



Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific**Seventy-ninth session**

Bangkok and online, 15–19 May 2023

Item 4 (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 seventeenth session***Summary*

The Governing Council of the Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development held its seventeenth session in Seoul on 9 November 2022.

The Governing Council reviewed the work of the Centre since its sixteenth session and expressed appreciation for the Centre's contribution to strengthening the capacities of member States on using digital technologies for sustainable development. It also reviewed the Centre's administrative and financial status.

The Governing Council endorsed the Centre's workplan for 2023. It welcomed the findings of the information and communications technology capacity-building needs assessment, which will contribute to identifying priority actions and focus areas, adjust the Centre's strategic positioning in the new digital era and help develop relevant capacity-building programmes on digital technologies, in line with the work of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific.

The Governing Council expressed its appreciation to the host country, the Republic of Korea, for its continued funding support for the Centre and to other member States for their voluntary and in-kind contributions. It called upon all member States to collaborate and support the Centre's work on promoting capacity-building for digital development in the region.

* ESCAP/79/1/Rev.2.

I. Matters brought to the attention of the Commission

1. The Governing Council expressed its appreciation and commended the Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development for its continued efforts in strengthening human and institutional capacities on digital development in the region.
2. The Governing Council endorsed the Centre's workplan for 2023 and welcomed its efforts to focus on providing more practical and impactful capacity-building programmes tailored to the needs of member States.
3. The Governing Council invited all members and associate members of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) to collaborate with the Centre and support its work, including through voluntary and in-kind contributions.

II. Proceedings

A. Report on the administrative and financial status of the Centre (agenda item 2)

4. The Governing Council had before it the report on the administrative and financial status of the Centre.
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. Funding had also been received from the Government of Canada to support the implementation of the ESCAP project entitled "Catalysing women's entrepreneurship", in the framework of which the Centre had implemented information and communications technology (ICT) training activities in Bangladesh, Cambodia, Fiji, Nepal, Samoa and Viet Nam.
7. During the reporting period, voluntary contributions had been received from Bangladesh and Cambodia, as well as 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 support the national roll-out of the Centre's training programmes.
8. The representative of the Republic of Korea expressed appreciation for the Centre's achievements in providing member States with relevant programmes and services and reiterated the Government's support for the Centre's programmes and operations and encouraged all member States to contribute through financial and in-kind contributions.
9. The representative of India informed the Governing Council that his Government would contribute \$20,000 in fulfilment of the commitment made to the Centre at the seventy-eighth session of ESCAP, held in May 2022. He underscored the need to widen the Centre's resource base and to encourage more countries to provide voluntary contributions.

10. The representative of the Russian Federation said that his Government intended to expand its cooperation with ESCAP and the Centre in the field of ICT. The Russian Federation was open to providing in-kind contributions, including by making the modules offered by the Centre's Academy of ICT Essentials for Government Leaders available in Russian.

11. The representative of Thailand said that her Government was committed to continuing its cooperation with the Centre through financial and/or in-kind support.

B. Work of the Centre since the sixteenth session of the Governing Council (agenda item 3)

12. The Governing Council had before it the report on the work of the Centre since the sixteenth session. A presentation was given by the Director of the Centre.

13. 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/youth (Primer Series on ICT for Development for Youth).

14. The representative of Cambodia congratulated the Centre for the capacity-building support it had provided across the region.

15. The representative of India stated that, to optimize training delivery, the Centre might wish to consider adopting a combination of in-person and online modalities. He recalled that the digital capacities of civil servants varied across the region and that countries had different ways of imparting training and introducing content into their digital skills curricula. He emphasized the importance of customizing and localizing content rather than developing standardized programmes. To support the national institutionalization of the Centre's programmes, the Centre could provide a general framework and template for integrating its programmes into the civil service programmes of member States.

16. The representative of the Russian Federation commended the Centre for its achievements. He recognized the socioeconomic orientation of the Centre's training resources and encouraged the Centre to leverage the programmes of other training institutions that focused on more technical aspects. Regarding content development, the Centre should strengthen the consistency and complementarity of all training modules, reflect good practices and case studies from the region, and avoid political sensitivities. Moreover, the Centre should participate in multi-stakeholder partnerships and dialogues at the global level, including in the framework of the digital capacity-building initiatives of the Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Technology.

17. The representative of Indonesia recommended that the Centre incorporate greater animation in its e-learning courses and increase user interaction and engagement. The Ministry of Communications and Informatics of Indonesia was planning to adopt the Centre's modules under its Digital Leadership Academy programme. As part of that effort, the contents of the modules would be translated into Bahasa Indonesia and further customized to

fit the national context. The representative suggested that, upon completion, the localized modules could be made available on the Centre's e-learning portal. He requested the Centre's support in providing experts and facilitators to deliver the modules and train potential trainers.

