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|  | **Regional Preparatory Meeting  for Asia and Pacific for WTDC-25 (RPM-ASP)**  **Bangkok, Thailand, 20-21 March 2025** | | A close up of a sign  Description automatically generated |
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| Chair, RDF-ASP | | | |
| Final Report of ITU Regional Development Forum for Asia and the Pacific Region (RDF-ASP) | | | |
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**ITU Regional Development Forum for Asia and the Pacific**

**(RDF-ASP) 2025**

***Information and Communication Technologies for attaining***   
***Sustainable Development Goals***

organized by the International Telecommunication Union, Telecommunication Development Bureau, with the support of the National Broadcasting and Telecommunication Commission and cooperation with the Asia Pacific Telecommunity

**FINAL REPORT**

**19 March 2025**  
**Bangkok, Thailand**

# Introduction & General Overview

The ITU Regional Development Forum for Asia and the Pacific (RDF-ASP) 2025, organized by the Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT) of the ITU, took place on 19 March 2025, in Bangkok, Thailand. The event was hosted by the National Broadcasting and Telecommunication Commission, in cooperation with the Asia Pacific Telecommunity and preceded the ITU Regional Preparatory Meeting (RPM) for Asia and the Pacific on 20-21 March 2025.

The RDF-ASP facilitated high-level dialogue and collaboration among telecommunications policymakers, regulators, industry leaders, academia, and development organizations. It was crucial in setting strategic priorities for the BDT's regional work plan between World Telecommunication Development Conferences.

The forum allowed ITU and its stakeholders, including Member States and Sector Members, to exchange views on achieving meaningful connectivity and sustainable digital transformation in Asia and the Pacific.

# Documentation

# The agenda, programme and meeting documents are published on the RDF website ([here](https://www.itu.int/itu-d/meetings/rdf/asp/home/)).

# Participation

The event was attended by a total of 167 participants (70 female and 97 male), including 150 (90%) attending in person and 17 (10%) participating remotely. 36Member States were represented by 85 delegates, along with participants from various stakeholder groups, 27 from ITU-D Sector Members, 23 guests. The final list of participants is available on the RDF website ([available here](https://www.itu.int/itu-d/meetings/rdf/wp-content/uploads/sites/31/2025/03/RDF-ASP-list-of-participants.pdf)).

# Opening Ceremony

The opening ceremony of the ITU’s Regional Development Forum began with remarks from dignitaries, highlighting the importance of digital transformation, innovation, and regional cooperation in promoting sustainable development. The opening remarks were given by the following speakers:

* **Dr. Cosmas Luckyson Zavazava**, Director of the Telecommunication Development Bureau, ITU
* **Mr David McLachlan-Karr**, Regional Director for Asia-Pacific, UN Development Cooperation Office
* **Mr Masanori Kondo**, Secretary General, Asia Pacific Telecommunity
* **Clinical Professor Prof. Sarana Boonbaichaiyapruck**, Chairman, Office of the National Broadcasting and Telecommunication Commission of Thailand (NBTC)

Dr. Cosmas Luckyson Zavazava, Director of the ITU Telecommunication Development Bureau, acknowledged the strong presence of diverse stakeholders, including member states, private sector representatives, academia, and non-governmental organizations. He commended Thailand’s continued support in hosting the event and highlighted ITU’s ongoing regional initiatives, such as the Girls in ICT program, which has contributed significantly to achieving gender parity in digital access across Asia and the Pacific. He reflected on ITU’s 160-year history and stressed the importance of the upcoming World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC) in Baku, Azerbaijan, as an opportunity to assess progress since the last conference in Kigali and to strategize for the future. He reiterated ITU’s commitment to human-centric digital development, noting that technology should serve people, rather than being pursued as an end in itself. Dr. Zavazava also recognized the contributions of several countries, including Australia, Japan, and China, in supporting ITU’s regional initiatives, particularly in disaster risk reduction, early warning systems, and climate change adaptation. He emphasized the need for continued collaboration to address pressing global challenges and stressed that meaningful digital connectivity should not be measured merely by internet access but by its tangible benefits to societies.

Professor Dr. Sarana Boonbaichiyapruck, Chairman, Office of the NBTC of Thailand, welcomed delegates and expressed gratitude to ITU for its commitment to advancing digital development in the region. He highlighted the rapid advancements in emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, 5G, the Internet of Things (IoT), and big data, which have created new economic opportunities but also exacerbated digital inequalities. Millions of people in the region still lack access to affordable and reliable connectivity, while cybersecurity threats and regulatory complexities pose additional barriers to achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Professor Boonbaichiyapruck called for greater cooperation in expanding digital access, promoting digital literacy, and strengthening cybersecurity frameworks to ensure that technology-driven development remains inclusive and sustainable.

