

Pacific Islands and the WSIS
Report of Conference and Side Events: Opportunities for the Pacific Islands Region

16 January 2003

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Asian Regional Conference was held in Tokyo 13-15 January 2003 as part of the preparatory process to the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) and invitations were sent to senior government ministries in the Pacific Islands region in November and December 2002. In addition, invitations were sent to several regional organizations that included the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, Secretariat of the Pacific Community and South Pacific Geoscience Commission.

This conference presented opportunities for Pacific Island Countries (PIC) to participate in the preparatory process of WSIS and ensure that the government sector, private sector, NGOs and civil society were represented in developing themes for WSIS.

Despite the short notice, a collaborative process was established via electronic mailing lists and email, and a side event meeting was proposed and conducted on Sunday 12 January to address the participation by PIC in the WSIS preparatory process. The press release, report of meeting, agenda and objectives, and list of participants are included as Attachments A through D.

The report of this side event meeting was accepted by the secretariat and distributed to all participants as Doc. C-24. In addition, a meeting was held Monday 13 January between Mr Adama Semassekoui, President of PrepCom and Charlotte Sgier De Cerf, Executive Secretariat and senior government representatives from PIC to explore participation in the forthcoming PrepCom-2 meeting that will be conducted in Geneva 17-28 February 2003 where is was noted that accreditation for this meeting closed 5 January.

An additional round table, representation as panelists on the planned eight round tables as well as opportunities to conduct a side event at PrepCom was requested. The request for an additional round table was unsuccessful, participation as panelists was considered possible as these had not been decided, a side event was considered and accreditation for participation in PrepCom-2 was accepted.

It was agreed that participation by representatives of PIC at PrepCom-2 was essential where a minimum of 4 would be needed and that a regional meeting post PrepCom-2 would be necessary ensure that there was continuity by PICs in the preparatory process.

The main outputs from this conference include a news releases and the Tokyo Declaration, a statement for the summit are included as Attachment E and F.

A list of participants from PICs, international and other organizations who interacted or are associated with PICs and CROP agencies is included as Attachment G. It should be noted however that this list in not complete as there will omissions of names as well as PIC invitees would did not participate in the relevant side events or the conference.

BACKGROUND

The Summit is being held under the high patronage of Kofi Annan, UN Secretary-General, with the International Telecommunication Union taking the lead role, in cooperation with other interested UN agencies, and will occur in two phases:

GENEVA 2003: FIRST PHASE

The first phase of the World Summit will take place in Geneva hosted by the Government of Switzerland from 10 to 12 December 2003. It will address the broad range of themes concerning the Information Society and adopt a Declaration of Principles and plan of action, addressing the whole range of issues related to the Information Society

TUNIS 2005: SECOND PHASE

The second phase of the World Summit will take place in Tunis hosted by the Government of Tunisia, in 2005. Development themes will be a key focus in this phase, and it will assess progress that has been made and adopt any further plan of action to be taken.

PREPARATORY PROCESS: GLOBAL LEVEL

The Summit in Geneva (10 to 12 December 2003) will be the outcome of a wide variety of inputs, including from previous meetings, existing Action Plans of the various partners involved and inputs from the Preparatory Committees of the Summit (PREPCOMs). Regional, conferences and thematic and expert meetings will be organized to consider a specific subject. Regional conferences will be organized to address the specific concerns, needs and priorities of the various regions. They will, most likely, be organized at ministerial level. PREPCOMs will be attended by governmental representatives and other parties concerned, including representatives of the UN specialized agencies, the private sector, civil society and NGOs.

KEY DATES

- PrepCom 1 - Geneva 1-5 July 2002
- Informal Meeting on Content & Themes - Geneva, 16-18 September 2002
- PrepCom 2 - Geneva, 17-28 February 2003
- PrepCom 3 - Geneva, September 2003 (tentative)

PREPARATORY PROCESS: REGIONAL CONFERENCES

- African Regional Conference - Bamako (Mali) 28-30 May 2002
- Pan European Regional Conference - Bucharest (Romania) 7-9 November 2002
- Asian Regional Conference - Tokyo (Japan) 13-15 January 2003
- Latin America and Caribbean Regional Conference - Bávaro (Dominican Republic) 29-31 January 2003
- ESCWA Regional Preparatory Conference: Beirut (Lebanon), 4-6 February 2003
- League of Arab States Regional Conference: Cairo (Egypt), June 2003

Regional preparatory conferences are taking place in each of the regions of the world. It is recommended that these should generally be based on the regional groupings used for conferences of the United Nations. The regional conferences should include representatives from all major stakeholders. They will assess the key challenges, opportunities and constraints stemming from the information society, develop a common vision and understanding for the region and prepare a plan to address the key issues and solve the problems identified.

More specifically, the regional conferences may undertake the following main tasks:

? Conduct a regional assessment of the relevant challenges, opportunities and constraints, taking into account a) the specific constraints faced by the region and b) constraints resulting from global developments in the information society.

? Develop a vision for an information-based society in the region and a strategy to achieve that vision.

? Establish a platform for dialogue and contributions that includes all major stakeholders.

? Share experiences and provide an opportunity to forge a better understanding of the concerns of the countries in the region, to prepare their positions and to identify the key themes for the Summit.

? Identify existing initiatives and networks in the regions and assess examples of best practices.

