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**REPORT ON THE FOLLOW-UP TO THE FIRST PHASE OF THE WORLD SUMMIT
ON THE INFORMATION SOCIETY, THE PREPARATIONS FOR THE SECOND
PHASE AND THE PREPARATIONS FOR THE THIRD MINISTERIAL
CONFERENCE ON SPACE APPLICATIONS FOR SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC, 2007**

Note by the secretariat

SUMMARY

Pursuant to the recommendation of the Commission at its sixtieth session, the secretariat has been coordinating the regional implementation of the outcomes of the first phase of the World Summit on the Information Society, held in 2003, and the preparations for the second phase, to be held in 2005. Part one of the present document contains a report on the relevant regional activities organized by the secretariat in cooperation with other regional and international organizations, especially the High-level Asia-Pacific Conference for the World Summit on the Information Society and Regional Preparatory Meeting for the Tunis Phase of the World Summit, and on the planned future activities. Along with the discussions on two focus issues of the 2005 Summit process, namely, financial mechanisms for ICTs for development and Internet governance, the Conference adopted the Tehran Declaration and the Regional Plan of Action. Following the devastating tsunami in December 2004, the issue of ICT knowledge-based disaster management was included in regional discussions and the Regional Action Plan.

As the Commission at its sixtieth session agreed to hold the Third Ministerial Conference on Space Applications for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific in 2007, part two of the document outlines the latest developments related to the preparatory activities for the Ministerial Conference. The concept for the preparation of the Ministerial Conference was considered by the Intergovernmental Consultative Committee on the Regional Space Applications Programme for Sustainable Development (RESAP) and a round table with heads of space agencies and the national focal points for RESAP was organized to brainstorm on regional issues and common priority areas which space technology could help address in future years. The Committee is invited to review the preparations described herein and provide the secretariat with further guidance for its future course of action.

The Committee on Managing Globalization is invited to review the progress achieved by the secretariat at the regional level on the follow-up of the outcome of the first phase of the Summit and preparations for the second phase as well as the preparations for the Third Ministerial Conference on Space Applications for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific in 2007, and provide comments and recommendations accordingly.

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PART ONE
REPORT ON THE FOLLOW-UP TO THE FIRST PHASE OF THE WORLD SUMMIT
ON THE INFORMATION SOCIETY AND THE PREPARATIONS
FOR THE SECOND PHASE

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Geneva phase of the World Summit on the Information Society had the objectives of developing and fostering a clear statement of political will and taking concrete steps to establish the foundations for an information society for all, reflecting the different interests at stake. The Geneva phase of the Summit went on to adopt a Declaration of Principles and a Plan of Action (see A/C.2/59/3, annex), which constitute the basis for a common approach towards the information society by all the States Members of the United Nations.

2. The Declaration of Principles presents a vision of information and communication technologies (ICTs) as an essential foundation for an inclusive information society. It embraces the idea of universal, accessible, equitable and affordable ICT infrastructure and services as a key goal of all stakeholders that will help build it. Furthermore, it points to related subjects, such as intellectual property rights, cultural diversity and freedom of the media. The accompanying Plan of Action outlines several action lines providing stakeholders with guidance on how to implement the goals of the Summit.

3. While global forces are expected to have a significant impact on the emergence of the information society, regional cooperation is regarded as an important component of an international strategy for promoting sustainable development and an instrument in itself for promoting integration between countries and attaining the Millennium Development Goals. Over the years, increasing attention has been given to issues of globalization and the cross-border nature of many development challenges, through the pursuit of regional initiatives and integration. Consequently, a regional information society strategy could help build a better knowledge environment, increase dialogue at the highest political levels, build political consensus and create a common vision of digital opportunities for countries. In addition, it could lay the required foundation for promoting greater cooperation among countries and faster integration of countries into the global economy.

4. Towards that end, the Commission at its sixtieth session, held in Shanghai, China, in April 2004, expressed support for the recommendation of the Committee on Managing Globalization at its first session that a regional plan of action be formulated to lead to an information society in Asia and the Pacific.¹ While expressing full support for the outcome of the first phase of the World Summit on the Information Society, the Commission requested the secretariat to play an active role in the

¹ See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2004, Supplement No. 19 (E/2004/39-E/ESCAP/1330)*, para. 196.

implementation of the follow-up to that phase and to coordinate the regional preparations for the second phase, to be held in Tunis in November 2005.²

II. PREPARATION FOR THE TUNIS PHASE OF THE SUMMIT

5. The Preparatory Committee for the Tunis phase held its first session from 24 to 26 June 2004 and decided that the focus of that phase should be: (a) Follow-up and implementation of the Geneva Declaration of Principles and Plan of Action by stakeholders at the national, regional and international levels, with particular attention to the challenges facing the least developed countries; (b) Consideration of the report of the Task Force on Financial Mechanisms (TFFM) and appropriate action; and (c) Internet governance: consideration of the report of the Working Group on Internet Governance (WGIG) and appropriate action. It was further decided that relevant thematic, regional and other related meetings would report to the Preparatory Committee at its second and third meetings (see WSIS-II/PC-1/DOC/6).

6. As part of regional initiatives for the two-phase World Summit on the Information Society and as already reported to the Commission at its sixty-first session,³ ESCAP has organized a number of preparatory events, including two regional and four subregional conferences. All six planned activities have been completed: the first regional conference, four subregional conferences and the second regional conference were held in Bangkok, Bishkek, Suva, Bali, Indonesia, Kathmandu and Tehran, respectively. The subregional and regional preparatory activities focused on the implementation of the Geneva Plan of Action through a Regional Action Plan and the two outstanding issues of Internet governance and financial mechanisms for ICTs for development. The conferences in Bali and Kathmandu also addressed the issue of information, communication and space technology (ICST) for knowledge-based disaster management as many of the participating countries had been affected by the recent tsunami. At those two subregional conferences, the member countries strongly requested the United Nations system, including ESCAP, to play a coordinating role in establishing a regional warning system for tsunamis and multi-purpose disaster management.

7. The High-level Asia-Pacific Conference for the World Summit on the Information Society, held in Tehran from 31 May to 2 June 2005, was organized jointly by the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran and ESCAP in cooperation with the UNDP Asia-Pacific Development Information Programme (APDIP) and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU). The Conference was attended by representatives of 31 countries of Asia and the Pacific, including 11 ministers, 6 vice-ministers/deputy ministers and 6 secretaries. The Conference was also attended by representatives of international organizations, civil society, non-governmental organizations and the private sector. Around 150 participants/representatives took part in the event.

² Ibid., para. 194.

³ Ibid., 2005, *Supplement No. 19* (E/2005/39-E/ESCAP/1359), para. 161.

8. The objectives of the Conference were to define a regional course of action towards building a people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented information society in Asia and the Pacific as stipulated in the Declaration of Principles and the Plan of Action adopted by the Geneva phase of the World Summit on the Information Society and to contribute to the preparatory process for the Tunis phase, including a global discussion on Internet governance and financial mechanisms for ICTs for development. In addition, the Conference was convened to deliberate on knowledge-based disaster management and discuss the reports of participating countries on the progress in the use of ICTs for development. The Conference unanimously adopted the Tehran Declaration and part II of the Regional Action Plan towards the Information Society in Asia and the Pacific, entitled “Programmes/projects and methodology for regional cooperation”. The outcome of the Conference will be presented to the Preparatory Committee at its third meeting, to be held in Geneva in September 2005, and the second phase of the Summit.

