2020 Regional Development Forum for Africa (RDF-AFR)
Digital transformation to accelerate achievement of the SDGs
− Digital development, partnerships and funding

6-7 October 2020, 12:00 − 15:00 CAR (Virtual meeting)
with preparatory break-out sessions on 5 October 2020 (12:00 − 13:30 CAT)

CONTRIBUTION BY South Africa

TITLE: National Digital and Future Skills Strategy

EXPECTED DURATION OF PRESENTATION: [5 minutes]

CONTACT: [Nozipho Sihlahla, nsihlahla@dtps.gov.za, +27 12 420 7712]

❖ **Africa Regional Initiatives:** [Strengthening human and institutional capacity building]

[Yes/No] **AFR Regional initiative 1** – Building digital economies and fostering innovation in Africa

[Yes/No] **AFR Regional initiative 2** – Promotion of emerging broadband technologies

[Yes/No] **AFR Regional initiative 3** – Building trust and security in the use of telecommunications/ information and communication technology

[**Yes**/No] **AFR Regional initiative 4** – Strengthening human and institutional capacity building

[Yes/No] **AFR Regional initiative 5** – Management and monitoring of the radio-frequency spectrum and transition to digital broadcasting

❖ **Related ITU development thematic:** [Capacity development]

[Yes/No] Networks and digital infrastructure

[Yes/No] Cybersecurity

[Yes/No] Emergency telecommunications

[Yes/No] Environment

[Yes/No] Digital policy and regulation

[**Yes**/No] Capacity development

[Yes/No] Digital services and applications

[Yes/No] Digital inclusion

[Yes/No] Digital innovation ecosystems

[Yes/No] Statistics and data for evidence-based decision making

❖ **Year(s) of implementation:** [Select the year(s) for which your action/project/initiative is relevant]

[Yes/No] **2018**	[**Yes**/No] **2019**	[**Yes**/No] **2020**	[**Yes**/No] **2021**	[Yes/No] **Others**

TEMPLATE FOR SUBMISSION OF CONTRIBUTIONS

❖ **COVID-19 response related initiative:** [Please indicate if your action/project/initiative is relevant for COVID-19 response]

[Yes/No] **COVID-19 response related initiative**

Background [max 300 words]

The National Digital and Future Skills Strategy provides an analysis of the digital skills needs in the country taking into account the skills required for the future and outlining key recommendations for a cohesive approach to implementation. The strategic focus is to address the skills revolution as it impacts South Africa with the intention of taking a future-orientated and collaborative implementation approach inclusive of all sectors namely; education sector, society, private sector, as well as labour. The strategy sets out a foundational perspective on the nature of competencies required for the future of work in the context of the emerging digital technologies.

Proposal [max 400 words]

The National Digital and Future Skills Strategy is inter- and cross-sectoral in nature and recommends strategic interventions which are to be implemented by various stakeholders and government departments. The Education sector (inclusive of government departments & entities, private training providers, business institutes and education training authorities) is a very important pillar within the ecosystem of digital skills development and the recommendations of the Digital and Future Skills Strategy will find expression in the plans of these entities.

The Department of Communications and Digital Technologies (DCDT) is developing a comprehensive 5 year Digital and Future Skills Implementation Programme which unpacks the implementation of the recommendations of the strategy through coordinated institutional mechanism and partnership. The implementation of the National Digital and Future Skills Strategy will require the involvement of relevant Government departments, their implementing entities, private sector and civil society. The emphasis of the Strategy is directed towards coordination and alignment between the various Government skills plans and strategies as well as the Private Sector. The DCDT will work with the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), International Labour Organisation (ILO) and United Nations Development Program (UNDP), to support a South African programme of the 'Digital Skills for Decent Jobs for Youth', global campaign.

The unprecedented consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic have made the need for digital skills society even more important. In that regard it is critical to develop strategies to provide guidance on re-skilling the workforce in order to minimise the impact of job losses due to lack of skills relevant for the emerging fourth industrial revolution. The Digital Skills Strategy provides strategic interventions to promote creativity and inculcate the culture of problem solving using digital skills. It pays attention to the whole of society, all income groups, all age groups, within the context of digital transformation. The interventions suggest creative and collaborative approaches to promote a digitally skilled society.

Successful implementation of the strategy has implications for economy, society and education. It calls on the education sectors inclusive of SETAs to build a strong focus and invest in digital skills as well as invest in the development of digital innovation skills, including agriculture, mining, manufacturing, postal services, and health services to mention a few.

PLEASE SUBMIT THE CONTRIBUTION TO ITU-RO-AFRICA@ITU.INT