? Consider new initiatives and commitments within the region and its subregions with a view to overcoming the prevailing constraints and fostering further progress towards achieving the vision of an information society.

? Prepare contributions for consideration by the PrepCom meetings.

Representatives from major stakeholders will play an integral role in these discussions through a multi-stakeholder process in which leaders from all sectors can contribute their expertise to the regional dialogue. The reports from these regional conferences will be considered by the following PrepCom meeting

CONFERENCE

The outputs from the conference in addition to the aforementioned news release and Tokyo Declaration can be summarised as follows:

1. ICT resources need to be focused on the regions that can use it best to reduce poverty.

2. ICT to enhance educational benefits is key to overall development of all regions.

3. Government must agree to boost private sector support and break away from monopoly situations and abuse of monopoly situations.

4. Low Cost Bandwidth and development of high bandwidth availability is a must.

SIDE EVENTS

The Pacific consultation on Sunday 12 January was a success where the relevant documents are included as Attachments A through D. The report of the meeting outlines the activities but cannot capture the cooperative spirit and sense of common purpose that prevailed.

POST CONFEENCE MEETING

Following the closing ceremony, a small meeting of PIC representatives and associates was convened where the process for next steps was discussed that included.

Participation at PrepCom-2

Participation by representatives from PICs is essential to ensure that there is input into this critical event in the preparatory process. It was suggested that key specialists from PIC be encouraged to attend and all participants at this post conference meeting who had access to funds either directly or indirectly would cooperate in securing participation by appropriate specialists.

Regional Meeting post PrepCom-2

A regional meeting should be convened post PrepCom-2 that provides PICs with a report of PrepCom-2 and opportunities to contribute to PrepCom-3 through a consultative process. In addition this meeting should be held in conjunction with the next PITA meeting in April 2003 to maximise participation. This meeting will also provide opportunities for a review of the Regional Pacific Islands Information and Communications Policy and Strategic Plan and enable outputs from various National implementations of this plan.

It should be remembered that donors may be exploring assistance to projects that fit within outputs from WSIS and PICs should ensure that their national needs are addressed with the preparatory process to WSIS.

Attachment A – Pacific Islands Side Event – News Release

For Immediate Release

PACIFIC ISLAND COUNTRIES AT MAJOR ICT CONFERENCE
(Tokyo, Japan; 14 January 2003)

Senior officials from around the Pacific are attending a series of high-level meetings in preparation for the 2003 World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS).

The Asia Pacific Regional Conference for WSIS is being held in Tokyo Japan from 13-15 January. The conference will prepare a regional declaration to the global summit that is expected to prioritise:

- Securing accessibility of telecommunication networks
- Preserving linguistic and cultural diversity
- Developing human resources
- Establishing legal, regulatory and policy frameworks
- Building confidence in the security of ICT

It is also expected to emphasise the importance of cross-sector programmes and activities in e-government, e-business, and e-community, supported by national and regional e-strategies.

In preparation for their engagement in the WSIS process, regional delegates attended a full-day Pacific consultation on 12 January at the United Nations University in Tokyo. The Pacific consultation, entitled "Pacific Islands and the WSIS: ICTs for Development: Resources, Needs and Opportunity" examined the Pacific islands regional experience with ICTs for development in island countries, and prepared delegates to ensure that Pacific island concerns and issues are adequately addressed in the global declarations and action plans.

The Pacific consultation summarised a series of policy and planning lessons for incorporation in the Tokyo declaration and future WSIS action plans. These included recommendations that:

- IT literacy should be increased at all levels and in all sectors to create 'e-citizens' able to make the most of new opportunities
- ICTs can increase efficiency and effectiveness and reduce the costs of delivery of public services such as health and education
- There is an over-riding need for training and indigenous capacity building in both technical and content areas
- Pacific island countries require technical and policy assistance during project implementation, including strong international support to bridge the international and domestic digital divide
- Development partners, governments, civil society, and the private sector could usefully increase their already considerable collaboration for example on the interconnection of networks.
- There is an existing context and planning framework in the Pacific island region, including the PALM process and culminating in the Pacific Islands ICT Policy and Plan, that has been prioritised and endorsed at Ministerial level, that could provide useful guidance to development partners

The event was supported by the Global Knowledge Partership, the Foundation for Development Cooperation, the Sasakawa Pacific Islands Nations Fund, the Center for Global Communications, the World Bank's infoDev programme, and the Asian Development Bank.

Delegations including representatives of governments, civil society, and the private sector are attending from a majority of Pacific island countries. They are being supported by advisers from the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, the Secretariat of the Pacific Community, and the South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission.

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Attachment B – Pacific Islands Side Event – Report

Pacific Islands and the WSIS: ICTs for Development: Resources, Needs and Opportunity

United Nations University
Headquarters Building Committee Rooms 2/3
Sunday, 12th January 2003

Side Event Final Report

A side event to discuss ICT sector opportunities for Pacific island countries, in the context of WSIS preparations and the Asia Pacific Regional Conference for WSIS, was held at the United Nations University on 12 January 2003. Pacific country representatives from Australia, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, New Zealand, Niue, the Northern Marianas, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, and Vanuatu attended. A wide range of participants from Pacific regional organisations, bilateral and multilateral development partners, NGOs, and academia also attended. A number of participants also attended via a videoconferencing link to American Samoa, Hawaii, Marshall Islands, and Samoa.

