Expert Group Meeting

"E-Participation: Empowering People through Information Communication Technologies (ICTs)"

ITU Headquarters
Geneva, Switzerland, 24-25 July 2013

THEMES FOR DISCUSSION

The discussion will focus on:

1) e-Participation and Empowerment: Opportunities and Challenges for All
2) e-Participation: Changes that Empower People
3) e-Participation for Social Groups as Means for Social Inclusion: Persons with Disabilities and Older Persons;
4) e-Participation: Innovative Strategies, Emerging Trends and Services for the Empowerment of People;
5) Empowerment and e-Participation: Policy Recommendations

1. Plenary Session: e-Participation and Empowerment: Opportunities and Challenges for All

The first day will begin with an opening session followed by a plenary session, which will provide an overview of the theme of the EGM and its link to the post-2015 development agenda. To facilitate discussions and exchange of views, two background papers will be prepared and presented in the plenary session of the first day.

Following these two presentations, experts will be invited to participate in a panel discussion where they will discuss key issues regarding both background papers and focus on the challenges as well as opportunities for people to use ICTs and e-Participation as tools between people and governments, potentially offering greater access to public information, basic services to all and promoting the empowerment of people.

Session I:
e-Participation: Changes that Empower People
Presentations and discussion to focus on examples to empower people through ICTs and e-Participation, particularly access and use of ICTs and government public online services for effective and inclusive participation. The session aims to identify successful e-Participation initiatives.

Session II: E-Participation of Social Groups as Means for Social Inclusion: Persons with Disabilities and Older Persons

The society ICTs and e-Participation need to share its benefits with, and the people who find it more difficult to use new technologies, such as those with a disability and the elderly should find it easy to use ICTs and be part of e-Participation . Presentations and discussion to focus on concrete examples of how older people and persons with disabilities can use and benefit from ICTs and e-Participation which improve their lives and empower them. These groups have been selected because they have been disadvantaged from the benefits of ICTs.

Session III: e- Participation as Innovative Strategies\ and Tools for the Empowerment of People

Greater attention needs to be given to innovative applications of ICTs in support of e-participation and sound initiatives for the empowerment of people. Presentations and discussion to focus on innovative strategies and tools for the empowerment of people through the use of ICTs. These strategies should highlight the impact of e-Participation and ICTs on people's empowerment and how they can be used as a means to contribute in implementing the post-2015 development Agenda.

Session IV: Empowerment and E-Participation: Policy Recommendations

Mobile penetration is very high in developing countries and simple SMS is a very powerful tool for empowering youth and PWDs. Though, the challenge of access and use of broadband and exists in many developing countries. Lack of modern ICTs infrastructure and integration of ICTs policies into development planning and an inadequate enabling environment and regulatory framework blocks participation of some social groups, for example sign interpretation is still missing from basic news broadcasts.

Presentations and discussion to focus on what is needed to make ICTs and e-Participation an effective tools for empowering people. These recommendations will identify which ICTs tools and means the UN can and should use to empower people and, in particular social groups in order to assure their social inclusion and participation and to improve quality of life.

Time should be devoted at the end of each day to preparing conclusions and recommendations to be endorsed at the end of the EGM

Resources:

- The 2012 Report of the Expert Group Meeting on "Promoting People's Empowerment in Achieving Poverty Eradication, Social Integration and Decent Work for All":
  http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/csocd/2013/egm-empowerment-final.pdf
- The 2013 Report of the High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda "A New Global Partnership: Eradicate Poverty and Transform Economies through Sustainable Development":
  http://www.post2015hlp.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/UN-Report.pdf