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**REPORTS OF SUBCOMMITTEES AND OTHER SUPPORTING
MANDATED DOCUMENTATION: INFORMATION, COMMUNICATIONS
AND SPACE TECHNOLOGY**

(Item 4 (c) of the provisional agenda)

**REPORT OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON INFORMATION, COMMUNICATIONS
AND SPACE TECHNOLOGY ON ITS FIRST SESSION**

Note by the secretariat

SUMMARY

The Subcommittee on Information, Communications and Space Technology, established by resolution 58/1 of 22 May 2002 on restructuring the conference structure of the Commission, held its first session in Bangkok from 13 to 15 October 2004.

The Subcommittee reviewed the situation with regard to selected issues concerning major initiatives and programmes to promote regional cooperation in information, communication and space technologies as well as related capacity-building activities and programme matters.

The Subcommittee examined the regional follow-up to the first phase of the World Summit on the Information Society and the preparations for the second phase. It underscored the importance of the Asia broadband programme and the need for a robust information and communication technology infrastructure to promote the objectives of an inclusive regional information society that would bridge the digital divide. The Subcommittee welcomed the initiative of the secretariat in developing guidelines for establishing community e-centres based on regional best practices and experiences and expressed full support for its activities under the Regional Space Applications Programme for Sustainable Development.

The Committee is invited to consider the report of the Subcommittee and provide the secretariat with further guidance on its future work in the area of information, communication and space technology.

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I. PROCEEDINGS OF THE SESSION

A. Review of major and related activities and future focus areas

65. The Subcommittee had before it document E/ESCAP/SICST/1, which contained a review of major and related activities and the future focus of work in the areas of the regional follow-up to the first phase of the World Summit on the Information Society and the Regional Space Applications Programme for Sustainable Development. It commended the secretariat on the quality of the document.

65. Regional follow-up to the first phase of the World Summit on the Information Society and preparations for the second phase

66. The Subcommittee noted with appreciation the reports on 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 Expert Group Meeting on Follow-up to the World Summit on the Information Society at which Internet governance and financial mechanisms were discussed; the ninth meeting of the Regional Working Group on Satellite Communication Applications; and the Expert Group Meeting on Open-source Software for Knowledge Management, all of which were held at Bangkok from 11 to 13 October 2004.

67. The Subcommittee welcomed the initiatives taken by the secretariat in organizing those events and requested it to take appropriate measures aimed at following up on the recommendations made by countries at those events.

68. Recalling the support given by the Commission at its sixtieth session for the preparation of the regional plan of action towards an information society based on the outcomes of the Geneva phase of the World Summit on the Information Society and the World Summit on Sustainable Development and taking into account the Millennium Development Goals, the Tokyo Declaration and the regional road map towards an information society in Asia and the Pacific, the Subcommittee expressed support for the efforts of the First Regional Conference in preparing the draft regional plan of action. It took 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 the Declaration of Principles. The Subcommittee also took the view that the plan should focus on the 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.

69. The Subcommittee expressed appreciation to the secretariat 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

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stories in ICT for development. It also expressed the hope that discussions on the two focal topics would be carried out at the planned forthcoming subregional and regional meetings in order to generate regionwide inputs as a contribution to the global discussions on the issues.

70. The Subcommittee held the view that there was a need to develop a means of assessing the development of the information society, including a standardized definition of indicators, measurement and methods. In that regard, it welcomed the offer of the Government of Thailand to cooperate and share its experience in developing a unified set of ICT indicators and requested the secretariat to initiate efforts at the regional level to harmonize the methods used to measure the information society.

71. The Subcommittee noted with interest the experience of some countries in creating an enabling environment for the information society by enacting strategic policy, legislative and regulatory measures and developing key ICST applications, such as e-government, e-business, e-learning, e-health and e-environment and natural resources management. The Subcommittee held the view that local content creation and connectivity were critical to expanding ICT penetration, while noting that universal access, affordability and skills development were essential for broad-based ICT adoption. The Subcommittee expressed appreciation of the offers of the Governments of China, India and the Russian Federation to share their experience in ICT application for development. It noted with appreciation that the seminar on best practices of community e-centres in the Asian and Pacific region would be held in Kunming, China, from 16 to 18 December 2004.