Convenors and Sponsors

The event was convened by co-facilitators from the Foundation for Development Cooperation and the Center for Global Communications/Pacific Islands Digital Opportunities. The event was generously sponsored by the Asian Development Bank, the Global Knowledge Partnership, infoDev, PEACESAT, and the Sasakawa Pacific Islands Nations Fund.

Four thematic sessions were held on National ICT Applications for Development, Connecting Communities through ICTs, a Development Partner Dialogue, and WSIS and the Pacific. A keynote address was given via videoconference by the Lt. Governor of American Samoa on Common Themes in ICT Development for Pacific Islands.

Session 1: National ICT Applications for Development

The objective of Session 1 was to illustrate common Pacific challenges and successes with ICT applications, and draw out policy and planning lessons for incorporation in the Tokyo declaration and future WSIS action plans. The session was moderated by Sam Taufao of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community.

Presentations were given by Professor Rajesh Chandra of the University of the South Pacific on USPNet Distance Learning, Abel Caine of Fiji on e-government, Stuart Davies of Cook Islands on Tele-health in the Pacific, Fuatai Purcell of Samoa and New Zealand on e commerce for micro-enterprises, and Richard St Clair of Niue on activities of the Pacific Islands chapter of the Internet Society (PICISOC).

Key lessons and recommendations for consideration at the Asia Pacific Regional Conference for WSIS included :

- Awareness by all stakeholders (decision makers and general public) should be increased
- IT literacy should be increased at all levels and in all sectors to create 'e-citizens' able to make the most of new opportunities
- It is important to raise awareness of the opportunities of e-commerce for small island developing states
- There is a need for compelling vision of sector and project development

- There is a strong need for research on applications and best practices on ICT for development that are sustainable in an island context
- Strong partnerships are required between all stakeholders and development partners
- ICT applications need to address the expressed needs of countries
- ICTs can increase efficiency and effectiveness and reduce the costs of delivery of public services such as health and education
- ICTs can enhance good governance practices through transparency and productivity
- Pacific island countries require technical and policy assistance during project implementation, including strong international support to bridge the international and domestic digital divide

Session 2: Connecting Communities

The objective of Session 2 was to illustrate Pacific experiences with ICT for development at the grassroots level for connecting communities, and to draw out implementation lessons for incorporation in the Tokyo declaration and future WSIS action plans. The session was moderated by Nina Ratulele of Fiji and the Pacific Islands News Association.

Presentations were given by Jim Stevenson of the Federated States of Micronesia on the Department of Education YapSEED project, Robert Guild of the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat on the Solomon Islands PeopleFirst Network for community development and peace building, Laila Younis o the Northern Marianas Variety and Palau Horizon newspapers, Norman Okamura of the University of Hawaii on PEACESAT and E-Rate Developments in American Samoa, Guam and CNMI, and Andrew Stockwood of Vanuatu on the Pacific Islands Association of NGOs

Key lessons and recommendations for consideration at the Asia Pacific Regional Conference for WSIS included :

- Countries and the Pacific region need to create sustainable ICT networks
- It is important to encourage cultural diversity and linguistic diversity through, among other means, the use of local languages understood by all
- There is an over-riding need for training and indigenous capacity building in both technical and content areas
- The role of traditional media will remain very important in information dissemination and that role should be stengthened
- Community participation through free flow of information and freedom of expression have a very important role in modern society
- Reliable, affordable and equitable access to ICTs are required for all people of the Pacific islands

Lunch Session

Objectives:
The objective of the lunch session was to address common topics pertinent to Pacific islands such as the creation of enabling policies, cooperation among organizations, and competition in small markets, and to demonstrate the potential of video over satellite by linking American Samoa; Hawaii; Marshall Islands, and Samoa. The session was moderated by Christina Higa of PEACESAT.

The Hon Togiola Tulafono, Lt. Governor of American Samoa, gave an address via videoconference that summarised the following key lessons and recommendations for consideration at the Asia Pacific Regional Conference for WSIS:

- Policy and regulations must be at the forefront of any ICT infrastructure
- Funding resources are required for development of local infrastructure before regional initiatives

- Sector planning and implementation should build and draw on indigenous capacity in preference to external experts with limited national knowledge
- Goodwill and sincerity, partnership and collaboration
- Liberal markets and competition have been proven in SIS, and will bring costs down, and there are good examples of liberalisation in small markets
- There are also examples of monopoly carriers providing effective services
- Voluntary participation at the local level can ensure ownership of projects
- It is important to facilitate participation of all Pacific islands regardless of political affiliation, and to urge the WSIS process to include small island states in international fora

Session 3: Development Partner Dialogue

The objective of Session 3 was to provide an opportunity for development partners active in the Pacific region to present summaries of their existing and anticipated programmes for the region over the medium term, and discuss how Pacific island countries and regional organisations should incorporate these plans into their own planning for the WSIS process. The session was moderated by Rinalia Abdul Rahim of the Global Knowledge Partnership.

