



**UNESCWA**  
**United Nations**  
**Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia**

**Peer Consultation Meeting on  
Cyber Legislation in the ESCWA region**  
Amman, 11-12 December 2007

**Information Note**

**1) Background**

It is generally accepted that cyberspace and Internet usage in the ESCWA region will not flourish in the absence of a proactive environment. Because cyber legislation is important for the development of a modern information society, active efforts from the public and the private sectors, as well as NGOs, are essential for the establishment of the enabling environment needed for the effective and ethical use of cyberspace. While extensive studies and regional analyses of cyber legislations have already been undertaken in other parts of the world, comparable material is not available for the ESCWA region. In order to narrow this legislative gap and to prevent the illicit and illegal use of cyberspace in a region where the information society is still in its infancy, ESCWA member countries must map out a course of action that will foster the creation of the aforementioned enabling environment. Crafting cyberspace laws, creating guidelines and adopting directives in the legislative, organizational and management domains are amongst the most important steps to take.

Acknowledging the need for regional integration in cyberspace legislation, certain regions in the World have already adopted directives on the regional level, important examples being the European Union and the Asia Pacific region. Taking into account their experience, ESCWA has recently developed a study titled “Models for Cyber Legislation”. The study aims at facilitating electronic interactions in the ESCWA region and provides analysis and policy advice that enables member countries to bring their legal structures in line with international cyber legislations. It reviews the status of cyberspace legislation in countries of the ESCWA region, compares the region’s status to the status of other regions in the world and proposes a set of directives and guidelines for the creation of cyberspace legislation. ESCWA intends to present this study in a Peer Consultation Meeting that will take place during 11-12 December 2007.

**2) Objectives**

The main objectives of the Peer Consultation Meeting are to present and discuss the “Models for Cyber Legislation in ESCWA Member Countries” study and to create a network of experts and institutions that would be involved in the continuous development, improvement and implementation of cyber legislation in the ESCWA region.

The meeting will also include the presentation and discussion of a template that was created by ESCWA to help with the development of an implementation strategy for cyber legislation in the region. Two case studies will help highlight the applicability at the country level of the template as well as the relevance of the guidelines and recommendations of the study.

**3) Topics**

The main topics of the meeting include:

- (a) Reviewing the status of cyberspace legislation on the national and regional levels in the ESCWA region;

- (b) Discussing a set of directives, guidelines and recommendations for the creation of cyberspace legislation in ESCWA countries;
- (c) Presenting a template that is designed to help with the development of an implementation strategy for cyber legislation;
- (d) Assessing the applicability of the cyber legislation template, guidelines, recommendations and implementation strategy at the country level;
- (e) Validating the suitability of the template, guidelines, recommendations and implementation strategy by presenting case studies of their application in two ESCWA countries.

Discussions of the topics listed above will highlight the fact that cyberspace legislation comprises a large number of laws and conventions which were covered by the “Models for Cyber Legislation” study. These include:

- Intellectual property rights;
- E-commerce legislation which incorporates e-signature, e-payment, electronic transactions and consumer protection in cyberspace;
- Privacy in cyberspace;
- Censorship and freedom of expression in cyberspace;
- Cyber crime which covers, amongst others, cross-border enforcement, child pornography (harmful content) on the Internet and attacks against information systems.

#### **4) Outcomes**

The main outcome of the meeting will be the adoption of the models for cyber legislation and the validation of the process for the implementation of these models at the national and regional levels. An additional outcome of the meeting will be the formation of a network of experts and institutions that would be involved in the continuous development, improvement and implementation of cyber legislation in the ESCWA region.

#### **5) Organization**

The meeting is organized by the ICT Division of ESCWA, and will be held in Amman during the period 11-12 December 2007.

#### **6) Participants and Registration**

Participants in the meeting will include representatives and decision-makers from ESCWA member countries interested in cyberspace legislation. The participants should have experience in the legal and the information and communication technology sectors. ESCWA might also invite experts from other international organizations, academia, the private sector and NGOs.

Participants can register for the meeting by filling a downloadable registration form and returning it by email, to [escwa-ictd@un.org](mailto:escwa-ictd@un.org), [idlebi@un.org](mailto:idlebi@un.org), before 5 December 2007.

#### **7) Languages**

English and Arabic are the working languages of the meeting. Simultaneous translation from English to Arabic, and vice-versa, will be provided during work sessions.