

e-COMMONWEALTH

A NEWSLETTER OF THE COMMONWEALTH TELECOMMUNICATIONS ORGANISATION

//MAY/JUNE 2020

COVID-19 Response Heroes

Members Innovative use of ICT's in response to the pandemic

// USF FOR MALAWI, DESPITE COVID

// THE CTO ATTENDED "GIRLS IN ICT DAY"



Malawi stakeholders at the USF Malawi project in Blantyre, Malawi

#GirlsInICT Day



COMMONWEALTH
TELECOMMUNICATIONS
ORGANISATION

CTO.INT/E-COMMONWEALTH

//EDITORIAL



Gisa Fuatai Purcell
Acting Secretary-General

Dear Readers,

We live in unprecedented times as we face the challenges of the Covid- 19, a pandemic, which has levelled the playing field for all of us globally. I have been humbled by the courage and tenacity of our frontline workers and celebrate the women who make up 70% of our healthcare workers across the Commonwealth.

The CTO continues to operate remotely with an emergency team on call to provide our members with dedicated support and solutions upon their requests. May and June 2020 have been remarkable months for the CTO as we have navigated change and implemented enhanced strategies and measures to protect the CTO, and save jobs as we face the negative impact of COVID-19.

The CTO Technical Support and Consulting (TSC) division continues to work with CTO partners on the project in Malawi with its partners. The CTO is currently assisting the Government of Malawi to establish a Universal Service Fund (USF) as part of Digital Malawi aimed at extending and improving access to critical ICT infrastructure. The project aims at improving ICT governance and access to government services through e-services to enhance public service delivery.

TSC also continues with the CERT project for Afghanistan. For both projects the World Bank has approved the inception reports and both projects are on target. The CTO celebrated Girls in ICT Day on the 23rd of April 2020 and attended the webinar

"Driving Digital Transformation for Women and Girls in the Commonwealth through Mobile: Unlocking the Potential of Small States". There are several challenges in bridging the digital gender divide, achieving gender equality and empowering women and girls. It is imperative to promote gender equality in the Commonwealth and we need to pursue digital and economic inclusion for women and girls. Increasing ICT literacy and capacity building for Girls and Women is essential as we address access and affordability in order to connect, innovate and transform the lives of girls and women. Harnessing the power of inclusive digital transformation will bring greater prosperity to all Commonwealth countries.

As a result of Covid- 19, we have taken our events online and we're delighted to present a CTO Webinar in collaboration with the Commonwealth Businesswomen's Network (CBWN) presenting a Commonwealth Forum: Technology, Trade and Innovation in a COVID- 19 World. I wish to give my special thank you to the Rt Hon. Patricia Scotland QC, the Secretary General of the Commonwealth Secretariat for the excellent introduction and welcome address she delivered that set the stage of the forum. I also thank with gratitude Hon, Paula Ingebire, Minister for ICT and Innovation, Rwanda for the inspiring keynote speech she delivered highlighting the successes of Rwanda in developing information and communication technology (ICT) to embrace an inclusive, secure and affordable development of a digital economy. Thank you Hon. Jonathan Le Tocq, Minister of External Affairs, Guernsey, for your valuable contribution on how your Government recognised the behavioural changes due to Covid- 19 and your swift, subsequent move towards identifying those areas where access to ICTs is poor. We commend your immediate provision of access and the training you conducted to ensure secure and affordable access for everyone as the new norm.

Thank you Arif Zaman, Executive Director, Commonwealth Businesswomen's Network

(CBWN) for the excellent partnership in making this online forum a great success with 167 participants. Details of the forum will be provided in the July newsletter.

We continue to offer all members free e-Learning programmes through collaborative partnerships with the GSMA and ICANN. I recommend that all members take full advantage of this opportunity during the pandemic to develop new skills and stay up to date with current trends, developments and adaptations to further equip your teams for the future. Should you have any questions please contact us.

