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Session 3: Human Resource Capacity Development

**Keynote Speaker
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Human Resources Capacity Development in an National Information Society eGovernment Implementation Initiative

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Abstract

The 'Information Society' as we call it, is an evolving concept that has reached different levels across the world, reflecting the different stages of development that each country is facing.

In Brunei Darussalam for example, the situation is very different to that which will be found, if we go into our ASEAN or BIMP-EAGA neighbor's countries or into the western, so called 'developed world'.

Technological and other change is rapidly transforming the environment in which the Information Society (IS) is developed and the Human Capital in each country is challenged by these changes.

The United Nations (UN), through an initiative called the World Summit for the Information Society (WSIS), has devised a unique two-phase structure,

which provides an opportunity to take this evolution into account, which started in Geneva in December 2003 and will be continued in Tunisia, later this year.

Under WSIS a Declaration of Principles was established and an Action Plan and we are now at the stage in WSIS, where the Action Plan is being implemented and hence the theme for this year, is 'Time for Action'.

The UN Plan of Action, is thus an evolving platform to promote the Information Society at the national, regional and international levels.

It is important to understand therefore, that all stakeholders have an important role to play in the Information Society, especially through partnerships and the development of Human Capital is key to the success of this initiative.

The Governments of each country have a leading role in developing and implementing comprehensive, forward looking and sustainable national e-strategies and this involves developing Human Resource capacity.

The private sector and civil society, in dialogue with Governments, also have an important consultative role to play in devising national e-strategies.

The commitment of the private sector is important in developing and diffusing Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), for infrastructure, content and applications.

The private sector is not only a market player, but also plays a role in a wider sustainable development context.

The commitment and involvement of civil society is equally important in creating an equitable Information Society, and in implementing ICT-related initiatives for development.

And finally, International and Regional Institutions, including international financial institutions, have a key role in integrating the use of ICTs in the development process and making available necessary resources for building the Information Society and for the evaluation of the progress made.

This keynote address, addresses the Objectives, Goals and Targets of the Plan of Action, from a Human Resource Capacity building perspective and how this can be implemented in Brunei Darussalam to build an inclusive Information Society; to put the potential of knowledge and ICTs at the service of

development; to promote the use of information and knowledge for the achievement of internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration; and to address new challenges of the Information Society, at the National, Regional and International levels.

The keynote also focuses on the need to raise the ICT literacy rate, the need for ICT education and the need to develop and role of local ICT Entrepreneurs.

Human Resource Capacity Development in the Information Society

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1. Introduction

The 'Information Society' (IS), is an evolving concept that has reached different levels of implementation across the world, reflecting the different stages of development in each country.

The concept and existence of the 'Digital Divide' is well documented and one does not have to travel very far from Brunei Darussalam into countries in the region to see the reality of the 'Digital Divide'.

The United Nations, has through the World Summit for the Information Society (WSIS), initiated in December 2003 in Geneva, a strategy for the Information Society and subsequently issued a Declaration of Principles and an Action Plan, for guidance of all member countries.

This year has also been themed '**Creating an Equitable Information Society: Time for Action**' and in the lead up to the next round of WSIS being held in Tunisia, December 2005, Brunei Darussalam has launched the National

Summit for Information Society (NASIS).

The anticipated outcome of the NASIS is to develop and foster a clear statement of political will and a concrete plan of action for achieving the goals of the Information Society, while fully reflecting all the different interests at stake.

This paper discusses the Human Resource Capacity Development issues, which need to be addressed.

2. Stakeholders

The unique two phase structure of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), provides an opportunity for all stakeholders to be involved and all have an important role to play in the Information Society, especially through partnerships.

HM Government has a leading role in developing and implementing a comprehensive, forward looking and sustainable national e-Strategy.

The private sector and civil society, in dialogue with HM Government, have an important consultative role to play in devising the national e-Strategy.

The commitment of the private sector is important in developing and diffusing Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), for infrastructure, content and applications.

At this point, it would be timely to define the exact meaning of InfoCommunications Technology (ICTs) – which is the convergence of Information Technology (IT) and Telecommunications.

The acronym ‘ICT’, often is commonly misunderstood and misused.

For example, in the context of Human Resource Capacity Building, ICT Learning and Development/training is often confused with IT applications training.

ICT Learning and Development/training is actually much broader and encompasses the Telecommunications infrastructure, which IT needs to function as ‘Cyberspace’ is very much on a physical infrastructure.

The private sector is also a major stakeholder and is not only a market player, but also plays a role in a wider sustainable development context and must be engaged throughout the process.

Government cannot complete this task on it’s own and in particular there is a very

real need for ICT Entrepreneurs and Champions.

The commitment and involvement of civil society is equally important in creating an equitable Information Society, and in implementing ICT related initiatives for development.

