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**REVIEW OF ISSUES PERTINENT TO THE SUBSIDIARY STRUCTURE OF
THE COMMISSION: INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS
TECHNOLOGY**

(Item 2 (e) of the provisional agenda)

**SUMMARY OF PROGRESS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF
COMMISSION RESOLUTIONS RELATING TO INFORMATION
AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY**

Note by the secretariat

SUMMARY

The present document provides a summary of the progress made in the implementation of Commission resolutions in the area of information and communication technologies, namely resolution 61/6 on the establishment of the Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development; and resolution 62/5 on building the information society in Asia and the Pacific, which facilitate the implementation of the outcomes of the two phases of the World Summit on the Information Society at the regional level.

The major issues and challenges were discussed and identified at the first session of the Committee on Information and Communications Technology, held in November 2008. In the current and next biennium, the secretariat will, pending approval by the Commission, continue the implementation of the recommendations of the Committee, while proposing that the national implementation of the outcomes of the Summit continue to be monitored at the regional level and identified gaps and challenges be addressed through regional cooperation. Against this background, the secretariat proposes the establishment of a national structure for the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society where it does not exist and the monitoring of the progress made with linkages to various national, regional and international development goals, such as the Millennium Development Goals.

CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
Introduction.....	2
I. RESOLUTION 61/6 ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE ASIAN AND PACIFIC TRAINING CENTRE FOR INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY FOR DEVELOPMENT	2
II. RESOLUTION 62/5 ON BUILDING THE INFORMATION SOCIETY IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC	3
III. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION.....	5

Introduction

1. In recent years, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) has adopted two information and communications technology (ICT) related resolutions: resolution 61/6 on the establishment of the Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development, and resolution 62/5 on building the information society in Asia and the Pacific, which facilitate the implementation of the outcomes of the two phases of the World Summit on the Information Society at the regional level. The present report summarizes the activities undertaken to implement those resolutions, followed by future directions and orientation.

I. RESOLUTION 61/6 ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE ASIAN AND PACIFIC TRAINING CENTRE FOR INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY FOR DEVELOPMENT

2. In accordance with the resolution, the Centre was established in June 2006. The Centre actively collaborates with United Nations agencies, other international organizations, member States and civil society to establish a strong and mutually reinforcing foundation for building human capacity in ICT for development within the region, and fulfill the vision of utilizing ICT for socio-economic development and achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

3. In the resolution, the Commission also invited all members and associate members to participate actively in monitoring and evaluating the work of the Centre in order to ensure that its activities do not duplicate those of other institutions or agencies in the region. Accordingly, the Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development (APCICT) reported its activities to the Committee on Managing Globalization in 2007 (see E/ESCAP/CMG(4/II)/7), and subsequently to the Committee on Information and Communications Technology at its first session, in 2008 (see E/ESCAP/CICT/3). The committees expressed their appreciation for the work of the Centre since its inception. In response to the growing concern regarding disaster risk reduction among ESCAP member States, the Committee on Information and Communications Technology requested that APCICT develop a training module on ICT and disaster risk reduction.

4. The Governing Council of APCICT has held three sessions: the first was held during the Centre's inauguration on 16 June 2006; the second on 16 and 17 April 2007; and the third on 9 December 2008. At the third session, the Council expressed satisfaction with the progress made towards a number of significant achievements within a short period of time, despite the limited human resources of the Centre. In particular, the Council commended the participatory and inclusive approach of the Academy of ICT Essentials for Government Leaders, recognized the added value the Academy contributes to the ICT human resource development agenda and acknowledged the critical role the e-Collaborative Hub has played and continues to play in fostering a continuous learning environment through the provision of a dedicated online platform for knowledge sharing and collaboration on ICT for development in the Asia-Pacific region.

