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United Nations Commission on Science and Technology for Development

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Commission on Science and Technology for Development

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Tackling the income inequalities caused by digital divide

Sponsors: New Zealand, People's Republic of China, United States of America

Signatories: Arab Republic of Egypt, Dominion of Canada, Federal Republic of Nigeria, Federative Republic of Brazil, French Republic, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, New Zealand, People's Republic of China, Russian Federation, Republic of India, Republic of Indonesia, Republic of South Africa, Socialist Republic of Vietnam, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Mexican States, United States of America

The Commission on Science and Technology for Development,

Recognizing the critical role and contribution of science, technology and innovation in realizing sustainable development,

Guided by hopes of cooperation between all Member States in terms of technology development,

Welcoming the increase in the development of science, technology and innovation capacities in developing countries,

Viewing with appreciation potential sharing of research and experience between Member States in terms of bridging digital divide,

Considering the economic and social benefits that may result from increased access to the Internet and digital devices,

Reaffirming the need to enhance the science, technology and innovation programs of the entities of the United Nations,

Taking into consideration past actions regarding bridging digital divide,

Recalling the previous works produced by UNESCO and ECOSOC,

Hopeful that all member states will comply with this resolution for the prosperity of humanity,

1. ***Suggests*** the establishment of the International Digital Fund (IDF) under the supervision of the World Bank, which would:
    a. Be financed by all Member States, taking into consideration their Human Development Index, World Bank economic development score and GDP per capita, which can be waived in circumstances of hazards or crisis;
    b. Provide financial aid towards:
        i. building the electrical infrastructure where needed, with emphasis on Less Economically Developed Countries;
        ii. equipping public spaces and institutions such as schools, libraries etc. with digital devices;

iii. investing in satellites or fiber optic cables, determined by individual policies of each Member State;

iv. investing in local broadband providers and local digital device manufacturers in Less Economically Developed Countries;

v. grant for the private companies to conduct research on making more affordable digital devices;

vi. investing in local private companies specializing in the development of translation tools;

vii. creating an International Broadband Search website which would generate a list of prices and maximum speeds available in an area, defined by a zip code or area code;

viii. investing in a free internet SIM card program;

ix. increasing the number of primarily women-led technology start-ups per country;

2. ***Recommends*** the deployment of a Digital Expert Commission made up of experts and scholars with digital specialization from the Member States to manage the IDF and ensure transparency of private sector initiatives in collaboration with governments of the Member States that would:

    a. Establish a list of universal digital skills and rules of safe internet usage that would be integrated into school curricula;

    b. Encourage capable Member States to extend their curricula with additional income-enabling digital skills, e.g. coding;

    c. Define standards of the equipment funded by the International Digital Fund;

3. ***Endorses*** undertaking the following actions to increase the availability of devices and broadband internet connections:
    a. Subsidizing the production of low cost devices containing essential features such as, but not limited to:
        i. 4G network access;
        ii. bluetooth and Wi-Fi compatibility;
        iii. an expandable memory of up to 128 GB;
    b. Deregulating the market of low cost devices to ensure lower costs for consumers;
    c. Expanding the availability of hotspots in areas lacking consistent wireless network access;
    d. Establishing a program distributing basic digital technologies;
    e. Promoting the distribution of refurbished devices to connect to the internet, such as laptops, tablets, and mobile phones;
    f. Strengthening international cooperation for research and development of low orbit satellite technology with the purpose of expanding internet access in rural and remote areas;
    g. Increasing the usage of fiber optic cables as a cost-efficient method to expand internet access in rural and remote areas;

4. ***Calls upon*** introducing tools and policies that ensure proper training in essential digital skills through the following measures:
    a. Developing an online course, under UN supervision, explaining the basic handling of digital devices, that would be translated to all languages and be free for all citizens to access;

b. Offering grants to Less Economically Developed Countries for developing IT classes in schools, which shall be chosen in a way that ensures equity and excludes the possibility of certain schools receiving the majority of the money;
c. Promoting volunteering programs that would educate areas with a significant digital gap;
d. Participating countries are encouraged to put in place initiatives aligned with UNESCO guidelines that emphasize the education of teachers and provide them with correct tools for digital training;

5. ***Encourages*** digitizing public spaces in accordance with the population density in the area including libraries, computer cafes, community centers etc., which would offer:
    a. Volunteer programs to promote digital literacy and optimize resources available at said locations;
    b. Government-led classes which would educate people, with specific efforts to reach minorities, on how to use the internet in the areas such as, but not limited to:
        i. job applications,
        ii. online healthcare,
        iii. finance technology;

6. ***Strongly advises*** the implementation of government policies including, but not limited to:
    a. Tax incentives for tech companies investing in underserved areas;
    b. Tax reliefs for lower income households in order to purchase digital technologies;

c. The introduction of subsidies for suppliers of broadband internet;
d. The use of economic measures (deregulation) to make low cost digital devices and broadband internet more available;
e. Customized digital content in regional languages in regards to government [services and educational resources;
f. Lowering of import taxes on digital devices in Less Economically Developed Countries;
g. Launch government campaigns targeting ethnic minorities and the elderly in terms of digital literacy and the availability of digital devices;
h. E-governance sites;

7. ***Recognizes*** the fact that digital devices are not widely spread and *considers* joint investments from both governments and private entities that would:
    a. Create a social assistance program providing necessary technology to lower income households;
    b. Create a program that would enable the customers to connect to the internet for free using a SIM card from mobile operators open to partaking;
    c. Launch satellites and provide fiber optic cables with the assistance of private tech companies originating from the Member States willing to participate;
    d. Promote training of employees for the aforementioned tasks;

8. ***Further encourages*** the use of the following sustainable recycling practices to bridge the digital divide:
    a. Utilization of e-waste for refurbishing devices to enable further use, specifically in states with high Human Development Index scores;

b. Refurbishing devices in countries with lower Human Development Index scores in comparison to countries with high Human Development Index scores;
c. Local recycling of the remaining non-reusable components of electronics in all Member States;

9. ***Acknowledges*** the role of female initiatives in reducing the gender gap in regards to the digital divide by establishing a union of female trainers in remote communities who have received digital training in order to:
    a. Teach about digital literacy to other women living in rural areas;
    b. Create a community promoting female entrepreneurship and tech start-ups;

10. ***Remains*** actively seized of the matter.