UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT
Knowledge Sharing, Training and Capacity Development Branch
Division on Technology and Logistics

Report of the Eighth Meeting of the
UNCTAD Advisory Group on the Strengthening of Training
Capacities and Human Resources Development

Geneva, Palais des Nations, 06 October 2011

E-learning: Best practices and field experience

I.   Resume

The eighth Advisory Group meeting focused on E-learning best practices and field experience. Experts from UNCTAD and from the participating international organizations and universities appreciated the results achieved by the TrainForTrade programme in E-learning activities for developing countries. In their opinion, the activities had succeeded at building sustainable trade-related knowledge. The group wishes to stress the importance of UNCTAD's choice to use information and communication technology as a tool to make training material more accessible. The group shared best practices and experiences, and believe that this practice should be re-enforced. The group posited that innovative solutions such as mobile learning should be tested and integrated into course development and delivery. Participants concluded that the TrainForTrade programme should take advantage of social media for communication and knowledge sharing during the training process, and that the UN hierarchy should recognise the importance of networking and should play an active role in this area.

II.   Introduction

1. The UNCTAD Advisory Group on the Strengthening of Training Capacities and Human Resources Development was established in 2001 in response to the recommendations endorsed at the 38th session of UNCTAD's Working Party on the Medium-term Plan and the Programme Budget. [1] The Group is expected to examine the evolution of UNCTAD's training and capacity-building activities in order to determine the elements needing to be strengthened, developed or modified; and to put forth proposals to enhance the work being carried out by UNCTAD in this area.

2. This year the Advisory Group focuses on E-learning best practices and field experience. Experts from UNCTAD and from the following international organizations, as well as universities attended the meeting:

   - International organisations: United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), World Trade Organisation (WTO), World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO), International Telecommunications Union (ITU); Office of the United Nations Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR); International Trade Centre (ITC); United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA); World Health Organisation (WHO); International Road Transport Union (IRU); International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC); and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).
   - Universities: Universidade Aberta of Portugal
   - International Training Centre of the International Labour Organisation (ITC/ILO) contributed through video presentation

III.   Outcome of the meeting

<u>**Recommendations of the experts**</u>

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[1] TD/B/WP/144, 17 July 2001.

Experts from ITC, ITU, UNHCR, UNITAR, WTO, WIPO, WHO, IRU, and ICRC, as well as from the Universidade Aberta of Portugal, gathered in Geneva on 6 October 2011 for the 8th meeting of the UNCTAD Advisory Group on Strengthening Training Capacities and Human Resources Development. They:

- *Commend* the UNCTAD Secretariat for the organization of this meeting on "E-learning: best practice and field experience", which discussed innovative electronic responses adopted by international organizations and universities to build and share knowledge

- *Appreciate* the results achieved by the TrainForTrade programme using information and communications technologies (ICTs) to support developing countries, and particularly the least developed ones, in building truly sustainable trade-related knowledge

- *Stress* the importance of UNCTAD's choice to use ICTs as a tool to facilitate access to pedagogical materials and training, deliver training and facilitate knowledge sharing, in order to increase the number of those who can be reached while reducing the cost of the activities

- *Take note* of the initiatives of the other international organizations such as UNITAR, WTO, WIPO, ITU, ITC/ILO, and UNHCR, as well as of the Universidade Aberta of Portugal, in the field of E-learning

- *Express their appreciation* for the kind availability of the representatives of such organizations and universities to come and share their practices on how to better use ICTs to improve knowledge building and sharing, and to discuss the way forward to strengthen the impact and relevance of E-learning activities

They *recommend* that the UNCTAD Secretariat:

- Continue to strengthen its action aimed at enhancing developing countries' training capacities in the field of trade and development through it's TrainForTrade programme

- Recognise the importance of allocating significant resources to the development of technical cooperation projects on E-learning, training and capacity building

- Reinforce the TrainForTrade team, to continue developing high quality online courses and maintain high standard online delivery, especially in developing countries

- Integrate mobile learning into TrainForTrade course development when it might be relevant for the target audience

- Take advantage of social media to facilitate communication and knowledge sharing between participants and stakeholders of TrainForTrade projects and programmes, and involve the UN hierarchy in the process so that they may recognise the importance of networking and play an active role in it

- The insight brought forth during this meeting will contribute to preparing for the UNCTAD XIII special event on Information and Communication Technology for Knowledge Sharing.

