United Nations

E/ESCAP/68/12

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
8 March 2012

Original: English

Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

Sixty-eighth session
Bangkok, 17-23 May 2012
Items 3 (e) and 3 (f) of the provisional agenda
Review of issues pertinent to the subsidiary structure of the Commission, including the work of the ESCAP regional institutions: Information and communications technology and disaster risk reduction

Report of the Governing Council of the Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development on its sixth session

Summary

At its sixth session, the Governing Council of the Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology (APCICT) reviewed the progress achieved by the Centre over the preceding year under the various pillars of its work, namely training, research and knowledge sharing, and advisory services. It expressed appreciation for the efforts of APCICT to fulfil its mandate of strengthening the human and institutional capacities of ESCAP members and associate members in the use of information and communications technology (ICT) for socio-economic development.

The Governing Council endorsed the proposed work plan of the Centre for 2012, which included the expansion of the flagship ICT for development capacity-building programme called the "Academy of ICT Essentials for Government Leaders". The Council recognized the importance of empowering students and youth with the knowledge of how ICTs could be used for socio-economic development, and noted the importance of sharing ICT for development best practices and experiences among member States.

The Council expressed appreciation for the contribution made by the Government of the Republic of Korea and other ESCAP member States to support the operations of APCICT.

The Commission may wish to consider, with a view to endorsing, the report of the Meeting and to provide the secretariat with further guidance on its work.

Contents

I. Matters calling for action by the Commission or brought to its attention

Recommendations

1.   The Governing Council endorsed the APCICT work plan for 2012, which included expanding the APCICT flagship information and communications technology for development (ICTD) capacity-building programme called the Academy of ICT Essentials for Government Leaders; strengthening the pool of Academy programme resource persons; customizing, translating and localizing the Academy training content and other APCICT capacity development resources to reach a wider audience; further expanding APCICT activities for new beneficiary groups such as youth, academic institutions and civil society organizations; implementing customized monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to meet the unique needs of different groups or "tiers" of Academy partners; enhancing research efforts as well as knowledge sharing; and strengthening advisory services for information and communications technology (ICT) human capacity development in member States and to institutionalize APCICT ICTD training programmes.

2.   In the context of strengthening the scope of advisory services, the Council recommended that, upon request by member States, APCICT consider providing support to them in the formulation of ICT human capacity development policies.

3. To increase the visibility of the capacity-building activities of APCICT and its partners, the Council suggested that APCICT enhance outreach mechanisms to facilitate communication between APCICT and the partners and share capacity-building outcomes.

II. Summary of proceedings

4. The Council had before it the following documents:

(a) Administrative and financial status of APCICT (E/ESCAP/APCICT/GC(6)/2);

(b) Work programme and project activities of APCICT (E/ESCAP/APCICT/GC(6)/3);

(c) Brief on the APCICT Academy of ICT Essentials for Government Leaders programme;

(d) Brief on APCICT Online: Advancing Knowledge Development and Sharing;

(e) Brief on the APCICT Virtual Academy;

(f) Brief on the APCICT research pillar;

(g) Brief on APCICT news releases.

Presentations were made by the Director of APCICT.

5. At the beginning of the session, the Chair made brief remarks on the importance of ICT as a tool for development and the critical need for capacity-building in this area. He also expressed appreciation for APCICT's efforts in this direction till date.

A. Report on the administrative and financial status of APCICT (agenda item 4)

6. The Council took note of four main aspects: (a) background on APCICT; (b) administration and management of the Centre; (c) financial status of the Centre; and (d) outreach and promotion activities of APCICT. It was pointed out that APCICT had been established in 2006 with a mission to strengthen the human and institutional capacity of ESCAP members and associate members to use ICT for socio-economic development. It was recalled that the initial five-year term of the Centre had been extended by the Commission in its resolution 66/14 of 19 May 2010.