Mr Masanori Kondo, Secretary-General of the Asia-Pacific Telecommunity (APT), emphasized the strong collaboration between ITU and APT, noting that their joint efforts in organizing WTDC preparatory meetings have helped align regional priorities with global digital development objectives. He highlighted the importance of using the forum as a platform to exchange experiences, coordinate regional views, and ensure that Asia-Pacific perspectives are well-represented at the global level. He urged participants to leverage the momentum of collaboration and encouraged them to actively engage in discussions that would drive positive policy outcomes for ICT and telecommunications development.

Mr David McLachlan-Karr, Regional Director for Asia-Pacific at the UN Development Cooperation Office, underscored the importance of digital transformation in addressing global inequalities and fostering sustainable development. He pointed out that recent UN summits had identified the digital divide as a critical challenge, with billions of people still lacking internet access. He cited the Secretary-General’s Early Warning for All initiative as a successful example of multi-agency collaboration in addressing global challenges such as climate change and disaster risk mitigation. He also highlighted regional partnerships, such as the Issues-Based Coalition on Digital Transformation, which unites ITU, ESCAP, and UNESCO in driving digital inclusion efforts. Mr McLachlan-Karr emphasized the role of multilateral cooperation in ensuring that digital policies are designed to benefit all communities, particularly vulnerable populations in small island developing states. He closed by noting the urgency of bold and holistic action to close the digital divide, referencing a recent World Bank summit where ITU Secretary-General Doreen Bogdan-Martin highlighted the need for accelerated efforts in achieving universal internet access.

The opening session set a collaborative and forward-looking tone for the forum, reinforcing the critical role of multilateral cooperation, public-private partnerships, and digital transformation in driving sustainable development across Asia and the Pacific. Participants were urged to actively engage in the discussions ahead, working towards a digital future that is inclusive, innovative, and resilient.

# Appointment of the Chair of the Regional Development Forum

At the end of the opening session **Clinical Professor Prof. Sarana Boonbaichaiyapruck, Chairman, Office of the NBTC, Thailand,** was appointed by acclamation as the Chair of the RDF for Asia and the Pacific. In his acceptance speech, Prof Boonbaichaiyapruck expressed gratitude for the trust placed in him and emphasized the importance of collaboration, open dialogue, and commitment to regional digital development goals. He encouraged participants to actively contribute to discussions and build strong partnerships that would lead to meaningful and measurable progress.

# Roundtable Discussions

# ROUNDTABLE ONE: State of Digital Development and Trends - Challenges & Opportunities:

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| **09:55 – 10:45** | Moderator: **Mr Edwin Diender,** Chief Innovation Officer, Huawei Enterprise Business Group |
| **Setting the Context:** Presentation by BDT, ITU |
| Panelists:   * **Ms Yuki Naruse,** Director, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (MIC), Japan * **Clinical Professor Prof. Sarana Boonbaichaiyapruck,** Chairman, Office of the NBTC, Thailand * **Mr Sione Pulotu 'Akau'ola**, Chief Executive Officer of the Ministry of Meteorology, Energy, Information, Disaster Management, Environment, Climate Change and Communications (MEIDECC), Tonga * **Mr Kila Gulo Vui**, Chief Executive Officer, National Information & Communications Technology Authority (NICTA), PNG |

The first RDF roundtable discussed digital development trends, challenges, and opportunities in the region, focusing on connectivity, regulation, and sustainability.

The session started with a presentation made by the BDT, highlighting the main points of the “State of Digital Development and Trends in the Asia and Pacific Region: Challenges and Opportunities” report (report can be accessed through this [link](https://www.itu.int/sddt2025)) The presentation emphasized that universal and meaningful connectivity has become a policy imperative. The report highlights that while the region has made significant progress, connectivity challenges still exist, in particular in small island developing states. There are also still urban-rural divides, and persistent gender and age gaps in digital access. Strong ICT policy and regulatory frameworks are essential to close these gaps. The presentation further stressed the importance of addressing cybersecurity and sustainability.