IV. Summary of discussions

Opening of the meeting

1. Mr. Mark Assaf, Officer-in-Charge of UNCTAD's Human Resources Development Section/TrainForTrade opened the meeting and made some introductory remarks. He mentioned that Ms. Anne Miroux, Director of the Division on Technology and Logistics of UNCTAD, was unable to take part in this year's meeting but due to E-learning tools like video, would still be able to deliver her opening statement. He then introduced Ms. Anne Miroux's delivery via video.

2. In her opening statement, Ms. Anne Miroux welcomed the participants and described how Information and Communication Technology have played a fundamental role within the last decade in widening the reach and scope of capacity building efforts and will continuously gain importance in the upcoming years in all sectors, including education. Furthermore, along with promoting interactive and collaborative learning, the evolution of information communication technology has also begun to facilitate the adaptation of training programmes in context to specific country needs. For developing countries, the use of ICTs has allowed them to better address the challenges they face to access, understand, and use information and research in the area of trade. She said that UNCTAD's TrainForTrade programme was continuously testing new ICT tools to improve its distance learning courses for capacity building efforts and that new tools like Wiki and an "instructor's database" have been set up to improve south-south collaboration within TrainForTrade's network. The next step, Ms. Miroux said, could include the use of social media and mobile learning.

3. Ms. Miroux recalled that the eighth session of the Advisory Group Meeting would focus on E-learning best practise and field experience. The Advisory Group was expected to provide advice on the implementation of innovative solutions such as Web 2.0 and mobile Learning for the building and sharing of knowledge. Within this framework the idea was to examine the innovative electronic approaches being adopted by international organizations, training institutions, and research centres in order to build and share knowledge in the field of international trade and development; to identify how successful these approaches have been in addressing the needs and challenges in the field of E-learning faced by developing countries and countries in transition; and to identify best practices and how they could be further implemented, by UNCTAD in particular. She highlighted that the deliverables of the meeting would also be used during the UNCTAD XIII special event scheduled for April 2012, in Doha, Qatar.

Outline of the meeting

4. Mr. Dominique Chantrel outlined the plan of discussions for the meeting with an illustrative PowerPoint presentation. He mentioned that a survey on E-learning platforms had been sent to participants ahead of the meeting and requested that each organisation

summarise their answers to this survey. Please see ANNEX 3 for the complete summary of answers.

5. WHO mentioned that it recently launched a pilot project of a Moodle platform with the target group being global staff of WHO. It has an internal training development task force that uses the platform to disseminate E-learning courses.

6. UNITAR mentioned that it currently uses Moodle 1.9 for all e-learning training delivered to Member States. The platform was adopted as official corporate solution in January 2010, following a trial period between 2008-2009. As from 2012 UNITAR is planning to open a second Moodle installation (2.0) which will be dedicated to hiring processes. At a later state plans are to also adopt the same platform for staff straining.

7. OCHA has a Moodle platform that hosts E-learning courses targeted for OCHA staff based in the field.

8. ICRC deployed an E-learning platform in 2009 and its target group is staff in the field. Its main challenge with having introduced E-learning courses is to change the mind-set of staff while integrating E-learning to traditional learning methods.

9. UNHCR mentioned that it uses E-learning to deliver training courses for staff and are experimenting with m-learning to support their E-learning courses as well as exploring the possibility of virtual classes.

10. ITC uses a Moodle platform for its on-going E-learning pilot project that started 2 years ago. It is yet to test courses developed for E-learning on targeted groups.

11. Universidade Aberta of Portugal mentioned that it uses Moodle to provide distance E-learning courses to 10 000 students worldwide. Hosting of its Moodle platform is outsourced to an external IT company.

12. IUCN uses Intra-Learn platform to provide E-learning courses to its staff as well as for human resources selection processes. It delivers their courses to over 40 countries and they hope to incorporate mobile learning courses as well in 2012.

