

Connecting economies and empowering people

The Asia Pacific information superhighway and regional cooperation for better ICT connectivity

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ICT for Development

- ICT plays a **central role in sustainable development**:
 - Development enhancing applications (e-education, e-health, business information etc.)
 - Enabling infrastructure (supports innovation, smart grids, intelligent transport systems)
- Asia-Pacific is the most digitally-divided region in World, with only 6% of Asia-Pacific developing population connected to highspeed Internet
- This is in large part driven by **cost of broadband**. Cost of a monthly subscription to fixed broadband as a % of monthly GNI:
 - less than 1% in ESCAP developed countries
 - Over 18% in ESCAP developing countries (39% in LDCs, 46% in Pacific SIDS).
 Official target is 5%
- Despite rapid progress in mobile broadband penetration, ESCAP developing countries are not catching up: risk of increasing digital divide



Rising need for ICT infrastructure

- Between 2010-2020, it is estimated that Asia-Pacific region needs to spend about **US\$ 800 billion for ICT infrastructure**;
- **Regional coordination** is required to improve ICT connectivity and increase interconnections between national networks:
- Asia-Pacific information superhighway initiative is to promote better ICT infrastructure for better connectivity
 - Promoting seamless regional connectivity between land and sea based ICT infrastructure to provide affordable, reliable and high-speed fixed broadband Internet for all.





Asia Pacific information superhighway initiative

• APIS concept defined after conduction of **research and analysis** that exposed gaps and need for better regional coordination in **4 sub-areas** (4 pillars):

- 1. Physical infrastructure upgrade and interconnection
- 2. Internet traffic management
- 3. Building regional network **resilience**
- 4. Promoting broadband access in **underserved areas**

• ESCAP carried out **subregional in-depth studies on broadband infrastructure** to explore causes of digital divide. Also reviewed existing connecting infrastructure by creating **maps of transmission infrastructure**

• Results were presented and discussed with **experts in respective subregions**, and at the **ESCAP ICT Committee**

• Resolution 71/10: ESCAP countries called for creation of **open-ended Working Group on Asia Pacific information superhighway** to move forward with implementation



Objectives of this Working Group

Improving regional cooperation on ICT connectivity

- Establish priority activities / projects for funding.
- Identify **specific areas** for regional co-operation
- Establish a **task force** for carrying work forward between working group sessions
- Lay out mandate and activity for ESCAP



Theme 1: Physical Infrastructure Investment Needed

- Currently in developing Asia: "backhaul networks are poorly meshed and follow a **"river system" pattern** whereby networks spread from submarine landing stations thinning out into countries' hinterlands" (OECD).
- This results in **insufficient terrestrial interconnectivity**, limits competition,
- Potential synergies in co-deployment of fiber along roads, railways, energy infrastructure as 80% of cost of fiber deployment is civil engineering work
- Asia Highway and Trans-Asian Railway networks could be used
- Promotion of **open-access principle** on such networks to improve competition, drive down cost



Theme 2: Improved Internet Traffic Management

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- To support user demand, industry recommendations call for countries to be able to deliver broadband capacities at 10 Mbps.
- International internet traffic is affected by hair-pinning: data transits through far away 3rd countries (USA, EU), when travelling between 2 neighbouring ESCAP countries or





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