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Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)

REPORT

WORKSHOP ON ESTABLISHING PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS FOR ICT INITIATIVES
AMMAN, 26 FEBRUARY - 1 MARCH 2007

Summary

Partnership is considered a most important mechanism for building the information society in the ESCWA region. However, stakeholders have not yet harnessed the numerous challenges and opportunities associated with cooperating and partnering together. There are several practices for cooperation within any newly founded partnership; different stakeholders address similar issues differently within the scope of their mandate and strategic development goals. Specific partnership models like the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model can be adopted to build on the individual strengths of the two sectors.

The Workshop on Establishing Public Private Partnerships (PPP) for ICT Initiatives was held during 26 February - 1 March 2007, at the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology (MoICT) in Amman, Jordan, and was jointly organized by the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), the Global Knowledge Partnership (GKP) and MoICT. The main objective of the Workshop was to increase the capacity of public and private institutions in ESCWA member countries in establishing PPPs focused on building the information society at the national and regional levels.

The first two days of the Workshop included eight training modules on the strategic, operational and organizational aspects of PPP, with topics covering legal and regulatory frameworks, project finance, feasibility analyses, and tendering and procurement, among others. The training was carried out by two experts from the institute of Public Private Partnerships (IP3). The third day included an overview of the structure and work of GKP, along with its Regional Partnership Programme, which allowed participants to discuss potential regional projects and collaborations via its MENA Regional Network. The publication on "Broadband for Development in the ESCWA Region", jointly prepared by ESCWA and Alcatel-Lucent was also launched on this day. The fourth day was devoted to contributions from participants who also presented case studies from selected countries highlighting examples of successful PPP projects ending with a panel discussion on the future of PPP in the ESCWA region.

The Meeting involved 38 participants, including officials of the member countries responsible for ICT policy making; ICT project leaders; ICT entrepreneurs/start-up professionals; and civil society organizations with PPP experience in the ICT field.

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The Meeting recommended the creation of an enabling environment for PPPs through policy reform promoting public sector entrepreneurship, and focusing on specific priority areas that would attract investment in ICT for development projects and represent "quick-wins" with maximum impact. Further recommendations for facilitating the establishment of PPPs in the region included setting up a MENA Regional Knowledge Centre for PPPs in ICT, which would provide PPP information and best practices, and creating a MENA Regional Project Development Facility to help identify and promote PPP investments.

CONTENTS

Introduction

1.   Partnership is considered a most important mechanism for building the information society and is the basis of the Regional Plan of Action for building the Information Society (RPoA) developed by ESCWA.[1] The partnership model suggested for the region involves the following stakeholders: high-impact entrepreneurs, mature national, regional and international firms, governments, universities, investors, donors, and international/regional organizations.

2.   The stakeholders for building the Information Society in the ESCWA region have not yet harnessed the numerous opportunities associated with cooperating and partnering together. Development and investment patterns in the region tend to favour secure sectors, such as real estate and commercial trade over more innovative and technically complex sectors, such as the ICT sector. While countries of the region share a common language and culture and complementary resources, very few projects have taken advantage of these commonalities in order to build the information society.

3.   There are several practices for cooperation within any newly founded partnership; different stakeholders will address similar issues differently within the scope of their mandate and strategic development goals. The size of some projects may require multi-stakeholder partnerships that involve the public sector, the private sector, non-governmental organizations (NGO) and other international agencies combining their strengths in various areas to achieve the desired objectives. Specific partnership models like the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model should be adopted to build on the individual strengths of the two sectors.[2]

4.   PPP is heavily influenced by cultural, behavioural and historical values of the region and its countries. This region has very few success stories in PPP. In recent years, there have been attempts amongst ESCWA member countries for developing ICT partnerships. Examples of these PPPs span different dimensions, from joint investments in Egypt, to BOT models in Lebanon, to recent revenue sharing schemes in Syrian Arab Republic. Some of these attempts represent success stories, while other attempts have not contributed enough to the national and regional goals. It is essential to study and analyse best modalities for PPP, and to benefit from lessons learnt in order to maximize the odds of success for current and potential PPPs in the region.

5.   At the invitation of ESCWA, the Workshop on establishing Public Private Partnerships (PPP) for ICT Initiatives was held during 26 February - 1 March 2007, at the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology (MoICT) in Amman, Jordan, and was jointly organized by ESCWA, MoICT and Global Knowledge Partnership (GKP).

