



FINAL SUMMIT COMMUNIQUÉ

Introduction

The Connect Arab Summit was held in Doha, State of Qatar, from 5 to 7 March 2012, under the patronage of His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, Emir of the State of Qatar. It was jointly organized by the International Telecommunication Union and the League of Arab States.

The Summit included some 540 participants from 26 countries, including 7 Heads of State or Government, 26 Ministers, 18 international and regional organizations and 99 private sector companies and other stakeholders.

This Summit, the third of its kind in a series of ITU-led Connect Summits, aimed to foster mechanisms to mobilize the financial, human and technical resources needed to expand the scope of information and communication technology (ICT) networks and provide universal access to these as a means of encouraging investment in ICT projects and providing employment in order to achieve broader social and economic development.

Leaders of the Arab countries and stakeholders commended the current ICT development that has been achieved as a result of all the efforts deployed in recent years to harness ICTs to increase rates of growth, reduce poverty and promote sustainable development in the region. They re-affirmed their commitment to realizing the vision of an inclusive Arab Information Society for all and leveraging the potential of ICTs to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

Moreover, they committed to furthering the attainment of the Summit goals in alignment with the WSIS goals and outcomes, and agreed to intensify efforts in the coming years in order to achieve the following priorities:

- 1) develop telecommunication and information technology infrastructure;
- 2) disseminate digital culture and develop Arabic digital content;
- 3) build capacity in the field of telecommunications and information technology and their use;
- 4) promote confidence and security in the use of ICTs, including the development of appropriate legislations and regulatory frameworks that ensure the safe use of the Internet;
- 5) create an enabling environment at all levels; develop and widen the scope of ICT applications and digital content;
- 6) promote innovation in the various fields pertaining to telecommunications and information technology, including stimulating innovation, especially in the domain of applications and Arabic digital content;
- 7) increase the level of Arab and international cooperation among all stakeholders to further ICT development;

- 8) endorse and support the right of the Palestinian people to have access to telecommunications and information technology services, including the right to establish telecommunication networks in all the Palestinian territories and the right to have access to radio-frequency spectrum and its management; and urge the International Telecommunication Union to implement the Union's relevant international resolutions and recommendations on Palestine.

In order to realize these priorities, all stakeholders, including governments, private sector, civil society and regional and international organizations, will work together towards the achievement of the following goals by 2015:

Goal 1: Access and infrastructure

Establish and modernize infrastructure, achieve universal access and improve the quality of services as a long-term target, promote rapid deployment of broadband networks in urban and rural areas in all Arab countries, increase the availability and affordability of ICT services throughout the Arab region, build workforce skills to prepare for broadband-enabled economies, further promote the use of ICTs to respond to the special needs of various segments of society, including persons with disabilities, establish Internet exchange points (IXPs) in all the Arab States, increase the connectivity among these States to help to reduce the international cost of the Internet, increase the security of telecommunications and information, avoid the use of international networks from outside the Arab region to connect the Arab States, and help in spreading Arabic digital content.

Goal 2: Digital content

Focus efforts to increase Arabic digital content on Internet sites by initiating national and regional programmes to develop content and promote innovation and incubators in order to encourage scientific research in processing the Arabic language, lower the cost of accessing digital content, and develop strategies to boost the consumption of digital content by Arab users so as to help in bridging the digital and ICT divide in the Arab region.

Goal 3: Cybersecurity

Improve regional cooperation and strengthen it through common or similar policies, strategies and legislations needed to effectively address the growing threat posed by cyberattacks and cybercrime, with a view to harmonizing policies, strategies and legislation, and also to establishing a regional legal framework on cybersecurity and cybercrime for all the Arab States. Make efforts to increase levels of protection against the risks posed by illegal use of ICTs, with specific attention to children and young people as well as the safe use of the Internet.

Goal 4: Innovation

Integrate ICT innovation as a key component of government policy and develop national strategy in coherence with public development goals, with clearly expressed political support; and design and coordinate an Arab regional approach to ICT innovation. This will help Arab countries to collaborate efficiently and promote regional integration in the field of research and innovation; empower Arab citizens to innovate through a new educational approach, allowing for a wider range of skills needed for innovation; and provide appropriate financing for ICT innovation, and enable the competitiveness of the products of this sector in the world markets.

