**Telecommunication
Development Bureau (BDT)**

Ref.:   BDT/DDR/ASP/DM/165   Geneva, 24 September 2020

To:
− Administrations of ITU Member States in Asia and the Pacific region
− Regulators in Asia and the Pacific region
− ITU-D Sector Members in Asia and the Pacific region
− ITU-D Associate Members and Academia in Asia and the Pacific region

Subject: **ITU Regional Development Forum 2020 for the Asia and the Pacific region (RDF-ASP 2020) Online from 2 to 5 November 2020**

Dear Sir/Madam,

We are pleased to announce that the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) Regional Development Forum for Asia and the Pacific region (RDF-ASP 2020) will be held online from 2 to 5 November 2020.

The objective of the RDF-ASP 2020 is to provide an opportunity for high-level dialogue between the ITU and decision-makers of ITU Member States, Sector Members as well as other stakeholders. It is planned to serve as a platform for assessing strategic orientations that may have an impact on the Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT)'s regional work plan, and to update participants on the implementation of the Buenos Aires Action Plan (BaAP), with particular emphasis on Asia and the Pacific Regional Initiatives (ASP-RIs) 2018-2021.

This year, the RDF-ASP 2020 will also include information on the planning towards the World Telecommunication Development Conference 2021 (WTDC-21) to be hosted next year in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The forum would also invite feedback and suggestions to adjust as well as contribute to the BDT's work in Asia and the Pacific region in the next operational cycle.

Please note that all information related to the Forum, including presentations, practical information and registration forms will be made available at the ITU website at: http://itu.int/go/RDF-ASP2020

A Provisional Agenda for RDF-ASP 2020 is attached for your consideration. The Forum will be conducted virtually in English with interpretation in Chinese and will not require any participation fees.

Should you require any further information, Mr Aamir Riaz (aamir.riaz@itu.int) would be your focal point for the event.

I look forward to your active participation for the success of the Forum.

[Original signed]

Doreen Bogdan-Martin
Director

Annex: Provisional Agenda

ITU REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT FORUM

ITURDF

ASIA AND THE PACIFIC REGION

ONLINE **2020**

2-5 November

itu.int/go/RDF-ASP2020

Organized by

#ICT4SDG   SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT G☮ALS   World Summit on the Information Society 2025 Turning targets into action Geneva 2003 | Tunis 2005 | New York 2015

Summary	➢ **What**
	Asia-Pacific Regional Development Forum 2020 (RDF-ASP 2020) aims to identify the emerging priorities for Digital Connectivity and serve as a platform for sharing strategic orientations and developing partnerships that may contribute to the development of BDT's regional work plan in between World Telecommunication Development Conferences (WTDCs).
	➢ **When & where**:
	Online 02-05 November 2020. Event webpage: http://itu.int/go/RDF-ASP2020
	➢ **Targeted participants:**
	Asia-Pacific Regional Development Forum 2020 is organized to provide an opportunity for high-level dialogue between the International Telecommunication Union and decision-makers of ITU Member States, Sector Members, UN agencies and other key development stakeholders from the region.

DRAFT AGENDA

02 – 05 November 2020

Time	Day 1 (02 November 2020)	Day 2 (03 November 2020)	Day 3 (04 November 2020)	Day 4 (05 November 2020)
Pre-Forum Sessions				
1000-1100	**Towards Digital Pacific**	**Focus Area: Inclusive Connectivity**	**Focus Area: Policy and regulation** **GSR best practice guidelines video**	**Focus Area: ICT statistic**
Regional Development Forum				
1200-1215		Recap of Day 1 and introduction of days proceeding **RD RO-ASP**	Recap of Day 2 and introduction of days proceeding **RD RO-ASP**	Recap of Day 3 and introduction of days proceeding **RD RO-ASP**
1215-1300	**Opening of RDF 2020 and Leadership dialogue** **Theme "Cross-sectoral collaboration to drive digital development and progress towards SDGs"**	**Session 2a: Partnerships for supportive Policies and regulations for ICTs**	**Session 4: ICTs and role of SMEs**	**Session 7: ICTs for ALL**
1300-1400	**Session 1a: ICTs to deliver SDGs as ONE UN**	**Session 2b: Affordable ICT connectivity in partnership with industry**	**Session 5: Role of academia in digital development**	**Session 8: Towards WTDC-21**
1400-1445	**Session 1b: ITU RO-ASP updates on activities to support WTDC-17 Regional Initiatives**	**Session 3: Digital services for Digital development**	**Session 6: Developing ICT Capacity in Asia and the Pacific**	**Closing Remarks**
Post-Forum Sessions				
1445-1545		**Focus Area: Cyber-safety**	**Focus Area: Cyber-Security**	**Your World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC 2021)**

