INTERSESSIONAL PANEL OF THE UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY FOR DEVELOPMENT (CSTD)

Geneva, Switzerland
6-8 November 2017

Contribution of Uganda

to the CSTD 2017-18 priority theme on 'Building digital competencies to benefit from existing and emerging technologies with special focus on gender and youth dimensions'

Dear CSTD

 Secretariat

As per your request for us to respond to the questionnaire in respect of theme 2 in preparation for the inter-sessional meeting of the CSTD, please find below responses from Uganda .

1. Can you give examples of digital competencies projects/policies in Uganda and how they have contributed to benefit from existing and emerging technologies? What are the main challenges confronted while trying to implement these projects/policies?

First, Uganda is now developing the Digital Uganda Vision to streamline efforts in this space and also give direction: http://ict.go.ug/digital-uganda-vision. In addition, government efforts include:
- An Information Access Centre (IAC) has been set up in conjunction with the Government of Korea at the Ministry HQ. It is expected that the centre will enhance citizen participation and engagement in public policy and governance;
- Technical support has been provided towards the establishment of a Government Citizen Interaction Centre (GCIC) championed by Office of the President: http://gcic.gou.go.ug/
- Training and retooling of teachers: http://ucc.co.ug/data/dnews/141/RETOOLING-OF-TEACHERS-TO-TEACH-COMPUTER-STUDIES.html
- NITA has also established an online portal for various services: http://ecitizen.go.ug/

Secondly, there are a number of initiatives by private sector and NGOs including WOUGNET, CIPESA, etc., for example, http://wougnet.org/home/project/girls-exploring-tech-solutions, http://wougnet.org/home/project/women-s-participation-in-ict-policy, http://www.ranlab.org/innovations/ran4gals

Challenges include access, affordability, energy solutions, inclusive policies, among others. The Web Foundation Report is a good overview of the key matters: https://webfoundation.org/research/2017-affordability-report/

2. Please, provide examples of digital policies/projects/initiatives to benefit from existing and emerging technologies specially focused on gender and youth? How have the policies benefited women and youth? What are the particular challenges confronted in implementing these projects?

A lot of what has been shared above is from a gender/youth perspective too given that this is my area of focus. However, WOUGNET has a number of reports in this area too: http://wougnet.org/home/docs#reports

In addition to general challenges of access and affordability, we have concerns around ICTs and STEMs not being deemed a space for women and girls. In addition, ICTs and

digital initiatives do need a degree of education and in many cases knowledge of English (or major international language). Given the education gaps between males and females, this also places women at a particular disadvantage.

Global reports of interest include: https://webfoundation.org/research/digital-gender-gap-audit/; https://webfoundation.org/research/womens-rights-online-2015/; http://www.apc.org/en/news/what-do-women%E2%80%99s-rights-have-do-sdgs-and-internet; http://www.apc.org/en/blog/access-and-beyond-gendered-barriers-internet-use

3. How can the science, technology and innovation community contribute towards overcoming these challenges? Can you give any success stories in this regard from your country or region?

The reports shared above include examples and case studies of what could be done. But in essence, there is need for three things:
- support for multistakeholder engagement/activities as government, private sector, and NGOs/academia all have a role to play
- there is also need to nurture an innovation ecosystem so that individuals and communities are empowered to find locally appropriate solutions that integrate ICTs. Efforts like the Innovation Funds under MoSTI, MoICT are to be commended, however, their role in promoting an innovation ecosystem must be clearly defined
- there are a number of regional, international reports and agreements to which even Uganda has signed up too. These give guidance on next steps. For example, on 15th March 2017, the Broadband Commission Working Group on the Digital Gender Divide launched "Recommendations for action: bridging the gender gap in Internet and broadband access and use": http://broadbandcommission.org/Documents/publications/WorkingGroupDigitalGenderDivide-report2017.pdf

4. Are there any documentation, references, or reports on the specific examples on digital competencies to benefit from existing and emerging technologies in Uganda?

These have been shared above as appropriate. This is by no means exhaustive

5. Contacts

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Government:

MoICT, UCC, NITA, UICT
Private Sector: Telecom operators and ISPs, ICTAU - ictau.ug, Outbox - outbox.co.ug, Hive Colab - www.hivecolab.org

Civil Society:

WOUGNET - www.wougnet.org, CIPESA - www.cipesa.org, Barefoot Law - www.barefootlaw.org

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