13. WTO uses its E-learning platform to support progressive learning targeted at participants from UN member countries.

Learning Management System & Technological solutions to target developing countries
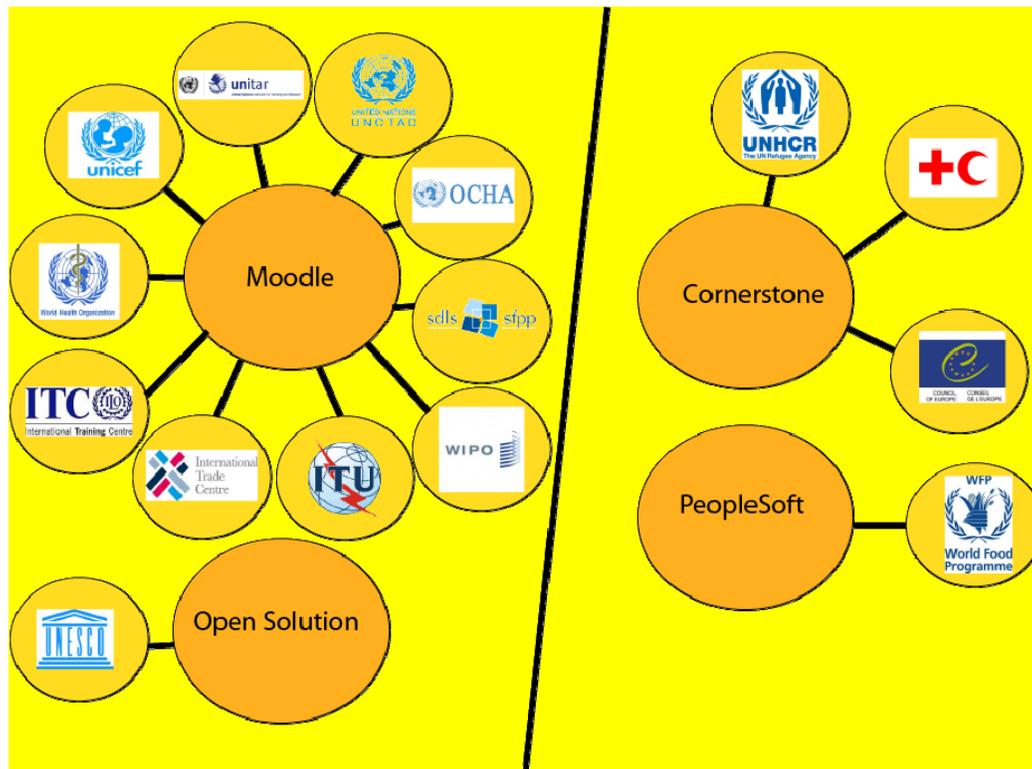
14. The choice between Open Source and proprietary (off-the-shelf) platforms was discussed with each organization briefly describing the type of software used for their LMS. Each organization also described the target groups for the E-learning courses that they provide. It was noted that most organizations with a target group external to the UN used open source software, while organizations whose target group was mainly UN staff used proprietary software. Costs and software Licensing agreement issues determined the use of open source LMS for organizations with external target groups: proprietary software is expense and there is a limit set in the license agreement for the number of users allowed.

15. UNHCR described the benefits and challenges of its proprietary LMS platform (Cornerstone On Demand). UNHCR mentioned that because the platform was Off-the-shell it already had a technical support system in place. It was not necessary for staff to establish experience in administering and maintaining the LMS. Challenges included licensing agreement limitations when opening up courses to a larger target group. The LMS also did not have functionality to create scorable tests and quizzes and 3rd party plugins had to be incorporated to enable that service which added to the costs.

16. ICRC who also uses Cornerstone On Demand mentioned the challenge of introducing the culture of E-learning to staff in the field who are accustomed to traditional learning methods.

