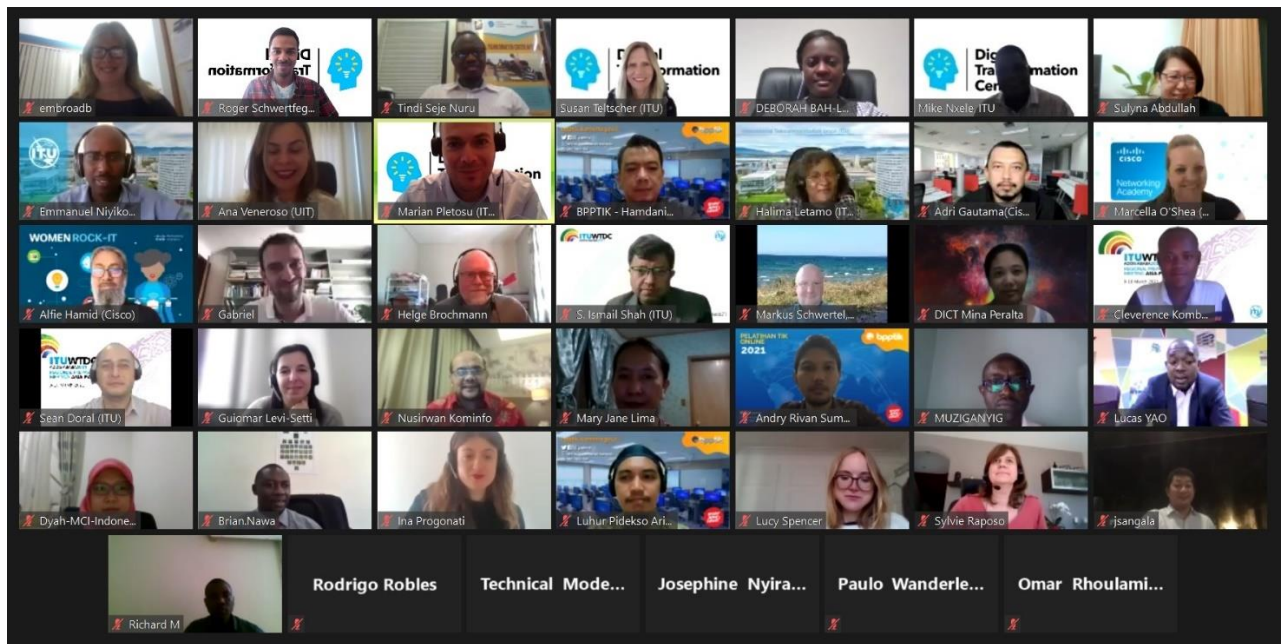




Digital Transformation Centres Initiative Virtual Global Meeting

23 March 2021

FINAL REPORT



INTRODUCTION

The Virtual Global Meeting of the Digital Transformation Centres (DTCs) Initiative took place on 23 March 2021. It was organized by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) in partnership with Cisco.

The meeting was attended by 45 participants representing the DTCs and the DTC Initiative partners including ITU, Cisco, HP and the Norwegian Government (see Annex 1 for the list of participants). The DTCs were represented by 17 participants from 8 selected DTCs in Africa, in the Americas and in Asia-Pacific. The DTC from the Dominican Republic was unable to participate.

The meeting was the first occasion for DTCs to get together since the onboarding workshop held in Geneva on 11-13 February 2020, at the start of the DTC Initiative. The objective of the meeting was to discuss the performance of the DTC network since its inception, exchange experiences encountered to date, and share ideas on how to strengthen the network going forward.

