Draft Concept Note
International Conference on ICT and Post-2015 Education:
Illuminating the Future of Digital Learning

Dates: 23-25 May, 2015 (3 days)

Venue: Qingdao City, People’s Republic of China

Organized by: - UNESCO
- Ministry of Education of the People’s Republic of China
- Chinese National Commission for UNESCO

Hosted by: The Municipal Government of Qingdao

Partners: (1) Commonwealth of Learning
(2) UN Women
(3) Directorate for Education and Skills of OECD

Participants: International participants including Ministers of Education and high-level ministry officials, leaders of ICT industries, senior representatives of UN agencies and international organizations, eminent researchers and practitioners

Working languages: Chinese, English, French (other United Nations official languages to be included, funding permitting)

Objectives:
(1) Inter-sectoral debate to define the role and value of ICT’s in the post-2015 education agenda

(2) Stock-taking of sector-wide strategies to leverage ICT to ensure equitable and quality lifelong opportunities for all

(3) Creation of action plans to follow-up on outcomes of the conference and reinforce partnerships

Expected outputs:
(1) A high-level statement
(2) Following-up action plans
(3) Partnership for following-up initiatives
BACKGROUND

Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) have transformed many aspects of our lives and offered unprecedented opportunities and challenges for education. Education institutions, at all levels, need to provide every citizen with the knowledge, skills and competences as well as the lifelong learning opportunities required for living and working in an increasingly technology rich environment. Education systems should also ensure that they are able to exploit the potential benefits of ICT to expand access to, and enhance the quality and relevance of, learning throughout life. To this effect, education management as well as the teaching and learning process should be reshaped towards the needs of individual fulfillment and sustainable development of knowledge economies.

The recent acceleration of technological change, including internet developments, mobile technologies, cloud computing as well as the rise of open education resources, to cite a few examples, result in a renewed, even stronger interest in their potential to solve the existing problems and shape the future education. This is in conjunction with the global consultation on shaping the post-2015 education agenda, which has been coordinated by UNESCO.

The Post-2015 agenda for education to be discussed with Member States in the World Education Forum 2015 will underscore the importance of a broad and lifelong learning perspective. The proposed Goals aim at empowering people to meet their right to quality education and fulfill their personal expectations for a life and work and contribute to their societies’ socio-economic development. In such vision, making access to digital devices and broadband universal is essential towards achieving “equitable, quality education and lifelong learning for all by 2030”, and to ensure that all young people and adults have equitable opportunities to access and complete formal and non-formal technical and vocational education and training relevant to the world of work as well as lifelong learning opportunities that enable learners to acquire diverse and relevant knowledge and skills that foster their professional and personal development.\textsuperscript{1}

To unleash potentials of ICT in underpinning the achievement of post-2015 education targets, policy makers need to understand ICT’s role in delivering equitable and quality lifelong learning opportunities, and the sector-wide strategies of integrating ICT in the post-2015 education agenda need to be informed by debates between education and ICT sectors. It is against this context, UNESCO, with the support from the Government of the People’s Republic of China, the Municipal Government of Qingdao, and the Wei Dong Group of China, is organizing the International Conference on ICT and Post-2015 Education from 23 to 25 May 2015 in Qingdao, China.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES
The Conference seeks to create an interface between education and ICT sectors to debate on how ICT can be leveraged at scale to support the achievement of post-2015

\textsuperscript{1} UNESCO Position Paper on Education Post-2015 (2014)
education targets. The Conference outputs will include a high-level Statement to provide Member States with policy recommendations about how to harness the power of ICT to address current educational challenges and to ensure equitable quality education and lifelong opportunities for all, and following up actions and relevant partnerships that are aimed to help Member States to develop system-wide ICT in education strategies in the context of shaping the national post-2015 sustainable development agenda.

TARGET COUNTRIES AND PARTICIPANTS

(1) Ministers of Education

A significant number of Ministers of Education from all regions are expected to join the Conference. Ministers from the countries where effective ICT in education strategies are being implemented or education leaders who have demonstrated vision in leveraging ICT for education development will be invited to join the high-level debate with ICT industry leaders. The Ministers are also expected to discuss and adopt the high-level statement that will be a key output of the Conference.

(2) ICT industry leaders

Leaders of international ICT companies that have created promising ICT solutions to education development or have evidence-based insights on ICT trends and their implications for the future of learning will be invited to join the debates.

(3) Experts

To maximize the spectrum of experiences and knowledge to be shared during the Conference, 20-30 experts who have conducted rigorous studies, or have developed innovative ICT solutions for education, or implemented effective large-scale projects, will be invited to join the plenary and breakout sessions.

(4) 300 International Participants

Ministry officials, representatives of other UN agencies, intergovernmental organizations, and NGOs will be invited as well.

(5) Up to 200 Chinese participants

Up to 200 Ministry officials, researchers, representatives of schools and education institutions of China will be invited to the Conference.

THEME AND SUBTHEMES

Under the core theme of leveraging ICT to support the achievement of post-2015 education targets, forward-looking debates, sharing of cutting-edge knowledge and ICT
solutions, deliberation on sector strategies will be organized around the following sub-themes:

1. Shaping Digital Learning by 2030: Education and ICT Leaders’ Debate

This session is to convene forward-looking debates between education and ICT industry leaders on how ICT trends will potentially reshape key aspects of the education system, and how policy enablers and ICT innovations should be intertwined in national and institutional policies in order to achieve post-2015 education targets. The debate will act as the overarching architecture to frame the following-up thematic debates. While forward-looking views are encouraged, the foresight should be anchored in questions on ICT’s role in ensuring the equality and quality of education.