Finally, the presentation showcased case studies demonstrating the effectiveness of collaborative digital transformation projects across various domains. It concluded that while challenges persist—including regulatory barriers, misinformation, and rising energy consumption—Asia-Pacific remains well-positioned to lead in digital innovation. Achieving this will require sustained investment, strategic policies, and stronger regional collaboration to ensure that digital expansion is both inclusive and sustainable.

The roundtable discussions provided important insights and perspectives as presented by the panelists. The main highlights of the discussions included:

* Panelists provided insights on their ongoing projects that focus on ICT infrastructure resilience, cybersecurity capacity building, and artificial intelligence integration in telecommunications. A multi-phase disaster response program that includes early warning systems for small island nations, and cybersecurity initiatives offer training was shared.
* Another presentation focused on Universal Service Obligations and highlighted that nationwide high-speed internet expansion has reached over 70,000 villages, with plans to increase broadband speeds further by 2028. Digital literacy programs, telemedicine applications, and initiatives for individuals with disabilities are actively being developed. Efforts to implement an emergency cell broadcast system are underway to enhance disaster preparedness and public safety.
* Panelists also presented Smart Island Digital Hub Initiative, highlighting that remote island communities now have improved access to online education, e-health services, and economic opportunities. Students can participate in university courses remotely, and the initiative is expanding to provide digital tools for local businesses, including fishermen and artisans.
* Another presentation focused on Digital Transformation Strategy which outlined six key priorities, including digital infrastructure, security, capacity building, and regional cooperation. Challenges such as cybersecurity threats, climate change impacts, and digital literacy gaps remain, with a strong call for international partnerships to support digital inclusion.

Discussions highlighted the need for sustained investment, policy alignment, and strengthened multilateral partnerships to bridge connectivity gaps. Digital technologies continue to play a critical role in economic and social development across Asia and the Pacific.

# ROUNDTABLE TWO: Matchmaking Roundtable on Fostering Partnerships on Infrastructure Development for Universal Connectivity

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| **11:00 – 12:15** | Moderator**: Honorable Senator TJ Remengesau,** Chair for the Senate Committee for ICT and Cybersecurity, Palau |
| **Setting the Context:** Presentation by BDT, ITU |
| Panelists:   * **Mr Norshahrul Nizam Bin Othman**, Assistant Chief Executive, Data Protection Office and International Group, Authority for Info-communications Technology Industry (AITI), Brunei Darussalam (Remote Participation) * **Dr. Pratompong Srinuan**, Executive Director, Telecommunications Policy and Resources Management Bureau, Office of the NBTC, Thailand * **Mr Vincent Choong Mun Kong**, AVP and senior specialist, Axiata * **Ms Neeti Biyani**, Senior Advisor, Strategy and Development, APNIC Foundation * **Ms Noelle de Guzman**, Senior Director for Regional Affairs, Asia-Pacific, Internet Society * **Mr Carlos Riopedre**, COO and Managing Director, Sateloit * **Mr Liu Yijia,** Manager Marketing, ZTE Thailand |

Roundtable two of the RDF focused on fostering partnerships for infrastructure development to achieve universal connectivity.

The session started with a presentation by BDT providingan overview of the Partner2Connect: Recap on the action framework, noting that $17.5 billion in pledges have been made by organizations from 45 countries, with a strong regional focus on access, affordability, and cybersecurity. 40% of pledges are dedicated to expanding physical access through satellite, fiber, and mobile networks, while 31% target affordability by fostering regulatory and policy frameworks. Additionally, 22% of pledges focus on enhancing cybersecurity and ensuring safe digital access.[[1]](#footnote-2)

ITU’s role in infrastructure development was underscored, with ongoing efforts to support broadband expansion, spectrum management, and last-mile connectivity solutions. Upcoming initiatives include the 2025 update of SMS4DC, a tool for effective usage of spectrum, the launch of a connectivity planning platform to optimize national infrastructure strategies and efforts on space technologies connectivity and ITU is also investing in emerging technologies, AI-driven solutions, and space-based and connectivity, reflecting a broader commitment to leveraging digital transformation for socio-economic development.

The following presents the main highlights of the discussions.