72. The Subcommittee held the view that national efforts in the implementation of the outcomes of the Geneva phase of the World Summit needed to be supported through effective international and regional cooperation. It commended the secretariat on its role in assisting countries in their preparation for the Geneva and Tunis phases of the World Summit and requested the secretariat to continue to play a coordinating role in the region towards that end. The Shanghai Declaration, adopted during the sixtieth session of the Commission, had given strategic direction to ESCAP participation in the Geneva Plan of Action and Declaration of Principles as well as the preparation for the Tunis phase.

66. Regional programme on information and communication technology applications

73. The Subcommittee noted the secretariat's programme in capacity-building and human resources development in ICT, e-government, e-business, e-learning, e-health, e-environment and natural resources management, providing access to ICT in rural communities through community e-centres, and knowledge management and networking. It reaffirmed the importance of that programme for the member countries, enabling them to participate in and benefit fully from the information society. It expressed appreciation for the secretariat's programme on institutional

capacity-building at the regional and subregional levels in support of national efforts to enhance human resources development.

74. The Subcommittee noted the initiatives taken by many member countries in the region for the development of e-government aimed at providing its citizens with better services, improving transparency and empowering citizens. Through e-government, better services could be offered to citizens and constituencies as a means to achieve increased transparency and improved efficiency and to empower citizens towards improved participation in the policy-making process. It expressed support for the secretariat's efforts in capacity-building in that application.

75. The Subcommittee noted the initiatives taken by member countries in the development of information processing tools, techniques and knowledge resources in support of local languages. Recognizing the importance of local content in local languages in bridging the digital divide, the Subcommittee requested countries to make continuous efforts in that area.

76. The Subcommittee noted the particular socio-economic situation of the countries in the Greater Mekong Subregion and requested the secretariat to pay special attention to those countries in their ICT applications, and thereby assist them in enhancing access to ICT and bridging the digital divide.

77. The Subcommittee stressed the need to provide isolated areas with ICT access in order to bridge the digital divide. It noted the need for bilateral and multilateral support focused on providing telecommunication services for landlocked countries, to enable them to become a part of the information society. It also noted the efforts made by member countries to bring the benefits of ICT to rural populations and welcomed the offer of the member countries to share their experience in that area.

78. The Subcommittee noted initiatives of the ASEAN secretariat to develop a knowledge-sharing network on universal design and supportive technology for disabled and elderly people within ASEAN countries, to set up an ASEAN network for software multilingualization aiming at sharing and exchanging experiences on research activities, and to train human resources in ASEAN countries.

67. Regional Space Applications Programme for Sustainable Development within the framework of the Millennium Development Goals, the World Summit on the Information Society and the World Summit on Sustainable Development

79. The Subcommittee agreed that space technology applications, such as satellite communications and remote sensing, were playing an important role in supporting poverty reduction and the sustainable development of countries in the region. It noted that space technologies could effectively help in achieving the Millennium Development Goals and the goals set at the World Summit on the Information Society and the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

16. The Subcommittee commended the work of the Intergovernmental Consultative Committee and the regional working groups under the Regional Space Applications Programme for Sustainable Development (RESAP) of ESCAP, and supported the initiatives taken by RESAP to address disaster management and regional cooperative mechanisms.

17. The Subcommittee expressed great appreciation for the reiteration of Malaysia's offer to host the Third Ministerial Conference on Space Applications for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific in 2007, an offer that had been made initially at the ninth session of the Intergovernmental Consultative Committee on RESAP, held in Kuala Lumpur in December 2003. The Subcommittee encouraged all members and associate members to support the preparations for the Conference.

4. Future focus areas

18. The Subcommittee expressed support for the outcome of the Expert Group Meeting on Open-source Software for Knowledge Management, held prior to the Subcommittee session. Recognizing the important role that open-source software could play in the development of ICT, knowledge-sharing, bridging the digital divide and the development of a knowledge-based society, the Subcommittee requested the secretariat to organize forums or training workshops to create awareness, build technical capacity and share knowledge and experience in open-source software.

