

**Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific**Committee on Information and Communications Technology,  
Science, Technology and Innovation**Third session**

Bangkok, 19 and 20 August 2020

**Report of the Committee on Information and  
Communications Technology, Science, Technology and  
Innovation on its third session****I. Matters calling for action by the Commission or brought to  
its attention****A. Matters calling for action by the Commission**

1. The following recommendations of the Committee on Information and Communications Technology, Science, Technology and Innovation are brought to the attention of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) for consideration and possible action:

**Recommendation 1**

The Committee recognizes that the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) has further demonstrated the importance of digital connectivity and e-resilience and recommends that the secretariat support expanding regional collaboration to scale up broadband Internet capacities for the effective use of technological innovation. In addition, the Committee recognizes the importance of collaborative actions to harness technology to address major challenges such as COVID-19 and welcomes collaborative multi-stakeholder efforts to forge technology alliances to that end.

**Recommendation 2**

The Committee, recognizing with concern that the digital divide is widening in the region, recommends expanding investments in next-generation infrastructure networks, recognizing the need to accelerate research on the issue of co-deployment of fibre-optic cables along passive infrastructure networks and make relevant information available to all parties, including methodology for calculating cost-effectiveness.

**Recommendation 3**

The Committee calls for the active participation of Governments, the private sector, international organizations, regional institutions and other stakeholders, as appropriate, in bridging the digital divide.

**Recommendation 4**

The Committee recommends that the secretariat set up a drafting group as part of the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway Steering Committee to develop an action plan for the next phase of implementation of the Master Plan for the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway, for 2022–2026, for consideration and adoption by the Committee at its fourth session, to be held in early 2022.

**Recommendation 5**

The Committee takes note of the proposals pertaining to the following: action plan for the digital transformation of the Asia-Pacific region; guidelines for inclusive technology and innovation policies for sustainable development; and guiding principles for business innovation policy development. It decides not to proceed with the proposals at this stage, without prejudice to addressing these issues at any of its future sessions.

**Recommendation 6**

The Committee recognizes that the establishment of carrier-neutral Internet exchange points can promote increased intraregional content exchange and improve the reliance, quality and cost of Internet connectivity and recommends that the secretariat continue to study and promote the work on those issues, with a focus on least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and Pacific small island developing States.

**Recommendation 7**

The Committee recommends that the secretariat continue enhancing regional cooperation, emphasizing that with the growing use of space applications in the region and the potential development of new and innovative applications, it will help Governments, in particular of countries with special needs, to better leverage innovative technologies, data and tools to strengthen the contribution of space applications to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

**Recommendation 8**

The Committee recommends that the secretariat, in particular through the work of the Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development, continue facilitating knowledge-sharing and providing capacity-building support on effective information and communications technology policies and practices to respond to COVID-19. It also encourages all member States to consider making voluntary financial and in-kind contributions to strengthen the work of the Centre and underlines the need to continue strengthening institutional and human capacities with regard to digital technologies for development.

**Recommendation 9**

The Committee emphasizes the importance of science, technology and innovation for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and recommends that the secretariat give priority to that area as a key means of implementation of the Goals. The Committee also recommends that the secretariat support member States, upon request, in developing their science, technology and innovation policies, strategies and road maps for the Goals, in

order to effectively harness science, technology and innovation for sustainable development.

### **Recommendation 10**

The Committee strongly supports the secretariat's work on inclusive technology and innovation policies over the previous two years, 2018 to 2020, and recommends that the secretariat continue to support member States to develop inclusive technology and innovation policies, including by providing advisory services; facilitating the sharing of best practices, learning and regional collaboration; conducting research; and making tools available for promoting and assessing such policies.

### **Recommendation 11**

The Committee recognizes innovative business models and practices, such as social enterprises, inclusive businesses and impact investing, as important sources of innovation for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. At the national level, the Committee recommends that the secretariat continue to support member States, upon request, to develop policy initiatives and capacities. The Committee stresses the importance of developing, as appropriate, regional guidelines to advance business innovation for inclusive and sustainable development. It also recommends that the secretariat build the evidence base of effective policies and facilitate knowledge-sharing among policymakers in the Asia-Pacific region.

