



ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

Sixty-first session
12-18 May 2005
Bangkok

**KEY DEVELOPMENTS AND ACTIVITIES AT THE REGIONAL LEVEL:
MANAGING GLOBALIZATION**

(Item 3 (b) of the provisional agenda)

**REPORT ON ISSUES RELATED TO INFORMATION, COMMUNICATION AND
SPACE TECHNOLOGY AND PREPARATIONS FOR THE WORLD SUMMIT
ON THE INFORMATION SOCIETY, 2005**

SUMMARY

Pursuant to the recommendation of the Commission at its sixtieth session, the secretariat has been coordinating regional implementation of the outcomes of the first phase of the World Summit on the Information Society, held in 2003 and the preparations for the second phase in 2005. The present document contains a report on the relevant regional activities organized by the secretariat in cooperation with other regional and international organizations, such as the First Regional Conference on Follow-up to the First Phase and Preparation for the Second Phase of the World Summit on the Information Society, held in Bangkok in October 2004 and the three subregional conferences, as well as on the planned future activities. In particular, the report provides information on the outcomes of the deliberations of the above event on the three focus issues of the 2005 Summit process, namely, regional implementation of the outcomes of the first phase of the Summit, financial mechanisms for ICT for development and Internet governance. Following the devastating tsunami in December 2004, the issue of ICT knowledge-based disaster management was included in the regional discussions and the draft regional plan of action.

The Commission is invited to review the progress achieved by the secretariat at the regional level in implementing the outcomes of the first phase of the Summit and preparations for the second phase and provide comments and recommendations accordingly.

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INTRODUCTION

1. The Commission, at its sixtieth session held in Shanghai, China, in April 2004, expressed support for the recommendation of the Committee on Managing Globalization that a regional plan of action be formulated to lead to an information society in Asia and the Pacific. While expressing full support for the outcomes of the first phase of the World Summit on the Information Society (held in Geneva in 2003), the Commission requested the secretariat to play an active role in the implementation of the follow-up to that phase and to coordinate the regional preparations for the second phase (to be held in Tunis in 2005).
2. At the same time, the first Preparatory Meeting of the Tunis phase held in June 2004 decided that the focus of that phase should be:
 - Follow-up and implementation of the Geneva Declaration of Principles and Plan of Action by stakeholders at the national, regional and international levels
 - Financial mechanisms for ICT for development
 - Internet governance
3. It was further decided that relevant thematic, regional and other related meetings would report to the second and third preparatory meetings.

I. FORMULATION OF THE REGIONAL PLAN OF ACTION AND REGIONAL CONSULTATION ON FINANCIAL MECHANISMS FOR ICT FOR DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNET GOVERNANCE

4. Pursuant to the recommendations of the Commission at its sixtieth session and the decisions of the first Preparatory Committee for the World Summit in 2005, ESCAP has been implementing, in cooperation with ITU, UNDP Asia-Pacific Development Information Programme (APDIP), the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat and other partners, a number of regional and subregional activities to assist countries of the region in formulating the regional plan of action, to complement their national efforts in implementing the outcomes of the 2003 Summit and to establish regional consultations on the two focus issues of the 2005 Summit, namely, financial mechanisms for ICT for development and Internet governance.

A. First Regional Conference on Follow-up to the First Phase and Preparation for the Second Phase of the World Summit on the Information Society, Bangkok, October 2004

5. The Conference was attended by 24 countries and by representatives of regional and international organizations, the private sector and non-governmental organizations. A summary of the discussions and recommendations is given below.

1. Regional Plan of Action

6. The Conference deliberated on and supported the ideas and recommendations on the draft regional plan of action presented by the secretariat. It noted that the draft took into account the outcomes of the major global events such as the Millennium Development Goals, the Plan of Action of the World Summit and Declaration of Principles of the World Summit as well as the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit. It further reflected the regional needs and priorities as identified in the Tokyo Declaration – the Asia-Pacific Perspective on the World Summit, the Regional Road Map towards an Information Society in Asia and the Pacific and the Bangkok Agenda adopted by the Asia-Pacific Telecommunity (APT) Ministerial Conference on Broadband and ICT Development, held in July 2004. The Conference held the view that the regional activities should be related to the themes in the Geneva Declaration with a focus on the issues of common concern to countries in Asia and the Pacific and especially least developed countries, small island countries and countries with economies in transition. The regional plan of action should also provide an agreed framework for the continued cooperation of all stakeholders at the regional level before and after the Tunis phase in 2005.

