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ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

Committee on Information and Communications Technology

First session
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DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE

1.   The Committee recommends that the members and associate members of the Commission strengthen cooperation in the development and application of information and communications technology (ICT), including space-based applications, to reach the Millennium Development Goals and the development goals established by major world summits, such as the World Summit on the Information Society and the World Conference on Disaster Reduction, and to meet the economic, social and technological challenges confronting the region.

2.   The Committee recommends that the secretariat prioritize its activities related to facilitating the development of multi-purpose community e-centres. These activities could include in-depth and focused research and analysis on policy options and recommendations to ensure the sustainability and scalability of e-centres. There would be a focus on the rural areas of least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States.

3.   The Committee recommends that the secretariat prioritize its activities related to enhancing Pacific connectivity for improved ICT access by unconnected and underserved people. These activities could include a study on viable options for deploying satellite technologies to geographically challenged countries in the region, particularly Pacific island developing countries.

4.   The Committee calls upon the secretariat to further its initiatives in human resources and capacity-building as regards ICT policy development and applications, especially for countries with special needs, in the areas of ICT indicators, e-readiness, information security management, and such applications as e-commerce/e-business, e-government, e-tourism, e-health and e-agriculture. The Committee recommends that the Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development (APCICT), in particular, play an important role in assisting member countries in addressing these needs and shortcomings.

5.   The Committee recommends that the secretariat, taking into account the work of other regional commissions and keeping within existing resources, put in place follow-up mechanisms at the regional level to review the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society[1] in 2015 and streamline the implementation of the Regional Action Plan towards the Information Society in Asia and the Pacific,[2] in cooperation with appropriate international/regional organizations, including the International Telecommunication Union, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the Asia-Pacific Telecommunity, the Council of Regional Organisations in the Pacific and other stakeholders.

6.   The Committee recommends that the secretariat make further efforts in inter-agency cooperation and in building regional cooperation on ICT for development, and make greater efforts in promoting public-private partnerships, where appropriate, while recognizing that the private sector is a main driver of ICT adoption and diffusion.

7.   The Committee recommends that the secretariat carry out more research on the importance of ICT for food security and sustainable agriculture, in cooperation with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and other international organizations, and disseminate relevant good practices to developing countries of the region. The Committee also recommends that lessons from failures also be analysed with a view to helping members and associate members to avoid such situations. The Committee recommends that the secretariat cooperate with other relevant international organizations, particularly FAO, to initiate a survey of online networks of agricultural expert systems within the region, focusing on aspects such as establishment, maintenance and contents, and assist in establishing online networks of agricultural expert systems in countries where such systems are not yet established.

8.   The Committee recommends that the secretariat consider organizing specific training courses on new agriculture technologies, such as precision farming, farm automation and bioinformatics, in order to raise awareness in the region, especially in developing countries, and to include the Pacific island developing countries as partners, venues, and target audiences for such activities.

9.   The Committee recommends that, in the implementation of the strategic framework and proposed outputs of the proposed programme of work for 2010-2011,[3] greater consideration be given to countries with special needs, especially in institutional capacity-building and human resources development in ICT and disaster risk reduction.

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[1] The Declaration of Principles and the Geneva Plan of Action (A/C.2/59/3, annex) and the Tunis Commitment and Tunis Agenda (see A/60/687).
[2] ST/ESCAP/2415.
[3] E/ESCAP/CICT/5.

10.   The Committee recommends that the secretariat promote the sharing of information, communications and space infrastructure and resources by strengthening existing regional cooperative mechanisms and using specialized facilities and knowledge to improve the disaster preparedness and response of all interested members and associate members.

11.   The Committee recommends that the secretariat explore possibilities for developing regional and subregional disaster-communication standby systems in synergy with the International Telecommunication Union, the Asia-Pacific Telecommunity and relevant stakeholders.

12.   The Committee recommends that the secretariat consider leveraging existing ICT-enabled infrastructure networks, such as telecentres, to be used effectively for disaster risk reduction and emerging issues, such as food security.

13.   The Committee recommends that the secretariat conduct a study on how ICT applications could play a greater role in disaster risk reduction.

14.   The Committee recommends that the secretariat continue to support regional cooperation through, among other things, APCICT and the Regional Space Applications Programme for Sustainable Development networks in cooperation with relevant organizations, in order to build the capacities of member countries at the policy, institutional and technical levels in the use of ICT for disaster risk reduction.

15.   Recognizing the need for a regional network of disaster information sharing networks, which would address multi-hazards, the Committee recommends that the secretariat promote such a network on information sharing and analysis for disaster risk reduction in collaboration with other international and regional partners working in this field.

16.   The Committee recommends that, in addition to its current work programme, APCICT strengthen the research and analysis component on ICT and disaster risk reduction in order to assist member States with policy options and recommendations.

17.   The Committee also recommends that APCICT develop a new module on ICT for disaster risk reduction for its programme "Academy of ICT for Government leaders" and that it conduct training for Government leaders and targeted stakeholders.

18.   Considering the relevance of the mandate of the Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology (APCTT) to the subprogramme on information and communications technology and disaster risk reduction, the Committee recommends that APCTT continue its contribution to that work programme for the biennium 2010-2011 and thereafter.

19.   The Committee recommends that APCTT assist Pacific island developing countries in the development of their capacity on technology transfer.

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