17. Moodle (Open Source) users also mentioned some of the reasons for choosing Open Source over proprietary software. For the ITC, proprietary software was too expensive. For UNITAR, Moodle proved user-friendly even for non- IT staff. No formalized training

was necessary to run Moodle, as sufficient tutorials are available on the web. UNCTAD's reason was that Moodle had diverse language packages and supports languages that are otherwise not standard with most proprietary LMS Moodle is also SCORM complaint. ITC/ILO mentioned that because it is open source software, it avoids vendor lock-in and gives buyers the freedom and flexibility to choose what to do and when to do it. Mr. Gonzalo Ayala (UNCTAD) described how replication of the Moodle platform onto a laptop was easy and can be done within hours, which was useful when the need arouse particularly when delivering courses in developing countries and servers can be set up and run locally by beneficiaries without having to worry about licensing issues.

18. Non-technical challenges experienced by Moodle users mentioned include the fact that the platform was less popular with higher management as there are uncertainties to Open Source software capabilities: One needs to prove that it works before it is accepted (UNITAR). WTO mentioned the challenge of having appropriate methodology to developing course content suited for on-line training.

19. Technical challenges mentioned by a number of organisations was that no formal support was in place for Moodle and that one needs to rely on the community of Moodle users for technical support. Mr. Gonzalo Ayala (UNCTAD) highlighted the importance of researching and establishing support networks with other Moodle users. WHO takes advantage of staff with skills on Moodle to mentor novice Moodle users. ITC mentioned the issue of instability of newer Moodle versions during upgrades when compared with proprietary software and stressed that there needs to be a balance between working with older versions long after newer versions are introduced and bowing to pressure to migrate to newer versions prematurely, when they still have many technical issues. ITC has had their staff trained formally on how to use Moodle to combat some of these issues.

20. Mr. Gonzalo Ayala mentioned that UNCTAD normally prepares user guides for Moodle users to familiarize themselves with new functionalities after the migration to a new version of their Moodle platform. UNITAR also stressed the importance of having a definitive sketch of the functions of the LMS.

21. The type of training provided was also discussed, whether organisations conducted group training or individual training for their participants. Most organizations using Open Source (with an external target group) conducted group-training sessions especially in cases where participants also required technical support on how to use the computer. Some organisations use blended learning to limit the need for experts to conduct the course.

22. Human Resources available within the different organisations to support LMS were also discussed. Most organizations rely on internal staff for course content development. UNCHR employs external service providers for the hosting and maintenance of their proprietary LMS. Organizations like UNITAR, ITC, WTO, IUCN, with Moodle (Open Source) LMS, use external Moodle certified service providers for their hosting and maintenance. UNCTAD and ICRC use internal resources for hosting and maintenance of their LMS but ICRC has an extended technical support agreement available with the supplier for their proprietary LMS and hopes to eventually decentralize LMS management to field operations. WHO, OCHA, SDLS employ services from staff from other UN organisations for hosting of their platforms. Mr. José Antonio Porfirio (Universidade Aberta of Portugal) mentioned that professors are responsible for the content development

for E-learning courses while hosting and technical support of the LMS is outsourced to an external company.

M-learning, Web 2.0 and Cloud Learning

23. A presentation on m-learning at UNHCR was done by Mr. Brain Hopkins. M-learning at UNHCR is primarily targeted at staff in the field with limited Internet connectivity and who require just-in-time learning for standard operations procedures (SOPs), Checklists, and recap quizzes. For example, staff will use content downloaded to their mobile phones to checklist SOPs that need to be done before going on field mission. Equeo develops UNHCR's M-learning tool on a pro bono basis.

24. BlackBerry was the mobile phone of choice because most staff already owned one. iPhones and Android phones are to be considered for the future. Content is developed on the LMS and then downloaded to the mobile phone and can be accessed on the mobile phone without having to connect to the Internet. Future plans on the use of m-learning include augmented reality training for security courses for staff deployed to the field. These will incorporate GPS to alert staff of any dangers at their locations and provide "just-in-time" checklists of things to do in that situation. Another example is the use of cameras to read the status of barcoded field mission vehicles and provide checklists of what maintenance the vehicles need at that time such as petrol refills etc.