The CTO has successfully negotiated accreditation of CTO Diploma of Telecommunication Management Systems (DTMS) with the UK Telecommunication Academy. We are on track and once completed, we will start the DTMS with interactive online training. This is the opportunity for those countries that are not members of the CTO's Programme for Development and Training (PDT) to become a member of the PDT. The PDT membership fee provides you with access to many valuable courses. You can request the course catalogue via the CTO website.

It is with great sadness that we pay tribute to the passing of our dear friends and colleagues Mr Bob Franklin and Mr Donny Defreitas who have both been a valued part of our wider CTO family for many years. Our thoughts and prayers are with your families, friends and colleagues at this time. Rest in peace.

At the CTO we celebrate every single one of our members for their ongoing innovations, advancements and progress in using ICT's in response to the challenges COVID- 19 has presented and value your shared learning for the benefit of all our CTO members. We stand together during these challenging times as we are dedicated in supporting you. We draw strength and inspiration from our global Commonwealth communities and their ongoing achievements every step of the way.

Thank you and God Bless.//

//TECHNICAL SUPPORT & CONSULTANCY



Malawi stakeholders at the USF Malawi meeting in Blantyre, Malawi

Development of Universal Service Fund (USF) for Malawi, despite COVID-19 challenges

The CTO in partnership with Research ICT Solutions Ltd is currently assisting the Government of Malawi to establish a Universal Service Fund (USF) for Malawi. This work is part of the Digital Malawi project, which is managed by Malawi Communications Regulatory Authority (MACRA). The overall aim of the Digital Malawi project is to extend and improve access to critical ICT infrastructure for the public and private sectors; improve ICT governance; improve access to government services; and facilitate provision of e-services thereby enhancing public service delivery. The Digital Malawi Project has been divided into four components, namely, digital ecosystems,

digital connectivity (infrastructure), digital platforms and services (e-Government) and project management. The objectives of the USF Malawi consultancy include: an assessment and analysis of existing communications and access gaps in Malawi, both geographical and functional; development of USF guidelines and operating procedures; proposing an action plan; developing procurement documents; proposing mechanisms for funding pilot projects and finally providing recommendations for optimal technical solutions for closing the communications gaps in Malawi. USFs are designed to fund projects that increase access to telecommunication services and are

primarily funded by telecommunication operators who contribute a percent of their adjusted revenues. The USF Malawi project aims to increase the level of telecom penetration in rural areas, expand broadband penetration in unserved areas, and enhance e-services throughout Malawi. *"The CTO consortium has made significant progress to deliver the project, despite the impact caused by COVID-19 pandemic"*, said Dr Martin Koyabe, who is the Team Lead for the CTO consortium. The CTO would like to thank both the Digital Malawi and MACRA teams in collaborating on this project, which is scheduled to be completed by mid August 2020.//

//MEMBER NEWS COVID- 19 RESPONSE

Nigeria Communications Commission 112 National Emergency Number

The National Emergency Number 112 established by the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) is providing succour to Nigerians in the nation's collective efforts to fight the spread of the COVID- 19 pandemic.

Nigerians are able to call emergency response agencies/or first responders with respect to any issue they may want to report on the coronavirus or other health-related issues and emergencies.

Already, states and federal government agencies are leveraging the 112 National Emergency Number, whose calls are handled through the Emergency Communication Centre (ECC)

established by the Commission across the country. The ECC project was developed by the NCC, by dialling the three-digit toll-free Number 112, to enable easy communication by Nigerians with emergency first responders such as police, fire service, federal road safety corporations and the National Orientation Agency (NOA) among others. Executive Vice Chairman of the NCC, Professor Umar Danbatta, moved swiftly to put systems in place to accelerate the implementation of ECC across the country, to enhance security of lives and property. The 112 National Emergency Number is fully available in 17 states around the capital

and FCT, these can be leveraged by Nigerians as an alternate number to reach first responders at this period of COVID-19 when seeking help and assistance from applicable government response agencies during emergencies.

