



Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific**Seventy-sixth session**

Bangkok, 21 May 2020

Item 5 (i) of the provisional agenda*

Review of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific: information and communications technology, science, technology and innovation**Report of the Governing Council of the Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development on its fourteenth session***Summary*

The Governing Council of the Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development held its fourteenth session in Incheon, Republic of Korea, on 28 November 2019.

The Council reviewed the work undertaken by the Centre since its thirteenth session and expressed appreciation for the Centre's contribution to strengthening the capacities of member States with regard to utilizing information and communications technology for sustainable development. It also reviewed the Centre's administrative and financial status.

The Council endorsed the Centre's programme of work for 2020, which was aimed at providing more practical assistance to member States and further expanding the Centre's footprint in the region. The Centre would prioritize its support to countries with special needs and would focus its work in the areas of digital government and transformation; digital society and inclusion; and addressing transboundary issues such as disaster risk reduction and climate change. The Council welcomed the Centre's efforts to provide additional support to Governments in the form of technical assistance and customized training programmes. It also welcomed the Centre's plan to develop programmes for vulnerable and disadvantaged populations.

The Council expressed appreciation to the host country, the Republic of Korea, for its continued funding support to the Centre and to other member States for their voluntary and in-kind contributions. It called on all member States to support the Centre's programmes and operations to promote human capacity development in the area of information and communications technology in the region.

* ESCAP/76/L.1/Rev.1.

I. Matters calling for action by the Commission or brought to its attention

1. The Governing Council expresses its appreciation to the Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development for its capacity development work on utilizing information and communications technology (ICT) for sustainable development, which contributes to efforts by member States to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

2. The Council commends the Centre for enhancing the ICT knowledge and skills of policymakers and civil servants, women entrepreneurs, and students and young people through three flagship programmes: Academy of ICT Essentials for Government Leaders; Women ICT Frontier Initiative; and Primer Series on ICT for Development for Youth.

3. The Council endorses the Centre's programme of work for 2020, which aims to provide more practical assistance to member States and further expand the Centre's footprint in the region. The Centre will prioritize its support for countries with special needs and will focus its work in the areas of digital government and transformation, digital society and inclusion, and on addressing transboundary issues such as disaster risk reduction and climate change. The Council welcomes the Centre's efforts to deepen support for national Governments through technical assistance and customized training programmes. It also welcomes the Centre's plan to develop programmes for vulnerable and disadvantaged populations.

4. The Council expresses its appreciation to the host country, the Republic of Korea, for its continued funding support for the Centre and to other member States for their voluntary and in-kind contributions.

5. The Council calls on all member States to support the Centre's mission of strengthening human and institutional capacities on ICT for sustainable development.

II. Proceedings

A. Report on the administrative and financial status of the Centre (Agenda item 2)

6. The Council had before it the report on the administrative and financial status of the Centre (ESCAP/APCICT/GC/2019/1).

7. The Council was briefed on the Centre's financial status, management and staffing capacity. A summary of operational funding was presented, including the institutional funding provided by the host country, the Republic of Korea, through the Incheon Metropolitan City and the Ministry of Science and ICT. The Council was informed that voluntary contributions had been received from the governments of Bangladesh, Cambodia, India and Macao, China.

8. Additional funding had been received from the Government of Canada to support the implementation of ICT training activities related to the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) project on catalysing women entrepreneurship, which was being jointly implemented by the Social Development Division and the Trade, Investment and Innovation Division of ESCAP.

9. The Council was informed that the in-kind contributions of national partners, in the form of logistical, material and human resources, had greatly facilitated the national implementation of the Centre's training programmes.

10. The representative of the Philippines informed the Council that her Government would continue to provide in-kind contributions aimed at supporting the delivery of new training modules. The representative of the Republic of Korea encouraged the Centre to mobilize resources from other donors, including other development organizations.

11. The Council encouraged member States to provide voluntary contributions to support the Centre's programmes and operation.