III. REGIONAL ACTION PLAN

9. The Regional Action Plan towards the Information Society in Asia and the Pacific is a further step in the direction envisaged in the Regional Road Map towards an Information Society.⁴ It addresses the key issues relating to the application of ICTs and outlines how the global and regional ICT initiatives could promote and catalyse actions at the regional and national levels. It outlines a comprehensive plan and strategic framework for collaborative ICT programmes and projects at the regional level for realizing the vision of an inclusive and sustainable information society. It draws from the outcome of the Geneva phase of the World Summit on the Information Society, at which a global consensus was reached at the highest political level on the vital role of ICTs for sustainable development. At the Geneva phase of the Summit, it was recommended that the preparatory process for the Tunis phase be inclusive and imbibe a regional dimension.

10. The objective of the Regional Action Plan is to build an inclusive information society. To that end, it attempts to do the following:

(a) To place the potential of knowledge and ICTs at the service of development, including educational development, to meet the Millennium Development Goals;

(b) To promote the use of information and knowledge for the achievement of internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration;⁵

(c) To address new and emerging challenges of the information society at the national and regional levels;

⁴ See ESCAP, *Regional Road Map towards an Information Society in Asia and the Pacific* (ST/ESCAP/2283).

⁵ See General Assembly resolution 55/2 of 8 September 2000.

(d) To promote close cooperation and partnership among all stakeholders (Governments, the private sector, civil society and international and regional organizations) in integrating ICTs in the development process.

11. The structure of the Regional Action Plan follows a top-down approach for macro-planning along the regionally and globally agreed action lines as contained in the Millennium Development Goals and the outcome of the Geneva phase of the World Summit on the Information Society as well as other regional and global initiatives. At the same time, for the Plan to be relevant to the realities on the ground in the diverse environment that exists in the region, a bottom-up approach involving prioritization and validation has been adopted by relying on the outcomes of the regional and subregional meetings and the results of a survey conducted by ESCAP. About 600 individuals representing 50 Governments, 35 international organizations, the private sector and non-governmental organizations took part in the drafting of the Plan, which incorporates the results of regional consultations and deliberations on the issues of financial mechanisms for ICTs for development and Internet governance.

12. The Regional Action Plan considers ICTs as a driving force in cross-sectoral programmes for promoting a sustainable and dynamic information society, contributing to poverty alleviation and robust economic growth and enhancing technological innovation and development. It complements national efforts and adds value by covering actions that a nation cannot undertake on its own owing to several factors, such as the multinational nature of some actions, an example being the proposed tsunami early warning system for the Indian Ocean and its integration into the global system. The Plan pays special attention to promoting the use of ICT for the empowerment of women, youth and the elderly as well as people with disabilities.

13. The earthquake and tsunami of 26 December 2004 focused the world's attention on the need for the countries of Asia, the Pacific and the Indian Ocean to have effective disaster management capabilities. Consequently, the Regional Action Plan includes a framework for information, communication and space technology-enabled disaster management. The ultimate goal is to help countries to establish technical capacities in disaster management, including risk assessment, mitigation, early warning and response communication systems in a more cost-effective manner. Major actions suggested in the framework focus on capacity-building at the technical, institutional and policymaking levels for the effective use of information, communication and space technology tools in disaster management, and promoting regional cooperative mechanisms for the sharing of relevant information and technical resources to make such systems more accessible and affordable to less developed countries.

14. In the Tehran Declaration, the High-level Asia-Pacific Conference for the World Summit on the Information Society requested ESCAP to coordinate the implementation of the Regional Action

Plan and to accord priority to the activities proposed in the Plan, paying special attention to the needs of the least developed, landlocked and island developing countries. It urged Governments and relevant regional and international organizations, especially members of the Regional Interagency Working Group on Information and Communication Technologies, as well as civil society to cooperate with ESCAP in the planning and implementation of specific activities of the Regional Action Plan to avoid duplication of effort and to ensure the effective utilization of available resources.