7. Specifically, the Conference recommended that:

- (1) ESCAP continue to take a lead role in formulating the regional plan of action.
- (2) ESCAP revise the draft regional plan of action in accordance with the discussions at the Conference and present the draft to the four subregional conferences, to be held in Kyrgyzstan, Fiji, Nepal and Indonesia, in order to further take into account the needs and priorities of the countries in the respective subregions.
- (3) The regional plan of action should also be submitted to the Summit process as the regional input to the second phase of the Summit in 2005.
- (4) ESCAP serve as the regional coordinator for the implementation of the draft regional plan of action with the active participation of all stakeholders, including the members of the Regional Inter-agency Working Group on ICT.
- (5) In implementing the regional plan of action, special consideration should be given to least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, small island countries and countries with economies in transition.

8. In addition, the Conference deliberated on the findings of the Expert Group Meeting on Follow-up to the World Summit on the Information Society held in parallel with the Conference in October 2004, which discussed the issues of Internet governance and financial mechanisms for ICT for development. It endorsed the summary of discussions and recommendations of the Expert Group Meeting, some of which are as follows.

2. Financial mechanisms for ICT for development

- (1) Countries in Asia and the Pacific are very diversified in terms of economic development, culture, religion, language and natural endowment. In financing ICT for development, they have employed different tools and mechanisms, and produced many successful cases. The Expert Group Meeting requested ESCAP to carry out further studies on success as well as failure cases, conduct more activities and advise the member countries on the best practices.
- (2) The Meeting found it very useful to build up a regional collection of cases of existing financial mechanisms in the member countries. The collection could be enriched through different ways and means, including the planned subregional and expert group meetings, and contribute to the global discussion process on the topic. It could also contribute to improvements and innovations of the mechanisms, and serve as a basis for project concepts for future regional cooperation in ICST.

3. Internet governance

- (1) Internet governance is difficult to define, and may have narrow and broad definitions. At this stage, it is useful to have a focus of work and identify priority areas or a list of problems for the region.
- (2) Significant consultations with all stakeholders will be needed in order to reach a common understanding. ESCAP should start collecting views of and information from the member countries in order to promote understanding in a systematic manner. The Expert Group Meeting welcomed the APDIP launching of its initiative, the Open Dialogue on Internet Governance, and hoped it would carry out the work in cooperation with other regional organizations.
- (3) Before embarking on the process of drawing up a framework for designing the new Internet governance frameworks, Asian and Pacific countries should raise awareness and understanding of the current problems and set a course within the country to avoid the foreseeable problems. It was highly recommended that ESCAP launch the following actions for its members and associate members, if appropriate:
 - (a) Set up a programme to develop human resources and capacity-building in each country with the objective of understanding the current key issues on Internet management, including Internet-related laws;
 - (b) Create a network of communities of practice and learn from the best practices of member countries on current issues such as privacy, anti-spam, computer security, domestic Internet exchange and country code domain name services;

- (c) Share experiences and new knowledge regarding content-level management, such as issues concerning intellectual property-related disputes and fraud on the Internet.

**B. Subcommittee on Information, Communications and Space Technology,
first session, Bangkok, October 2004**

9. The Subcommittee noted with appreciation the reports of the First Regional Conference on Follow-up to the First Phase and Preparation for the Second Phase of the World Summit on the Information Society.

10. The Subcommittee expressed support for the efforts of the First Regional Conference in preparing the draft regional plan of action. It held the view that the Plan should focus on specific action to be taken in the region for the realization of the Geneva Plan of Action and Declaration of Principles. The Subcommittee also held the view that the Plan should focus on issues of common concern to countries in Asia and the Pacific and reflect their needs and priorities. In that regard, the Subcommittee welcomed the recommendation that the draft regional plan of action be submitted to the four subregional conferences for further refinement before adoption by the Second Regional Preparatory Conference.