B. Work of the Centre since the thirteenth session of the Governing Council
(Agenda item 3)

12. The Council had before it the report on the work of the Centre since the thirteenth session of the Council, which was held in Bangkok on 31 August 2018 (ESCAP/APCICT/GC/2019/2).

13. A presentation was made by the Director of the Centre on the activities that had been undertaken under the three flagship programmes: Academy of ICT Essentials for Government Leaders; Women ICT Frontier Initiative; and Primer Series on ICT for Development for Youth.

14. Under the Academy programme, the Centre had continued to innovate its ICT curriculum for civil servants and launched, in December 2018, a new training programme on realizing data-driven governance. Following the regional launch, training-of-trainers sessions and workshops for policymakers had been undertaken in Bhutan, Cambodia, Kazakhstan and the Philippines.

15. The Centre had also organized training activities for policymakers of the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Myanmar in the areas of national ICT policy formulation, ICT and sustainable development, and social media for development. It had also embarked on a training programme specifically targeting local governments and had organized a session for the training of trainers on digital local government in the Philippines in September 2019.

16. The Council was informed that the Women ICT Frontier Initiative, an ICT capacity development programme for women entrepreneurship, had been rolled out in Armenia, Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, the Philippines and Sri Lanka, and subregional launches had been undertaken for Central Asia and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

17. A training-of-trainers session on basic financial management and ICT tools for women entrepreneurs had been undertaken in Cambodia in November 2019 aimed at building capacities on delivering basic business financial management training, including the use of a mobile bookkeeping application, to Cambodian women micro-entrepreneurs.

18. The Council was informed of the continued utilization of the Academy, Women ICT Frontier Initiative and Primer Series training resources by national partners from ICT ministries, civil service organizations and academia. Those partner-led activities had served to demonstrate the continued relevance of the Centre's training programmes in national efforts related to digital skills development.

19. The Council was briefed on the Centre's knowledge-sharing activities, including the enhancements of its online platforms – the Virtual Academy and the Centre's website – and the release of a new publication on data-driven smart government, in cooperation with the National Information Society Agency of the Republic of Korea.

20. The Council noted that the Centre offered well-developed training modules related to distinct themes, such as ICT for disaster risk management, ICT for women entrepreneurship, and data-driven governance. It recommended that the Centre should raise funding related to the substance of its modules rather than approach donors to fund the Centre as an institution.

21. One representative welcomed the Centre's work in the areas of women entrepreneurship, data-driven governance and information security. The representative noted that the ICT environment was changing rapidly, and that emerging technologies – such as the Internet of things, the fourth industrial revolution, artificial intelligence and 5G wireless technology – would result in increasing demand for the Centre's training activities. A new training agenda could be the basis for the Centre's resource mobilization efforts.

22. One representative stated that the emergence of new technologies had necessitated the re-skilling and up-skilling of the country's workforce. The representative requested that the Centre consider developing training modules on topics such as artificial intelligence, blockchain and automation.

23. The Council expressed appreciation for the Centre's continued efforts to enhance and expand the delivery of its programmes in the region.

C. Programme of work for 2020
(Agenda item 4)

24. The Council reviewed the Centre's programme of work for 2020.

25. The programme of work for 2020 was aimed at providing more practical assistance to member States and further expanding the Centre's footprint in the region. The Centre's programmes would focus on the following thematic priorities: digital government and transformation; digital society and inclusion; and addressing transboundary issues such as disaster risk reduction and climate change.

26. New training modules would be developed in the areas of data privacy and ICT for vulnerable populations. Existing modules would also be updated to reflect the latest ICT trends. Module localizations would be prioritized to address unique subregional and national contexts, with specific attention to countries with special needs.

27. To broaden the delivery of capacity-building programmes in the region, the Centre would strengthen its partnerships with ICT ministries and civil service organizations as well as collaborate more closely with international, regional and subregional organizations. To deepen support for national Governments, the Centre would provide technical assistance and deliver customized and sector-specific ICT training programmes. It would also strengthen its outreach to local governments.

28. To ascertain the impact of its work in the region, the Centre would improve its monitoring and evaluation and would develop guidelines for reporting by national partners on the utilization of the Centre's programmes.