7. The Council noted that a new Administrative and Financial Arrangement had been signed in September 2011 with the Korea Communications Commission and Incheon Metropolitan City for $1.92 million in 2011. The Administrative and Financial Arrangement would be automatically extended for another five years unless it was terminated.

8. The summary of the financial status of the Centre highlighted contributions from the host country, other member States and donor organizations.

9.   The Governing Council expressed appreciation for the contribution made by member States to support the operations of APCICT, including that from the Government of the Republic of Korea and other ESCAP members.

B.   Presentation of the work undertaken by APCICT since the fifth session of the Governing Council (agenda item 5)

10.   The Governing Council noted the programme activities of APCICT since its fifth session (see E/ESCAP/APCICT/GC(6)/3), especially with regard to the seven key recommendations adopted by the Council at that session:

        (a)   Expanding the Academy programme based on a customized approach for different countries;

        (b)   Prioritizing organization of regional-level workshops;

        (c)   Promoting utilization of the "technical cluster" of Academy modules (Modules 4, 5 and 6);

        (d)   Continuing the localization of the Academy curriculum;

        (e)   Enhancing the reach of online training;

        (f)   Expanding the beneficiary group to include students;

        (g)   Increasing the visibility of the Centre at the national level.

11.   The Governing Council was informed about the progress achieved under the various pillars of the work of APCICT, namely training, research and knowledge sharing, advisory services, and serving as a multilateral cooperation mechanism. The Council was also briefed about the flagship Academy programme, which had been developed and was being implemented through an inclusive and participatory approach. The programme had already been rolled out in 22 countries of the Asia-Pacific region with the help of a range of partners, which are categorized as Tier I (mature Academy programme status), Tier II (recently launched the Academy) and Tier III (planning or early initiation stage). It was brought to the attention of the Council that the ICTD learning content developed by APCICT for youth would be disseminated through universities, especially open universities.

12.   Recounting an instance of uptake of the Academy programme, the representative of Indonesia informed the Council that, in his country, the competencies of government officials had been mapped and the Academy programme training content had been blended with other content for developing the competencies of chief information officers. He added that the Academy curriculum modules would be used either by themselves or as reference material for the training of 700 officials.

13.   In response to a request from the representative of Cambodia for support on the development of case studies, it was clarified that APCICT had created a template for case studies to assist partners and would continue to work with them to support the compilation of cases.

14.   The representative of India highlighted the need to translate the Academy modules into Hindi for use in India. In that context, the Council

noted the willingness of APCICT to support and coordinate the national partner's initiative for such translation.

15.   In context of knowledge sharing and its importance for the practical application of ICTD capacity-building, the Council suggested that the title of the "ICTD How-To-Do" series currently being developed by APCICT be revised to include "knowledge sharing".

16.   The representative of Cambodia requested further information on the modality of recent collaboration between APCICT and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) on a joint project entitled "Improving Public Services through ICT", and the basis for selecting countries for pilot studies under the project. It was clarified that APCICT had offered in-kind support to the project by making available Academy Module 3 (e-Government Applications) and Module 7 (ICT Project Management in Theory and Practice) to ADB for the development of an ICT project guidebook. It was further clarified that ADB had selected Mongolia, the Philippines and Viet Nam for implementing the project and that APCICT had a coordinating or liaison role between ADB and the Academy's national partners, with ADB providing funding directly to those partners.

17.   Responding to query from the representative of Bangladesh regarding whether APCICT can assist in building ICT infrastructure, the Chair pointed out that the mandate of APCICT was to develop ICT capacities which could, in turn, indirectly support other areas of ICT development, such as infrastructure.

