Session Outcome Document

Summary of Session:
Biskaabiiyaang: The Indigenous Metaverse – Gamifying Indigenous Knowledge to create a path towards Healing and Reconciliation through the Metaverse

Organizers:
UniVirtual, USA
Nokiiwin Tribal Council, Canada

Date and Time:
Thursday, 25 May 2023, 12:00–13:00 (UTC+02:00)

Session Link:
https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2023/Agenda/Session/511

Key Issues discussed:
- Why Indigenous presence in the metaverse is essential.
- Sharing priorities identified by Indigenous communities for the creation of an inclusive metaverse that incorporates Indigenous culture, language, and Knowledge.
- Discussion topic: How can we decolonize the metaverse?
- Discussion topic: How can we start building networks of trust, friendship, and mutual respect with Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities building the metaverse together?
- The process of translating Indigenous teachings into metaverse game mechanics.

Towards WSIS+20 and WSIS beyond 2025, please share your views on the emerging trends, challenges, achievements, and opportunities in the implementation of the WSIS Action Lines to date:
- A challenge in the development of the metaverse is ensuring Indigenous peoples are not misrepresented or excluded. It is essential that Indigenous peoples have access to information concerning their communities and that the process of online archival is inclusive.
- There is a great opportunity for emerging platforms to work with Indigenous community groups and develop relationships built on trust, friendship, and mutual respect when building these inclusive online spaces.
- Achieving cultural continuity and digital empowerment of community Elders should be a priority for groups involved in metaverse creation, particularly when archiving Indigenous Knowledge, culture, and language.
- When implementing inclusive online spaces, there should be a prioritized capacity for Indigenous employment and training in the creative technologies industry.
- E-learning has the potential to teach endangered languages (such as Anishinaabemowin) to wide audiences, engage learners, and connect culturally diverse individuals across the world.

- It is essential that those creating virtual learning involving Indigenous worldviews undertake cultural competency training to ensure digital content is created through this cultural lens.

Tangible outcomes (such as key achievements, announcements, launches, agreements, and commitments:
- Our session at WSIS Forum 2023 allowed Indigenous and non-Indigenous participants to learn what Indigenous community groups have defined as priorities for the early days of metaverse construction.
- Through sharing community values and teachings, (Ojibway, Cree, and Haudenosaunee), we were able to engage participants with an Indigenous perspective on building relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous professionals involved in metaverse development.
- Participants from Indigenous communities outside Canada reached out to discuss how what we have learned can help their endangered language thrive!
- We remain committed to openly sharing our unprecedented process of creating an Indigenous metaverse that is built by and in support of Indigenous communities.

Actionable plan:
- We will widely share the recording of our session within the Anishinaabe community and with Elders who could not attend as live virtual participants. The information presented is integral for community members to understand when part of the archival process. Presenting at WSIS also shows community members who are cautious of online spaces that Indigenous involvement in the metaverse is valued.
- Based on feedback, questions, and response from the session, we will ensure that our materials can be adapted for other languages and diverse groups.
- We will continue to share our process so others can implement best practices when involving Indigenous communities in metaverse development.

Suggestions for thematic aspects that might be included in the WSIS Forum 2024 (WSIS+20 Forum High-Level Event):

- It would be valuable if WSIS Forum 2024 continued to include and host Indigenous teams, sessions, and projects. This ensures cultural diversity in topics and content discussed. It is also important that Indigenous worldviews are heard to reduce inequalities and move forward with global Indigenous resurgence.