President Buhari said *'We have taken advantage of digital technologies to ensure that Nigerians in distress are only a dial away from the relevant emergency response institutions in the country'* via the 112 Number. According to him, the NCC's 112 National Emergency Number will go a long way in supporting their efforts to improve the security of lives and property.//

Gibtelecom offers local businesses free Cloud

Gibraltors Gibtelecom, through its data centre, is offering local businesses, agencies and organisations its locally hosted Cloud Computing platform free of charge until 30 June 2020 to help them through these challenging times. Gibtelecom's Cloud infrastructure is popular in the demanding fintech, e-commerce and e-gaming industries. It can support high volumes of user connections and can be used to quickly setup informational websites, for example, or simply to increase storage and capacity to an already overloaded IT system.//



Please click [here](#) to view the CHOGM report.



Dr Martin Koyabe of the CTO, is a graduate of Harvard and would like to share with all our members that Harvard University is offering 67 courses for free during the pandemic. Access [here](#).

Over the Top Applications & the Internet Value Chain & COVID- 19

WEBINAR INVITATION: JUNE 30th @ 2:30PM LONDON

Register [here](#) for the event

Cenerva Limited, in partnership with Research ICT Solutions (RIS) and The Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation (CTO), is pleased to invite you to join a Webinar on the compelling report **Over The Top Applications & the Internet Value Chain** to discuss how COVID-19 has underlined the critical role that OTT applications play in our lives.



Prof. H Sama Nwana
Host

Managing Partner, Cenerva Ltd.



Dr. Christoph Stork
Host

Telecommunications expert specialising in applied innovative solutions



Dr. Martin Koyabe
Panellist

Head of technical support and consultancy at CTO



Debra-Derieux Matos
Moderator

Training solutions and digital content consultant at Cenerva

//MEMBER NEWS COVID- 19 RESPONSE

Digital contact tracing in India is key to combating Covid- 19



The Aarogya Setu app detects and tracks the movement of its users with the help of GPS and Bluetooth sensors and sends out a notification if they come in contact with infected people by using its database and algorithms.

“The biggest weapon to combat Covid-19 is to increase contact tracing rapidly and the best way to do so is digital tracing”, said Vijay-Raghavan, Principal Scientific Adviser to the government of India in combating Covid- 19.

“This is being done through the Aarogya Setu app launched by the government of India,” he said at the webinar ‘Global Online Conference on Combating Covid-19: Biotech to the Rescue’.

The app detects and tracks the movement of its users with the help of the global positioning system (GPS) and Bluetooth sensors and sends out a notification if they come in contact with infected people by using its database and algorithms. The app might also be used as an e-pass for people to

move around once the lockdown is lifted.

“Even when people go back to work, those such as workers, elderly and those with other conditions must be protected,” he said.

While a proper exit strategy from lockdown is definitely important, he emphasised that following proper guidelines even after lockdown is crucial. The app is most useful in areas with a high probability of the disease and a useful tracking system for infections and adhering to social distancing.//

//MEMBER NEWS COVID- 19 RESPONSE

TATT Facilitates Improved Services to Mobile Customers



The Telecommunications Authority of Trinidad and Tobago (TATT) is pleased to advise that it has been working closely with mobile services TSTT and Digicel to ensure improved and more resilient connectivity for citizens over the next two months as the country grapples with COVID-19.

TATT has assigned more spectrum to

the mobile operators, at no additional cost, for the next two months and will consider an extension if necessary. This move will facilitate the expected increase in traffic which, based on mobile operators’ network monitoring, has already begun with the increased number of people now working from home. It will also ensure that mobile

consumers have connectivity to reach relatives, friends and essential services during this period.

Additionally, TATT has been in consultation with all telecommunications service providers to ensure that the service provision in both urban and rural communities is configured to deal with increased traffic.