11. The Subcommittee expressed appreciation to ESCAP for playing a timely, leading and coordinating role in forging regional understanding and consensus on issues related to Internet governance and financial mechanisms for ICT for development, and requested the secretariat to undertake the compilation and dissemination of databases, case studies, best practices and success stories in ICT for development.

**C. Bishkek Conference on the Information Society and Regional Cooperation in
Information and Communication Technologies for Development,
Bishkek, November 2004**

1. Regional plan of action

12. The Conference noted that the regional plan of action would take into account the results of the major global and regional events such as the Millennium Development Goals and the Tokyo Declaration adopted by the Asia-Pacific Regional Conference for the World Summit on the Information Society, held in Tokyo in January 2003, and expressed support for the ideas and recommendations presented in the draft plan.

13. The Conference further noted that the draft plan would complement national efforts in the implementation of the Plan of Action and the Declaration of Principles adopted by the World Summit held in Geneva in December 2003 and suggested that the plan should take into account the needs and priorities of the participating countries, particularly, community e-centres, training of ICT professionals, e-government, e-education, e-business and e-health.

14. The Conference felt that the regional plan of action should contribute to national efforts in improving access to information in remote and rural areas and, in that regard, establishing different e-community access centres could be one of the priority work areas.

15. The Conference also felt the need to strengthen subregional cooperation, in particular with respect to such issues as the prevention of cybercrime, ensuring information security and harmonization of laws and regulations, especially those related to e-commerce.

2. Financial mechanisms for ICT for development

16. The Conference noted that many countries in Europe had allocated special budgets for ICT development, ranging from 1 to 6 per cent of GDP, in view of its importance and crucial role in the national economy. However, such a budget was conspicuously absent in most of the participating countries in the Conference. It strongly recommended that a special budget be allocated on an annual basis for ICT for development activities in each country.

17. The Conference welcomed the ESCAP initiative in collecting and compiling a collection of cases of financial mechanisms for ICT for development, and supported its approach to enrich the collection through subregional and expert meetings and other channels, and its submission as one important regional input to the global discussion process on the topic.

18. The Conference felt that international as well as regional cooperation was required in generating funds for ICT for development, and called on international and regional funding organizations to assist countries in that regard.

19. Since information was as a public good, a fund such as a universal service fund for ICT for development should be established through the promotion of public-private partnership. Such a fund could mainly be used for the informatization of and poverty alleviation in rural areas through the promotion of e-access activities such as e-post and e-government.

3. Internet governance

20. The Conference felt that a unified and universally accepted definition of Internet governance had to be developed. In that regard, it supported the work of the United Nations Working Group on Internet Governance.

21. The Conference believed that all stakeholders of Internet governance, such as the public and private sectors and civil society, should cooperate with each other in order to manage current and future Internet governance issues.

22. The Conference also believed that the decision-making process on Internet governance should be transparent and that all countries should have equal rights to it, while preserving their cultural diversity. In particular, Governments should play a leading role in public policy issues, such as

Internet security, privacy, anti-spam, combating child pornography, protection of intellectual property rights and international domain names.

23. It was recommended that the United Nations and international organizations such as ITU, which was a United Nations specialized agency in telecommunications, should play an important role in Internet governance. The proposal was made that ITU be invited to establish a special study group on Internet governance with a view to elaborating systematic proposals on that issue, taking into account the views of member States.

D. Symposium on ICT for Development in Pacific Island Developing Countries, Suva, December 2004

24. A summary of discussions and recommendations of the Symposium is given below.

1. Regional Plan of Action

25. The Symposium noted that the significant problems faced by many Pacific island developing countries were the high cost of ICT services, including Internet access, owing to poor national and subregional infrastructure, the high cost of equipment and repair and maintenance, existing monopolies in the ICT sectors and low economy of scale. In addition, all Pacific island developing countries suffered from a severe shortage of qualified ICT human resources at all levels, from technicians to managers, as well as a low computer literacy level of end-users. Lack of local content in local languages was also identified as a serious obstacle in ICT appreciation.

