

## 273 (XXIV). Follow-up to the development of the Information Society in Western Asia

*The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia,*

*Cognizant* of the commitments made by ESCWA member countries in the Geneva<sup>1</sup> and Tunis<sup>2</sup> phases of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) to build an inclusive Information Society and put the potential of knowledge and information and communication technologies (ICTs) at the service of development for the achievement of internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration,<sup>3</sup>

*Affirming* the role given to the regional commissions of the United Nations in the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society<sup>4</sup> to follow up on activities in collaboration with regional and subregional organizations, and to assist member countries with technical and relevant information for the development of regional and national strategies and the implementation of the outcomes of regional conferences,

*Guided* by the declaration of the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society on the need to devise appropriate indicators and benchmarks, including community connectivity indicators, to clarify the magnitude of the digital divide in both its domestic and international dimensions, and to assess such a divide regularly and track global progress in the use of ICTs to achieve internationally agreed development goals and objectives, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs),

*Considering* the Damascus Call for Partnership<sup>5</sup> and the work carried out by ESCWA in developing the Regional Plan of Action for Building the Information Society (RPoA),<sup>6</sup> which is based on a thorough understanding of the regional and national needs and on continued cooperation among international and regional organizations,

*Recognizing* the effect of the important role played by ESCWA as a member of the global Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development and in collaboration with member countries, and its efforts aimed at developing a set of core ICT indicators for the ESCWA region in order to measure the digital divide in its many dimensions, harmonize that set of indicators within the Partnership list of core ICT indicators and strengthen the capacities of the national statistical offices to collect and disseminate timely, accurate and comparable Information Society statistics and indicators,

1. *Calls* on the secretariat to provide member countries with technical assistance to implement the plans of actions through workshops, advisory services and other means of technical cooperation in areas related to the formulation and implementation of national ICT strategies and plans of actions; formulate and implement capacity-building plans of action aimed at promoting the adoption and collection of core ICT indicators in support of policymaking at both the national and regional levels; devise a mechanism to foster participatory multi-stakeholder partnerships; and facilitate the implementation of ICT applications for socio-economic development;

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<sup>1</sup> WSIS-03/GENEVA/DOC/4-A and WSIS-03/GENEVA/DOC/5-A.

<sup>2</sup> WSIS-05/TUNIS/DOC/6(Rev.1)-A and WSIS-05/TUNIS/DOC/7-A.

<sup>3</sup> General Assembly resolution 55/2.

<sup>4</sup> WSIS-05/TUNIS/DOC/7-A.

<sup>5</sup> Issued by the Second Regional Preparatory Conference for the World Summit on the Information Society – Partnership for building the Arab information society, Damascus, 21-23 November 2004.

<sup>6</sup> E/ESCWA/ICTD/2004/4.

2. *Also calls* on the secretariat, in coordination with member countries, to participate actively in the implementation of RpoA,<sup>7</sup> and continually update that plan as progress is made in achieving its objectives;

3. *Appeals* to Governments, the private sector and civil society to contribute to the above endeavours with the aim of promoting regional cooperation and creating equal opportunities for the growth of the ICT sector in Western Asia;

4. *Requests* the Executive Secretary to submit a report to the Commission at its twenty-fifth session on follow-up to the WSIS Tunis Agenda,<sup>8</sup> implementation of the plans of actions in respect of the progress achieved in member countries, and the efforts exerted by ESCWA in that regard.

7<sup>th</sup> plenary meeting  
11 May 2006

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<sup>7</sup> E/ESCWA/ICTD/2004/4.

<sup>8</sup> WSIS-05/TUNIS/DOC/7-A.