Dear Delegates,

It is a pleasure to welcome you to the 2016 Montessori Model United Nations Conference.

The following pages intend to guide you in the research of the topics that will be debated at MMUN 2016 in committee sessions. Please note this guide only provides the basis for your investigation. It is your responsibility to find as much information necessary on the topics and how they relate to the country you represent. Such information should help you write your Position Paper, where you need to cite the references in the text and finally list all references in the Modern Language Association (MLA} format.

The more information and understanding you acquire on the two topics, the more you will be able to influence the Resolution writing process through debates [formal and informal caucuses], and the MMUN experience as a whole. Please feel free to contact us if and when you face challenges in your research or formatting your Position Papers.

We encourage you to learn all you can about your topics first and then study your country with regard to the two selected topics. Please remember that both committee members need to be well versed and ready to debate both topics.

Enjoy researching and writing your Position Papers.

We look forward to seeing you at the Conference!

MMUN Secretariat Team

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The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)

The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) is the United Nations' central platform for reflection, debate, and innovative thinking on sustainable development.

ECOSOC is one of the six main organs of the United Nations established by the UN Charter in 1946, is the principal body for coordination, policy review, policy dialogue and recommendations on economic, social and environmental issues, as well as for implementation of the internationally agreed development goals. It serves as the central mechanism for the activities of the United Nations system and its specialized agencies, and supervises the subsidiary and expert bodies in the economic, social and environmental fields.

Source: http://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/about/index.shtml

Communication & Technology: Increasing Access to Information

Topic Background

In the 21th century, technology is developing rapidly. Especially due to the internet, many technologies we are currently leveraging massive amounts of information never before so easily accessible. Known as the "sea of information," the online web has turned into a massive powerhouse for many people around the world, and served as the place where many well-known companies were created, such as Google or Yahoo. With this tool, it seems all information known to mankind is at our fingertips, and the web is only expanding as time goes by. With the growth of technology generally following the trajectory of Moore's Law (the theory that computational speed and data storage will double every 18 months), computers are unlocking untapped potential, giving businesses and societies the ability to improve all parts of their functions.

However, this is not the case for everyone. Especially in the undeveloped regions around the world, people are still struggling to take care of basic human necessities rather than trying to access technology for communication. With this kind of burden, receiving the benefit of the internet is way out of reach, and can leave developing countries in the dust due to lack of ability to keep up with accelerating business trends. Notably in Myanmar, where 99.8 percent of the population does not have access to the internet, they struggle to expand their information technology to the world when only a small number of individuals in the population utilizes the internet.[1]

Information Communication Technologies (ICT) are seeing increasing use around the globe every day. Agricultural Extension Agents in sub-Saharan Africa use the internet and mobile phones to bring information to rural areas; critical information such as the value of different agricultural products, or meteorological forecasts, or even new government funding for agricultural endeavors allow smallholder farms to stay up to date and keep their often fragile businesses operational.

Another common use of ICT is in the realm of mobile health- allow people around the world to find information about the spread of epidemics, preliminary diagnoses of potential diseases and ailments, allow individuals to order vaccines and medicines, and even propose treatment and advice on how to avoid health risks. Mobile Health helps significantly reduce the costs of healthcare, as well as the geographic burdens of accessing healthcare. This is aided by Health Extension Agents around the world, who can maximize the impact of information about diseases and medicines by spreading it to those who most need it.[2]

Past Actions

Fortunately, some African regions, such as South Africa were able to reach a high economic standpoint with advanced railway technology, or opening a research lab in Nairobi,

capital of Kenya. Additionally in 2013, Microsoft released their smartphone to 14 different countries, which increases information technology all through Africa. With the help of the International Monetary Fund, the usage of cellphones in Africa has gone up to 67% which is a dramatic acceleration over the past 10 years.[3]

There have been many governments and organizations which have provided aid in order to close this gap between the rich and the poor countries. But, many also believe that developing information technology will in fact make the existing gap between developed and undeveloped countries even worse. Installing infrastructures that require internet are extremely expensive, especially to poverty-line citizens, creating these systems will actually create a massive debt.[4] Additionally, since the undeveloped countries tend to be less educated about the technology, installing infrastructure will not be cost beneficial to fully utilize productivity of citizens within that nation.