Note: Session details are in on page 3

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SESSION DETAILS

Pre-Forum Information Sessions

A. Towards Digital Pacific

The session would provide information on Initiative of ITU in the Pacific which had impact on ICT connectivity especially in rural areas. The discussion would focus on:

- International connectivity in pacific
- ITU Satellite connectivity and Emergency Telecomm project Impact Assessment Report
- Smart Islands for Digital Pacific (Upcoming)

B. Inclusive connectivity

To facilitate its membership in making key investment decision to improve ICT connectivity infrastructure, ITU has developed various guidelines and tools. The session would provide information on these guidelines and toolkits along-with the key initiatives being taken to address the challenges of schools' connectivity and harnessing the advantages of ICT to recover from COVID-19 impacts. The session would share information with participants on the following:

- Digital Network connectivity (LMC guidelines and toolkits, terrestrial connectivity Maps)
- Giga in ASP
- Connect2Recover

C. Policy and Regulation

Even with all the available option for connectivity, without enabling policies and regulations no country can progress. In the continuously evolving digital space the need to have forward looking polices is must. ITU recently conducted several regional and one global forum that emphasized the need for conducive and collaborative regulations. The session would discuss the outcomes of these forums and discuss the related issues.

RDF-ASP 2020 Sessions

Opening and Leadership dialogue

Formal opening session with policy statements from leadership level. The theme of the session would be "Cross-sectoral collaboration to drive digital development and progress towards SDGs"

Session 1a: ICTs to deliver SDGs as ONE UN

The session would bring together development partners from agencies working under the UN umbrella in the region. The main objective of the sessions is to explore synergies in achieving SDGs by harnessing the use of ICTs. Targeted speakers are from UNRCOs and regional UN agencies.

Session 1b: ITU RO-ASP updates on activities to support WTDC-17 Regional Initiatives

WTDC-2017 stipulated five Asia-Pacific Regional Initiatives with shift from activity-based implementation to result based outcomes with impact harnessing the role of ICT in achieving Sustainable Development Goals through Digital Transformation fostering cross sectoral collaboration. The session aims to discuss how the efforts of ITU's Regional Office for Asia-Pacific including projects through Regional Initiatives , technical assistances, trainings and partnerships have contributed towards the expected results of the WTDC-17 and encouraging current and potential partners to mobilise resources to further implement the Regional Initiatives with impact and outcome.

Session 2a: Partnerships for supportive Policies and regulations for ICTs

After the deregulation over the years the traditional telecommunication sector has been driven by the private sector. In the digital space and the ICT sector in general the private sector plays a key role in the development process. However, none of this is possible unless the government policies are investment friendly, forward looking and conducive for the sector development. This requires partnership between the public and private sector. The session is designed to provide an opportunity to ITU-D member administrations and key regional organizations to suggest possible ways through which existing partnerships can be strengthened and new ones built to introduce policy interventions and regulatory regimes at regional and national levels that support comprehensive development of ICTs.

Session 2b: Affordable ICT connectivity in partnership with industry

The session would serve as a platform for ICT industry leaders to discuss challenges in development of ICT infrastructure and affordability of services provided through these networks. Recommendations on addressing this issue would be another focus area of the session and to put forward immediate priority areas for collaboration with industry as digital technology are having a massive impact during COVID-19 pandemic.

Session 3: Digital services for Digital development

With governments around the world now according unprecedented importance to the development of digital networks and services, the session would build on previous discussions and would focus on the implementation experiences of digital services leveraging on ICTs.