26. In order to overcome these problems, the concerted efforts of all stakeholders at the national level, along with international and regional measures to promote foreign direct investment, development bank loans and regional and subregional cooperation, were urgently required. The Symposium also felt that the application of open source software could reduce the costs and enhance the local adoption of ICT services and applications. Therefore, ESCAP, ITU, APDIP/UNDP and other organizations were requested to promote awareness of and capacity-building for open source software.

27. The Symposium emphasized that the regional plan of action should not just serve as reference material but rather be very operational and action-oriented, reflecting the results of questionnaires and the Symposium discussions and presentation, including the creation of a trustworthy, transparent and non-discriminatory legal, regulatory and policy environment; promotion of the use of ICT in rural areas, including the establishment of a sustainable multi-purpose community e-access centre; the promotion of e-education and e-training from schools to institutional management; building confidence and security in the use of ICT, including upholding universally held values preventing abuse of ICT; strengthening of the public-private partnership; and promotion of different ICT applications for development, such as e-government, e-business, e-agriculture and e-environment.

28. The Symposium held the view that subregional, regional and international organizations could assist the Pacific island developing countries in a significant way through the collection and dissemination of best practices in ICT development, capacity-building and training, pilot and demonstration projects, and providing advisory services especially in the review, formulation and implementation of ICT policies and rapid advances in technology.

29. The Symposium felt that implementation of the regional plan of action should benefit all social groups, including women, youth and older persons, and facilitate their economic and social empowerment.

30. The Symposium requested that, in addition to emphasizing the importance of telecommunications, the regional plan of action should give more attention to applications of other ITs, such as wireless technologies.

2. Financial mechanisms for ICT for development

31. The Symposium further requested ESCAP, ITU, APDIP/UNDP and other organizations to conduct more activities to help the Pacific island developing countries to acquire expertise and knowledge on financial mechanisms and enable them to introduce improvements and innovations into their existing mechanisms of ICT financing.

32. When examining funding mechanisms, the Symposium stressed the need to recognize the specific conditions of the Pacific island developing countries. They were islands physically separated from each other and from other parts of the world, small in population, land size and scale of business, and lacking financial, technical and human resources. The Symposium recommended that the member Governments adopt a realistic approach in funding ICT programmes such as “Aiming big, starting small but moving fast”.

33. The Symposium identified the monopolies in the telecommunication sector found in many of the countries as one of the causes of high prices and barriers in accessing ICT services, and requested further studies to identify innovative investment and funding mechanisms and appropriate technologies to reduce the high cost of accessing ICTs. The Symposium also requested the organizers and any other potential development and funding agencies to provide assistance to the Pacific island developing countries in funding their collective ICT programmes, especially when they decided to unite in a group to negotiate with ICT service providers for better and more services at concession rates.

34. The Symposium noted that the current satellite costs were very high for small island countries, which required relatively small amounts of bandwidth. Therefore, there was a need to develop strategies to give small islands better negotiating power with satellite providers in order to reduce costs.

3. Internet governance

35. The Symposium felt that one of the most important and difficult tasks would be formulating the definition of Internet governance. Such a definition would help developing countries to understand better the issues and scope of Internet governance. The Symposium expressed full support to global and regional initiatives in promoting regional and subregional consultations on Internet governance. In that regard, it noted with appreciation the work of APDIP on an open regional dialogue on Internet governance and that of ESCAP in organizing conferences to discuss that issue, and ongoing work under ITU in that regard.

36. The Symposium fully supported the view that the partnership of all stakeholders, including Governments, civil society, the private sector and international and regional organizations, was necessary for proper Internet governance. In that regard, the Symposium expressed appreciation to the United Nations Working Group on Internet Governance for including the issue of the respective roles of stakeholders in Internet governance in its deliberations.

37. The Symposium was strongly of the opinion that government had a vital role to play in Internet governance, especially with respect to public policy issues. It stressed that Internet governance should include such issues as national security, e-health, e-governance and universal access to information, which were vital for national sustainable development.

38. At the same time, some organizations expressed the view that the current system of Internet management was effective and sufficient and no major involvement of Governments was required.

