

Cross-cutting session: Digital transformation beyond the COVID-19 pandemic

1 April 2022 | 10:00-13:00 CEST

Segment 1- SDG 4 - Quality education

Key policy outcomes

- Access and affordability of Internet connectivity are key to guaranteeing access to a high-quality and wide range of educational content. Stakeholders are encouraged to invest in infrastructure development and enable the same standards for digital infrastructure in all schools, including in remote and rural areas, in order to mitigate pre-existing inequalities;
- Countries are recommended to look at digitalization through the prism of quality instead of quantity, technology should be perceived as a tool for enabling every child to achieve their learning goals and attain the needed competencies. This requires flexible and adaptive use, as well as adaptation to end-users needs, such as providing digital tools and services in the local language or being accessible for persons with disabilities;
- Digital skills are increasingly required in all areas of work; governments are encouraged to redesign the education curriculum to include STEM and ICT education starting from the elementary school level and apply a whole-of-ecosystem approach to digital skills. Special attention should be given to teachers' digital skills which are at the forefront of providing quality education;
- Partnerships across Ministries of Education and Ministries of ICTs, but also governments at the local level, the regulator community, the private sector, and the civil society is key to spurring these change.

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Segment 2 - SDG 5 - Gender equality

Key policy outcomes

- Stereotypes continue to be a major impediment to girls' and women's participation in ICTs and STEM fields. To raise the interest of girls and women in these fields, it is recommended to establish a balance between imposing and inducing interest as the former may be counter-productive, through a personalized and competency-based approach as well as through offering ICT related extra-curricular activities;
- The involvement of women and girls in the ICT and STEM education does not translate into strong participation in the employment sector, as they experience vertical segregation and the gender pay gap. Women are poorly represented in managerial and entrepreneurial positions. To counter these, it is recommended to undertake a flexible based approach, not only through formal education but also through extra-curricular training, by offering career guidance, self-confidence, and self-perception training, as well as increasing caregiving support;
- Member states are encouraged to develop data-driven and evidence-based policies and programs to foster women and girls' participation in the ICT and STEM sectors.

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Segment 1- SDG 14 - Life below water

Key policy outcomes

- Countries are encouraged to step up efforts in implementing digital solutions for sustainable use of resources underwater. UN/FLUX provides a harmonized message standard that allows Fishery Management Organizations to automatically access electronic data from fishing vessels, such as vessel and trip identification, fishing operations or fishing data;
- Countries are also encouraged to fully implement VMT (Vessel Monitoring tools) and ERS (Electronic Reporting system);
- Marine ecosystems should be preserved and ITCs can help reuse tools that are already in place. Solutions can include already existing and future underwater communications tools to develop sensors measuring the environmental impact of human activities and use them as disasters warning;
- Government-led multistakeholder partnerships, both domestic and international, are needed.

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Segment 1- SDG 15 - Life and land

Key policy outcomes

- Standards are very important tools to implement SDG15 (i.e. UN/CEFACT standards to support the CITES Convention to Control the illegal trade of wildlife). This standard helps ensuring proper control on international trade in animals through adequate enforcement of strict sanitary standards;
- Countries are also encouraged to implement Electronic data interchange (EDI) as an eWaste standard for efficient handling of "live", "real-time" business-to-administration (B2A) data flows. Live EDI can provide authorities with an up-to-date overview of the environmental situation and enables them to react to environmental risks;
- Multistakeholder partnerships can be used to achieve inclusions of all relevant actors for sustainable use of land management. Already available ITCs such as google earth can be used to facilitate access to geospatial data in order to monitor land management and localize land degradation;
- Knowledge sharing should be promoted. It needs to be available and renewable.

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Youth statements

Key policy outcomes

- Governments are encouraged to offer capacity development programs to help youth develop the necessary digital skills to use technology effectively but also safely;
- To respond to the growing demand for ICT and STEM skills, avoid a shortage of skills and develop a balanced workforce, the youth call for all stakeholders to ensure that digital inclusion and more specifically gender equality are set as a priority;
- The youth request all ICT players to consider the environmental impact of ICT, and make the environmental cost count as much as monetary cost in the decision-making process.

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