Further information, including agenda, the presentation slides and photos are available at <https://academy.itu.int/index.php/main-activities/digital-transformation-centres-initiative/dtc-virtual-global-meeting-2021>

Opening ceremony

The Global Virtual Meeting was officially opened by Ms Sulyna Abdullah Lim, Acting Chief, Digital Knowledge Hub Department, Telecommunication Development Bureau, ITU, followed by Mr Alfie Hamid, Regional Manager for Africa, Cisco Corporate Affairs, Ms Ina Progonati, Sustainable and Social Impact Consultant, HP, Mr Helge Brochmann, Senior Adviser, Department for Health, Education and Human Rights, Norad and Ms Susan Teltscher, Head, Capacity and Skills Development Division, ITU.

Ms Sulyna Abdullah Lim congratulated the DTCs for their work as part of phase 1 of the Initiative and emphasized the challenging circumstances experienced due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The pandemic led to a huge shift in the way people relate to each other and more pertinently the way people learn, as physical encounters are no longer an option and online learning has become the new normal. The pandemic highlighted two major challenges standing in the way of building a truly digital economy and society. The first challenge is connectivity, as today, half of the world is still not connected, and the second challenge exposed is the importance of digital skills which have become even more critical for participating in the digital economy and society. This means that it is crucial to focus our energies on connectivity and digital skills to ensure that no one is left behind if we are to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

Mr Alfie Hamid stressed that despite the challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic, the DTCs have achieved a lot, and this is mostly due to the partnerships and commitments that are present on the ground. The public-private partnerships are key for social and economic development and Cisco stays strongly committed to the Initiative.

Ms Ina Progonati expressed appreciation for HP being part of the DTC Initiative and for the opportunity to offer the training content of HP LIFE to the DTCs as part of the Initiative. The 32 courses that are part of HP LIFE are mostly focused on business and entrepreneurial skills, complementing the technical skills strongly needed to thrive in the digital economy.

Mr Helge Brochmann took the opportunity to thank the organizers for the invitation and expressed the delight of Norad for being part of the Initiative and of the event.

Lastly, Ms Susan Teltscher introduced the ITU team in charge of the DTC Initiative, both in the ITU headquarters and in the regional and area offices.

Agenda item 1: Brief introduction by each DTC

During this session, each DTC representative had the opportunity to briefly introduce the DTC, its mandate and activities. The introductions proceeded per region and in alphabetical order, as follows:

Africa: Ecole Multinational Supérieure des Postes d'Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire), Ghana Investment Fund for Electronic Communications (Ghana), Rwanda Information Society Authority (RISA), Smart Zambia Institute (Zambia);

Americas: Federal Institute of Brasilia (Brazil);

Asia-Pacific: ICT Training and Development Centre (Indonesia), Department of Information and Communication Technology (the Philippines), Papua New Guinea University of Technology (Papua New Guinea).

Agenda item 2: Meeting objectives

Ms Susan Teltscher, ITU, presented the objectives of the virtual global meeting, namely to take stock of the implementation of the Initiative one year after its launch, review the overall performance of the Initiative and of its network, bring the stakeholders together and share experiences and challenges, and make suggestions to strengthen the network, and lastly, facilitate the preparation of phase 2 of the Initiative.