19. The Subcommittee recognized 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 and the Expert Group Meeting on the follow-up to the World Summit (at which Internet governance and financial mechanisms were discussed), held prior to the Subcommittee session. The Subcommittee expressed support for the initiatives of the secretariat aimed at continuing its efforts to provide platforms for discussion and the exchange of experiences and views on the main thematic areas of the World Summit.

20. The Subcommittee stressed the need to develop ICT indicators to monitor progress towards the information society and the Millennium Development Goals. It expressed support for the initiative proposed by the secretariat, in collaboration with member countries, to create definitions, standards and methodologies in the development of ICT indicators that could be used to benchmark the development of ICT among countries. Some countries expressed the view that the monitoring of progress towards the Millennium Development Goals should be carried out by the national bodies concerned.

21. In order to promote the sharing of knowledge, experiences and lessons learned in ICT development and to apply ICT more effectively for development and for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, the establishment of databases of good practices was proposed, including practices involving financial mechanisms, the use of ICT applications and national programmes.

22. The Subcommittee expressed the need to organize forums in which to exchange experiences, develop guidelines for the implementation of selected applications, analyse and share good practices, facilitate the replication of successful practices and build a knowledge databank.

23. The Subcommittee recognized the need to bridge the digital divide, not only between countries but also within them. In line with that, it expressed support for the efforts made by the secretariat in the area of community e-centres and encouraged continuous effort in that area.

24. The Subcommittee recognized the role of RESAP in assisting member countries in achieving the Millennium Development Goals and in identifying specific projects and activities through forums and the exchange of the most suitable good practices for the benefit of ESCAP members.

25. The Subcommittee noted with appreciation the Asia broadband programme and expressed support for the role of ESCAP as a regional coordinator in the implementation of that programme.

A. Major initiatives and programmes to promote regional cooperation in information, communication and space technologies

26. The Subcommittee had before it document E/ESCAP/SICST/2, which highlighted the major regional cooperation initiatives and programmes in the region in information, communication and space technology development and applications, and ESCAP's role in promoting regional cooperation and implementing cooperation programmes, such as the Asia broadband programme and RESAP.

65. Asia broadband programme

27. The Subcommittee held the view that the creation of an inclusive regional information society and the bridging of the digital divide required the building of an ICT infrastructure in the region. One of the most promising ways of achieving that goal was the building of a regional broadband infrastructure. In that regard, the Subcommittee expressed appreciation to the Asia-Pacific Telecommunity (APT) for bringing to its attention the Bangkok Agenda adopted by its Ministerial Conference on Broadband and ICT Development, held in July 2004.

28. The Subcommittee expressed support for the broadband initiative and took the view that a favourable broadband network environment required wide regional consensus and common principles agreed by all stakeholders from all countries in the region, including Governments, the private sector and civil society. Taking that into account, the Subcommittee suggested that ESCAP could serve as a regional coordinator in the implementation of those initiatives. Furthermore, the Subcommittee welcomed the offer of the Government of Japan to promote further cooperation among countries in Asia and the Pacific in implementing that programme on a continuous basis.

66. Regional cooperation in space technology

29. The Subcommittee expressed full support for the efforts of RESAP to bridge the digital divide and to initiate regional cooperative mechanisms in space technology applications for disaster management. As most countries in the region were severely affected by natural disasters, addressing disaster management effectively through better integration and operationalization of space technology applications was regarded as a priority to be addressed by RESAP.

30. The Subcommittee noted with interest the achievements of some member countries in space technology development and the wide spectrum of applications, from poverty alleviation and disaster management to distance education, telemedicine and the provision of communication services for remote rural areas through community e-centres at the village level.

31. The Subcommittee held the view that there was a need to organize forums for exchanging experiences, sharing good practices, developing guidelines for the implementation of selected applications and facilitating the replication of successful practices that would benefit the socio-economic development of member countries and the region as a whole. The Subcommittee welcomed the offer of India to contribute to such activities.

