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Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

Connecting economies
and empowering people

Measuring the Information Society 2014

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The digital divide in Asia and the Pacific

- Great intra-regional inequalities exist in broadband **access, speed and costs**.
  - In Japan; the Republic of Korea; Macao, China; Singapore; and Hong Kong, China, **monthly subscription for an entry-level broadband plan** is less than 2% of monthly gross national income (GNI) per capita.
  - Costs are much higher in developing economies of the region **(8.8%)**, least developed countries **(41.7%),** landlocked developing countries **(63.5%),** and Pacific island developing countries **(126.0%)**
- **International bandwidth** per Internet user remains very low in Asia and the Pacific.
- Heavy reliance on IXPs in technologically advanced countries has led to **high Internet transit prices**.
- International **backhaul costs** reach up to **five times** those in more developed regions of the global economy.
- It is estimated that the Asia-Pacific region needs to spend about $8 trillion on infrastructure, with the **ICT sector comprising 10 per cent of that amount**.

Three Pillars

ESCAP Mandate on ICT for Development: Commission Resolution 69/10

i) Infrastructure for sustainable development

ICT as a metainfrastructure that enhances efficiencies in resource-use, delivery of services and builds e-resilience across all other infrastructure sectors (e.g. transport, energy, water)

Research and policy analysis:

- Map of Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway (AP-IS):
- first consolidated map of terrestrial fibre optic cables
- identifies gaps, missing transnational links, synergies with ESCAP's intergovernmental agreements namely, Asian Highway, Trans-Asian Railways
- joint ESCAP/ITU product

- Committee on ICT, fourth session
- set up Working Group on principles and norms for AP-IS
- amend transport agreements

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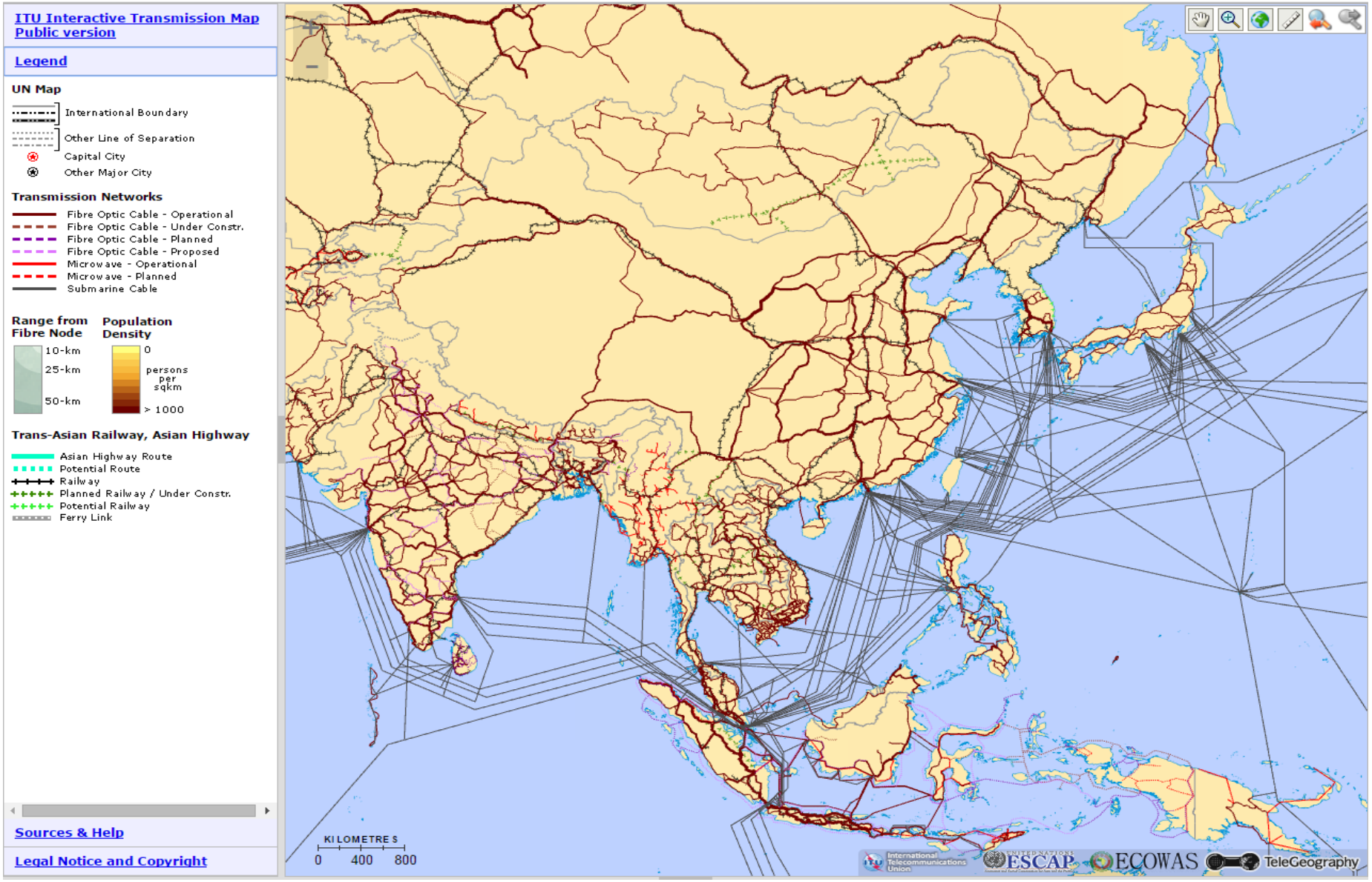

