

**Main outcome of the Asia-Pacific Regional Conference for the  
WSIS**

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**Thank you Mr. Chairman,**

**P1 Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, let me first express my sincere gratitude to all those who have worked so hard to prepare for this important meeting, especially the Executive Secretariat and the Swiss government.**

**It is both a pleasure and indeed an honor to have this opportunity to make a presentation at this meeting with so many participants in attendance.**

**As one of the co-hosts of the Asia-Pacific Regional Conference for the WSIS which was held in Tokyo from 13 to 15 January this year, I would like to report on the main outcome of this Conference.**

**However, before doing so, I wish to express my sincere appreciation to participants from Member States, International Organizations, business entities and NGOs, who**

**vigorously discussed the issues and contributed to the success of the Conference. The Tokyo Declaration adopted by this Conference is the result of the many ideas and efforts of all participants, and it is indeed a privilege for me to make this report on behalf of all participants.**

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**Firstly, I would like to provide you with a brief outline of the Conference itself. This Conference was co-hosted by the Government of Japan and UN ESCAP with about 600 participants drawn from 47 countries in the region, 22 international organizations, 54 business sector entities, and 116 NGOs.**

**During the Conference, keynote speeches were given by Mr. Yoshio Utsumi, Secretary-General of the ITU, who also read a message from Mr. Kofi Annan, Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Adama Samassekou, Chairman of the PrepCom, Mr. Kim Hak-su, Executive Secretary of the UN ESCAP, Mr. Junichiro Koizumi, Prime Minister of Japan, and Mr. Toranosuke Katayama, Minister of Public Management, Home Affairs Posts and Telecommunications and other esteemed persons. In addition, roughly 60 people including Ministers, high-level government officials, representatives**

**from business sector entities, NGOs, made statements on a wide range of subjects, including their visions on the information society, how to best maintain cultural diversity, the importance of international standardization, and so on.**

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**Five panel discussions were organized by the ITU, UNESCO, UNDP and other entities on such topics as**

- 1) Connectivity and the Information Society in Asia**
- 2) Cultural and Linguistic Diversity**
- 3) Development and the ICT**
- 4) Future of e-Economy**
- 5) Towards a More Inclusive Information Society**

**How to improve infrastructure, develop applications for distance education and medical services, maintain network security and privacy, and respond to cybercrime in a networked society were part and parcel of these discussions. Attention was focused not only on technical aspects, but also on social issues including economic and gender disparities.**

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**On the 11th and 12th of January, immediately prior to the Conference, related events were held at the United Nations University in Tokyo and issues concerning Pacific Islands,**

**Youth, Gender and other items were discussed mainly by NGOs.**

**Now, I would like to turn to the Tokyo Declaration.**

**If I were to be asked what the main points of the Tokyo declaration are, I would say,**

- the importance of ubiquitous access to information networks by all,**
- the great potential of the broadband,**
- the necessity of increased cooperation and partnerships among international organizations, business sector entities and NGOs, and that**
- the characteristics of the Asia-Pacific region, including economic, social and cultural diversity, should be taken into account when considering a global framework.**

**There are three pillars that support the declaration.**

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**The first is a “Shared Vision of the Information Society”.**

**The Information Society in the Asia-Pacific Region must:**

- provide equitable and appropriate access for all,**
- use ICT as the driving force for the promotion of sustainable economic and technological development and reduce poverty levels,**

- **enhance the sharing and strengthening of global knowledge for development,**
  - **provide information and communication services targeted at disadvantaged groups in society to contribute to the alleviation of poverty,**
- and so on.**

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**The second is “Recognizing the unique features of the Information Society in the Asia-Pacific region”. In building an Information Society for the Asia-Pacific Region, 11 unique feature items should be taken into account. Specifically,**

- **geographic and demographic diversity: over 65 per cent of the world’s population lives and works in this region,**
- **cultural and linguistic diversity: of the more than 6,800 languages in the world, 3500 are spoken in the region,**
- **institutional stability: such stability will enable the region to attract more investors,**
- **productive workforce: the region’s economic growth depends on a large, productive workforce capable of fully utilizing ICTs,**
- **gender issues: more attention should be given to ensure that women can equally benefit from increased use of ICTs,**
- **disability issues: more effort should be made to ensure**

**equitable access to ICTs for an estimated 400 million persons with disabilities in the region,**

- **youth issues: equipping young people, which forms majority of the population in the region, with knowledge and skills on ICTs,**
- **digital divide disparities: particular attention should be given to the least developed countries,**
- **imbalance of information flows: information flow between the region and the rest of the world could grow substantially to reach the same level as trade,**
- **pioneering role in selected ICT areas: sharing with others to promote good practice at local, national, regional and global levels,**
- **special circumstances of regional small island developing states characterized by limited, homogenous markets.**

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**The third is “Advancing the region’s Information Society”. In order to develop and move the Information Society forward, it is necessary to address many issues, within and across sectors, while ensuring that the essential platform of ICT infrastructure is established. Specifically, as priority areas for action, eight individual issues are cited including infrastructure development and the securing of affordable**

**universal access to ICTs.**

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**In addition, as cross-sectoral priority programmes and activities, five issues including e-government, e-business are cited.**

**Furthermore, this declaration emphasizes that comprehensive ICT strategies need to be formulated at community, national, regional and global levels. Governments, international organizations, business sector entities, NGOs and other entities should collaborate with each other to develop both national and regional e-strategies depending on the roles they can play.**

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**In conclusion, increasing awareness worldwide of the significance of ICTs are required to make the WSIS a confirmed success. To this end, co-operation among countries, in particular between those in the same regions, harmonized efforts among international organizations such as ITU, and contribution from the private sector such as business entities and NGOs are all of vital importance.**

**With respect to the first phase of the WSIS, I am certain that this year will be the most important year for all stakeholders engaged in the information society. Japan is currently renewing basic ODA allocation policies and I would like to**

**take this opportunity to include the spirit of the Okinawa Charter on Global Information Society, which initiated the tackling of digital divide issues, in this renewal process. By doing so, we will try to set the stage for an active contribution to the WSIS.**

**Thank you for your kind attention.**