* The APNIC Foundation presented its recent pledge of $24 million for the period 2025-2027, focused on three key pillars: infrastructure development, capacity building, and inclusivity, targeting least developed, developing economies, and small island states, with an emphasis on marginalized communities, particularly women and persons with disabilities. The foundation also aims to assist governments in formulating strategic digital transformation policies to create a more inclusive digital ecosystem.
* Similarly, Axiata Group showcased its connectivity initiatives in Cambodia, committing $1.2 billion across ten pledges to bridge the digital divide and support the broader goals of the Royal Government of Cambodia. The group discussed its innovative approach in Indonesia, where its X Camp IoT Lab fosters an ecosystem for Internet of Things (IoT) development, allowing startups, businesses, and innovators to experiment with new solutions.
* Sateliot emphasized the importance of affordable satellite-based IoT connectivity to bridge the digital divide in remote areas. The company highlighted that 80% of the planet lacks terrestrial coverage, making space-based connectivity crucial for sectors such as agriculture, disaster management, maritime operations, and smart metering. Sateliot has committed to providing low-cost, 5G-standardized satellite connectivity, ensuring that IoT devices can seamlessly integrate with existing mobile networks. Sateliot is working closely with governments, NGOs, and mobile operators to advance regulatory frameworks that support satellite-based digital inclusion.
* Similarly, Thailand’s National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission (NBTC) outlined its approach to 5G rollout and infrastructure development, using spectrum auctions and regulatory incentives to encourage private-sector investment. The Thai government’s initiatives include a four-year grace period for 5G license holders and a sandbox approach that allows universities and private companies to collaborate on innovative applications of 5G technology.
* From a regional perspective, Brunei’s Authority for Info-communications Technology Industry (AITI) provided an overview of ASEAN’s digital government interoperability framework, which focuses on digital identity, digital payments, and cross-border data exchange. This initiative, developed in collaboration with ITU and regional partners, aims to create a standardized technical framework for ASEAN member states, ensuring smoother integration of digital public infrastructure across borders. The framework aligns with ASEAN’s Digital Master Plan, which envisions a unified approach to digital transformation across the region.
* ZTE Corporation introduced its integrated mobile network solutions for rural and disaster-prone areas that include solar-powered base stations, satellite links, and emergency response helicopters. ZTE highlighted its experience in deploying over 4,000 integrated base stations across Indonesia, Malaysia, and parts of Africa. The company also showcased its airborne connectivity solutions, including UAVs and helicopters equipped with mobile network technology, which can be rapidly deployed to restore communication in disaster-affected regions. During the discussion, stakeholders from small island states and emergency response organizations expressed interest in leveraging such solutions for health emergencies and disaster relief operations.
* The Internet Society (ISOC) reaffirmed its commitment to digital inclusion, announcing a new $30 million pledge over the next five years to support connectivity in rural and underserved communities. ISOC has been actively involved in training communities to deploy and maintain their own networks, addressing market gaps where traditional service providers are absent. The organization has already surpassed its initial pledge to train 10,000 individuals, reaching 17,000 trained professionals who now have the skills to build and sustain community-driven networks. Additionally, ISOC is working towards its second pledge of supporting 100 complementary connectivity solutions, having implemented 44 projects to date.
* The session also featured an interactive discussion where representatives from the Maldives, India, and Thailand shared insights on cybersecurity policy development, universal service obligations, and spectrum allocation for private 5G networks.

In conclusion, the roundtable reinforced the importance of public-private partnerships, regulatory collaboration, and technological innovation in achieving universal and meaningful connectivity. Sustained investment, policy alignment, and cross-sector engagement are critical to bridging the digital divide. The session ended with a call to action for stakeholders to foster further collaboration, exchange best practices, and explore new financing mechanisms to accelerate digital transformation in the Asia-Pacific region.

The session was followed by two significant announcements regarding cooperation between ITU and its partners from the ASP region:

* A collaboration was announced with the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (MIC) of Japan, highlighting a first initiative to bolster Artificial Intelligence Technology and Standards Capacity Building across the Asia-Pacific region and a second initiative that continues into the third phase of a project dedicated to enhancing digital infrastructure and ensuring affordable access to ICT services in Asia and the Pacific. This phase will also aid in implementing ITU's EW4ALL initiative within the region.
* The 'Girls in ICT Day Thailand', which will take place from April 24th to July 31st 2025, was announced with the National Broadcasting and Telecommunication Commission (NBTC) of Thailand. This initiative is designed to empower girls and young women by enhancing their digital literacy and ICT skills for educational and professional advancement, as well as fostering meaningful use of ICT and strengthening online communities.

