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First, during this very brief presentation, I will discuss the Trust for the Americas and the Organizational Work Force within the OAS, there Organization of American States. I will then try to present to you the POETA Program, and I will then present all the other ICT Solutions that enable us to train people with disabilities especially in Latin America. First and foremost, the Trust for the Americas is a non-profit organization affiliated with the OAS, the Organization of American States, that was established in 1997 to facilitate public and private sectors through participation in projects that reflect the main goals of the OAS and the Summit for the Americas.

The Trust's mission is to mobilize resources to fight against poverty and to promote democracy through actions that are socially, environmentally, and economically sustainable. The Trust currently has two initiatives, Governance and Transparency and ICTs for Development. It is precisely within this last initiative that the Trust is implementing the POETA Program, Partnership in Opportunity for Employment through Technology in the Americas. The POETA Program trains people with disabilities in the use of ICTs and job readiness skills, thus changing lives and democratizing connectivity in the Americas. POETA's objective is to provide for a person with disabilities to develop skills through ICTs and to further their education and activeness in the work place with active participation in community activities.

The program has three main components. The first is our Technology Center where we train people with disabilities in Microsoft Curriculum. Microsoft, by the way, is our main donor. We use Microsoft Unlimited Potential curriculum where we train them in Word, Excel, Publisher, etc. These tools will enable them to have a better life. However, the main idea is to create and help in the interaction in a way with the social integration of people with disabilities.

The second main component of our program is the job readiness skills. We do not want to train people with disabilities and not just does anything with that. Our main purpose is to

bring them into the job market and therefore we have created a job readiness model that trains people with disability and how to create a CV, how to make a presentation, how to dress for a presentation, hoping that will bring them to a job market, of course with the training in ICT.

Our last component is the public awareness campaigns, as part of the OAS multi-lateral organization in Washington DC, we have contacts in government and the private sector, and we leverage those contacts in a way to entice public and private sector companies to reinsert people with disabilities into the job market and to offer them a place in their companies. Our objective is not to create centers, but to do it through local organizations. They are the ones having the infrastructure and they are the ones who are in charge of everything. That is the reason why we selected them to be our partners.

Our organization was born in 2004 out of a project in Guatemala where we established two centers and trained 500 people with disabilities. Thanks to the success of this program. In 2005, Microsoft decided to expand into seven countries in the hemisphere with thirteen centers in 2005. In 2006, we opened 17 additional centers for a total of 30 countries in the hemisphere. This year we will be opening 10 additional centers in 13 countries in the hemisphere. I am also pleased to announce that Canada just recently gave us half a million dollars to implement this project in the eastern Caribbean states. We will have centers in Honduras, Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, Panama, Ecuador, Peru, Columbia, Venezuela and Argentina.

Why people with disabilities? It is very simple. Approximately 50 million people now in Latin America are disabled. 80% of 90% of them are unemployed and not in the work force. 82% are living in poverty. Unemployment rate of disabled is estimated because 91% in Mexico 75% of the population of people with disabilities are unemployed. It is our responsibility to give these people with the tools they need so that they can be reinserted into the job market and have a better life.

Lastly, I want to focus on the ICT solutions that enabling us to provide this training for people with disabilities especially in Latin America. They are using adaptive technology, which are products for people who do not use a regular version of the product. The technology used in the POETA Program includes, but is not limited to:

- Trackballs are a bigger version of the mouse. Sometimes people do not use the trackball in adaptive technology because this can be use by people with or without disabilities. However, this device allows the person to better use of the computer and especially in conjunction with hand wands and mouth sticks; people who have tremors in their hands can use this with their feet.
- We also have voice-activated software such as Dragon Naturally Speaking that allows the user to dictate into almost any Windows-based application quickly and accurately.
- We also use Intellikeys, which is an alternative keyboard attached to any computer and enables students with physical, visual, cognitive disabilities to easily type, navigate screen displays and execute many commands.
- For blind people, we also have JAWS (Job Access With Speech). It is a screen reader and its purpose is to maximize windows accessibility to blind or visually impaired users.

I want to end this presentation by inviting all of you from public and private sectors to contribute for the development and expansion of POETA throughout the hemisphere.