18. The representative of the Philippines said that the Centre's online courses were also used by officers, directors and senior managers, who may not have time to go through the e-learning modules in their entirety. She suggested that "bite-size" courses be developed to allow government officials to complete the courses gradually. She also noted the importance of making the courses available on different types of devices for better accessibility. The representative of Bangladesh suggested categorizing the various courses (as, for example, basic, intermediate or advanced) so that learners and users could easily identify and enrol in suitable courses.

19. The representatives of the Philippines and Thailand recommended that the Centre's Advisory Group review the Centre's knowledge products and online courses.

20. The representative of Tonga, attending as an observer, commended the Centre on its achievements. He emphasized that, in the context of the Pacific islands and small island developing States, some countries had no framework or platform on ICT capacity-building. To ensure the sustainability of such training programmes, Tonga needed to partner with organizations that could be mentors and more platforms were needed for countries to share experiences and expertise. Tonga would establish its first national university and would need support in developing its expertise, especially in the field of ICT.

C. Priority capacity-building programmes on digital technologies for sustainable development (agenda item 4)

21. A presentation on priority capacity-building programmes on digital technologies for sustainable development was delivered by the Director of the Centre.

22. The Director provided an overview of the results of the ICT capacity-building needs assessment that had been conducted by the Centre from September 2021 to March 2022. The Governing Council was informed that the assessment had been undertaken using various methodologies, including desk research, surveys and key informant interviews. The study had focused on priority training needs in areas such as digital government, digital infrastructure, sectoral applications, emerging technologies and the empowerment of target groups. The results would help the Centre to identify priority actions and focus areas, adjust its strategic positioning in the new digital era and develop relevant capacity-building programmes in the future, in line with the work of ESCAP.

23. The Governing Council members stressed the need to continue the ESCAP project entitled "Catalysing women's entrepreneurship". The representative of India suggested developing an e-waste management programme as part of the circular economy. As 60 million people from rural areas had been trained in India to use digital devices, such capacity-building programmes and policies should be included to help nations to grow in an inclusive manner.

D. Workplan for 2023 (agenda item 5)

24. The Director of the Centre presented the workplan for 2023.

25. The workplan focused on providing more practical and impactful capacity-building programmes tailored to the needs of member States under the Centre's medium-term strategy (2021–2023), based on the results of the ICT needs assessment. The workplan would enable the Centre to further expand its footprint in the region, broaden its reach to all subregions, trickle its programmes down to local governments and deepen support to member States through the provision of policy and advisory services. The Centre would continue to work closely with national partners to customize its programmes to fit national contexts and integrate them in partners' training curricula. It would also direct efforts towards strengthening its monitoring and evaluation mechanism. In addition, the Centre would increase its visibility and enrich its network by building more effective partnerships at the regional and global levels. Through the workplan, the Centre aimed to strengthen its ability to mobilize resources, expand its pool of experts to support programme delivery and strengthen partnerships with international organizations and technology companies.

26. The representative of the Philippines called for the socioeconomic context of digital technologies in training programmes, including issues of accountability and ethics in the use of digital technologies, to be addressed and recommended that the Centre develop customized training programmes tailored to legislators.

27. The representative of India shared his Government's experience on the circular and green economy and noted the issue of e-waste management and the reusability of hardware items. Almost 5 million civil servants were utilizing Mission Karmayogi, an online learning platform for civil servants at the central and local levels. The provision of digital IDs to over 1.3 billion people had helped the country to promote financial inclusion through a digital payment platform that had contributed to improving the livelihoods and quality of life of marginalized populations by providing them with access to small loans, direct benefit transfers and credit. Digital payment schemes in India were also benefiting the informal sector, which represented a significant portion of the total economy.

28. The representative of the Russian Federation said that his Government had initiated a digital professionals programme, through which service providers could promote the Centre's Academy modules. Target audiences would benefit from more in-depth content and the Centre was encouraged to incorporate more specialized topics into the modules to increase their relevance to civil servants.

29. The representative of Thailand emphasized the importance of funding and technical assistance to the Centre's work, as well as the need for greater private sector engagement. She recommended that the Centre consider blended learning and hybrid capacity-building activities and seek further collaboration with existing online learning portals. Regarding the target audiences for the Centre's modules, the representative recommended that the Centre collaborate more closely with civil service training providers and benefit from their operational expertise and their experience in designing programmes for civil servants.