# NETWORK OF WOMEN FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC: Building Connections, Empowering Futures

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| **12:15 -12:45** | Moderator: **Ms Angela Wibawa**, Director APAC, Government and IGO Engagement, ICANN |
| Opening Remarks: **Dr. Cosmas Luckyson Zavazava**, Director of the Telecommunication Development Bureau, ITU |
| Panelists:   * **Ms Rujira Thammachat**, Executive Director, International Affairs Bureau, Office of the NBTC, Thailand * **Ms Christine Puro Francis**, Principal International Affairs Officer, National Information & Communications Technology Authority (NICTA), Papua New Guinea * **Ms Ming Xu**, Director, Ministry of Industry and Information Technology (MIIT), China * **Ms Philomena Gnanapragasam,** CEO / Secretariat Director, Asia-Pacific Institute for Broadcasting Development (AIBD) |

The session commenced with remarks by **Dr. Cosmas Luckyson Zavazava**, BDT Director, who emphasized the importance of fostering gender inclusivity and empowerment in digital development, highlighting the significant increase in female delegates and participants. He shared information on ITU’s ongoing efforts, including mentorship initiatives that connect established professionals with young women in marginalized communities.

Dr. Zavazava also announced that this year’s Girls in ICT Day would be co-hosted by the Arab and CIS Regions, inviting all stakeholders to contribute to the effort.

The Network of Women session focused on the role of professional networks in empowering women in the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) sector, and highlighted initiatives that equip girls and women with essential digital skills, fostering their active participation in digital transformation and leadership roles.

* Panelists underlined the importance of digital literacy and security, particularly for young girls, as these serve as the foundation for both personal and professional growth. Successful initiatives were discussed, including efforts to engage youth through influencers who share their experiences in technology and career-building. Additionally, strategies to extend ICT training to remote areas were shared, such as leveraging Universal Service Obligation (USO) net centers to ensure broader participation and inclusivity.
* The session also examined national strategies for empowering women in ICT and illustrated how smart village initiatives can complement existing programs aimed at connecting underserved communities. The integration of digital access into rural education and community development was seen as a key factor in bridging the digital divide. The importance of aligning such initiatives with national digital transformation goals was emphasized, ensuring sustainable and long-term progress.
* Infrastructure development was another major theme, with panelists noting that significant investments have been made in some regions to ensure universal access to broadband, 5G networks, and school connectivity. Additionally, scholarship programs and training initiatives have been implemented to equip young professionals with emerging technology skills, helping them stay competitive in the digital economy. The session stressed that leadership opportunities should be expanded for women in ICT, ensuring that they are not only participants but also decision-makers in shaping the digital landscape.
* The role of the media and public engagement was highlighted as a crucial element in raising awareness and fostering inclusivity. Events have provided platforms for young people, particularly women, to engage in ICT-related discussions, strengthening their presence in the sector. It was also noted that while there has been a growing focus on young women in ICT, no one should be left behind, and efforts should be made to include young men in these initiatives as well.

The session concluded with a strong call to action: building an inclusive digital ecosystem through structured training, policy alignment, and collaborative engagement. The discussion reinforced that while solutions may vary across different regions, shared expertise, supportive networks, and proactive initiatives are key to driving lasting change. By fostering collaboration and ensuring equal access to digital opportunities, a more balanced and inclusive ICT sector can be achieved.

# DIGITAL INNOVATION ALLIANCE: Collaboration Opportunities

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| **13:45 – 14:15** | Moderator: **Prof. Yuosre Badir,**Dean, School of Management, AIT |
| Setting the Context: Presentation by BDT, ITU |
| Open discussion: Collaboration Opportunities  Panelists:   * **Mr Avinash Agarwal**, DDG, International Relations, Department of Telecommunications (DoT), India * **Ms. Mina Seonmin Jun**, Policy Advisor, Korea Information Society Development Institute,Republic of Korea |

This session highlighted the collaborative opportunities under the Digital Innovation Alliance, a regional platform for stakeholders to exchange innovative solutions and scale technology-driven initiatives. By leveraging alliances and multi-stakeholder partnerships, the session aimed to facilitate knowledge sharing and coordinate efforts to accelerate digital innovation in Asia and the Pacific.