29. The representative of the Philippines welcomed the capacity development support being provided to local governments. She shared with the Council that the Department of ICT and the Department of Interior and Local Government would collaborate to provide ICT training to local government leaders utilizing the Centre's training modules.

30. The representative of Cambodia requested the Centre to strengthen and expand its e-learning content. He also noted that existing training modules would need to be translated to Khmer language to effectively reach the country's civil servants.

31. The representative of the Russian Federation expressed appreciation for the Centre's work, which had helped member States in efforts to implement the Sustainable Development Goals. He emphasized the importance of module localization and noted that, as an in-kind contribution to the Centre, his Government would support the Russian localization of the training modules.

32. The representative of Thailand requested the Centre to consider developing a training programme on ICT for vulnerable and disadvantaged populations. With respect to module localization, she proposed that the Centre partner with academic institutions. She also recommended that the Centre strengthen its cooperation with the private sector and subregional groups such as the Ayeyawady-Chao Phraya-Mekong Economic Cooperation Strategy and the Greater Mekong Subregion Economic Cooperation Programme.

33. The representative of the Philippines supported the request of the Government of Thailand related to the development of the new training programme and suggested the development of modules in two tracks: one for policymakers and the other for vulnerable and disadvantaged populations. She also welcomed the Centre's plan to strengthen its monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. She requested the Centre to look into the area of ICT competency standards, which could facilitate a more systematic identification of future training modules for civil servants. She noted that in South-East Asia, competency standards had already been developed by ASEAN for technical professionals, but not for the workforce at the management level.

34. The representative of Indonesia stated that, as in-kind contribution to the Centre, his Government would support the localization of the Centre's newest modules by making them available in Bahasa. He noted that the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology would continue to roll out the Centre's training programmes. He also supported the recommendation of the Government of the Philippines with regards to developing ICT competency standards.

35. The Council was informed that it was necessary for the Centre to prioritize which new ICT-related modules and topics should be developed, given the Centre's limited resources. Issues such as access/connectivity, vulnerable and disadvantaged populations, and ageing would be potential areas for the Centre's future programmes. The Centre could also leverage the programmes and initiatives that were already being spearheaded by ESCAP in those areas, such as the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway initiative and the Incheon Strategy to "Make the Right Real" for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific.

D. Date of and venue for the fifteenth session of the Governing Council
(Agenda item 5)

36. The secretariat, in consultation with the Council, would make the necessary arrangements for the organization of the fifteenth session, to be held in conjunction with the third session of the Committee on Information and Communications Technology, Science, Technology and Innovation in 2020.

E. Other matters
(Agenda item 6)

37. No other matters were discussed by the Council.

F. Adoption of the report of the Governing Council on its fourteenth session
(Agenda item 7)

38. The Council adopted the present report on 31 December 2019.

III. Organization

A. Opening, duration and organization of the session

39. The fourteenth session of the Council was held in Incheon, Republic of Korea, on 28 November 2019.

40. A statement was made by the Deputy Executive Secretary of ESCAP. In his remarks, the Deputy Executive Secretary reminded the Council of the relevance of the Centre's mandate in implementing the 2030 Agenda. He underscored the persistent digital divide in the region and the need to nurture human resources and create digital competencies to help countries prosper in a technology-driven world economy. He emphasized that the Council's deliberations would be instrumental to enhancing the impact of the Centre's ICT capacity development work as well as in charting the Centre's strategic direction in the years to come.

B. Attendance

41. The session was attended by representatives of the nine members of the Council: Bangladesh; Cambodia; India; Indonesia; Philippines; Republic of Korea; Russian Federation; Sri Lanka; and Thailand.

