6TH MEETING OF THE GROUP ON CAPACITY BUILDING INTIATIVES (GCBI)

GENEVA, SWITZERLAND

27-28 FEBRUARY 2018

DRAFT REPORT

Introduction

1. The Group on Capacity Building Initiatives (GCBI) held its 6th meeting in Geneva to discuss capacity building work since the last GCBI meeting held in Geneva in 2017. The meeting discussed topics to be considered by the group in the future, considered the outcomes of WTDC-2017, and discussed the review of the Operational Processes and Procedures (OPP) document for the ITU Centres of Excellence (CoEs).

2. The meeting was chaired by Mr Santiago Reyes-Borda.

3. Mr Abdul Aziz Awang was welcomed as second Vice Chair, in addition to Ms Gladys Ogallo.

4. The meeting was attended by nine GCBI members. Mr Joao Chaves was unable to attend and Mr David Mellor and Mr I.S. Khanna have resigned. Mr Toni Janevski participated as a resource person on a temporary basis and pending the decision from CEPT to appoint a successor. The group welcomed the presence of a delegation from the Ministry of Communications of India and took note of their presentations on key capacity building priorities and initiatives.

5. As part of the official opening of the meeting, Dr Cosmas Zavazava, Chief, Projects and Knowledge Management Department/BDT provided welcome remarks, on behalf of the BDT Director, followed by opening remarks by Mr Reyes-Borda, GCBI Chair.

6. GCBI members were reminded that their terms of tenure had come to an end and, recalling the Terms of Reference of the group, ITU will invite Member states to submit to their regional telecommunication organizations names of individuals to serve as GCBI members. The group was advised that current members are eligible for a second term as the period ended is deemed as one term.

Capacity building activities since the last GCBI meeting

7. ITU presented an overview of the major capacity building activities undertaken by ITU since the last GCBI meeting in February 2017, and highlighted future capacity building activities. Some of the major areas covered in the presentations were the Global ICT Capacity Building Symposium (CBS-2018), development of training materials, delivery of training by the Centres of Excellence (CoEs), partnerships, engagement with academia and the capacity building publication, outcomes of WTDC 2018 and the preparation of the next cycle of the CoE network. In the subsequent discussion, the following points were raised:

8. The number of courses cancelled by CoEs and the low levels of implementation was observed by the members. This gap between the number of planned courses and implemented courses due to lack of registration of participants has also been discussed by the regional steering committees which meet annually to review the performance of the CoEs. The group highlighted the need for CoEs to be resilient in their marketing and continuous pursuit of high quality to be able to attract participants to their courses. The need for CoEs to be trained in marketing and promotion,

especially digital marketing, was highlighted. The group encouraged ITU to also collect data on CoE courses disaggregated by gender and age of the participants.

9. The development and implementation of the Spectrum Management Training Programme (SMTP) was considered a resounding success. There is now need to focus attention to other programmes such as the Quality of Service Training Programme (QoSTP), and on developing training content in the field of emergency telecommunications and other emerging issues.

10. The success of CBS-2016 was reiterated and the group expressed their views concerning CBS-2018. The Symposium will be held in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, from 18-20 June 2018 under the theme "Developing skills for the digital economy and society''. The group highlighted the importance of involving young innovators and covering topics related to unattended areas in these discussions.

WTDC-17 Outcomes

11. The outcomes of WTDC 2017, as contained in the Buenos Aires Action Plan were presented and noted by the group. The group particularly observed that the outcomes provide a strong mandate for work on capacity building. The group also noted that some revisions were made on Resolution 40 on GCBI, Resolution 73 on the Centres of Excellence and Resolution 46 on indigenous people.

12. WTDC-17 discussions called for the review of the CoE Strategy. This will be undertaken by ITU with the aim of reporting at the next WTDC. It was reported that currently the OPP is being reviewed taking into consideration input from regional steering committees and the CoEs themselves (see below).

Roundtable on trends in ICT and capacity building: regional perspectives

13. GCBI members delivered presentations on regional ICT trends and their implications for capacity building. In their presentations, and the subsequent discussions, the following points were highlighted:

14. There are notable differences in skills requirements and skills development approaches across regions. The demand for digitally skilled workers is rising at a fast pace, making it difficult for regions to cope with this demand. Most countries are not able to develop the required skills at the pace dictated by the digital transformation. These include skills related to artificial intelligence, big data analytic, machine learning, IoT, 5G, cloud computing, cybersecurity and others. Basic digital literacy skills are now required by almost every job in public and private sectors.

15. The target audience for capacity building activities needs to be broad and include professionals (e.g. middle and senior-level managers), young people and students, researchers, SMEs, underserved communities and other users of ICT. In particular, there is an increasing growth of "digital natives" who are spearheading innovative ICT advances.

16. Capacity building interventions should move away from the traditional approach of focusing on technical competencies only, and should be customized to respond to specific needs and priorities of different target groups. In this respect, the trainings should take an interdisciplinary approach where a course will cover the technical, business and regulatory aspect of the topic.

17.   It is important to have strong stakeholder engagement and feedback of technology users beyond policy makers and regulators to analyze capacity building needs and priorities.