39. Although Pacific island countries fully realized the importance of Internet governance, there was little understanding and awareness of the issue. Furthermore, the Symposium felt that the Pacific island developing countries did not have sufficient capacity to participate effectively in Internet governance. In particular, that included public policy issues and relevant legal and legislative frameworks in areas such as the prevention of cybercrime and information security, e-commerce and e-health.

40. In the light of the above, the Symposium requested ESCAP, ITU, APDIP/UNDP and other international, regional and subregional organizations, and all other relevant stakeholders, to continue their efforts to promote regional consultations on Internet governance, thus facilitating and contributing to the global discussions. It further requested those organizations to initiate knowledge, awareness and capacity-building activities, allowing the Pacific island developing countries to participate meaningfully in Internet governance. It also requested that those activities especially related to public policy issues, as well as a multi-stakeholder dialogue on Internet policies, be sustained beyond the second phase of the World Summit in 2005.

E. South-East and East Asia Conference on Follow-up to the First Phase and Preparation for the Second Phase of the World Summit on the Information Society, Bali, Indonesia, February 2005

41. A summary of the conclusions and selected recommendations is given below.

1. ICT for knowledge-based disaster management

42. In addition to the draft regional plan of action, Internet governance and financial mechanisms, the Conference discussed the issue of ICT for knowledge-based disaster management. It noted the vital contribution of ICST in disaster management and recommended that the high-level Regional Preparatory Conference should elaborate on the important role of ICST in knowledge-based disaster management and report its findings to the preparatory process for the World Summit. The Conference suggested that the use of ICT for knowledge-based disaster management should be taken into account in the finalization of the regional plan of action, and address the need to enhance the use of ICST for more efficient disaster management, from preparedness, including early warning systems, public education and awareness, to emergency relief operations as well as reconstruction efforts and creating new economic opportunities for the victims of natural disasters. Regional cooperation could benefit many countries and the strong and pivotal role of ESCAP in promoting such cooperation was essential.

2. Regional plan of action

43. While expressing appreciation of the draft regional plan of action presented by ESCAP, the Conference suggested that the following points be taken into account in the finalization of the plan.

- There should be more emphasis on certain aspects common to the region to give the document a regional flavour.
- It would be expedient to devise strategies for monitoring mechanisms, including identification of benchmarks and targets specific to the region.
- As ethical values were most important in the Asian and Pacific region, this issue should be emphasized more in the regional plan of action.
- The Use of ICT for knowledge-based disaster management should be added to the plan of action.
- More emphasis should be given to the use of ICT for empowering disadvantaged social groups, especially people with disabilities.
- The challenge posed by the existing digital divide should be transformed into a digital opportunity.
- Special attention should be given to bridging the digital divide within different regions, within countries and promotion of access to ICT by people in remote and rural areas.

- The common principles of the countries within the region on the issue of Internet governance should be included.
- Due consideration should be given to subregional initiatives, such as the Information Super Highway for the Greater Mekong Subregion.
- The plan should include an emphasis on regional research activities which build upon research networks by the East and South-East Asian countries.

44. The Conference held the view that the countries of the subregion had diverse priorities with respect to ICT and establishment of the information society depending on their level of economic development. However, specific priorities had been mentioned by some countries, which included access to ICT, telecommunication infrastructure, the participation of all stakeholders, capacity-building, global partnership, cybercrime and information security, anti-spam and e-government.

3. Internet governance

45. The Conference held the view that the issue of Internet governance was important for all countries in the region since the development and reliable functioning of the Internet were prerequisites for the establishment of the information society. Therefore, the Conference welcomed the opportunity to discuss the issue of Internet governance within the framework of the regional follow-up activities relating to the World Summit coordinated by ESCAP.

46. There was general agreement that all stakeholders had a significant role to play in Internet governance. The Internet had become a public good and Governments had the responsibility to make it useful to the development of the country.

47. The Internet-related activities of Governments were vitally important for creating an enabling environment for ICT and Internet development, in particular, the promotion of universal access to information, including for communities in rural and remote areas and socially disadvantaged groups such as people with disabilities. Government activities were also important for facilitating the use of ICT in the private sector, such as e-commerce.