### **Recommendation 12**

The Committee recommends that the secretariat facilitate knowledge-sharing and collaboration in the region with regard to science, technology and innovation and that ESCAP discussions on science, technology and innovation be linked, as appropriate, to relevant broader conversations, including at the annual multi-stakeholder forum on science, technology and innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals, which takes place throughout the lifespan of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

### **Recommendation 13**

The Committee acknowledges that the support provided by the Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology in the period 2018–2020 strengthened the capacities of member States in critical areas of science, technology and innovation. The Committee recommends that the Centre continue to facilitate knowledge-sharing and provide demand-driven capacity-building support with regard to enabling science, technology and innovation strategies to advance sustainable development. The priority areas of focus for the Centre's continued work include technology transfer and commercialization, intellectual property management and technology-based entrepreneurship and start-ups, with a special focus on fourth industrial revolution technologies, renewable energy, agriculture, water, and climate change mitigation and adaptation technologies. In addition, the Committee underlines the need to continue strengthening the institutional and human capacities of the Centre and recommends that member States consider providing or enhancing extrabudgetary financial support to the Centre and financing new technical cooperation projects to ensure the variety and sustainability of its capacity-building, research and technical assistance work.

## **B. Matters brought to the attention of the Commission**

2. The following decisions adopted by the Committee are brought to the attention of the Commission:

### **Decision 1**

The Committee welcomes the newly constituted thematic working group on innovation and technology for sustainable development of the United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia and recognizes its contribution to the implementation of the Master Plan for the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway and the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway Regional Cooperation Framework Document.

### **Decision 2**

The Committee decides to scale up the use of space applications to deliver on the Sustainable Development Goals, by implementing the Asia-Pacific Plan of Action on Space Applications for Sustainable Development (2018–2030) and building a regional gateway to promote the sharing of integrated geospatial data, tools and good practices in an open and systematic manner, in line with global initiatives such as the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework of the Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management.

## **II. Organization**

### **A. Opening, duration and organization of the session**

3. The Committee held its third session in Bangkok on 19 and 20 August 2020, both in person and online owing to the COVID-19 pandemic. The session was opened by the Executive Secretary of ESCAP. A keynote address was delivered by Mr. Bambang Brodjonegoro, Minister for Research and Technology, and Chair of the National Agency for Research and Innovation, Indonesia. A statement was delivered by Mr. Sorena Sattari, Vice President for Science and Technology, Islamic Republic of Iran.

### **B. Attendance**

4. The Committee session was attended by representatives of the following members and associate members: Afghanistan; Azerbaijan; Bangladesh; Bhutan; Cambodia; China; Democratic People's Republic of Korea; Fiji; India; Indonesia; Iran (Islamic Republic of); Japan; Kazakhstan; Kiribati; Kyrgyzstan; Lao People's Democratic Republic; Malaysia; Maldives; Marshall Islands; Mongolia; Myanmar; Nauru; Pakistan; Papua New Guinea; Philippines; Republic of Korea; Russian Federation; Samoa; Sri Lanka; Tajikistan; Thailand; Timor-Leste; Tonga; Turkmenistan; United States of America; Uzbekistan; and Viet Nam.

5. Representatives of Switzerland attended in the capacity of Permanent Observer to ESCAP.

6. A representative of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat attended.

7. Representatives of the following United Nations bodies, specialized agencies and funds attended: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations; International Maritime Organization; International Telecommunication

Union; United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women); United Nations Environment Programme; United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat); United Nations Industrial Development Organization; United Nations Population Fund; World Bank; World Meteorological Organization; and World Trade Organization.

8. Representatives of the following intergovernmental organizations attended: Asia Pacific Telecommunity; Asian Development Bank; Asian Reinsurance Corporation; Association of Southeast Asian Nations; International Coconut Community; International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies; International Pepper Community; Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development; Pacific Community; and Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

9. Representatives of the following non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations and other entities attended: Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences; Geo-Informatics and Space Technology Development Agency; GSM Association; Huqooq-ul-Ebad Development Foundation; International Council on Social Welfare; Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency; Kabul University; Korea Information Society Development Institute; Korea Institute of S&T Evaluation and Planning; National Information Society Agency; Odessa National Academy of Telecommunications; Pardis Technology Park; Society for International Development; and TOT Public Company Thailand.