Service providers have also agreed to the provision of low-cost packages as well as additional services free of charge to the consumer. These include improvements to Voice, Internet and SMS packages amongst others.

As a part of this response effort, the Authority is also working with the Ministry of Public Administration to provide services to low-income households who do not have access to internet services. This will facilitate the timely communication of bulletins issued by the Ministry of National Security and the Ministry of Health regarding COVID-19.//

South Africa’s smart phone apps assist in mass screening, helping to stem coronavirus tide



South Africa has used a combination of mass screening, targeted testing and a draconian lockdown to control the early stages of the COVID- 19 outbreak that threatened to overwhelm the country if left unchecked in its densely populated townships.

To overcome this challenge South Africa has also taken a different approach to contact tracing than many western countries, which

are largely placing their faith in voluntary smartphone apps.

In the past month President Cyril Ramaphosa’s government has mobilised 28,000 health workers to screen over 7 million people, which is more than one in 10 South Africans.

Under lockdown regulations, subject to regular review by a former constitutional court judge, the state has the power to access

data from mobile phone companies on the movements of possible coronavirus contacts.

“The major difference in South Africa is that it is not an opt-in app, as it is in Singapore and Australia,” said Livia Dyer, a partner at Bowmans, a South African law firm. “It is reflective of the way mobile phones are used in this country,” she said, since the poorest citizens do not have smartphones.”

Mr Ramaphosa’s warning that South Africa is still early in its epidemic means it will have to keep up these screening, testing and tracing efforts for many months to come. His government has said that different forms of a lockdown could be in force for at least six months and public health experts have predicted a possible peak in the number of infections in September. That will add to the pressure on the thousands of community health workers on the front line who have battled for years to be recognised as permanent government employees and are now central to the state’s response.

“We never saw the importance of these workers and use of smart phones until... Covid- 19,” said Mr Matoko.//

//MEMBER NEWS - EXAMPLES OF USING ICT IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19

Bangladesh using radio broadcasting to reach the most vulnerable communities to tackle the coronavirus



Bangladesh NGOs Network for Radio and Communication (BNNRC) has been mobilizing all community radios for developing and broadcasting awareness building programmes on COVID-19: Coronavirus contamination, to protect lives and livelihoods since March 1, 2020. www.bnnrc.net

In times of crisis, information saves lives. As of now, the country has 18 Community Radio Stations that have been broadcasting 165 hours of Coronavirus prevention education. There are 200 community youth and young women working as community broadcasters.

Tackling COVID-19 demands cooperation among government, CSOs, local business communities, multi-stakeholders. BNNRC are continuing to work 24/7 to reach rural communities in Bangladesh with life-changing information through community radio. It's not easy to get information to the hard-to-reach at the best of times, we will continue to strive to make sure the

needs of these communities are not forgotten.

BNNRC has been working on COVID-19 covering the following issues:

1. Animate CSOs, Government, health service providers and communities for reinforcing collective action.
2. Keeping people in communities daily life normal and their livelihoods functional
3. Mobilize further cooperation among government, CSOs, local market and communities response

Currently the Bangladeshi government is:

- Actively distributing information and resources, including scripts and backgrounders, about how to plan and produce effective COVID-19 radio programming;
- Creating or activating spaces, such as social media groups, to give radio broadcasters a place to learn from each other about best practices in COVID-19 community radio

programming;

- Developing connections between broadcasters and health authorities in government and civil society to ensure accurate information goes out and myths are debunked;
- Reminding community broadcasters of the steps they can take to stay healthy; Commending community broadcasters and other journalists for being on the front line and continuing to work in these conditions

Community Radio Stations are building awareness to change attitudes among their communities. They offer a platform for those who are involved in the COVID-19 response to update rural communities. They are also providing a channel for two-way communication within their communities where listeners are able to send in a SMS or call in with questions.