18.   The Council noted the passion demonstrated by APCICT as an institution to serve its mandate.

C.   Presentation of the APCICT work plan for 2012 (agenda item 6)

19.   The Governing Council reviewed the proposed work plan of the Centre for 2012, which was guided by the mandate of APCICT and aligned with the APCICT Business Strategy for 2011-2016, which had received the support of the Council at its fifth session. The key elements of the work plan included expansion of the APCICT flagship ICTD capacity-building programme, the Academy of ICT Essentials for Government Leaders, development and updating of Academy training modules, prioritization of the modules for training and supporting their localization, enhancing the pool of Academy resource persons, widening the beneficiary group of the programme, conducting thematic training on ICTD, promoting distance learning through the APCICT Virtual Academy, strengthening ongoing efforts for ICTD capacity-building for youth, furthering research and knowledge sharing through new ICTD knowledge products and leveraging online platforms, enabling the provision of advisory services for member States and partners, and the facilitation of multilateral cooperation on ICTD human capacity-building.

20.   In response to a query from the representative of Thailand regarding the way in which APCICT balanced the different pillars of its work programme given its limited staff and resources, the Council was informed that APCICT balanced the allotment of time and resources across its different pillars through an integrated approach in which each pillar fed into and complemented the others.

21.   The Council recognized the need to support Tier II partners in moving beyond the initial launch of the Academy programme and of working closely to help in planning and organizing resources for Tier III partners. It highlighted the importance of continuing to build the pool of local resource persons, especially in countries where the Academy focal points tended to change frequently.

22.   The Council recognized the importance of empowering students and youth with the knowledge of how ICTs could be used for socio-economic development, and noted the efforts of APCICT to develop a primer series on ICTD for youth. It also noted the Centre's strategy to engage universities in order to reach students enrolled in full-time academic programmes as well as open universities to reach students engaged in part-time or distance-learning programmes.

23.   The representative of Mongolia requested more information on the potential role of APCICT in assisting member States with policy formulation in the area of ICT human capacity-building. It was clarified that, on the basis of formal requests from member States, APCICT could explore the possibility of providing such advisory services.

24.   The Council reiterated the importance of identifying national focal points for APCICT programmes. It noted that APCICT had previously taken steps to identify country focal points through the designated diplomatic channels but, due to continuity issues and staff movements within government ministries, had opted for establishing an effective network of Academy partners and had sought the support of the members of the Governing Council to channelling information about the Centre's activities in member countries.

25.   The Council noted the importance of sharing ICTD best practices and learning across member States through the collection and dissemination of case studies as well as the willingness of APCICT to provide partners with guidance and technical inputs for that purpose.

26.   The Council took into account the recommendation made by the representative of Sri Lanka that the visibility of the work of APCICT should be increased through such forums as the Commission session. That would further help to support the sustainability of the Centre. The Council also noted the views of the representative of Sri Lanka regarding the need for Governing Council representatives to communicate about and highlight the work of APCICT within their government.

27.   Through the Chair, the Council once again recognized the excellent work of APCICT, expressed appreciation for the passion demonstrated by APCICT for its mission, and noted the strong and energetic leadership of the Director of the Centre.

D. Confirmation of the date and venue of the seventh session of the Governing Council (agenda item 7)

28.   Bearing in mind the practice of holding Governing Council sessions at the end of the year in order for APCICT to be able to present the year's work, the seventh session of the Governing Council was tentatively scheduled to be held during the second week of December 2012. The Chair reiterated the offer of the Government of India to host the next session of the Council subject to the outcomes of the election of new members during the

sixty-eighth session of the Commission, which was scheduled to be held in May 2012.

29.   Council members were reminded that, as per applicable United Nations rules, they were required to bear the cost of the travel of their representatives to attend the Council sessions.

30.   The representative of Cambodia informed the Council that, as an economy measure, his Government had asked its ambassadors to represent Cambodia at meetings held abroad for which the cost of travel was not supported by the organizers.

E.   Other matters (agenda item 8)

31.   Council members were reminded that the current year was the last of the current three-year term, and that a new set of members would be elected by the Commission at its sixty-eighth session, which was scheduled to be held in May 2012.

