



UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC (ESCAP)

INTERNATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATION UNION (ITU)

ASIA-PACIFIC TELECOMMUNITY (APT)

Sixteenth Meeting of the regional Interagency Working Group (IWG) on Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)

22 November 2012
Bangkok

REPORT¹

¹ This document has been issued without formal editing.

1. The Sixteenth meeting of the Regional Interagency Working Group (IWG) on Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) was jointly organized by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), and the Asia-Pacific Telecommunity (APT) on 22 November 2012 at the United Nations Conference Centre, Bangkok.
2. During the meeting the participants (i) exchanged views on recent ICT development and its trends in the Asia-Pacific region, and provided information on activities completed and planned, and (ii) discussed the areas for future collaboration including area of “Building disaster emergency communications capacities of countries with special need”.
3. The meeting was attended by representatives from United Nations agencies, regional and other inter-governmental Organizations. There was also a participation of other entities, as observers. The programme of the meeting and the list of the participants are attached as annex 1 and annex 2, respectively.
4. Opening remarks were delivered by Ms. Shamika Sirimanne, Director, Information and Communications Technology and Disaster Risk Reduction Division (IDD), ESCAP; Mr. Cosmas Zavazava, Chief of Department, Project and Knowledge Management, ITU; and Mr. Kraisorn Pornsutee, Deputy Secretary General, APT.
5. In her opening remarks, Ms. Shamika Sirimanne, Director, Information and Communications Technology and Disaster Risk Reduction Division (IDD), ESCAP, at the outset, welcomed the participants and expressed her appreciations for the IWG members for their continuous support to the work of the Working Group. She stated that the Asia and the Pacific was most digitally divided and highly disaster prone region in the World. The benefits from significant advances and explosive growth in new technologies (ICT including space-based) which had significant role in advancing development and disaster risk reduction had not been shared equitably with the region’s poor. She hoped that the joint efforts of the IWG would play an important role to address these issues and urged the members to collaborate in some areas of common interest.
6. In his opening remarks, Mr. Cosmas Zavazava, ITU appreciated ESCAP for providing the opportunity to participate in the meeting as representative of ITU which was remarkable for him. He introduced the participants about ITU activities in the field of telecommunications and ICT for development and disaster management. He specifically mentioned that the Asia and the Pacific was a diverse, scattered and highly disaster-prone region. Many developing countries in the region including Pacific Island developing countries do lack capacity to deal with disaster emergency situations and beyond (rescue and rehabilitation) effectively due to lack of availability timely information to the communities as well as to decisions makers. He proposed that for a larger impact, it was necessary to work together by pulling the expertise/resources. In this context, he expressed his willingness to collaborate with other agencies, in particular with ESCAP.
7. Mr. Kraisorn Pornsutee, Deputy Secretary General, APT started his opening remarks by welcoming all participants to the IWG meeting and by thanking ESCAP for hosting the meeting and providing excellent meeting facilities. He highlighted that disasters were common experiences in the Asia-Pacific region and their effects had been felt by everyone from large businesses and private sectors to the general public. He further highlighted the important role of telecommunications for disaster management. Noting the availability of limited financial resources, he encouraged all the members of IWG to collaborate effectively in the area of both ICT for development and disaster management during 2013.

