



Republic of Botswana



INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION FOR INFORMATION PROCESSING

IFIP



Call For Papers

Prep-WITFOR 2005 WORKSHOPS

Preparatory workshops for
IFIP World Information Technology Forum 2005
August 27, 2004

In connection with

IFIP World Computer Congress
Toulouse France
August 22-27, 2004

For formation of the ICT-enabled development agenda aiming at assisting developing nations to implement sustainable strategies for the application of ICT in the areas of:

- Building the infrastructure
- Economic opportunity
- Empowerment and participation
- Health
- Education
- Sustainability of Natural Resources
- Agriculture
- Social and ethical aspects

Call For Papers – Pre-WITFOR 2005 WORKSHOPS

Recognizing the developmental opportunities offered by the digital technologies and the need for developing countries and developed countries to collaborate to exploit such opportunities, the Second World Information Technology Forum (WITFOR) will be organized by the International Federation For Information Processing (IFIP) under the auspices of UNESCO. The Government of Botswana will host the forum, 31 August – 2 September 2005 in Gaborone.

The World IT Forum (WITFOR) focuses on the formation of the ICT-enabled development agenda and aims at assisting developing nations to implement sustainable strategies for the application of ICT by organizing state-of-the-art conferences on global trends in ICTs and relevant policy issues concerning developing countries. It also aims at initiating projects in different areas of the ICT spectrum.

The aim of WITFOR is to examine different initiatives on effective, context sensitive development and use of ICT applications, access to quality relevant information, and the development of "fair use principles" in the Internet Age. In particular the WITFOR events are intended to:

- Help put ICT-enabled development initiatives on the agenda of different organizations, governmental bodies, and groups currently involved in information and communications technologies.
- Work with different groups to ensure that the issue of ICT diffusion and sustainable effective use is on the agenda of senior policy makers and political leaders.
- Assist international organizations and donor agencies to build issues of the spread of ICTs and access to information into their loan and funding programmes with adequate financial and institutional allocations.
- Develop a position paper on these issues and draft a *Gaborone Protocol* advising governments on strategies for the use of ICT.

Gaborone Protocol is a document aiming at advising governments in emerging countries on how to formulate and follow the best strategy for the use of ICT in order to achieve global ICT-equity.

THEMES OF Pre-WITFOR WORKSHOPS

For WITFOR 2005, the following themes of *The Gaborone Protocol* have been identified:

1. Building the infrastructure
2. Economic opportunity
3. Empowerment and participation
4. Health
5. Education
6. Sustainability of Natural Resources
7. Agriculture
8. Social and ethical aspects

WORKING PROCEDURE

Prior to WITFOR, thematic commissions will be established to propose thematic documents. Each commission will identify and select different experts in the field to form a team or workgroup. The workgroup will draft a report prior to WITFOR. After discussions at WITFOR the reports will be finalized and incorporated in *The Gaborone Protocol*.

In order to compose the groups of the experts, gather the state of the art within the areas of different Commissions and construct input to the work of WITFOR 2005 Commissions and development of The Gaborone Protocol, preparatory workshops will be held on August 27, 2004 in connection with WCC 2004, in Toulouse, France, August 22-27, 2004.

Building the infrastructure

While industry and business are providing the infrastructure for access to information resources, as well as contents, the challenge is to define the concepts of “public domain” and “universal access” in a global context. This task should be accomplished in order to promote common public welfare while encouraging private initiative and protecting rightful economic interests.

Governments, in both industrialized and developing countries, should take action to guarantee citizens’ security, privacy and freedom of expression in the Information Society. We have to find the answers:

- What are the most important economic obstacles to access to information?
- What are the most important technical obstacles to access to information?
- How can the availability of the ICT infrastructure be guaranteed?
- How can public administrations balance the commercial interests with their civic and moral obligations to promote equitable access?
- What financial mechanisms can be put into place to ensure universal access to information?
- Should the concept of “e-rates” (preferential tariffs for educational and cultural institutions) be standardized, generalized and applied internationally to assist public service institutions and disadvantaged communities in developing countries?
- What role can the media play in facilitating the worldwide acceptance of the concept of universal access?

Economic Opportunity

ICT can contribute to income generation and poverty reduction. It enables people and enterprises to capture economic opportunities by increasing process efficiency, promoting participation in expanded economic networks, and creating opportunities for employment.

ICT enables solution sharing between local people and communities, providing access to practical information on small business accounting, weather trends and farming best practices, for example.

ICT enables improved business process efficiency and productivity. Using electronic job marketplaces, employers and employees can match labour skills and availability to satisfy their demands. ICT facilitates global connectivity, resulting in new ways of creating and delivering products and services on a global scale.

ICT provide developing countries with access to new markets and new sources of competitive advantage from which to drive income growth.

Empowerment and Participation

Using ICT, governments can improve the quality and expand the reach and accessibility of the services they provide to their citizens. This is facilitated by e-government applications that provide services and information to citizens over the Internet and other communication networks.

