**Concept Note (Draft)**

**Sixth session of the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway (AP-IS) Steering Committee and WSIS Regional Review**

29 August 2022 / 09:00-17:00

UNCC Conference Room 3 (Hybrid)

Bangkok, Thailand

BY INVITATION ONLY

1. **Background**

The rapid rise of digital technologies adoption in response to the COVID-19 pandemic has drastically transformed socio-economic activities of citizens across the Asia-Pacific region. The rapid adoption of digital technologies not only ushered digital opportunities but also reveals alarming digital divide risks.

In response, the United Nations Secretary General has called for global actions through the implementation of the “Roadmap for Digital Cooperation: implementation of the recommendations of the High-level Panel on Digital Cooperation” (A/74/821) and “Our Common Agenda”, in particular the seventh commitment on “Improving digital cooperation[[1]](#footnote-1)”, which emphasizes the need to take actions on reducing digital divides, avoid Internet fragmentation, and protect data among others.

At the regional level, the ESCAP Resolution 75/7[[2]](#footnote-2) promotes the implementation of the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway (AP-IS) initiative through regional cooperation to bridge the digital divide. In addition, the Committee on Information and Communications Technology, Science, Technology and Innovation (CICTSTI) at its third session recommended that the secretariat set up a drafting group to develop an action plan for the next phase of the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway, for consideration and adoption by the CICTSTI at its fourth session in 2022.

Subsequently, the secretariat supported member States and developed an Action Plan[[3]](#footnote-3) for implementation of the AP-IS initiative and adopted by the AP-IS Steering Committee at its fifth session on 25 November 2021.[[4]](#footnote-4) The Action Plan consists of 25 actions centered on three pillars of “Connectivity for all”, “Digital technologies and applications”, and “Digital data”. Three bureau Working Groups bureau[[5]](#footnote-5) has been established to implement each pillar. This Action Plan serves as a blueprint for regional cooperative actions to bridge the digital divide and accelerate digital transformation by promoting connectivity, digital technology applications and data use. Against this background, the secretariat is convening the sixth session of the AP-IS Steering Committee.

1. **Objectives**
2. To convene an informal AP-IS bureau Working Groups meeting to discuss progress of implementation (Working Group Bureau member only);
3. To review progress on implementation of the Action Plan and facilitate information sharing by various stakeholders supporting the implementation of the Action Plan (for all invited participants); and
4. To facilitate regional review of the implementation of the WSIS action lines for Asia and the Pacific.
5. **Date and Venue**
* Date/Time: 09:00-17:00, 29 August 2022 (Bangkok, Thailand, UTC +7)
* Venue: UNCC Bangkok, Thailand/ Virtual (MS Teams)[[6]](#footnote-6)
1. **Participants (by invitation only)**
* Senior government officials directly involved on digital technologies and connectivity policies
* Other key stakeholders and partners supporting the implementation of the AP-IS platform
1. **Interpretation Service**
* The meeting will be conducted in the English language only.
1. **Tentative Programme**

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| **Time** | **Sessions** |
| 08:30 ~ 09:00 | Registration – United Nations Conference Centre (UNCC) |
| 09:00 ~ 10:00 | ***Informal meeting of the AP-IS Bureau Working Groups (Working Group Bureau members only)*** |
| **Working Group 1**Meeting Room F (TBC) | **Working Group 2**Meeting Room G (TBC) | **Working Group 3**Meeting Room H (TBC) |
| 10:00 ~ 11:00 | **Session 1: Opening** (UNCC Conference Room 3)* Mr. Kaveh Zahedi, Deputy Executive Secretary, ESCAP (TBC)
* Statement by Mr. Malcolm Johnson, Deputy Secretary-General, ITU (TBC)
* Report of the Chair, Fifth session of the AP-IS Steering Committee (TBC)
* Ms. Tiziana Bonapace, Director, ICT and Disaster Risk Reduction Division (IDD), ESCAP
* Election of Bureau and adoption of Programme

Moderator: Mr. Tae Hyung Kim (Chief, ICT and Development Section, IDD) |
| 11:00 ~ 11:15 | *Group Photo & Coffee/Tea Break*  |
| 11:15 ~ 12:15 | **Session 2: Update on implementation of Pillar 1 ‘Connectivity for all’*** Working Group 1 Bureau
* ESCAP Member and Associate Members
* Other stakeholders and partners
* ESCAP secretariat

Moderator: Chair |
| 12:15 ~ 13:15 | *Lunch Break* |
| 13:15 ~ 14:15 | **Session 3: Update on implementation of Pillar 2 ‘Digital Technologies and Application’*** Working Group 2 Bureau
* ESCAP Member and Associate Members
* Other stakeholders and partners
* ESCAP secretariat

Moderator: Chair |
| 14:15 ~ 15:15 | **Session 4: Update on implementation of Pillar 3 ‘Digital Data’*** Working Group 3 Bureau
* ESCAP Member and Associate Members
* Other stakeholders and partners
* ESCAP secretariat

Moderator: Chair |
| 15:15 ~ 15:30 | *Coffee/Tea Break* |
| 15:30 ~ 16:30 | **Session 5: Regional Review of the WSIS Action Lines in Asia and the Pacific*** Opening Remarks by Mr. Malcolm Johnson, Deputy Secretary-General, ITU (TBC)
* WSIS Action Lines by Ms. Gitanjali Sah, WSIS Coordinator, ITU (TBC)
* Discussion

Moderator: ITU |
| 16:30 ~ 17:00 | **Session 6: Closing*** Ms. Tiziana Bonapace, Director, ICT and Disaster Risk Reduction Division (IDD), ESCAP
* Mr. Tae Hyung Kim, Chief, ICT and Development Section, IDD, ESCAP

Moderator: Chair |

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1. UN resolution 76/6 “Follow-up to the report of the Secretary-General entitled Our Common Agenda” [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. <https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/d8files/event-documents/E75_Res7E.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/d8files/event-documents/AP-IS%20Action%20Plan%202022-2026\_Final.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. The Action Plan supports the UN Secretary General’s Common Agenda on Improving Digital Global Cooperation and the Action Lines of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), to connect all people to the Internet, avoid Internet fragmentation, protect data, and digital commons as a global public good. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Details of bureau members can be accessed here: https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/d8files/event-documents/Outcome%20Document%20AP-IS%20SC-5%20FINAL\_0.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. MS Teams link will be shared with participants once online registration has been received by the ESCAP secretariat. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)