

Workshop on Broadband and ICT Development for Improved Communications
in Central Asia
Tashkent, Republic of Uzbekistan, 21-22 June 2007

TASHKENT STATEMENT *on*
Broadband and ICT Development for Improved Communication in Central Asia

The Workshop on Broadband and ICT Development for Improved Communications in Central Asia was held on 21-22 June 2007, in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. The workshop was attended by more than 100 participants including representatives of the Governments of Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, private sector and international and regional organizations.

Based on the presentations and discussions on broadband, ICT and regional cooperation, the workshop reached consensus on the below issues, with agreed follow-up actions to be implemented by the respective interested stakeholders for increased broadband access and improved communication in Central Asia.

ICT in Central Asia

1. The workshop reaffirmed the importance of ICT in support of sustainable development in Central Asia, considering challenges unique for land-locked countries, such as limited access to sea ports, terrain, and geographically dispersed population.
2. The workshop also noted that ICT are becoming indispensable tools for Central Asian countries to participate in the global knowledge economy and to cascade information from national governments to municipalities and to the rural communities and, subsequently, connectivity is considered as one of the keys to improved access to information and knowledge. In order to realize smooth transition and integration of Central Asian economies into the global economy and to encourage the development of ICT industries, all key stakeholders are urged to make concerted efforts towards the development of accessible, affordable and robust ICT networks as well as enhanced ICT applications and local content.
3. As the foundation of all the efforts, the workshop reiterated the continued commitment to realizing internationally agreed goals such as the Millennium Development Goals, the Declaration of Principles and the Geneva Action Plan, the Tunis Agenda and commitment of the World Summit on the Information Society and the Declaration of World Summit for Sustainable Development.

Partnership and Regional cooperation

4. The workshop recognized the vital role of partnerships among governments, the private sector, international and regional organizations and other stakeholders in realizing universal, ubiquitous, equitable and affordable access to information and telecommunication infrastructure and technologies as well as to information and knowledge in Central Asia. The workshop also acknowledged the importance of regional

cooperation among Central Asian countries to ensure national efforts and to establish mutually beneficial partnerships.

5. Considering the increasing prominence and decreased cost of broadband access, the workshop encouraged all the stakeholders to raise awareness and initiate debates at the national and regional levels on the role of broadband access in socio-economic development in general and development of the ICT industry in particular.

6. Taking into account the need for regional cooperation, the workshop recommended that Central Asian countries strengthen partnerships to improve broadband penetration. The workshop recognized the importance of the regional broadband network (Silk Road Network) in Central Asia proposed by InfoCom Research, Inc. and Nippon Telegraph and Telephone West Corporation. As the first step toward the realization of Silk Road Network, some participants showed interest and expressed their support to the development of part of Silk Road Network in their countries.

7. In this background, the workshop recommended the following actions to the respective stakeholders:

Governments

8. The workshop recognized necessity to

- a. Raise awareness and encourage discussions on the role of broadband access at the national level
- b. Promote cooperation in the development of regional broadband network
- c. Provide leadership and work with all stakeholders to create an enabling environment for the development of such a network in Central Asia
- d. Organize Broadband and ICT Cooperation Dialogue among various stakeholders at regional, national and local levels.
- e. Explore in tandem with the roll out of the network the applications, managed services and content that will utilize the network, and create revenues, such as e-health, e-government and e-education, storage and e-retail.

Private sector

9. The workshop requested the private sector to continue to play its pivotal role to improve broadband access and to actively participate in partnership with other stakeholders in the development of the regional broadband network in Central Asia and explore ways of providing the population with solutions to access the network.

International and Regional Organizations, Financial Institutions and Donors

10. The workshop requested international and regional organizations to promote the development of the regional broadband network in Central Asia in partnership and collaboration with the governments, private sector and other stakeholders.

11. The workshop also requested international and regional organizations to work with all stakeholders to complement national efforts in enhancing broadband penetration in

Central Asia and to continue and strengthen their activities of capacity building and regional cooperation on ICT for development.

12. The workshop invited international and regional financial institutions and donor countries to consider financing the proposed regional broadband network.

Other remarks

The workshop expressed special appreciation to the Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan for hosting the workshop, and to the providers of financial support for the workshop, namely the Government of Japan.

The workshop extended special thanks for United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), Asia-Pacific Telecommunity (APT), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and IT Association of Uzbekistan for organization of the workshop.