Projects

On the occasion of the Summit, a number of projects valued at USD 46.6 billion were proposed by stakeholders with the aim of achieving these goals, including the projects for Palestine and the Arab least developed countries. Details of these projects can be found at the following link:

http://www.itu.int/ITU-D/connect/arabstates/projects_home.asp.

It should be noted that proposals for projects will continue to be accepted after the Summit.

Summit commitments

During the Summit, the leaders of the Arab region reached out to all relevant stakeholders, including the telecommunication/ICT sector, development banks and financial institutions, international and regional organizations, other private sector companies and civil society, with the aim of working hand in hand to expedite efforts and mobilize resources to support these priorities and goals, and to contribute to the achievement of leaders' goals and targets in line with the WSIS goals and targets and MDGs.

Advantage may be taken of the existing special Arab Funds for financing telecommunication and information technology projects. Details of all the commitments can be found at the following link:

<http://www.itu.int/ITU-D/connect/arabstates/commitments.asp>

Follow-up mechanism

The leaders present in Doha noted the importance of following up the progress made in implementing the Summit outputs. In that regard, a follow-up mechanism will be implemented by ITU in collaboration with the League of Arab States and other relevant stakeholders, with the aim of identifying gaps and avoiding overlaps in the efforts to achieve the Connect Arab Summit outcomes.

Annex 1

Goals and targets

Priorities	Goals	Targets
A. Innovation	A.1 Consider innovation as a key component of government policy and ensure policy coherence by treating it with strong leadership at the highest political level. Articulate and adopt a strategic and broad-based framework approach to innovation that takes into consideration current best practices and involves a range of concerned parties, including governments, educational and research institutions, firms, consumers and, in particular, ICT-enabled users. Support evidence-based decision-making and policy accountability, undertake measurement of innovation capabilities at national levels as well as comparative measurement at regional levels in Arab States.	A.1.1 Integrate ICT innovation as a key component of government policy in coherence with national development agendas with clearly expressed political support and strong leadership at the highest political level. A.1.2 Provide a high-level policy commitment to an innovation agenda as part of national development strategies and ensure policy coherence by establishing a governance framework that crosses regions and sectors and includes roles for relevant stakeholders, including governments, education and research institutions, firms, consumers and ICT-enabled users. A.1.3 Foster innovation in the public sector at all levels of government to enhance the delivery of public services, improve efficiency, coverage and equity, and create positive externalities in the rest of the economy. A.1.4 Develop robust measurement of innovation capabilities at national levels as well as to support comparative measurement at regional levels in Arab States. A.1.5 Promote a culture of innovation at all levels from consumers to corporations. Document and share related and replicable best practices.
	A.2 Promote ICTs as general-purpose platforms for innovation and knowledge sharing to build knowledge societies.	A.2.1 Create a suitable policy and regulatory environment that allows for the responsible development of technologies and their convergence. A.2.2 Ensure that a modern and reliable knowledge infrastructure that supports innovation is in place, accompanied by the regulatory frameworks which support open access to networks and competition in the market. A.2.3 Undertake national ICT innovation

Priorities	Goals	Targets
		initiatives, where appropriate, using partnerships, that respond to improving delivery of public services (e.g. government, education, health, transport, quality of life).
	A.3 Promote a policy environment that supports the start-up and expansion of new and young firms as they are critical for innovation to flourish. Establish a cooperation agenda between, governments, private sector and regional Arab organizations, to consider innovative thinking, new approaches and bold steps to leverage the combined potential of youth, entrepreneurship and innovation in the region, in order to face high levels of unemployment in the region, with most of the jobless being young people.	A.3.1 Develop a national policy coherent approach fostering the start-up and expansion of new and young firms, through concrete initiatives such as seed funding and grants, business incubation/support, bureaucracy reduction, tax and other incentives, use of shared facilities and employment policies that facilitate efficient organizational change. A.3.2 Mobilize private funding for innovation, by fostering well-functioning financial markets and easing access to finance for new firms, in particular for early stages of innovation. A.3.3 Foster partnerships, open markets, a competitive and dynamic business sector and a culture of healthy risk-taking and creative activity. A.3.4 Provide necessary mid- and long-term predictability in the general environment in order to encourage entrepreneurship in general and in the ICT sector, in particular.
	A.4 Develop and coordinate an Arab regional ICT innovation approach to make Arab States collaborate efficiently for the benefit of a regional integration based on best practices in innovation strategies.	A.4.1 Establish an efficient and effective follow-up regional coordination mechanism to support an innovation agenda across Arab States and the ongoing sharing of best practices and experiences. A.4.2 Establish a regional “Arab Center for Development of Innovation and Knowledge”. A.4.3 Establish a regional web portal and capacity building activities focused on innovation. A.4.4 Develop cooperation and partnerships between Arab States as well as between developed and developing countries, to encourage innovation and creativity and the adoption of cost-effective technologies.

