

FOR PARTICIPANTS ONLY

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

INTERNATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATION UNION (ITU)

ASIA-PACIFIC TELECOMMUNITY (APT)

Eleventh Meeting of the Regional Interagency Working Group on Information and
Communication Technologies (ICT)

25 February 2008
Bangkok

DRAFT REPORT

This document has been issued without formal editing.

I. Organization of the Meeting

1. The Eleventh Meeting of the Regional Interagency Working Group on Information and Communication Technology (IWG) was held at UNCC, Bangkok on 25 February 2008. It was jointly organized by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), the International Telecommunication Union Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (ITU ROAP), and the Asia Pacific Telecommunity (APT). The Meeting had discussions on programmes and initiatives as follow up to the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society after 5 years (WSIS+5), the preparation to Telecom Asia, and Pacific Connectivity initiatives, in addition to proposals for partnership and cooperation for ICT4D. The meeting was attended by representatives of ten United Nations Organizations, International/Regional and Inter-governmental Organizations including the UNESCAP Secretariat. The list of the participants is attached.
2. The meeting was opened and chaired by Mr Siva Thampi, Director, Information, Communication and Space Technology. In his opening statement, Mr Siva Thampi, Director, Information, Communication and Space Technology Division (ICSTD), UNESCAP, welcomed and thanked the participants for their continuous cooperation and support provided to the work of the Regional Interagency Working Group on ICT since its inception. Mr. Thampi pointed out that the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) highlighted the importance of the regional dimensions of the Information Society, and that the Summit assigned to the Regional Commissions the task of moderating and facilitating the implementation of action line C11, International and regional cooperation, of the WSIS Plan of Action.
3. Mr. Thampi also informed the members that at the coming 64th Session of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific in April 2008, Member States will share lessons learned and insights gained from country-level implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of major global conferences, including the WSIS. He highlighted that the commission could be the first regional event organized for WSIS+5. He suggested that the impact of ICT on climate change could be examined as an overarching theme for WSIS+5. He then touched on “Delivering as One”, expressing his gratitude to ITU for suggesting a “One UN Pavilion” at the upcoming ITU organized event, Telecom Asia 2008. He also hoped for delivering as One on current and futures initiatives regarding Pacific Connectivity.
4. In her opening remarks, Ms. Eun-Ju Kim, Head, ITU Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (ITU ROASP) emphasized on the need for strengthening the theme of Delivering as one UN. She highlighted the following major ITU led events of this year Global Industry Leaders Forum & Global Symposium for Regulators (March 10-13, 2008), ICT & Climate Change, (April & June, 2008), TELECOM Asia (September 2-5, 2008) and Connect Asia-Pacific Summit (TBC) that can serve as a platform for inter agency cooperation. She also highlighted the areas of cooperation underway with agencies such as UNESCAP, UNHCR, IMO etc. and informed of the initiatives especially in relation to one UN platform during TELECOM Asia.
5. In order to strengthen co-operation, Ms. Kim called for identification of a focal point for ICT in each of the agencies in Asia and the Pacific region, which would serve as a window

for day to day co-operation in the areas of common work. She also stressed on the need to increase interagency cooperation through holding joint actions and information sharing.

6. In his statement, Mr. Kraisorn Pornsutee, Deputy Secretary General, Asia-Pacific Telecommunity (APT) welcomed the members of the IWG and mentioned that the regional interagency working group on ICT was successfully meeting since 2001 with the aim of bringing synergies and developing partnership among the members. He assured APT current and future cooperation with other agencies, including ITU and UNESCAP.
7. The opening statements were followed by brief introduction of the participants and the ICT related activities undertaken by UNDP, UNHCR UNODC, FAO, ICAO, ITU, UNIDO, APT, and UNESCAP.

II. Summary of the meeting presentations and discussions

8. Mr. Sameer Sharma, ITU, began his presentation with an overview of the ITU activities pertaining to the WSIS Action Lines, Millennium Development Goals, and its linkages with ICT. He informed the participants of the global initiatives taken with respect to WSIS Action Lines C2 and C5 for which ITU was the moderator. Specific mention was made to “Connect the World initiative” and “Global Cybersecurity Agenda”. He also highlighted the success of “Connect Africa Summit”, which was able to draw commitments of USD 55 Billion to improve connectivity in the continent.
9. Following the global initiatives relating to WSIS, Mr. Sharma briefed the participants on the six global development programs of the ITU, the five specific initiatives for the Asia-Pacific region and the capacity building programs under Centre of Excellence Network in Asia and the Pacific. He detailed the regional actions planned for 2008 under these programs and initiatives and called for partnerships amongst the agencies.
10. In accordance with the agenda, he explained the various activities and projects in the Pacific which deal with policy & regulation, infrastructure development and capacity building. Mr. Sharma specifically mentioned the projects being undertaken in partnership with the Government of Australia and the European Commission. Towards the end, he provided a brief description of the initiatives undertaken by ITU on ICT and Climate Change and encouraged all UN Agencies to participate and contribute in the forthcoming Symposiums organised by ITU on Climate Change in Tokyo in April and UK (June).
11. In conclusion, the representative of the ITU called for greater co-operation through joint programs and information exchange amongst the agencies on our activities in the region.
12. Ms. Rowena C. Morales, UNHCR, said that UNHCR would be interested in providing access to ICT to vulnerable groups, such as refugee women and children. Another area of interest was emergency and disaster communications, where they have experience from a deep field operation point of view. The representative sought more information on existing projects, including Emergency and Disaster Communication. She also called for the participation of WHO who have recently set up in Kuala Lumpur a Global Service Center that provides back-office support to WHO offices world-wide.
13. Mr. Lars Bestle, UNDP, informed about the closing of the Asia-Pacific Development Information Programme (APDIP) of UNDP and of the new orientation of the work of UNDP on e-governance. The focus was on mainly local e-governance, to offer better public