Citizens are encouraged to participate in the democratic process through ICT – *e-government* - mechanisms. This is especially relevant for marginalized communities and groups such as women, youth and ethnic minorities: they can share and exchange information of mutual interest, strengthen their collective power and shape their own development solutions.

We have to address these problems:

- What information should be considered as a national and/or global public good?
- How should the production and delivery of this information be financed?
- How can the participation of citizens in the production of and access to information be encouraged?
- What special measures are needed to help developing countries and disadvantaged communities to benefit from available knowledge and information?
- How can private industries exploit and contribute to the electronic public domain more efficiently?

Health

Some of the most promising and clearly demonstrated applications for ICT are in the improvement of health care delivery. ICT is being used in many developing countries and communities to facilitate remote consultation, diagnosis and treatment. For example, nurses in remote villages may use digital cameras to download images of symptoms onto a PC and transfer them to nearby towns for examination by doctors. The same model is being applied to facilitate collaboration among physicians themselves.

Health workers in developing countries are accessing relevant medical training through ICT-enabled delivery mechanisms. For example, several new malaria Internet sites for health professionals include innovative ‘teach and test’ self-assessment modules. In addition, centralized data repositories connected to ICT networks enable remote healthcare professionals to keep abreast of the rapidly evolving stock of medical knowledge.

The Internet also can be utilized to improve prevention of disease such as HIV/AIDS by enabling more effective monitoring and response mechanisms. ICT can also be applied to improve the efficiency of medical facility administration through, for example, the streamlining of medical procurement or the creation of patient record databases.

Education

One of the most clearly demonstrated applications is distance education. Distance education has been a particularly successful model in developing countries where affordability and geography have been real barriers to access.

The development of scientific research networks on a worldwide basis, usually over the Internet, is also helping to empower indigenous research and development programs in developing countries. Virtual research groups share databases, organize conferences, and undertake collaborative research and reporting.

However, the well established principle of copyrighted information for educational and scholarly purposes is being questioned for digital media because of increased piracy of copyrighted works. Governments need to balance their strategy between preserving the integrity of intellectual property rights (IPRs) and the need for broad access to information and knowledge.

Furthermore, levels of protection and access should be harmonized worldwide, particularly in the context of global information networks. Collective global reflection is required to reach conclusions in taking account of the interests of all stakeholders, including authors, right holders, citizens, public services and developing countries.

Sustainability of Natural Resources

ICT can make a valuable contribution to sustainable natural resource management by improving monitoring and response systems, facilitating natural resource activism and enabling more efficient resource use.

Used to collect, process and disseminate information, ICT enables a better understanding of issues such as climate change and biodiversity and helps to monitor ecological conditions so that prevention and mitigation measures can be activated.

ICT is also being deployed extensively to monitor and respond to natural disasters in developing and developed countries.

ICT applications can be used to reduce the consumption of energy, water and other essential natural resources through more efficient agriculture and industrial procedures.

In the future, ICT may also play an important role in the fight against pollution—not only by providing more useful metrics and information, but also by enabling population decentralization and large-scale telecommuting.

Agriculture

By the year 2025, the world will have to feed an additional 3.2 billion people from a natural resource base which is already seriously threatened by unsustainable farming practices and environmental pressures arising from other human activities. Millions of people are caught in a poverty trap which forces them to eke out their livelihood at the expense of natural resources which are the sole means of their survival.

Moreover, for the coming decades, the needs for food, fibre and other agricultural products as well as energy have to be served, of a world population which is not only rapidly increasing, but also rapidly urbanizing and expecting improved living conditions. However, the resource base should be used rationally and sustainably to meet the needs of society but not for the greed of society.

Agriculture will have to meet these challenges, mainly by increasing the production on land already in use, and by avoiding further encroachment on land that is only marginally suitable.

It has been shown in the industrialized world that agricultural production can be greatly increased if the non-agricultural sectors of the economy provide, in return, the means to do so. However, intensification has often been accompanied by large demands on non-renewable resources, environmental pollution, problems of waste disposal, an accelerated rural exodus and the development of unsustainable production patterns.

The challenge for the world is to learn from past experience and to do better, in reconciling further development needs with environment protection requirements.

Social and ethical aspects

ICT has always been perceived as creating new challenges, new opportunities, but also at the same time, new risks, if not threats. Globalization creates more competition, societies are also becoming more dependent upon accurate information and then more fragile. The gap between the information rich and the information poor has existed for a long time, but the new communication means seem to widen it, and make all societies more dual.

ICT developments lead us again to reconsider the way we make human, social, and ethical choices. The Internet and the emerging information and knowledge societies raise new questions such as content regulation, multilingualism and respect for the different cultures, customisation of education, personal identity in virtual worlds, new questions linked to employment - flexible work and employability, learning organisation, new ways of commerce, new social issues - digital divide and social exclusion, new forms of computer crime, new threats on privacy, electronic Government and revisited democracy, etc.

Submission

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