5. In accordance with resolution 61/6, the Centre reported its activities to the Commission at its sixty-third (see E/ESCAP/63/23) and sixty-fourth sessions (see E/ESCAP/64/27). At the sixty-fourth session, some delegations recognized the excellent training conducted by APCICT and encouraged the knowledge sharing initiated by the Centre, while acknowledging that APCICT had become a platform for

developing and promoting the use of ICT among member States.¹ In particular, the Centre reported on capacity-building to bridge the digital divide, creating a sustainable institutional framework for the training of trainers in the field of ICT, and enhancing regional cooperation in human resources development through the following activities undertaken by the Centre:

(a) Guided by analytical studies, needs assessment surveys and consultative workshops, the Centre developed the Academy of ICT Essentials for Government Leaders Programme, a comprehensive ICT for development training curriculum with eight initial modules that aim to equip policymakers with the knowledge and skills to fully leverage opportunities presented by ICT to achieve national development goals;

(b) APCICT organized 16 training events and 3 global forums/conferences. In total, 1,384 participants—of whom 385 were female—representing government, academia, civil society and the private sector from over 40 countries participated in these events;

(c) One regional workshop for training of trainers for the Academy Programme, four subregional workshops (Central and West Asia, the Pacific, South Asia, and South-East Asia), and one national Academy workshop in Mongolia have been held;

(d) Implementation of the Academy Programme through a participatory and inclusive approach has not only resulted in high-quality modules, but also commitment from participating countries to customize, translate and deliver the Academy Programme at the national level on a regular basis;

(e) The launch of an e-Collaborative Hub² on 16 June 2008 to enhance the learning and training experience by providing easy access to relevant resources and making an interactive space for sharing knowledge and experiences on ICT for development available;

(f) The inclusive and participatory approach the Centre took in the development of the Academy and its focus on strengthening institutional capacities of member States provides a value added contribution to ICT capacity-building in the region.

6. As mandated by the resolution, APCICT submitted a mid-term review to the Commission at its sixty-fourth session entitled Performance review of the Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development (E/ESCAP/64/29).

II. RESOLUTION 62/5 ON BUILDING THE INFORMATION SOCIETY IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

7. In resolution 62/5, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary to take a number of actions aimed at assisting member States in developing the information society in the region. Accordingly, the activities described below have been undertaken.

¹ See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2008, Supplement No. 19* (E/2008/39-E/ESCAP/64/39), para. 203.

² See <http://www.unapcict.org/ecohub>.

8. As mandated by the resolution, the secretariat invited international and regional organizations to cooperate with ESCAP in the regional implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society. In particular, regional inter-agency working group meetings³ were organized in February 2008 with a view to strengthening cooperation and coordination at the regional level and promoting mutually complementary and coherent strategies and programmes which would ensure synergy of efforts in achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

9. Regarding the technical and financial contributions from regional and multilateral financial institutions, donor countries and agencies for the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society as well as the Regional Action Plan,⁴ a number of ICT for development projects and initiatives have been planned and implemented. The World Summit on the Information Society Stocktaking Activities database⁵ keeps track of these projects and initiatives online, while the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) compiled a report⁶ on the World Summit on the Information Society stocktaking activities in 2008.

10. In response to the resolution, the secretariat has been implementing a number of activities aimed at achieving the goals set by the World Summit on the Information Society within existing regular budget resources or with voluntary contributions. In order to encourage the participation of the private sector and civil society and promote the exchange of information and best practices, the secretariat organized a series of trainings on capacity-building, such as the Consultative Meeting for the Establishment of a Regional Knowledge Network of Rural Women's Cooperatives,⁷ the National Seminar on Capacity-building in Public Policy Issues of Internet Use for Business Development⁸ in 2007 and the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Forum on Digital Economy for Women 2006: Innovation and Leadership in Asia-Pacific.⁹

11. Furthermore, the secretariat organized various expert group meetings in coordination with ITU and other relevant organizations to promote capacity-building in developing countries for monitoring the information society. The Capacity-building Workshop on Information Society Statistics: Infrastructure, Household and Other Indicators¹⁰ was organized in 2007 in collaboration with ITU and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.

