

Draft

## CONCEPT NOTE

2nd African Ministerial Forum on  
ICT Integration in Education & Training

***“Advancing inclusive knowledge societies in Africa to  
implement Africa’s Agenda 2063 and the SDGs”***

8<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> June, 2016  
Abidjan, Côte d’Ivoire

Organized by:



Association for the  
Development of  
Education in  
Africa

gesci  
Founded by UN ICT Task Force



ORGANISATION  
INTERNATIONALE DE  
la francophonie



Microsoft

Hosted by:

Government of Côte d’Ivoire through  
Ministry of National Education



**Content of the concept note:**

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2. Expected outcomes
3. Thematic areas/sessions and structure
4. Participants

**1. Context and rationale**

The *African Ministerial Forum on ICT Integration in Education and Training* is a regional policy dialogue mechanism created by the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA), the African Development Bank Group (AfDB), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and their partners to assist member states to harness the potentials of ICT to achieve the goal of inclusive and equitable quality education and life-long learning for all.<sup>1</sup> Launched in Tunis on December 9<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup>, 2013 as the first Ministerial Forum, the mechanism brought together policymakers, experts, academia, research institutions, development partners and representatives of ICT in the private sector and civil society organizations, providing a platform for regional high-level policy dialogue and knowledge sharing on how to effectively and efficiently integrate ICTs into:

- providing universal access to quality education and relevant lifelong learning opportunities to all Africans;
- equipping learners with skills that empower them to become full actors of knowledge society; and
- promoting, through education, a culture of digital literacy and creativity necessary for Africa to build innovation capacity for the ICT industry

The forum also aims at providing a setting for incubating partnerships and projects that could potentially be supported by relevant actors and stakeholders.

Two years have passed since the first edition. Meanwhile, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) came to an end and the African Union Commission (AUC) announced its vision for the continent (Agenda 2063), and followed through with the development of a Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) Strategy for Africa (STISA 2024), a Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) continental strategy and the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA 2016-2025) adopted at the Summit of African Union Heads of State and Government in January 2016 as the Framework for Transformative Education and Training System. At international level, the global community endorsed a new and ambitious development agenda in September 2015, commonly referred to as the 2030 SDGs Agenda. All above mentioned development agendas stress

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<sup>1</sup> This is reflected in the 4<sup>th</sup> goal of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), on education, and the objectives and priority areas of the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA 2016-2025), adopted as the Framework for Transformative Education and Training System in January 2016 – a strategy that responds to all the seven aspirations of Africa’s Agenda 2063, especially the 7<sup>th</sup> aspiration (An Africa whose development is people-driven, relying on the potential of African people, especially its women and youth, and caring for children.)

the critical role ICTs can play in achieving development goals in general and in improving quality, access and equity of education and training systems in particular.

On another note, the recently published World Bank's *World Development Report: Digital Dividends* stipulates that digital divides between Africa and the rest of the world and within Africa - across generations and rural and urban areas and social groups - remain considerable. In other words, a lot still needs to be done in Africa to effectively and efficiently leverage ICTs to achieve education policy objectives and, subsequently, social and economic development goals.

The World Bank report's statement applies also to the education and training sector where one notices the mushrooming of pilot and small-scale projects and among these projects, very few become large-scale national initiatives that can help achieve educational goals and democratize access to Internet and technology beyond the educational environment. The multiplicity of ICT integration in education projects, designed and developed by development cooperation partners and which are not necessarily talking to each other, coupled with the lack of large scale national ICT in education initiatives, are the outcome of the following shortfalls:

- African governments and ministries in charge of education and training still require technical support for developing and implementing national ICT in education and training policies and strategies;
- At national level, lead actors and stakeholders are still working in silos, preventing the emergence of ecosystems necessary for effective ICT integration;
- When designing ICT integration, main focus remains the system at central level, very few initiatives are teacher- and school-driven;
- Lack of articulation and alignment between ICT in education strategies with national development policies;
- The absence of models with clear definitions for ICT integration in education and how such can be evaluated and measured for better planning and implementation;
- Lack of ownership of ICT in education projects at central and local levels.

It is in this framework, and as a follow up to the first forum held in Tunis in 2013, that the Government of Côte d'Ivoire through the Ministry of National Education is hosting the 2<sup>nd</sup> African Ministerial Forum on ICT Integration in Education and Training in Abidjan from 8<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> June 2016, co-organized by ADEA, GESCI, AfDB, Intel, UNESCO, OIF and Microsoft.

