Economic and Social Council

Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
Committee on Information and Communications Technology,
 Science, Technology and Innovation

Third session
Bangkok, 19–20 August 2020

Annotated provisional agenda

The present document contains the provisional agenda for the third session of the Committee on Information and Communications Technology, Science, Technology and Innovation (section I) and the annotations thereto (section II).

I.   Provisional agenda

1.   Opening of the session:

   (a)   Opening statements;

   (b)   Election of officers;

   (c)   Adoption of the agenda.

2.   Collaborative actions to harness technologies during pandemics.

3.   Bridging the digital divide for inclusive broadband access.

4.   Scaling up the use of space applications to deliver on the Sustainable Development Goals.

5.   Inclusive technology and innovation for the decade of action for the Sustainable Development Goals:

   (a)   Guidelines for inclusive technology and innovation policies for sustainable development;

   (b)   Policies to enable business innovation for inclusive and sustainable development;

   (c)   Supporting countries on inclusive technology and innovation through capacity-building and technical assistance.

6.   Consideration of the future focus of the subprogramme.

7.   Other matters.

8.   Adoption of the report of the Committee on its third session.

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[*]   Reissued for technical reasons on 22 June 2020.

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II. Annotations

1. Opening of the session

(a) Opening statements

The programme for the session will be available online at www.unescap.org/intergovernmental-meetings/committee-information-and-communications-technology-science-technology-and-innovation-third.

(b) Election of officers

The Committee will elect a chair, vice-chair and rapporteur for the session.

The list of participants will be available online at www.unescap.org/intergovernmental-meetings/committee-information-and-communications-technology-science-technology-and-innovation-third.

(c) Adoption of the agenda

Documentation

Annotated provisional agenda (ESCAP/CICTSTI/2020/L.1)

Annotation

The provisional agenda will be considered and adopted by the Committee, subject to such changes as may be necessary.

2. Collaborative actions to harness technologies during pandemics

Documentation

Collaborative actions to harness technologies during pandemics (ESCAP/CICTSTI/2020/1)

Annotation

Disinfecting robots, low-costs diagnostics, social media, open big data, and online services and solutions such as telemedicine, e-learning and telecommuting are just a few of the technology applications being deployed by governments in the Asia-Pacific region in the fight against coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). Supported by e-resilience and inclusive broadband, Asia and the Pacific has demonstrated ways that governments can proactively engage with key technology stakeholders from the private sector and academia against pandemics and emergencies. The technologically advanced countries in the region have led the charge in mobilizing technology and deploying innovative solutions at scale to combat the contagion. However, the progress in some countries to enhance e-resilience and inclusive broadband has been too slow to be effective and the question remains: how can less advanced countries benefit from these solutions?

Document ESCAP/CICTSTI/2020/1 contains an overview of how governments have deployed a range of technologies – including frontier, low-cost and digital technologies – in the fight against COVID-19. It also contains a review of government policy responses and the use of digital and geospatial technology to contain the contagion as well as a review of policy responses and

measures taken by governments to improve e-resilience and digital inclusion. Examples of how the private sector and academia have played a role in the technological response are presented, as are models for the kinds of open innovation that could support a collaborative response to future pandemics so that all countries can benefit from technological solutions.

The Committee may wish to discuss the issues raised in the document, share experiences and lessons learned, and identify policy priorities and areas for regional cooperation for a more effective technological response to COVID-19 and future pandemics.

3. **Bridging the digital divide for inclusive broadband access**

Documentation

Promoting regional cooperation for inclusive broadband connectivity through the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway initiative (ESCAP/CICTSTI/2020/2)

Master Plan for the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway, 2019–2022 (ESCAP/CICTSTI/2020/INF/1)

Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway Regional Cooperation Framework Document, 2019–2022 (ESCAP/CICTSTI/2020/INF/2)

Annotation

Asia and the Pacific has made impressive progress in the development of information and communications technology (ICT) in the past decade, with some advanced countries in the region dominating major ICT-related indicators at the global level. However, the digital divide continues to persist and could further exacerbate inequality within societies, particularly during times of natural disasters and pandemic outbreaks such as COVID-19.

In its resolution 75/7, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) invited members and associate members to consider developing and implementing joint ICT activities at the subregional level. It also requested the secretariat to continue support to ongoing activities and encouraged the participation of various stakeholders in the implementation of the Master Plan for the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway, 2019–2022, and the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway Regional Cooperation Framework Document, 2019–2022. Capacity-building for government officials on using ICT for inclusive and sustainable development has been highlighted as an important component.

Document ESCAP/CICTSTI/2020/2 contains a discussion of emerging trends related to digital technologies and regional connectivity, as well as the opportunities and challenges member States face in implementing the World Summit on the Information Society action lines. In addition, there is an outline of the progress on the implementation of the proposals of the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway Steering Committee at its third session, in August 2019. Lastly, the document contains an outline of the programmes and activities of the Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development related to capacity-building and using ICT for inclusive and sustainable development.

The Committee may wish to note the progress in the implementation of the Master Plan for the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway, 2019–2022, and the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway Regional Cooperation Framework Document, 2019–2022, as well as of the programmes and activities of the Centre. The Committee may also wish to provide further guidance on the present and future work of the secretariat in this regard.