48. The Conference noted with appreciation that ITU was actively involved in Internet governance, especially with the issues of Voiceover-Internet Protocol (VoIP), cybersecurity, spam, telecommunication infrastructure and universal service obligations. Those issues were being considered by the unique make-up of the membership of ITU, which includes countries and the private sector.

49. The Conference requested ESCAP and APDIP/UNDP to continue their work in promoting regional dialogue and consultation on the issue of Internet governance and requested them to report the outcomes of the regional consultations to the second Regional Preparatory Conference, the United Nations Working Group on Internet Governance and the World Summit Process. ESCAP,

APDIP/UNDP and ITU were further requested to promote the sharing of experience and capacity-building for Internet-related activities, such as the creation of an enabling policy and legislative environment, including information protection and prevention of cybercrime, anti-spam, providing access to communities, schools and public institutions.

4. Financial mechanisms for ICT for development

50. The Conference requested ESCAP to present a set of studies, or a collection of cases of best practices, to the preparatory process of the World Summit as a regional contribution to the global discussion on that issue.

51. The Conference believed that a collection of best practices in financial mechanisms would be very useful to help member countries to fund ICT for development. Those could serve as models for the participating countries in formulating their own programmes, or serve as policy papers for member countries as references.

52. The Conference held the view that public-private partnership was of special importance in bridging the digital divide and the realization of World Summit benchmarks in the member countries. In the field of ICT and space technology, the majority of technologies and know-how were in the hands of the private sector. In that connection, the Conference requested the secretariat to explore possible tools and schemes to strengthen mechanisms for involving the private sector in ICT for development.

F. Other scheduled activities

53. The preparations for the South and South-West Asia Conference on Follow-up to the First Phase and Preparation for the Second Phase of the World Summit on the Information Society, scheduled to be held at Kathmandu in March 2005, and the Second Regional Conference, scheduled to be held in May-June 2005, are under way. The Second Conference is expected to adopt the regional plan of action and finalize the regional consultations on Internet governance and financial mechanisms. It has also been suggested that the Conference further discuss the role of ICT in knowledge-based disaster management.

G. Seventh Meeting of the Regional Inter-agency Working Group on Information and Communication Technology, Bangkok, October 2004

54. The Meeting discussed the outcome of the First Regional Conference on Follow-up to the First Phase and Preparation for the Second Phase of the World Summit on the Information Society. The Meeting noted the initiatives of ESCAP related to the World Summit and expressed willingness to cooperate with the ESCAP secretariat in the process. It discussed a matrix of ICT activities of the Working Group agencies presented by ESCAP and expressed the view that the matrix would be useful

in identifying cooperative activities and avoiding duplication. Therefore, the Meeting felt that the matrix should be updated regularly.

II. ACTIVITIES OF THE ICST SUBPROGRAMME TO MEET THE TARGETS OF THE WORLD SUMMIT

55. The objective of the ICST subprogramme is to meet the targets established in the Plan of Action of the World Summit in achieving the information society. In line with the targets of connecting villages with ICTs and establishing community access points, and encouraging the development of local content in local languages, the subprogramme organized two training workshops on the establishment of community e-centres. The workshops discussed the related issues, including available technology options, building community ownership, ICT training for communities and the operation of centres. The subprogramme plans to continue its work in this area through collecting and documenting good practices of community e-centres and also establishing a few community e-centres in rural or remote areas, on a pilot basis, to promote ICT applications for socio-economic development.

56. The Plan of Action reaffirmed that “ICT applications can support sustainable development, in the fields of public administration, business, education and training, health, employment, environment, agriculture and science”, and urged Governments and international communities to work on policies and initiatives promoting those applications. E-government can not only increase the efficiency of government through streamlining processes, provide better services to citizens and increase citizen’s participation, but also make government processes transparent and accountable. ICT application to business processes (e-business) can be a powerful tool for small businesses and rural entrepreneurs, enabling them to compete in the knowledge-based global economy by providing them with market information and to make their business processes more efficient. Through technical cooperation projects, the subprogramme will promote and build the capacity of developing countries in these applications.