30. The representative of Indonesia said that the Ministry of Communications and Informatics of Indonesia conducted an annual digital

leadership training session for city mayors and requested the Centre's support in the form of technical assistance to conduct benchmarking activities for assessing those sessions. Such technical assistance could allow the Centre to extend and deepen its support to local governments and provide an additional platform to conduct training activities or information sessions to introduce and promote the Academy modules.

31. The Governing Council endorsed the Centre's workplan for 2023.

E. Date of and venue for the eighteenth session of the Governing Council (agenda item 6)

32. The Governing Council welcomed the offer by the representative of the Philippines to hold the eighteenth session in Manila in November 2023. The secretariat, in consultation with the Governing Council, would make the necessary arrangements for the organization of the eighteenth session.

F. Other matters (agenda item 7)

33. No other matters were discussed by the Governing Council.

G. Adoption of the report of the Governing Council on its seventeenth session (agenda item 8)

34. The Governing Council adopted the present report on 5 December 2022.

III. Organization

A. Opening, duration and organization of the session

35. The seventeenth session of the Governing Council was held in Seoul on 9 November 2022.

36. A statement was made by the Executive Secretary of ESCAP. In her remarks, the Executive Secretary congratulated the members that had been elected to the Governing Council for the period 2022–2025. She stated that the Centre had been expanding its support to member States over the years and that it continued to tailor its programmes and services in line with ESCAP priorities and focus areas. She noted the importance of the ICT capacity-building needs assessment in guiding the work of the Centre in the years to come and expressed appreciation to Governing Council members for providing strategic guidance to the Centre.

37. The Director of the Centre thanked the Chair, the Vice-Chair and the members of the Governing Council for their strong engagement and cooperation. He also thanked the session observers for their participation and welcomed closer collaboration with them in the future.

B. Attendance

38. 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.

39. Representatives of the following members of ESCAP attended as observers: Tajikistan; and Tonga.

C. Election of officers

40. The Governing Council elected the following officers:

Chair: Mr. Jeffrey Ian Cardano Dy (Philippines)

Vice-Chair: Ms. Ishariyaporn Smiprem (Thailand)

D. Agenda

41. The Governing Council adopted the following agenda:

1. Opening of the session:
 - (a) Opening statements;
 - (b) Election of officers;
 - (c) Adoption of the agenda.
2. Report on the administrative and financial status of the Centre.
3. Work of the Centre since the sixteenth session of the Governing Council.
4. Priority capacity-building programmes on digital technologies for sustainable development.
5. Workplan for 2023.
6. Date of and venue for the eighteenth session of the Governing Council.
7. Other matters.
8. Adoption of the report of the Governing Council on its seventeenth session.

Annex I

List of documents

<i>Symbol</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Agenda item</i>
<i>General series</i>		
	Report on the administrative and financial status of the Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development	2
	Report on the work of the Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development since the sixteenth session of the Governing Council	3
	Priority capacity-building programmes on digital technologies for sustainable development	4
	Workplan for 2023	5
ESCAP/APCICT/GC/2022/1	Report of the Governing Council of the Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development on its seventeenth session	
<i>Limited series</i>		
ESCAP/APCICT/GC/2022/L.1	Annotated provisional agenda	1 (c)

Annex II

Financial statement of the Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development for the year ended 31 December 2022

(United States dollars)

<i>Income</i>	
Contributions	1 576 656
Interest income	24 071
Total income	1 600 727
<i>Less: Expenditure</i>	
	(1 533 316)
Net income over expenditure	67 411
Fund balance as at 1 January 2022	4 354 331
Refunds to donors	-
Fund balance as at 31 December 2022	4 421 742^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 2022, by project component**
(United States dollars)

	<i>Incheon Metropolitan City and Ministry of Science and ICT</i>	<i>Joint contribution and other projects</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Income</i>			
Contributions	1 522 210	54 446	1 576 656
Interest income	22 348	1 723	24 071
Total income	1 544 558	56 169	1 600 727
<i>Less: Expenditure</i>			
	(1 393 592)	(139 724)	(1 533 316)
Net income over expenditure	150 966	(83 555)	67 411
Fund balance as at 1 January 2022	3 936 620	417 711	4 354 331
Refunds to donors/fund transfer	-	-	-
Fund balance as at 31 December 2022	4 087 586	334 156	4 421 742^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 2021 and 31 December 2022**
(United States dollars)

<i>Country/area</i>	<i>Year ended 31 December 2021</i>	<i>Year ended 31 December 2022</i>
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)	834 301	739 230
Subtotal	1 617 281	1 522 210
2. Other technical cooperation projects		
Bangladesh	-	10 000
Cambodia	2 000	4 000
Macao, China	5 000	5 000
Republic of Korea (Ministry of Science and ICT)	42 095	35 446
Subtotal	49 095	54 446
Total	1 666 376	1 576 656