25. IUCN asked with regards to UNHCR's presentation on how they deal with animations on the mobile phones to support flash movies. It was noted that other applications like html 5 could be used instead. The challenge of constraints of the small size of mobile phone screens was also noted. Mr. Hopkins mentioned that UNHCR only use static graphics currently thus issues of animation on smaller screens were not a problem as yet.

26. Mr. Hopkins (UNHCR) then mentioned the advantages of m-learning; just-in-time learning in areas were there is limited connectivity; the Equeo m-learning tool works without having to connect to the Internet which eliminates connectivity costs; Content can be uploaded onto the mobile phone and stored until staff are able to access the internet and update onto the LMS.

27. The question of how to use m-learning for projects in least developing African countries where ownership of smart phones is not as common as in developed countries was discussed. Mr. Hopkins commented that for m-learning at UNHCR the idea to use phones already common with staff meant that staff did not have to be trained formally as they were already familiar with using them. Mr. Dominique Chantrel (UNCTAD) commented that m-learning could be used as a support to E-learning in developing countries with fewer smart phone owners such as sending course information (new updates available on line, dates on exams etc.) to participants using sms.

28. WTO commented on adaptation of LMS e learning content to mobile phone platform vs. developing m-learning specific content different to that on LMS e learning. This was dependent on whether m-learning was to be used as a support for E-learning or as a complete E-learning tool. It was noted that the type of content suitable for the small

mobile phone screen had to be developed. To limit the issue of 3G connectivity costs it was better to use mobile phones to receive information on e learning courses via the mobile phones but use the internet in the office to send course information, assignments etc. WHO mentioned some work done with Jennifer Parker to explore m-Health.

29. A video on Social media for learning prepared by Tom Wambeke (ITC/ILO) was presented. He described how Blogs, wikis, forums, Facebook, YouTube, could be used to compliment E-learning and streamlined for effective knowledge sharing and learning. He also commented on m-learning and the importance of short, relevant and contextualized content for effective m-learning. He made reference to Jennifer Parker's report on m-learning in Africa to highlight the opportunities available to use m-learning for effective pedagogic learning and capacity building projects in Africa.

30. The issues faced by UN organisations on social networking were discussed.

31. WHO mentioned that bloggers, for example, were not well received by its management. Internal social networks were available, however, to share language skills. Social networking was generally not encouraged because content on social media cannot be controlled. Marginal social networking like on-line workspace tools (low resolution workspace tools with low bandwidth utilization), data collection tools, webinars for meetings, collaborative mind-mapping tools for staff to share ideas, wiki maps (for collaborative editing), and open source twitter application (available to internal staff) was, however, deemed acceptable. Other issues included cultural differences, which meant that some of the staff were more vocal than others leaving those less vocal isolated.

32. ICRC reiterated the need to control interactivity on networking tools to make them effective for learning. Collaborative tools like forums and wikis are available on their LMS but participants by-pass the tutor and collaborate among themselves resulting in uncontrolled interactivity.

33. It was noted that most of the organizations have unofficial Facebook pages set up by groups of colleagues and that it was necessary to have senior management buy-in and organizational cultural change for social networking to be accepted.

34. IRU mentioned that social networking used largely in the private sector and that the risks associated with social networking being uncontrolled were of major concern to organisations like the UN.

35. ITC also mentioned the problem of not having a defined structure for social networking set out in the UN rules. Staff therefore set up social networking groups underground. Social networks can be used for one of two things: as an external communicator (for information conveyed to the pubic); as an internal communicator and this must be guided by UN communication strategy.

36. Mr. Dominique Chantrel (UNCTAD) mentioned the legal aspects, which lie in the fine print of terms and conditions that must be agreed to when signing up for social networks, as another reason for management's caution to officially accepting social media.

37. Mr. Assaf (UNCTAD) said the issue of UN staff posting damaging information on social media that would reflect negatively on the organization was another cause for concern.

38. WTO highlighted that there were differences between commercial companies and an international organization like the UN when comparing how either makes use of social networking. Commercial companies use social media more as a marketing strategy whose end result is to make a profit whereas the UN was a non-profit organisation and therefore marketing within the UN is more to share the work that the UN does with the public.

