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# Information and communication technology for knowledge sharing

## UNCTAD XIII special event

Held at the Qatar National Convention Centre, Doha, on 26 April 2012

**Summary prepared by the UNCTAD secretariat**

1.      The discussion showed that knowledge played a key role in today's globalized world by enabling organizations to increase their competitiveness and understand the most important economic issues of economic development. Information and communication technologies (ICTs) were improving and accelerating the way information was shared and valued, and changing the way people learned and networked.

2.      Some panellists said that e-learning experiments had been conducted in the member countries of the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (SELA). Over the last three years, 420 experts had been trained in the legal aspects of electronic commerce, using e-learning and face-to-face workshops at the regional level. SELA's innovative approach and the TrainForTrade programme had produced excellent results in terms of quality, coverage and cost control. Participants praised TrainForTrade for its rapid response and ability to meet training and e-learning needs from that regional grouping.

3.      The demonstration of tools and methods by some panellists emphasized the importance of enabling e-learning in training strategies and integrating m-learning into course development processes. The panellists and participants recognized the importance of combining face-to-face activities with e-learning and not substituting it. In the same spirit, pedagogy and technology should be combined, taking into consideration the right balance of resources. The quality and pedagogic aspects of training systems should not be undermined by technology.

4.      Participants and panellists lauded the intelligent nation model from the Singapore regulatory authority on communication and information. The main message, in terms of policy recommendation, was that governments should take the lead and develop a

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collaborative model based on three main points – co-creating, connecting and catalysing, in which users were empowered and encouraged to pursue self-development. The role of the State was of crucial importance to foster appropriate measures to stimulate the use of e-learning and similar tools to facilitate access to the knowledge economy. Some panellists stressed the importance of the social media to facilitate communication and knowledge sharing between participants and stakeholders.

5.      There was also wide agreement on the need to reinforce skills to develop high-quality capacity development courses and maintain high standards of delivery, using the appropriate technological means, for example, e-leaning, m-learning and cloud learning.

6.      The panellists recognized the importance of allocating significant resources to develop technical cooperation projects on distance learning, training and capacity development, using new technological and pedagogical approaches such as TrainForTrade.

7.      Panellists and participants were of the view that the development of local services by local people for local people was the way forward. The development of platforms based on the smart integration of open-source components should be encouraged in order to easily share technology with partners. Likewise, more resources should be engaged for technology incubators, in particular those oriented towards open-source microservices.

8.      Panellists said that the demand by private and public entities for e-learning applications was growing very fast, outstripping supply. The appetite for e-services had grown bigger and bigger in a very short span of time, while the need to refine the content, taking into account cultural aspects to support learners around the world, was a new challenge.

9.      Several panellists and participants said that UNCTAD should strengthen its actions to enhance developing and transition countries' training capacities in the field of trade and development by using new technological solutions. It was generally recognized that UNCTAD's use of ICTs in some of its programmes, such as TrainForTrade as a tool to share knowledge, had increased the number of beneficiaries while reducing cost.

10.     The panellists and speakers encouraged UNCTAD to pursue activities aimed at enhancing developing and transition countries' training capacities in the field of trade and development by using new technological solutions.