Presentations were given by Abdul Waheed Khan of UNESCO, Craig Keating of the Australian Agency for International Development Virtual Colombo Plan Unit, Pamela Kruzic of the Asian Development Bank, Shahid Akhtar of the UNDP Asia Pacific Development Information Program, Kenji Saga of the Pacific Islands Digital Opportunities initiative, and Les Allinson of the South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission

Key lessons and recommendations for consideration at the Asia Pacific Regional Conference for WSIS included :

- There is a need to raise awareness of the mandates of bilateral and multilateral funding agencies
- Pacific island countries with the help of development partners are creating enabling environments on policy strategy and regulatory framework
- Development partners should work according to national needs and priorities of governments, and stakeholders need to work through national and regional procedures to influence these
- There is a need for education on appropriate uses of ICTs and
- Access to appropriate information on development partner programmes should be increased
- Development partners will continue to work through a range of stakeholders depending on types of project
- Development partners, governments, civil society, and the private sector could usefully increase their already considerable collaboration for example on the interconnection of networks.
- There is a need for simplified processes for funding with less bureaucracy at both domestic and international levels to identify and support good projects not necessarily good proposal writing
- Technical and policy assistance may be needed at national level to adapt and implement
- Pacific island countries and regional organisations should continue to build their collaboration, so that subsets of states can cooperate to leverage resources
- Poverty alleviation an over-arching goal for many devlopment partners
- There is an existing context and planning framework in the Pacific island region, including the PALM process and culminating in the Pacific Islands ICT Policy and Plan, that has been prioritised and endorsed at Ministerial level, that could provide useful guidance to devlopment partners

Session 4: WSIS and the Pacific

The objective of Session 4 was for Pacific island countries to consolidate their national and regional lessons and experiences, propose contributions to the Tokyo Declaration and future WSIS action plans, and discuss strategies for future engagement in the WSIS process. The session was moderated by by Robert Guild of the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat.

Presentations were given by Fuatai Purcell of of Samoa and New Zealand on Themes for Small Island States, Abel Caine of Fiji on inputs to the WSIS Preparatory Process, Adam Peake of the Center for Global Communication on the procedures for the WSIS Preparatory Process, Tarja Virtanen of UNESCO, and Sam Taufao of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community.

Key lessons and recommendations for consideration at the Asia Pacific Regional Conference for WSIS included :

- Key SIS issues are well known and have been synthesised in the findings of this event
- Two of the most important issues are development of human resources and continued development of national strategies that should be effective, responsive, and culturally appropriate
- The overall WSIS process offered opportunities to small island developing states, which require specific and targeted approaches to address their needs, respond to opportunities, and increase the effectiveness of national and regional initiatives
- The Tokyo Declaration could usefully be improved in areas of gender issues, youth, the role of traditional media, and should emphasise the free flow of information and freedom of expression
- Interregional cooperation between small island developing states should be explored and further discussed
- The possibility of a Pacific regional consultation should be explored and further discussed
- Regional coordination is requested to explore the possibility of holding a thematic meeting and increase Pacific island country participation in roundtables at Prepcom2
- A Pacific caucus meeting will take up further details on the Tokyo Declaration and regional statements later in the week

Conclusion

The meeting requested that a report of the event's topics and findings be forwarded for consideration by the Asia Pacific Regional Conference.

The co-facilitators closed the meeting by thanking all participants for their valuable contributions, and expressed appreciation to the sponsors for making the event possible.

Submitted by:
Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat
Tokyo, Japan
13 January 2003

Attachment C – Pacific Islands Side Event – Agenda and Objectives

Pacific Islands and the WSIS: ICTs for Development: Resources, Needs and Opportunity

United Nations University
Headquarters Building Committee Rooms 2/3
Sunday, 12th January 2003

Welcome

Co-facilitaors: Beris Gwynne FDC and Adam Peake, GLOCOM/PIDO representative

Session 1: National ICT Applications for Development

Objective:
Illustrate Pacific challenges and successes with ICT applications, and draw out policy and planning lessons for incorporation in the Tokyo declaration and future WSIS action plans.

Moderator:
Sam Taufao SPC

Lead Discussants:
Rajesh Chandra, Deputy Vice Chancellor, USP: USPNet Distance Learning
Abel Caine Fiji: e-government
Stuart Davies, Cook Islands: Tele-health in the Pacific
Fuatai Purcell, Consultant, e-Pasifika: e-commerce for micro-enterprises

Panellists:
Richard St Clair, Niue and PICISOC
Muli'agatele Jean Malifa, Samoa and PINA Vice President

Session 2: Connecting Communities

Objective:
Illustrate Pacific experience with ICT for development at the grassroots level, and draw out implementation lessons for incorporation in the Tokyo declaration and future WSIS action plans.

Moderator:
Nina Ratulele, PINA Fiji

Lead Discussants:
Jim Stevenson, FSM Department of Education, YapSEED
David Leeming, Solomon Islands, PeopleFirstNet community development /peace building
Johnson Honimae, Solomon Islands and PINA President
Christina Higa, Director, PEACESAT: E-Rate Developments in American Samoa, Guam and CNMI

Panellists:
Sai Rokovucago, Ministry for Women, Fiji
Andrew Stockwood, Pacific Islands Association of NGOs
Izumi Aizu, GLOCOM

Lunch Session

Objectives:
Address key topics pertinent to the overall workshop such as enabling policy, cooperation among organizations, competition in small markets, etc. Demonstrate potential of video over satellite by linking American Samoa; Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands; East-West Center and Pacific Resources for Education and Learning (PREL), Hawaii; Federated States of Micronesia, Yap State; Samoa

Moderator:
Professor Akio Watanabe, Chair, Steering Committee, SPINF

Speaker:
Hon Togiola Tulafono, Lt. Governor, American Samoa

Session 3: Development Partner Dialogue

Objective:
Provide an opportunity for development partners active in the Pacific region to present summaries of their existing and anticipated programmes for the region over the medium term, and discuss how the region should incorporate in its own planning for the WSIS process.

