

Agenda item: PL 2.5

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**Report by the Secretary-General**  
CONNECT THE WORLD INITIATIVE

**Summary**

The *Connect the World* initiative was launched in 2005 to help mobilize partners and resources needed to implement WSIS outcomes. To this end, a series of regional Summits have been organized over the past number of years to bring together committed stakeholders to strengthen existing and launch new partnership initiatives for telecom/ICT investment. The most recent event was the *Connect Asia-Pacific Summit*, held on 18 November 2013 in Thailand, in conjunction with TELECOM WORLD 2013.

**Action required**

The Council is requested to **note** this report.

**References**

Documents [C13/18](#), [C13/INF/7](#), [C12/34](#)  
Council [Resolution 1281](#)

1. Recognizing the need for a multistakeholder approach to successfully turn commitments into actions, ITU launched the *Connect the World* initiative in 2005 to help mobilize the financial, human and technical resources needed to implement outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS).
2. As part of this effort, ITU has been organizing high-level events known as [Connect Summits](#) in each region in collaboration with regional and global partners. These five summits have brought together like-minded stakeholders to work together on concrete projects to expand telecom/information and communication technology (ICT) networks and access as a means of spurring investment, employment and broader social and economic development.

***Connect Africa Summit***

3. First in the series, the [Connect Africa Summit](#) was organized by ITU together with the African Union, the World Bank Group and the United Nations Global Alliance for ICT and Development, in partnership with the African Development Bank, the African Telecommunication Union, the UN

Economic Commission for Africa and the Global Digital Solidarity Fund, in Kigali, Rwanda, 29-30 October 2007 (<http://www.itu.int/council/C2013/pd/018link1.docx>). As follow-up of the Connect Africa, the following are some of the actions that have been implemented:

- The ITU implemented a USD 6 million [project](#) on the Harmonization of ICT policies in Sub Saharan Africa (HIPSSA) jointly funded by the EU and ITU. It provided support to RECs and their respective Regulators' Associations and built human capacity.
- Analog-to-Digital TV Broadcasting migration Guidelines and National Roadmaps have been undertaken for Angola, DRC, Ethiopia and Mali with support from KCC, Rep. of Korea, and MIC, Japan.
- ITU in partnership with respective governments and institutions has implemented Multipurpose Community Centre projects in rural areas and is connecting villages in partnership with Nokia Siemens Networks. Connect a School Connect a Community projects in partnership with the government of France are underway and over 60 schools have been equipped with ICTs and internet connectivity.
- ITU and UNECA jointly implemented an e-employment project in Congo, while a similar project has been implemented in Gabon and planned for ten other African countries. ITU funded the establishment of an African Centre of Excellence Network to build human capacity including Spanish and Portuguese CoEs in Mozambique and Angola.
- In 2013, a cooperation agreement establishing a Regional Cybersecurity Center in Abuja was signed between ITU and Nigeria.
- The Government of the Republic of Rwanda and ITU co-hosted the [Transform Africa Summit](#) in 2013 with the aim of evaluating the implementation of Connect Africa goals and leveraging its achievements. The principle outcome of the Summit was Smart Africa, an innovative approach designed to ensure that Africa makes the most of broadband and ICT opportunities. The Summit also endorsed the [Smart Africa Manifesto](#), which embodies the five principles and implementation framework of the Smart Africa initiative.

### **Connect CIS Summit**

4. As the second regional event in the series, the [Connect CIS Summit](#) was organized by ITU in partnership with the Regional Commonwealth in the Field of Communications, the Commonwealth of Independent States Executive Committee, the World Bank, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the European Investment Bank, the Islamic Development Bank, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, and the United Nations Global Alliance for ICT and Development, in Minsk, Belarus, on 25-27 November 2009 (<http://www.itu.int/council/C2013/pd/018link2.docx>). Following up on the Connect CIS, the actions below have been implemented: e.g.

- Joint projects were implemented between ITU and the Republic of Moldova (exceeding USD 250 000), the Republic of Belarus (around USD 200 000), the Kyrgyz Republic with "Alippe TV" company (around USD 1 200 000) on creation of public Internet access points in the rural areas of the countries and on creation of Interactive Multimedia Digital Broadcasting for education purposes.
- ITU and the Kyrgyz Republic, within the framework of "Connect Schools" initiative, conducted a series of upgrade-qualification trainings for village informatics teachers of Kyrgyzstan.
- The private sector of the Kyrgyz Republic has supported ITU "Build on Broadband" initiative at estimated project costs of more than USD 250,000.
- The majority of CIS countries (Azerbaijan, Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia, Uzbekistan and Ukraine) have developed and implemented with target of state programmes on comprehensive national ICT development.

### **Connect Arab Summit**

5. As the third regional event in the series, the [Connect Arab Summit](http://www.itu.int/council/C2013/pd/018link3.docx) was organized in close partnership with the League of Arab States and the Qatari administration on 5-7 March 2012 in Doha, Qatar (<http://www.itu.int/council/C2013/pd/018link3.docx>). As follow-up of the Connect Arab, the following actions have been implemented, e.g.