32. The Subcommittee acknowledged with appreciation the support given by China and Malaysia in organizing regional training workshops on space technology applications (such as soil erosion risk assessment) for other developing members, and the offer of Malaysia to share its experience in space-related activities and education as well as to cooperate in space science and technology research. The Subcommittee expressed appreciation for the offer of India to share its expertise in space technology applications and to provide technical and managerial training opportunities for other developing member countries in natural resources accounting, environmental and disaster management, and in e-education, e-health, village resource centres and the cost-effective sharing of resources in those fields. The Subcommittee acknowledged the offer of Kazakhstan to share its experience and capacity in space technology development and applications and in other information technology applications.

33. Recognizing the important contribution of space technology to effective natural disaster management, the Subcommittee noted with satisfaction the progress made by China in developing a constellation of satellites dedicated to natural disaster reduction and expressed appreciation for China's offer of regional cooperation in the development and application of the constellation, which could become one of the platforms that could support regional cooperative mechanisms in disaster reduction.

34. The Subcommittee expressed appreciation for the reiterated proposal of the Islamic Republic of Iran to establish a regional centre affiliated with the United Nations in that country to support the region's efforts in informed disaster management. The Subcommittee welcomed the suggestion by

the Islamic Republic of Iran that a feasibility study on the proposed centre be conducted with the ESCAP secretariat.

35. The Subcommittee noted major initiatives on space cooperation in the region, such as Asia-Pacific Multilateral Cooperation in Space Technology and Applications (AP-MCSTA), Asia-Pacific Regional Space Agency Forum and the ASEAN Subcommittee on Space Technology and Applications. The Subcommittee recommended that ESCAP, with its long-term involvement and coordinating role in regional cooperation in space technology applications in the Asian and Pacific region, develop an appropriate mechanism for major initiatives to complement their resources and avoid duplication of effort, for the benefit of all members.

36. The Subcommittee recognized the progress made in the institutionalization of AP-MCSTA towards an Asia-Pacific space cooperation organization by its member countries. Additionally, it acknowledged the proposal for the broader involvement of other interested countries.

A. Capacity-building in information, communication and space technology to reinforce regional cooperation

37. The Subcommittee had before it document E/ESCAP/SICST/3 on the above-mentioned subject.

38. The Subcommittee recognized that human and institutional capacity-building in ICST and its applications were essential for economic and social development. It expressed strong support for the capacity-building activities of the secretariat and urged the secretariat to make those activities a priority area of its work. It endorsed the secretariat's proposal on the areas of capacity-building activities: the establishment of community e-centres; e-government, e-business and other ICT applications; and public-private partnerships.

65. Community e-centres for bridging the digital divide

39. Community e-centres providing an ICST infrastructure and integral services were considered an important development tool with the potential to empower communities. The Subcommittee endorsed ESCAP's role in implementing in particular the recommendation of the Declaration of Principles and Plan of Action of the World Summit on the Information Society that called for providing "universal and non-discriminatory access to ICTs". Furthermore, it encouraged ESCAP to continue its work in developing sustainable models for community e-centres, documenting good practices and conducting training workshops for those centres.

40. The Subcommittee noted the efforts made by member countries in establishing community e-centres and acknowledged the key challenges faced by countries in establishing those access points, especially in rural areas. It stressed that the centres were a viable means of providing ICT access for communities that had been left out of the information society. The Subcommittee expressed support

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for ESCAP's efforts to develop a sustainable implementation model of community e-centres in collaboration with the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

41. The Subcommittee welcomed ESCAP's initiative in developing a guidebook for establishing community e-centres based on the experience of providing ICT services for rural communities in Malaysia and other countries. It expressed appreciation for the support of the Government of Malaysia and welcomed the Government's offer to provide technical expertise on the initiative to bridge the digital divide within the framework of the secretariat's capacity-building programme. The Subcommittee noted with appreciation the offer of the Government of the Philippines to contribute to the documenting of case studies on ICT for development.

