Standing Committee on C-II/144/DR

Sustainable Development 25 January 2022

**Leveraging Information and Communication Technology
as an enabler for the education sector,
including in times of pandemic**

***Draft resolution submitted by the co-Rapporteurs
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The 144thAssembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union,

1. *Welcoming* Sustainable Development Goal 4, the Incheon Declaration and the United Nations Secretary-General’s Roadmap for Digital Cooperation that all recognize the importance of information and communication technology (ICT) in education,
2. *Encouraging* theuse of ICT to support, enhance, and optimize the delivery of information to create new teaching methods and improve learning results while paying attention to challenges in terms of equity and inclusion, security and privacy, and the financing of expensive digital capacities,
3. *Recognizing* the fact that the world had been facing a global learning crisis long before the COVID-19 pandemic started,
4. *Aware* that, according to the Institute for Statistics of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), in 2016, over 600 million children and adolescents were estimated to be not reaching minimum proficiency levels in reading and mathematics, and that an estimated 53 per cent of children in low- and middle‑income countries cannot read proficiently by age 10,a phenomenon the World Bank defined as “Learning Poverty”,
5. *Welcoming* the United Nations Children’s Fund’s (UNICEF) call to address the learning crisis and urgently better finance education for the poorest children,
6. *Highlighting* the fact that the COVID-19 pandemic has aggravated gaps between rural and urban areas, with a critical impact on the education of children, especially disadvantaged ones, and that Africa and Asia account for nearly two-thirds of the 463 million school children unable to access remote learning,
7. *Noting* that learning is the right of every child,
8. *Bearing in mind* that remote learning can open up vast opportunities in bridging distances to remote areas, by bringing new applications to classrooms, as well as by reaching out to families in times of pandemic,
9. *Welcoming* technological development that creates more opportunities with smaller and more effective devices, applications, and more interactive solutions,
10. *Aware* that digitalization can deepen inequalities between the poorest and richest households,
11. *Noting* that in-person social contacts are important to children and adolescents,
12. *Acknowledging* that countries come from very different starting points in terms of their capacity to acquire technological devices and in terms of teaching staff,
13. *Reminding* parliaments and governments that, according to the estimates of UNICEF, every dollar invested in increasing enrollment in pre-primary education returns US$ 4 to 9 in benefits to society,
14. *Stresses* that a sufficient number of computers and other technological devices, and well‑functioning internet connections are the basis of an infrastructure necessary to leverage ICT as an enabler for the education sector;
15. *Underlines* that the pedagogical skills of teachers and assisting staff are of key importance in all learning, including in the use of ICT devices and applications, and in teaching methods that support the introduction of ICT skills;
16. *Also underlines* that teachers’ ICT skills require constant updating and training, so that information technology can be applied as best as possible;
17. *Calls upon* parliaments and governments to pass necessary legislation enabling effective ICT training of teachers and digital solutions to be part of their countries curricula;
18. *Urges* parliaments and governments to allocate sufficient economic resources to the education sector to ensure funding for teacher training and ICT devices while bearing in mind that funding for learning conditions and more basic teaching equipment should not be compromised;
19. *Welcomes* holistic thinking to create ecosystems which integrate technology, digital content and digital skills with the capacities of teachers and policy makers to build resilient education systems;
20. *Emphasizes* that hybrid teaching arrangements, including both in-person and remote learning, significantly increase the workload of teachers which must be compensated in the salary of the teaching staff, and that sufficient additional staff must be hired to avoid overburdening teachers;
21. *Calls for* effective tools for tackling online harassment and bullying to create a safe and non-discriminatory learning environment;
22. *Stresses* the importance of evaluating and monitoring of education results as one of the corner stones of measuring the success of education policies and teaching methods;
23. *Urges* governments to keep the number of pupils in classes small and to ensure adequate assisting staff to teachers to enable effective learning;
24. *Emphasizes* the key role of families in supporting children, especially in the early stages of education, in learning, both in the learning process itself and in understanding the importance of education;
25. *Notes* that remote learning requires more self-discipline from pupils and their families, the lack of which is a major contributing factor to the digital divide between pupils;
26. *Stresses* that digital and remote learning can never fully replace in-person learning as vocational teaching in many fields requires in-person learning on site;
27. *Urges* parliaments to pay special attention to equity and inclusion when legislating in the education sector, including in the use of ICT;
28. *Underlines* that women are a large untapped learning resource as women and girls are often being prevented from using ICT and particularly internet, and, at the same time, that educated women have a great impact on societal development by contributing to more stable, resilient societies that give all individuals – including boys and men – the opportunity to fulfil their potential;
29. *Encourages* governments to include in their development cooperation programmes assistance in technology transfer in the education sector and support in teacher training;
30. *Also encourages* governments to provide vitally important support functions, such as free meals in schools because well-nourished pupils can concentrate better and get better learning results, and also because free meals in schools can be an added incentive especially to poorer families for sending their children to school;
31. *Invites* governments to engage the youth in the development of plans and strategies in the short and medium term, to chart the obstacles that may arise, and to look for new opportunities in introducing ICT in education;
32. *Invites* parliaments and governments to look into possible partnerships with United Nations organizations such as UNESCO and UNICEF.