Community Radio stations are also producing contents which speaks directly on localised issues and concerns and features trusted local people in a way that nationally or regionally produced content cannot.

The Community Radio stations help to reduce the panic of COVID-19 gradually by broadcasting awareness programmes. Now the communities are taking precautionary measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and people are now understanding more about this coronavirus. Community Radio stations have already been established as a well-trusted source of information for rural people of Bangladesh.//

Ghana launches COVID-19 Tracker App

Ghana's Vice-President, Dr Mahamudu Bawumia, in collaboration with the Ministry of Communications this week, launched a new app designed to help in tracing people who have come into contact with individuals who have COVID-19.

The app is meant to augment the government's effort in the fight against the global pandemic. Dr Bawumia said that the gathering and availability of data has played a significant role in Ghana's battle against COVID-19 so far.

Data: Ghana's 'most powerful weapon' in the fight against COVID-19

"Data is our most powerful weapon in the fight against COVID-19. You cannot fight what you cannot see," said the Vice-President who

is also the Chairman of Ghana's COVID-19 Daily Monitoring Team.

The COVID-19 Tracker App is able to trace contacts of persons infected by the virus and show where they have been in recent times through various telephone-related data. This links such people to health professionals for urgent action to be taken.

The app, through the same telephone-related data, is also able to report contacts which are, or have recently been to COVID-19 hit countries, as well to track whether individuals required to self-quarantine, are indeed doing so.

After public concerns over the security of personal information required by the app to help in identifying and tracing persons who

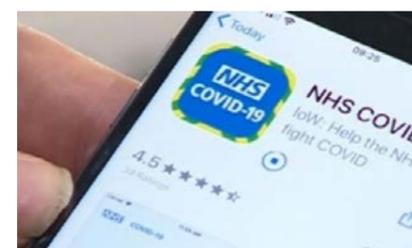
have come into contact with infected persons, Communications Minister Ursula Owusu-Ekuful sought to reassure Ghanaians that the app is safe to download and that none of their personal data is being collected.

The Minister explained that on 23 March the President signed the Executive Instrument 63 on the establishment of emergency communication services and that this was now being set up with telecommunication companies by using the metadata behind phone communications.

The government says the app is user friendly and will be free to download on devices using Android and iOS operating systems on [//](http://ghcovid19.com)

//MEMBER NEWS - EXAMPLES OF USING ICT IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19

UK launches tracing app to combat coronavirus



An app that is designed to track the spread of coronavirus has been launched in the UK. This is available to anyone with a smartphone. The Covid-19 Symptom Tracker app designed by a team at King's College London, allows users to self-report daily even if they are healthy. Scientists say the technology will help

them to identify in real-time how fast the virus is spreading, and which areas are becoming coronavirus hotspots. Another Commonwealth country with similar digital tracing systems is Singapore. The App will be used together with manual contact-tracing by public health officials to identify and rapidly isolate those who are at risk.//

//RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

Tribute to Bob Franklin, wise counsel and friend to the CTO



Bob's early career saw him qualify as an FCCA accountant, his work took his family to Tanzania with PWC followed by Senior Finance executive roles within British Telecom.

In 1991 he formed the independent consultancy firm - Telcoconsulting. His sharp independent mind, humanity and strategic thinking coupled with an intricate knowledge of complex regulatory cases enabled him to deliver tangible benefits to Governments, Regulators, Operators and Financial Institutions in over 50 countries.

He was particularly proud to support the future of the Telecoms sector. He curated bespoke regulatory and finance training for universities, corporate

and international government organizations and specifically for CTO in Botswana, Fiji, Malaysia, Seychelles and Uganda. Known the world over as Dr. Bob!

Bob's personal reflections extracted from his 25th Anniversary article

"... Now (2017) the challenge is to measure financially, an intangible asset such as spectrum. How do you measure the value of slices of the electromagnetic radio spectrum, this fundamental force of nature?"