42. The Subcommittee expressed strong support for the secretariat's efforts in documenting national initiatives and conducting training programmes on community e-centres to build capacity in the establishment of the centres. To promote the sharing of experiences and lessons learned more effectively, the Subcommittee recommended that the secretariat act itself as a "central help desk" or "databank" of national initiatives so that member countries could easily access information on or enquire about national community e-centre initiatives in the region.

43. The Subcommittee encouraged ESCAP's cooperation with ADB, the ADB Institute, ITU, UNESCO and other organizations in the area of developing local content and training operators and users of community e-centres.

66. E-government, e-commerce and other applications

44. The Subcommittee noted with appreciation the secretariat's programme on capacity-building and human resources development in the implementation of e-government in member countries. It called upon the secretariat to continue its efforts to provide ESCAP member countries with assistance in that application in collaboration with regional organizations.

45. The Subcommittee noted the outcome of the workshop on implementing e-government, held in May-June 2004 in collaboration with the ADB Institute and the Government of France. It recognized that, despite the potential, there were still major challenges in improving e-government services and efficiency and urged the secretariat to continue its efforts in such capacity-building activities.

46. The Subcommittee noted the initiatives taken by many Governments to provide citizen-centric government information and sustainable services for their citizens and businesses in order to achieve more transparency, efficiency and accountability. It also acknowledged the need for more cooperation among member countries in the implementation of e-government and capacity-building in that application.

47. The Subcommittee stressed the importance of security and confidence in the success of e-commerce systems. It recognized that there was a need for appropriate legal frameworks in many jurisdictions to validate electronic transactions, which was seen as a significant barrier to the full growth of e-commerce. In view of the borderless nature of the Internet, the need for cooperation and consistency in the regional and international arena was also acknowledged. In that context, the Subcommittee requested ESCAP to finance and organize seminars and training workshops on cyber law to facilitate the sharing of experiences in the development of cyber laws and to promote the importance of harmonizing the laws. The Subcommittee welcomed Malaysia's offer of collaboration in organizing such workshops.

48. The Subcommittee recommended that ESCAP be involved in the dissemination and replication of good practices on the successful implementation and promotion of ICST applications in e-government, e-business and e-learning, which would provide further employment and income generation in rural areas.

49. The Subcommittee emphasized that ESCAP should strengthen its activities in the areas of capacity-building in ICST applications, which were beneficial to the rural poor. It felt that ESCAP, while strengthening its activities aimed at assisting member countries in alleviating poverty through ICST and its applications, should also engage in knowledge management and networking in the region.

50. The Subcommittee encouraged ESCAP to continue its efforts to organize activities in collaboration with regional organizations, such as the UNDP Asia-Pacific Development Information Programme and the ADB Institute, to provide member countries with assistance in their e-business development services for small and medium-sized enterprises, particularly for countries of the Greater Mekong Subregion.

51. The Subcommittee endorsed the organization of forums through knowledge networks for the exchange of experiences, the development of guidelines for the implementation of selected applications, the analysis and sharing of good practices, the facilitation of the replication of successful demonstration projects. It also endorsed the building of knowledge bases.

65. Public-private partnerships

52. The Subcommittee held the view that public-private partnerships were one of the most important factors for the long-term sustainability of development-oriented ICT programmes, since they were built on the basis of mutual benefit and complementarities between the profit motive of the private sector and the government commitment to ICST development goals. The Subcommittee further emphasized the importance of public-private partnerships for the development of community e-centres and their long-term operations.

53. The Subcommittee noted with appreciation that public-private partnerships in ICST programmes had been successfully achieved in many member countries. Reported successful cases and initiatives included community e-centres in Yunnan Province of China, the Technopreneur Flagship and Cyberkids Software Camp of Malaysia and the provision of low-cost computers in Malaysia, Thailand and other countries.

54. To enhance public-private partnerships, the Subcommittee endorsed the recommendation of the secretariat that forums be created at both the national and regional levels to share experiences and good practices related to public-private partnerships in ICST development.

