

## Webcast

**Tuesday 13 June**

### **11:00 'e-Inclusion' – A Global Challenge - Plenary 4**

World leaders at the UN World Summit on Information Society put inclusion at the top of the agenda. What does this mean in the global context? In developing countries, 'e-Inclusion' is about the need to mobilise technologies to fight poverty, disease and exclusion and support basic services such as health and education. Early steps in exploiting ICTs to enable such services include providing access, by putting the necessary infrastructure in place, including basic electronic communication services. In countries where the information society is well established, "e-Inclusion" means all citizens having access to services, and benefiting from ICTs. The 'e-Inclusion' agenda is addressing issues such as ensuring services and products are designed to be accessible to as many people as possible, facilitating accessibility and empowering people. How can we learn from very different exploitations of ICTs to foster inclusion? This session reflected on the twofold approach and brings together political vision and practical experiences.

The session was chaired by Fabio Colasanti, (Director-General, Information Society and Media Directorate, European Commission), with contributions from: Derek Hanekom (Deputy Minister of Science and Technology, South Africa); Vice Minister Marianne Nganunu (Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Communications, Science and Technology, Botswana); Erik Aas (CEO, GrameePhone Ltd); Claudio Prado (Digital Policy Coordinator, Ministry of Culture, Brazil); and, Dai Davies (General Manager, DANTE).

**Derek Hanekom** (Deputy Minister of Science and Technology, South Africa) promoted the concept of a 'digital doorway' rather than a 'digital divide', giving a positive focus on overcoming the exclusion of marginalised groups. He stressed that access alone to ICTs is not enough, but that "it is all about quality of life". Observing that teledensity in Africa is the lowest in the world, with uneven telecoms access growth – in South Africa, for example, 80% of those with a phone are using mobile phones. He gave examples of simple, but powerful, eInclusion projects. In Lubisi, a mother was able to hold her child up to a camera, with a nurse talking to the specialist in a distant hospital, so that rapid diagnosis and treatment was delivered locally. Robust public access Internet points, modelled on the India 'hole-in-the-wall' initiative, are available. Their usage has been closely monitored, and the majority of users are teenage boys. As a consequence efforts are underway to make access safer and more meaningful for females, particularly in the context of a gender-balance of content and services. In Makuleke, farmers use cellphones to contact distant markets,

and can take better decisions about taking their products to market. Mr. Hanekom concluded that eInclusion is a global issue that needs smart global partnerships to overcome the diversity of exclusions.

**Marianne Nganunu** (Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Communications, Science and Technology, Botswana) noted that the global challenge was also a global mindset issues – we no longer can assume that a lower standard for Africa is acceptable. There are pan-African initiatives to improve infrastructure, such as the development of an undersea optical cable on the eastern seaboard of Africa. There are projects, such as BEANISH, which provide integrated health information to six nations by using collaborative networks. The low level of available funding in Africa requires low-cost relevant solutions. Botswana has provided Internet access to schools by utilising spare capacity on the television transponders already in place, and there are projects to re-furbish and recycle government computers for schools and other user groups. User-relevant applications include fingerprint identification of people on ATMs so that pensions can be paid, thus overcoming a lack of literacy using a lateral approach. Critical needs include an enhanced research capacity in Africa, and more capacity building and between country collaboration.

**Claudio Prado** (Digital Policy Coordinator, Ministry of Culture, Brazil), linked back to the comments of Michael Moore on the first day, that the Internet presents lateral, indeed anarchic potential for development. He argued that the 21<sup>st</sup> century is not, for most in the developing world, a step forward from the 20<sup>th</sup>. Indeed, he argued that the prevailing 19<sup>th</sup> century models in many countries actually provide significant learning lessons for Europe and developed nations. He noted that full employment is not the model for the 21<sup>st</sup> century economies, and that social security was never strong in developing nations (and is declining in developed nations). Consequently while Europe is trying to deconstruct issues of employment and social security within a globalised economy, Brazil has been doing this already for many years. He noted that lateral solutions were needed to IPR and copyright (rather than the existing process of trying to change legislation after events have occurred), citing the example of a Brazilian musician who put his music free-of-charge on the Internet. He was then invited to Spain to perform, and was paid money for performance, and now is making a significant income from performance in Europe. In summary, he informed delegates that Brazil is aiming to become the “21<sup>st</sup> century laboratory for showing how things can be done” in the Information Society.

**Erik Aas** (CEO, GrameePhone Ltd), communicated their experiences in Bangladesh, where the Village Phone programme now provided phones in 70,000 villages, with 215,000 women in charge of the phones. This phone network had significant impacts in communications connectivity in a nation where mobile phone penetration is now 10%. Community information centres, all wireless based, also provide access to information on jobs, government advice and forms, general information, and

communication with friends and relatives using Webcam and Internet telephony. Bangladesh has set a challenging target of achieving full broadband access by 2015.

**Dai Davies** (General Manager, DANTE), addressed global research and education activities. He presented large research networks such as GEANT2, enabled by the liberalisation of the EU telecoms marketplace. His critical argument was that the cost of infrastructure often is not related to the access price to the infrastructure. Price is affected by protectionism and over-regulation, and in Europe the liberalisation resulted in a 3000% reduction in the cost of materials. Therefore, telecoms liberalisation will be fundamental in building infrastructures in developing nations. The cost of a 34mbit link in Latin America is 50 times that of Europe, even though the raw materials can be sourced from the same supplier. He provided examples of scientific collaborative networks in Europe, South America, and Asia, where there was increasing between country research and education collaboration. Application areas covered included groundwater modelling, virtual learning, and telemedicine. An example of telemedicine was given between Australia and Vietnam: before the use of the Internet medics would visit Vietnam twice a year. Now there are twice-weekly consultations, providing a 50-fold increase in accessibility.

