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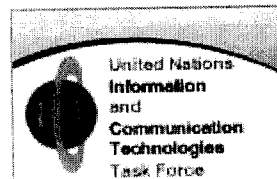
KUALA LUMPUR DECLARATION ON ICT POLICIES AND eSTRATEGIES IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

22 October, 2003

ASIAN FORUM ON INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY POLICIES AND e-STRATEGIES

KUALA LUMPUR

20-22 OCTOBER, 2003

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The Asia-Pacific is one of the most dynamic regions in terms of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) developments. Representing this vast, diverse and dynamic region, delegates, including Ministers and senior government officials as well as private sector and civil society representatives, from 22 countries in the Asia-Pacific Region and regional and international organizations convened at a Forum on Information and Communication Technologies held on 20-22 October 2003 in Kuala Lumpur. The participants of the Forum engaged in productive deliberations, which are reflected in this declaration:

Underlining the importance of Poverty Reduction and the Millennium Development Goals as a focus of development aspirations in the region;

Recognising the extraordinary potential for human development embodied in the cluster of goods, services, and practices described as information and communication technologies;

Understanding the possibilities opened up by ICTs for creativity, decentralised decision-making, and innovation by persons, groups, and enterprises hitherto marginalized from full participation;

Accepting the responsibility of government to create the conditions for the optimal utilisation of the new possibilities by citizens, groups, and enterprises through institutional reforms;

Emphasising the importance of involving private sector and civil society, in particular women, in the development and implementation of ICT policies and e-strategies;

Giving weight to the values of equality of opportunity, non-discrimination, cultural and linguistic distinctiveness, and sustainability;

Acknowledging the benefits of mutual learning, co-operation, and co-ordination among the members of the Asia-Pacific region in the areas of ICT policies, strategies, and practices;

Realising the important role of regional and international organizations in facilitating the application of ICT to development; and

Taking note of previous deliberations and declarations, including the Communiqué of the Ministerial Roundtable on "Toward Knowledge Societies' held on 9-10 October 2003 during the 32nd session of UNESCO's General Conference, the Association of South East Asian Nations – Joint Statement for the World Summit on Information Society (WSIS) 2003, the Tokyo Declaration adopted at the WSIS Asia-Pacific Regional Conference held on 13-15 January 2003, and the Pacific Islands Information and Communication Technologies Policy and Strategic Plan of 2002;

We the participants of the Asian Forum on Information and Communication Technology Policies and e-Strategies hereby endorse the formulation, adoption, and implementation of ICT policies and e-strategies at the national, bilateral, regional, and international levels that include the following elements:

Poverty Reduction and the Millennium Development Goals
1. Ensure that ICTs are harnessed in the pursuit of poverty reduction and the achievement of Millennium Development Goals, thus helping to overcome the Digital Divide;
2. Deploy ICTs actively in the policies and strategies for empowering women;

Policy and Governance

3. Ensure transparency and accountability of governments and the participation of multiple stakeholders, including women and ethnic minorities, in the formulation and implementation of ICT policies and e strategies, utilising the technical features of ICTs;

4. Establish legal and technical principles to assure trust and confidence, and make possible trust-building actions by users, giving due regard to data protection, privacy and the security of persons, enterprises, and society against any harm;

5. Ensure that policies and strategies are periodically evaluated and modified as necessary to yield the desired results;

6. Encourage South-South learning through effective arrangements at an inter-agency level to initiate exchange of information, best practices, and explore possible collaborative development programs;

Infrastructure and Access

7. Create the conditions and incentives for the provision of widest possible access to ICTs, particularly for rural and under-served areas in configurations responsive to demand;

8. Enable the private sector and civil society to participate in the provision of affordable ICT infrastructure, products, and services in forms of their choosing;

Human Capacity

9. Facilitate opportunities for human resource development and life long learning through and on ICTs, with particular attention to women;

10. Support youth programmes related to ICT skills development;

Content and Applications

11. Reflect the appropriate balance between rewarding the originators of knowledge and creative content, and the fair and flexible use of information products;

12. Develop creative approaches to preserving and advancing cultural and linguistic distinctiveness and self expression in the new ICT environment;

13. Balance considerations of software alternatives between open source and proprietary platforms and applications;

Enterprise ad Entrepreneurs

14. Allow the greatest flexibility for entrepreneurs and enterprises to use ICTs to create wealth, trade, and employment opportunities;

15. Ensure the provision of sustainable sources of revenues to priority programs;

Strategic Compacts and Cooperation

16. Engage in bilateral, multilateral, regional, and international co-operation, to fully realise the potential of ICTs, to learn from each other, and adopt best practices;

17. Take into account the special needs of least developed countries, landlocked and developing island nations of the Asia-Pacific in the application of ICT to development.

Governments, regional organizations, and international organizations responsible for the formulation and adoption of ICT policies and e-strategies are urged to develop and adhere to adequately resourced action plans that designate responsible actors, timelines, and priorities as appropriate for their particular circumstances.

This declaration is timed so as to be able to make a contribution to the Geneva phase of WSIS 2003. As follow up and in light of the outcomes of the Geneva phase of WSIS, we agree to convene the Asia-Pacific Forum on ICT Policies and e-Strategies, which will involve stakeholders from the public, private sector, civil society, regional and international organizations, during the inter-Summit period (2003-2005) to:

- review national and regional action plans vis-à-vis the WSIS 2003 Plan of Action;
- discuss common challenges in implementation;
- exchange information on lessons learned and best practices, and
- establish solutions-oriented e-strategies.

Kuala Lumpur, 22 October, 2003