



BDT COMMUNIQUÉ

Achieving priorities for digital development discussed at the Regional Development Forum for Asia and the Pacific

***The international community gets together to forge a new path towards the
implementation of the Kigali Action Plan in the region***

Bangkok, Thailand, 15 September 2023

The ITU Regional Development Forum for Asia and the Pacific (RDF-ASP) took place from 13 to 15 September in Bangkok, Thailand. Over 200 participants from 20 countries and partner organizations from across the region came together to discuss strategies to address regional and country digital needs of the region and engage partners to commit resources towards the implementation of those needs in the region.

The Forum, which welcomed several high-level officials from governments, the private sector, and the UN system, focused on match-making the pledges announced under the Partner2Connect Digital Coalition initiative through commitments to address the needs on the ground including Regional Initiatives for the Asia and the Pacific region.

The event was organized by the ITU Telecommunication Development Bureau and hosted by the National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission (NBTC), in collaboration with the Asia Pacific Telecommunity (APT).

In his opening remarks, Clin. Prof. Sarana Boonbaichaiyapruck, Chairman of NBTC said: “The Regional Development Forum provides a significant opportunity for our stakeholders to get an insight into the current progress made in telecommunications development within our region. It provides an excellent platform for dialogue amongst stakeholders for advancing telecommunications in the Asia and the Pacific.”

“I thank the National Broadcasting and Telecommunication Commission (NBTC) for graciously hosting this Forum and giving us the opportunity to meet and partner for impact,” said Dr Cosmas Luckyson Zavazava, Director of ITU’s Telecommunication Development Bureau. “We have in the Asia and the Pacific region long standing donors and partners who continue to support our work focused at addressing the digital and skills divide and ensuring that everyone has access and able to use connectivity in a meaningful way. The interactive and engaging discussions held at the Forum and

the commitments made confirmed the shared vision of all stakeholders to contribute towards getting the remaining estimated 2.6 billion people online.”

The Forum was chaired by Mr Notachard Chintakanond, Executive Director of the International Affairs Bureau of NBTC.

The RDF-ASP reported on the implementation status of the [five Regional Initiatives for Asia and the Pacific](#) approved by the of the World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC-22).

Highlights from the Regional Partner2Connect Roundtables matchmaking sessions include:

The commitments of **Amazon Web Services (AWS)** to help 29 million people grow their tech skills by 2025 in Australia, New Zealand, Indonesia Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Singapore, Republic of Korea, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Vietnam; investments worth USD 4,700,000 by **BitSight** to help LDCs in the region accelerate improvements in their cybersecurity posture and reduce the cyber capacity gap; commitments worth USD 25 million made by **Cisco** via their NetAcad and Skills for All program, benefitting over 250,000 people across Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, Kiribati, Nepal, Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste, Tuvalu by 2027; farmers empowered in Bangladesh and other countries by **FAO**, the Food and Agriculture Organization, with actionable information in the palm of their hands; the provision by **Huawei** to provide 10,000 training opportunities for ICT professionals in Cambodia over the next five years and bring connectivity to about 120 million people in remote areas globally by 2025; the provision by **Intelsat** of Wi-Fi internet access solutions to connect 100 schools in rural and remote areas including in Bhutan, Nepal, Maldives, Mongolia, Cambodia, Papua New Guinea, Laos and Timor-Leste by 2025; investments worth USD 300 million by **Kacific** to connect 1 billion people across Asia and the Pacific by 2027 in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Kiribati, Lao P.D.R., Malaysia, Micronesia, Nepal, New Zealand, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka; and commitments by **ZTE** to build USD 400 million worth of ICT infrastructure annually by 2025.

At the Forum, new Partner2Connect pledges and commitments were also announced. Here is a snapshot:

The **China Academy of Information and Communications Technology (CAICT)** committed to collaborate with all countries in the Asia and the Pacific Region to develop standards and projects on enablement indicators and assessment methods of ICT for sustainable development; **IsDB** committed to submit a new pledge by early 2024 to support its Member Countries in Asia and the Pacific region; the **Pacific Islands Telecommunications Association pledged** to support the Pacific Girls for ICT Day programme, promote green energy and E-Waste, regularly organize testing of emergency communications equipment, support capacity building in the Pacific, and enhance cybersecurity cooperation in the Pacific; **PT Indosat Tbk** committed to provide at least 100,000 citizens among the underserved communities in the Eastern part of Indonesia, by the end of 2024, with free data packages and digital literacy and proficiency training modules; **PT MUKTI MANDIRI LESTARI PT MUKTI MANDIRI LESTARI** pledged to triple its contribution in e-waste management in Indonesia and increase collection to 50,000 tonnes of e-waste annually by 2030; **UNCDF** pledged to partner with ITU to set-up an investment facility for the development of inclusive digital economy in Asia and the Pacific, which has the ambition to mobilize USD 25-40 million; **Welchman Keen** committed to continue to enhance capacity and capabilities in cybersecurity in developing and least developed nations, and support the Partner2Connect Coalition by investing additional USD 480,000 in-kind to continue these efforts in various regions.

Detailed information on the match-making sessions and new pledges will be featured in the official report of the Regional Development Forum for the Asia and Pacific to be posted on the Forum's website by 24 September 2023.

The Forum also brought together partners from UN agencies working in the region to explore synergies in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals through digital technology.

“The Regional Development Forum for Asia and the Pacific provided a platform to discuss the implementation of Regional Initiatives and identify emerging challenges and opportunities so as to co-create and scale up solutions with ITU members,” said Atsuko Okuda, Regional Director of the ITU Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific.

New partnerships and announcements

During the Regional Development Forum several joint declarations were signed:

- Huawei and ITU will strengthen their partnership on digital development in the Asia and the Pacific region, and, in particular, they will collaborate in the area of digital inclusion, conduct ICT research, and organize events that foster the digital ecosystem.
- Indosat and ITU will strengthen digital literacy and skills of citizens in underserved communities, and promote digital inclusion in Indonesia, primarily through the Digital Transformation Centres Initiative (DTCI).
- Indonesia-ITU Concern Forum (IICF) will cooperate with ITU on digital transformation and inclusion.

Furthermore, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications of Japan presented joint projects with ITU on digital infrastructure and affordable access and cybersecurity worth USD 300,000.

Sponsors of the Regional Development Forum for the Asia and the Pacific included Amazon Web Services, Huawei, Senko Advanced Components and Welchman Keen.

Resources and background information:

- [RDF-ASP website](#)
- [RDF-ASP photos](#)
- [RDF-ASP highlights video](#)

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About the International Telecommunication Union (ITU)

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