Tehran Declaration

on

Building the Information Society in Asia and the Pacific

We, the participants gathered in Tehran from 31 May to 2 June 2005 at the High-level Asia-Pacific Conference for the World Summit on the Information Society,

Reaffirming the global common desire and commitment to build a people-centered, inclusive and development-oriented Information Society, made at the highest political level by the adoption of the Geneva Declaration of Principles and Plan of Action;

Acknowledging that transforming the digital divide to digital opportunities requires, among others, access to ICTs, information and knowledge; and that connectivity is a central enabling agent in building the Information Society;

Reaffirming the need to join efforts to ensure universal, inclusive and non-discriminatory access to ICTs so that everyone, including all target groups as outlined in the relevant paragraphs of the WSIS Plan of Action, as can benefit from the opportunities that these technologies offer;

Further Reaffirming the need for supporting national efforts in developing countries, including the least developed, land locked, small island developing states, as well as economies in transition, in the area of building, improving and strengthening capacities to facilitate their genuine involvement in all aspects of

the information society, including through availability of resources, financial or otherwise and transfer of technology;

Recognizing that the Information Society should be founded on and stimulate respect for cultural identity, cultural and linguistic diversity, traditions and religions, and foster dialogue among cultures and civilizations, taking into account the specifications of the Asia-Pacific region, including through creation, dissemination and preservation of local content;

Acknowledging the importance of ethics for the Information Society, and the need for preventing abusive uses of ICTs,

Reaffirming the regional commitment, shared vision and common strategies for the Information Society, stipulated in the Tokyo Declaration – the Asia-Pacific Perspective on the World Summit adopted by the Asia-Pacific Regional Conference held in January 2003;

Further reaffirming the regional commitment to implement the Geneva Plan of Action and take action to achieve the objective of the Geneva Declaration of Principles as enunciated in the Shanghai Declaration adopted by ESCAP at its 60th session held in April 2004;

Emphasizing the utmost importance of *international and* regional cooperation in building the Information Society which complements national efforts through exchange of experiences and best practices, regional networking of initiatives and creation and pursuance of a common regional vision;

Endorsing the main outcomes of the First Regional Conference on Follow-up to the First Phase and Preparation for the Second Phase of the WSIS

held in Thailand in October 2004 and four Sub-regional Conferences held respectively in Kyrgyzstan, November 2004; Fiji, December 2004; Indonesia, February 2005; and Nepal in March 2005; and supporting their efforts in formulation of the Regional Action Plan towards the Information Society in Asia and the Pacific and their contributions to the global discussions on Internet governance, financial mechanisms for ICTs and development and the role of ICTs for knowledge-based disaster management;

Taking note of the findings of the Open Regional Dialogue on Internet Governance (ORDIG) Paper for the UN WGIG and WSIS;

Further taking note of the conclusion of the chairman's report of Tokyo Ubiquitous Network Conference which was held as a thematic meeting of the WSIS on 16th and 17th May 2005;

Recognizing the vital role of partnerships between and among Governments, the private sector, civil society from developing and developed countries and regional and international organizations and their prompt and collective commitment and efforts in transmitting the digital divide into digital opportunities and in working together to improve universal, ubiquitous, equitable and affordable access to information and communication infrastructures and technologies as well as to information and knowledge;

Further recognizing that urgent action at the regional and national levels is needed for realization of the objectives and goals of WSIS in building and developing the Information Society bringing its benefit to all;

Appreciating the work being carried by ESCAP, ITU, UNDP/APDIP, UNESCO and other regional and international organizations including UNICT Task Force,

APT, the Pacific Forum Secretariat, and ADB in promoting the development of an inclusive Information Society;

We hereby:

1. ***Adopt*** the "Regional Action Plan towards the Information Society in Asia and the Pacific" which takes into account, the specific features and common concerns of the region, and contains recommendations for action complementing national efforts aimed at creating the Information Society and mainstreaming ICTs for achieving the Millennium Development and other internationally agreed Goals;

2. ***Call upon*** all stakeholders in Asia and the Pacific including - governments, the private sector, civil society and regional and international organizations, to strengthen their partnerships to implement the "Regional Action Plan towards the Information Society" at the regional and national levels;

3. ***Call upon*** the governments of the region to support the Regional Action Plan especially by promoting regional cooperation and encourage the creation of an enabling environment for the development of the Information Society in the region;

4. ***Call upon*** civil society including non-governmental organizations to actively participate in realization of the Regional Action Plan especially for ensuring the projects sustainability and bringing the benefits of ICTs to local communities;

5. ***Call upon*** the business community to continue to play its important role in the development and application of ICTs and to actively participate in the projects in partnership with other stakeholders aimed at ensuring – universal access to ICTs;

6. *Request* UN organizations, including the ITU, UNESCO, UNDESA, and other relevant UN organizations consistent with their terms of reference, together with other international and regional organizations to play a collaborative and productive role as coordinators in partnership and collaboration with other players in the implementation of the action lines of the WSIS Plan of Action;

7. *Request* ESCAP to coordinate the implementation of the Regional Action Plan and to accord priority to the activities included in the Regional Action Plan with relevant international and regional organizations, paying special attention to the needs of the least-developed countries, land-locked developing countries and small island developing states, bearing in mind the specificities and requirements of different countries;

8. *Urge* the governments and relevant regional and international organizations especially members of the Regional Interagency Working Group on ICTs, as well as civil society to cooperate with ESCAP in planning and implementation of specific activities of the Regional Action Plan to ensure complimentarity of effort as well as effective utilization of available resources;

9. *Invite* international and regional financial institutions and donor countries to enhance their involvement in financing ICTs for development [and give priority to the projects of the Regional Action Plan];

10. *Request* ESCAP, UNDP/APDIP, ITU, UNESCO, including Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC), and other international and regional organizations to continue their efforts in capacity-building, enhancing awareness and dissemination of best practices in the areas of Internet governance, financial mechanisms for ICTs for development and the use of ICTs for knowledge-based disaster management as recommended by the sub-regional conferences.