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eLearning Africa 2010: Will Africa Learn by Mobile Phone or by Desktop Computer?

Teachers and technologists gathering at the eLearning Africa 2010 conference in Zambia will be debating a billion dollar question, attempting to work out whether future African students will learn from the telephones in their pockets or from the laptops in their classrooms.

The African continent stunned the world by leapfrogging several stages of traditional telecommunications development and a third of all African citizens are now mobile phone subscribers. Some debaters at eLearning Africa 2010 will argue that the existence of these millions of mobile phones means it may no longer be cost-effective to use scarce resources to install laptop and desktop computers in schools. Despite some huge investments in Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in most African states, the millions of mobile telephones now in private hands may provide the best gateway to learning for the school children, students, apprentices and technicians of the new Africa.

The eLearning Africa Debate will be held at the 2010 conference in Lusaka, Zambia, between May 26th and May 28th.

Conference participants will find that “eWaste management”, “eInclusion”, “eHealth” and “Green IT” are high on the agenda. For the last five years eLearning Africa has spread technology-enhanced learning and training throughout the continent and demonstrated best practice examples of eLearning and technology-enhanced learning. There will be special events on "speed networking" and the "Insaka" sessions which are named after the Bemba word for a meeting place and feature delegates exchanging knowledge and new ideas.

International organisations including the African Virtual University, the World Bank Institute and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) will join grassroots non-governmental organisations to enrich the conference programme with presentations about the work of battling illiteracy in Southern Africa, promoting gender equality in Mali and encouraging participatory communication in East African refugee camps.

After a successful political discussion on eLearning in post-conflict situations at last year's Senegal conference, the role of ICT in building a peaceful and stable society will be discussed in Lusaka this year.

There is more information at www.elearning-africa.com