



ITU-TRCSL Training on
ICTs for promoting Innovation & Entrepreneurship

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Colombo, Sri Lanka

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Experts,

Distinguished Delegates;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

It is a great pleasure and a privilege to be with you here in Colombo, Sri Lanka today at ITU-TRCSL Training on ICTs for promoting Innovation & Entrepreneurship with support from the Department of Communications and the Arts, Government of Australia. This training on "ICTs for promoting Innovation & Entrepreneurship" has been designed with main objectives of the training course are to:

- Increase practical entrepreneurial skills among students that will allow them to pursue their entrepreneurial aspirations and to start and grow their businesses;
- Train the trainers who will introduce the course on provincial level; and
- Analyse Case studies on different countries of Asia-Pacific region and consider international best practices

While we want to share innovation experiences from best experts, we also accord high importance of transfer of knowledge and building capacity and local ownership so that such programme can be replicated in our provinces and inspire and develop future entrepreneurs from Sri Lanka!

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today, we are very well aware that ICTs cut across each and every sector through e-education, e-health, e-agriculture, e-banking, smart cities and smart countries and we need to embrace emerging technologies such as Big data, open data, cloud computing Internet of Things and artificial intelligence to tap into the huge opportunities offered by ICT for achieving sustainable development. This is an exciting time for the sector and for people around the world, as ICTs have moved center stage in the global digital economy.

The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) recognized innovation as one of the main goals at the World Telecommunication Development Conference and the Plenipotentiary Conference held in 2014. Innovation is also highlighted in Goal 9 of the Sustainable Development Goals: Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Innovation has three key roles to play for ITU Member States. It allows states to improve public services through innovative ICT solutions and transform their public sectors. It also allows governments, civil society, and the private sector to work together, develop ICT solutions and share them to foster knowledge sharing and collaboration on social innovation. Finally, innovation is an essential part of a thriving ICT sector, and more broadly a thriving economy, enabling businesses to develop ICT solutions and compete on a global scale by creating jobs, wealth, and economic growth. This can help to bridge the digital and innovation divides, creating a more equal world where more and more people can enjoy the benefits of ICTs.

ITU helps Member States to promote innovation in their own ecosystems. Sustainable, durable innovation comes about when governments not only create an enabling environment for innovation to take place, but also take an active role in catalysing partnerships with innovation stakeholders. To enhance national innovation ecosystems, ITU has undertaken a series of country reviews of ICT-centric innovation ecosystems and made recommendations on how to strengthen them.

I am pleased to share with you that ITU has developed first tool kit “Bridging the digital innovation divide: A toolkit for strengthening ICT centric ecosystems” for strengthening ICT centric ecosystems shares the knowledge gained and methods used in the country review process, and is meant to help Member States to directly undertake the review process, exploring the needs of key innovation stakeholders and working with them to develop policies, projects and other actions to foster innovation.

For this event we have distinguished experts Mr Peter Argent from Australia, Mr. Shahryar Khan from Pakistan, Ms. Achia Khaleda Nila from Bangladesh, Mr. Hu Zhongming and I myself is learning to become expert of some kind while learning from everyone who will deliver practical hands on experience sharing and skill development sessions during the four days! I welcome all the experts who have come all the way to Colombo to share their knowledge with us!

Alvin Toffler, an American writer, futurist, and businessman known for his works on modern technologies, digital revolution and the communication revolution, said “The illiterate of the 21st century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn and relearn”

With that, I conclude my remarks by thanking all of you for sparing your precious time and our host TRCSL for making excellent arrangements for this training and I am sure with our collective learning, we will have a very successful, interactive and fruitful training.

I thank you.