International and regional institutions, including international financial institutions, have a key role in integrating the use of ICTs in the development process and making available necessary resources for building the Information Society and for the evaluation of the progress made.

It can be seen therefore, that the key issues to be addressed for the Information Society to be successfully implemented, can be reduced to a number of key issues:

- 2.1 Political Will
- 2.2 Finance
- 2.3 Infrastructure
- 2.4 Human Resource Capacity Development
- 2.5 Change Management

3. Political Will, Funding and Infrastructure

The Government of Brunei Darussalam, has long understood, that ICTs are a catalyst of growth of the economy of the country and is one of the reasons that Brunei Darussalam, has enjoyed growth.

HM Government has already embarked upon a major program to implement eGovernment and to upgrade the ICT infrastructure in the country, which is a major step towards implementation and enabling of the Information Society and

funds have been made available for this purpose and the country has an advanced ICT / Telecommunications system.

HM Government has therefore taken a leading role in developing and implementing a comprehensive, forward looking and sustainable national e-Strategy and is a leader in the BIMP-EAGA region.

However, there are some gaps from a Human Resource Capacity Building perspective and there is a need for a National InfoComm Certification Scheme, for Human Resource Development purposes.

As far as the ICT infrastructure is concerned, some projects are already implemented e.g EG-Bandwidth, RAGAM 21, JTB NGN Network, b-Mobile Communications 3G network, Tafis, PMoNET etc., and others are in an advanced stage of tendering for implementation in the near future.

However, there is a need for a cohesive National Broadband Plan and also a network to serve the peri-urban and rural areas of Brunei Darussalam, that are not covered by EG-Bandwidth, so that ALL can benefit from the Information Society.

The national ICT infrastructure local circumstances require:

- 3.1 connection of Mukims and Kampung with ICTs and establish Community Access Points all over the country, including rural areas;
- 3.2 connection of Universities, Colleges, Secondary Schools and Primary Schools with ICTs;

- 3.3 connection of Scientific and Research Centres with ICTs;
- 3.4 connection of Public Libraries, Cultural Centres, Museums, Post Offices and Archives with ICTs;
- 3.5 connection of Health Centres and Hospitals with ICTs;
- 3.6 connection of all Local and Central Government Departments and establish Websites and e-Mail addresses;
- 3.7 adaption of all Primary and Secondary school Curricula to meet the challenges of the Information Society, taking into account national circumstances;
- 3.8 ensuring that all of the citizens have access to television and radio services;
- 3.9 encouraging the development of content and to put in place technical conditions in order to facilitate the presence on the Internet;

4. Human Resource Capacity Development

The overall objective for Human Resource Capacity Development, is that ICTs can contribute to achieving universal Education worldwide.

This must be done through delivery of Education and Training of Teachers, improving professional skills and offering improved conditions for lifelong learning.

This involves a Change Management Process, for existing Teachers, but also the

students and a need for the whole Learning process to be re-invented.

Learning is not just about going to school for a few years of one's life and then getting a job.

Learning is and should be a lifelong process and ICT technologies should enable the learning process to be pervasive i.e Anytime, Anyhow, Anyplace and be for any age.

Technology should ease the process and make it easier not complicate.

Using ICTs, people that are outside the formal education process, can also be included and not disadvantaged and ensured a standardized education and also benefit from Healthcare and other services.

This encompassing process is called 'eInclusion'.

Human Resource Capacity Development is also about:

4.1.1 developing domestic policies to ensure that ICTs are fully integrated in Education and Training at all levels, including curriculum development, Teacher Training, Institutional Administration and Management, and in support of the concept of lifelong learning.

4.1.2 developing and promoting programs to eradicate or improve illiteracy using ICTs at national, regional and international levels. This should include setting basic literacy targets.

4.1.3 promoting e-literacy skills for all, for example by designing and offering courses for public administration, taking advantage existing facilities such as libraries, multipurpose Community Centres, Public Access Points and by establishing local ICT Training Centres, with the co-operation of all stakeholders.

Special attention should be paid to disadvantaged and vulnerable groups, like the 'Differently-abled', physically challenged or visually impaired or HIV/AIDS patients.

4.1.4 In the context of national educational policies, and taking into account the need to eradicate adult illiteracy, ensure that young people are equipped with knowledge and skills to use ICTs, including the capacity to analyse and treat information in creative and innovative ways, share their expertise and participate fully in the Information Society.

4.1.5 Governments, in cooperation with other stakeholders, should create programs for capacity building with an emphasis on creating a critical mass of qualified and skilled ICT professionals and experts.

This may or may not involve in the early stages, a decision to outsource the requirement, for a period of time and this needs to be evaluated carefully, with a precise timeline included for overall hand-over.