57. Information on the preparatory processes for the World Summit at the regional level has been disseminated widely through the “WSIS preparations” page on the ESCAP website. The site includes information on the ICST Subcommittee and expert group meeting covering issues relating to the World Summit, pre- and post-session documents, including the draft regional plan of action, and documents for subregional preparatory conferences.

58. Recognizing the need for the creation of favourable policy and regulatory frameworks conducive to the adoption and diffusion of ICT in the ESCAP region, the main focus of the ICT policy programme has been on increasing the capacity of developing member countries to create enabling policies and a regulatory environment for the development of national and subregional information societies and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. In this regard,

assistance has been provided through the organization of intergovernmental and expert group meetings, the undertaking of research studies and the provision of technical advisory services as well as the organization of regional seminars and training workshops in line with specific mandates given under the Tokyo Declaration of Principles, the Regional Road Map towards an Information Society in Asia and the Pacific, and follow-up to the first phase of the World Summit held in 2003. Towards this end, priority attention has been given to (a) ICT policies to promote private sector development, including international management standards for e-business, e-commerce and increasing the competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises; (b) policies and regulatory frameworks to facilitate the establishment of a knowledge-based society; (c) policies for ICT human resources development, especially in the area of information technology-enabling legal frameworks; and (d) policies to promote public-private partnerships.

59. The establishment of an enabling ICT policy environment is not an end in itself but rather a catalyst for further economic and social development. It is therefore imperative to develop an instrument for measuring the impact of such policies on development. Countries of the region have clearly expressed their need to rely on ICT statistics in order to formulate and review appropriate policies. The process of identifying an internationally agreed framework of ICT statistical indicators at the global and regional levels has already commenced and ESCAP is contributing to this global effort as an active partner of the Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development recently formed by a number of United Nations agencies and programmes, United Nations regional commissions and individual national statistical offices. ESCAP will further help countries of the region in capacity-building in ICT indicators.

60. Consequently, such capacity-building programmes in policy and regulatory framework development will continue to be provided in order to implement the outcomes of the first phase of the World Summit and provide technical contributions towards the preparations for the second phase in 2005.

61. The Plan of Action of the World Summit had defined action lines to be taken to promote ICT applications that could support sustainable development in various fields within the framework of national e-strategies. Among those, Governments were encouraged, in cooperation with other stakeholders, to use and promote ICTs to establish monitoring systems to forecast and monitor the impact of natural and man-made disasters, particularly in developing countries, least developed countries and small economies.

62. As vulnerability to disasters poses greater challenges, their management emerges as an important development issue. Recognizing the uneven development of space technology applications among countries of the region, the Commission, at its fifty-ninth session, recommended that regional cooperative mechanisms be institutionalized to facilitate equitable sharing of the benefits of space technology development and applications by all countries in the region.

63. Towards this end, ESCAP organized, under its Regional Space Applications Programme for Sustainable Development (RESAP), regional workshops to discuss specific cooperative mechanisms to enable the participating countries, through regional and international cooperation, to develop their capacity and organize their internal resources to integrate space technology into mechanisms for natural disaster reduction, in particular flood and drought, and to strengthen their ability to receive efficient support from countries and international organizations willing to provide space-based information services during major disasters. ESCAP also organized a meeting of experts from space agencies and disaster management authorities to discuss issues of space-based information products and services for disaster management.

64. RESAP provided the platform for regional cooperative initiatives among member countries, such as the proposal to establish a centre for informed disaster management by the Islamic Republic of Iran, which will work out a feasibility study, and the proposal by China on the development of a constellation of small satellites for environment and disaster monitoring.

65. Such activities will continue to be provided to implement the recommendations made in the first phase of the World Summit and in preparation for the second phase in 2005, and the Third Ministerial Conference on Space Applications for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific, scheduled for 2007.

III. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

66. The Commission may wish to take note of the various activities undertaken by the secretariat in implementing the outcomes of the first phase of the World Summit in 2003 and its preparations for the second phase in 2005, as well as consider concrete measures to ensure that a regional consensus emerges on issues related to, inter alia, the regional plan of action, financial mechanisms for ICT for development and Internet governance which, in turn, would serve as important regional inputs into the second phase of the World Summit in 2005.

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