

"ICT for the construction of non-exclusive society"
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Remarks

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentleman , dear colleagues
and friends

It is a great pleasure to be here and share with you our vision,
to empower people to realize their potential and shed the light
on our work and challenges in the field.. We are talking about a
very important pillar of the digital inclusive society, women and
its role in the socio economic development.. We would all agree
that "Women.. Girls, Mothers, teachers, are the foundation of
any society whether primitive, developed, underdeveloped ...
Therefore, Investing in female is an ultimate investment in
society at large"

Building on this, I would like to state that, Knowledge is the
foundation for development. Through knowledge, a new
generation, capable of competing globally will transpire driving
us to a new realm of independence.

Today it is very inspiring to see the dream coming through our
gathering, where we are discussing

- Democratization of Access
- Policies and Strategies of ICT
- Impact of ICT on different cultures and particularly our
region
- Inclusion specially of women in the information society ..
how women play in the growing information society..

Thus I believe this panel of today will be a key contributor to shape our position as Arabs, representatives of the developing countries and active participants in this major event The "World Summit for Information Society" in Tunisia 2005... We strongly believe that the outcome of our Forum will foster an effort to initiate an awareness campaign within all sectors of society to recognize the importance of shaping Young Women future and empower the Arab as well as other future generations through the use of ICT.

As we will be discussing over the next few days, We are striving to achieve the best for this globe but more for our own countries in the region. We do have a great chance having the WSIS hosted in Tunisia. Through the use of the new tool.. From where I come from, and where I serve, Young People look at IT as the window of opportunity, the tool that will help them Leap Frog, A Key to the Future..

However, the challenges still exist that are facing the Developing world .. We so call the Digital Divide.. However, In most of the Developing countries, the assist / capital of these countries lies in their HUMAN Capital.. From where I come from more than 50% of the population are under the age of 20% and more than 65% are under the age of 30%..

Thus investing in the human capacity is the key to success..

In this respect I would like to share with you some of what we at Microsoft have been doing to address a digital inclusive society..

Let me start by the main corner stone for Development, Education, which am sure we will all agree on ..

Education creates opportunities and employment options for youth and allows for the renewal of workplace skills to ensure the labor force is properly prepared for challenges and opportunities that their information society presents. Disproportionate investments in, and access to, education invariably results in heightened disparities in quality of life and economic development.

- We view ourselves as partners in human potential.
- Microsoft has developed two programs which map to how most of us think about education—there's what you learn at school, and there's what you learn outside school. These are two very different needs. The company's flagship digital inclusion initiatives are Partners in Learning and Unlimited Potential. Together, the programs aim to provide IT skills training to 250 Million individuals globally in the next 5 years.
- We call our effort to help people learn better in schools "Partners in Learning."

Training and capacity building

- And what we're trying to do is really empower teachers in the neediest schools by helping them get the latest computer technologies at the lowest possible cost, and offering them the training they need to make the most of those technologies.

Infrastructure

- Many schools use donated PCs, but they often don't have the software they need to make those computers great learning tools. So we're offering them copies of Windows 98 or 2000 free of charge for donated/refurbished PCs. We're offering free upgrades to Windows XP Professional for newer computers that are already in the classroom. We're also making copies of Office XP Pro

available to schools at a very low cost—just a few dollars a copy.

Can we do it all alone.. The Answer is **NO That is Why Partnership is a key to our success..**

- we partner with governments and make investments over the next five years in customizable teacher training that will cover everything from basic technology skills to helping them integrate computer technology into curriculums.
- We're doing all this on a local basis, trying to match the exact needs of the schools that need it most in each specific country and region. But we're also doing it in more than 70 countries—focusing on the low-income communities that are most in need. So we're acting globally, but thinking really, really locally.
- And I want to emphasize—this is a long-term commitment from Microsoft to partner with governments, schools and teachers. We want to help schools that are in need to really establish a 21st-century foundation for education and learning.
- So that's what we doing in schools, and we believe it will make a real difference.

Give you some examples

We're collaborating on Partners in Learning projects with 91 national governments, including 12 Arab nations. In the Arab world, our five-year goal is to help more than 400,000 teachers and to reach 15 million students.

In many countries, we've helped create IT Academies for Teacher Training, where teachers acquire computer skills that they can use to enhance learning and that they can pass on to their students. Here in the region, we've helped establish IT

Academies in Bahrain, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Oman, the UAE and Yemen.

In Yemen, for example, we worked with the Ministry of Education to provide many teachers with an intensive, 10-week course that qualified them as master trainers. They completed the course in December and then fanned out to establish IT academies in five cities around the country. Within 3 months, they trained 1,000 teachers, and they're on track to train another 1,000 by the end of this year.

I want to emphasize that we strive to tailor our Partners in Learning programs to serve the specific needs and priorities of individual countries and communities. In Egypt, for example, the government wants to raise the level of IT literacy in all 36,000 of the nation's schools, and provide in-depth training in software development to 25,000 school children before the end of the decade. Their goal is to nurture a community of top-notch developers who will drive growth in the country's technology industries and make Egypt a global technology hub.