39. As far as social networking strategy was concerned, UNAIDS have prepared strategy for staff on how to use social networking. WTO and WHO have drafts of social networking strategy. UNITAR also advised that the Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon's July 2011 address on social media be revised for reference on this matter.

40. The subject of Cloud Learning was also discussed. IUCN mentioned Docebo as a cloud learning application used to send automated bulk sms to large groups of participants. Cloud Learning costs is dependent on scope of E-learning and m-learning provided. It is therefore important to have a defined focused solution suited to staff needs to avoid paying for applications that staff will not use. With Cloud Learning, there is no need to worry about issues of security and hacking, as this is normally the responsibility of company hosting "the cloud".

41. ITU's cloud learning tool hosts about 40 000 participants. The hosting company resolves hacking security issues at a cost. ITU noted that Open source cloud learning tools were more prone to web design mistakes from internal administration, which left them vulnerable to hacking. ITU also highlighted cost effective advantages of cloud LMS hosting as the infrastructure and maintenance costs were incurred by the Host Company, which meant less resources needed and no technical involvement.

42. Mr. Dominique Chantrel concluded on the session by making reference to UNelearn, a website set up for knowledge sharing on E-learning. The idea is to establish what E-learning courses can be shared among UN organizations as well as address quality control issues.

Course Development, Quality Assurance, and Certification

43. Mr. Serafino Marchese presented on the Progressive Learning Strategy (PLS) setup at WTO. WTO has both general courses and specialized courses for E-learning. The target groups are officials from government ministries with 10 000 users registered for E-learning courses. E-learning is used to support traditional learning and as a pre-requisite to face-to-face courses/workshops. It provides continuous learning as participants have access to the LMS anytime of day and their progress easily monitored by WTO experts/tutors. It was noted, however, that there were more dropouts with more integration of self-study E-learning to traditional methods of learning. *Advantage*s of having integrated E-learning include flexible study time for participants as training material accessible on line any time. *Challenges* included the need to develop more multimedia content for E-learning, pitfalls that come with upgrading the LMS platform, and budget concerns over staff with expertise in E-learning (as most WTO staff not knowledgeable of eLearning techniques).

44. Mr. Assaf mentioned that UNCTAD/HRD Section TFT uses on-line tests (as a pre-requisite) for selection of participants for the face-to-face training. This normally encourages participants to do well during for the on-line courses.

45. Mr. Hopkins mentioned that it's important to have defined reasons for why training is needed, why courses are developed with a focused approach specific to participants needs. Participants are better able to apply what they learn if courses are tailor-made to their needs as opposed to having information damped on them with the hope that participants can use it.

46. It also was noted that there was more interest from participants if some kind of certificate is given at the end of the course.

47. UNITAR advised that it's important to establish E-learning objectives and evaluate what participants have actually learnt. E-learning is more than just disseminating information, it should enable effective learning. A thorough evaluation of learning material is necessary for quality assurance and a structured design of learning that enhances participants' performance. UNITAR also briefly described ecbCheck, which qualifies E-learning courses specific to capacity building. EcbCheck could be used as a framework to design high-quality on-line courses even if the courses are not officially certified. EcbCheck also outlines how to use media to support eLearning and helps avoid silo course development within the same organisation. Course validated by ecbCheck are valid for 3 years after which they must be updated and re-validated. Self-assessment of courses by staff is also necessary to test that they do indeed learn from the courses. UNITAR has at least 10 courses per year aligned to ecbCheck criteria.

48. WHO mentioned that their staff is also motivated by certification and accreditation of courses.

49. IRU highlighted the difficulty to set up courses to meet ecbCheck criteria for courses developed externally. If courses were developed externally there were sometimes encounter interpretation issues with the end product not meeting client's expectations. A distinction between subject matter experts (for course content) and E-learning experts (who know how to translate course material into effective E-learning courses) needs to be made to avoid replication of reference material for into E-learning courses. E-learning should stimulate learning, be interactive learning and provide case studies among other things.

