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Asia-Pacific States agree to set up regional broadband connectivity framework – UN



26 November 2010 – In an effort to harness the rapid developments in mobile telecommunications services to enhance broadband access, countries in Asia and the Pacific agreed today at a United Nations-backed meeting to set up a framework for regional connectivity.

“Information and Communications Technology (ICT) has opened up an array of previously unimaginable possibilities for even the poorest members of society,” [said](#) Noeleen Heyzer, the Executive Secretary of the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific ([ESCAP](#)), at the end of the two-day session on ICT in the Thai capital, Bangkok.

“Nowhere is this more evident than in the mobile phone revolution,” Ms. Heyzer told ESCAP’s Committee on Information and Communication Technology (CICT). She added that mobile telephone usage in the region has reached more than 60 per cent of the population, the target set at the World Summit on Information Society (WSIS), which took place in Geneva in 2003 and in Tunis in 2005.

The Committee recommended that ESCAP’s members and associate members continue to strengthen cooperation in the development and application of ICTs, including space applications, and to build on new developments made possible by the rapid advances in mobile devices and broadband networks.

Thailand’s Minister for Science and Technology, Virachai Virameteekul, said that the recent natural disasters in the region had “washed away the development gains and aspirations of

millions of people,” while the global economic crisis had compelled the region to recognize the vulnerabilities of the current financial system.

He pointed out that technological progress in ICT – including space applications – as a tool for development and for disaster risk reduction is more important than ever before to create and protect sustainable socio-economic development.

Phase one of the Asia Pacific Gateway for Disaster Risk Reduction and Development was also launched. The Gateway, a web portal focused on bringing disaster risk reduction into development planning, will also support an online community of practice on ESCAP-promoted regional mechanisms to reduce disaster risks.

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