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Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

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Bangkok, 21–25 April 2025
Item 5 (i) of the provisional agenda*
Review of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific and issues pertinent to the subsidiary structure of the Commission: information and communications technology, science, technology and innovation

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

Note by the secretariat

Pursuant to Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific resolution 61/6, annex, paragraph 15, the secretariat has the honour to transmit to the members and associate members of the Commission the report of the Governing Council of the Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development on its nineteenth session, held in Astana on 4 September 2024, as well as the relevant financial statements and information on cash contributions received in 2023 and 2024.

* ESCAP/81/1.

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

I. Matters brought to the attention of the Commission

1. The Governing Council expressed its appreciation to the Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development for its contributions to accelerating digital transformation in Asia and the Pacific through its flagship information and communications technology (ICT) capacity-building programmes.

2. The Governing Council endorsed the Centre's workplan for 2025, which is aimed at enhancing the Centre's programmes to leverage the opportunities and address the challenges of emerging technologies, meet the evolving capacity-building needs of member States, deepen support to member States through programme customization and localization and foster greater alignment with the broader priorities of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), such as addressing gender issues and protecting vulnerable populations.

3. The Governing Council invited all members and associate members of ESCAP to collaborate with the Centre and support its work, including through voluntary and in-kind contributions.

II. Proceedings

A. Administrative and financial status of the Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development (agenda item 2)

4. The Governing Council had before it the note by the secretariat on the administrative and financial status of the Centre (APCICT/GC(19)/2).

5. The Governing Council was informed about the Centre's financial status, management and staffing capacity. A summary of operational funding was presented, including the institutional funding provided by the host country, the Republic of Korea, through the Incheon Metropolitan City and the Ministry of Science and Information and Communications Technology, as agreed under the Administrative and Financial Arrangement signed by ESCAP and the Government of the Republic of Korea for the period 2021–2025.

6. Additional funding had been received from the Government of Canada to support the implementation of the ESCAP project entitled "Catalysing women's entrepreneurship", under which the Centre had implemented training activities for women entrepreneurs in Bangladesh, Cambodia, Fiji, Nepal, Samoa and Viet Nam.

7. During the reporting period, voluntary contributions had been received from Macao, China. The Governing Council was informed that national partners continued to provide in-kind contributions, in the form of logistical, material and human resources, to facilitate the implementation of the Centre's capacity-building initiatives and programmes at the national and local levels.

8. The representative of Indonesia announced a pledge of financial support for the Centre by his Government and requested information from the secretariat regarding contribution procedures.

9. The representative of India announced a financial contribution of $20,000 for 2024 and 2025.

B. Work of the Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development since the eighteenth session of the Governing Council (agenda item 3)

10. The Governing Council had before it the note by the secretariat on the work of the Centre since the eighteenth session (APCICT/GC(19)/3). A presentation was given by the Director of the Centre.

11. The Governing Council was briefed on the Centre's completed activities under its three pillars of work: training, technical assistance and knowledge-sharing. The Governing Council was informed of progress made in the implementation of the Centre's flagship programmes for policymakers and civil servants (Academy of ICT Essentials for Government Leaders), women entrepreneurs (Women ICT Frontier Initiative) and students and youth (Primer Series on ICT for Development for Youth).

12. The Director concluded his presentation by expressing his appreciation to the Republic of Korea for its ongoing financial support of the Centre's programmes and operation.

13. The representative of the Republic of Korea highlighted the world's rapid transition to a digital economy, emphasizing both the emerging opportunities it presented and the growing need for access to ICT infrastructure. The Centre's role and mission had become increasingly important in that regard. She commended the valuable contributions of the Centre in enhancing member States' capacities through its flagship programmes, which had been effectively implemented across the region. She noted that the Republic of Korea continued to provide material and financial support and encouraged the Centre to persist in its efforts to strengthen the ICT capacities of Governments throughout Asia and the Pacific.

14. The representative of the Russian Federation affirmed his Government's commitment to supporting the work of the Centre, in particular through the translation of training modules into Russian. The Government of the Russian Federation was implementing programmes on promoting e-government services and would be interested in exploring potential collaborations with the Centre in that domain.

C. Workplan for 2025 (agenda item 4)

15. The Director of the Centre presented the workplan for 2025.

16. The workplan contained an outline of the Centre's strategy to enhance the effectiveness and impact of its work. Under the workplan, the Centre would prioritize the continuous enhancement of flagship programmes to meet the evolving capacity-building needs of member States, with a view to ensuring the relevance and timeliness of their response to emerging technologies. The workplan included the development of new training programmes for policymakers on artificial intelligence applications in government, artificial intelligence governance, data governance and open radio access networks.

