Information and Communications Technology and Disaster Risk Reduction Division

Concept Note

Expert Group Meeting on Digital Connectivity for Sustainable Development, United Nations Conference Centre (UNCC), Bangkok, Thailand, 3-4 October 2016.

Background:

It is well-recognized that Information Communications Technology (ICT) is a key enabler for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the goals of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS). Furthermore, as a meta-infrastructure ICT supports a wide range of other infrastructures and activities across the whole spectrum of human endeavours that promote sustainable development. Notwithstanding the efforts that each country and sub-region is making towards enhanced ICT connectivity, the broadband penetration in several Asia and the Pacific economies are still very low with widening gaps between countries. The digital divide within the Asia-Pacific region is in large part driven by missing physical infrastructure, inefficient internet traffic management, the cost of broadband and limited e-resilience.

In response, through ESCAP Resolution 71/10, ESCAP requested the Secretariat to establish an open-ended working group on the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway (AP-IS)[1]. In addition, the Secretariat was requested to conduct regional ICT analyses, including to update its fibre-optic terrestrial and submarine cable maps (in collaboration with ITU), and to collaborate with other relevant national and regional institutions. The first Working Group meeting[2] was held in Incheon, Republic of Korea in September 2015. As per the recommendations from the meeting, a Steering Group was established to develop an AP-IS Master Plan detailing the principles, deliverables, timeline and financing mechanisms with a regional cooperation framework document. The second Working Group meeting was held in Guangzhou, China PR on 29-30 August 2016. The members of the Working Group reviewed the draft Master Plan and Regional Cooperation Framework[3] on the AP-IS and recommended that it be presented to the first meeting of the Committee on Information and Communications Technology, Science, Technology and Innovations (CICTSTI) on 5-7 October 2016.

Objectives:

Against this background, the objectives of this Expert Group Meeting are to:

   a) Review state of ICT in Asia and the Pacific, discuss challenges and policy options;

   b) Discuss the regional review on implementation of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) action lines for the achievement of SDGs;

   c) Inform experts of the updates on the AP-IS draft Master Plan and Regional Cooperation Framework Document adopted at the second Working Group meeting held in China in August 2016.

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[1] ESCAP Resolution 71/10 <http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=E/ESCAP/RES/71/10>
[2] For further information on the first Working Group meeting, please visit <http://asdf.rcm-asiapacific-un.org/events/first-meeting-working-group-asia-pacific-information-superhighway>
[3] For further information on the draft Master Plan and Regional Cooperation Framework, please visit < http://www.unescap.org/resources/asia-pacific-information-superhighway-ap-master-plan>   and   < http://www.unescap.org/resources/asia-pacific-information-superhighway-ap-regional-cooperation-framework>

Expected Outcomes:

Participants obtain in-depth information and share expertise on the state of ICT in Asia-Pacific for sustainable development, including within the broader context of the WSIS action line implementation and SDGs achievements. Participants are informed on the draft AP-IS Master Plan and Regional Cooperation Framework Document in preparation for the Committee session.

Participants:

30 expert members of the AP-IS Working Group and Steering Group will be invited, in addition to participants from regional and international organizations.

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Agenda (Draft)

Day 1 : Monday 3 October 2016 Venue: UNCC, Room A (1ˢᵗ Floor)		
09:00 – 9:30		**Session 1**: Opening • Welcome remarks by Ms. Tiziana Bonapace, Director, SONCA, ESCAP • Opening Remarks by Mr. Banamali Bhowmick, Director-General, Department of ICT, ICT Division, Ministry of Posts, Telecommunications & Information Technology, Bangladesh (**Chairperson of the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway Working Group**. • Remarks by Dr. Yeong Ro Lee, Research Fellow/Special Advisor, Multilateral Cooperation Division, National Information Society Agency (NIA), **Chairperson of the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway Steering Group**. • Introduction of the EGM and participants • Objectives and structure of the meeting
9:30 – 10:15		**Session 2**: State of ICT 2016 – Uncovering the Widening Broadband Divide, Policy Challenges and Opportunities • State of ICT 2016 in Asia and the Pacific by Mr. Siope Vakataki 'Ofa, Economic Affairs Officer, ICT and Development Section (IDS), Information and Communications Technology and Disaster Risk Reduction Division (IDD), ESCAP • ICT and Disaster Risk Reduction Gateway Overview by Mr. Preminda Fernando and Mr. Jonas Flake, ICT and Development Section (IDS), Information and Communications Technology and Disaster Risk Reduction Division (IDD), ESCAP • Q&A
10:15 – 10:30		Break
10:30 – 12:00		**Session 3**: Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway (AP-IS) – An update • Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway Overview by Mr. Dongjung Lee, ICT Expert, ICT and Development Section (IDS), Information and Communications Technology and Disaster Risk Reduction Division (IDD),

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		• Summary discussion from the Chairperson of the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway Working Group, Mr. Banamali Bhowmick, Director General, Department of ICT, ICT Division, Ministry of Posts, Telecommunications & Information Technology, Bangladesh. • Q&A
12:00 – 13:15		Lunch
13:15 – 15:30		**Session 4**: Update on the AP-IS Master Plan Initiatives and Regional Cooperation Framework Document • Dr. Yeong Ro Lee, Research Fellow/Special Advisor, Multilateral Cooperation Division, National Information Society Agency (NIA), Chairperson of the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway Steering Group. • Q&A
15:30 – 15:45		Break
15:45 – 17:00		**Session 4:** The AP-IS: Way Forward • Summary of the discussions and salient points by Ms. Atsuko Okuda, Chief, ICT and Development Section (IDS), Information and Communications Technology and Disaster Risk Reduction Division (IDD), ESCAP • Q&A
Day 2 Tuesday 4 October 2016 **Venue: UNCC, MR C+D**		
09:00 – 10:30		**Regional Review of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) Action Line Implementation Meeting** **Session 1**: Opening Remarks
10:30 – 11:00		**Break**
11:00 – 12:30		**Session 2:** Introduction to WSIS Regional Review
12:30 – 13:15		**Lunch**
Venue: UNCC, Conference Room 4 (1ˢᵗ Floor)		
13:15 – 15:30		**Asia-Pacific Regional Internet & Development Dialogue** **Session 3**: WSIS and Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific (45 minutes) Facilitator – ESCAP • Multi-stakeholder views on WSIS • Identification of good practices • Structure of the future regional review • Q&A **Session 4**: Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway (AP-IS) (45 minutes) Facilitator – ESCAP • Digital divide in Asia-Pacific • Fixed broadband infrastructure development • E-resilience • ICT connectivity cooperation at the regional level

		• Q&A •
15:30 - 16:00		**Break**
16:00 – 17:00		**High-level Roundtable Forum:** Harnessing the Internet of Opportunity for Asia-Pacific