The main highlights of the discussions included:

* The discussion began with a presentation by the BDT on the Digital Innovation Alliance (DIA) and its three key pillars: the Digital Innovation Board, the Network of Acceleration Centers, and the Digital Transformation Lab. Specific emphasis was placed on the Regional Initiative Accelerator, which provides a structured approach to aligning digital initiatives with regional priorities, defining measurable outcomes, and enhancing implementation strategies.
* The conversation highlighted the importance of stakeholder engagement, with a focus on structured cooperation and public-private partnerships (PPPs). To effectively implement digital initiatives, stakeholders from governments, private sector entities, academia, and civil society must collaborate in meaningful ways.
* Successful models, such as structured innovation frameworks and knowledge-sharing platforms were presented as key enablers for fostering open innovation. Additionally, the session emphasized the role of regional coordination hubs such as ITU Innovation Centres to streamline cooperation and scale digital solutions.
* Opportunities for co-creation and pilot projects were also explored, particularly in areas where digital solutions exist but require alignment with real-world challenges. Case studies of national-level initiatives were presented, showcasing solutions such as fraud prevention systems, mobile device tracking, and digital public safety alert platforms. These examples illustrated how targeted pilot projects can serve as scalable models for broader regional or global adoption. Furthermore, discussions underscored the need for stronger regulatory frameworks and increased capacity-building efforts to support innovation ecosystems, particularly for startups and SMEs facing challenges related to intellectual property rights and compliance with technical standards.

The session concluded with an interactive Q&A, where participants raised key concerns about regulatory challenges, right-of-way policies for fiber deployment, and the importance of a structured patent registry to support small enterprises. The panelists emphasized that multi-stakeholder engagement, knowledge-sharing, and policy alignment are crucial for sustaining innovation and ensuring equitable digital progress. The session closed with a call to action for ongoing collaboration and proactive engagement in shaping the future of digital innovation alliances.

# ROUNDTABLE THREE: P2C Matchmaking Roundtable on Fostering Partnerships for Development

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| **14:15 – 15:30** | Moderator: **Mr Pochchhy Khy,** Director of International Cooperation Department, General Department of Administration, Ministry of Post and Telecommunications of the Kingdom of Cambodia |
| Panelists:   * **Ms Tupuo’tuah Baravilala**, Director General of Digital Government Transformation, Cybersecurity, and Communications, Ministry of Trade, Co-operatives, Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises, and Communications, Fiji * **Ms Daloun Intharath**, Deputy Division Director, International Organization Division, Cabinet Office, Ministry of Technology and Communications (MTC) Lao PDR * **Ms Nadia Ghazali**, Director, ASEAN & Bilateral Affairs, Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC), Malaysia * **Ms Georgina Garcia**, Finance Director, Autoridade Nacional De Comunicações, Timor-Leste * **Ms Suthinee Leelahemaratana,** Program Manager, Cisco System, Thailand * **Mr Woragarn Likhitdechasakdi**, Chief Technology Officer (CTO), Carrier Network Business Group, Huawei Technologies (Thailand) Co., Ltd * **Mr Samir K. Chatterjee**, Managing Director, Rebaca Technologies, US/India |

The third roundtable provided a platform for meaningful collaboration and strategic partnerships for development across Asia and the Pacific. The session aimed to align resources with real-world needs and highlighted innovative approaches to building sustainable, high-value partnerships. It sought to support initiatives that advance the region's skills development agenda, digital transformation, and regional growth.

The main highlights of the discussions included:

* Panelists from various countries and organizations shared their perspectives on national digital development strategies, highlighting ongoing initiatives and challenges in ICT capacity-building. Discussions emphasized the importance of digital literacy and cybersecurity awareness, particularly in small island nations and developing economies, where digital expansion must be coupled with appropriate safeguards. Several panelists stressed the need for inclusive digital skills programs, tailored to different demographics, including women, youth, marginalized communities, and persons with disabilities. Additionally, the session underscored the role of multi-stakeholder engagement in driving national digital strategies, ensuring that all sectors contribute to sustainable digital growth.
* The discussions also elaborated on technology-driven training initiatives aimed at enhancing workforce readiness for the digital economy. Participants presented AI-powered learning platforms, virtual labs, and cloud-based digital skills programs designed to make ICT education more accessible and scalable. These platforms enable individuals to gain hands-on experience with cutting-edge technologies, such as 5G, cybersecurity, and data analytics, ensuring that they are equipped with relevant competencies for the job market. Additionally, companies committed to providing certification programs, mentoring initiatives, and digital literacy campaigns to support ICT workforce development across the region.
* The session also explored the role of public-private partnerships (PPPs) in closing the digital divide and ensuring equitable access to digital tools. Governments, regulatory bodies, and technology firms discussed collaborative projects aimed at expanding broadband infrastructure, implementing e-learning programs, and supporting small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in adopting digital solutions. Specific case studies highlighted fiber deployment strategies, rural connectivity projects, and AI-based regulatory frameworks that are being implemented to enhance digital accessibility. These initiatives reinforced the need for long-term investment in ICT capacity-building, along with policies that encourage innovation and sustainable digital growth.
* An important theme throughout the discussion was the need for regional knowledge-sharing and policy alignment to streamline digital transformation efforts. Several speakers emphasized the importance of cross-border cooperation, particularly in AI ethics, cybersecurity, and ICT regulatory frameworks. Countries also highlighted their commitments to expanding ICT training for educators and integrating digital literacy into national education curricula, ensuring that digital skills are embedded in foundational learning. There was a strong call for leveraging regional centers of excellence and ITU-supported programs to enhance collaboration and accelerate digital inclusion.

