



# WSIS | 19-23 FORUM | MARCH 2018 Geneva | Switzerland

## **WSIS Forum 2018 OUTCOME DOCUMENT**

### **Template for Submission of Executive Summaries for**

### **Thematic/Country Workshop/ Action Line Facilitation Meetings/ Interactive Sessions/ High Level Dialogues/Publication Releases/Briefings**

**Deadline: Thursday 22 March, 2018**

**Exception: For sessions on Friday 23 March, please send at the latest 2 hours after the session**

*Please note that the WSIS Forum 2018 Outcome Document will be released on the **23<sup>rd</sup> of March** (the last day of the Forum)*

#### **1) Title of your session**

The Skills Mismatch: the digital skills employers are looking for

#### **2) Name of Organization/s organizing the session**

International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and International Labour Organization (ILO)

#### **3) Relevance with the WSIS Action Lines – please specify the Action lines C1 to C11**

In line with WSIS Action Line 4, the discussion aims to increase the effectiveness of education and training systems by analyzing the skills needed in the digital economy. As outlined in WSIS Action Line 4, capacity building and ICT literacy are essential if we want everyone to benefit from the Information Society. In order for these capacity building activities to be effective it is essential to understand what kinds of profiles and skills employers are looking for to make sure young people are equipped with the relevant skills for the current labour market.

The increased presence of ICTs in work environments is also intended as a means to achieve more sustainable environments for workers, foster job creation and address the current youth employment crisis, in line with WSIS Action Line 7.

#### **4) Key achievements, announcements, launches, agreements, and commitments (these will be reflected in the press release and Outcomes Document of the WSIS Forum 2018)**



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ITU will soon be launching its digital skills toolkit, which provides new, updated guidance to both ITU members and the Decent Jobs for Youth community on how to ensure young people are able to develop their job-ready digital skills. The toolkit will also support the design of national digital skills development strategies for life and work of all citizens in the growing digital economy. It takes a hands-on how-to approach with a flexible road map and includes wealth of real-life examples designed to inspire action.

## **5) Main outcomes highlighting the following:**

### **I. Debated Issues**

One of the main issues highlighted during the session was the importance of combining technical skills with soft skills. Digital skills cannot be seen in isolation and we need to think in a holistic manner. Essential skills in addition to technical skills include critical thinking, teamwork, interpersonal skills, intercultural skills and the ability to adapt to a constantly changing environment. Furthermore basic empathy, historical consciousness, the ability to adapt to ambiguity and humility have also been proposed from the audience as important skills in the digital economy.

A second important debated issue is the need for constant learning. It is true that new skills are needed, but it is not only important to learn these skills, it is also essential to learn how to learn and to be adaptable to the constantly changing technology environment. So it is also our responsibility to teach ourselves, and there are several opportunities available including free online courses.

In such a dynamic and constantly changing environment, reskilling is also essential and Telenor in particular highlighted their focus on seeing how they can upscale the existing workforce and how to create a culture for learning so that people don't only have one career but actually reskill themselves along their professional lives. One tool Telenor is currently using is the 40 hour challenge, through which every employee is challenged by the CEO to spend 40 hours during the year on their own upskilling.

In view of this constantly changing environment, the challenge of adapting curricula to the skills needed in the digital economy has been highlighted. To address this the two essential elements highlighted were the need for life-long learning and the importance for educational institutions and training providers to closely collaborate with employers to adapt their curricula to the actual needs of the job market.

Mr. Anir Chowdhuri, from the a2i programme in Bangladesh presented how in his country these issues are being addressed highlighting some of the achievements in the area which include for example the training of about 10.000 entrepreneurs in rural areas and the implementation digital skills training for nearly 300.000 teachers.

### **II. Quotes**

“Lifelong learning is essential for all of us, not just for the youth. It's increasingly important not to gridlock people into predefined jobs but create work environments that help them to excel.” Ms Elizabeth Thomas-Raynaud, Senior Policy Executive, Digital Economy and Director, BASIS, International Chamber of Commerce



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“The biggest opportunity for job creation is actually going out there and be an innovator. Learn something new. If there was an advice that I would have for a young person trying to build or think about his careers, go on some of these video tutorials and learn something new and try to educate yourself” Mr. Pierre Mirlesse, Vice President, Hewlett Packard Enterprise

“ITU and ILO launched the Digital Skills for Decent Jobs for Youth Campaign at the WSIS Forum last year, and ITU will soon be launching its Digital Skills Toolkit that will support stakeholders to build digital skills strategies where young people can develop basic skills, progress to acquire intermediate and advanced levels of digital expertise, to then be able to participate in emerging industry sectors and to start their own businesses” Mr. Yushi Torigoe, Deputy to the Director, ITU BDT.

### **III. Overall outcomes of the session**

- A holistic approach is essential to focus not only on technical skills, but also on soft skills
- Life-long learning and the ability to adapt to a constantly changing technology environment is essential. It is important to learn new skills, but also to learn how to learn and to create a culture for learning to be able to adapt to such a dynamic environment
- It is important to keep curricula up-to-date with the actual employers’ needs and to create collaborations between educational institutions and employers
- The ITU Digital Skills Toolkit is designed to support stakeholders to build national digital skills strategies to promote youth employment and digital skills for the digital economy.

### **IV. Main linkages with the Sustainable Development Goals**

Digital skills (advanced, mid-level, basic, entrepreneurship and soft skills) are increasingly needed for nearly all jobs and professional careers. Understanding the skills demanded in the labour market is thus essential to ensure young women and men are equipped with relevant, transferable, job-relevant digital skills. This is in line with SDG 4.3 which calls for equal access for women and men to affordable and relevant education and SDG 4.4 which calls for increasing the number of youth and adults with relevant skills for employment.

SDGs 5.5 and 5.b are addressed through guiding young people, universities and training providers on the skills needed to ensure young women and men alike can pursue successful professional careers in the digital economy.

Considering the number and quality of jobs available for young people with digital skills, the discussion will provide a better understanding of the digital skills demanded in the digital economy thus addressing the current youth employment crisis in line with SDGs 8.5 and 8.6.



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## V. Emerging Trends related to WSIS Action Lines identified during the meeting

In relation to WSIS Action Line 4, the discussion highlighted several positive trends leading to improved digital skills training for young men and women. First of all the session highlighted some of the skills needed in the digital economy which include not only technical skills, but also soft skills. It also stressed the importance of life-long learning and presented some examples of how this can be implemented through online courses as well as workforce reskilling programmes (such as the 40 hours challenge presented by Telenor). The aforementioned example from Bangladesh also highlighted how digital skills training programmes are already being implemented in different areas. Finally, Ms. Elizabeth Thomas-Raynaud from ICC also presented the example of an international school in France where children are learning in a very different way compared to traditional education programmes, by for example not using textbooks, but only the web and tablets in class as well as teaching agility and adaptability.

## VI. Suggestions for Thematic Aspects that might be included in the WSIS Forum 2019

Some topics touched upon by this session would in our opinion deserve greater attention. For example identifying more concrete examples on how to provide youth with the skills needed that have been highlighted in this session. Furthermore it would also be important to further discuss how to ensure that such essential training programmes are inclusive and take into consideration also minorities and vulnerable groups.

**Please complete this document and send to Matthew L. Greenspan,  
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