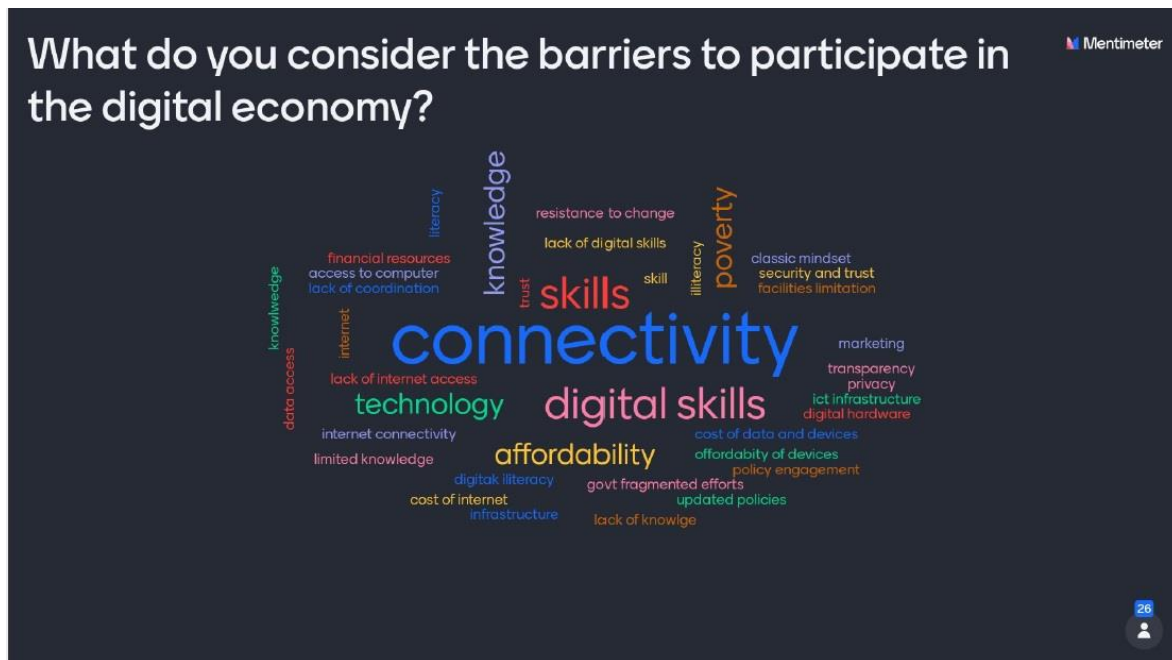
Agenda item 3: Presentation by Cisco on experiences with working with DTCs

During this session, Cisco shared its experience as founding partner of the Initiative, including the main challenges and opportunities so far.

The experience during the first year of the Initiative has been diverse, as each DTC is unique and each of them faced different challenges and embraced different opportunities once the phase 1 started. On one hand, as soon as the onboarding workshop ended, some DTCs had the opportunity to immediately start training trainers and disseminate them in training centres throughout the country. On the other hand, other DTCs suffered from the consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic, where most of their financial resources were reallocated to programmes targeting the recovery from the pandemic.

As lessons learnt, firstly, Cisco observed that the Initiative is successful when the training activities are backed by Governments, as part of their country strategy. Secondly, Cisco noticed a major success when the DTCs keep the same focal points throughout the Initiative, as this helps keeping track of the activities and gives additional stability to the implementation. Lastly, the implementation has been more successful in DTCs where instructors and community training facilities were more widely available.

A short polling question was shared with the participants at the end of the session, asking for their opinion on the major barriers for citizens to participate in the digital economy. As shown in the picture below, the challenges related to connectivity, digital skills and affordability were mentioned the most by participants.



Agenda item 4: Update on DTC Initiative to date

This session was dedicated to an update of the DTC Initiative so far, including an overview of training activities carried out in 2020, partnership engagement in general, and the partnership with the Government of Norway in particular, and finally challenges and achievements. The session was opened by Mr Helge Brochmann, Norad, who stressed the importance of delivering digital skills training to vulnerable groups, while highlighting the challenges as these groups are difficult to reach in the first place. In addition, Mr Brochmann emphasized that the DTC Initiative in Ghana is fully aligned with the development priorities of the Government of Norway, and it can leverage on a number of existing local partnerships.

Mr Mike Nxele, ITU, then provided an overview of the 2020 activities of the Initiative. Despite the challenging circumstances generated by the Covid-19 pandemic, in 2020 a total of 81,536 citizens were trained in basic and intermediate digital skills through the DTC network. Among these, a total of 22,001 people were trained in Africa, 22,543 in the Americas and 36,992 in Asia-Pacific, with 65% of them being female against 35% male. The DTCs almost doubled the number of citizens trained compared to their submitted training plans for 2020.

