Conclusions and Implications

1. Many countries in the region reported of having developed a policy and master plan on teacher training on ICT. Yet these plans still need to be looked into more carefully to link them to the broader ICT for development and education goals – they need to be updated, encouraging a movement from developing basic computer literacy competencies to ICT-integrated teaching/learning. Many countries are realizing that they have developed their ICT in education policy from the technology perspective and understand the need to revise and overhaul the policy from the pedagogy-based perspective.

2. There is a clear need for countries to formulate their basic standards/benchmarks and ICT competencies for teachers, managers and students that can serve as a basis for developing teacher training programmes on ICT.

3. While basic computer literacy and software applications need to be taught to teachers and other professionals, they should be offered as an integral part of the teaching and learning process or as pedagogical tools rather than as applications per se. Countries should now start moving forward in developing their training courses to focus on the development of skills in the pedagogy-based and integrated use of ICT into the subject curricula and classroom teaching.

4. Intertwined with the need for training programmes to focus on the development of skills in the pedagogy-based and integrated use of ICT into teaching is the corresponding need to build a critical mass of trainers in the countries that have a mastery of knowledge and skills in this area.

5. Training programmes should always start with an introduction of the rationale and purpose of using ICT in teaching/learning, the role of teachers in the new ICT environment and how they can benefit from the use of ICT, even before the technical aspect is given. Experience in certain countries has shown that without the motivational push, teachers do not bring back what they have learned into classroom application.
6. The issue of whether troubleshooting and technical maintenance should be included in the training of all teachers or only given to selected key teachers needs to be considered more carefully.

7. The value of training principals and headmasters together with the teachers (but on a different stream) is beginning to be recognized in many countries in the region and practiced by a few. This trend should be replicated and expanded to other countries as well.

8. Similarly, extending the training facilities and programmes to the community, such as to the parents, can benefit school-based programmes in terms of support to both teachers and students. This approach also provides access to resources that can help improve community life.

9. There is now a growing body of tested training modules and materials that can be replicated or adapted by countries planning to implement new training programmes. The issues of sharing, copyright and open source need to be addressed to break the barriers that prevent the poorer countries or marginalized areas from tapping into this wealth of resources.

10. The inventory of teacher training on ICT programmes initiated by UNESCO should go beyond profiling into serving a clearing house and depository of actual copies of training modules and materials on ICT.

11. Best practices and lessons learned in teacher training/professional development on ICT should be documented in a more in-depth manner, as it is more cost-effective and wiser to learn from other countries’ experiences which have pioneered in this area and have accumulated lessons learned, rather than starting from zero.

12. The huge amounts of resources invested in teacher training programmes will only pay off if teachers go back to their schools with continuing support in terms of facilities/equipment, connectivity, appropriate software installed, materials and technical and help-desk support.

13. Countries should now start venturing out into gradual use of online learning combined with the face-to-face mode of delivery – selecting parts of the training programme that can easily be implemented online.
14. To enable countries to learn from each other, especially those less advanced countries learning from the more developed ones, attachments and study visits should be considered.

15. To enable countries to have equal access to the wealth of training resources that are beginning to grow, digital/electronic copies of these should be made available on the Internet as open source, gathered by UNESCO through a Web-based clearing house.