- **Envisioning digital learning in 2030:** Articulating scenarios of the ICT-enhanced equitable and quality education system and multiple lifelong learning pathways by 2030.

- **Foresight on ICT trends and their implications for education:** Sharing insights on major ICT trends and their impacts on the process and outcome of lifelong learning, analyzing the long-reaching promises and risks of ICT for education.

- **Translating scenarios into policy responses:** Planning vision-oriented policies and strategies that are needed to achieve the vision, including to ensure universal access to digital devices and online content, to re-define core roles of schools and teachers in the digital era, and to create learning environments spanning formal and informal systems.

2. Supporting effective pedagogical use of ICT to ensure quality of learning

This session aims to share effective policies and innovative practices on how national, institutional and school strategies should be aligned to provide system-wide support for teachers’ effective pedagogical use of ICT, therefore to optimize the benefits of ICT for quality of learning. Specific issues to be addressed under this sub-theme include:

- **System-wide support for teachers:** How should teachers' ICT competencies be defined and developed to ensure effective pedagogical use of ICT? How should teacher performance appraisal be aligned to encourage innovative use of ICT?

- **Reinventing schools to create open learning environments:** How should schools and learning environments be reinvented to take advantage of the ubiquity and mobility of ICT to ensure all girls and boys to achieve minimum proficiency standards relevant to their age group/grade?

- **Mainstreaming innovative practices:** What new ways of teaching, learning and assessment have been proved as attributors to better learning performance?
3. Scaling up ICT innovation to enhance lifelong learning outcomes

This session will deliberate how innovative ICT solutions can be successfully brought to scale in order to bridge the knowledge divide and to build multiple lifelong learning pathways that span formal and informal systems and support the job-related skill development. Specific issues to be addressed under this sub-theme include:

- **Transforming large-scale literacy programmes**: How can mobile technologies, cloud solutions, and localized content be leveraged to enhance the quality of literacy programmes and enable learning anytime anywhere by large-scale illiterate or semi-literate people?

- **Enabling responsive skills development strategies**: How the intelligence about the changing skills demands can be drawn from big data to inform the reform of skills policy and the methodology of skill development?

- **Building multiple lifelong learning pathways**: How is ICT best utilized to build multiple lifelong learning pathways that span formal and informal systems and support personalized learning and the job-related skill development?

4. Opening up potentials of online content to catalyze knowledge creation

This session aims to identify the key institutional strategies to promote the development and sharing of high quality open educational resources (OER) and to unleash the potential of online learning to foster knowledge creation. Specific issues to be addressed under this sub-theme include:

- **Opening up textbooks and augmenting learning content**: How open licensing, cloud storage, and mobile devices are re-shaping textbooks and augmenting learning content? What are effective strategies to assure the quality of large-scale user-generated OER?

- **Incentivizing knowledge creation and sharing**: What strategies best incentivize teachers and students to create and share high quality resources? How should regulative policies be developed to balance knowledge openness with knowledge ownership and information security?

- **Optimizing online learning outcomes**: How the design and organization of online courses can be optimized by learning analytics to boost deep learning while safeguarding learners’ privacy? What are effective models to recognize the outcomes of online learning?

5. Benchmarking and monitoring the impacts of ICT on post-2015 education
This session aims to examine the indicators and methodologies that can be used to monitor the impacts of ICT on the achievement of post-2015 education targets. The following questions will be discussed:

- **How to measure ICT’s contribution to equality in education:** When developing country-level targets and indicators for inclusive access to education, how access to well-organized online courses should be reflected?

- **How to measure ICT-related skills as emerging learning outcomes:** When developing country-level targets and indicators for the quality of education and lifelong learning, how ICT-related skills should be integrated?

- **How to monitor the long-lasting impacts of ICT on large-scale learning processes and learning outcomes?**

**EXHIBITION AND STUDY VISITS**

Exhibitions and associated seminars will be convened to demonstrate ICT innovations for education. These events will call attention to best practices and show how ICT can be leveraged to promote equitable and quality education and lifelong learning for all.

Study visits will be organized so participants can observe innovative practices of ICT integration in local schools and institutions.

**SCHEDULE OF EVENTS**

Table 1: Structure of the Proposed Programme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Day 1 23 May</th>
<th>Day 2 24 May</th>
<th>Day 3 25 May</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Morning (3h + 30’ break)</strong></td>
<td>Opening Ceremony</td>
<td>High-level Roundtable: Innovative Practices (Chaired by Vice Minister of Education of China)</td>
<td>Plenary Session 4 Monitoring ICT in post-2015 education</td>
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<td>Contextualizing the Debate: Outcomes of Incheon WEF</td>
<td>Plenary Session 2 Scaling up ICT innovation to enhance lifelong learning outcomes</td>
<td>Discussion and Adoption of the High-Level Statements</td>
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<td>Education &amp; ICT Leaders’ Debate (two rounds)</td>
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<td><strong>Lunch (1.5h)</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Afternoon (3h + 30’ break)</strong></td>
<td>Plenary Session 1 Supporting effective pedagogical use of ICT to ensure quality of learning</td>
<td>Plenary Session 3 Opening up potentials of online content to catalyze knowledge creation</td>
<td>Study Visits to Local Institutions</td>
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<td>Breakout session 1 Supporting effective pedagogical use of ICT to ensure quality of learning</td>
<td>Parallel Breakout sessions 2 &amp; 3 Scaling up ICT innovation to enhance lifelong learning outcomes; Opening up potentials of online content to catalyze knowledge creation</td>
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