The session concluded with an announcement of collaboration with Ministry of Industry and Information Technology (MIIT) China on capacity building, digital innovation and entrepreneurship and an announcement of partnership between ITU and Ministry of Science and ICT, Republic of Korea on Spectrum Management, Innovation and Cyber for Good.

# ROUNDTABLE FOUR: Roundtable on the Implementation of ITU Regional Initiatives for Asia and the Pacific

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| **15:45 – 17:00** | Moderator: **Dr. Maria Myutel,**Acting Director, International Engagement, Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts (DITRDCA), Australia |
| Setting the Context: **Dr. Atsuko Okuda,** Regional Director, Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, ITU |
| Panelists:   * **Mr Steven Matainaho**, Secretary and CEO to the Department of Information and Communications Technology, Papua New Guinea * **Mr Imad Memon**, Member (International Coordination), Ministry of Information Technology & Telecommunication, Pakistan (Remote Participation) * **Mr Domingo Kabunare**, Officer in Charge Digital Transformation, Ministry of Information, Communications and Transport, Kiribati * **Mr Suresh Nepal,** Dy. Chief ICT Officer, GovTech Agency, Bhutan |

The session on the Implementation of ITU Regional Initiatives focused on the implementation of the Regional Initiatives for Asia and the Pacific as adopted at the World Telecommunication Development Conference 2022 which are:

* ASP1 : Addressing special needs of least developed countries, small island developing states, including Pacific island countries, and landlocked developing countries
* ASP2 : Harnessing information and communication technologies to support the digital economy and inclusive digital societies
* ASP3: Fostering development of infrastructure to enhance digital connectivity and connecting the unconnected
* ASP4: Enabling policy and regulatory environments to accelerate digital transformation
* ASP5: Contributing to a secure and resilient information and communication technology environment

The fourth roundtable highlighted achievements, challenges, and future priorities as the region prepares for the upcoming WTDC-25. The session reflected on progress in connectivity, digital transformation, inclusion, cybersecurity, and innovation, emphasizing the importance of collaborative efforts between governments, private sector stakeholders, and international organizations. The key highlights of the panel discussion included:

* ITU provided a report of the activities undertaken by the BDT in partnership with the membership. This presentation highlighted several results and outcomes of the work undertaken by the BDT under each Regional Initiative.
* One of the major achievements highlighted was the Smart Villages and Smart Islands projects, which have trained thousands of community members and are operational in multiple countries. Additionally, technical assistance has been provided through projects like the Green Climate Fund, which supported early warning systems in Fiji and Cambodia, and connectivity in rural areas.
* The session also emphasized the importance of tailored digital literacy programs for different societal groups, including persons with disabilities, older persons, refugees, and migrants. The Girls in ICT Day initiative was particularly successful, with thousands of girls and young women participating in training programs across the region.
* Another key highlight was the whole-of-government digital transformation through the implementation of GovStack, which has been adopted by several countries to enhance digital connectivity and improve public service delivery. The Prime Minister's Dashboard in Bhutan was mentioned as an example of data-driven decision-making at the highest level.

The session concluded with discussions on the importance of community engagement and integration with national development for effective early warning systems. The need for expanding mobile network coverage and developing mobile-based alert systems was also emphasized.