Priorities	Goals	Targets
B. Cybersecurity	B.1 Establish a pan-Arab agreements on cybersecurity and cybercrime, harmonizing policies, strategies and legislations.	B.1.1 Establishment of national legal frameworks harmonized at the regional level in all Arab countries, within the period of 5 years. B.1.2 Development of a national cybersecurity strategies, aligned with international cooperation principles, including Critical Information Infrastructures Protection (CIIP), within the period of 5 years.
	B.2 Improve and consolidate regional cooperation to effectively address the growing threat posed by cyberattacks and cybercrime.	B.2.1 Establishment of Computer Security Incident Response Teams (CSIRTs)/Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT), in the Arab countries that do not have such teams, within the period of 3 years. B.2.2 Elaborate regional strategy to facilitate coordination of regional CERTs/CSIRTs, making use of existing mechanism (GCC Cert, OIC-CERT).
	B.3 Recognize the importance of protecting users against the risks posed by illegal use of ICTs, with specific attention to children and youth.	B.3.1 Establish cybersecurity-related curriculum aimed at build capacity and raise awareness in the various constituencies (e.g. governments, academia, private sector, schools), within the period of 2 years. B.3.2 Promote safe use of Internet using the curriculum as delivery mechanism, and linking the education activities to the CERT/CSIRT work programmes.
C. Access & infrastructure	C.1 Rapid deployment of broadband networks in all Arab countries. C.2 Building workforce skills to prepare for broadband-enabled economies. C.3 Promoting further the use of ICTs to respond to the special needs of persons with disabilities and women. C.4 Transitioning to digital broadcasting to enable mobile TV and interactive multimedia services and applications. C.5 Increasing affordability of ICT services throughout the Arab region. C.6 Achieve completion of infrastructure and universal access and improving the quality of service as a long-term target.	- Increasing penetration levels of fixed telephone lines (per 100 inhabitants) from current level of 9.7% (2011) to 9.74% in 2016. - Increasing penetration levels of mobile-cellular telephone subscriptions (per 100 inhabitants) from current level of 96.7% (2011) to 116.14% in 2016. - Raising penetration levels of total broadband subscriptions (per 100 inhabitants): - Raising fixed (wired) – broadband subscriptions from current level of 2.2% (2011) to 2.96% in 2016. - Raising active mobile broadband subscriptions from 13.3% to 21%. - Raising number of Internet users (per

Priorities	Goals	Targets
		100 inhabitants) from current level of 29.1% (2011) to 50% in developing countries and 15% in LDCs by 2016. • Raising international Internet bandwidth (bit/s/user) from 11 310 bit/s/user in 2010 to 145 220 bit/s/user. • Availability of USO Policy in all Arab countries from 7 countries in 2011 to all Arab countries in 2015. • Reducing the price of broadband: Price of fixed broadband tariffs as % of monthly Gross National Income (GNI) per capita from 52.6% in 2011 to 5% by 2015. • Increasing household connectivity from 26.1% households with Internet access at home in 2011 to 40% by 2015.
D. Digital content	D.1 Increase percentage of Arabic digital content on the Internet sites.	D.1.1 From current levels of (0.2-1.5%) to (1-3%) by 2015 and to (4-5%) by 2020.
	D.2 Raising consumption levels of digital content by the Arab user.	D.2.1 To go from around 2 Gigabytes per month to 10 Gigabytes per month by 2015 and to 50 Gigabytes per month by 2020.
	D.3 Lowering the cost to access digital content.	D.3.1 To go from USD 60 (PPP) to connect for 1 Gigabyte per month to around USD 10 by 2015 and to around USD 2 by 2020.