42. The representative of Pakistan attended as an observer.

C. Election of officers

43. The Council elected the following officers:

Chair: Mr. Mohammad Fazlur Rahman (Bangladesh)

Vice-Chair: Ms. Ishariyaporn Smiprem (Thailand)

D. Agenda

44. The Council adopted the following agenda:
1. Opening of the session:
 - (a) Opening statements;
 - (b) Election of officers;
 - (c) Adoption of the agenda.
 2. Report on the administrative and financial status of the Centre.
 3. Work of the Centre since the thirteenth session of the Governing Council.
 4. Programme of work for 2020.
 5. Date of and venue for the fifteenth session of the Governing Council.
 6. Other matters.
 7. Adoption of the report of the Governing Council on its fourteenth session.

Annex I

List of documents

| <i>Document Symbol</i> | <i>Title</i> | <i>Agenda item</i> |
|--------------------------|--|--------------------|
| <i>General series</i> | | |
| ESCAP/APCICT/GC/2019/1 | Report on the administrative and financial status of the Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development | 2 |
| ESCAP/APCICT/GC/2019/2 | Report on the work of the Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development since the thirteenth session of the Governing Council | 3 |
| | Programme of work for 2020 | 4 |
| ESCAP/APCICT/GC/2019/3 | Report of the Governing Council of the Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development on its fourteenth session | |
| <i>Limited series</i> | | |
| ESCAP/APCICT/GC/2019/L.1 | Annotated provisional agenda | 1 (c) |
| ESCAP/APCICT/GC/2019/L.2 | Draft report | 7 |

Annex II

Financial statement of the Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development for the year ended 31 December 2019

(United States dollars)

Income

| | |
|--|------------------------------|
| Contributions | 1 610 689 |
| Interest income | 93 473 |
| Other income | - |
| Exchange difference | - |
| Total income | 1 704 162 |
| <i>Less: Expenditure</i> | (1 308 365) |
| Net income over expenditure | 395 797 |
| Fund balance as at 1 January 2019 | 3 428 800 |
| Refund to donors | - |
| Fund balance as at 31 December 2019 | 3 824 597^a |

^a The balance amount is earmarked for future programmatic and operational activities of the Centre.

Annex III

Financial statement of the Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development for the year ended 31 December 2019, by project component
(United States dollars)

| | <i>Ministry of Science and ICT and Incheon Metropolitan City</i> | <i>Joint contributions and other projects</i> | <i>Total</i> |
|--|--|---|------------------------------|
| <i>Income</i> | | | |
| Contributions | 1 488 317 | 122 372 | 1 610 689 |
| Interest income | 87 097 | 6 376 | 93 473 |
| Exchange difference | - | - | - |
| Total income | 1 575 414 | 128 748 | 1 704 162 |
| <i>Less: Expenditure</i> | | | |
| | (1 196 589) | (111 776) | (1 308 365) |
| Net income over expenditure | 378 825 | 16 972 | 395 797 |
| Fund balance as at 1 January 2019 | 3 146 656 | 282 144 | 3 428 800 |
| Refund to donors/fund transfer | - | - | - |
| Fund balance as at 31 December 2019 | 3 525 481 | 299 116 | 3 824 597^a |

^a The balance amount is earmarked for future programmatic and operational activities of the Centre.

Annex IV

**Cash contributions to the Asian and Pacific Training Centre for
Information and Communication Technology for Development for
the year ended 31 December 2019**
(United States dollars)

| <i>Country/area</i> | <i>Year ended 31 December 2019</i> | <i>Year ended 31 December 2018</i> |
|---|--|--|
| 1. Incheon Metropolitan City and Ministry of Science and ICT | | |
| Republic of Korea (Incheon Metropolitan City) | 800 000 | 800 000 |
| Republic of Korea (Ministry of Science and ICT) | 688 317 | 763 101 |
| Subtotal | 1 488 317 | 1 563 101 |
| 2. Other technical cooperation projects | | |
| Bangladesh | 10 000 | 10 000 |
| Cambodia | 2 000 | 2 000 |
| India | 19 960 | 20 000 |
| Macao, China | 5 000 | 5 000 |
| Thailand | - | 15 000 |
| Republic of Korea (Ministry of Science and ICT) | 85 412 | 44 456 |
| Subtotal | 122 372 | 96 456 |
| Total | 1 610 689 | 1 659 557 |