services to all, including ethnic minorities and refugees. He also mentioned the UNDP Regional Initiative on Indigenous Peoples' Rights and Development¹ which aimed to strengthen policy dialogue on indigenous peoples' rights and sustainable development; to build networks and facilitate information sharing amongst indigenous peoples; and to support capacity development of all stakeholders. He also informed the IWG about recent publications of UNDP related to e-governance interoperability and expressed interest to build partnerships in these areas.

14. Mr. Michael Riggs, FAO, informed that FAO was the facilitator for WSIS Action Line 7 on e-agriculture, and said that there were recent efforts to build on interest in e-agriculture at the regional level. He informed of the recent launch of the e-agriculture.org website², a global initiative to enhance sustainable agricultural development and food security by improving the use of ICT and associated technologies in the agricultural sector. As one focus of FAO is on Human Capacity Building, he expressed interest about possible cooperation with ITU Centres of Excellence in this area, and in ITU TELECOM Asia. He identified Capacity Building and Climate Change amongst potential areas for collaboration
15. Ms. Olivia Sylvia O. Inciong, UNODC, specifically discussed the involvement of UNODC after disaster, especially in case of human trafficking of and psychological impact to victims of disasters. She informed that UNODC was working on initiatives that would bring the victims back to main society. She also mentioned the success against clandestine drug producing industries through effective engagement and highlighted the role of ICT as an information tool for law making and judicial organizations. UNODC is interested in cooperation for improving usage of ICT among judicial and enforcement authority.
16. Ms. Kim, ITU, noted that ITU CoE would be a possible way of cooperation for providing training on e-agriculture, improving ICT usage and information flow among enforcement authorities. She also felt that ITU could use UNDP publications for training purposes. More generally, she mentioned a possible cooperation for cross-distributing each agency publications and products to all the stakeholders, in order to enhance their diffusion and make the most of interagency cooperation.
17. APT inquired the possibility of cooperation with respect to the programs and events proposed by the ITU as he mentioned that several training courses have already been implemented by APT through the support of the Government of Japan. Regarding the coming ITU Telecom Asia 2008, he inquired whether Telecom Asia through ITU would put up one pavilion as an umbrella platform to all the UN organization including APT for a free space during the show in Thailand.
18. ITU mentioned that they are still coming up with an idea of having the pavilion and inform the participants to the coming meeting of head of organization this middle of March.
19. Mr. Sujin K. Saraswati, ICAO, informed the members about ICAO migration from a closed system to using the IP protocol and the Internet to share information. This information sharing though the Internet benefited in particular small Pacific Islands that could not afford the previous closed system. He proposed participation by ICAO at Kyoto & London meeting on ICT and Climate Change being organized by ITU.

¹ <http://regionalcentrebangkok.undp.or.th/practices/governance/ripp/>

² <http://www.e-agriculture.org/>

20. Mr. Miao Feng-Chun, UNESCO, presented two projects on ICT in Education: firstly, on policy making for ICT Education, with already 20 countries being trained and ICT in Education Policy Makers' Toolkit being available³. The second targeted teacher educators and teacher-training institution, to build and improve the capacities of teacher regarding the usage of ICT education. Institutional and individual level initiatives were undertaken in about 15 countries in the region. UNESCO was in the process of undertaking National Projects to work with governments on ICT to support literacy education, in particular how to work with telecentres on ICT for literacy education. The representative from UNESCO also provided details on the Capacity building CD-ROMs for ICT education that has been developed by UNESCO and welcomed the idea to share and build partnerships with initiatives of other agencies such as the ITU Centres of Excellence.
21. Mr. David Hastings, from UNESCAP, presented ESCAP's Pacific connectivity study⁴ and informed the delegates about the forthcoming leaders meeting on Pacific Connectivity in New Caledonia from March 12-13. Thanks to several focused studies by United Nations and other organizations on different aspects of Pacific telecommunications and connectivity, as well as assessments and proposals by the private sector, there was a wealth of information about the current telecommunications situation and potential for the Pacific, and about interesting practices elsewhere that might offer context for an improved Pacific approach. The study found that most or all previously claimed impediments to improved Pacific connectivity now have positive responses. It also found that the relatively high literacy rates combined with relatively low salary structures in many Pacific islands make them “inexpensive knowledge economies” ready to benefit in jobs, economic and social benefits from improved connectivity infrastructure and services. It sketched ideas for enhancing undersea cable and satellite access, terrestrial wireless to the last mile, and toward strengthened regional cooperation to assist the process.
22. Mr. Robledo Salvador, APT, informed the participants about the various activities being undertaken by APT in assisting the Pacific Islands countries for 2008. These include APT Expert Missions on Rural Communication Projects in F.S.Micronesia and Samoa through the support of the Government of Japan Extra Budgetary Contribution to APT, Sub-regional Meeting on Network Development for the Pacific, in Nadi last January 29-31, plan to hold the Telecommunication ICT Policy and Regulation Meeting for Pacific and the Sub-regional Workshop on Telecoms/ ICT Development and NGN for Pacific, September 15-16, 2008. He also apprised the meeting about last year's Workshop on Disaster Communications & Network Development and Telecom Policy & Regulation Meeting in Nadi and Auckland respectively. Mr. Salvador also mentioned that APT had supported a Pilot Projects initiative in Papua New Guinea such as the Tele-hausline to narrow the digital divide in the Asia-Pacific region by establishing pilot projects to ensure the access to ICT in rural areas of APT Member countries and to promote and develop ICT and Broadband development in the region.
23. One concern had been how to increase the capacities of Pacific residents, from top policymakers to individuals, on how to best make progress with beneficial connectivity enhancements. This Interagency Working Group on ICT, supplemented by the Council of