50. Comments were also made on the different levels for course evaluation. UNITAR highlighted the importance of specifying criteria to qualify participants. Mr. Assaf (UNCTAD) mentioned that certification was twofold; that of participation and that of completion. UNHCR have facts sheet to keep record of training done by staff. Courses must have assessment process for them to be registered on the facts sheet. ICUN said that it was important to provide certification for informal training as proof for E-learning courses done as some participants use these courses for career advancement. Other accreditation authorities that were mentioned that quantify courses were ISO for eLearning, and APACC for content and structural design.

51. It was noted that certificates with official accreditation are highly regarded. Certificates with UN affiliation are also highly regarded. UNITAR made an example of a participant

from South Africa who had completed one UNITAR's E-learning courses: the course was validated as equivalent to a Masters and enabled the participant to enrol for PhD at a local University.

52. José Antonio Porfirio (Universidade Aberta of Portugal) reiterated the importance of validating E-learning courses and that there were difference in the validation process between E-learning and traditional learning methods.

53. The benchmark to evaluate participants was also discussed. WIPO described the different levels of evaluation; follow-up evaluations on what participants thought about course content; examinations to assess knowledge acquired by participants; and contact of participants' employers to follow up on improvement in the work place based on knowledge acquired from courses (participants agree to have their employees contacted for follow-up evaluation before taking up courses). WIPO partners with intellectual property authorities in member countries and have developed evaluation processes to follow up on participants at national level, to measure impact of training done. They are issues with the number of replies to calls for evaluation with an estimated 50/1000 immediate responses, and an estimated 400/1000 eventual responses. Incentives for participants having completed the course could be salary increase and career advancement. WIPO reiterated the importance of the involvement of hierarchical management from the on set to support follow-up evaluations and encourage participants to make use of knowledge gained in their workplace.

54. ICRC mentioned the challenge of designing an effective evaluation structure prior to course being run. They currently have 10-30 % of evaluation done for their courses.

55. The ITU works with universities to produce training content and are investigating options of having universities taking over the quality control processes of their course material as universities already have a defined accreditation process.

56. Ms. Altaye Tedla did a presentation on WIPO and E-learning. WIPO uses Moodle for their LMS for the delivery of multilingual, multisession courses. They have partnered with Universities for course delivery, which eases the process to have courses accredited as Universities already have a defined process for accreditation. They have also established satellite Universities in developing countries to start-up learning programs. WIPO follows a customised approach for their courses with a detailed records database for participants to update and track their progress available on LMS. Both free and paid courses are available on their LMS. Ms Tedla noted that more value was conferred to paid courses. WIPO employs 4 staff for content delivery and production of courses and 1 staff member responsible for IT.

57. There were also discussions on the authoring tools used for course development. Most organizations use PowerPoint and articulate for course development. WIPO and ICRC also use SENARI. UNHCR uses Xerte for their course development

58. Mr. Assaf then concluded the discussions and requested participants to fill in an evaluation survey for the meeting. (See Annex 2 for responses).

IV - Conclusions

59. According to the survey completed at the end of the meeting, participants learnt from each other, and the majority of the group approved the usefulness of this meeting for all agencies.

60. Differences between the uses of open source software vs. proprietary software, the importance of social networking and m-learning for E-learning purposes and the perceived value of E-learning courses were debated.

61. Participants acknowledged that it was common within the UN for the use of open source software for E-learning courses targeted at external participants due to costs and flexibility restrictions that come with proprietary software.

62. Interactivity is an essential component of a successful E-learning activity. This is done through social networking software that facilitates community development and most organisations had incorporated these applications into their E-learning platforms. It was noted, however, that social media was not well received higher up the hierarchy.

63. The value of E-learning courses is enhanced by the provision of some form of certification. In developing and least developed countries, the certificates that international organizations deliver are well appreciated.

64. Participants proposed that the debate on E-learning issues be pursued even further for the next Advisory Group meeting, as the participants felt that a more thermic breakdown on several issues regarding both technical and content-related aspects of E-learning could be organised, with smaller grouped discussions and more visual examples from each organisation.