6.   The Workshop is in line with MDG Goal 8 "Developing a global partnership for development" as well as ESCWA's Strategic Framework 2006-2007 Expected Accomplishment (b): Activated partnership for implementing ICT projects to achieve socio-economic development, with particular emphasis on the Millennium Development Goals; in addition to the "Regional Plan of Action for building the information society" (RPoA), developed by ESCWA.

7.   The Meeting involved 38 participants, including officials of the member countries responsible for ICT policy making, ICT project leaders, ICT entrepreneurs/start-up professionals, and civil society organizations with PPP experience in the ICT field. The main objective of the Meeting was to increase the capacity of

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[1] The RPoA, based on a strategic framework, is specifically designed for triggering partnerships in the ESCWA/Arab countries and inducing interactive participation of a broad spectrum of stakeholders. It takes into consideration the challenges associated with maintaining an integral and sustainable effort for building the information society in the region, with the aim of strengthening inter-Arab cooperation in a framework of partnership that embraces all stakeholders.

[2] However, there are also public-public and public-international partnerships and their combinations. In all such partnerships, national or regional barriers need to be removed.

public and private institutions in ESCWA member countries in establishing PPPs focused on building the information society at the national and regional levels.

8.   During the first two days, eight training modules were given by two experts from the Institute of Public Private Partnerships (IP3) on the strategic, operational and organizational aspects of PPP. Topics covered PPP options and structures for infrastructure services; legal and regulatory frameworks; project finance; feasibility analysis; tendering and procurement; ICT PPP case studies; monitoring and regulation of PPP projects; and developing PPP units. During the third and fourth days, an overview was made of the organization and work of GKP and its Regional Partnership Programme. Case studies from selected countries highlighting examples of successful PPP projects were also presented. The publication on "Broadband for Development in the ESCWA Region", jointly prepared by ESCWA and Alcatel-Lucent was also launched on the third day, at a press conference held at the MoICT. The Workshop ended with a panel discussion on the future of PPP in the region.

I. RECOMMENDATIONS

9.   As a result of the Meeting discussions, summarized in the panel discussion, the participants agreed on the following:

      (a) The ICT landscape is witnessing a paradigm shift in the concept of asset ownership in from purely public to public-private and to fully private. Defining the extent of that shift is important. As such, clear vision and commitment of the government is vital. Ultimately, sustainability and ownership aspects of PPP relationship should be well defined at the start. For example, while the private sector may become increasingly involved in the ownership of infrastructure assets and the quality and quantity of service, the responsibility for providing the service ultimately rests with the public sector. The public sector may need to monitor, evaluate and/or regulate the service and private sector service provider;

      (b) An enabling environment is arguably the single most important issue to ensure the success of PPPs, especially in the ICT sector. As such, a coherent reform environment needs to be created to enable PPP, involving several building blocks. These include policy reforms to unbundle the functions of the public sector, commitment on the highest level (as in Jordan, where there is strong royal commitment in initiating and funding) as well as building trust and confidence in the environment surrounding public-private relationships. Changes within governments are an important factor, incorporating business process re-engineering and internal restructuring, as well as instigating the culture of a facilitator within governmental institutions. Until the reform environment, laws and policies are fully in place, initiating successful pilot projects could be essential, as it is not always feasible to wait for the ideal environment; applications should drive change, rather than the other way around;

      (c) Properly identifying priority areas in the ESCWA region that PPP players can get involved in is one of the main challenges that need to be overcome. Primarily, stakeholders in the region need to identify the right applications for quick-wins and areas of largest impact. Jordan believes that e-learning is one of the high-impact areas that has a substantial socio-economic impact. For example, e-government projects often tend to focus on back-end applications rather than front-end, the latter of which would be more beneficial to citizens and attractive to investors;

      (d) The fear of failure is causing many public sector officials as well as potential partners from the private sector to be hesitant about venturing into PPP. This necessitates taking strong measures to encourage an entrepreneurial atmosphere within the public sector. Efforts should be made to praise public-sector entrepreneurship in the field of PPPs and to attract investors from the private sector;

      (e) In the ESCWA region, the government usually initiates PPP project concepts; this mindset needs to be extended to allow the private sector the freedom to initiate its own projects. In many cases, the time duration for initiating and approving a PPP project from within the government can last for more than 24

months, depending on the country. Hence, there is a dire need to change the mechanism of publicly initiated PPP projects to make it faster and more efficient;

(f) Creating PPP units within specific ministries (e.g. Ministry of Finance) can help generate ideas, transfer knowledge and develop PPP projects within member countries. However, a centralized yet quasi-governmental body for PPP development may possibly provide another approach. This quasi-governmental body should be given a certain autonomy and independent allotment of the national budget for the sole objective of efficiently partnering with the private sector. This is in a way similar to industrial development agencies (IDA), in certain countries, that are usually entrusted to approve private sector projects, but with a different focus on PPP at large rather than on industrialization only;