Since the launch of the Initiative in February 2020, three new partners joined ITU and Cisco in the Initiative, while a fourth partnership is soon to be finalized. HP joined the Initiative as partner offering the training courses targeting business and entrepreneurship skills under the HP LIFE program. The Government of Norway signed a partnership agreement through the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad) supporting financially the delivery of training activities mostly in Ghana, and to a lesser extent in other DTCs. A partnership with the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) has recently been signed, supporting delivery of digital skills training for farmers in Ghana, allowing them to benefit from e-commerce services. This agreement will allow to extend the collaboration between the two organizations in multiple other countries, Côte d'Ivoire being one of them. Finally, an agreement with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) will soon be signed. This agreement will help strengthening collaborations with the private sector for the implementation of DTC activities.

Agenda item 5: Breakout group discussions

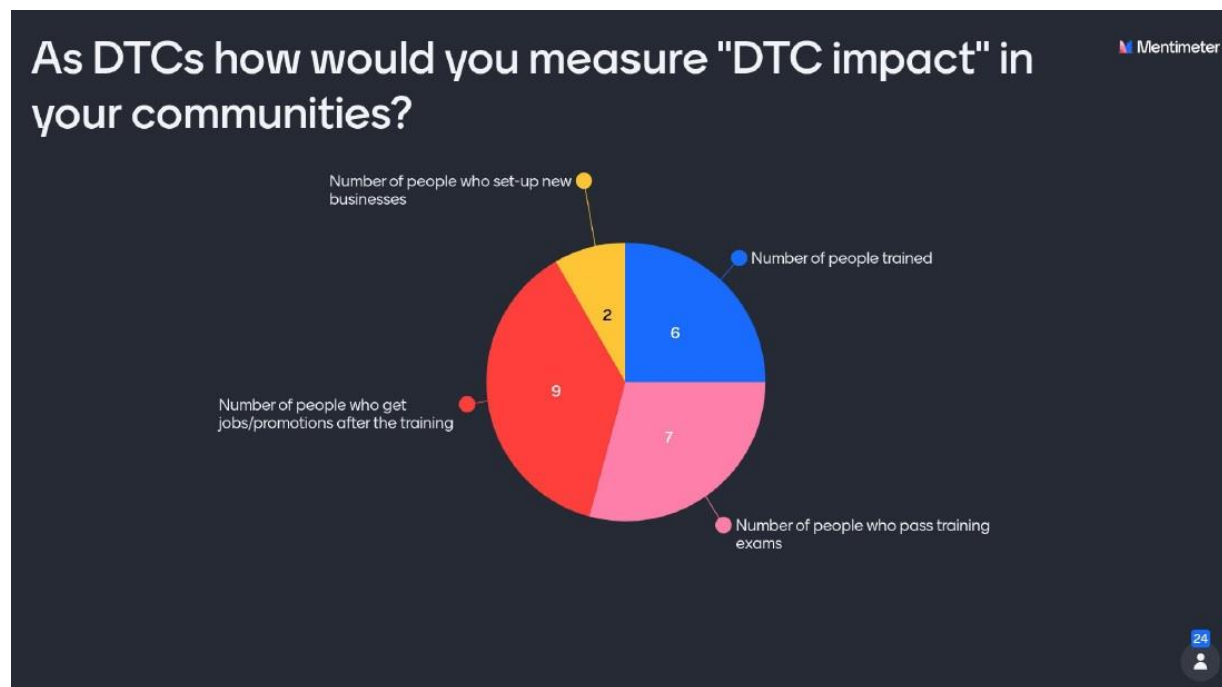
During this session, participants had the opportunity to interact with each other while separated into 4 working groups, two of which discussed the major challenges faced during phase 1 of the Initiative, lessons learnt and suggestions for the phase 2, whereas the other two groups discussed the improvements needed in order to increase the stakeholder engagement at the national level, as well as ways of scaling-up the training activities locally.

