CONNECT ASIA-PACIFIC SUMMIT

Asia-Pacific: Smartly DIGITAL

Digital Inclusive Green Innovative Transformative Affordable Living

Bangkok, Thailand, 18 November 2013

Overview

Recognizing the need for a multi-stakeholder approach to successfully turn commitments into action, the ITU launched the *Connect the World* initiative in 2005 to help mobilize the financial, human, and technical resources needed to implement outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS).

As part of this effort, ITU has been organizing high-level events known as *Connect* Summits (www.itu.int/partners) in each region where Members have expressed an interest. These summits have brought together like-minded stakeholders to work together on concrete projects aimed at improving access to information and communication technology (ICT) networks with the aim of promoting investment, employment, and broader social and economic development, with the view to helping countries attain the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and prepare for the post 2015 development agenda as well as implement actions in the Declaration of World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS).

Four *Connect* summits have been organized to date, in collaboration with regional and global partners. Each Summit was preceded by an intensive and inclusive preparatory process to take into account the views of all relevant stakeholders. Previous Summits were held for Africa (2007), the CIS (2009), the Arab States (2012) and the Americas (2012) regions.

Trends in the Asia-Pacific Region

The Asia-Pacific region has witnessed one of the fastest growths in telecommunications/ICTS and particularly mobile telephony, while six out of 25 top performers on ICT Development Index (IDI-2012) are from the Asia-Pacific. Despite this stupendous growth, 77.5% of the population in the Asia-Pacific do not have access to Internet, while the situation for broadband access is even more challenging. Considering the role of digitization and broadband in countries' socio-economic developments, countries are gearing towards improved connectivity through deployment of robust telecommunication/ICT infrastructure and applications, which are posing several challenges such as deployments of 3G and 4G networks, migration from analogues to digital broadcasting, spectrum refarming for IMT Advanced bands/digital dividend, launch of satellite, submarine and terrestrial connectivity for greater bandwidth capacities, emergency and disaster communications, role of social networking giants and requirement of infrastructure, net neutrality, convergence of sectors and institutions, international connectivity and mobile roaming especially in the landlocked and small island developing states, development of local languages and applications in addition to diverse cultures and languages as well as the digital gaps between the haves and have-nots in the Asia-Pacific. In other words, closing the digital gap is an important component of on-going efforts to promoting enhanced regional connectivity, which includes better understanding and links amongst peoples.

At the same time, telecommunications/ICTs in the converged digital era have an enormous impact on virtually all aspects of our lives, while being globally recognized as a critical enabler for creative economy, socio-economic development, closing of gender gaps and empowerment of people and local communities in all countries with different phases of development. However, many people cannot take advantage of this resource because of financial impediment, disabilities, low-literacy, remoteness, cultural and language barriers. Here, the ability of ICTs to reduce many traditional obstacles, especially those of time and distance, makes it possible to use their potential to achieve digital inclusion, including through enhanced access to Internet for all walks of life in the world including the Asia-Pacific, ranging from persons with disabilities, elderly persons, ethnic groups, disadvantaged women, men, youth and children to many more marginalized and underprivileged groups, while supporting them to enjoy independent life, fully participate in and contribute to society, as well as improve their accessibility and affordability with more opportunities for jobs, health care and education. It is critical to extend the benefits of telecommunications/ ICTs to ALL of society, and the innovative and creative economy including SMEs and micro-businesses, in order to build a truly inclusive and sustainable information and digital society, with special focus on those who are disadvantaged, underprivileged and/or marginalized.

The Summit in Bangkok, Thailand

Fifth in the series, the Connect Asia-Pacific Summit is being organized by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and the Kingdom of Thailand, the host country and member of the ITU since 1883, in close partnership with ABU, AIBD, APT, ESCAP and other UN Agencies, development and funding agencies, leading industries and others. It will take place on 18th November 2013 in Bangkok, Thailand. The Summit will take place against the backdrop of growing opportunities in a rising Asia-Pacific supported by enhanced regional integration such as in the emerging ASEAN Community and enhanced regional cooperation such as in the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC).

By bringing together key global and regional players in the sector, the Connect Asia-Pacific Summit will among others seek to provide a platform for mobilizing human, financial and technical resources needed to support ICT growth which is widely recognized as the key engine or enabler for future economic prosperity as well as inclusive and sustainable development.

Preparatory process

The suggested preparatory process of the Summit includes the followings: e.g.,

- ✓ Kick-off Meeting: 2 May 2013, Phnom Penh, Cambodia;
- ✓ Information Session: 19 June, Geneva, Switzerland;
- ✓ Briefings for Ambassadors: 17 July 2013, Geneva and 2 August 2013, Bangkok;
- ✓ Preparatory Meeting: 23-26 September 2013, Bangkok, Thailand;
- ✓ On-going online consultations; and
- ✓ Connect Asia-Pacific Summit: 18 November 2013, Bangkok, Thailand.

Expected Results

Connect Asia-Pacific Summit will bring multi-stakeholders who will present and discuss ICT projects and announce new partnerships and/or awards forged between partners and ITU. The expected outcome is envisaged to include a shared Leaders' Vision driven by political will, shared commitment, and partnership to connect the Asia-Pacific with quality and speed, in order to reduce development and gender gaps in the region, promote enhanced regional connectivity including enhancing people-to-people links, promote economic prosperity and inclusive sustainable development, and improve the welfare of all people. This Vision will be translated into concrete actions through initiatives and projects based on smart partnership.

Political Commitment

Political support and will by leaders are critical to ensure a safer, greener, smarter and inclusive digital society for all. ITU Member States in Asia and the Pacific, under the leadership of the Host Country, Thailand, and the support of ITU, will prepare draft *Leaders' Vision for Asia-Pacific 2020: Smartly DIGITAL (Digital Inclusive Green Innovative Transformative Affordable Living)* and *Communiqué* to be endorsed by the Summit for the Vision and the Commitment for ICT development in the Asia-Pacific region.

High-level Panels: Asia-Pacific 2020

The Summit will bring together Heads of State and/or Government, Ministers, Heads of Regulatory Authority in the Asia-Pacific Region as well as CEOs and senior officials from industry, regional and international organizations including financial institutions from the world. They will use this opportunity to share their views on the digital challenges and opportunities in the region and pave the way forward for investments in telecommunications/ICTs infrastructure, innovative and creative ICT applications/services, job creations and a Smartly Digital Life.

The Summit will feature high-level interactive discussions focused on addressing the challenges faced by developing economies in their efforts to harness the full potential of ICTs. Panellists will exchange visions and ideas on issues at stake, possible outcomes and strategies.

Multi-stakeholder Meeting & Partnership Announcements

A number of projects and/or awards would be prepared for the Summit within the framework of the Asia-Pacific Regional Initiatives adopted by the World Telecommunication Development Conference 2010 (WTDC-10). This will be compiled in a publication that will be distributed among the participants for their reference/consultation during and beyond the meeting.

The Multi-stakeholder meeting will bring ICT stakeholders under one roof: i.e., while ITU Member States and other stakeholders will use this opportunity to present their projects and/or awards to the leaders and participants at the Summit, partners can utilize this platform to announce and/or attract investments through various projects.

Networking Platform

The Summit will also provide an opportunity for intense networking for all those invited to attend. Specific attention will be given to Bilateral Meetings: e.g. meetings between Heads of States and/or Governments, ITU Elected Officials, and industry leaders.

In the same spirit, an opportunity for other participants to gather and network will be provided. The networking platform will also facilitate access by stakeholders to the media at the Summit.

Programme

The tentative programme of the Summit is outlined as below:

Tentative Programme	
09:00-10:30	**Summit Grand Opening** Summit Chair: Her Excellency Ms. Yingluck Shinawatra Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand ▪ Welcome Address by ITU Secretary General, Dr. Hamadoun Touré ▪ Opening and Keynote Address by Her Excellency Ms. Yingluck Shinawatra, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand ▪ Statements by Heads of States or Governments ▪ Endorsement of the Leaders' Vision for the Asia-Pacific 2020
11:00-12:30	**High-level Panel:Envisioning Asia-Pacific 2020** Chair: ITU Secretary-General, Dr. Hamadoun Touré Panellists: ▪ Presidents/Chairmen/CEOs of Industry and International Organisations ▪ Leaders/Nobel Laureate of Academia ▪ Honourable Guests
12:30-14:00	**Lunch**
	13:30-14:00 **Summit Press Conference**
14:00-15:45	**Multi-stakeholder Meeting and Partnerships Announcements**
16:00-17:30	**Ministerial Roundtable** ▪ Welcome Address by ITU BDT Director, Mr. Brahima Sanou ▪ Welcome Speech by Minister of Information and Communication Technology, Thailand, H.E. Group Captain Anudith Nakornthap ▪ Endorsement of the Communiqué ▪ Ways forward to realize the Vision for the Asia-Pacific 2020
17:30-18:00	**Closing**
18:30-20:00	**Gala Dinner**