17. Under the workplan, support for member States would be broadened and intensified, with the aim of reaching a wider audience and providing more in-depth assistance where needed. The Centre would strengthen cooperation with national partners on customizing and localizing programmes and trickling down training activities to local governments. Another aim of the workplan was to create stronger alignment with broader ESCAP programmes and priorities, in particular with a view to addressing gender issues and the needs of ageing populations, persons with disabilities and other vulnerable populations.

18. The Director underscored the need for effective resource mobilization strategies to secure the necessary funding and resources for the successful execution of the Centre's mission and objectives in line with its workplan.

19. The representative of India shared her country's approach to digital transformation, focusing on its digital public infrastructure initiatives and their impact on various sectors. She highlighted several key initiatives, including: the Aadhaar digital identification programme; the unified payments interface; the Digi-Locker platform for credential verification and document storage; the CoWIN platform for vaccination programmes; the Digital Infrastructure for Knowledge Sharing (DIKSHA) education platform; and the Bhashini language services platform. She emphasized the role of India in promoting digital public infrastructure during its presidency of the Group of 20 (G20), highlighting related key outcomes, such as the G20 framework for systems of digital public infrastructure, the Global Digital Public Infrastructure Repository and a multi-stakeholder initiative to support the development of digital public infrastructure in low- and middle-income countries. Furthermore, during the virtual G20 Leaders' Summit, held on 22 November 2023, the Government of India had announced the creation of a social impact fund for accelerating the implementation of digital public infrastructure across the global South, including low- and middle-income countries, for which the Government of India had committed to make an initial contribution of $25 million. Furthermore, the Global Digital Public Infrastructure Repository, created by the Government of India, was aimed at fostering international collaboration in developing and managing digital public infrastructure and featured 54 initiatives from 16 countries to date. She also mentioned the Government's efforts in artificial intelligence development through the Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence and the IndiaAI Mission. She expressed her Government's commitment to international collaboration in ICT development, in particular through the sharing of experiences and innovations in digital public infrastructure and the responsible use of artificial intelligence, with the goal of fostering sustainable development and inclusive growth.

20. The representative of Bangladesh noted the varying levels of technological advancement across the region and called for initiatives to reduce digital disparities between countries. He highlighted the efforts of his Government to enhance digital accessibility through 9,000 digital centres providing essential services nationwide. The Government was also supporting innovation and start-ups through investments and in-kind support. The representative stressed the importance of digital technologies during crises and shared the success of the Government's "333" service, a national helpline that had been crucial in connecting citizens with government services, in particular during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and the recent floods in the country. He emphasized the need for digital inclusion, capacity-building and collaboration among member States to foster technological advancement and reduce inequality in the region.

21. The representative of Thailand emphasized the value of the Centre's Academy of ICT Essentials for Government Leaders in enhancing the digital competencies of civil servants and urged the Centre to intensify its efforts to disseminate the Academy's training resources and the Centre's e-learning resources to leaders in the Government of Thailand. She commended the Centre's Women ICT Frontier Initiative, highlighting its potential benefits for women entrepreneurs in the country, in particular in fostering trust and ensuring security in their enterprises.

22. The representative urged the Centre to maintain a database of ICT experts in the region. Such a resource would be invaluable for Governments, including that of Thailand, seeking to leverage expertise from other Governments and facilitate the exchange of experiences and knowledge. The representative of Cambodia endorsed the recommendation, highlighting its relevance to her Government's context. The Government of Cambodia faced diverse challenges in digital technology comprehension among officials owing to varied backgrounds and local language barriers. The proposed database would be a valuable resource in addressing those issues.

23. The representative of Kazakhstan stated that Governments were at varying stages of digital progress, with some leading the way and others lagging behind. Although Governments aspired to accelerate their digitalization, organizing such efforts could be challenging. Concerns about cybersecurity and legal and regulatory frameworks added complexity to the process. He stated that Governments required assistance in creating road maps that identified the most crucial technologies for their specific needs. High-level officials and policymakers would benefit from guidance on how to effectively attract capable and knowledgeable staff who could assist in implementing digital technologies in their countries.

24. The representative of the Philippines expressed the appreciation of his Government for the capacity-building programmes offered by the Centre and reiterated its support for the Centre's work.

25. The representative of the United States of America, attending as an observer, informed the Governing Council that the Government was funding a capacity-building project on open radio access networks, to be implemented by the Centre in 10 countries in 2025.

26. The Governing Council adopted the Centre's workplan for 2025.

D. Date and venue of the twentieth session of the Governing Council (agenda item 5)

27. The representative of Indonesia announced his Government's intention to host the twentieth session of the Governing Council in Yogyakarta in 2025.