- ITU together with the League of Arab States (LAS) had provided USD 380,000 for the submission of an application for the dot ARAB domain name both in the Latin and Arabic strings.
- A Regional Centre on Cyber Security was established by ITA Oman and the ITU/IMPACT partnership in March 2013 through a joint project totaling over USD 2 million to provide assistance to countries in the region to set up their CIRTs and for technical support.
- ITU worked with Sudan on a project for the establishment of a Digital Forensic Lab and had conducted project to carry out CIRT assessment for Comoros, Djibouti, Lebanon and Mauritania to discuss the requirements, including financing.
- While assistance to Palestine is in progress, the ITU is working on securing the needed fund to assist Lebanon. ITU, with the assistance of experts from the region started a project on the establishment of a regional working group to develop guidelines for legal framework related to Child Online Protection (COP) for the Arab region to be shared with the countries and to be endorsed by the LAS.
- ITU in collaboration with the LAS held a Connect Arab Summit Follow-up meeting on the 11th of November 2013 in Hamamat, Tunisia.

### **Connect Americas Summit**

6. As the fourth regional event in the series, the Connect Americas Summit (CAS) was held on 17 - 19 July 2012 in Panama City ([www.itu.int/council/C2013/pd/018link4.docx](http://www.itu.int/council/C2013/pd/018link4.docx)). As a follow-up of the Connect Americas Summit, the following actions have been under way:

- ITU has completed the implementation of the HIPCAR project on “Enhancing Competitiveness in the Caribbean through the Harmonization of ICT Policies, Legislation and Regulatory Procedures” funded by the European Union (EU).
- ITU is working with regional institutions such as CTU, CDEMA, CBU and CANTO on broadband initiatives, spectrum management, transition from analogue to digital, cybersecurity and disaster management.
- ITU in partnership with the CTU and one regional government hosted a follow-up Connect Americas for the Caribbean meeting in August 2013 in Trinidad.
- The CANTO in partnership with the IDB launched their “Broadband Infrastructure Inventory and Public Awareness Project’ and ITU was invited to be part of the technical team.
- One of the highest priorities for COMTELCA countries presented to the Connect Americas is the project “Complementary Infrastructure for the Mesoamerican Information Highway”. COMTELCA has started implementing RG-T2242 broadband project, financed by the IDB, which has been supported by ITU through knowledge resources and expertise. ITU has also been working with COMTELCA on Communications during Emergencies. MoUs/Cooperation Agreements have been signed with the government of Haiti for the development of the telecommunication sector, with Research and Development Center (CPqD) in Brazil for non-exclusive collaboration in the area of conformance and interoperability and with the CAF for transition from Analogue to Digital Broadcasting in the Americas Region.

### **Connect Asia-Pacific Summit**

7. As the fifth regional event in the series, the *Connect Asia-Pacific Summit* was jointly organized with the Government of Kingdom of Thailand, the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology (MICT) of Thailand in particular, in partnership with regional organizations and UN agencies such as APT, ABU, UNESCAP, WHO and many others on 18 November 2013, Bangkok, Thailand, in conjunction with ITU TELECOM World, on 19-22 November 2013.

8. The Summit attracted some 625 participants from 37 ITU Asia-Pacific Member States, including seven Heads of State or Government, 30 Deputy Prime Ministers, Ministers, Deputy Ministers, and Ambassadors, 13 Observers from ITU Member States outside the Asia-Pacific region, one Observer (Res. 99), international and regional organizations, Recognized Operating Agencies, Scientific and Industrial Organizations, Academia and other stakeholders.

9. During the Summit, leaders affirmed their common [Leaders' Vision](#) of an inclusive and development-centered as well as creative Asia-Pacific: Smartly DIGITAL by 2020. The Summit also adopted a [Communiqué](#), which is an action plan to achieve the Leaders' Vision for the Asia-Pacific Region.

10. During the Multistakeholder Partnership Meeting, a number of projects and partnerships, valued at USD 53 billion, were identified as [market opportunities](#) by ITU, relevant partners and stakeholders. As follow-ups of the Connect Asia-Pacific Summit, the following actions have been developed and signed during/after the Summit: e.g.

- ITU and the MCMC developed and launched a project with aggregated budget USD 80,000 on *Promoting the transformational power of broadband - [connecting at the roots](#)* that raised awareness about the importance of broadband and demonstrated how it can be harnessed to transform lives and society. Contest and award ceremony were conducted during the Summit.
- ITU and the NBTC, Thailand, developed and signed a project (USD 466,273) aimed at smooth transitioning from analogue to digital TV broadcasting in Thailand.
- ITU and the Department of Communications of Australia (Comms) developed and signed a project (CHF 591,000) to implement the priorities identified from the Summit and the Asia-Pacific Regional Initiatives.
- ITU and the Ministry of ICT, Science and Future Planning (MISP), Republic of Korea, developed and signed a project with amount of USD 135,000 to develop "Master Plans for Spectrum Management" and build human capacity.
- Following the successful outcome of the Connect Asia-Pacific Summit and the launch of ITU and Asian Development Bank (ADB) joint initiative on ICT for Development for the Asia-Pacific Region, ITU and ADB plan to convene a follow-up meeting at the end of April 2014, Manila, Philippines.

11. **The Connect Summits** have proven to be *effective platforms for multistakeholder partnerships* by attracting government leaders and executives from the private sector, regional telecommunication organizations, financial institutions and civil society. At each summit, a series of new partnerships have been announced to the benefit of the respective region in the presence of Heads of State and/or Government focusing on telecom/ICT for sustainable development after the WSIS.

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