Moderator:
Ms Rinalia Abdul Rahim (Executive Director, GKP)

Lead Discussants:
Abdul Waheed Khan, UNESCO Assistant Director General for Communications and Information
Craig Keating, AusAID Virtual Colombo Plan Unit
Adam Peake, GLOCOM
Pamela Kruzic, ADB: the Pacific ICT Assessment 2002

Panellists:
Kyoko Shibata, World Bank (Knowledge Management)
Shahid Akhtar, Director, Asia Pacific Development Information Program
Kenji Saga, Japan National Committee for PECC and PIDO
InfoDev ?
Bilateral aid agencies

Session 4: WSIS and the Pacific

Objective:
Pacific island countries to consolidate lessons and experiences, propose contributions to the Tokyo Declaration and future WSIS action plans, and discuss strategies for future engagement in the WSIS process.

Moderator:
Robert Guild, Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat

Lead Discussant:
Fuatai Purcell, Consultant, e-Pasifika: Themes for Small Island States
Abel Caine, Fiji: Comments on WSIS Preparatory Process

Panellists:
Palmira Pries, East Timor Development Agency
Tarja Virtanen, UNESCO
Sam Taufao, SPC

Final Session - Conclusions and Acknowledgements

Co-Facilitators
Session Moderators

Notes for Panellists and Moderators

Objective: Incorporate the Pacific islands regional experience with projects and planning to inform the WSIS preparatory process and ensure that Pacific island concerns and issues are adequately addressed in declarations and action plans

Structure: The event will feature two keynote addresses, four substantive sessions, and a demonstration of a video link via satellite. It will be co-facilitated by FDC and SPINF/PIDO/GLOCOM. A report of the event will be submitted to the Regional Conference. The event should be approached as a workshop among colleagues, rather than a set of formal presentations, and be directed to producing a regional consensus.

Sessions: Topical sessions are 60 minutes each and will feature 3 or 4 introductory presentations by Lead Discussants followed by open discussion between the panel and the meeting participants. This means presentations should be not longer than 10 minutes each, and can usefully be shorter. Moderators will be very strict with time limits so Lead Discussants please practice your presentation.

Presentations: Given the objectives for the event and the time constraints we face, Lead Discussants are asked to focus their introductory presentations first on the overall theme of their paper, then spend most of their time slot drawing out the lessons from the Pacific islands experience that should go into WSIS declarations and action plans. Computer presentations are not required and may be informal. Project details are welcome for off-line consideration but should be covered in a paper or handout, NOT in verbal presentations.

Papers: Printed documentation is not required but is welcome in any form – papers, handouts, or a printed version of a presentation are all suitable. Please bring 50 copies of your documentation to the meeting, as it may not be possible to reproduce them on-site on the day of the meeting.

Discussion: The formal conference is expected to develop an Asia Pacific Declaration for the Information Society. It may also make recommendations for development of a global action plan to be taken up in the WSIS preparatory process. Panellists should therefore be familiar with the themes proposed in the draft declaration (see attached outline) and focus their discussion on supporting, amending, and supplementing aspects of the Declaration and making recommendations for future Action Plans.

Briefing Session: Lead Discussants, Panellists, and Moderators are asked to register on site promptly at 0800 on Sunday morning and attend a briefing session with moderators in the meeting room to begin at 0815. Note that this may mean taking separate transportation to UNU at an earlier time than other participants.

Meeting Record: It is expected that a summary report of the meeting will be submitted to the formal conference. Lead Discussants should provide a one-paragraph description of their presentation in electronic form to their moderator. Moderators should produce a synthesis of the discussion of their session. Particular attention shall be given to recommendations for the Tokyo Declaration and future Action Plans. A drafting committee consisting of the co-facilitators and session moderators will meet Sunday evening to draft the summary report. Additional volunteers for the drafting committee are welcome.

World Summit on the Information Society

Asia Pacific Regional Conference

The Tokyo Declaration

Draft version 1.0 (22 December 2002)

Preamble

1. What is the Information Society?

2. The Present Situation

3. Bridging the Digital Divide to Make Progress Together

(1) Platform of development

(2) Priority should be placed on the following issues:

a) Securing accessibility of telecommunication networks
b) Preserving linguistic and cultural diversity
c) Developing human resources
d) Establishing legal, regulatory and policy frameworks
e) *Building confidence in the security of ICT*

(3) Cross-sector Programmes and Activities

a) e-government
b) e-business
c) e-community

(4) National and Regional e-Strategies

4. Follow-up

Attachment D – Pacific Islands Side Event – Participants

To be provided by Reiko Hayakawa.

Attachment E – Conference – News Release

For Immediate Release

SUCCESS FOR PACIFIC ISLAND COUNTRIES AT TOKYO WSIS CONFERENCE
(Tokyo, Japan; 15 January 2003)

The Asia Pacific Regional Conference for the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) has concluded in Tokyo Japan today with major successes for the Pacific islands region.

The Pacific caucus at the meeting was instrumental in ensuring that the Tokyo Declaration recognises the special circumstances of small island developing states and calls for tailored solutions for ICT development. Pacific island delegates were also successful in gaining recognition for regional priorities in universal access through rural telecentres, distance learning for human resources development, and tele-medicine.