## **2. Expected Outcomes**

The expected outcomes of the Abidjan's Ministerial Forum include:

- a. A shared understanding of *Relevant and effective ICT integration in Education and Training in Africa*, and what it implies in terms of required paradigm shifts and policy and strategy development, implementation and sustainability. This also implies:
  - Raising awareness on the necessity to build strong and volunteer political commitment to engage education and training systems in methodical and programmed ICT integration;
  - Sharing knowledge, experiences, good practices and lessons learnt to better inform approaches and identify levers of change, success and failure factors of ICT integration in education and training initiatives from Africa and beyond.
- b. A commanding understanding of, and the role of education and ICTs in building knowledge society.
- c. Sharing knowledge and experience in connection with digital skills development and how this can foster youth employment and entrepreneurship.
- d. Promotion of a network that includes the public sector (ministries as well as education and training systems, Regional Economic Communities or RECs); development cooperation agencies and international organizations such as the International Telecommunication Union (ITU); the private sector (Telco operators, ICT solution providers, digital and educational content developers); civil society organizations; the diaspora; youth; and ICT and education-related NGOs. Such a network is necessary for the development of environments that will foster partnerships critical to the relevance and sustainability of *ICT integration in education and training* policy and strategy development and implementation.
- e. Public-private partnerships (PPPs) promoted between governments, educational services and content-development industry and technology companies to connect and engage in dialogue on ways to foster the development of innovative initiatives and approaches that promote ICT integration in education and training through relevant ICT educational solutions alive to the African context.
- f. Strategies are suggested to help bridging the Learning Opportunity Access Divide within African societies - urban vs rural, gender and other marginalized populations - by identifying game-changing experiences and lessons learnt.
- g. Awareness is raised on the importance of economic benefits for private sector actors to contribute to investments in ICT integration strategies and initiatives and to develop innovative funding mechanisms based on converging interest between education policy objectives and private sector economic development.

### **3. Thematic areas/sessions and structure**

#### **3.1. Thematic areas/sessions:**

Derived from the above expected outcomes, the following thematic areas to be addressed during the forum are intended to provide conceptual and concrete answers and approaches on how identified levers can

catalyse the dynamics that pave the way for the required transformation of Africa's education and training systems through relevant and effective integration of ICT:

- **National ICT in education and training policies and strategies – lessons learned**

Type of session: Panel of experts

**Relevance:** *While African governments recognise the importance of leveraging ICTs for improving access and quality of education, their applications is very weak in connection with teaching and learning (African Development Bank Group & World Bank Group, eTransform Africa: ICTs for Education in Africa). Indeed, ICT application to education and training remains focused in the administration and management of the system.*

**Guiding questions:** *What are African countries doing to leverage ICTs in teaching/learning? Are pedagogy specialists and educators revisiting teaching/learning theories and practices or are they just trying to reproduce the classical pedagogical scenarios through the utilisation of ICTs? How is this reflected in terms of policies/strategies in general and implementation in particular? How is it redefining the teaching profession, role of teachers and, hence, teacher training and professional development, pedagogical resources, pedagogy and evaluation and assessment?*

- **Empowering marginalized populations through ICT-driven education initiatives**

Type of session: Panel of experts

**Relevance:** *The SDG No. 4 calls upon governments and the global community to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”. CESA 2016-2025, Africa's framework for a transformative education and training system that relates with the global goal on education, is guided by six principles which include the realisation that "holistic, inclusive and equitable education with good conditions for lifelong learning is sine qua non for sustainable development." These commitments to inclusive education are not just the outcome of a human rights approach to education but are also driven by the fact that nations will not be able to achieve sustainable development and prosperity by leaving behind groups that could potentially contribute to their socio-economic development. Nations are required to tap into all their potentials to achieve inclusive growth and sustainable development, and achieving this very ambitious endeavour and ‘reaching the unreached’ can be facilitated through innovative pedagogical models and proper utilisation of technologies.*

**Guiding questions:** *How can ICTs concretely help ‘reach the unreached’? Are there any effective projects implemented in Africa? How did these projects start? What research is available to inform African policymakers? Have these projects been scaled up and, if so, how? What are the lessons in terms of policy development and implementation?*

- **ICT applications in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) teaching/learning**

Type of session: Panel of experts

**Relevance:** *promoting STEM teaching/learning is key for the future of Africa in terms social development and economic growth. The continent needs STEM skills to think and drive its growth, also taking into account the gender perspective. “If Africans are to solve problems and to lead social and economic development in their own countries – rather than leaving it to international*

aid agencies – all African learners will need higher-level STEM skills » (World Economic Forum (WEF), 2015). The AU's STISA-2024 places science, technology and innovation at the epicentre of Africa's socio-economic development and growth.