Among the major challenges expressed by the group 1 and 2, the lack of IT infrastructure and stable and affordable Internet connection have been highlighted as the main barriers while delivering online training during the pandemic. The IT infrastructure also includes key components such as computers, mobile phones and printers, which are crucial for e-learning. Moreover, the citizens lacking basic digital literacy are automatically excluded from online learning, where basic digital skills are required in order to access the training content. Finally, it was highlighted that there is a need to create a more blended approach while delivering online training, allowing trainees to spend less time online and more time in self-learning.

Among the major potential improvements highlighted by groups 2 and 3 are the need for additional promotion of the DTC activities in order to attract new partners supporting the implementation of the training. The promotion could also be achieved through engagements with local leaders and champions, citizens who are digitally literate being able to influence and motivate other citizens to follow the same path. Showing clear benefits of the Initiative could also play a key role in attracting new partners.

Moreover, it was stressed that the activities should be aligned with the Government priorities, in order to be able to seek its support.

A short polling question was shared with the participants at the end of the session, asking for their opinion on how to best measure the DTC impact in their communities. As shown in the picture below, the impact on the citizens' career paths after the training was delivered was selected the most, followed by the number of people trained and those having passed the training exams.



Agenda item 6: Phase 2 planning

This session was dedicated to the introduction of the next steps of the Initiative by ITU, including the conclusion of phase 1 and planning of phase 2.

During the session it was highlighted that phase 2 of the Initiative will be focused on scaling-up the activities and it will be open ended, which means that it won't be limited in time and new DTCs will be able to join at later stages. The current DTCs that are satisfactorily performing will automatically qualify for phase 2 of the Initiative, and for that purpose, new cooperation agreements will be prepared and signed in advance. Finally, an active partner engagement and resource mobilization strategy will be pursued.

As concrete timeline, the performance evaluations for DTCs in Phase 1 will be carried out starting from June – July 2021. The launch of the applications for the new DTCs will start from 1 July 2021. The selection of the DTCs and the signing of the new cooperation agreements will take place from September to December 2021, in time for the start of the phase 2 of the Initiative in January 2022. Phase 1 DTCs may have their current cooperation agreements extended for the period September to December 2021, with a short training plan covering the last quarter of 2021 developed and implemented. All the DTCs start the phase 2 at the same time in January 2022.

Summary and closing

Final remarks were delivered by Ms Susan Teltscher, Head, Capacity and Digital Skills Development, ITU. In her remarks, Ms Teltscher thanked all the DTCs and partners for their active participation in the virtual global meeting and highlighted the importance of receiving feedback in order to successfully implement the Initiative. Moreover, it was emphasized that the virtual meeting was extremely useful for the participants, and another one will be organized later this year. The focus for this year is to move the Initiative from the pilot phase to phase 2, scale and open it to other DTCs. ITU and the partners stay committed to making the Initiative successful.

