6. *Also requests* the Executive Secretary to report to the Commission at its fifty-eighth session on the implementation of the present resolution.

5th meeting
25 April 2001

57/4. Regional cooperation in information and communication technologies for development[4]

The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific,

Recognizing that information and communication technologies can play an important role in promoting economic and social development in the Asian and Pacific region,

Reiterating that national governments bear the primary responsibility for the development of their countries, and that the international community should support sound national development policies and programmes, establish pro-competition policy and regulatory environments that attract private sector capital flows, and encourage private sector leadership in the field of information technology,

Recognizing the potential of regional cooperation to complement national efforts in maximizing benefits from the development and application of information and communication technologies,

Mindful of the growing digital divide and the need to create digital opportunities in developing countries, including the least developed countries, landlocked and island developing countries, and economies in transition, from the revolution in information technology,

Bearing in mind the recommendations, conclusions and decisions of the Regional Round Table on Information Technology and Development, held in New Delhi on 21 and 22 June 2000, which aimed at integrating the dimension of the Asian and Pacific region into the theme for the high-level segment of the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council in 2000,

Bearing in mind also the Ministerial Declaration on Development and International Cooperation in the Twenty-first Century: the Role of Information Technology in the Context of a Knowledge-based Global Economy, adopted by the high-level segment of the substantive session of the Council in 2000,

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[4] See paragraph 159 above.

Noting Economic and Social Council resolution 2000/29 of 28 July 2000 on the information and communication technologies task force,

Noting also General Assembly resolution 55/28 of 20 December 2000 on developments in the field of information technology and telecommunications in the context of international security,

Noting further that several international initiatives are being taken to bridge the global digital divide and create digital opportunities, including the establishment of a Digital Opportunity Task Force (dot force) by the Summit of the Group of Eight Nations, held in Okinawa, Japan, in July 2000, as well as the Tokyo Declaration and Action Plan on "Asia-Pacific Renaissance through ICT in the 21st Century" adopted at the Asia-Pacific Telecommunity Asia-Pacific Summit on the Information Society, held in Tokyo in October-November 2000,

1. *Requests* the Executive Secretary:

(a) To accord priority to assistance to members and associate members in the region in supporting their ongoing initiatives and strengthening regional cooperation in information and communication technologies in the following areas:

(i) Designing and implementing concrete measures for assisting members and associate members in the development of a pro-competition policy and regulatory framework on information and communication technologies, including online services and electronic commerce as well as capacity-building in connectivity and accessibility, taking into account the special needs of small and medium-sized enterprises, women and disadvantaged groups;

(ii) Enhancing information on, and the exchange of experiences in, information and communication technologies application and development, including the potential challenges and benefits of the information and communication technologies revolution to economic and social development, especially in poverty alleviation, human resources development and improved competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises, in particular through electronic commerce;

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(iii) Identifying, developing and implementing appropriate market-led efforts to assist members and associate members in infrastructure development and capacity-building, as well as in creative applications of information and communication technologies for education, health, tourism, public safety, ageing, community development, empowerment of women, youth and disadvantaged groups, and income and employment generation;

(iv) Ensuring affordable and fair access of members and associate members to information by designing and implementing symmetrically financed digital connections;

(v) Designing and implementing projects to establish community access centres, with initiatives from local communities, to ensure that information dissemination programmes for poverty alleviation are well in place;

(vi) Developing mechanisms and facilitating opportunities for making available machine translation services to ensure that information is accessible by all members of society, regardless of their language capabilities;

(vii) Strengthening the work in official statistical information networking and sharing and exchanging official statistics;

(viii) Monitoring various regional initiatives and progress towards the realization of the digital opportunity, helping members and associate members to identify the challenges and issues in terms of their readiness for the digital era, and providing them with the necessary guidance and assistance in this regard;

(ix) Compiling and disseminating an inventory of online services and electronic commerce best practices and lessons learned, to enable members and associate members to make more informed choices in developing their information and communication technologies strategies;

(x) Designing and implementing concrete projects to promote regional complementarities in the development and application of online services and electronic commerce through the promotion of trade in hardware, services and software, exchange of specialists and professionals and the networking of governmental, non-governmental and private sector organizations;