³ <http://www.unescobkk.org/index.php?id=toolkit>

⁴ <http://www.unescap.org/icstd/research/pacific-connectivity.asp>

Regional Organizations in the Pacific (CROP) members, trade associations (at their impartial win-win best) and development banks, might “de-facto” comprise a core body of balanced coaching and support for Pacific leaders, and other stakeholders in beneficial connectivity enhancements. As other agencies discussed their activities and interests, it would be interesting to hear comments on how such an advisory role could be fulfilled.

24. UNDP asked if the ECTEL model could be included among the recommendations of the report. The answer was that the ECTEL model is an interesting model that warranted further examination, taking into account its specificities. ITU asked about the objectives and strategy of the upcoming New Caledonia meeting and if the industry has been invited. ESCAP stated that the strategy was still being worked on, and that only trade associations were being invited. ITU offered to build on the result of the meeting and follow up on them at Connect Asia Pacific.
25. Another discussion was centered on the possible support from the meeting participants on the forthcoming Joint Session of Executive Heads of Sub regional Organizations and ESCAP and the Pacific Islands Leaders to be held at Noumea, New Caledonia on 12 March 2008 and the Stakeholders’ Roundtable Consultation on Pacific Connectivity to be held on the same venue on 13 March 2008. For further details of the Noumea meeting they directed participants to the website http://www.unescap.org/LDCCU/Meetings/NoumeaMeetings-March2008/ConsultativeMeetings_Noumea_12-13March08.asp
26. In concluding, Ms Eun-Ju Kim from ITU summarized the possibilities of cooperation in such areas as
 - Training courses through the respective CoE Nodes for joint programs.
 - Use existing products developed such as those by UNDP on e-Government publications to distribute amongst partners.
 - Possibility of joint actions / information sharing amongst agencies.
 - Identification of an ICT focal point at regional level.
 - Common UN pavilion at ITU TELECOM Asia subject to the internal agreement.
 - Pacific-related communication development.
 - Climate change and environmental issues.
 - Disaster / Emergency Communication.
27. It was also suggested that another Interagency Working Group Meeting could be convened later in the year and before ITU TELECOM Asia to take stock of the organizational and administrative preparation towards that event by the various involved parties.
28. Ms Eun-Ju Kim from ITU also proposed to present the agreed outcomes of the Eleventh ICT Interagency Meeting to the forthcoming Heads of Agencies’ Meeting to be held on 20 March 2008 for the awareness of Heads of Agencies as well as appropriate follow-up actions on the agreed areas for cooperation.

TENTATIVE AGENDA

1. Opening Remarks by ESCAP, APT and ITU Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific
2. WSIS+5: The regional approach: presentations on Programmes and Regional Initiatives as follow-up to WSIS by all members
3. Telecom Asia in September 2008: One UN - Discussion about our representation at the event
4. Pacific Connectivity: current and future initiatives
5. Proposals for Cooperation and Partnership by all members
6. Other matters
7. Closing

TENTATIVE PROGRAMME

- 0900-0915 Opening Remarks by Mr Siva Thampi, Director, ICSTD, ESCAP, Mr. Toshiyuki Yamada, Secretary General, APT, Ms Eun-Ju Kim, Head, ITU Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific.
- 0915-0930 Coffee Break.
- 0930-1015 WSIS+5 The regional approach: presentations on Programmes and Regional Initiatives as follow-up to WSIS by all members.
- 1015-1045 Telecom Asia in September 2008: One UN - Discussion about our representation at the event.
- 1045-1120 Pacific Connectivity: current and future initiatives.
- 1120-1200 Proposals for Cooperation and Partnership by all members.
- 1200-1215 Other matters.
- 1215 End of the meeting.