32.   No other matters were proposed for discussion.

F.   Adoption of the report (agenda item 9)

33.   The Governing Council adopted the present report on 15 November 2011.

III.   Organization

A.   Opening, duration and organization of the session

34.   The sixth session of the Governing Council of APCICT was held in Cheonan, Republic of Korea, on 29 October 2011, immediately following the Second Asia-Pacific Regional Forum on ICT Human Capacity Development, which had been organized by APCICT.

35.   The session was opened by the Chair of the fifth Governing Council session, Mr. Udi Rusadi (Indonesia).

36.   In her opening statement, delivered through the Director of APCICT, the Executive Secretary of the Commission welcomed members to the sixth session of the Council. She noted that the session was being held following the Second Asia-Pacific Regional Forum on ICT Human Capacity Development, which gave Council members an opportunity to experience APCICT at work and deepen their understanding of the way in which APCICT was contributing to human resource capacity-building.

37.   Recounting statistics on the rapid proliferation of various forms of ICTs in the Asia-Pacific region, the Executive Secretary remarked that, opportunities notwithstanding, there were still fundamental challenges for strengthening ICT capacity for development in the region, particularly in terms of information, knowledge and policy gaps. She expressed the hope that, with the valuable encouragement of member States and the Governing Council, APCICT would continue to build upon its current achievements in addressing the digital divide while further developing the region's ICT capacity in order to promote ICT for inclusive and sustainable socio-economic development.

38.	The Executive Secretary thanked the Governing Council members for their time and participation and expressed a special appreciation to the Government of the Republic of Korea, especially the Korea Communications Commission and Incheon Metropolitan City, for their generous funding and supportive commitment to APCICT. She also thanked the other member States which had provided valuable additional voluntary contributions, as well as the APCICT's Academy partners for their financial and in-kind support to the Centre.

39.	The Governing Council members expressed appreciation for the opportunity to participate in the Second Asia-Pacific Regional Forum on ICT Human Capacity Development prior to the sixth session of the Governing Council. The Council noted that participation in the Regional Forum allowed members to engage in dialogue and witness APCICT activities first-hand, and had provided them with a useful platform for enhancing their learning on various aspects of ICTD. The Council acknowledged the dedicated effort put in by APCICT to ensure the smooth organization of the Regional Forum.

## B.	Attendance

40.	The session was attended by 12 representatives of 9 member countries of the Governing Council, namely Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Mongolia, Republic of Korea, Sri Lanka and Thailand.

## C.	Election of officers

41.	The Council elected Mr. Shankar Aggarwal (India) Chairperson and Ms. Rungthip Sripetchdee (Thailand) Vice-Chairperson.

## D.	Adoption of the agenda

42.	The Council adopted the following agenda:

1.	Opening of the session.

2.	Election of officers.

3.	Adoption of the agenda.

4.	Report on the administrative and financial status of APCICT.

5.	Presentation of the work undertaken by APCICT since the fifth session of the Governing Council.

6.	Presentation of the APCICT work plan for 2012.

7.	Confirmation of the date and venue of the seventh session of the Governing Council.

8.	Other matters.

9.	Adoption of the report.

Annex

List of documents

Symbol	Title	Agenda item
E/ESCAP/APCICT/GC(6)/1	Provisional agenda	3
E/ESCAP/APCICT/GC(6)/2	Administrative and financial status of APCICT	4
E/ESCAP/APCICT/GC(6)/3	Work programme and project activities of APCICT	5
N/A	APCICT work plan for 2012	6
N/A	Brief on APCICT Academy of ICT Essentials for Government Leaders	5
N/A	Brief on APCICT Online: Advancing Knowledge Development and Sharing	5
N/A	Brief on APCICT Virtual Academy	5
N/A	Brief on APCICT's Research Pillar	5
N/A	Brief on APCICT News Releases	5
N/A	Tentative programme	3
N/A	Provisional list of participants	2

—————————