(xi) Promoting the sharing of experiences in the development of frequently used software, such as office applications, using the open-source software development concept, so that it can be widely disseminated and used at low cost;

(xii) Providing assistance to members and associate members for the creation of "online communities", establishing a linkage with their national information infrastructure and conducting workshops for the sharing of experiences of this online communities experiment in the region;

(xiii) Sensitizing members and associate members and promoting awareness among them of the need to create and establish national traditional technologies and knowledge databases and to create a regional traditional knowledge warehouse;

(b) To serve as the focal point for high-level regional coordination through arranging regional digital economy forums;

(c) To seek extrabudgetary resources, as well as to explore new and creative initiatives for mobilizing financial and equipment support, including from the private sector as the primary agent for information and communication technologies research, development and diffusion;

(d) To strengthen and harness the multidisciplinary potential of the secretariat to ensure full support for the effective implementation of the present resolution, and to facilitate effective coordination with the United Nations information and communication technologies task force;

(e) To initiate the establishment of strategic alliances at the regional level to include relevant United Nations bodies, regional organizations, such as the Asian Development Bank, the Asia-Pacific Telecommunity and the Asian Institute of Technology, and private sector organizations and funding agencies, to promote information and communication technologies in the region in a coordinated and synergistic manner;

(f) To prepare a progress report on the implementation of the present resolution for submission to the Commission at its fifty-ninth session in 2003;

2. *Calls upon* all concerned donor countries and funding agencies, United Nations bodies and specialized agencies, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and the private sector to provide support for the implementation of the resolution;

3. *Urges* all members and associate members to fully cooperate with, and provide substantive and other support to, ESCAP in the implementation of the resolution;

4. *Also urges* regional organizations, such as the Asian Development Bank and the Asia-Pacific Telecommunity, and the private sector, to support and participate effectively in the implementation of the resolution.

5th meeting
25 April 2001

57/5. Integration of Asian and Pacific developing countries and economies in transition into the international trading system[5]

The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific,

Recalling the discussion on the theme topic of the fifty-sixth session of the Commission, "Development through globalization and partnership in the twenty-first century: an Asia-Pacific perspective for integrating developing countries and economies in transition into the international trading system on a fair and equitable basis",

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[5] See paragraph 155 above.

Recalling also the initiative of the Foreign Minister of the Islamic Republic of Iran, as Chairperson of its fifty-sixth session, to hold the Meeting of Eminent Persons ("Friends of the Chair") on the Integration of Asian Developing Countries into the International Trading System, in Tehran on 10 and 11 March 2001,

Noting with interest the report of the Meeting,

Expressing its appreciation to the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran for hosting the Meeting,

Considering that globalization is an evolving process accelerated by technological developments and liberalization in trade and investment regimes,

Recognizing that globalization presents opportunities, challenges and risks and that there is a need to manage globalization so as to ensure the full participation of all countries and the universal enjoyment of its benefits, thereby minimizing its associated risks, including the possible continuing exclusion and marginalization of developing countries,

Stressing the importance of creating among all countries a sense of ownership and partnership in shaping the future of the international trading system, through dialogue,

Acknowledging the desirability of integrating developing countries and economies in transition into the international trading system in order to ensure human-centred development,.

Mindful of the contribution of regional and subregional organizations in preparing for more effective integration of developing countries into the international trading system,

1. *Reaffirms* the call for a fair, transparent and rule-based international trading system;

2. *Underlines* the importance of forging partnerships and alliances between all development actors, in particular between the private and public sectors, in increasing the benefits of globalization and liberalization and managing their risks;

3. *Notes* that facilitating the integration of developing countries and economies in transition into the international trading system is an important area of its work;

4. *Notes further with appreciation* the memorandum of understanding between the World Trade Organization and ESCAP establishing a joint training programme;

5. *Requests* the Executive Secretary, subject to the availability of extrabudgetary resources, to further assist developing countries and economies in transition in their attempts at national capacity-building for the negotiation and implementation of multilateral trade agreements by: