

ASIA-PACIFIC TELECOMMUNITY

APT Asia-Pacific Summit on the Information Society

31 October – 2 November 2000, Tokyo, Japan

TOKYO DECLARATION

Asia-Pacific Renaissance through ICT In the 21st Century

Preamble

The Ministers for information and communications of member countries of the Asia-Pacific Telecommunity (APT), gathered in Tokyo for the Asia-Pacific Summit on the Information Society, held from 31 October to 2 November in the first year of the new millennium.

Ministers held fruitful discussions on issues related to information and communications technology (ICT). These included means to bridge the digital divide and make the most of digital opportunities, taking into account the proposals from the private sector made at the round-table discussion that preceded the ministerial meeting. Ministers shared the view that it is necessary to take initiatives to unite efforts of all concerned and to tackle ICT-related issues, so that a sound information-based society is established which respects the diversity of the Asia-Pacific region. With this understanding, Ministers adopted the Tokyo Declaration on “Asia-Pacific Renaissance through ICT in the 21st Century”.

Ministers also discussed action to be taken to create an information-based society, and adopted an Action Plan together with the declaration. Ministers expect that the Action Plan will be implemented without delay, and that APT will play a leading role in its implementation.

Forming a Shared Vision

1. ICT is a vital engine for the development in the twenty-first century. As can be observed in the explosive diffusion of the Internet, ICT has demonstrated enormous power to change economic structures and greatly contribute to economic prosperity and a better quality of life. ICT can also enable greater freedom and enrich people's lives through broadening their choices and supporting social, welfare and cultural activities. In the Asia-Pacific region, which enjoys a rich and vibrant cultural heritage, we should understand and respect the diversity of cultures and make efforts to ensure that, through international co-operation, ICT is used to promote cultural development within all traditions.
2. Equally, we must strive to give every citizen access to communication tools, so that the opportunities and benefits brought by ICT can be shared by all and individuals can be

given new ways to demonstrate their creative abilities. In order to promote economic, social and cultural development and achieve affluent coexistence among countries in the Asia-Pacific region, both the private and public sectors should co-operate in all fields to strengthen the foundations of ICT.

Bridging the Digital Divide

3. To enable everyone to reap the benefits of ICT, we should strive to bridge the digital divide, between and within nations, that separates those with easy access to network resources, especially the Internet, and those without. With the remarkable progress in ICT, which might be called an ICT revolution, issues concerning the digital divide and convergence have become increasingly broad and complex. We must take immediate action to tackle these issues, because of their tremendous and multiple impacts on nations and individuals.
4. In the Asia-Pacific region, besides the gaps in use of ICT caused by differences in a person's income, age, gender or physical disability, there are also significant gaps between countries, between urban and rural areas, and between industrial sectors. It is necessary to adopt different measures to bridge each gap appropriately. In this regard, it is useful to exchange and share information on various relevant activities in the Asia-Pacific region, as well as to effectively co-ordinate initiatives in this field with the growing activities to tackle the digital divide that are being undertaken in other parts of the world.

Developing Information and Communication Infrastructure

5. In order to establish an information-based society in which everyone can obtain the benefits of the ICT revolution and take advantage of the numerous opportunities it brings for the development and prosperity, we must take immediate steps to develop the necessary infrastructure that will provide access to such resources as the Internet.
6. An effective way to promote the balanced development of Information and communication infrastructure in the Asia-Pacific region, with its geographic and economic diversity, is to utilize different technologies and equipment according to local conditions, as well as to take account of changes such as technological convergence.
7. Investment in the development of Information and communication infrastructure is one of the areas in which the private sector has a vital role to play. Therefore, governments should work to create an environment that encourages private-sector participation, such as by establishing transparent legal frameworks. At the same time, in situations where the private sector finds little incentive for investment, the participation of the public sector is indispensable in developing vital infrastructure. In such cases, it is essential for governments to take the lead in promoting infrastructure development, with international support, if required. Meanwhile, international co-operation is essential in such fields as standardization or management of radio frequencies that are needed for cost-effective and efficient development of Information and communication infrastructure.