65. Some of the outcomes formulated from discussions of this meeting should be developed for the UNCTAD XIII special event scheduled for April 2012 in Doha, Qatar.

V - Closing of the meeting

66. Mr. Mark Assaf thanked the experts for their important contributions to E-learning best practises and field experience. He also expressed his gratitude to the participants for the valuable suggestions made during the meeting. He explained that their comments and suggestions would be taken into consideration in the formulation of the recommendations. These recommendations would be included in a draft report that would be forwarded to the participants for comments and validation. The final report would be submitted to the Secretary-General of UNCTAD. He also reiterated that the outcomes from the meeting would be considered for UNCTAD XIII special event.

ANNEX 1: AGENDA OF THE MEETING

	Thursday 6 October 2011 (Palais des Nations, Geneva) Room : XXVII
9h30-10h00	**Opening and outline of the meeting** • **Preparation of the UNCTAD 13 special event**

10h00-10h45	**LMS & Technological solutions to target developing countries**
	    ▪ LMS (Open source & software solutions)
	    ▪ Facilities in the field
	    ▪ Human resources needed and trained to oversees the delivery
	DISCUSSION

10h45-11h00	*Coffee break*

11h00-12h30	**M-learning, cloud-learning, web 2.0, web 3.0**
	    • **M-learning where, how and for what?**
	    • **New, or further development?**
	    • **Hybrid approach**
	Discussion

12h30-14h00	*Lunch break*

14h00-16h00	**Course development, quality control, certification**
	    • **Process to validate courses**
	    • **Quality control / methodology?**
	    • **Certification / Diploma/ Recognition?**

16h00-16h15	*Coffee break*
16h15-17h15	**Discussion**
17h15-17h30	**Summary of discussions and recommendations**
17h30-17h45	**Closing of the meeting**

ANNEX 2: SYNTHESE OF OPINION QUESTIONNAIRES, October 6

For each aspect of the meeting, as listed below, please show your opinion as follows:
Put a single cross in the box which corresponds most closely to your opinion;

Aspects of meeting	1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree → 1, **Disagree** → 2, **Neither agree nor disagree** → 3, **Agree** → 4, **Strongly agree** → 5					
1. The subject of this meeting was clear				1	9
2. This meeting was relevant to my job					10
3. The discussions and the cases studies were useful and practical				1	9
4. This meeting was well organized				3	7
5. This meeting has met its objectives				2	8

Other opinions:

Inform about the meeting more in advance, but the meeting is excellent

6. What did you like most in this meeting, and why?
Questions & answers
2 - Best practice sharing, good opportunity to share experiences
Rich diversity of organizations and implementation levels
2 - Being able to meet UN colleagues working in the same field, facing similar issues
Enjoyed the discussions
Exchange of information on how participating organizations deal with specific aspects of Distance Learning
Learning from others
ITC is in the process of developing its E-learning programme and this meeting was very timely, informative and useful in every aspect.
Sharing from mistakes made by others
Tips to better do my job
Sharing experience, within similar organization like ITU
Participants experience and meeting organization and facilitation
Thank you very much

7. What did you like least in this meeting, and why?
The lack of contribution by some participants
Would be good to have more background material
So that from initial familiarization we could move into more indepth discussion of one or two topics
To formal facility for having more spontaneous conversations

8. How could this meeting be improved?
Organise thematic breakout in small group (topic based)
Instead of PPT, show what agencies deliver "life"
Smaller room would have been better (less formal)
By showing examples of concrete courses developed/delivered

Maybe more people from ITC should have attended
IT is our duty to make sure that more people from E-learning team come
It is good
Give more time to participants to prepare presentation

9. What are the topics you would you like to be addressed next year?

How to bring learning as one priority of the top executives
What really works in the different agencies: Top 3 learning success?
Rating & evaluation of E-learning
Linked with performance management?
Security, in particular to avoid email addresses be used for unauthorized "Hacking"
M-learning
Evaluation (1,2,3 and 4 level)
Kids learning
Technology
Advance training development, sharing of experience
Evaluation and quality control
Train the trainers strategy programme on blended learning
Content production policy
Evaluation
Webcast