Bangladesh Friendship Education Society (BFES)

BFES recommendations on Internet Governance

BFES has organized the Dhaka Meeting for South Asia region. It was participated by Government, Civil Society/NGOs and Media. BFES received participants from India, Sri Lanka, Nepal & Pakistan. Also APC from Philippines and USA joined. BFES received UNDP official from Asia-Pacific office (UNDP-APDIP).

Resolutions of Dhaka WSIS Consultations

After extensive discussion on ICT policy by participants from the government, civil society, private sector, academia and the media from the South Asian region, the WSIS Consultation meeting held in Dhaka, Bangladesh from 5-7 January 2005 under the auspices of the Bangladesh Friendship Education Society (BFES) and the Bangladesh Working Group on WSIS (in collaboration with APC and One World South Asia) resolves as follows:

The following issues should be drawn to the attention of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) at their next meeting:

1. That SAARC undertake a study on the establishment of a regional Internet exchange to connect the national Internet exchanges to contain regional traffic within South Asia in order to promote equitable regional trade in services and save on the cost of international connectivity and thereby enhance regional cooperation;

2. That SAARC consider the establishment of a regional registry for IP addresses allocations (SANIC) to ensure that IP addresses are fairly distributed in South Asia;

3. That SAARC recommend that South Asian member states develop a common approach to the issue of Internet Governance and Financial Mechanisms for ICTD during the second phase of the World Summit on the Information Society which culminates in Tunis in November 2005;

4. That as part of this common approach to WSIS, consideration be given to the transformation of ICANN into a multi-stakeholder body accountable to the global community;

5. That expanding access to ICTs in South Asia in terms of the WSIS Declaration of Principles and Plan of Action is a global public good that enhances the value of global information networks and hence

benefits everyone including developed countries. A Global Fund for ICTD should, therefore, be established to support the goal of increasing access to ICTs by 2015 and this should be recommended by South Asian member states at the WSIS Prepcom 2 in February 2005;

6. That SAARC should take inputs from South Asian member states, the private sector and civil society to formulate a regional e-strategy to implement the WSIS Plan of Action in South Asia as a whole;

7. That the regional e-strategy should adopt a regional public goods approach to financing ICTD which would explore the relationship between creating a development-oriented policy environment and the exploitation of existing and prospective financial mechanisms to enable ICTs for the achievement of the MDGs and poverty reduction targets in the region;

8. That SAARC should encourage multi-stakeholder participation by member states, the private sector and civil society in the UNDP/APDIP WSIS consultation process on Internet Governance as a way of raising awareness of the importance of Internet policy and governance in South Asia;

9. That SAARC should undertake specific programmes for mainstreaming ICTs in poverty alleviation strategies and achieving the MDGs through the integration of efforts undertaken by governments, the private sector and civil society in the region;

10. That SAARC should support initiatives to promote local content and languages on ICTs in South Asia;

11. That SAARC should seriously consider ways of integrating gender equality into ICT policy issues at the regional level;

12. That serious consideration should be given to the licensing of community radio stations by member states as a key component of an early warning system in response to the Tsunami tragedy in the region as well as community radio's role in enabling development. Consideration should be given to best practices in community radio in the region such as those in Nepal;

13. That the regional e-strategy should consider the problems of implementation of ICT policy in the region and develop an approach to ensuring successful implementation of ICT policy at country level;

14. That SAARC should establish and fund a Regional ICT Forum to undertake these above-mentioned tasks and involve stakeholders from the private sector and civil society in the process. Dhaka, Bangladesh 7 January 2005