12. In order to assist member States in developing policies and plans focusing on communication technology applications in view of the development of regional strategies and the implementation of the outcomes of regional conferences, the secretariat held the National Seminar on Capacity-building for ICT Policymaking¹¹ in Azerbaijan and the Workshop on Broadband and ICT Development for Improved Communications in Central Asia in 2007. It was commented that these workshops were helpful to member States in reviewing, formulating and implementing ICT policies.

³ See http://www.unescap.org/icstd/policy/working_group_on_ICT.asp.

⁴ See ESCAP, *Regional Action Plan towards the Information Society in Asia and the Pacific* (ST/ESCAP/2415) (E.06.II.F.20).

⁵ See <http://www.itu.int/wsis/stocktaking/scripts/search.asp>.

⁶ See <http://www.itu.int/wsis/stocktaking/docs/2008/WSIS-Stocktaking2008-e.pdf>.

⁷ See <http://www.unescap.org/icstd/applications/projects/Green-Coops/consul-meeting/>.

⁸ See http://www.unescap.org/icstd/events/NW_Mongolia_2007/.

⁹ See <http://www.unescap.org/icstd/applications/projects/apecforum2006/>.

¹⁰ See <http://www.unescap.org/icstd/events/Info-Society-Stats-Workshop-2007/>.

¹¹ See <http://www.unescap.org/icstd/events/NW-Azerbaijan-2007/>.

13. Regarding the ICT capacity-building mandated by the resolution, a number of initiatives have been undertaken by the APCICT as described in the above paragraphs as well as in the report submitted by the Centre (E/ESCAP/64/27 and Corr.1).

14. In addition, the secretariat has been implementing various projects and assisting member States in expanding ICT access in rural and remote areas through community e-centres (CeC). A project funded by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) has assisted the establishment of CeCs in Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal. The secretariat is also implementing a United Nations Development Account project entitled knowledge networks through access points for disadvantaged communities, which promotes knowledge sharing and networking at the regional level of national CeC networks for the benefit of rural communities. The secretariat compiled a report on the status of CeCs in the Asia-Pacific region (2007), entitled *Enhancing Pacific Connectivity: The current situation, opportunities for progress*¹² as well as the upcoming report entitled *Rural Telecenter Panauti*.

15. As for the Third Ministerial Conference on Space Applications for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific, which had been planned to be held in October 2007 in Kuala Lumpur, the secretariat cooperated with member States in making all relevant documentation and logistical preparations. However, due to difficulties in concluding a host country agreement between the Government of Malaysia and the United Nations, the conference was postponed.

III. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

16. Some of the above progress was reported by the secretariat to the Committee on Information and Communications Technology at its first session and major issues and challenges were discussed and identified (see E/ESCAP/65/7). In the current and next biennium, pending approval by the Commission, the secretariat will continue the follow-up and implementation of the recommendation of the Committee on Information and Communications Technology as well as the ESCAP resolutions within the overall framework of the implementation of the World Summit on the Information Society and the Millennium Development Goal.

17. At the same time, the secretariat wishes to propose that the national implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society continue to be monitored at the regional level and that the gaps and challenges that have been identified be addressed through regional cooperation and shared at various regional and international forums, such as the Inter-Agency Working Group meeting. One of the first steps the secretariat proposes is the establishment of a national structure for the implementation of the World Summit on the Information Society where it does not exist and the monitoring the progress made with linkages to various national, regional and international development goals, such as the Millennium Development Goals. The secretariat would compile and analyse such progress as a basis for discussion on regional cooperation among various stakeholders and partners active in developing an equitable information society.

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¹² ESCAP, *Enhancing Pacific Connectivity: The Current Situation, Opportunities for Progress* (United Nations Publication, Sales No. E.08.II.F.14).