Three Pillars

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ii) Knowledge-networked Societies and Building E-resilience

Research and policy analysis:

•increased occurrence of megadisasters: hyperconnectivity results in cascading effects threatening interconnected systems that modern life relies upon

•E-solutions (e.g. internet education) empower societies and economies to create, share and adapt knowledge for enhanced participation in decision-making and ex-ante disaster preparedness

•ICT statistics and indicators: *Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development*

•WSIS review

iii) APCICT: Strengthening ICT for Development Capacities

'Academy of ICT Essentials for Government Leaders'
'Turning Today's Youth into Tomorrow's Leaders'

ESCAP and the WSIS review

- ESCAP is a member of the *Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development*
- The Partnership requested UN Regional Economic Commissions to assist in surveying the WSIS targets. ESCAP carried out the survey in 2012, Asia-Pacific obtained the highest response rate of all developing-regions.
- The secretariat produced a regional review of the WSIS targets
- ESCAP also cooperating with UNCTAD for its Ten-year review of the Implementation of WSIS Outcomes for the United Nations Commission on Science and Technology

Results of the regional WSIS review

- Salient regional results
  - Overall improvement in ICT connectivity in the region, including in rural areas (target 1), and in many institutions (targets 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7)
  - Progress led by mobile telephony, less in terms of internet connectivity
  - Some improvement in cultural diversity and the availability of locally relevant content, in particular for large population regional languages (Chinese, Russian)
- Methodological considerations
  - The targets were too focused on access, did not cover crucial ICT-related questions (gender dimension, ICT and environment, types of ICT use, ICT transmission infrastructure)
  - Targets not flexible enough to meaningfully encompass rapid technological changes, e.g. no specific broadband targets
  - ICT measurement capacity a big problem for many countries, many targets were not measured, require increased capacity
- Conclusions in terms of future international ICT for development goals
  - Future Targets will need to be reviewed more frequently
  - Targets will need to be made easily measurable, use existing standards set by Partnership
  - Many existing targets still relevant for the future, with adaptation (e-government, e-education, urban/rural divide)
  - Need to embed targets within wider post-2015 development agenda

Regional review findings: looking forward

- New ICT development goals will need to be devised to update the WSIS targets, they will need to reflect the discussions on new global development objectives
- They will need to be reviewed on a more frequent basis than in the past, and include new areas such as broadband connectivity, as well as the gender dimension of ICT.
- Post 2015 Development Agenda:

  • Regional Commissions expected to play a role in monitoring and evaluation of implementation of post 2015 development agenda goals

  • ESCAP can contribute to *Partnership* in cooperation with other relevant institutions, by supporting assessment of the WSIS outcome at the regional level, and facilitating linkage between ICT, its measurements and the evolving post-2015 context

Thank you

For further information please contact

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