Session 4: ICTs and role of SMEs

The development in the ICT sector is driven by the SMEs. This not only requires the government support but requires all the stakeholders like the academia, funding agencies and young entrepreneurs to be fully on board and aware of the digital innovation ecosystem. In this regard ITU has been paying special attention to this area. SMEs play a vital role in economies of many Asia-pacific countries. The recovery from COVID-19 requires innovative solutions and these solutions often come from upcoming innovators and SMEs. This session will focus on the key requirements for the SMEs to flourish and contribute towards the development of the economy and society.

Session 5: Role of Academia in digital development

The Academia members are an important institution for ITU to engage talented young researchers and students to contribute in the vital work of ITU. The session would bring together academia and other R&D institutes to discuss the important role academia plays for sustainable future ICT solutions.

Session 6: Developing ICT Capacity in Asia and the Pacific

Capacity development programme is key in helping ITU members to build the skills needed in today's digital era and respond to the high demand for training for all. New technologies have also proliferated over the past decade, and the challenge is clear. A large skills gap has emerged – with tens of millions of jobs opening up around the world for those with advanced digital skills – and a shortage of qualified people to fill the positions. This session brings partners in capacity development to discuss about strategies and approaches in addressing the large digital skills gap that exists, through developing partnership, maximising reach and creating impact.

Session 7: ICTs for all

Digital Inclusion is an important item in ICT development. An inclusive development requires giving due consideration to people from all communities and backgrounds. The session would be a platform for ITU members and partners exchange of ideas on how to bridge the digital divide through multi-stakeholder partnerships, collaborations and initiatives, to implement scalable roadmaps, actions, activities, and projects, and provide a more inclusive, equal access and use of ICTs for all.

Session 8: WTDC-21 reform initiative

The 2021 World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC-21) comes at a defining moment for the world and our place in it. The COVID-19 global pandemic has brought home the stark reality th at in today's hyper-connected economies, connectivity is not just important; it is absolutely critical. At the same time, it is increasingly clear that the success of this final Decade of Action in achieving the SDGs will largely rest on digital solutions. With governments around the world now according unprecedented importance to the development of digital networks and services, WTDC-21 represents our best chance in decades to mobilize the global community around the power of digital transformation and reshape the connectivity agenda. This session aims at discussing key reforms for World Telecommunication Development Conference in 2021 that are agreed during TDAG 2020 so that the WTDC could be a solutions-based conference that addresses the real challenges in the development of telecommunications/ICTs.

Post-Forum Sessions

A. Cyber Safety: Launching of the 2020 Child Online Protection for Asia and the Pacific

This session is dedicated to the regional launch of the 2020 Guidelines for the Protection of Children Online (COP). The guideline, aimed at improving online child protection and providing resources and practical tools to support children and their families in the development of digital skills and digital literacy. The guidelines are targeted for government, industry, to develop national and corporate policies and strategies, and educators, parents and children. The ceremony will include the launching of COP in two of the 6 official languages of the UN, English and Chinese. The session will bring representatives from the government, industry as well as ITU to discuss about the importance of childrens' safety online.

B. Cyber-Security

ITU improves a States' cybersecurity readiness, protection, and incident response capabilities by conducting CyberDrills which is an annual event during which cyber-attacks, information security incidents, or other types of disruptions are simulated in order to test an organization's cyber capabilities, from being able to detect a security incident to the ability to respond appropriately and minimize any related impact by sharing experiences amongst CERT/CIRT/CSIRT community in a unified exercise to build global response and recovery capabilities and raise awareness of other cyber exercise initiatives. This session will showcase and share experiences of countries during the cyber drill. This session will also see release of white paper on Critical national Infrastructure: Risks and Opportunities looking at cyber threats and challenges to the critical national infrastructure and how to address these threats.

C. Your World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC 2021)

The session is resdesigned to hear from participants in an informal interactive way on the plans of ITU on WTDC-21. The linkage with RDF session 8 is made where details would be provided on the WTDC-21 planning strategy.

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