As for the next 25 years... Some broad trends appear clear, most notable 5G. Despite the hype, Telcoconsulting believes fixed networks will continue to dominate and cable and wireless will remain the most fundamental technologies."

Bob was a loyal and committed partner of the CTO, a refined gentleman, always pleased to share

his knowledge and educate those that had the pleasure to meet him.

He has been instrumental in the delivery and implementation of CTO activities and projects. He specifically played an important role in the realisation of our Capacity Development mandate by delivering several CTO training programmes as well as speaking at different CTO Events, most especially the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Roundtables. As you know, he recently travelled to the Office of the Utilities Regulation (OUR) in Jamaica to deliver CTO training on Telecommunications Interconnection Rates. Bob's wealth of knowledge and insights in the field of ICTs was very valuable to the CTO membership. We extend our sincere condolences to Bob's wife Marilyn and family. Rest in peace Bob.

He will be missed dearly. Your CTO family.//

Tribute to Donnie DeFreitas, pioneer and friend to the CTO



Mr Donnie DeFreitas, a national of St Vincent, one of the Commonwealth countries in the Caribbean and a friend of

the Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation (CTO). Donnie passed away on 27 May 2020. He is a pioneer in the start of the reform of telecommunication. In the early 1990s, Donnie was instrumental in the establishment of the unique regional multi-island regulatory authority – the Eastern Caribbean Telecommunication Authority (ECTEL), which is a milestone said Andrew Millet, Managing Director of ECTEL. From this distinguished achievement of the first regional regulatory authority in the Southern hemisphere

Donnie moved to the Pacific region and became the Regulator of Samoa from 2009-2015. He achieved a lot of milestones for the Government of Samoa.

Donnie has been invited to many CTO events and it's always clear that he has a moral dedication to telecommunication reform at the start of liberalization of the mobile market. He is dedicated and ensured he provides his expertise for any issue asked of him. During the EU funded project of the ITU 2009-2012, his dedication and fierce commitment to achieve to this project was no different. The amazing nature of Donnie is that anyone from any country in the world that needed help, he went out of his way to help them, regardless of the job he was doing at the time. In 2015, Donnie moved to Fiji to take up his new job of Project Manager for a World Bank project, the Pacific ICT Regulatory and Resource Center (PIRRC).

That was after he dedicated his time to train one of his staff to succeed him. When word of his passing spread the world, all those who knew him poured in their condolences and their love for the man who does not charge for his advice. Donnie has a genuine commitment to the Pacific Island Countries which was sealed with his marriage to the most beautiful Samoan lady, Antonia. In the words of one of the cyber security experts who worked with Donnie in the Pacific "I have had the pleasure and honour to work with more than 100 countries and I have not been to a single one where Donnie was not known and loved". We extend our sincere condolences to Donnie's wife Antonia, his son Donito and both families. Rest in peace Donnie, we will always remember you for always standing by to help with any query we sent your way. Your CTO family.//

//MEMBER NEWS - EXAMPLES OF USING ICT IN RESPONSE TO COVID- 19

Eswatini - Fundza Naye Educational Online Learning Platform Aiding Eswatini Students During The COVID-19 Pandemic

With the education system highly strained during the international Covid-19 pandemic, ICTs and innovation have become pivotal to finding solutions of how students, parents and teachers can work together to ensure that learning continues. The Edu-Buddies Innovators is a business established by a group of young entrepreneur students from Manzini Nazarene High School in the Manzini Region of Eswatini. After winning the 2019 Junior Achievement Award for their first of its kind educational app, Fundza Naye ("learn with" in Siswati), they have displayed continuous innovation by configuring their App to alleviate the educational gap caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Fundza Naye was initially a system that uses Unstructured Supplementary Service Data to enable parents from different schools in the country to view their students' monthly test reports and get daily reports on class attendance for each subject using their cell phones. In March 2020 when the Eswatini Government announced the closure of schools due to

Covid-19, the students re-configured the original application into a fully interactive Online Learning Platform.