The conference adopted a regional declaration to the global summit that identified for priority action:

- Infrastructure development including universal access to information and communication technology in rural and remote areas
- Preserving linguistic and cultural diversity
- Developing human resources
- Establishing legal, regulatory and policy frameworks
- Ensuring balance between intellectual property rights and public interest
- Enhancing security of ICTs
- Fostering partnerships and mobilising resources

In addition, the Tokyo Declaration emphasises the importance of, and calls for progress in, cross-sector programmes and activities:

- e-government
- e-business
- e-learning
- e-community
- national and regional e-strategies.

In addition to the main conference documents, Pacific island delegates were also successful in having a report from the full-day Pacific consultation released as an official conference document. The Pacific consultation, entitled "Pacific Islands and the WSIS: ICTs for Development: Resources, Needs and Opportunity" examined the Pacific islands regional experience with ICTs for development in island countries, and prepared delegates to ensure that Pacific island concerns and issues are adequately addressed in the global declarations and action plans.

Delegations including representatives of governments, civil society, and the private sector attended from a majority of Pacific island countries. They have been supported by advisers from the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, the Secretariat of the Pacific Community, and the South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission.

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Attachment F – Conference – Tokyo Declaration

World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS)
Asia-Pacific Regional Conference

The Tokyo Declaration
- the Asia-Pacific perspective to the WSIS -

Preamble

Representatives of the governments of 47 countries, 22 international organizations, 54 private sector entities and 116 non-governmental organizations (NGO) of the Asia-Pacific region gathered at the Asia-Pacific Regional Conference, held in Tokyo from 13 to 15 January 2003, to develop a shared vision and common strategies for the “Information Society”. The objective of the conference was to discuss how best to work together to contribute to the region’s effective transition to an Information Society that will accelerate and enhance regional economic, social, cultural and technological development.

The conference emphasized that a primary aim of the Information Society must be to facilitate full utilization of information and communication technologies (ICT) at all levels in society and hence enable the sharing of social and economic benefits by all, by means of ubiquitous access to information networks, while preserving diversity and cultural heritage.

The Conference endorsed the important role that ICTs can play in achieving the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, which describe a fundamental set of principles and guidelines for combating poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy, environmental degradation and gender inequality.

1. Shared vision of the Information Society

The concept of an Information Society is one in which highly-developed ICT networks, equitable and ubiquitous access to information, appropriate content in accessible formats and effective communication can help people to achieve their potential, promote sustainable economic and social development, improve quality of

life for all, alleviate poverty and hunger, and facilitate participatory decision-making processes. The Information Society in the Asia-Pacific region must:

1) Provide equitable and appropriate access for all to well-developed, affordable and easily-accessed information and communication network infrastructures.

2) Use ICTs as a driving force for the promotion of sustainable economic and technological development by enlarging the gross national product (GNP) through increased technological innovation and continuous research and development resulting in reduced levels of poverty through robust economic growth.

3) Enhance the sharing and strengthening of global knowledge for development by ensuring equitable access to information for educational, scientific, economic, social, political and cultural activities, leading to a vibrant public domain of information.

4) Preserve the rich and diverse cultural heritage and social values of the Asia-Pacific region in the information age.

5) Provide information and communication services targeted at disadvantaged groups in society, in particular those from lower income groups, to contribute to the alleviation of poverty.

6) Use ICTs to strengthen traditional media such as broadcasting and print, which will continue to have an important role in disseminating content in the Information Society.

7) Promote the use of ICTs for capacity-building and human resource development, including ICT literacy, with special reference to the requirements of people with disabilities.

8) Ensure the security and reliability of information and communication networks so as to build confidence and trust in the Information Society.

9) By providing a secure environment for communication, ensure that the use of information and communication services does not place vulnerable groups at risk.

10) Facilitate the important role played by the private sector and civil society in the development of diversified information and communication technologies, networks and services in the Information Society. Concurrently, acknowledge the significant role of governments in terms of creating stakeholder partnerships that engender trust and confidence, promote fair competition, and encourage innovative private sector investment and new initiatives, and promote global and regional cooperation, while protecting consumers and safeguarding public interests.

11) Promote strategies to assess and deal with the environmental impact of ICTs.

12) Continue the ongoing spirit of cooperation and solidarity among the countries of the region.

1. Recognizing the unique features of the Information Society in the Asia–Pacific region

In building an Information Society for the Asia-Pacific region, we should take into account its unique features:

1) Geographic and demographic diversity: The region comprises the earth's largest land mass and vast ocean as well as many small islands. The region has over 65 per cent of the world's population, including over 75 per cent of the world's poor. Many countries of the region have very low population densities spread over large percentages of their areas. Many rural populations are also inaccessible, and have limited contact with other communities.

2) Cultural and linguistic diversity: This region enjoys a richness of ancient and modern cultures, including diverse languages, social traditions and customs. Of the more than 6,800 languages in the world, 3,500 (51 per cent) are spoken in the Asia-Pacific region, including languages without written scripts.

3) Institutional stability: Generally speaking, the region is institutionally stable. Such stability will enable the region to attract more investors, including innovators, entrepreneurs, operators, manufacturers and vendors in the field of ICTs.

