ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC
  (ESCAP)
INTERNATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATION UNION (ITU)
ASIA-PACIFIC TELECOMMUNITY (APT)

Tenth Meeting of the Regional Interagency Working Group on Information and
  Communication Technologies (ICT)

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Bangkok

**OPENING REMARKS BY
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Distinguished participants, ladies and gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to the Tenth Meeting of the
Regional Interagency Working Group on Information and Communication
Technologies (ICT). At the outset, I would like to thank you for the continuous
cooperation and support you have given to the work of the Regional Interagency
Working Group since its establishment five years ago.

As you know, the World Summit on the Information Society highlighted the
importance of the regional dimensions of the Information Society. Regional
implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit is vitally important for
bridging the digital divide and building an information and knowledge-based
society in Asia and the Pacific.

The Summit assigned to the Regional Commissions the task of moderating
and facilitating the implementation of action line C11, International and regional
cooperation, of the WSIS Plan of Action. The coordination of multi-stakeholder
implementation activities would help to avoid duplication of activities. This
should include, inter alia, information exchange, creation of knowledge, sharing of
best practices, and assistance in developing multi-stakeholder and public/private
partnerships

To that effect, UNESCAP will present to you a new draft of the web-based
Matrix for ICT for Development and will invite all the participants to provide their
comments.

Before that, we will have the honour to have a presentation by Ajay Puri, the Computer Whiz Kid from India. ITU and APT will then present their Young Professional Programmes in ICT. UNESCAP applauds these efforts to develop human resources in ICST, especially for the youth.

We in UNESCAP have also been paying special attention to the development of human resources in ICST. In this connection, I am pleased to report that in June 2006, UNESCAP established the Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development (APCICT), located in Incheon, Republic of Korea. The Centre aims to improve knowledge and productivity for long-term economic growth and sustainable development of the region, and is expected to contribute to bridging the digital divide.

The Centre will assist in the sharing of best practices in the area of ICT development among UNESCAP members and associate members. Through training, the Centre will enhance knowledge and skills in ICT for policy-makers, ICT professionals and ICT project managers; training-of-trainers programs and exchange of trainers and experts will also enhance the capacity of ICT trainers and ICT training institutions

Distinguished Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen,

In addition to sharing our respective initiatives, I would like to urge the interagency working group to consider and focus on specific joint activities pooling the strengths of each, to assist countries in the region, and especially the less developed ones, in following up on the implementation of the WSIS Outcomes and Regional Action Plan towards building the Information Society. In this manner, those countries would be able to fully utilize the digital opportunities provided by ICT for social, economic and sustainable development and the achievement of internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration.

I am confident that this meeting, with your valuable contributions, will come up with concrete outcomes towards our close cooperation in the implementation of the outcomes of the WSIS and Regional Action Plan in building an information and knowledge-based society in the region.

I wish the Meeting all success. Thank you.