8. Ms. Tiziana Bonapace, Chief, Information and Communications Technology and Development Section, IDD, ESCAP, made a presentation in the area of ICT infrastructure for Sustainable Development. She highlighted the role of ICT, as a meta-infrastructure that enhances efficiencies in resource-use, delivery of services and builds e-resilience across all other infrastructure sectors (e.g. transport, energy, water). She mentioned that in 2013, focus of the work would be on research and policy analysis in the following areas: (i) development of regionally comparable statistics through participation in global Partnership on Measuring ICT for development; (ii) mapping of broadband backbone infrastructure in the region, identifying gaps and missing transnational links in collaboration with ITU; (iii) estimation of infrastructure financing gap, including cost-benefit analysis of synchronizing infrastructure development across sectors; and (iv) policy analysis on regulatory bottlenecks and policy coordination, including options such as leveraging on agreed connectivity of AH or TAR.
9. Ms. Shamika Sirimanne, Director, IDD, ESCAP presented the ESCAP activities in the areas of ICT for development, space applications for sustainable development and disaster risk reduction. The structure of her presentation included brief introduction of ESCAP; post 2015 agenda in ICT area; and planned activities of Information and Communications Technology and Disaster Risk Reduction subprogramme for 2013. She highlighted that ICT and Development Section and APCICT would focus their activities on the following: ICT infrastructure for sustainable development, knowledge-networked societies and building E-resilience; and strengthening ICT for development capacities. The major focus of Space Application Section would be strengthening regional cooperation and partnership on space applications for disaster risk management and sustainable development, and organization of the follow-up activities to the outcomes of Regional meeting on implementation of Resolution 68/5 on “Asia-Pacific Years of Action for Applications of Space Technology and the Geographic Information System for Disaster Risk Reduction and Sustainable Development, 2012-2017” which would be held from 18-20 December 2012 in Bangkok. Lastly, she mentioned that the major focus of Disaster Risk Reduction Section in 2013 would be organization of the third session of the Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction, among others.
10. Mr. Cosmas Zavazava, ITU presented the ITU’s work in general. He mentioned that ITU had three main areas of activity organized in ‘Sectors’ (Radio-communication, Standardization, and Development) which work through conferences and meetings. Radiocommunication Sector (ITU-R) coordinates the vast and growing range of radiocommunication services, as well as the international management of the radio-frequency spectrum and satellite orbits. Telecommunication Standardization Sector (ITU-T) develops standards that are fundamental to the operation of today’s ICT networks. Telecommunication Development Sector (ITU-D) organizes a wide range of Conferences, Meetings and Workshops, including WTDC, TDAG as well as a series of ongoing Study Groups meetings. ITU-D activities were aimed at contributing to the creation of enabling regulatory and market environments, the efficient development technologies and networks and new ICT applications, promoting Digital Inclusion of people with special needs, undertaking capacity building activities, strengthening cybersecurity, helping develop emergency telecommunication networks, and boosting ICT’s input to climate change monitoring and mitigation. All this work is supported by the production of authoritative statistics and indicators.
11. Mr. Stuart Davies, Telecom Expert, APT provided an overview of the APT activities in 2013. He restated that the mission of APT was to contribute to the development of the telecommunications and ICT industry through promoting the expansion of telecommunications services, developing regional cooperation, and facilitating

coordination between regions. ICT Development and human resources development were shown to be the major components of the work programme of APT. He specifically mentioned the APT's 4th Workshop on Disaster Management / Communications (WDMC-4), planned to organize in Bangkok in July 2013, and 10th Asia Pacific Telecommunication and ICT Development Forum (ADF-10) planned to organize in July/August 2013 in Dhaka, and welcomed all the members for their participation in these meetings.

12. Mr. German Velasquez, Senior Regional Coordinator, Thailand/UNISDR introduced the PreventionWeb, an initiative of UNISDR launched in 2007 to serve the information needs of the disaster risk reduction community including the development of information exchange tools to facilitate collaboration. He demonstrated how this initiative had been providing information for disaster risk preparedness as well as rescue and rehabilitation process of the disaster risk management. He urged the IWG members to visit the website: <http://www.preventionweb.net> for more information. He then introduced the web-based open source database named DesInventar, which allowed the recording and analysis of the occurrence and effects of natural disasters. He showed how the tool was useful to identify patterns of damages in member countries and to verify the accuracy of hazard risk maps. For more information, he urged participants to visit the website: <http://www.desinventar.net>.
13. Mr. Li Peng, Representative of International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), Asia and Pacific Office, highlighted through a presentation the importance of ICT support for smooth and seamless flight operation and the rapid development of civil aviation. Need for improvements of ICT infrastructure in Pacific islands States to meet the requirements of civil aviation in the Pacific region was identified. Priority of ICT service is required for flight safety and collaborative decision making by the stakeholders. Concerns on information security for aeronautical and meteorological information exchange through public internet were expressed. Requirements of civil aviation sector for a reliable and redundant communication service were also illustrated. ICAO's representative supported to the joint efforts for contingency arrangements for ICT facilities in disaster situations and expressed interest to explore possibility for establishment of contingency communication arrangements through a solution of using a compact satellite terminal for voice and data communication.
14. Ms. Rosa M. Gonzalez of UNESCO/Bangkok, Asia-Pacific Bureau for Education stated that the work of UNESCO in ICT for Education focuses mainly on promoting education as a fundamental right, promoting freedom of expression, ensuring diversity of cultural expression, improving the quality of education, and stimulating experimentation, innovation and policy dialogue. She informed that UNESCO/Bangkok had been working with ITU regional office for Asia and the Pacific in this area. She informed the meeting that marking the 10th anniversary of the adoption of the Plan of Action of the World Summit on the Information Society, UNESCO, in cooperation with ITU, UNDP and UNCTAD, hosts in 2013 the first WSIS+10 Review meeting, in which world leaders, along with high-level participants from governments, the private sector, NGOs and other groups, to assess progress made and future ICT trends, which would impact all spheres of societies. It was also envisaged that the Conference would result in post-2015 recommendations.

