

REGIONAL MEETING FOR THE ASIA-PACIFIC LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES

TOWARDS GRADUATION: A FOCUS ON BROADBAND CONNECTIVITY

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Session 4: Broadband applications and services for national development

Broadband-enabled applications can play a vital role in supporting national development objectives across a vast array of critical areas for the Least Developed Countries (LDCs). They have the potential to generate sustainable growth and contribute to reduce inequality.

In the LDCs, rolling out broadband infrastructure can be coupled with strategies to foster innovation and entrepreneurship that could contribute to stimulating the creation of localized new applications, services and content that is adapted to the local reality and, thus, generating opportunities for individuals and small and medium enterprises.

High-speed internet access opens new possibilities in the realms of online collaboration and content creation. Fostering the development of local content can also establish the foundation for productive capacity building in the areas of ICT, content creation or software development. This requires integrating the deployment of broadband infrastructure into a larger strategic approach that places emphasis on education, access to information, entrepreneurship, participation in decision making and sustainable social and economic development. Ultimately, broadband applications can empower people to participate in the process of transforming information into knowledge that is relevant for them.

Broadband applications and services can contribute to innovative solutions for the least developed countries in various areas that are important for their development. Telehealth services can reduce costs of diagnosis, facilitate disease management to underserved areas and improve efficiency in record management. Although health is one of the sectors that present greater complexity due to regulatory constraints and the multiplicity of actors in many countries, there is room to include telehealth initiatives in those countries that are still in the process of developing or enhancing their health systems. Education is an area that can benefit through the deployment of broadband infrastructure, particularly in relation to distance learning, dissemination of technical knowledge and com-

munity building. E-government applications can provide important benefits, not only in relation to greater transparency and accountability, but also contribute to increase the efficiency of the public administration, facilitate administrative procedures and bring public services to underserved areas. Similarly, e-banking can support LDCs in expanding access to financial services in conjunction with other measures. Lastly, emergency management operations have received some attention as an area that could potentially enhance coordination and planning during emergencies.

Questions

- What successful examples of broadband based applications are relevant and could be replicated in LDCs?
- What kind of rules and regulations foster content creation and application development?
- What can LDCs do to support local entrepreneurs, application developers and content creators?