B. Programme matters

65. Review of programme performance for 2002-2003

55. The Subcommittee observed that a results-based approach had been introduced in the review of the programme performance for 2002-2003 in the area of information, communication and space technology, as shown in document E/ESCAP/SICST/4. It noted with appreciation that the secretariat had successfully implemented its programme of work on information, communication and space technology, especially in contributing to improved national ICT policies and frameworks, capacity-building, enhanced regional cooperation in ICT applications, application of information and space technologies for poverty reduction, environmental protection and disaster management. Lessons learned from the biennium 2002-2003, particularly those relating to raising the awareness of government officials at the decision-making level, the cost-effectiveness of employing poverty-mapping tools and utilizing effective regional institutional arrangements to foster regional cooperation on ICT, were all considered significant in helping to determine the kind of direction that the secretariat would be provided with in the future.

66. Priority areas for inclusion in the programme of work for 2006-2007

56. The Subcommittee reviewed document E/ESCAP/SICST/5, which contained the biennial programme plan for the work of ESCAP for 2006-2007 with regard to subprogramme 7, Information, communication and space technology, as incorporated into the draft strategic framework for ESCAP for the same period (A/59/6 (Prog. 15)). It noted that the draft strategic framework for the period 2006-2007 had been endorsed by the Commission at its sixtieth session, in April 2004,¹ and, following the recommendation of the Committee for Programme and Coordination,² would be considered by the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session, in 2004. The Subcommittee discussed and provided a number of suggestions on areas of focus to be included in the ICST programme of work for 2006-2007. Specific requests were heard from many countries, including Bhutan, Cambodia,

¹ See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2004, Supplement No. 19 (E/2004/39-E/ESCAP/1330)*, para. 257.

² See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 16 (A/59/16)*, para. 241.

Malaysia, Nepal, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Timor-Leste. The requests focused on cyber laws, ICST empowerment for poverty reduction, cost-effectiveness, quality of education, implementation modalities on community e-centres, indicators for the information society, capacity-building as a whole, access to ICST equipment, ICST awareness, human resources development and sharing of resources. The secretariat would compile those suggestions and the results of the questionnaires completed by the delegations, identifying priority areas, including outputs, activities and suggested modalities for delivery on which they wished the secretariat to focus in the programme of work for 2006-2007.

C. Other matters

57. No other matters were raised in the Subcommittee. The secretariat requested members and associate members to nominate their national focal points, of whom there could be more than one to cover relevant fields, to facilitate future contacts.

I. ORGANIZATION OF THE SESSION

A. Opening, duration and organization of the session

65. The first session of the Subcommittee on Information, Communications and Space Technology was held at Bangkok from 13 to 15 October 2004.

66. The session was opened by the Executive Secretary and by His Excellency Dr. Surapong Suebwonglee, Minister for Information and Communication Technology of the Government of Thailand.

60. In his opening statement, the Executive Secretary of ESCAP said that he was impressed by the large attendance of representatives of members and associate members and organizations. He referred to the inauguration by His Excellency the Minister of Information and Communication Technology of the Government of Thailand as a demonstration of his commitment to the success of the Subcommittee. He noted with appreciation a number of encouraging offers and initiatives for regional cooperation from a number of member countries. In view of the huge digital gap between and within countries of the region, ESCAP intended to focus on bridging the digital divide in the region, as called for by the World Summit on the Information Society, as well as on realizing the established benchmarks, with priority given to the least developed, landlocked, small island developing countries, and countries with economies in transition. Based on the requests received from a large number of member countries, ESCAP would help to connect villages to ICSTs and establish community access points through community e-centres, the sharing of best practices, capacity-building and demonstration and pilot projects. ESCAP intended to work closely with the private sector and stakeholders in their services delivery which supported e-government, e-learning, e-business, e-health, e-environment, e-agriculture and e-science. In its delivery of services, ESCAP

continued to emphasize its leading and catalytic roles as well as a major partner role in national initiatives to promote regional cooperation.