### **C. Election of officers**

10. The Committee elected the following officers:

Chair:	Mr. Renato U. Solidum, Jr. (Philippines)
Vice-Chairs:	Mr. Bambang Brodjonegoro (Indonesia)
	Mr. Asim Iftikhar Ahmad (Pakistan)
	Mr. Elmir Velizade (Azerbaijan)
	Mr. Mahdi Mohammadi (Islamic Republic of Iran)
	Mr. Fualau Talatalaga Matafeo (Samoa)

### **D. Agenda**

11. The Committee adopted the following agenda:

1. Opening of the session:
  - (a) Opening statements;
  - (b) Election of officers;
  - (c) Adoption of the agenda.
2. Collaborative actions to harness technologies during pandemics.
3. Bridging the digital divide for inclusive broadband access.
4. Scaling up the use of space applications to deliver on the Sustainable Development Goals.
5. Inclusive technology and innovation for the decade of action for the Sustainable Development Goals:
  - (a) Guidelines for inclusive technology and innovation policies for sustainable development;

- (b) Policies to enable business innovation for inclusive and sustainable development;
  - (c) Supporting countries on inclusive technology and innovation through capacity-building and technical assistance.
6. Consideration of the future focus of the subprogramme.
  7. Other matters.
  8. Adoption of the report of the Committee on its third session.

## **E. Other events**

12. The following meetings, side events and special events were held in conjunction with the Committee session:

- (a) 1 July 2020, webinar: Bringing affordable and reliable Internet to all: what do Internet exchange points have to do with this?;
- (b) 3 July 2020, online meeting: E-resilience for pandemic recovery: intercountry consultations in preparation for the third session of the Committee;
- (c) 9 July 2020, online working group meeting: Enhancing sustainable and inclusive connectivity through Internet exchange point and traffic management in Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar and Viet Nam;
- (d) 15 and 29 July 2020, online expert group meetings: Regional consultation on guidelines for inclusive technology and innovation policies for sustainable development;
- (e) 22 July 2020, online expert group meeting: Regional consultation on enabling policies for business innovation for inclusive and sustainable development;
- (f) 30 July 2020, online meeting of the United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia thematic working group on innovation and technology for sustainable development;
- (g) 5 August 2020, second meeting of the working group on a Pacific Internet exchange point and capacity training workshop on Internet exchange point operational modalities (held online);
- (h) 10 August 2020, fourth session of the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway Steering Committee and the World Summit on the Information Society Regional Review (held online);
- (i) 18 August 2020, twenty-fourth session of the Intergovernmental Consultative Committee on the Regional Space Applications Programme for Sustainable Development;
- (j) 20 August 2020, webinar: 2020 United Nations E-Government Survey.

13. The final week of the World Summit on the Information Society Forum 2020 will be held online from 7 to 10 September 2020.

**Annex**

**List of documents**

<i>Symbol</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Agenda item</i>
<i>General series</i>		
ESCAP/CICTSTI/2020/1	Collaborative actions to harness technologies during pandemics	2
ESCAP/CICTSTI/2020/2	Promoting regional cooperation for inclusive broadband connectivity through the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway initiative	3
ESCAP/CICTSTI/2020/3	Enhancing geospatial information applications for implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals	4
ESCAP/CICTSTI/2020/4	Guidelines for inclusive technology and innovation policies for sustainable development	5 (a)
ESCAP/CICTSTI/2020/5	Policies to enable business innovation for inclusive and sustainable development	5 (b)
ESCAP/CICTSTI/2020/6	Technology and innovation capacity-building and technical assistance provided to member States from 2018 to 2020	5 (c)
ESCAP/CICTSTI/2020/7	Report of the Committee on Information and Communications Technology, Science, Technology and Innovation on its third session	
<i>Limited series</i>		
ESCAP/CICTSTI/2020/L.1	Annotated provisional agenda	1 (c)
ESCAP/CICTSTI/2020/L.2	Draft report	8
<i>Information series</i>		
ESCAP/CICTSTI/2020/INF/1	Master Plan for the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway, 2019–2022	3
ESCAP/CICTSTI/2020/INF/2	Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway Regional Cooperation Framework Document, 2019–2022	3
<i>Information available online</i>		
<a href="http://www.unescap.org/intergovernmental-meetings/committee-information-and-communications-technology-science-technology-and-innovation-third">www.unescap.org/intergovernmental-meetings/committee-information-and-communications-technology-science-technology-and-innovation-third</a>	Information for participants	

<i>Symbol</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Agenda item</i>
www.unescap.org/intergovernmental-meetings/committee-information-and-communications-technology-science-technology-and-innovation-third	List of participants	
www.unescap.org/intergovernmental-meetings/committee-information-and-communications-technology-science-technology-and-innovation-third	Tentative programme	

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