

ICT in Sri Lanka's Vision 2025

Gayani Hurulle

New Thinkers' Symposium on the National Economic Policy Outlook
27th February 2018, Colombo



This work was carried out with the aid of a grant from the International Development Research Centre, Canada and the Department for International Development UK..



Vision 2025 is looking to create 1 million jobs in 3 years

	Population not in labour force	Labour force participation rate	Unemployment rate
<i>Gender</i>			
Male	1.2 mil	81%	2%
Female	4.7 mil	39%	7%
<i>Locality</i>			
Urban	1.1 mil	54%	4%
Rural	4.8 mil	59%	4%
Total	5.9 mil	58%	4%

Source: Labour Force Survey Q3 2017, Base: Ages 20+

Technological development can lead to creation and loss of jobs

- Automation can lead to job losses for low skilled workers
- *“Enhanced digital ecosystems, through reduced transactions costs, will stimulate inclusive growth and job creation, especially by empowering the self-employed and SMEs.”*

Vision 2025

ICTs can enable working regular jobs from home, and on online platforms

Eg: Online freelancing allows for flexible work according to income needs and time constraints

“I don’t run after [money]... I earn LKR 10,000 per month. I try to cover my basic expenses. If I feel I need more money, I work. Or else, I just stay without working”

Female, 34, Colombo (LIRNEasia, 2016)

“We will increase free Wi-Fi provision...as provision of internet facilities at low cost is essential increase the level of digitalization”

Country	Internet users per 100	GNI per cap (current USD)	Cost of 1GB (mobile) as % of monthly GNI per capita	Average connection speed (Mbps)
Malaysia	79	9,860	1.4	8.9
Thailand	48	5,640	1.2	16
Sri Lanka	32	3,850	0.6	8.5
Philippines	56	3,580	2.1	5.5
Indonesia	25	3,400	2	7.2
India	30	1,670	3.2	6.5

Sources: World Bank Database, ITU Measuring Information Society Report 2017, Akamai State of the Internet Report Q1 2017

Few Internet users despite affordable Internet and relatively high speeds
– adoption may stem from need

Lack of digital skills identified as a setback– ICT training offered

Vision 2025 identifies that only 27.5% of population computer literate

“A person is considered a computer literate person if he/she could use computer on his/her own. For example, even if a 5 year old child can play a computer game, he/she is considered as a computer literate person.”

Computer Literacy Survey, 2016

Progress on training may be better monitored through more identifying KPIs– skills required for jobs

Eg: Are people able to search for information?

ICTs a catalyst for larger developmental outcomes

- ICTs should not be viewed as a magic bullet
- ICTs can play a role in achieving larger developmental goals of Vision 2025
- Potential gains identified with sector specific context
 - Eg: Getting online with digital skills alone insufficient to work on platforms. Factors such as willingness to work, social acceptance, payment mechanisms play a part

Thank you!

For more information: gayani@lirneasia.net
www.lirneasia.net