- 4.1.6 Developing pilot projects to demonstrate the impact of ICT-based alternative educational delivery systems, notably for achieving Education for All
- This should include delivery of education outside the educational structure, such as the workplace and at home in a truly ubiquitous and pervasive manner.
- 4.1.7 Working on removing the gender barriers to ICT education and training and promoting equal training opportunities in ICT - related fields for women and girls.
- Early intervention programs in Science and Technology should target young girls with the aim of increasing the number of women in ICT careers and promoting the exchange of best practices on the integration of gender perspectives in ICT education.
- 4.1.8 Empowering local communities, especially those in rural and underserved areas, in ICT use and promote the production of useful and socially meaningful content for the benefit of all.
- 4.1.9 Launching education and training programs, where possible using information networks of traditional and indigenous peoples, which provide opportunities to fully participate in the Information Society.
- 4.1.10 Design and implement regional and international cooperation activities to enhance the capacity, notably, of leaders and operational staff in developing countries and to apply ICTs effectively in the whole range of educational activities.
- 4.1.11 Designing specific training programs in the use of ICTs in order to meet the educational needs of information professionals, such as Archivists, Librarians, Museum Professionals, Scientists, Teachers, Journalists, Postal Workers and other relevant professional groups.
- Training of information professionals should focus not only on new methods and techniques for the development and provision of Information and Communication services, but also on relevant management skills to ensure the best use of technologies.
- Training of teachers should focus on the technical aspects of ICTs, on development of content, and on the potential possibilities and challenges of ICTs.
- 4.1.12 Developing distance learning, training and other forms of education and training as part of capacity building programs.
- 4.1.13 Promoting international and regional co-operation in the field of capacity building, including country programs developed by the United Nations and its specialized Agencies
- 4.1.14 Launching pilot projects to design new forms of ICT-based networking, linking education,

training and research institutions between and among developed and developing countries and countries with economies in transition.

- 4.1.15 Volunteering, if conducted in harmony with national policies and local cultures, can be a valuable asset for raising human capacity to make productive use of ICT tools and build a more inclusive Information Society.

Activating volunteer programs to provide capacity building on ICT for development.

- 4.1.16 Designing programs to train users to develop self-learning and self development capacities, as well as promoting ICT entrepreneurial spirit and individuals.

5. Change Management and Human Resource Capacity Development

Change Management is probably the biggest obstacle and the major challenge which the Human Capital has to embrace, in order to make a successful Transition to the Information Society and develop the Human Resource Capacity .

It is often said that for things to change, people must want to change and also know what is the desired outcome and see and understand the advantages of the change.

Simply put they have to buy into the change process.

In a culture which is steeped in tradition and rich culture, embracing ICTs,

particularly for the older generation, is not easy.

The younger generation (Generation – C or the Community Generation) are early adopters of new Technologies and adopt new things easily and with enthusiasm, however they need to be guided.

Profound change results from individuals coming to their personal realisation that what used to be cannot continue, and that a change in their own behaviour is what is necessary to bring about the required change.

Because the realisation of the need to change is personal and the commitment to change comes from within, the process cannot be imposed by a third party.

It is like trying to give up smoking or to lose weight.

No one can do it for you.

This is undoubtedly true of transformations which require significant behaviour change to be successful - and major organisation changes do require behaviour change - but there are different kinds of change and the depth and breadth of behaviour change is not the same for all.

But all change, whether simple or complex, an extension of what we do today or profoundly different, needs a strategic framework in which to work.

That framework needs to be developed, articulated, and managed, progress has to be monitored, feedback utilised, and the strategy updated.

The change process needs to be supported, encouraged, stimulated or facilitated and the resources have to be managed.

That is a considerable management task.

The description of change is different from the language of ten years ago.

Then, 'Change Management' was about a small 'inner' group deciding what was in the interests of the larger group, and then making it happen for them.

Great emphasis was placed on 'selling' the vision and getting people to 'buy-in' to the consequences.

Those who could see where the organisation 'should' be going, had the task of persuading the rest to join in or, at least, not block 'progress'.

There was a high degree of manipulation in the process and in the messages - not unlike politics in many respects and there was a risk of failure.

That top down and controlling approach to change is seen less frequently today - as it has proved to be less effective than was believed.

The approach is fraught with difficulties.

The truly visionary leader who can develop a picture of the future with only the help of a few friends and then impose it successfully on the rest, is rare.

Because discussion of change tends to be from the perspective of the change agent, any behavior that is not in line with that way of thinking, can be perceived by them as resistance.

An implication is that the way change programs are handled, can stimulate the resistance they are designed to address, particularly if they impose pre-conceived notions of the solution that is required.

Managing change has its limitations and sometimes stimulation and focus are better strategies.

All in all, challenging and interesting times ahead.