

## **8<sup>TH</sup> MEETING OF THE GROUP ON CAPACITY BUILDING INITIATIVES (GCBI)**

**1-2 JUNE 2020,**

### **CHAIR'S SUMMARY**

The Group on Capacity Building Initiatives (GCBI) held its 8<sup>th</sup> meeting from 1 to 2 June 2020. The meeting was held virtually.

The meeting was attended by all members of the GCBI except the Vice Chair Ms. Gladys Ogallo, who offered her apologies. The meeting was also attended by the ITU Regional Capacity Development Cluster Focal Points.

The meeting was chaired by Dr Lidia Stępińska-Ustasiak, Deputy Director, Department of Foreign Affairs, Office of Electronic Communications (UKE), and Chair of GCBI.

The group noted the regional presentations made by the experts on the implications of Covid-19 on regional capacity development activities, and the strategies to address the digital skills requirements within their regions. The group also discussed the future work of GCBI in its advisory role to the BDT Director, and noted the upcoming feasibility study on establishing an ITU training institute.

The key outcomes of the meeting are:

1. The Covid-19 pandemic has changed drastically people's way of life around the world, and greater reliance is now placed on the use of digital tools for work and learning.
2. The pandemic has also exposed the digital gap between countries both in terms of the availability of digital infrastructure, and the skills required to use that infrastructure for learning purposes. Strategies need to be developed to address these gaps, and training and capacity development will be a crucial part of those strategies.
3. In many developing countries, where many people are unconnected due to lack of affordable and high-quality Internet services, the top strategic priority is to improve access. There is need to develop the capacity of policy makers to develop and adopt innovative and flexible enabling policies and

- regulatory regimes that encourage provision of affordable and high-quality access, through creating and encouraging private public partnerships.
4. In countries where connectivity is available, but people are not using the Internet, priority should be given to develop the digital skills necessary to fully leverage digital products and services for usage areas such as work, learning and health. There is need to implement digital skills programmes at the national level to ensure that nations develop digital competent citizens, in particular, among vulnerable and marginalized groups.
  5. The pandemic has highlighted the need to develop specific training programmes on digital technologies targeted at specific sectors, such as health and education.
  6. GCBI members expressed appreciation for the launch of the Digital Transformation Centres Initiative and acknowledged the role this could play in strengthening digital skills and supporting digital inclusion and bringing into the digital economy the marginalized and underserved populations.
  7. There has been a huge increase in the demand for and use of online platforms for remote learning over the Covid-19 period. There is need to develop skills to conduct remote teaching and remote learning on the part of trainers and learners, respectively. The group encouraged Centres of Excellence to use the ITU Academy and /or other online learning platforms more and avoid disruptions to training such as those caused by Covid-19. ITU was urged to strengthen the capacity of Centres of Excellence to run training online using the ITU Academy platform and to convert existing content into online training materials.
  8. The shift to online or distance learning and skills development should not be seen as an emergency response only. Rather, training providers such as CoEs should seize this opportunity to create long-term positive impacts and develop greater resilience. Cross-regional collaboration among training providers was encouraged.
  9. The launch of the ITU Digital Skills Assessment Guidebook 2020 was timely as it will be a useful tool to assist countries assess their digital skills supply,

demand and gaps and develop appropriate strategies and programmes to address those gaps. It should be presented widely across all regions.

10. The group welcomed the submission of the draft Glossary of ITU Capacity Development Terms compiled by Secretariat based on the inputs from the work of the task groups of GCBI. This document will help standardize and harmonize capacity development activities within ITU and assist in establishing quality standards for the different training and capacity development activities. Members of the group will submit their comments in writing for consideration in the final document.

11. In view of the impending study on the assessment of ITU capacity development activities and feasibility to establish an ITU training institute, the group considered it prudent to shape any plans for GCBI's future work based on the outcome of that study. The group welcomed the invitation by the Director BDT to make its input to the study and looked forward to the opportunity to contribute.

12. The outcome of this meeting will be reported by the Chair of GCBI to the next meeting of TDAG, which will be held virtually from 2 to 5 June 2020.

The next GCBI meeting will take place in the first quarter of 2021. The exact dates of the meeting will be provided at a later stage.

The final draft report of this meeting will be circulated to GCBI members for comments by 15 June 2020. GCBI members are invited to submit comments within one week thereafter. The final report will then be posted on the GCBI webpage by 30 June 2020.

Dr Lidia Stępińska -Ustasiak, Chair, GCBI

Geneva, 2 June 2020