The "One Laptop Per Child" project was launched in 2006. The goal of this project was to create low cost laptops that children in Africa could easily use. The original aim was to develop a laptop that would cost $100, but in the end it costs $188 which created a significant issue in terms of its affordability. The project hoped to ship ten million laptops by 2007, but could only ship 250,000 laptops in 2008.[5]

Although there has been an increased use of information technology in undeveloped countries, the impact of having no education plays a big role in increasing information technology. Since people have no education relating to that field, they are not able to find ways to effectively set up infrastructures in their hometown.

Multinational Corporations are taking significant actions to spread the internet around the world. The four leading corporations are employing two different styles of trying to spread the internet, and are expected to give universal internet access by 2020- either the spread of more satellites into orbit, or the launching of stationary aerial vehicles to spread internet access:

- Google has launched "Project Loon" to place high-altitude loons around the world to beam internet access to households in hard-to-reach places.
- Facebook has launched "internet.org" to give limited internet access around the world to communities in poverty, by working with existing Telecom companies as well as high-altitude balloons and potentially drones.
- SpaceX and its founder, Elon Musk, are seeking to launch thousands of low-cost satellites into orbit to provide alternatives for internet access around the world.
- Richard Branson, the founder of Virgin Galactic has launched project OneWeb, another satellite-based solution to provide universal internet access.[6]

Possible Solutions

Information technology plays a huge role in how humanity's future will unfold. As the internet becomes more commonly used throughout the world, it starts to become a necessity instead of a luxury. Fitting into goal 9 in the post-2015 development agenda, information

technology can be a key to solving many problems currently occurring around the world. Since information technology provides a wide range of education, it will soon increase productivity and innovative thinking to benefit the country as a whole. In order to get to that step, there are many challenges to be solved in order to make our future bright.

Infrastructure:

Before accessing the internet, one must have some sort of device in order to connect to the internet. Whether the device is wired or wireless, some infrastructure must be established before reaping the benefits of information technology. How will undeveloped countries be able to create infrastructure around their nation? How can we hire educated people around the world to build infrastructure for that nation? Where will these infrastructures be set up?

Finance:

Internet is free, yet not free. In order to access this free internet, we must build infrastructures and devices to dive into this field. How can nations afford this massive construction for their nation? Is it possible to work with large private companies to build a wider range of network for cheaper negotiations? Can nations borrow money from other organizations and agencies to build information technology?

Benefits:

Suppose information technology is more widely implemented across the nation. How can the nation use this as an advantage? How can the nation use information technology to create better economic stability? Can this technology be used in many other subjects, such as health, and politics?

There are other areas around the world without the usage of information technology besides Africa. For example, Bermuda is a small Island in the Atlantic Ocean without any resources or knowledge. However, Stanford University began "The Bermuda Project" where students and professors travel to Bermuda to public schools to teach them about "introduction to computing," which now became a mandatory class to take.[7]

Other parts around the world, such as North America or Europe are also participating in the widespread implementation of information technology. Although these regions are stable in terms of economics and technology, they continue to spread their influence to many undeveloped nations for various reasons;

1. To create a strong trade alliance,

2. To gain a positive influence within that region,

3. To establish a high tech company in that undeveloped country to expand their market.

With Asian countries rising in power, many developed countries are pressured to spend even more money on information technology to stay competitive. Although the motive should be to work as a group to solve "sustainable development goals," many countries are in tensions to become the best within the market. As the United Nations, we must find a solution, to create the future for the youth of the world.

Endnotes

1. https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/focussdgs.html
2. https://impactofinformationsystemsonsociety.wordpress.com/2011/01/09/week-2-technology-and-third-world-development/
3. http://cs.stanford.edu/people/eroberts/cs181/projects/developing-economies/index.html
4. http://stps.metu.edu.tr/sites/stps.metu.edu.tr/files/0302.pdf
5. http://www.itif.org/files/DQOL-16.pdf
6. http://www.washingtonpost.com/business/economy/spacex-founder-files-with-government-to-provide-internet-service-from-space/2015/06/09/db8d8d02-0eb7-11e5-a0dc-2b6f404ff5cf_story.html
7. http://www.economist.com/news/business/21571889-technology-companies-have-their-eye-africa-ibm-leading-way-next-frontier

Questions

1. What percentage of the population of Myanmar does not have access to the internet?
2. How much were the "One Laptop Per Child" laptops supposed to cost? How much did they end up costing?
3. Which university started the Bermuda Project?
4. How much has cell phone usage increased in Africa?
5. In 2013, Microsoft released a smartphone in how many African nations?

Answers

1. 99.8%
2. $100; $188
3. Stanford University
4. 67%
5. 14