— [PAUSE] —

- The cornerstone of our lifelong learning strategy is much broader. We call it "Unlimited Potential".
- Unlimited Potential is really a natural evolution of Microsoft's community investments during the past 20 years, but it's much more focused on a single goal—offering technology-related skills training for disadvantaged young people and adults through community-based learning centers. In the United States, our existing Club Tech initiative with the Boys & Girls Clubs is a great example of the types of investments we'll

be making in the coming years—but on a more global scale than ever before.

- There are already community technology learning centers in cities, towns and villages around the world As we have heard from the Minister
- We're partnering with those centers to really enhance the IT skills programs they offer, to help them improve access to that training, to get them hooked up to the technology they need. We're helping them with everything by providing grants of cash and software to meet their needs for trainers to creating curriculum and a support network. We want to help transform even the poorest rural technology center into community hubs for lifelong learning.

Microsoft Unlimited Potential is our global community initiative. The program aids global workforce development by providing technology skills training through community technology and learning centers (CTLCs). Unlimited Potential promotes digital literacy through four critical components:
Unlimited Potential grants.

Software donations

Unlimited Potential curricula

Community Technology Support Network

Technology Innovation is making software more accessible and easier to use

Microsoft strives to build products that are available, accessible and easy to learn and use; we are continually working to de-mystify technology & make it more accessible to people, regardless of their economic, cultural, or educational background.

Accessibility: Among the other innovations Microsoft continues to build into its products are accessibility features that make it easier for people with physical or cognitive difficulties, impairments or disabilities to use a computer and modify their work environment. For example, accessibility features in Windows XP include a screen magnifier that enables users with low vision to magnify certain portions of the computer screen, settings that people who are deaf or hard of hearing can use to transform audible cues into visual ones, and keyboard features that enable people with dexterity impairments to type key combinations (such as ALT+CTRL+DEL) one key at a time.

Ease of Use: In addition to innovation, Microsoft also constantly looks for ways to make technology less complex and easier to use. The company has adopted a multidisciplinary development model to cater to a diverse user base with varying levels of technical skill. As part of this process, Microsoft complements the work of software programmers with a host of experts from non-technical fields such as ethnography, linguistics, industrial design, and usability engineering. Among other tasks, these specialists help simplify the way users navigate products and find features, and refine product terminology for better cross-cultural understanding.

Programs include:

PC Refurbishment: Through the Microsoft Authorized Refurbisher (MAR) donation program, Microsoft helps to facilitate the refurbishing and recycling of thousands of PCs every year so that they can be donated to schools and nonprofit organizations. The MAR program donates software licenses through nonprofit refurbishers, enabling schools and charities to take full advantage of personal computers they receive from donors.

Examples

To meet this need, we now partner in 80 countries to set up and support thousands of community centers where people learn IT skills. Our support includes donations of cash, software grants and creation of a global support network. In Arabic-speaking countries, we have collaborated with governments and NGOs and with 120 local partner companies to provide training through more than 250 community technology centers. We've invested more than \$2 million in cash and more than \$1.7 million in software.

In this region, because the population is young and unemployment of young people is a big challenge, the majority of Unlimited Potential projects focus on underserved youth.

In Kuwait, we're working with the National Career development Center to provide IT skills training to unemployed graduates. In Lebanon, we're working with partners on Netcorps Lebanon, which is training 600 college graduates at community technology centers around the country, and then placing them in jobs in Lebanon's tourist industry. The idea is that the young people will gain job skills, and they will help Lebanon's tourist industry to grow by using technology in marketing and operations.

About 30 percent of our Unlimited Potential projects in the Middle East are focused on the needs of women. In one of our projects In Jordan, for example, we're working with local communities and with the United Nations Development Fund for Women on an e-Village project. It's providing IT skills training to women so that they can advance socially and economically and so they can help with their communities' development. The goal of this project is to reach every woman in 2 villages. Then we'll learn from our experience in those two villages, and work to help other communities.

In Saudi Arabia, we're supporting efforts to provide IT and business skills to 2 million citizens, especially the unemployed, young people and women. We're working with the Saudi Ministry of Education and other partners, including the King Faisal Foundation. In Bahrain, we're announcing a grant to the Career Connections project to help provide IT skills training to unemployed youth. In Morocco, we're providing funding to extend IT skills training to young people across the country through 50 new community technology centers.

To be able to achieve this we need to address some questions and issues that we need to address..

- How can we increase IT literacy and digital literacy, both through formal education and through lifelong education?
- How can the region best share best practices and insights, to make it easier for ministries of Education, Higher Education and ICT to meet their goals?
- What are the implications of PPP, national successes, and other initiatives that have been less successful, for regional policy, societal goals, curricula, government investment strategies and partnerships?
- What barriers are there to achieving that success?

Let me conclude by saying 'how can we create a more vibrant society.. an inclusive society for a better tomorrow.. few key words

- Partnership , Shared believe and objective

