MINISTERIAL ROUNDTABLE FOR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION SYSTEMS

The 5th eLearning Africa Conference in Lusaka, Zambia, saw ministers, diplomats and government officials from Angola, Finland, Kenya, Liberia, the Netherlands, Malawi, Mali, Namibia, Rwanda, Senegal, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe, gather for the 3rd Ministerial Round Table to discuss and explore key issues related to the following theme:

Leadership for Creating Inclusive Education Systems for Inclusive Knowledge Societies: The Role of ICT.

The Round Table was underpinned by research in the form of GeSCI's Meta Review of ICT in Education 2009. The MRT which was organised by GeSCI, IICD and ICWE (GmbH) was also informed by findings from recent reports such as the UNESCO *Global Monitoring Report 2010, the World Bank Horizon Report 2010, and ICTs for Education: Impact and Lessons Learned from IICD supported Activities (2008).*

The issues considered included the need to:

» Establish more dynamic institutional structures to respond to changing demands

» Develop effective leadership strategies and capacity-building programmes

» Improve coordination and planning among national institutions for national ICTE interventions

» Find solutions for the effective allocation of resources among competing priorities

» Explore potential tensions between central policy-making and local implementation

» Reduce the time lag between Information and Communication Technology for Education (ICTE) policy formulation and implementation

The following issues were discussed during the round table:

» Leadership

» ICT and the MDGs

» Provision of evidence of the hard impact of ICT

» The sharing of e-Learning research findings

» The regular evaluation of ICT4E strategy

» The sharing of good e-learning practices

» Cooperation

» The prioritisation of capacity development

» The cultivation of distributed and inclusive leadership

» Defining the resources needed to achieve policy goals

» Developing local content that has cultural reference, and educational reform

Links to all reports are available in the Lusaka Communique *www.elearning-africa.com/mrt/*

Dr Patti Swarts addresses Ministers at Ministerial Round Table eLA 2010

Recommendations

During the Ministerial Round Table it was acknowledged and stated that there is an urgent and immediate need for countries to:

1. Take stock of their existing education systems and revise them to suit Africa's needs

2. Take time to reflect on, internalise and articulate the need for Knowledge Sharing from an African perspective by Africans: no more borrowed and hackneyed concepts from elsewhere

"Following the discussions it was agreed that the creation of an enabling structure and environment to develop a knowledge society in Africa is a priority and depends upon the vision, drive and commitment of policy-makers."

extract from GeSCI Blog

3. Substantially increase investment in R&D in Africa to harness innovation in African societies and economies

4. Ensure that there is distributed leadership throughout the system – i.e. inclusive leadership

5. Recognise and acknowledge Africa's own home-grown talent and combine this with a concerted effort to stop the brain drain from Africa or *national brain migration to different sectors*

15

Honorable Dora Silya Zambia Minister for Education at Ministerial Roundtable eLA 2010

6. Create a dynamic system that involves all stakeholders in the policy development process right from the start

7. Embrace disruption because without some degree of disruption change is not possible

8. Be aware that many people working within the system are actively resisting ICT because of the transparency that it brings

9. Listen to the voice of youth because ultimately they will hold leaders accountable

10. Make these issues top priority at the regional level as well as the national level

Please download the Lusaka Communique in full from: *www.elearning- africa.com/ mrt/downloads/MRT_2010_The_Lusaka_Communique.pdf*

2010 MRT Results

Following the discussions it was agreed that the creation of an enabling structure and environment to develop knowledge societies in Africa is a priority and depends upon the vision, drive and commitment of policy-makers. MRT participants agreed upon a five step process to achieve inclusive education:

» Cultivate closer collaboration between ministries, international development organisations, and private sector IT companies, particularly in the area of (ICTE) policy formulation and implementation

» Cultivate closer collaboration between African countries at the ministerial level whereby African countries that are more advanced with formulating and implementing their ICT for education policy can share their findings and best practices with African countries that are about to embark on this path

» Develop a Monitoring and Evaluation system in each country to ascertain how well ICTE strategy implementation is working and whether planned outcomes and impact is achieved, so that the ICTE strategy can be fine-tuned at different intervals

» Invest in more R&D in each African country and throughout Africa as a whole to foster innovation throughout the continent

» Help to spearhead a fully-fledged 'ICT movement' in all African countries, led by key decision-makers at the ministries