4. **Scaling up the use of space applications to deliver on the Sustainable Development Goals**

Documentation

Enhancing geospatial information applications for implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (ESCAP/CICTSTI/2020/3)

Annotation

In the Asia-Pacific Plan of Action on Space Applications for Sustainable Development (2018–2030), it was recognized that rapid digital innovation continues to augment the availability of geospatial information and that this provides countries of Asia and the Pacific, particularly those with special needs, with an expanded choice of tools to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Further, the need for exploiting new data sources and analytics associated with enabling and integrative technologies, processes and tools, so that timely, reliable and quality information is delivered to citizens, businesses, organizations and governments was underlined. This is key for evidence-based decision-making and enhanced accountability of actions.

Progress in the implementation of the Plan of Action with regard to disaster risk reduction and resilience, as well as management of natural resources, is reviewed in document ESCAP/CICTSTI/2020/3. The document contains an overview of the regional status of implementation, good practices and lessons learned. It also contains an assessment of future trends and recommendations for areas where regional cooperation can be strengthened.

In implementation of the intergovernmental modality contained in the Plan of Action, the Committee is invited to discuss these issues and endorse the recommendations with a view to strengthening regional cooperation in space applications and guiding the present and future work of the secretariat.

5. **Inclusive technology and innovation for the decade of action for the Sustainable Development Goals**

(a) **Guidelines for inclusive technology and innovation policies for sustainable development**

Documentation

Guidelines for inclusive technology and innovation policies for sustainable development (ESCAP/CICTSTI/2020/4)

Annotation

Technology and innovation can potentially increase the efficiency, effectiveness and impact of efforts to meet the ambitions of the 2030 Agenda; however, to do so, they must be inclusive. It is critical that technology and innovation policies include social and environmental as well as economic objectives. Additionally, such policies should aim to ensure that the benefits of science, technology and innovation are shared more equally. Technology and

innovation can be a source of inequality and exclusion. As recognized by the General Assembly, the promise of science, technology and innovation remains unfulfilled for the poor.[1]

A variety of policies and initiatives in the Asia-Pacific region promote technology and innovation in line with the three dimensions of sustainable development, address the needs of disadvantaged and low-income groups, support and engage women, and make technology and innovation accessible to the very poorest people.

In document ESCAP/CICTSTI/2020/4, policy experiences are presented, and draft guidelines on how to formulate inclusive technology and innovation policies are proposed.

Members of the Committee may wish to share national experiences – including good practices and lessons learned – in promoting inclusive technology and innovation policies. The Committee is invited to provide comments on the draft guidelines and to indicate the support, in the form of training, research or advisory services, that may be required from the secretariat to promote inclusive technology and innovation for sustainable development.

(b) Policies to enable business innovation for inclusive and sustainable development

Documentation

Policies to enable business innovation for inclusive and sustainable development (ESCAP/CICTSTI/2020/5)

Annotation

Business has been a source of innovation and economic dynamism in the Asia-Pacific region. However, to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, innovative government policies that incentivize businesses to focus on creating social and environmental value, as well as economic value, are urgently required.

In response to this challenge, innovative business models and practices – such as social enterprise, inclusive business and impact investing – are emerging. They can be defined as business models and practices that aim to generate social and environmental impact together with economic return.

Governments in the Asia-Pacific region have been at the forefront of national policy innovation in this area. At the regional level, member States in Asia and the Pacific agreed, for the very first time, by resolution, to support the development of enabling environments for social enterprise and impact investing as outlined in the regional road map for implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific. In addition, Association of Southeast Asian Nations member States are also developing subregional guidelines to promote inclusive businesses.

Document ESCAP/CICTSTI/2020/5 contains an overview of emerging policy options to promote business innovation for inclusive and sustainable development and a proposal for basic, practical guiding principles for member States that are considering the development of strategies on this topic.

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[1] See General Assembly resolution 74/229.

Members of the Committee may wish to share national experiences, including good practices and lessons learned, in promoting business innovation for inclusive and sustainable development. The Committee is invited to provide comments on the proposed guiding principles and to guide the work of the secretariat by indicating the support required to further this issue both nationally and regionally.

(c) **Supporting countries on inclusive technology and innovation through capacity-building and technical assistance**

Documentation

Technology and innovation capacity-building and technical assistance provided to member States from 2018 to 2020 (ESCAP/CICTSTI/2020/6)

Annotation

The document contains a description of the capacity-building and technical assistance provided to member States by the Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology and ESCAP.

The Committee may wish to provide input and suggestions to support and strengthen the Centre's and the secretariat's work for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

6. **Consideration of the future focus of the subprogramme**

The secretariat will provide an overview of its work in the areas of ICT, science, technology and innovation, including its contribution to areas that should be mainstreamed in the work of all the committees in accordance with the Commission's conference structure.

The Committee may wish to provide the secretariat with guidance on the preparations for the programme plan based on its deliberations.

7. **Other matters**

The Committee may wish to consider other matters not covered under the items mentioned above.

8. **Adoption of the report of the Committee on its third session**

Documentation

Draft report (ESCAP/CICTSTI/2020/L.2)

Annotation

The Committee will consider and adopt the report on its third session for submission to the Commission at its seventy-seventh session.

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