

## Leaders' Vision *Asia-Pacific 2020 – Smartly DIGITAL* (Digital Inclusive Green Innovative Transformative Affordable Living)

**We, the representatives of the Governments in the Asia-Pacific region, assembled in Bangkok, Thailand, on 18 November 2013, for the ITU Connect Asia-Pacific Summit, declare our common vision of an inclusive and development-centred as well as creative Asia-Pacific by the year 2020, where everyone can access, use, create, and share information and knowledge to empower individuals, communities, industries and countries to achieve inclusive and sustainable development in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the Declaration of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS): *Asia-Pacific 2020: Smartly DIGITAL (Digital Inclusive Green Innovative Transformative Affordable Living)*.**

### **Cognizant of this Vision,**

We acknowledge the rapid growth and dramatic change in the Asia-Pacific region during the last decades and the present trends where the Asia-Pacific is one of the world's fastest growing regions contributing to global development. We also observe increased economic integration and enhanced connectivity within the Asia-Pacific region including inter alia the emerging Association for South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) Community, Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) and South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC).

Within this regional context:

**We acknowledge** the promising ICT development in the Asia-Pacific region, where the ICT growth has surpassed global ICT growth rates in all key indicators and where significant investments have been committed in 2011-2015 to roll out ICT infrastructure and applications including innovative public-private partnerships.

**We recognize** nevertheless the challenges faced by countries in the Asia-Pacific region having two thirds of the world's population which, with its unique geographic and demographic circumstances and diversity, has a stark contrast between the region's high-income and highly advanced countries on the one hand, and the least developed countries (LDCs), landlocked developing countries (LLDCs), and small island developing states (SIDSs) on the other hand.

**We take up the challenges** of not only accelerating the growth of the vibrant and dynamic ICT sector in the region but also on working together with all stakeholders to extend the benefits of ICTs to ALL, especially the millions of people in the region living in poverty and those with special needs.

**We are aware** of the importance of harnessing the immense opportunities for developing innovative ICT infrastructure and creative ICT applications in order to positively transform lives of people as we move towards reaching the Vision of *Asia-Pacific 2020: Smartly DIGITAL*. Thus, we must

ensure continued sustainable growth in ICT – broadband inter alia - through leadership and recognition that ICT/broadband is a national priority for the overall socio-economic development as well as a powerful tool/enabler for achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and post-2015 Development Agenda, and the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) Declaration and Actions.

**We are also fully aware** that ICT is a powerful catalyst for stimulating innovation, promoting industrialization, enhancing productivity, creating employment, and thus the importance of establishing national ICT strategies, policies and plans, promoting creation of multilingual local content, incentivizing commercial and public service applications (e.g., e-government, e-education for enhancing digital literacy, e-health, e-agriculture, e-tourism, e-security etc.), promoting small and medium enterprises (SMEs), and raising citizens' awareness - i.e., digital literacy - and skills among others.

**We strongly encourage** the use of ICT for sustainable and inclusive development. ICT provides critical tools to fight climate change, address the unique geographic and demographic challenges faced by countries in unique circumstances (e.g., LDCs, LLDCs, SIDSs, and others), minimize the impact of disaster and save lives when it strikes, and build confidence in the use of ICT through public awareness, individual and institutional capacity building, and coordinated responses to cyber threats.

**We affirm** our commitment to digital inclusion as a critical component of all national, sub-regional and regional policies, programmes, initiatives, and projects to increase accessibility, to promote gender equality, and to empower all peoples including youth, elderly, persons with disability, and other vulnerable or disadvantaged groups of the society. **We further affirm** that concerted efforts are required through policy intervention and innovative partnership in achieving equal opportunity for ALL.

**We commend** the initiative of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and the support and contribution of the Royal Thai Government, as well as the partnership of the Asia-Pacific Telecommunity (APT), the Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union (ABU), Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), other UN agencies, development and funding institutes, and other relevant stakeholders in the Asia-Pacific region and beyond.

**We reaffirm** that the Vision of *Asia-Pacific 2020: Smartly DIGITAL* cannot be realized without achieving digital literacy, building relevant human and institutional capacity, enabling policy and regulatory environment, enhancing connectivity within the region and amongst countries, and close cooperation and partnerships at the national, regional and global levels.

**We reiterate** our common desire and endeavour to build an inclusive, development-centred, innovative and creative economy in the *Asia-Pacific 2020: Smartly DIGITAL* (Digital Inclusive Green Innovative Transformative Affordable Living).

**We intend** to monitor the progress and level of regional development to achieve Asia-Pacific 2020: Smartly DIGITAL, assess the effectiveness of investments, and enhance regional and international innovative partnership towards reaching this Vision for ALL.

**We call** on ITU, APT, ABU, ESCAP, other UN agencies, development and funding agencies, and other relevant stakeholders and partners to work resolutely with commitment to achieve the common vision that we have adopted in this Summit.

