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Committee on Information and Communications Technology,
Science, Technology and Innovation

Fourth session

Bangkok and online, 30 August–1 September 2022

Annotated provisional agenda

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

I. Provisional agenda

1. Opening of the session:
 - (a) Opening statements;
 - (b) Election of officers;
 - (c) Adoption of the agenda.
2. Asia-Pacific digital transformation landscape.
3. Action plan for implementing the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway initiative, 2022–2026.
4. Fourth industrial revolution technologies for sustainable development.
5. Assessment of information and communications technology capacity-building needs in Asia and the Pacific.
6. Use of digital technology and geospatial information systems to enhance resilience and promote sustainable development.
7. Other matters.
8. Adoption of the report of the Committee on its fourth session.

II. Annotations

1. Opening of the session

(a) Opening statements

The programme for the session will be available online at www.unescap.org/events/2022/committee-information-and-communications-technology-science-technology-and-innovation.

(b) Election of officers

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

The list of participants will be available online at www.unescap.org/events/2022/committee-information-and-communications-technology-science-technology-and-innovation.

(c) Adoption of the agenda

Documentation

Annotated provisional agenda (ESCAP/CICTSTI/2022/L.1)

Annotation

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

2. Asia-Pacific digital transformation landscape

Documentation

Summary of the Asia-Pacific digital transformation report 2022 (ESCAP/CICTSTI/2022/1)

Annotation

The rapid rise in digital technologies creates opportunities and poses challenges for implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. As digital options have become the default during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, the nexus between digitalization and development has been highlighted by the positive impact of digital transformations on societies on the one hand and the negative impact of widening digital divides on the other hand. In addition, as more and more devices and systems rely on Internet connectivity, those countries without reliable and affordable access to the Internet or without the necessary digital skills will increasingly be left behind in terms of gaining access to the benefits and opportunities that a digital economy will present in the future.

Consequently, the Asia-Pacific region faces a compelling need to bring meaningful digital opportunities to all, for a more prosperous present and for greater participation in the digital societies of the future.

The Committee will share information on the national experiences related to the key information, data, analyses and policy recommendations emerging from the Asia-Pacific digital transformation report 2022. The Committee will also propose ways in which the findings and experiences can

support the action plan for implementing the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway initiative, 2022–2026 (see ESCAP/CICTSTI/2022/2 and ESCAP/CICTSTI/2022/INF/1).

3. Action plan for implementing the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway initiative, 2022–2026

Documentation

Summary of the process for the development and main elements of the action plan for implementing the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway initiative, 2022–2026 (ESCAP/CICTSTI/2022/2)

Action plan for implementing the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway initiative, 2022–2026 (ESCAP/CICTSTI/2022/INF/1)

Annotation

The Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway initiative is a region-wide intergovernmental platform that aims to bridge the digital divide and accelerate digital transformation through regionally coordinated actions for promoting digital technology and applications, digital connectivity and the use of digital data. At its third session, the Committee recommended that the secretariat of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) set up a drafting group from among the members of the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway Steering Committee to develop an action plan for the 2022–2026 phase of implementation, for consideration and endorsement by the Committee at its fourth session, in 2022.

Consequently, the drafting group developed the action plan, which was adopted by the Steering Committee at its fifth session, on 25 November 2021.

At the global level, the action plan contributes to implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, the World Summit on the Information Society action lines and the report of the Secretary-General entitled “Our Common Agenda”. At the regional level, it supports the implementation of ESCAP resolution 78/1, entitled “Bangkok Declaration Commemorating the Seventy-fifth Anniversary of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific: a Common Agenda to Advance Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific”, in which the members and associate members of ESCAP committed themselves to improving digital cooperation, expressed their intention to work at all levels, including the ministerial level, and endeavoured to ensure safe, affordable and equitable digital access for all. Also in the Bangkok Declaration, members and associate members recognized that the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway initiative could be one of the useful regional platforms for the promotion of digital cooperation. Moreover, the action plan is also aligned with the regional agendas of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Digital Master Plan 2025, the Trans-Eurasian Information Superhighway and the Council of Regional Organizations of the Pacific’s Information and Communications Technology Working Group.

The Committee is invited to consider and endorse the action plan.

4. Fourth industrial revolution technologies for sustainable development

Documentation

Fourth industrial revolution technologies for sustainable development (ESCAP/CICTSTI/2022/3)

Annotation

Countries in the Asia-Pacific region are fast embracing the technologies of the fourth industrial revolution. In fact, the rate at which these technologies are being adopted has increased owing to the COVID-19 pandemic. At the same time, however, the pandemic has had an adverse impact on efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.

