Presentation by Mr Alan Curry

Topic: Your speech will be a part of the main session on **Curriculum Development and Education management systems** so it is relevant to talk about the importance of creating a 'global' classroom with Innovative Education that is relevant to the 21st Century.

TALKING POINTS

Creating a 'Global' classroom

A few interesting facts that typify the African youth

- Young make up 37% of the working-age population in Africa, but 60% of the unemployed

- Almost half of Africa's population is under 25; about 75% is under the age of 35

- It is estimated that by 2050, Africa will account for 29% of all people aged 15 to 24

- This is about 348 million of the total 1.2 billion persons globally.

What do we need to do:

- Need to assess and re-equip youth, so they have the skills the market will be looking for tomorrow
- Aim for expansion of tertiary and university education,
- Explore deeper public private partnerships, and
- Take advantage of technology to innovate and expand education beyond familiar walls

What does this tell us?

- We **all** need to be part of the solution;

- Margaret Meade said, *"The solutions to adult problems tomorrow depend, in large measure, on how children grow up today. There is no greater insight into the future than recognizing that when we save our children, we save ourselves"*

- All this reinforces the challenge for educators and policy makers to move quickly, to ensure the growing numbers of young people have the skills required to prosper and contribute their full potential to society

Opportunities that these challenges create

- World has become interconnected pushing on cultural relations people to people connection is presenting immense potential

- With almost a billion mobile subscribers; and extraordinary successes such as Mpesa

- While America and Europe were in recession growth for Africa was at its highest

- And this at large is due to our energized youth—economies of Africa being pushed by the young professionals in Africa

- The current generation must realize that they are living on the point of a revolution, like those who witnessed the agricultural or industrial revolution, youth at the moment are living in the ICT revolution and we need to guide the youth on how to learn how to leverage ICT

Why British Council and what is our contribution?

- 75 years of cultural relations and making a world of difference in 191 0ffices in 110 countries

- Our passion is Trust and Opportunity, basically to create international opportunities for the people of the UK and other countries and build trust between them worldwide

- British Council's charitable objectives include the teaching of English, the advancement of education and a desire to bring people together and create trust worldwide. And clearly, technology plays a part in all of that

- *In Education our desire is to facilitate Innovative Education for Global Citizenship in the 21st Century*

- For these reasons, the bulk of the British Council's work in SSA focuses on young people and the education and skills they need. We believe ICT, in all its forms, can make an enormous difference if used effectively in a joined-up way; and initiatives that do not end up on dusty shelves after well-meaning pilots lacking sustainability

- *'It's not only about the tech...It's about the teach!' **Ewan Macintosh***

We have been able to aspire to reach through;

Schools partnerships & International Collaboration – British Council in partnership with DFID has a schools programme in order to enrich education and develop 21st century skills. This is achieved by facilitating collaboration between schools and communities around the world to collaborate on global issues. It is also transforming the teaching and learning process and supporting technology, research and innovation as an enabler

Digital in Schools is helping to improve ICT use in innovative teaching practice, helping teachers, hone their English language skills, and providing content to help educators increase their students' knowledge and ability to engage in a global environment. As British Council we are rolling out the Digital in Schools in 16 countries across SSA including Rwanda, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Sudan, South Sudan, South Africa, Malawi, Botswana, Sierra Leone and Senegal.

And out of those 16 countries, six of them are established under **The Badiliko Project**, which is the first project to be implemented as part of the new global partnership between Microsoft and the British Council. We have almost completed establishing 90 digital hubs across the 6 countries which include Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Ethiopia, Ghana and Nigeria.

Stats:
4,200 schools in partnerships

9,000 teachers trained in ICT and global citizenship

1,500 school leaders trained in leadership skills
77% of teachers say Connecting Classrooms improved
learners' academic achievement

English – While languages like Mandarin are increasingly important, English remains a key tool in terms of access to knowledge and ability to work across borders, which opens doors, which creates opportunities for mobility, education and which builds global communities. ICT – enables students and teachers to access all sorts of exciting material – our English programme offers solar powered MP3 players pre-loaded with hours of English material; exciting video material projected to large classes and even content rich laptops and tablets in the hands of groups of students or individuals. Used effectively all these mediums can help motivate learners to acquire the levels of fluency they need to access further and higher education.

Higher Education – How are we enhancing Higher Education through internationalization? Most countries in Africa have as one of their development plans and aspirations to transform their country into newly industrialising, middle-income countries providing a high quality life to all its citizens by the year. As well as increasing the numbers of students moving to Further Education (FE) & Higher Education (HE) is to ensure international ranking for student's achievement in maths, science and technology. Working with leading HE specialists we as British Council are commissioning a regional research project to analyse the role of HE in development and what factors most influence this contribution.

Skills – How are we developing skills for employability? What about social entrepreneurship? Skills are important and ICT helps at two levels – hard skills like early grade reading and bringing the excitement of science to girls and boys but also the softer skills - enabling young people to research issues, to analyse results and present their results together across borders or to stakeholders. This is all about learning how to work in global teams – these are the skills of the C12st. A bigger work force able to collaborate with workers around the world adds even more to global competitiveness.

I have spoken about;

- the value of ICT in helping students broaden their horizons & learn from each other and work globally;

- how a growing labour force of youngsters with these skills can only speed Africa's progress in development;

- how ICT can help improve equity – encouraging more girls to study maths and science and more girls to progress not only from basic to secondary education but also from secondary to tertiary education.

- For us, as we have seen in our partnership with Microsoft, **The Badiliko Project**, requires effective school leadership to drive for sustainability and to inspire teachers to be innovative; it needs sound professional development and IT skills for the teachers themselves; it needs exciting, easy to use and relevant content and it needs technology that works. If you have these ingredients kids and young people will have the future we all want.

It is great to see the broad mix of participating sectors in this conference, which inevitably creates more interest in building public private partnerships. This is a huge agenda and one that is fast moving as technology seems to open doors faster than we can progress through them.

In all this as I frequently remind colleagues in the British Council, the role of Ministries like Education and Higher Education and Communications is crucial, you train the teachers, you set the standards and you pay those who do all the work. Above all you set the direction and the strategy –such a wide range of stakeholders and interested parties to contribute through conferences like this will create a transparent and inclusive approach to implementing ICT policies with in the curriculum that will give African countries a genuine competitive advantage in the 21st Century.

With that, I will pose a few pertinent questions to all of us:

1) Are we providing relevant curriculum that meets the needs of students today and equips them to meet challenges of tomorrow?

2) Are we prepared to stop talking about numbers of computers and focus more on the impact of teaching and learning

3) Are we building international partnerships that allow true and equitable sharing of the ownership of the knowledge?