**Jerome Morrissey**

**CEO, GESCI (Global eSchools & Communities Initiatives)**

**Thank you Chairman and thanks to ITU for the opportunity to participate in the multi-stakeholder consultative process**

**I wish to briefly talk about leadership development for ICT policy- making in Education**

The successes in meeting the **Millennium Development Goals**  has led to sharp increases in primary school enrolments since 2000 but education systems in many emerging economies are being stretched beyond their capacities to provide **E*ducation for All* (EFA).** Enormous pressure is placed on current resources to educate **a growing youth population.**

**Increasing enrollment rates** has led to a decline in the **quality of education**. The emphasis on ***access*** still exists but is now being replaced by ***access*** **AND *quality*.** Globally, at least 250 million young people cannot read or write after four years of primary schooling.

Low uptake and poor delivery of science, technology, language and mathematics (STEM) at primary and secondary level lead to reduced numbers of school leavers capable of entering third level to become technicians, engineers or programmers.

**Bearing in mind the pivotal importance of education and skills development for future social cohesion, employment and for wider knowledge society development, countries must refocus on a revised model of education.** Without a better and more relevantly educated majority, a country will lack the wisdom, problem solving skills, foresight, creativity and knowledge to bring about alternative transformational futures.

Issues of **access, quality** and **gender equity** in educational provision are at system- wide and system- deep levels. **The capacitation of leaders for policy development and implementation at every level of the education system is required to ensure effective ICT- enabled solutions.**

Teachers cannot be replaced by technology. If the provision of ICT devices **does not** take serious account of the teacher’s central role in the learning process, devices will have very limited impact on the achievement of learning objectives. Accordingly, resources will be wasted.

While championing its use and effectiveness, GESCI discourages technology trends that **dictate** the nature of interventions in education as it has witnessed failures of initiatives that **were seduced by the glamour** of technology without paying due heed to the capacity and readiness of its teachers to integrate that technology in teaching and learning.

**There is also a need for** capacity development for those in positions of leadership at higher national levels**.** GESCI’s mission is to **build a critical mass of leaders** with the skills, knowledge and capability to **develop and implement coherent policies which will advance technology -driven and sustainable socio-economic development.**

GESCI is implementing the programme ***Leadership in ICT & Knowledge Society Development* -** currentlyrunning in 16 countries in Africa. In partnership with the **African Union Commission and with the substantial support of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland**, this programme focuses on multi-sectoral capacity building, enhancement of leadership skills and the acquisition of a commanding understanding of the key pillars of knowledge society development.

Education, more than any other Government intervention, will shape countries’ futures. The adage **that no country can raise about the quality of its education provision** still rings true.

Education leaders who fail to take account of prevailing trends such as population growth, youth unemployment, rural /urban digital divides, rural/urban migration, digital communications, the internet as an information source and gender disparities **will create policies that are based on inadequate forecasts of the future.**

GESCI will work with leaders at every level of the education system from **ministries to classrooms to communities**, to provide practical insight into the transformative potential of ICT on learning and to equip them with the skills and knowledge to plan effectively for ICT integration in education systems, through coherent policy development and implementation.