18.   Digital transformation and the digital economy should be the main focus of training workers for the future labour market. Topics to be delivered should include, among others, broadband, AI, big data analytics and data science, IoT, cloud computing, QoS and cybersecurity, taking into account other topics that keep emerging due to the proliferation of technologies.

19.   It is important to take into consideration the desired impact that should be achieved through training, from as early as during the planning stages. Comprehensive needs assessments should be part of this process to ensure the alignment of trainings with the needs of the target populations.

20.   Training is required for ICT users with a focus on ICT applications and solutions and non-technical aspects of the digital economy and society. This can be achieved through strengthening existing partnerships and encouraging continuous feedback.

21.   Methods of learning and delivering training are also changing. In particular, e-learning is becoming more popular in all regions as it provides working professionals with an opportunity to work and learn at the same time.

Centres of Excellence

22.   The reviewed Operational Processes and Procedures for the Centers of Excellence document was presented to the group. GCBI members discussed and noted the major changes in the document. In their discussions, they highlighted that the revised document is a good basis for implementing the next cycle of the Centers of Excellence network.

23.   An important issue that was considered in the review of the OPP document relates to the failure of some CoEs to sign the cooperation agreement (CA) after having been selected, or being unable to commence CoE activities. This requires a strategy to ensure that if within six months of selection a CoE is not able to take up its duties, there should be a process to select another CoE without delay.

24.   The group recognized that the current CoE strategy expects the CoEs to be self-sustainable. CoEs benefit from having access to ITU material and free use of the ITU Academy platform, while they generate their own income through training fees and partner sponsorships.

25.   The group noted the importance of maintaining the value of the ITU certificate. Therefore, certificates should only be provided to participants who have successfully passed the training assessment. Taking into consideration that ITU is pursuing accreditation of its training programmes to be delivered towards attainment of academic qualifications up to Master's degree level, it is important to maintain this principle for issuing ITU certificates. ITU has provided guidelines on how to assess participants for certification.

26.   The group noted that the plaques that are issued to CoEs will be developed and distributed by ITU HQ, to ensure standardization. The plaques have to be returned to ITU by the CoE when it ceases to operate as an ITU CoE.

27.   The requirement for the application to be signed by the administration of the country of the applying CoE was mentioned as a difficult but necessary part of the process.

28.   The group noted that in the next round of selections, while the number of CoEs will be maintained at six per region, it will be possible to allocate more than one priority area to a

CoE. This will be done taking into consideration the capability of the CoE to deliver training courses in more than one priority area.

29. The role of the GCBI in the selection process was discussed. The group noted the importance of advising ITU on the evaluation process as presented to them in the revised OPP document since this is the process that the ITU will follow to operationalize the evaluation and selection of CoEs for the next round.

Outcomes of GCBI meeting

30. Based on the above discussions, the summarized key outcomes of the meeting are:

— The group noted the outcomes of WTDC 2017, as contained in the Buenos Aires Action Plan, which include a strong mandate for work on capacity building. The group also noted the revisions to Resolution 40 on GCBI, to Resolution 73 on the Centres of Excellence and to Resolution 46 on indigenous people.

— The group discussed and took note of the review of the document Operational Processes and Procedures for the Centers of Excellence Network (2018). They noted the major changes in the document and considered the revised document as a good basis for implementing the next cycle of the Centers of Excellence network.

— The group discussed the process for selection of CoEs for the next round and noted the timeline within which the whole process would be implemented.

— The group noted that the first term of service for the members of the GCBI comes to an end in 2018 and that the call for nominations for the next four years will be initiated.

— The group made presentations relating to their respective regions, and the following issues emerged from the presentations and subsequent discussions:

- While there are important differences across regions when it comes to capacity building issues, most of the emerging ICT trends are global.
- There is an increase in the demand for digitally skilled workers in all regions and most countries are not able to develop the required skills at the pace dictated by the digital transformation.
- The target audience for capacity building activities needs to be broad and include professionals (e.g. middle and senior-level managers), young people and students, researchers, SMEs, underserved communities and other users of ICT. In particular, there is an increasing growth of "digital natives" who are spearheading innovative ICT advances.
- Capacity building should be customized to respond to specific needs and priorities of different target groups. In this respect, strong stakeholder engagement and feedback of technology users beyond policy makers and regulators is important to analyze capacity building needs and priorities.
- Training should take a more interdisciplinary approach, where one course combines the technical, business and regulatory aspects.
- Topics to be delivered should take into consideration the desired impact that should be achieved. Training workers for future labour market needs should focus on the digital transformation and digital economy, including topics around AI, big data analytics and data science, IoT, cloud computing and cybersecurity. In addition, training is required for ICT users with a focus on ICT applications and solutions and non-technical aspects of the digital economy and society.

- Partnerships for delivery of training should be promoted (e.g. with academic institutions), as well as proactive engagement, coordination and feedback from stakeholders.

Next GCBI meeting

31. The next GCBI meeting will take place in early 2019. The dates and venue of the meeting will be provided at a later stage.

Report to TDAG

32. The GCBI Chair will report to TDAG on the work of this group and the outcome of this meeting.