(g) Setting up a MENA Regional Knowledge Centre for PPPs in ICT can help address the interest in PPPs expressed by various stakeholders from the ESCWA region throughout the Meeting. Such a centre can offer many services, including providing information and 'best practices' on PPP in the region, establishing a network of PPP Units, ICT firms and investors and creating the opportunity for dialogue and collaboration, sponsoring training and capacity building, providing support to existing PPP organizations in the ESCWA member countries, and producing a regular newsletter on PPP;

(h) One of the biggest obstacles to the establishment of PPPs and the attraction of new private investment to the ICT sector in the region is that few PPP investment projects are being fully analysed and prepared as "bankable" transactions. Leading in the creation of a MENA Regional Project Development Facility to support the identification and preparation of PPP investments in the ICT sector can help increase the number of successful investments in the region even in the absence of the proper legal and regulatory framework.

II. DISCUSSION TOPICS

10.   The subjects addressed during the Meeting sessions are summarized in the sections that follow.

A. PPP OPTIONS AND STRUCTURES FOR INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES

11.   The first module highlighted the challenges hindering the provision of infrastructure services, and how forging public-private partnerships can help address such challenges, including insufficient access, inefficiency, and lack of funding. It further expanded on six different techniques for forging PPPs: Corporatization; Service Contracting; Management Contracting; Leasing; BOT (Build Operate Transfer)/BOO (Build Own Operate); and Divestiture. It stressed the need for careful understanding of the needs, best fit, preparation and commitment required before selecting the best option for a PPP transaction.

B. POLICY, LEGAL AND REGULATORY, AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORKS FOR PPPs IN ICT

12.   The second module addressed the role of PPPs within overall ICT sector policy and institutional reforms. It presented global statistics on PPP investments in telecommunications infrastructure, including telecoms investments by region and investments in the ESCWA region. The module also highlighted PPP legal, institutional and regulatory framework (LIR) good practices and select PPP LIR frameworks for public sector support as well as risks associated with public sector support and how to minimize them. A case study: "Partnerships Victoria" - LIR Framework for PPP in Victoria, Australia, was also discussed and the most important lessons learned were summarized. Setting clear objectives, properly analysing risks, and flexibility are among those lessons.

C. ICT PPPs IN ICT APPRAISAL AND FEASIBILITY ANALYSIS REQUIREMENTS

13.   The third module addressed PPP project identification and selection, highlighting constraints, common characteristics, and examples of sectors where it has been applied. PPP feasibility analysis techniques were outlined, including technical, economic, financial, and environmental aspects. Risk structuring techniques

were discussed in the form of allocation matrices, which stressed the important point that it is best to allocate particular risks to the party (public or private) that is most able to manage such risks. A case study, "BOO Computerization of Land Transport Office in Philippines", was also presented, which illustrated key success factors in PPPs, such as a proactive approach, creating jobs and empowerment, proper regulation and ensuring long-term competitiveness of public services.

D. PPP CASE STUDY

14. The fourth module outlined ways of identifying, selecting and evaluating PPP projects, as well as alternative PPP structures for ICT PPPs. Several ICT PPP case studies were also highlighted, including:

(a) Management contract: Seat management for ICT services in Virginia, USA;

(b) Lease contract: Service New Brunswick - e-government services for Canadians;

(c) BOT contract: ESD life portal - a bilingual portal in Hong Kong, developed through a Design-Build-Own-Operate PPP;

(d) BOO contract: Estonia rural connectivity - ensuring connectivity in rural and scarcely populated areas;

(e) Local government ICT PPPs: US state government Web portals;

(f) Multi-service provider contracts: Online tax filing in Chile; Malaysia's multimedia Super Corridor; Egypt's ICT and e-government programme, subscription-free Internet, and the Smart Village.

E. INTRODUCTION TO PROJECT FINANCE: RATIONALE, STRUCTURE AND FINANCING CHARACTERISTICS

15. The fifth module introduced the basics of project finance for ICT PPPs. The module proved very relevant, with the boom in project debt financing (30 per cent during 2005-2006) and increase in infrastructure demand in Middle East, which exceeded 25 billion in 2006 with 120 infrastructure projects over the next five years. Traditional "On-Balance" debt financing and "Off-Balance" project financing approaches were discussed, as well as the basic elements and parties involved in project financing. Project risks, including technological, financial, environmental and political risks were highlighted, along with ways to distribute these risks among the parties involved. Finally, the module touched on global trends in project finance, mainly: private sector participation in infrastructure projects; the emergence of risk management techniques; the deepening of capital markets in emerging countries; and the issuance of bonds in some developing country markets.