**Guiding questions:** How can ICTs contribute to implementing AU's STI strategy and promoting STEM education in Africa? Are there any scalable experiences or large-scale initiatives? How can Africa scale up successful experiences and go beyond pilots into large-scale initiatives so as to reach critical masses? What are the lessons to be drawn from the experiences that are presented and that can inform on-going, as well as new, programmes and policies?

- **ICTs and Technical and Vocational Skills Development (TVSD) for youth employment and entrepreneurship: promising models**

Type of session: Ministerial round table and a side event on youth and innovation

**Relevance:** According to the African Development Bank's Briefing Note on Africa's Demographic Trends, African population aged 15-39 years will reach 637 million by 2030.<sup>2</sup> Whether this rapid increase in youth population will be leveraged for the growth of the continent or become a source of instability will depend, among others, on what relevant learning opportunities African education systems are providing the youth. Africa cannot afford not to achieve the demographic dividend and government experts and development partners are required to come up with innovative models to skill African youth for employment and entrepreneurship. CESA 16-25 calls for the development and implementation of innovative strategies to expand TVET opportunities at both secondary and tertiary levels and to strengthen linkages between the world of work and education and training systems.

**Guiding questions:** Are ICTs being leveraged enough by TVET/TVSD policies and programmes for skilling the youth and preparing them for the job market or self-employment? What are the professional digital skills that can be developed to open new economic opportunities in terms of employment or entrepreneurship for African youth? Why and how should this be done?

- **ICT integration, distributed Leadership and policy coherence**

Type of session: Ministerial round table

**Relevance:** The existence of so many pilot programmes and very few large scale ICT-driven initiatives in education and training systems in Africa can be explained by (a) the lack of articulation of the ICT in education policy with other sectorial policies (STI and ICT), (b) the lack of alignment with national, social and economic development policies, making it hard to mobilize the whole government and key stakeholders and required resources, and (c) the lack of distributed leadership required for cascading the visions and ambitions downward and upward, and also for analysing real problems and procurement of real solutions that will translate ambitions into implementable policies/strategies and effective programmes.

**Guiding questions:** How can we move from a logic of pilots to that of experimenting for scale up? Can Ministries of Education do this on their own or do they also require to bring on board other knowledge society related ministries such as ministries in charge of higher education, science, TVET, ICTs, etc.? How can this be done? Is policy coherence a viable and sustainable approach to

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<sup>2</sup> African Development Bank, Briefing Note 4 Africa's Demographic Trends, p. 6, 2012.

*bring on board other ministries and build ownership of ICT in education policy by other ministerial departments?*

- **Inclusive knowledge societies and the role of Education and ICTs**

Type of session: Ministerial round table

**Relevance:** *Building inclusive knowledge societies in Africa paves the way for growth and the implementation of the sustainable development goals. The process of building a knowledge society is known to rely on 2 pillars (education and STI) and a driver (ICT). It is therefore fundamental for leaders, policymakers and government administrators to have a commanding understanding of the concept of knowledge society and how it fundamentally depends on how relevant and impactful education policies are and how ICTs are leveraged to potentially achieve sustainable development and promote the development and expression of cultural and linguistic diversity for the benefit of all.*

**Guiding questions:** *How is developing knowledge society understood and hence reflected in terms of social and economic development policies? How does this influence defining education policies and outcomes? And, what was expected from ICTs in education policy formulation and implementation in terms of linking education policies to building knowledge society?*

### 3.2. Structure:

The 2<sup>nd</sup> African Ministerial Forum on ICT Integration in Education and Training is structured as follows:

	7 June	8 June	9 June
Arrival of participants	✓		
Ministerial Forum		✓	✓
Innovation & Partnership Exhibition	✓	✓	✓
Socialization and networking events (during evening)	✓	✓	✓
Side meetings	✓	✓	

### 4. Participants

The Ministerial Forum is expected to gather approximately 140-150 participants comprising:

- Ministers in charge of education, TVET, higher education, and scientific research.
- Policymakers and senior technical staff from Ministries in charge of education, TVET, higher education and scientific research.
- Practitioners from the education, training, technology and skills development fields (technical institutes, universities, research institutes)
- Participants from both the public and private sectors in areas that include education, training and technology.
- The ITC private sector.
- Regional and international experts involved in the development and implementation of education and training policies and ICT integration in education and training policies (development cooperation agencies, Regional Economic Communities (RECs).
- The African diaspora who have distinguished themselves in the field of ICT integration in education and training.
- International, regional and national media.
- Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and advocacy organisations.
- Youth organizations