# GENERATION CONNECT EVENT: Intergenerational dialogue on challenges and opportunities in the field of digital development for the Youth in Asia and the Pacific

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| **17:00 – 17:30** | Moderator: **Ms Nicola Bennett,** Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts |
| Panelists:   * **Mr Yuang Feng**, GC ASP Youth Envoy, China * **Mr Zhuoyong SHI,** GC ASP Youth Envoy, China (Remote participation) * **Ms Yearin Lee,** GC ASP Youth Envoy, Republic of Korea (Remote participation) * **Ms Zoe Angeli Go Uy**, GC ASP Youth Envoy, Philippines (Remote participation)   Closing Intervention   * **Dr Cosmas Luckyson Zavazava**, Director of the Telecommunication Development Bureau, ITU |

The Generation Connect session commenced with an intergenerational dialogue focused on the challenges and opportunities in the field of digital development for the youth in Asia and the Pacific. The session provided a platform for young leaders to share their vision for digital development in the region, reflecting on the recent Global Youth Summit and discussing the regional preparations for WTDC-25.

The session highlighted the importance of digital transformation for socioeconomic growth while acknowledging the complex challenges it presents, particularly for young people. The discussion emphasized the need for strong and affordable digital infrastructure as a prerequisite for tackling digital literacy education. It was noted that without robust connectivity, many young people, especially in rural areas and least-developed countries, struggle to access digital education and opportunities.

The session also addressed the exclusion of youth from digital policymaking, underscoring the necessity of formalizing youth participation in decision-making processes. The importance of cybersecurity and online safety was highlighted, with concerns about cyberbullying, misinformation, data privacy breaches, and deepfakes affecting young leaders across the region.

Additionally, the session discussed the unequal access to economic opportunities for youth, particularly in the digital economy. It was noted that many young people lack the skills, funding, or mentorship needed to succeed, with marginalized groups facing even greater challenges. The discussion also touched on the barriers to digital inclusion, emphasizing the need to address the unequal participation and representation of marginalized groups in the digital space.

The session concluded with the closing intervention by the BDT Director.

Dr. Cosmas Luckyson Zavazava began by reflecting on the recent Global Youth Summit, highlighting the participation of over 400 young people from 31 countries. He emphasized the importance of securing the information highway and bridging the digital skills divide. He also stressed the need for youth to become not just employees but employers, fostering innovation and entrepreneurship. Dr Zavazava discussed the necessity of embracing emerging technologies responsibly and ensuring that no youth is left behind, whether in rural or urban areas. He called for creative solutions to ensure equal opportunities for all and reminded participants that regulatory barriers also need to be addressed. He also highlighted the importance of resilient, reliable, and robust infrastructure provided by the private sector.

He emphasized the continuous effort in capacity building through the ITU Academy, webinars, and demystifying the WTDC process for youth participation. He highlighted the importance of collaboration between governments, international organizations, and the private sector to advance digital literacy programs and infrastructure.

At the end of the session the [video](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QvCYhjH9gKs) of the Global Youth Summit was shown.

# Closing Ceremony

The closing ceremony of the Regional Development Forum was marked by reflections on the significant outcomes achieved throughout the event.

The closing ceremony commenced with the closing remarks of Dr. Cosmas Luckyson Zavazava, who expressed sincere appreciation to the Chairman, Office of the NBTC, Thailand. The event was a testament to the collaborative efforts and shared vision of all participants.

Dr. Zavazava emphasized the importance of open dialogue and active contributions to discussions. He highlighted the progress made during the sessions and the valuable advice received. Dr. Zavazava acknowledged the collective efforts in building impactful initiatives and stressed the significance of creating an enabling environment for the private sector and industry to invest. He also mentioned the pledges to contribute to the Partner2Connect alliance for digital partnerships, underscoring the importance of sustained collaboration.

Ms Rujira Thammachat, representing the RDF Chair, delivered her closing remarks, expressing delight in hosting the successful event in Bangkok, Thailand. She highlighted the engaging conversations and the importance of digital development and transformation. The roundtable discussions covered various topics, including digital development trends, challenges, and opportunities in the region. Ms Thammachat emphasized the need for sustained investment, policy alignment, and strengthening multilateral partnerships to bridge community gaps.

As the forum came to a formal closure, the outcome reports of RDF were announced, with the secretariat to publish the draft the same day.

Ms Thammachat expressed gratitude to the esteemed speakers and participants for their active participation and commitment. She looked forward to continued collaborations and positive outcomes that reflect the strong commitment of the regions toward the preparation for WTDC-25. The ceremony concluded with a declaration of the meeting's closure and a call to remain connected and share knowledge in the journey toward universal connectivity and sustainable digital transformation. Dr. Cosmas Luckyson Zavazava,delivered a certificate of recognition to the RDF Chair.

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1. As of 19 March 2025 – Source: ITU ([Explore pledges - Partner2Connect](https://www.itu.int/partner2connect/pledges/explore-pledges/)) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)