F. TENDERING AND PROCUREMENT TECHNIQUES FOR PPPs IN ICT

16. The sixth module discussed the purpose, goals and objectives of PPP procurement. Different PPP procurement options, depending on the scale of the project, were outlined, and PPP procurement steps identified as follows: appointment of the government. project team; implementation of the recommendations of the PPP feasibility analyses; preparation and issuance of pre-qualification documents; and development of PPP bid documents. A case study on Chile's "Pro-Poor" approach to Universal Telephone Access PPPs was also presented, illustrating good practices for PPP tendering and procurement.

G. A CONTRACT COMPLIANCE UNIT, MONITORING THE TECHNICAL PERFORMANCE AND REGULATION

17. The seventh module illustrated the purpose of regulation and performance monitoring for PPPs. It covered the importance of monitoring, how to manage the monitoring process, and how to manage

contractual and performance disputes. The module stressed the importance of using Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to ensure achievability, and highlighted some of the best regulatory contract management practices, including: communication; consultation; consistency; predictability; flexibility; accountability; transparency and regulatory lag.

H. PPP INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORKS: DEVELOPING PPP UNITS

18.   The eighth module covered PPP policies and laws, without which the appropriate PPP institutional frameworks could not be put in place. It argued the benefits of creating PPP units, which, although not always necessary, can make PPP transactions easier, faster and cheaper and can keep the PPP knowledge. It also illustrated key options and best practices for PPP units, such as:

    (a) Bundled versus unbundled public authorities;
    (b) New public borrowing: Required versus "encouraged" PPP option analyses;
    (c) Powers of PPP unit: Promotional versus approval;
    (d) PPP sector nodal institutions: Official versus unofficial or ad hoc network;
    (e) PPP unit organization: Functional matrix (legal, financial, etc...) versus sector specialist;
    (f) PPP models, templates and standard operating procedure: Required versus ad hoc;
    (g) PPP unit human resources and skills: In-house versus outsource;
    (h) PPP project prep resources: Ad hoc versus PPP project development facility;
    (i) PPP training and capacity-building: Ad hoc versus local training institutions network.

19.   A case study on South Africa was also presented, demonstrating the successful creation of post-apartheid telecoms infrastructure through financing provided by the Development Bank of Southern Africa and PPPs.

I. GKP PRESENTATIONS

20.   The third day was dedicated to an overview of the work and organization of Global Knowledge Partnership (GKP) as well as its Regional Partnership Programme, which offered the Workshop participants the chance to learn more about potential partnership projects and becoming GKP members or partners.

21.   GKP delegates presented an overview of GKP structure, projects and programmes. Its main area of focus being Knowledge for Development and ICT for Development with an emphasis on Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships (MSPs), GKP has, as of 26 February 2007, 105 members and covers seven regions.[3] It is proactive in building partnerships and has a holistic approach, drawing on the strengths of different sectors. The four main themes of the organization are: Access to knowledge; education; poverty reduction; and resource mobilization. The benefits of being GKP members include collaborating in knowledge sharing activities, spreading good practice, expanding strategic alliances and working together to mobilize resources.

22.   Current GKP members had the chance to present their organizations' projects and scope of work:

    (a) ESCWA gave a brief background description of its role as a think tank for the region, conducting studies, organizing meetings, consulting for governments, and implementing pilot projects. The ICT division is one of five substantive divisions at ESCWA, which focuses on ICT for development. The division prepares studies and profiles of the region regarding the Information Society, and holds expert group meetings and workshops, in order to build capacity of member states. Many networks related to ICTD have been built, the latest being on Free Open Source Software and ICT Indicators. A network of Knowledge Networks composed of ICT Access Points has also been initiated. It was noted that all these projects rely on partnerships and as such should be enhanced through GKP membership;

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[3] GKP Regional Networks are established for the following seven regions: Africa, Central and Eastern Europe, East Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, Middle East and North Africa, Oceania and South Asia.