IV. ACTIVITIES OF THE ESCAP SUBPROGRAMME ON INFORMATION, COMMUNICATION AND SPACE TECHNOLOGY DESIGNED TO MEET THE TARGETS OF THE SUMMIT

15. The objective of the ESCAP subprogramme on ICST is to meet the targets established in the Plan of Action of the World Summit on the Information Society with a view to achieving the information society. In line with the targets of connecting villages with ICTs and establishing community access points as well as encouraging the development of local content in local languages, the subprogramme organized two training workshops on the establishment of community e-centres. The workshops discussed the related issues, including available technology options, building community ownership, ICT training for communities and the operation of centres. The subprogramme plans to continue its work in this area by collecting and documenting good practices related to community e-centres and by establishing a few community e-centres in rural or remote areas, on a pilot basis, to promote ICT applications for socio-economic development.

16. The Plan of Action reaffirmed that “ICT applications can support sustainable development, in the fields of public administration, business, education and training, health, employment, environment, agriculture and science” and urged Governments and the international community to work on policies and initiatives to promote those applications. E-government can not only increase the efficiency of government by streamlining processes, providing citizens with better services and increasing the participation of citizens but also make government processes transparent and accountable. The application of ICT to business processes (e-business) can be a powerful tool for small businesses and rural entrepreneurs, enabling them to compete in the knowledge-based global economy by providing them with market information and to make their business processes more efficient. Through technical cooperation projects, the subprogramme will promote and build the capacity of developing countries in these applications.

17. Information on the preparatory processes for the World Summit at the regional level has been disseminated widely through the “WSIS preparations” page on the ESCAP website. The site includes information about the Subcommittee on Information, Communications and Space Technology and expert group meetings covering issues related to the Summit, pre- and post-session documents, including the documents for the subregional preparatory conferences and the Regional Action Plan.

18. Recognizing the need for policy and regulatory frameworks conducive to the adoption and diffusion of ICT in the ESCAP region, the main focus of the ICT policy component of the subprogramme has been on increasing the capacity of developing member countries to create enabling policies and a regulatory environment for the development of national and subregional information societies and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. Towards this end, priority attention has been given to (a) ICT policies to promote private sector development, including international management standards for e-business, e-commerce and increasing the competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises; (b) policies and regulatory frameworks to facilitate the establishment of a knowledge-based society; (c) policies for ICT human resources development, especially in the area of information technology-enabling legal frameworks; and (d) policies to promote public-private partnerships.

19. Countries in the region have clearly expressed their need to rely on ICT statistics in order to formulate and review appropriate policies. The process of identifying an internationally agreed framework of ICT statistical indicators at the global and regional levels has already commenced and ESCAP is contributing to this global effort as an active partner of the Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development, recently formed by a number of United Nations agencies and programmes, United Nations regional commissions and individual national statistical offices (see E/2004/15, para. 177).

20. As vulnerability to disasters poses great challenges to socio-economic development, disaster risk reduction and management emerge as important development issues. The catastrophic Indian Ocean tsunami indicated that effective disaster risk reduction and management relied greatly on the appropriate application of relevant information, communication and space technology tools. In the regional preparatory process for the second phase of the World Summit on the Information Society, that issue was broadly discussed, and relevant recommendations were incorporated into the Regional Action Plan towards the Information Society. ESCAP also organized the High-level Expert Group Meeting on Technical Options for Disaster Management: Tsunamis and Others, held in Bangkok from 22 to 24 June 2005, which provided disaster management decision makers with a forum in which to gain a better understanding of the broad ICST capabilities for supporting effective multi-hazard disaster management; it also provided an opportunity for developers of technical systems and vendors to understand the concerns of disaster managers.

21. With financial support from the Governments of France and the Republic of Korea and in-kind contributions from China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia and Singapore as well as some international organizations, a series of activities were conducted under the Regional Space Applications Programme for Sustainable Development (RESAP), with the aim of promoting regional cooperative mechanisms on the use of space-based information and communication technology for disaster management. RESAP also provided the platform for promoting relevant regional cooperative initiatives, such as the proposal of China for the development of a constellation of small satellites for disaster monitoring.

22. Such activities will continue in implementation of the recommendations made in the first phase of the World Summit on the Information Society and in preparation for the second phase, in November 2005, as well as the Third Ministerial Conference on Space Applications for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific, scheduled for 2007.

V. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

23. The Committee on Managing Globalization may wish to take note of the various activities undertaken by the secretariat in implementing the outcome of the first phase of the World Summit on the Information Society and its preparations for the second phase. It may consider concrete and practical measures in the implementation of the Regional Action Plan, including the regional framework for ICST-enabled disaster management, and provide its views on issues related to financial mechanisms for ICTs for development and Internet governance, which, in turn, would serve as important regional inputs for the second phase of the Summit.

PART TWO PREPARATIONS FOR THE THIRD MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON SPACE APPLICATIONS FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC, 2007

VI. INTRODUCTION

24. In the past few decades, there has been remarkable development in space technology and its applications in a number of developed and developing Asian and Pacific countries. Regional collaboration efforts in space technology applications began in 1983 with the ESCAP/UNDP Regional Remote Sensing Programme, which was developed to assist the countries of the region in meeting the need to work together in the use of remote sensing technology for development. Recognizing the established capability of space technology in the region and the desire expressed by member countries to enhance regional cooperation, the Commission adopted resolution 49/5 of 29 April 1993, by which it decided that a ministerial-level meeting would be held to launch a regional space applications programme for development.

25. The first Ministerial Conference on Space Applications for Development in Asia and the Pacific, held in Beijing from 19 to 24 September 1994 and hosted by the Government of China, launched RESAP to work towards the realization of the goals set forth in the Strategy and Action Plan adopted by the Conference.⁶ The outstanding achievement of RESAP has been the establishment of a three-tiered network in the region consisting of (a) the Intergovernmental Consultative Committee on RESAP (ICC), which supplies policy and technical advice on RESAP; (b) the four regional working groups, on (i) remote sensing, geographic information systems and satellite-based positioning; (ii)

⁶ See E/ESCAP/985 and Corr.1. See also ESCAP, *Ministerial Conference on Space Applications for Development in Asia and the Pacific* (ST/ESCAP/1451).

satellite communication applications; (iii) meteorological satellite applications and natural hazards monitoring; and (iv) space sciences and technology applications; and (c) the Regional Information Service and the Education and Training Network.

26. The launching of RESAP and its implementation have had a significant impact on national capacity-building, enhancing regional capabilities and raising the status of Asia and the Pacific to that of a fast-growing region for space technology development and applications. Recognizing the need to prepare the region further for expanded and effective practical uses of space technologies, the Commission requested the secretariat to initiate the preparation for the Second Ministerial Conference with a fresh vision for the new millennium.⁷

27. The Second Ministerial Conference on Space Applications for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific was held in New Delhi from 15 to 20 November 1999 and hosted by the Government of India (see E/ESCAP/1166). The second phase of RESAP centred on the operational use of space technology addressing the minimum essential requirements of countries of the region in the areas of environmental and natural resources management, poverty alleviation, natural disaster reduction, food security, capacity-building, human resources development and education, health care and hygiene, and sustainable development planning, and worked towards promoting regional cooperative mechanisms.

28. During the second phase of its fifty-ninth session, held from 1 to 4 September 2003, the Commission recommended that the secretariat initiate preparations for the Third Ministerial Conference on Space Applications for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific and consider concrete steps towards an institutional framework for regional space applications and development.⁸ The Commission at its sixtieth session, held from 22 to 28 April 2004, agreed to hold the Conference in 2007.⁹ That year will mark the fiftieth commemoration of the beginning of the Space Age with the launching of the first artificial satellite, Sputnik 1.

VII. PREPARATORY ACTIVITIES

A. Conceptualization

29. A concept paper to aid the preparations for the Third Ministerial Conference was developed by the secretariat for consideration by ICC at its ninth session, held in Kuala Lumpur on 15 and 16 December 2003. It explained the need for the Third Ministerial Conference and outlined the issues to be addressed and the major areas calling for prioritization.

⁷ See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1997, Supplement No. 18* (E/1997/38-E/ESCAP/1080), para. 149.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 2003, *Supplement No. 19* (E/2003/39/Add.1-E/ESCAP/1298/Add.1), para. 234.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 2004, *Supplement No. 19* (E/2004/39-E/ESCAP/1330), para. 198.

30. The Third Ministerial Conference would recommend a regional strategy and action plan to promote access to information, communication and space technology with a view to helping the countries of Asia and the Pacific to achieve the development goals set by major world summits, such as the Millennium Summit, the World Summit on Sustainable Development and the World Summit on the Information Society.

31. One of the issues identified in the concept paper for consideration by the Third Ministerial Conference was that of regional cooperative mechanisms in major space applications fields. With an increasing number of space-capable countries within and outside the region supporting disaster management, the secretariat had promoted regional cooperative mechanisms in space technology applications for disaster management to foster a harmonized environment for regional and international sharing of resources to help overcome national gaps in capabilities to prepare for and respond to natural disasters.

32. The major outputs will be the Ministerial Declaration, reflecting the commitments of the member States to regional cooperation in space technology applications for sustainable development, and the Regional Strategy and Action Plan on space technology applications for sustainable development and regional cooperative mechanisms in space technology applications for selected areas that are of common concern to members and associate members.

33. ICC agreed with the concept for the preparation of the Third Ministerial Conference. Taking cognizance of the convergence of information, communication and space technologies, ICC suggested that the secretariat prepare supporting documents on trends of space technology and infrastructure available for applications in the ESCAP priority areas of poverty alleviation, managing globalization and addressing emerging social issues, as well as a summary of the achievements of RESAP.

34. ICC agreed that the Third Ministerial Conference would further strengthen regional, subregional and bilateral cooperation among members and associate members of ESCAP, and develop closer public-private partnerships and relevant commercial models. On the basis of the achievements of RESAP, the Third Ministerial Conference should be prepared with a new vision, taking into account technological trends, opportunities and challenges, as information, communication and network technologies are rapidly expanding and converging, leading to a growing information superhighway infrastructure. The global nature of space activities and the emerging information convergence environment provide opportunities for developing countries to have access to adequate and necessary information products, services and decision-supporting tools.

35. The representative of Malaysia at the ninth session of ICC expressed the intention of the Government to consider hosting the Third Ministerial Conference in 2007. A number of members expressed strong support for ESCAP in the preparations for the Third Ministerial Conference.

B. Round table with heads of space agencies and the national focal points for RESAP

36. In view of regional cooperation endeavour, a round table with heads of space agencies and national focal points for RESAP was organized in conjunction with the tenth session of the ICC, held in Bangalore, India, on 21 and 22 October 2004, to brainstorm on regional issues and common priority areas which the Third Ministerial Conference should address, and the expected role of space agencies and ESCAP in future years.

37. The round table considered the evolving role of RESAP and acknowledged that the Millennium Development Goals and the goals set in the World Summit on Sustainable Development and the World Summit on the Information Society clearly defined the linkages between space technology and addressing problems of poverty, illiteracy and health care as well as natural disasters, which affect each society, and that a holistic approach had to be taken to address those issues.

38. The round table noted that space and spatial information applications as well as technical and information resources were mostly owned and operated by public organizations, whereas most satellite communications services were operated by the private sector. While the private sector played a leading role in the development of information and communication networks in the information society, the public sector complemented it by addressing policy issues, including human resources development. It recognized that public-private partnerships and community participation were important issues to be addressed, and took the view that efforts should be made to promote such partnerships in the future, in particular with regard to enhancing connectivity in remote rural areas with affordable satellite communications services and space information products and services. To prepare the region for the forthcoming satellite broadband services, fostering public-private partnerships for an affordable and sustainable service mechanism that would support broadband penetration into remote and underserved areas was essential.

39. The round table recognized that space technology could help bridge the digital divide through satellite-connected community e-centres to support the provision of ICT services and development-oriented applications for underserved areas. Blending satellite and terrestrial networks, such centres could enable accessible, affordable and useful services to empower the poor with knowledge, responsive governance and entrepreneurship. Some of the applications in the region that could be served by satellite broadband were distance education, telemedicine and disaster management.

40. The round table agreed that it was in the common interest of all members to address disaster management using space technology and that ESCAP should promote regional cooperative mechanisms in that field so that developing countries could have easier access to space-based information and communications during major disasters and enhance their national capacity to use such tools to support disaster management.

41. The round table noted that a number of countries were well advanced in space technology development. They had launched and would launch Earth observation and communication satellites for their socio-economic development needs and had been offering satellite data and services to other countries to help address urgent needs, such as disaster management. The round table recommended that the issue of mechanisms for delivering such data at near-real-time be addressed.

42. The round table recommended that RESAP pursue action-oriented projects with practical outputs and that the regional network of RESAP evolve and adopt in the future a thematic orientation approach, such as disaster management, distance education, tele-health and empowerment of people through e-centres, in lieu of the current technical sectoral approach.

43. The round table took note of the need for more cooperative projects to strengthen the capacity of developing countries as well as for continuous human resources development. It also took note of the need to finding appropriate means to address the issue of capacity-building in least developed countries, landlocked countries, Pacific island countries and economies in transition.

C. Upcoming preparatory activities

44. The preparations for the Third Ministerial Conference will take into consideration the above-mentioned opportunities to intensify regional cooperation and mobilize stronger political will to work towards establishing regional cooperative mechanisms in space technology applications in such fields as disaster management and satellite communication services, as well as to devise appropriate policies to ensure cost-effective access to ICT and space-based data, products and services equitably in the region.

45. Preparatory activities have been initiated with the existing resources of ESCAP. The secretariat has developed a project profile to cover the various activities needed to facilitate the organization of a successful Ministerial Conference. The Information, Communication and Space Technology Division of ESCAP will be responsible for coordinating and discharging all related activities at the regional level, and the RESAP national focal points of member countries will act under the concerned minister in undertaking all preparatory activities at the national level. The ICC sessions will be held as preparation meetings for the Third Ministerial Conference.

46. The secretariat will initiate in 2005 the compilation of an updated regional inventory of space capabilities and facilities in the Asian and Pacific region, in coordination with the regional working groups on major space applications sectors of RESAP, to serve as a reference document for the Ministerial Conference.

47. The secretariat will develop in 2006 issue papers on RESAP implementation status, a regional strategy and action plan for regional cooperation in space technology development and applications in future years, a draft declaration for endorsement at the Ministerial Conference. Subregional

consultations will be carried out when resources become available. A meeting of senior-level experts will be organized in order to finalize the issue papers. By the end of 2006, the pre-session documents will be formally edited for circulation to members and associate members for their preparations, host country agreement finalized, and formal invitation letters prepared.

48. Information concerning the convening of the Third Ministerial Conference has been disseminated at a few ESCAP meetings. A publicity and promotion package, including the posting of relevant conference information and documents on the web site, will be developed with the assistance of the United Nations Information Services (UNIS).

49. The Third Ministerial Conference will comprise a senior officials segment to finalize the documents for consideration by ministers and a ministerial segment to consider policy issues, endorse the strategy, action plan and ministerial declaration and consider other relevant matters.

50. The Committee is invited to review the preparations for the Third Ministerial Conference on Space Applications for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific described herein and to provide the secretariat with further guidance for its future course of action.

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