Annex 1: List of participants

Name	Title	Institution	Country
DTCs			
Ms Abena Acheampomaa Nyamesem	Senior Manager, Sustainability and Partnership	Ghana Investment Fund for Electronic Communications (GIFEC)	Ghana
Ms Deborah Korkor Bah-Lano	Manager, Programmes	Ghana Investment Fund for Electronic Communications (GIFEC)	Ghana
Mr. Gerard Muziganyi	ICT IIN Governance Cluster Specialist	Rwanda Information Society Authority (RISA)	Rwanda
Ms. Josephine Nyiranzeyimana	Government Chief Information Officer	Rwanda Information Society Authority (RISA)	Rwanda
Mr. Richard Muragijimana	Digital Literacy Officer	Rwanda Information Society Authority (RISA)	Rwanda
Mr. Brian Nawa	Senior Change Management Officer	SMART Zambia Institute	Zambia
Mr Lucas Yao	DTC Project Manager	Ecole Multinationale Supérieure des Postes d'Abidjan	Côte d'Ivoire
Mr. Paulo Wanderley	Dean of Extension	Instituto Federal de Brasilia	Brazil
Mr Fabiano Cavalcante Fernandes	Professor	Instituto Federal de Brasilia	Brazil
Mr Hamdani Pratama	Head of Programme and Reporting Section	Balai Pelatihan dan Pengembangan Teknologi Informasi dan Komunikasi (BPPTIK)	Indonesia
Mr Nusirwan	Head of BPPTIK	Balai Pelatihan dan Pengembangan Teknologi Informasi dan Komunikasi (BPPTIK)	Indonesia
Mr. Luhur Pidekso ARIF	Researcher, Sub Coordinator of Public Training Organizer	Balai Pelatihan dan Pengembangan Teknologi Informasi dan Komunikasi (BPPTIK)	Indonesia
Mr. Andry Rivin SUMARA	Researcher, Lecturer	Balai Pelatihan dan Pengembangan Teknologi Informasi dan Komunikasi (BPPTIK)	Indonesia
Ms. Dyah Puspito Dewi Widowati	Instructor	Balai Pelatihan dan Pengembangan Teknologi Informasi dan Komunikasi (BPPTIK)	Indonesia
Ms. Mary Jane Lima	Planning Officer IV	Department of Information and Communication Technology (DITC)	Philippines
Ms. Mina Lyn Peralta	Project Development Officer	Department of Information and Communication Technology (DITC)	Philippines
Mr. Tindi Nuru Seje	Director, Teaching and Learning	PNG University of Technology	Papua New Guinea

Partners			
Mr. Alfie Hamid	Regional Manager, Corporate Affairs Africa	Cisco	South Africa
Mr. Gabriel Bello Barros	Cisco NetAcad Brasil	Cisco	Brazil
Ms. Emma Broadbent	Networking Academy Regional Manager ANZ & Papua New Guinea & Pacific islands	Cisco	Australia
Mr. Imoh Akpan	Programme Manager	Cisco	Nigeria
Mr. Adri Gautama	CSR Manager	Cisco	Indonesia
Mr. Macky Macaspac	Programme Manager	Cisco	Philippines
Ms. Marcella O'SHEA	Corporate Affairs, Regional Manager APJ	Cisco	United States
Ms. Constanza Pla Macaya	CSR Manager	Cisco	Costa Rica
Mr. Omar Rhouli	CSR Manager	Cisco	Morocco
Mr. Calvin Nangue	CSR Manager	Cisco	South Africa
Mr. Helge Brochmann	Senior Advisor	Norad	Norway
Mr. Markus Schwertel	Lead Government Relations CEE MEA	HP	Germany
Ms. Ina Progonati	HP Global Lead	HP	United States
ITU			
Ms. Nur Sulyna Abdullah	Acting Chief, Digital Knowledge Hub Department	ITU	Switzerland
Ms. Susan Teltscher	Head, Capacity and Digital Skills Development Division (CSD), BDT	ITU	Switzerland
Mr. Mike Nxele	Senior, Capacity and Digital Skills Development Officer (CSD), BDT	ITU	Switzerland
Ms. Halima Letamo	Training and Development Officer, CSD, BDT	ITU	Switzerland
Ms. Guiomar Levi-Setti	Capacity and Digital Skills Development Officer (CSD), BDT	ITU	Switzerland
Ms. Sylvie Raposo	Capacity Development Administrative Coordinator	ITU	Switzerland
Mr. Roger Schwertfeger	Intern	ITU	Switzerland
Mr. Marian Pletosu	Digital Skills Officer (CSD), BDT	ITU	Switzerland
Ms Lucy Spencer	Communication and Promotion Officer	ITU	Switzerland
Mr. Sean Sharidz Doral	Programme Officer	ITU	Thailand

Mr. Cleverence Kombe	Programme Officer	ITU	Thailand
Mr. Rodrigo Robles	Programme Officer	ITU	Honduras
Mr. Ismail Shah	Area Representative	ITU	Indonesia
Mr. Emmanuel Niyikora	Programme Officer	ITU	Senegal
Ms. Ana Jamily Veneroso	Programme Coordinator	ITU	Brazil