While many developed and some developing countries are harnessing the benefits of fourth industrial revolution technologies to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, there is a risk that the least developed countries and countries in special situations will be left behind. The intraregional disparity in terms of development and usage of fourth industrial revolution technologies is a challenge for the Asia-Pacific region.

Mindful of this situation, in the document before the Committee, the secretariat presents an overview of the status, opportunities and challenges related to the development, transfer, adoption and diffusion of fourth industrial revolution technologies for sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific. It also presents examples of enabling policy mechanisms to promote the development and application of fourth industrial revolution technologies for sustainable development at both the national and regional levels.

In addition, the secretariat presents strategies on how States in the region can: (a) jointly harness the benefits of the fourth industrial revolution; (b) learn from each other's experiences and practices; and (c) utilize existing platforms for South-South and triangular cooperation to accelerate the adoption of fourth industrial revolution technologies.

The Committee may wish to share national experiences, including effective practices and lessons learned, in promoting fourth industrial revolution technologies for sustainable development and consider taking the following actions:

(a) Indicate the types of support, such as in the areas of policymaking, strategy development, training and knowledge-sharing, tools development, research and advisory services, that may be required from the secretariat to promote the adoption, diffusion and innovative application of fourth industrial revolution technologies for sustainable development;

(b) Make recommendations to the secretariat on ways to promote fourth industrial revolution technologies for sustainable development in the region;

(c) Identify new and priority policy issues related to fourth industrial revolution technologies for sustainable development that the secretariat should address in greater detail.

5. Assessment of information and communications technology capacity-building needs in Asia and the Pacific

Documentation

Assessment of information and communications technology capacity-building needs in Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP/CICTSTI/2022/4)

Annotation

The digital landscape at the national, regional and global levels has changed drastically since the Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development was established. New types of needs are coming to the fore. The need to grapple with the second wave of the digital revolution threatens to overwhelm many Governments, especially those of least developed countries. Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic has further accelerated the use of information and communications technologies by Governments, businesses and societies, creating new opportunities and posing new challenges to members and associate members.

ESCAP members and associate members must urgently build the capacity to develop policies and regulations that ensure an ever-more sophisticated use of information and communications technologies for sustainable development.

The document before the Committee contains information that will contribute to helping the Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development to reposition itself so that it can better support members and associate members to navigate the current digital era by empowering Governments in carefully targeted niche thematic areas with the greatest potential to implement the 2030 Agenda. The document also contains information on the new opportunities and challenges that all ESCAP members and associate members, as well as specific communities, are facing, including the existing and emerging information and communications technology-related challenges for developing countries in the region, the opportunities and challenges arising from certain subregional contexts and the current and emerging digital technologies that could make an enormous contribution to government efforts to address persistent development problems and achieve sustainable development.

6. Use of digital technology and geospatial information systems to enhance resilience and promote sustainable development

Documentation

Use of digital technology and geospatial information systems to enhance resilience and promote sustainable development (ESCAP/CICTSTI/2022/5)

Annotation

Driven by the emerging needs of members and associate members and facilitated by the Asia-Pacific Plan of Action on Space Applications for Sustainable Development (2018–2030), the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework and the Global Statistical Geospatial Framework, the stage has been set in Asia and the Pacific for the utilization of digital technologies for applications of geospatial information to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Significant progress has already been made in developing

innovative ways of applying geospatial information systems through the use of digital technologies such as artificial intelligence, big Earth data, the Internet of things and cloud computing. These have resulted in a generation of operational, faster, versatile, accessible and available approaches to evidence-based information that support decision-making processes in all sectors, at both the local and national levels. However, significant barriers to the adoption of digital technologies remain at the regional and national levels, which the COVID-19 pandemic has amplified.

The innovative use of digital technology and geospatial information systems will play an essential role in developing new sustainable development solutions. In a post-pandemic world, the theme “Space+ for our Earth and future” was proposed by the Intergovernmental Consultative Committee on the Regional Space Applications Programme for Sustainable Development, at its twenty-fifth session, in 2021, to promote the implementation of the Asia-Pacific Plan of Action on Space Applications for Sustainable Development (2018–2030) in its second phase (2022–2026). The proposal to focus on that theme was aimed at enabling members and associate members to go beyond traditional space applications and make geospatial information accessible, available, affordable and actionable. Moreover, the focus on the theme “Space+ for our Earth and future” will help to leverage digital technologies to enhance space applications for the benefit of people while informing practices, processes and policies, including through innovation and the integration of socioeconomic parameters.

The Committee may wish to share experiences in making innovative use of geospatial information and identify policy priorities and areas ahead of the Fourth Ministerial Conference on Space Applications for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific and the future implementation of the Asia-Pacific Plan of Action on Space Applications for Sustainable Development (2018–2030).

7. Other matters

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

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

Documentation

Draft report (ESCAP/CICTSTI/2022/L.2)

Annotation

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