4) Productive workforce: the region's economic growth depends on a large, productive workforce capable of fully utilizing ICTs. Given the strong integration of the region into the global economy, this would maintain and enhance the competitive position of its enterprises, leading to the growth of decent employment.

5) Gender issues: Unequal power relations and other social and cultural aspects have contributed to differential access, participation and status for men and women in the region. In this regard, more attention should be given to overcoming these constraints and ensuring that women can equally benefit from the increased use of ICTs for empowerment and full participation in shaping political, economic and social development.

6) Disability issues: There are an estimated 400 million persons with disabilities in the Asia-Pacific region. The majority are poor and have been excluded from the benefits of ICT development due to the lack of appropriate or affordable technology for persons with disabilities. More effort, including implementation of disability-concerned regional plans of action and programmes, should be made to ensure equitable access to ICTs for persons with disabilities.

7) Youth issues: Youth forms the majority of the population in the Asia-Pacific region and is a force for socio-economic development. Equipping young people with knowledge and skills on ICTs to prepare them for full participation in the Information Society is an important goal.

8) Digital divide disparities: In the region as a whole, there is a noticeable disparity in access to, and use of, the latest ICTs, including Internet access and broadband availability, between and within countries. It is recognized that the barriers to equitable access result from differences in education and literacy levels, gender, age, income and connectivity. In this context, particular attention

should be given to least developed countries, economies in transition and post-conflict countries.

9) Imbalance of information flows: While there is substantial internal international trade within the Asia-Pacific, North American and European regions, the same cannot be said for the flow of information between these regions. There is potential for growth in information flows between the Asia-Pacific region and the rest of the world, as well as between countries within the region.

10) Pioneering role in selected ICT areas: Within the region, some countries have been pioneering, *inter alia*, broadband, satellite and mobile telecommunication services, among others, which are having a significant impact on the way people communicate and on the delivery of government and business services. The experience gained by those countries in this field can be shared with others to promote good practice at local, national, regional and global levels.

11) Special circumstances of regional small island developing States: These countries, vulnerable to environmental hazards, and characterized by small, homogenous markets, high costs of access and equipment, human resource constraints exacerbated by the problem of “brain-drain”, limited access to networks and remote locations, will require particular attention and tailored solutions to meet their needs.

2. Advancing the region’s Information Society

In order to promote the development and advancement of the Information Society, it is necessary to address many issues, within and across sectors, while ensuring that the essential platform of ICT infrastructure and services, standards and innovation is established.

(1) Priority areas for action

a) Infrastructure development

The development of the Information Society must be based on platforms of internationally interoperable technical standards, accessible for all, and technological innovation of ICTs, as well as systems to promote the exchange of knowledge at global, regional and subregional levels through any media. In this regard, in addition to enhancing people's awareness of the advantages of using ICTs, reliable, advanced and appropriate, ICT technologies and services infrastructure are required.

As a sharp increase in the volume of international and regional Internet traffic is anticipated, it is important to strengthen regional and international broadband network infrastructure by using new technologies to enhance network efficiency and provide the capacity to match the needs of the countries in the region.

Working towards open and flexible international and interoperable standards is an important issue for all countries so as to ensure that all can utilize the technology and associated content and services to their maximum potential. Development and deployment of open-source software should be encouraged, as appropriate, as should open standards for ICT networking.

b) Securing affordable, universal access to ICTs

In order to achieve affordable and universal access it is important to enable existing and new technologies to provide connectivity to all, in particular through institutions accessible to the public such as schools, libraries, post offices and multi-purpose community centres. Special attention should be paid to how ICTs can benefit the disadvantaged, through innovative initiatives.

High-quality access, attainable through broadband, has great potential to help better deliver essential services required to meet basic human needs through applications such as e-education and e-health, as well as e-business and other ICT applications. Also, new technologies, such as wireless and satellite networks can assist remote areas, including small island nations, to gain access to information and knowledge.

c) Preserving linguistic and cultural diversity and promoting local content

Linguistic and cultural diversity enriches the development of society by giving expression to a range of different values and ideas. It can facilitate the spread and use of information by presenting it in the language and cultural context most familiar to the user, thereby further encouraging the use of ICTs.

Promoting broadband networks in the Asia-Pacific region could not only support research, business and personal activities, but also help to preserve cultural diversity and indigenous knowledge and traditions. In this context, an effort should be made to support multilingual domain names, local content development, digital archives, diverse forms of digital media, content translation and adaptation. The development of standard and recognized character sets and language codes should also be supported.

d) Developing human resources

In order for people to make the most of the Information Society, they must have enhanced levels of ICT literacy and ICT skills. To achieve this, relevant education and training should be promoted at every level, from primary to adult, to open up opportunities for as many people as possible, and especially for the disadvantaged. The capacity of developing and least developed countries to apply ICTs effectively must be enhanced through regional and international cooperation.

ICTs can contribute to enhancing the quality of teaching and learning, and the sharing of knowledge and information. Teachers act as a gateway to the Information Society, and their skills development and curriculum resources need increased support.