61. In his inaugural address, His Excellency the Minister of Information and Communication Technology of the Government of Thailand referred to ICT as a powerful tool for creating an enabling environment for sustainable development, which offered enormous opportunities to narrow economic and social inequalities. The rapid growth of ICT had had tremendous positive effects on the economic and social development of many countries in the region while, however, the access to ICT and its applications in a number of less advanced countries was very low. In an effort to bridge its own national digital divide, the Government of Thailand had embarked on a campaign to provide the Thai people with access to low-cost computers, the Internet and broadband connectivity, which were considered prerequisites to bridging the digital divide. In addition, Thailand was striving to build human capacity in several digital areas.

62. The Minister expressed satisfaction with the increasingly visible role of ESCAP in ICST and expressed appreciation for the large number of ICT activities conducted by the secretariat in best practices, capacity-building, demonstration projects and regional advisory services. He expressed the hope that ESCAP would continue to make its activities results-based and demand-driven and that they would cater for regional and local conditions, with a focus on field operations that could be useful to countries in the Asian and Pacific region. He cited community e-centres as one priority area for future action. The Minister reaffirmed his country's full support for ESCAP in its delivery of services, adding that Thailand was ready to work more closely with ESCAP and other countries of the region.

63. Finally, he urged the Subcommittee to focus on the possibility of greater regional cooperation, facilitated by ESCAP and other regional and subregional organizations, towards mutually beneficial opportunities to promote complementarity in ICT.

B. Attendance

64. The session was attended by the following members and associate members of ESCAP: Afghanistan; Australia; Bangladesh; Bhutan; Cambodia; China; Democratic People's Republic of Korea; Fiji, France; India; Indonesia; Iran (Islamic Republic of); Japan; Kazakhstan; Lao People's Democratic Republic; Malaysia; Maldives; Mongolia; Nepal; Pakistan; Philippines; Republic of Korea; Russian Federation; Singapore; Sri Lanka; Thailand; Timor-Leste; United States of America; Uzbekistan; and Viet Nam.

65. Representatives of the following United Nations bodies attended: United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and United Nations University.

66. Representatives of the following United Nations specialized agencies attended: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, World Health Organization, International Telecommunication Union and United Nations Industrial Development Organization.

67. Representatives of the Asian Development Bank, Asia-Pacific Telecommunity, Association of Southeast Asian Nations, Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat and Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization also participated.

C. Officers

68. The Subcommittee elected Mr. Chin Bun Sean (Cambodia) Chairperson, Mr. Lalith Weeratunga (Sri Lanka), Mr. Zulkifli Idris (Malaysia) and Mr. Lefter Victor Dmitryevich (Kazakhstan) Vice-Chairpersons, and Ms. Kunping Kuang (China) Rapporteur.

D. Agenda and organization of work

69. The Subcommittee adopted the following agenda as contained in document E/ESCAP/SICST/L.1:

65. Opening of the session.
66. Election of officers.
67. Adoption of the agenda.
68. Review of major and related activities and future focus areas:
 - (mmm) Regional follow-up to the first phase of the World Summit on the Information Society and the preparations for the second phase;
 - (nnn) Regional programme on information and communication technology applications;
 - (ooo) Regional Space Applications Programme for Sustainable Development within the framework of the Millennium Development Goals, the World Summit on the Information Society and the World Summit on Sustainable Development;
 - (ppp) Future focus areas.
69. Major initiatives and programmes to promote regional cooperation in information, communication and space technologies:
 - (mmm) Asia broadband programme;
 - (nnn) Regional cooperation in space technology.
70. Capacity-building in information, communication and space technology to reinforce regional cooperation:
 - (mmm) Community e-centres for bridging the digital divide;
 - (nnn) E-government, e-commerce and other applications;
 - (ooo) Public-private partnerships.

71. Programme matters:
 - (mmm) Review of programme performance for 2002-2003;
 - (nnn) Priority areas for inclusion in the programme of work for 2006-2007.
72. Other matters.
73. Adoption of the report.

E. Documentation

70. The documents that were before the Subcommittee at its first session are listed in the annex to the present report.

F. Adoption of the report

71. The Subcommittee adopted the report on its first session on 15 October 2004.

Annex

LIST OF DOCUMENTS

<i>Symbol</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Agenda item</i>
E/ESCAP/SICST/L.1	Provisional agenda	
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