Essential Applications for the Information Society

8. In order to allow ICT to provide the benefits of speedier and more efficient economic and social interaction, it is essential to develop various applications. We should encourage the administrative use of ICT particularly through e-government and e-commerce to help improve the efficiency of business and public services including in rural areas. The quality and variety of content is also of great importance to the information society. To encourage more people to join online activities in the Asia-Pacific region, special emphasis should be placed on the promotion of applications that are useful for various languages, such as translation as well as development and distribution of contents that reflect local cultural or linguistic characteristics. In all these development efforts, we must pay attention to the protection of intellectual property rights and social harmony.
9. Security and reliability of online communications is another important element needed to establish a sound information society. Crimes such as hacking, the spread of computer viruses, the misuse of personal data and the circulation of indecent information, are serious threats to the stability of ICT-based economies, as well as a danger to society and particularly to the young. To overcome these problems, we should co-operate in sharing information among countries and in co-ordinating their efforts to prevent cyber crime and to ensure security. We should also co-operate on the protection of privacy and ethical issues.

Human Resource Development and Enhancement of ICT Literacy

10. As ICT rapidly penetrates wide areas of social and economic activities, we must find ways to make sure that every citizen has at least the basic skills needed to fully participate in the information society. It is our vital and urgent task to enable people to use ICT in their daily lives, at the same time we must increase the number of skilled personnel in advanced areas of ICT. We should give high priority to human resource development in the field of ICT and to the enhancement of ICT literacy in the population as a whole.
11. In addition to each country's promotion of advanced training in ICT for researchers or engineers, the Asia-Pacific region as a whole should strengthen co-operation in exchanging personnel or conducting joint research on subjects of common interest and benefit. At the same time, regional exchanges of information should take place regarding the enhancement of ICT literacy. Each country should also promote measures to help people of every age, background and location and level of physical ability to acquire these skills.
12. Human resource development is essential for sustainable social and economic prosperity, and activities that use ICT itself, such as distance learning, can be of great help in human resource development. Various programs in this field should be conducted in

co-operation with educational organizations, taking account of the economic, social and cultural diversity of the Asia-Pacific region. We should also encourage development of appropriate technology to help combat illiteracy, as well as to help those with special needs, such as the hearing impaired.

Regional Co-operation and Global Co-ordination

Regional Co-operation

13. It is important for all countries to co-operate in seeking solutions to ICT issues, in order to establish an information society that respects economic, social and cultural diversity. In this regard, APT, as the leading international organization for telecommunications in the Asia-Pacific region, should strengthen its function as a regional forum for policy co-ordination and for coping with emerging aspects of ICT. This will greatly assist the Asia-Pacific region to present a coherent voice in global efforts to tackle ICT issues. The financial and professional resources of the APT should be enhanced for this purpose.

Global Co-operation

14. Since the ICT revolution has global effects, it is important to include not only regional but also global co-operation in our perspective. Because action has started around the world aimed at bridging the digital divide, it is necessary to effectively co-ordinate activities in the Asia-Pacific region with global activities or those of other regions. For this reason, APT should strengthen its co-operative relationships with other international organizations such as the International Telecommunications Union (ITU), which is the focal point for global telecommunication policy co-ordination; the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), which works for economic and social development in the Asia-Pacific region, the United Nations, and various international bodies such as the OECD and the Digital Opportunity Taskforce (dot force), which the G8 Summit agreed to establish at its 2000 meeting. Relationships with countries and organizations outside the Asia Pacific region, private sector entities and relevant NGOs should also be strengthened.

Target for Internet Access “Phase One”

15. We Ministers declare that we will do our best, in both domestic efforts and through international co-operation, to enable people in the Asia-Pacific region to have access to the Internet by the year 2005 to the extent possible, including access from public facilities such as schools and post offices.