15. Mr Keran Wang, Chief, Space Applications Section, IDD, ESCAP, made a presentation entitled "Connect People in Disasters to the Critical Information by Mobile Satellite Communication Terminals". He highlighted the essential role of space applications, including the mobile satellite communication, for providing the critical information to the people in serious disasters, such as satellite imagery, rescue and recovery solutions. The international and regional cooperation mechanism, such as International Charter for space and major disaster, Regional Space Applications Programme for Sustainable Development (RESAP) as well as its network and Community of Practices, Asia-Pacific Gateway for Disaster Risk Management and Development (Gateway for DRR), PreventionWeb and others, were reemphasized which would provide effective and efficient access to the current and planned information portals and expert networks related to disaster risk reduction. Test results of using a mobile satellite broadband communication terminal to access the satellite imagery were introduced. The results indicated that, during the serious disaster, the imagery and information products, rather than large volume raw data of the satellite images, would be more appropriated and easy for access by the users particularly in small island developing countries by using current broadband mobile communication terminal. It was proposed to collaborate among the IWG members to provide the information and knowledge on disaster risk reduction, support on hardware/airtime of mobile satellite communication and training/drill to enhance the capacity for disaster response and emergency communication of the countries with special needs, including Pacific island developing states.

Potential areas of collaboration in 2013:

16. The meeting had thorough discussions and proposed ideas for collaborations which are outlined below.
17. The meeting requested the IWG members to circulate their Work Programme of 2013 and requested each agency to identify the areas for collaborations in a timely manner.
18. The meeting suggested that ESCAP, ITU and other interested agencies organize joint activity to celebrate the World Telecommunication and Information Society Day (WTISD) on 17 May, 2013 as the previous practice.
19. IWG members noted the proposal of ESCAP to collaborate with ITU to conduct a joint study on Information Super highway in the region.
20. The IWG members recognized the importance of building disaster emergency communications capacity of countries with special needs, including Pacific Island Developing States. In this regard, ESCAP together with ITU and APT would work to develop a joint concept paper for this purpose.
21. Currently, there were only few countries in the region that were signatories and/or had ratified the Tampere Convention treaty which facilitates timely deployment and provision of reliable telecommunications for disaster rescue and relief operations, during the disaster emergency situations. In this regard, it was suggested that IWG members made joint efforts so that more countries become signatories and ratify the treaty.
22. The Meeting was concluded following the brief remarks by Ms. Sirimanne of ESCAP and Mr. Pornsutee of APT.

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22 November 2012

United Nations Conference Centre (UNCC), Meeting Room E, Bangkok

PROGRAMME

0900-0915	Opening remarks by Ms. Shamika Sirimanne, Director, Information and Communications Technology and Disaster Risk Reduction Division (IDD); ESCAP, Mr. Cosmas Zavazava, Chief of Department, Project and Knowledge Management, International Telecommunication Union (ITU); and Mr. Kraisorn Pornsutee, Deputy Secretary General, Asia Pacific Telecommunity (APT).
0915-0935	Coffee Break
0935-1015	Presentations on ICT including Information Super Highway (<i>by ESCAP and other interested UN agencies/regional/subregional organizations, 5 minutes each</i>)
1015-1125	Brief presentations on ICT activities (including ICT for development and disaster risk reduction) and planning for 2013 (<i>by ESCAP, ITU and APT, and other UN agencies/regional/subregional organizations, 5 minutes each</i>)
1125-1200	Potential areas of collaboration in 2013 and beyond.
1200-1205	Other matters.
1205-1210	Closing Remarks by Director, IDD, ESCAP; and Deputy Secretary General of APT.
1210	End of Meeting

FOR PARTICIPANTS ONLY



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LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

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