28. The secretariat, in consultation with the Governing Council, would make the necessary arrangements for the organization of the twentieth session.

E. Other matters (agenda item 6)

29. The secretariat informed participants that the three-year term of the current Governing Council would be coming to an end and that a new Governing Council would be elected during the eighty-first session of the Commission, to be held in Bangkok from 21 to 25 April 2025.

30. The secretariat reminded all current members that they were welcome to seek re-election to the Governing Council. More detailed information on election procedures would be communicated by the secretariat to all member States prior to the Commission session.

F. Adoption of the report of the Governing Council on its nineteenth session (agenda item 7)

31. The Governing Council adopted the present report on 1 October 2024.

III. Organization

A. Opening, duration and organization of the session

32. The nineteenth session of the Governing Council was held in Astana on 4 September 2024, alongside the Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on Digital Inclusion and Transformation, which was held in Astana from 3 to 5 September 2024.

33. A statement was made by the Executive Secretary of ESCAP. In her remarks, the Executive Secretary emphasized the growing significance of digital technologies, resulting in an increased demand from member States for capacity-building support. She noted the Centre's increasingly critical role in providing assistance to member States in that context. The Executive Secretary acknowledged the valuable contributions of the Centre, noting in particular the Women ICT Frontier Initiative, which had benefited numerous women entrepreneurs in the region. She conveyed her gratitude to the members of the Governing Council for their strategic guidance and ongoing support in furthering the Centre's mission.

B. Attendance

34. The session was attended by representatives of the nine members of the Governing Council: Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation and Thailand.

35. A representative of the United States attended as an observer.

C. Election of officers

36. The Governing Council elected the following officers:

Chair:	Ms. Somaly Nguon (Cambodia)
Vice-Chair:	Mr. Jimmicio Daoaten (Philippines)

D. Agenda

37. The Governing Council adopted the following agenda:

1. Opening of the session:
   - (a) Opening addresses;
   - (b) Election of officers;
   - (c) Adoption of the agenda.

2. Administrative and financial status of the Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development.

3. Work of the Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development since the eighteenth session of the Governing Council.

4. Workplan for 2025.

5. Date and venue of the twentieth session of the Governing Council.

6. Other matters.

7. Adoption of the report of the Governing Council on its nineteenth session.

Annex I

List of documents

Symbol	*Title*	*Agenda item*
General series		
APCICT/GC(19)/1	Annotated provisional agenda	1 (c)
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Annex II

Financial statement of the Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development for the year ended 31 December 2024

(United States dollars)

Income	
Contributions	1 510 187
Interest income	217 063
Total income	**1 727 250**
Less: Expenditure	(1 858 353)
Net income over expenditure	**(131 103)**
Fund balance as at 1 January 2024	4 271 442
Refunds to donors	–
Fund balance as at 31 December 2024	**4 140 339**[a]

[a] The balance amount is earmarked for future programmatic and operational activities of the Centre.

Annex III

Financial statement of the Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development for the year ended 31 December 2024, by project component
(United States dollars)

	Incheon Metropolitan City and Ministry of Science and ICT	*Joint contribution and other projects*	*Total*
Income			
Contributions	1 468 971	41 216	1 510 187
Interest income	207 980	9 083	217 063
Total income	**1 676 951**	**50 299**	**1 727 250**
Less: Expenditure	(1 611 211)	(247 142)	(1 858 353)
Net income over expenditure	**65 740**	**(196 843)**	**(131 103)**
Fund balance as at 1 January 2024	3 994 641	276 801	4 271 442
Refunds to donors/fund transfer	–	–	–
Fund balance as at 31 December 2024	**4 060 381**	**79 958**	**4 140 339**[a]

[a] The balance amount is earmarked for future programmatic and operational activities of the Centre.

Annex IV

Cash contributions to the Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development received for the years ended 31 December 2023 and 31 December 2024
(United States dollars)

	Country/area	*Year ended 31 December 2023*	*Year ended 31 December 2024*
1.	**Incheon Metropolitan City and Ministry of Science and ICT**		
	Republic of Korea (Incheon Metropolitan City)	782 980	782 980
	Republic of Korea (Ministry of Science and ICT)	697 621	685 991
	Subtotal	**1 480 601**	**1 468 971**
2.	**Other technical cooperation projects**		
	Bangladesh	10 000	–
	Cambodia	2 000	–
	Macao, China	5 000	5 000
	Republic of Korea (Ministry of Science and ICT)	38 139	36 216
	Subtotal	**55 139**	**41 216**
	Total	**1 535 740**	**1 510 187**