UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMMISSION FOR ASIA
AND THE PACIFIC (UNESCAP)

INTERNATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATION UNION (ITU)

ASIA-PACIFIC TELECOMMUNITY (APT)

Thirteenth meeting of the Regional Interagency Working Group on Information and
Communication Technologies (ICT)

20 November 2009
Bangkok

REPORT

This document has been issued without formal editing.

I. Organization of the Meeting

1. The thirteenth meeting of the Regional Interagency Working Group (IWG) on Information and Communication Technology (ICT) was held at UNCC, Bangkok on 20 November 2009. It was jointly organized by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), the International Telecommunication Union Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (ITU ROAP), and the Asia Pacific Telecommunity (APT). The meeting was attended by representatives of twelve United Nations entities and International/Regional Inter-governmental Organizations, and Microsoft was invited as observer. The programme of the meeting and the list of the participants are attached.

2. The meeting was started with an opening remark read by Mr Wu Guoxiang, on behalf of Mr. Xuan Zengpei, Director, Information and Communication Technology and Disaster Risk Reduction Division (IDD), ESCAP. The statement congratulated the Asia Pacific Telecommunity (APT) on its 30th Anniversary, a milestone marks 30 years of partnership among ESCAP, ITU and APT, and pointed out the objective of the Meeting: as follow-up to the 12th meeting of the IWG to discuss major concepts proposed for joint actions and explore major fields for future interagency cooperation. In this connection, Mr. Xuan proposed the collaborative field of disaster reduction, since the first session of the Committee of Information and Communications Technology (CICT), held in November 2008, recommended that ESCAP to explore possibilities for developing regional and subregional disaster-communication standby systems in synergy with the ITU, APT and relevant stakeholders.

3. Mr Wisit Atipayakoon, delivered the opening remark on behalf of Ms. Eun-Ju Kim, Head of ITU ROAP, and emphasized the need of collaboration among UN agencies, development organizations and other potential partners in promoting ICT for disaster management, especially in emergency communications.

4. Mr. Takamichi Kajiwara, Programme Officer of APT, in his opening remarks, emphasized that APT was focusing some of its programmes on disaster communications, prevention and management by the use of ICT in the Asia-Pacific region.

II. Summary of the meeting: presentations and discussions

ESCAP Presentation

5. Representative of ESCAP, summarizing the functions for communications at different disaster risk management phases and relevant capacity needs: i) satellite mobile for reporting after disasters; for receiving early warning from relevant authorities, and for supporting field actions at early response stages; ii) cellular mobile in major disaster prone areas should be resilient for continuing or restoring local mobile service to support field actions, including an interface for connection with satellite terminals; iii) broadband is needed to support networks, cellular mobile, video/audio conferences, news reporting, tele-medicine and WiFi functions; iv) Internet connection, including WiFi, should ensure bandwidth to support all these IP based communications; v) network congestions of cellular and satellite mobile may happened due to dramatic increase of the calls, and

advanced arrangement could be made to allocate more bandwidth resources and identify priority users; and vi) arranged for cross-boundary shipment of telecommunication should be made before possible occurrence of major disasters. He highlighted that collaborative building of disaster communication capacity is necessary, since such capacity is expected to be rarely used, and it might not be cost-effective to establish such capacity by each country individually. He suggested that such collaborative capacity might include advanced distribution of satellite mobile to communities prone to major disasters, and collaborative stand-by of identified equipment, through multi-stakeholder and public-private approach. ESCAP also informed the Meeting with two additional project concepts for improving ICT connectivity in rural areas and for developing open source software for inclusive and sustainable development in least developed countries (LDCs) in Asia and the Pacific through public-private partnerships (PPP).

ITU Presentation

6   The representative of ITU informed the Meeting about the ITU initiative on "ITU Framework for Cooperation in Emergencies (IFCE)" which is a global framework aiming at provision of assistance in response to disasters. The IFCE comprises three clusters, namely; technology cluster, finance cluster and logistics cluster. He also presented two proposals to the meeting: 1) Asia-Pacific Regional Platform for Disaster Communication Management, which aims to provide a   single point of contact for countries requesting for ICT assistance in response to disasters and to provide technical assistance as well as to facilitate coordination between assistance providers and requesters for deployment of ICT resources (human, ICT equipment and services). The proposed platform could apply the IFCE model but at the regional level; 2) Development of the National Emergency Telecommunications Plan (NETP) and standard operating procedure which aim at assisting countries to assess their existing telecom/ICT resources which could be utilized in time of emergencies and to identify critical information infrastructure as well as telecom vulnerabilities in order to find ways for protection and to forge partnerships for relevant preparedness. The NETP is supposed to be part of the national disaster management framework. He also highlighted importance of the Tampere Convention on the Provision of Telecommunication Resources for Disaster Mitigation and Relief Operations.

APT Presentation

7   The representative of APT informed the meeting their initiatives in the Asia-Pacific region in the form of meetings, workshops, training courses, pilot projects, ministerial summits declarations and statements, strategic plans and technical recommendations to global events. to champion disaster communications, prevention, management and recovery using ICT. Against this background, APT held the Asia Pacific Ministerial Meeting on Strengthening Regional Collaboration towards Broadband Economy held in Bali, Indonesia, November 2009. He also elaborated the APT Recommendations on "Use of the band 4940-4990 MHZ for Public Protection and Disaster Relief (PPDR) Applications" and "Radiocommunication systems for early warning and disaster relief operations" were also elaborated. He concluded that APT Disaster Management Plan Activities aim to promote disaster preparedness and restoration by the use of ICT and the

benefits of ICTs in disaster prevention and management and facilitate the development of ICT skills for disaster management.

World Food Programme (WFP) Presentation

8   The representative of WFP shared his experience on the operational emergency communications preparedness and response, and lesson learned during the Indonesia West Sumatera Earthquake occurred on 30 September 2009, which claimed more than 1,000 lives. As the lead agency responsible for emergency and security communication and logistics clusters, WFP is entrusted in provision of communication capacities for UN entities during emergency actions. He further explained how the congestions of cellular and satellite mobile had dampened the communication among the relief operation teams and highlighted the importance of immediate operational services vis-a-vis medium-long term's requirement and national response capacity and understanding of interagency activities from different actors.

Microsoft Presentation

9   The representative of Microsoft Corporation, invited as observer to the meeting, informed the Meeting on Microsoft's initiatives on ICT for disaster management: OneResponse Platform, a website designed in collaboration with IASC to enhance humanitarian coordination within cluster approach to support predictable exchange of information in emergencies at the country level, that are used by clusters on information management and information technology issues in humanitarian response; Disaster Management Infrastructure Optimization (DMIO) aims to assist the countries assess and improve ICT capacities for disaster management; and ICT for DRR training for government leaders.

III.   Discussion on major fields for future inter-agency cooperation

10   Representative from UNEP Regional Resource Centre for Asia and the Pacific recommended the Meeting to consider establish a "disaster and conflict theme" homepage through multi-stakeholders partnership to address the urgent need of delivery of ICT support for disaster management. In this context, ESCAP invited UNEP as well as WFP to share their experience in disaster management and climate change adaptation and contribute to the Asia Pacific Disaster Report, particularly on chapter six : Applications of space, information and communications technology for disaster risk reduction and management.

11   Representative of International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), Asia and Pacific Office emphasized that usually high percentage of airport and air transportation infrastructure gets damaged during a severe disaster, but the demand for the flow of air traffic gets increased significantly after the disaster. Critical air/ground and ground/ground communication, navigation and surveillance facilities and services including additional equipment from other countries may be immediately required to be imported and put into operation on a temporary basis. ICAO recommended that ESCAP may take a leading role in coordinating cross-boundary regulatory related issues to

facilitate delivery of the relevant equipment and other ICT equipment for provision of air traffic service. A database containing focal points for facilitation in each country for major disaster response actions needs to be established.

12   Representative from Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC) recommended to work on a detail mapping of disaster risk management communication capacity, includes emergency response to cross-border pandemic threat, and expressed that ADPC would provide necessary training in this context.

13   Representative from Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) secretariat, highlighted that SEAMEO is interested to participate in the interagency regional cooperation mechanism where their experience of cooperation with UNESCO, ASEAN and UNICEF can be shared.

IV.   Conclusion of the inter-agency cooperation

14   The meeting agreed to confirm the establishment of regional disaster risk management communication capacity for Asia and the Pacific as the first area for interagency cooperation, and suggested to develop a joint-concept on it, with emphasis on multi-stakeholder and public-private partnership approaches. Other inter-agency cooperation fields would be further identified.

15.   The Meeting agreed to establish a task force comprising interested agencies to promote the inter-agency cooperation, and suggested ESCAP, ITU to lead and prepare the draft concept as they have already started and to present it for discussion among the members of the IWG on ICT online.

13th Meeting of the regional Interagency Working Group on Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)

20 November 2009

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

PROGRAMME

0900-0915	Opening Remarks by Mr. Xuan Zengpei, Director, IDD, ESCAP; ITU Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific and APT
0915-0935	ESCAP Presentations on i) collaborative development of disaster management communication capacity with public-private partnership approaches and ii) ICT applications for inclusive and sustainable development in least developed countries (LDCs) of Asia and the Pacific
0935-0955	ITU presentations on the highlights of the initiative to establish an emergency communications mechanism for disaster prevention and management as guided by i) ITU Framework for Cooperation in Emergencies (IFCE) and ii) National Emergency Telecommunications Plan (NETP)
0955-1015	APT presentations on the highlights of APT Initiatives on ICT for Disaster Prevention and Management
1015-1030	Break
1030-1115	Brief presentations by other agencies and Microsoft on their ICT activities and proposals for cooperation and partnership including reporting on progress in following up of the recommendations from the Twelfth IWG meeting held on 10 June 2009
1115-1145	Discussion on major fields for future inter-agency cooperation
1145-1200	Other matters
1200	End of the meeting

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LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

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