The innovators used gitlab, a system that connects coders from different physical locations. The online based application can be accessed through a web address e.edubuddies.org/students. The students login to the system using default user ID and password. When a student logs in with the default account, they are directed to their "class" in terms of learning guides and syllabus modules. This is a revolutionary platform that, unlike other learning platforms, caters to the specific needs of the Eswatini educational demographic in terms of availability of access and connectivity.

System Features

The application allows students to perform the following tasks:

- View lessons and assignments
- Write a comment on a lesson
- Write and submit assignments both offline and online using text editor
- Interaction with teachers

- Receive feedback on submitted work
 - Write online Exams
- The application allows teachers to perform the following tasks:
- Post video or PDF Lesson
 - Send assignments to students
 - View assignments submitted by students
 - Send feedback and additional material to students
 - Post notices to all students
 - Set online exam
 - View learners' performances on the online exam
 - Interact with an individual student

Quote from the Managing Director of Edu-Buddies Innovators, Brian Dlamini "We are convinced that this online learning platform is the innovation we need in the country to do what we would like to call autographing education with a signature of excellence during this tough time and even beyond the pandemic. This really is a revolutionary time for our education system" //

//CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

CTO rides the wave on the technological applications to deliver training

In this era where face to face interactions seem impossible, the CTO seeks to ride on the technological applications to deliver training to its Programme for Development and Training (PDT) members. A blended learning approach shall be adopted, meaning courses will be delivered through a combination of e-learning methodologies to make training effective i.e. Telepresence, Skype for Business, Video conferencing etc.

Through collaboration and partnership with Geeks without Frontiers (GWF), the CTO will deliver a series of webinars that seek to empower, educate and train the commonwealth members. CTO and GWF will bring together thought leaders and subject matter experts from the ICT community as keynote presenters, panelists, leading-edge vendors and technology stakeholders. The "EVENT NAME" webinar series will focus on technological innovations, delivering digital access to communities,

emerging global challenges, and financially sustainable broadband business plans. The webinar series will feature engaging modules that include:

- Tele-Health Module to enable all relevant government officers, as well as non-government stakeholders (e.g. hospital administrators, clinicians, NGOs, etc.) to more effectively respond to the COVID-19 crisis by learning how best practices are being leveraged for delivery of e-health, tele-health and tele-medicine services.
- Distance Education Module to enable education administrations, institutions and organisations to design and implement online distance education solutions to address the needs of children and teachers who have been prevented from attending classrooms due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Emergency Management Module for chief resilience officers (or equivalent), military,

police, fire and other first responders, as well as related government and non-government actors, who will be better equipped with information tools for pandemic-related preparedness, mitigation, response and recovery, in addition to other types of disasters.

- Telecom Regulatory & Policy Module to enable Ministry and regulatory officers, together with private-sector system and service providers, to help facilitate delivery of COVID-related solutions with improved connectivity in unserved / underserved areas and by using public policy and regulations to more effectively implement services with best practice licensing, spectrum allocations, national broadband planning and universal service programmes, mapping of areas where there is insufficient or non-existent access to broadband services, etc. //

//RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

The CTO attended "Girls In ICT Day"



"Driving Digital Transformation for Women and Girls in the Commonwealth through Mobile: Unlocking the Potential of Small States". The webinar was organized by GSMA in collaboration with EQUALS, ITU, UNCDF, CBWN and ITC. The Commonwealth faces several challenges in bridging the digital gender divide, advancements in this area will bring many opportunities to these countries. Harnessing the power of digital transformation will bring greater prosperity to Commonwealth countries. The impact of this transformation and the power and potential of mobile to accelerate change will have a profound impact on women and girls in particular. Key findings from the 2020 GSMA Mobile Gender Gap Report were shared. Women in the Commonwealth make up 70% of total healthcare workers across to Commonwealth in fight against Covid- 19.

Goal five of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030 calls for achieving gender equality and empowering women and girls. It is imperative to promote gender

equality in the Commonwealth We need to pursue digital inclusion & economic inclusion for women and girls across all Commonwealth nations. Increasing ICT literacy and capacity building for Girls and Women is essential as we address access and affordability in order to connect, innovate and transform. In least developed countries women are fourteen per cent less likely than men to own a mobile phone. Women should be enabled and liberated to play key roles in the digital economy. In a post Covid- 19 world, digital transformation, connectivity and economic empowerment become even more essential.

We must increase mobile banking for women in less developed nations, help their businesses access e-commerce platforms and create opportunities for greater independence which thereby boosts the economy as we tap into the most underutilized asset of many less developed nations which is harnessing the potential that women bring to the economy. In addition, we need to engage, enable and empower those

with disabilities.

We need an inclusive approach for using digital technologies to create new or improving current processes for doing business. Digital transformation using digital technologies, for example, artificial intelligence (AI) and other Internet-based applications will benefit countries in creating greater access to digital trading platforms and improved delivery of public services among others.

We must shape the future and create real sustainable opportunities for girls and women to engage in their rights of access to education, health, finances, mobile phones and more. This enables them to contribute to the social and economic growth of both their communities' and their countries' future. Greater awareness on vital issues such as the impact of child marriage and teen pregnancy on women's education and thereby economic independence is essential in working towards gender equality.

A matter such as illiteracy results in a woman not having a signatures, which makes banking unsafe as just a tick is used, therefore savings can be stolen, until a biometric finger print is introduced - giving women safer banking and empowering start up businesses. Women have less access to collateral as there are more barriers for women to get loans to start a business. Both women and girls should be included in the response and rebuild of their countries economy post Covid- 19. We must nurture and restore dignity, purpose and opportunity and capitalise change, ensuring women are to be agents of change not just recipients of change. //

Countries with Zero Covid- 19 cases and those who eradicated the virus

We celebrate the fact that the majority of these countries and island nations are in fact Commonwealth nations. Six countries and territories say they have managed to eradicate the virus. These are New Zealand, Anguilla, Greenland, the Caribbean islands of St Barts and Saint Lucia and Yemen

Countries with no reported cases of coronavirus:

1. Comoros
2. Kiribati
3. Lesotho
4. Marshall Islands

5. Federated States of Micronesia
6. Nauru
7. Palau
8. Samoa
9. Solomon Islands
10. Tajikistan
11. Tonga
12. Turkmenistan
13. Tuvalu
14. Vanuatu
15. North Korea (unknown)

Territories with no confirmed cases

1. Pitcairn Islands, UK
2. Saint Helena, Ascension and Tristan da Cunha, UK
3. American Samoa, US
4. Wallis and Futuna, France
5. Svalbard, Norway
6. Christmas Island, Australia
7. Norfolk Island, Australia
8. Cocos (Keeling) Islands, Australia
9. Niue, New Zealand
10. Tokelau, New Zealand
11. Cook Islands, New Zealand

We Invite You to Share Your Adaptations Using ICTs in Response to COVID-19

The Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation offers support through our member networks and services.

In the wake of the coronavirus outbreak, we would like to propose that you share your experience of using ICTs to make appropriate, effective and affordable changes for all.

How are you enhancing the use of ICTs in the following sectors to mitigate the COVID-19 challenges?



ICT



Education



Emergency Services



Health Services



Energy



Water & Sanitation



Food, Agriculture & Livestock



National Defence & Security



Government & Social Welfare



Banking & Finance



Tourism, Leisure & Entertainment



Transport

We welcome all members responses

Refer to the CTO website dedicated Covid-19 webpage for updates
e-mail us at communications@cto.int to share your stories

Follow us on #CTO_ICT and visit our Facebook, Twitter & LinkedIn page

