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| **Regional Preparatory Meeting  for WTDC-17 for Asia and the Pacific (RPM-ASP)** | P:\SUP\Logos\Post-150th Anniv\ITU-logo-UNblue.jpg | |
| **Bali, Indonesia, 21-23 March 2017** | | |
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| **China (People’s Republic of)** | | |
| IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ASIA PACIFIC INFORMATION SUPERHIGHWAY INITIATIVE | | |

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| **Priority area:**  Priority setting for Regional Initiatives, related projects and financing mechanisms  **Summary:**  Currently, interconnectivity based on terrestrial and maritime cable networks is not adequate in the Asia-Pacific countries. Many countries in the region have difficulties in accessing the international Internet, which severely hinders their efforts to develop the ICT sector as well as society and economy. To cope with this situation, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) has initiated the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway (AP-IS) project and is now leading its implementation according to the AP-IS Master Plan and Regional Cooperation Framework agreed by member states. China has also been actively involved in this effort.  AP-IS is a great platform to advance the ITU Connect 2020 Agenda and the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We call on ITU as well as its member countries from the Asia-Pacific region to actively participate in the AP-IS Initiative.  **Expected results:**  ITU strengthen cooperation with UNESCAP to jointly promote the implementation of AP-IS in the Asia-Pacific region  **References:**  RPM-ASP17/15: APT VIEW ON DRAFT REGIONAL INITIATIVES FOR THE ASIA AND THE PACIFIC REGION  RPM-ASP17/INF/9：ASIA PACIFIC INFORMATION SUPERHIGHWAY |

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ASIA PACIFIC INFORMATION SUPERHIGHWAY INITIATIVE

1. **Background**

Currently, the role of ICT as a key enabler of sustainable social-economic development is increasingly recognized by the international community. However, interconnectivity based on terrestrial and maritime cable networks is quite inadequate in the Asia-Pacific countries. Many countries in the region have difficulties in accessing the international Internet, which severely hinders their efforts to develop the ICT sector as well as society and economy. To cope with this situation, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) has initiated the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway (AP-IS) project and is now leading its implementation according to the AP-IS Master Plan and Regional Cooperation Framework agreed by member states.

China has been actively involved in this effort, by contributing to the drafting of the AP-IS Master Plan and proposing a feasible mechanism of implementing the project separately in each sub-region of the Asia and the Pacific. We have also hosted the Second Meeting of the AP-IS Working Group in Guangzhou in 2016.

The aim of AP-IS is in alignment with the ITU Connect 2020 Agenda and the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as it can greatly promote the ICT interconnectivity and enhance the access to international Internet by Asia-Pacific countries. We call on ITU as well as its member countries from the Asia-Pacific region to actively participate in the AP-IS project. Together we can enhance interconnectivity, bridge the digital divide, improve the level of ICT development and eventually share the prosperity brought about by all these achievements.

1. **Proposal**

It is proposed that,

1) ITU through its Asia-Pacific office to strengthen cooperation and synergy with UNESCAP, APT and other international/regional organizations and enhance the interconnectivity of the Asia Pacific countries, as a contribution to realizing the Connect 2020 Agenda.

2) AP-IS be included in the ITU-D regional initiatives of ASP. We suggest add one more item to the APT contribution on regional initiatives as follows:

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| **(Draft) Regional Initiatives of ASP (2018-2021)** |
| **ASP1: Addressing special needs of least developed countries, small island developing states, including Pacific island countries, and landlocked developing countries**  **Objective**: To provide special assistance to least developed countries (LDCs), small island developing states (SIDS), including Pacific island countries, and landlocked developing countries (LLDCs) in order to meet their priority ICT requirements. |
| **ASP2: Harnessing ICTs to support the digital economy and an inclusive digital society**  **Objective**: To assist ITU Member States in utilizing ICTs to reap the benefits of the digital economy and to address the human and technical capacity challenges to bridging the digital divide. |
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| **ASP3: Fostering development of infrastructure to enhance digital connectivity**  **Objective**: To assist Member States in the development of infrastructure in order to facilitate services/applications on that infrastructure. |
| **ASP4: Enabling policy and regulatory environments**  **Objective**: To assist Member States in developing appropriate policy and regulatory frameworks, fostering innovation (e.g. especially SMEs), enhancing skills, increasing information sharing and strengthening regulatory cooperation which contribute to a supportive regulatory environment for the industry (including public – private partnership) and take into account consumer interests. |
| **ASP5: Contributing to secure and resilient environment**  **Objective**: To assist Member States to develop and maintain secure, trusted and resilient networks/services, to address challenges related to climate change and also to facilitate disaster preparedness, risk reduction and mitigation. |
| **ASP6: Strengthening cooperation and synergy with UNESCAP, APT and other international/regional organizations and enhancing the interconnectivity of the Asia Pacific countries**  **Objective:** To jointly promote the implementation of the AP-IS with UNESCAP; To encourage and support ITU member states and multi-stakeholders to actively participate in the AP-IS; To assist in solving the technical problems in the implementation of the AP-IS with ITU’s technical strength and expertise. |

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**Annex： The Framework of the AP-IS**

The AP-IS concept was defined to identify cross-border fibre-optic network gaps, opportunities and the need for regional cooperation on improving digital inclusion around four areas (pillars):

1) Connectivity:

- Physical network design, development, management at regional level;

- Intergovernmental negotiation;

- Improving regulations based on open access

2) Traffic/network management

- Ensuing efficient and effective Internet traffic and network management at regional, sub-regional and national levels

3) E-resilience

- Resilient ICT networks;

- Support to disaster management systems;

- Ensuring last-mile disaster communication

4) Broadband for all

- Bridging digital divides

- Promoting affordable access to underserved areas

- Policy and technical support to governments

The AP-IS Master Plan endorsed by ESCAP member countries in October 2016 included three key areas and seven strategic initiatives for the achievement of medium-term objectives for implementation as follows:

Three key areas:

1) Seamless, affordable and reliable regional broadband connectivity, with well-balanced sea- and land-based connectivity and Internet traffic exchange management;

2) The promotion of e-resilience; and

3) The promotion of inclusive broadband access in underserved areas and narrowing the digital divide.

**AP-IS seven initiatives:**

1) Identification, coordination, deployment, expansion and integration of the regional backbone networks at the cross-border intra- and interregional levels, in collaboration with member countries and sub-regional organizations;

2) Establish a sufficient number of Internet exchange points at the national and sub-regional levels and set out common principles on Internet traffic exchange to prevent Internet tromboning, decrease transit costs and improve service quality;

3) Regional social and economic studies;

4) Enhancing ICT infrastructure resilience in the AP region;

5) Policy and regulations for leveraging existing infrastructure, technology and inclusive broadband initiatives;

6) Capacity-building; and

7) AP-IS project funding mechanism based on public-private partnerships.

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