It is also important to improve both basic and advanced education in science and technology. This will help to create a critical mass of highly qualified and skilled ICT professionals and experts that will continue to serve as a foundation for the region's ICT development. It is recognized that education in network infrastructure development and operation is of particular importance, and is critical to the availability of efficient, reliable, competitive and secure ICT network services.

e) Establishing legal, regulatory and policy frameworks

The transition to the Information Society requires the creation of appropriate and transparent legal, regulatory and policy frameworks at the global, regional and national levels. These frameworks should give due regard to the rights and obligations of all

stakeholders in such areas as freedom of expression, privacy, security, management of Internet addresses and domain names, and consumer protection, while also maintaining economic incentives and ensuring trust and confidence for business activities. In order to secure prompt settlement of disputes, alternative dispute resolution (ADR) should be considered along with normal judicial proceedings.

f) Ensuring balance between intellectual property rights (IPR) and public interest

While intellectual property rights play a vital role in fostering innovation in software, e-commerce and associated trade and investment, there is a need to promote initiatives to ensure fair balance between IPRs and the interests of the users of information, while also taking into consideration the global consensus achieved on IPR issues in multilateral organizations.

Copyright holders and distributors of content should be cognizant of the need to ensure that content is accessible for all, including persons with disabilities. In this connection, access requirements should be included in legal, regulatory and policy frameworks, where appropriate.

g) Ensuring the security of ICTs

Among the challenges to the region are the general lack of awareness of information security issues, the rapidly evolving complexity, capacity and reach of information technology, the anonymity offered by these technologies, and the transnational nature of communication frameworks. Recognizing the principle of fair, equitable and appropriate access to ICTs for all countries, special attention should be paid to the fact that ICTs can potentially be used for purposes that are inconsistent with the objectives of maintaining international stability and security, and may adversely affect the integrity of the infrastructure within States, to the detriment of their security in both civil and military fields. A multi-pronged approach is needed to address these challenges, and cybercrime, on all fronts, with emphasis on preventive approaches, national guidelines and regional and international cooperation. At the same time, action to address cybercrime and to ensure a safe and secure Information Society must respect the sovereignty of nations and maintain respect for the constitutional and other rights of all persons, including freedom of expression.

All stakeholders concerned with ICT issues should take the necessary steps to enhance security, user confidence and other aspects of information and system/network integrity in order to avoid the risk of wholesale disruption and destruction of the network systems on which they are increasingly dependent.

Effective information security could be guaranteed not only by technology, but also by education and training, policy and law, and international cooperation. In the long term, development of a “global culture of cybersecurity”, based on a common understanding of regulations and appropriate mechanisms for information and technology exchange and international cooperation, should be promoted.

h) Fostering partnerships and mobilizing resources

The private sector plays an important role in the development and diffusion of ICTs, while civil society, including NGOs, works closely with communities in strengthening ICT-related initiatives. Increased cooperation and partnerships are needed between governmental and intergovernmental organizations, the private sector and civil society, for effective design and implementation of various initiatives, by giving priority to locally-available human resources. All stakeholders are urged to mobilize resources for the development of the Information Society, including through increasing investment in telecommunication infrastructure, human capacity building, policy frameworks and the development of culturally sensitive local content and applications. International and regional organizations, including financial and development institutions, have an important role to play in integrating the use of ICTs in the development process and making available the necessary resources for this purpose.

(2) Cross-sectoral priority programmes and activities

To make significant progress, all countries of the region will need to mainstream ICTs, with special reference to gender, within their national and regional development strategies, and across all sectors.

In this context, the following initiatives can support social and economic development, including the emergence of e-communities, while at the same time ensuring that traditional models are recognized and respected, so that the non-users of ICTs are not marginalized.

a) e-government

ICT networks can offer better public services to citizens by more efficient and effective dissemination of information and delivery of essential government services.

E-government can also generate a greater sense of community participation, and improve informed decision-making and development programme implementation.

b) e-business

Through the application of ICT, businesses in all sectors can achieve increased productivity and profitability, reach wider markets, lower their transaction costs and control inventories more effectively. On the consumer side, ICTs can bring to consumers greater satisfaction through their interaction with many potential suppliers, beyond the constraints of location.

c) e-learning

Access to education and knowledge is essential for economic, social and cultural development, and as a means of personal empowerment, community development and business efficiency. ICT networks have the potential to offer unprecedented educational opportunities to all groups in all areas of the Asia-Pacific region. Implementation of affordable and universal educational programmes, content, broadband networks and hardware should be promoted.

d) e-health

Access to healthcare information and services is a basic right. Many countries lack adequate healthcare facilities and personnel, particularly in rural and remote areas. The use of ICTs promotes social inclusion of all members of society by enabling equitable access to healthcare services, as well as empowering citizens to better manage their own health and to participate more effectively in the healthcare process.

e) Community information and communication centres

Community information and communication centres are critical to ensure inclusive access to information and social services, particularly in rural areas.

(3) National and regional e-strategies

Comprehensive ICT strategies that have been endorsed at the highest political levels and that include clear goals need to be formulated at community, national, regional and global levels in order to create the Information Society. These strategies will be encouraged to be designed and implemented through collaboration and

participation of all stakeholders. In this regard, awareness of the vast potential of the positive use of ICTs should be promoted among all concerned.

3. Conclusion

This Declaration was adopted at the conclusion of the Asia-Pacific Regional Conference and will be submitted as the Asia-Pacific region's input to the WSIS process. Furthermore, the Conference recognizes the importance of the declaration and plan of action resulting from the WSIS process, taking into account internationally agreed goals, including those of the Millennium Declaration.

Attachment G – Contacts

URLs

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Conference: www.wsis-japan.jp

Side events: www.unu.edu/wsis

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