In overall conclusion, Mr. Colasanti informed delegates that a future 'meeting point' will be the global eInclusion Symposium that is proposed in the Ministerial Declaration.

### **12:15 Keynote address - Mark MacGann, Director-General, EICTA**

Mr MacGann broadly welcomed the Ministerial Declaration on behalf of industry. He noted that inclusion involves a commitment to providing both rights and opportunities. He noted that the levels of unemployment in the EU (20 million unemployed, with 50% of these long-term unemployed), required innovative and flexible eInclusion strategies, and that the 'ambient pessimism' of many political discourses was not helping. He proposed that the implementation of the Ministerial Declaration would be enhanced through the establishment of a permanent stakeholder group. Furthermore, there were two key areas missing from the Declaration. First, it did not effectively address the affordability of ICTs to excluded groups, and there is a strong relationship between ICT adoption and personal income levels. Better fiscal and regulatory policies are needed. Second, Europe should make more use of its internal development policy by transferring best practice to and from other countries in the world. Lastly, he called for better regulatory approaches that avoid approaches that may mandate industry to build specific products for specific groups – these would fail he stressed. He noted that the new member states, having been so recently subjected to regulated and controlled economies, could be ideal champions of the free market.

## 12:30 Towards the 2008 'e-Inclusion' Initiative – Plenary 5

Chair: **Frans de Bruïne**, European Commission

**Paul Timmers** (Head of eInclusion, DG INFSO, European Commission)

**Judy Brewer**, Director Web Accessibility Initiative, World Wide Web Consortium

**Richard Allan**, Head of Government Affairs UK and Ireland, Cisco Systems

**Guus Broos**, Executive Board Orbis Medical and Healthcare Group, The Netherlands

**Hervé Le Guyader**, eris@; user representative

**Reinhard Posch**, Austrian Federal Chief Information Officer

**Rodolfo Cattani**, Executive Officer, European Disability Forum

**Ina Gudele**, Minister for Special Assignments for Electronic Government Affairs, Latvia

**Frans de Bruïne** introduced the session, asking people to focus on the themes of 'understand, mobilise, deliver, and show', asking also the delegates to consider when they leave the Conference "what shall I now do to deliver eInclusion"?

**Paul Timmers** gave an overview of the EU activities between now (the Ministerial Declaration) and 2008, and these included: a Communication on ICTs and Ageing in September 2006, along with a report following studies into ageing; a 2007 Framework to promote the exchange of best practice, and for eAccessibility Standardisation; 2007 studies into assistive technologies; a 2007 Policy document on eInclusion that will outline the contents of the 2008 Initiative; and, in 2008, Digital Literacy and eInclusion initiatives.

**Judy Brewer** noted three main action points. First, enhance the understanding of eInclusion by linking developer and consumer communities more effectively in design and production. Second, Make sure that co-learning is encouraged to strengthen the links. Third, use the developer supply-chain more effectively to train SMEs more effectively about eInclusion needs.

**Richard Allan** noted two main action points. First, find strategies that improve the ability of industry to reach the eInclusion market. Second, Combine top-down and bottom-up policy strategies, thus helping avoid prescriptive top-down approaches that will reduce the ability of industry to innovate.

**Guus Broos** identified healthcare as a sector that had focused mainly on the use of ICTs in medical equipment, and which now needs to turn major attention to processes and information management. The long planning and procurement cycle for a new hospital (around 10 years), is too long in the context of ICT innovation.

Also, in the context of independent living and assistive homes, there is a question of who is responsible for the interfaces between the devices and the person – this point had been raised also in the context of the lack of standards for device interfaces in the assistive environment, and also for the standardisation of work processes when building electronic patient dossiers.

**Hervé Le Guyader** also supported a combination of top-down and bottom-up initiatives, and to link central and local government, particularly in the context of the EU Structural Funds for 2007-2013 where 75% of the funding is identified for Lisbon Agenda themes. He argued that public-private partnerships will not in themselves be adequate for the involvement of all excluded groups.

**Reinhard Posch** outlines the Austrian initiatives in eInclusion, ranging from electronic identity and the provision of electronic documents that are accessible to all. He agreed that a better regulatory framework is desirable so that services and products are sustainable and flexible.

**Rodolfo Cattani** agreed that a better regulatory environment is needed to maximise innovative eInclusion solution development. He supported the development of legislation that protects those consumers and users who are the most marginalised, and encouraged the use of public procurement legislation to mandate access to all people on a non-discriminatory basis. He agreed that EU Structural Funds could be used to help fund such activities.

**Ina Gudele** supported the many initiatives undertaken around this Conference, and reported that for Latvia, it is now important to monitor usability, performance and satisfaction levels for services developed to maximise inclusion. She encouraged further cross-country collaboration.

### **13:25 Conference closing - Ina Gudele, Minister for Special Assignments for Electronic Government Affairs, Latvia**

**Ina Gudele** closed the Conference by thanking the Austrian Presidency, the European Commission, and the Delegates, for making the event a success. There had been 620 attendees from 45 nations, and 34 nations had committed themselves to the Ministerial Declaration. She looked forward now to work that created the ideal regulatory and legislative environment to maximise investment and commercial innovation of eInclusion ICTs.