THE TUNIS e-SKILLS DECLARATION

e-Skills Capacity Building for
Growth and Employability
Making the Information Society a Reality

RECOMMENDATIONS TO HEAD OF STATES AND GOVERNMENTS, INDUSTRY, AND THIRD SECTOR STAKEHOLDERS CONCERNED

World Summit of the Information Society

Tunis, 16 November 2005

world summit
on the information society
Geneva 2003 - Tunis 2005

"THE TUNIS e-Skills DECLARATION"

e-Skills Capacity Building for
Growth and Employability
Making the Information Society a Reality

While many important issues have already been addressed by the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) to improve access to information and communication technologies (ICT) and to bridge the digital divide, it is increasingly felt that the challenge relating to e-skills capacity development has not yet received the full attention it deserves.

The skills and the capacity to use new technologies remain a prerequisite for effective participation of citizens in the Information Society so that they can take advantage of opportunities for employment and wealth creation, for taking advantage of innovative life-long learning strategies, and for using new services and interaction with public authorities. In short, e-skills capacity and employability empower individuals to make full use of the new powerful technological tools and thus ensure that investments in infrastructure are truly sustainable and fruitful.

As such, capacity building draws attention to a general policy shift from "*access for all*" to "*skills for all*", and to needed strategies for improving skills employability.

DEPLOYMENT OF E-SKILLS EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Education and training providers have a crucial role to play in making sure that adequate e-skills,

from basic digital literacy to advanced professional user level, exist to support a dynamic and

inclusive world economy. Alongside traditional, mostly formal government-supported, education and

training, the ICT industry has provided e-skills training in growing importance in response to fast

changing technological and economic developments.

MULTI-STAKEHOLDER PARTNERSHIPS IN E-SKILLS PROVISION

The emerging life-long learning paradigm of the 21st century implies a stronger role for key stakeholders compared to the past. Governments, educational and training institutions should consider establishing sustainable partnerships with the ICT industry that combine their respective strengths and resources. In result, individuals share responsibility for using lifelong learning opportunities to remain employable through advanced e-skills competences. Co-operation between users and providers of e-skills employability alike will enable people to acquire the capabilities they need to actively and continuously participate in an inclusive world economy.

DIFFERENT ROLES OF E-SKILLS STAKEHOLDERS

Multi-stakeholder partnerships hold out the prospect of major benefits and involve substantial commitment from all stakeholders involved. Partnerships in a multitude of possible varieties require leveraging the strengths of each partner:

- *The role of ICT industry training channels* in this partnership should be to ensure that the performance standards (associated with industry certifications) support employability by corresponding closer alignment to industry requirements.

- *The role of academic and educational institutions* should be to ensure that learning offerings and credentials they confer remain relevant to industry and other stakeholders, through required flexibility to respond to the ever changing needs of society as a whole.

- *The role of governments and public institutions* should be to ensure an enabling environment to provide individuals with the opportunity to attain real valued e-skills.

Aligning formal educational channels with industry and other non-formal training and certification implies that related financial arrangements should be explored. Better allocation of existing public resources to confront needed e-skills capacity building would leverage the existing knowledge, experience and energy of the commercial training market, and stimulate private and corporate investments that can advance public goals.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Stakeholders present at the WSIS Tunis e-skills symposium call on all WSIS Delegates to highlight the role of multi-stakeholder partnerships in making e-skills capacity building more prominent in the final Declaration of the Tunis Summit and in other relevant documents as well as to advance this goal in the follow-up implementation process. Key actions should include:

- **Ensure that e-skills capacity development is fully integrated into overall policies** promoting innovation, competitiveness and inclusion in the Information Society at large;

- **Enhance public support and recognition or endorsement** of high quality and relevant industry-based and non-formal e-skills certifications;

- **Support innovative multi-stakeholder projects** in the area of e-skills to demonstrate successful approaches for e-skills delivery;

- **Increase public engagement** in co-operative and associative forms of e-skills learning and training offerings with industry and other stakeholders with a view to reach transparent and portable e-skills certifications and employability;

- **Consider fiscal and financial incentives** to encourage investment in e-skills acquisition notably to support individuals to assess their capabilities and small and medium sized enterprises who want to pursue learning opportunities that result in e-skills certifications;

- **Promote best practices of multi-stakeholder partnerships** in digital literacy, vocational and professional e-skills;

- **Organise annual regional and international events** to benchmark progress and successful approaches in e-skills delivery in a global context.

—————————————

About the e-Skills Certification Consortium (eSCC)

The eSCC (e-Skills Certification Consortium) is a multi-stakeholder consortium bringing together representatives of industry, governments and training institutions with the aim of securing endorsement for and use of ICT training certifications within government endorsed education and training frameworks across Europe. Its Members include Cisco Systems, CompTIA, ECDL (European Computer Driving License), Exin and Microsoft.

Multi-stakeholder partnerships in e-skills provision

The eSCC promotes **Multi-stakeholder Partnerships as a main channel to ensure that citizens can participate fully in the Information Society** and that all citizens and professionals of all ages are provided with qualifications that are in line with demand. This is an important aspect of the debate on **capacity building**, which is at the heart of discussions at the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) taking place in November in Tunis.

eSCC members constantly renew their efforts to bring together traditional, government-supported, education or training on the one hand, and ICT industry e-skills training on the other hand. While in some countries industry certificates are becoming "de facto" standard in e-skills capacity building, in many countries such certificates exist in parallel to publicly recognised certifications.

Public curriculum schemes are increasingly integrating industry and public certifications through relevant "matching" methods. **Multi-stakeholder partnerships for education and training are the main tool for bridging these "parallel universes"**. This corresponds to the call of the WSIS 2003 Declaration of Principles that "*[b]uilding a people-centred Information Society is a joint effort which requires cooperation and partnership among all stakeholders*" (para. 20 and 29 of the Declaration).

The emerging life-long learning paradigm of the 21st century implies **a stronger role for key stakeholders** compared to the past. The eSCC believes that Governments, educational and training public institutions should consider establishing sustainable partnerships with the ICT industry that combine their respective strengths and resources. Co-operation between users and providers of e-skills employability alike will enable people to acquire the capabilities they need to actively and continuously participate in an inclusive world economy.

For more information see www.e-scc.org or contact the eSCC Secretariat c/o CompTIA Brussels office (idebeni@comptia.org, Tel: +32-2/234.78.23).