

WORLD SUMMIT ON INFORMATION SOCIETY, 16-18 Nov 2005 Tunis

YOUTH FOR THE INFORMATION SOCIETY: COMMON STATEMENT BY ITU YOUNG LEADERS IN ICTS & WSIS YOUTH CAUCUS

A. DIGITAL DIVIDE- A Challenge:

In this generation, called Information Age, the gap is evident in the usage of information and communications technologies (ICT) compared to previous generations, such gap has been designated as Digital Divide. Due to this gap, people have become vulnerable to the adverse effects of poverty, inequality, and injustice. Hence, digital divide can be considered a hindrance to the better enjoyment of humankind, a matter that needs to be addressed seriously and effectively.

B. OUR SHARED VISION:

Construct a better world in the Information Age. The potentials of people would be maximized by increasing the exposure and responsible use of ICTs and Systems. This requires the active involvement of key players including national governments, international organizations, the ICT industry and the Youth.

In this way, ICTs create opportunities in industrialized countries as well as in developing ones, but we need to accelerate the convergence of these opportunities. In this sense, youth are obligated to be the main contributors this process, no matter our nationalities.

C. OUR GOALS AND EXPECTATIONS:

1. Policy, Knowledge Sharing and Engagement:

We feel that our vision can be addressed primarily by focusing on the root cause; which is the ICT illiteracy. Hence, promotion of modern education steered by the Youth's Initiative is our initial response. Driven by passion and knowledge, we believe that we can put this into effect by actively involving ourselves with the concerns of our local communities and by engaging ourselves in youth forums both locally and globally. In other words, to be able to create projects and other initiatives that are truly of a collaborative effort.

While talent and enthusiasm are the major sources of sustenance in this endeavor, we believe in the importance of external supports, especially those coming from the local governments, international agencies, and the industry. As for the industries' participation, we would like for them to redirect or adopt as one of their corporate responsibilities, policies, and missions that are oriented towards the bridging of digital divide. In addition, we seek resource support and guidance from our governments and the different international agencies. Every government must promote educative plans and projects to improve the use and access to the ICTs and with its help the diminution of the digital gap.

The technology and communication industry should embrace projects with Universities so as to provide incentives for the students embarking in future endeavors in such field. Additionally, the youth should be given a place to actively participate in policy-making activities as well as other activities that will be of direct concern to them and their future.

D. ACTION PLANS

1. ICTs for Education: Tool for realizing the MDG Goal Number 2 as it pertains to Youth as a vulnerable group:

The learning techniques include new technological resources every day. For this reason, it is required to implement educational plan that incorporates the technology, in order to properly

transform the information into knowledge.

This involves both training courses and seminars. Youth highly encourages ITU, its regional and local partners to support them in this regard, as well as in the kind of education that the Youth wants to provide for the less educated ones; through modern computer literacy programs and other modern means. Teaching and training the educated ones specifically 'youth' for effective utilization of Technologies is also important. For both cases, the themes will revolve around the following:

- a.) Digital Divide: Youth who create the projects and the beneficiaries should have a deeper understanding of the issues surrounding it, the ways and means of dealing with it.
- b.) Exposure to different ICT and systems: Education first; Youth working on projects must acquire formal education and involve in research activities in Communication Technologies for the human benefit.
- c.) Proper Use of ICTs: Young people should utilize ICTs responsibly for its integration and contribution to the development of a society. In light of the recent disasters, terrorist attacks and other cyber crimes, utilizing ICTs positively in promoting peace and disaster and cyber crime prevention.
- d.) ICT for Development projects must target all groups of population i.e. children, youth, older generation, disabled etc.

2. Recognizing and Supporting Youth in the ICT industry development as a win-win process:

We as youth, have to seek different forms of support from the industry, the private entities and the non-governmental institution so that they recognize youth as creators and developers of ICT s The Youth, in turn, if granted the power to, can help those companies and institutions receive tax incentives and other benefits through their collaboration with the government agencies.

3. Consolidation and Continued Support of Youth for the Information Society: ITU Young Leaders in ICTs and WSIS Youth Caucus:

The ITU-Telecom Youth Forum, founded on the principle of global inclusiveness was held for the first time in Jonesburg in 2001. Since then other five ITU-Telecom Youth Forums followed, and its Alumni currently actives in “ ITU Youth Leaders in ICT” a dedicated Network, provided by ITU Youth Programme as a follow up project of World Youth Forum, share their regional projects and experiences in Youth and ICTs. The ITU Youth Forums Alumni also serve in their countries as youth representatives volunteers for helping in bridging the digital divide and promoting projects towards this end to be supported by the ITU/BDT Youth Programme.

The Youth Caucus is made up of young people across the globe; youth led and youth oriented organizations and in particular the youth who worked and work hard in their local communities to raise awareness on the Information Society and the role of Information and Communication Technologies.

The World Summit on the Information Society Youth Caucus has worked to build on the successes and lessons learnt from the first phase of the Summit in Geneva – amongst other processes such as the World Summit on Sustainable Development – ensuring the agenda of the WSIS reflects the priorities of those who will live with its decisions, and that the process catalyses support for concrete youth action.

In joint cooperation with the ITU Youth Programme, the ITU-Young Leaders in ICTs and WSIS Youth Caucus would like to work together and help with our expertise in developing projects that targets the ICTs development at local and regional level. The Youth is not only a force in bridging the digital divide but also in improving the quality of life and the development of their communities, countries and regions.