(b)   The Ministry of Information and Communication Technology in Egypt paves the way for the development of the industry of CIT in terms of policy, regulation, and strategy. It implements a number of projects that promote ICT for development and manages a national ICT program entitled Egypt's Information Society Initiative;

(c)   The Sustainable Development Association (SDA) in Egypt hosts, manages and implements several international and local programmes for youth development. These programmes enable youth to identify the priority problems facing them and their society, and to prepare youth to face those problems as well as the challenges of today's ever-changing environment. Their next project is to establish an e-payment platform, for which the organization is seeking a partner;

(d)   The Science and Arts Foundation (SAF) aims to provide ICT services and hardware for education and career development. Its Iranian experience focused on setting up a network of Iranian high schools, connecting 60,000 students in 180 high schools, and ultimately helping young people find jobs and start careers and businesses in the ICT sector. SAF has set up e-Clubs, virtual academy communities that vary from robotics to biotech to arts. They were the first people to use Linux in Iran, and have also developed Taraba, a voice browser for the visually impaired. Their work is mostly concentrated in deprived areas such as Bam and Zaheda;

(e)   The Regional Information Technology and Software Engineering Center (RITSEC) is a non-profit organization based in Cairo, Egypt. Established in 1992 jointly by the UNDP and the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development and hosted by the Government of Egypt, RITSEC provides technical, professional, and developmental services to government, non-government, institutes, and agencies at the national, regional, and international levels.

23.   GKP discussed its regional engagement opportunities through a presentation entitled "Engaging GKP at the Regional Level - Introducing the MENA Regional Network", through which organizations can join as partners, members, and Friends of GKP, while "GKP Advisor" is a by-invitation-only status accorded to prominent proponents of K4D or ICT4D. GKP offers its members seed funding for MSP projects and assistance to apply for GKP Project Development Funding; use of the GKP brand; eligibility for their Showcase Award; inclusion in GKP registry; and the prospect of project scale-up.

24.   GKP also discussed different aspects of MSPs in its presentation "Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships (MSP) - the Model, Benefits and Case Studies", which elaborated on the nature of multi-stakeholder partnerships. They involve partners pooling responsibility, resources and knowledge and working together as team. Each partner usually has expertise in a specific area, with core competencies and strategic interests. The presentation also discussed success factors in creating MSPs and identified the main steps in the MSP Process: partnership exploration; partnership building and partnership maintenance. It also presented a MSP success story on Mobile Phone Banking. This initiative allows rural families unable to get to mainland banks to transfer money through the telecom company to the bank simply by charging credit to their phone and sending the money via SMS. At the end, participants were grouped into round-tables, where each group was required to discuss and suggest project ideas then present potential partnership opportunities to the rest of the participants. These ideas are further elaborated in the section entitled "Group Discussions".

J. PARTICIPANT CASE STUDIES AND PRESENTATIONS

25.   On the fourth day, participants from member countries presented case studies on successful PPPs across the region in two different sessions.

26.   ESCWA's regional Adviser, Mr. Abdulilah Dewachi discussed the guiding principles and modes of ICT partnerships in the presentation "Building ICT Partnerships", placing partnerships in the context of WSIS and highlighting the regional status in terms of barriers to success and current investment priorities. It is worth noting that most of the investments in the ESCWA region are in real estate and trade, with

knowledge industries placing very low. The presentation also introduced the proposed modality for ESCWA's Regional Plan of Action (RPoA) Partnerships, and gave examples of partnership in ESCWA ICT projects, such as "Networking Academies for Iraq's Universities".

27. Methods for identifying potential PPP projects were discussed by The National Information Technology Center (NITC) in Jordan in the presentation entitled "Identification of e-Government Opportunities - Potential for Public Private Partnerships, A World Bank View" which illustrated the various questions and issues dealt with in the World Bank survey on e-government.

28. The Iraqi Computer Society discussed the social and cultural aspects of the knowledge society and its impact on socio-economic development in "IT Partnership Principles - Arab Vision". The presentation elaborated on the uniqueness of IT; more than a mere tool, it is also a resource, platform and bridge towards a new cyberspace environment. The presentation also pointed out the challenges faced by the knowledge society in turning knowledge into a production tool, and highlighted the 'idea' as the new index of development in the knowledge society.

29. The Jordan Education Initiative elaborated on its successful experience as a public private partnership, its vision being to become a model of effective PPP that leverages reform to generate value through education. Established in 2002 at the World Economic Forum (WEF), it was originally comprised of a group of non-profit IT organizations that got together to improve education within a developing country, and Jordan was selected for its youth, royal commitment and focus on education. Its three main tracks are: Discovery School, a network of 100 Amman public schools that were chosen to install classroom technology and e-curricula; lifelong learning; and training.

30. The Yemeni experience was detailed in the presentation "Status of ICT partnerships in Yemen". Yemen is the only least developed member country in ESCWA, and the Yemeni government believes ICT is key to socio-economic development. As such, Vision 2025 was developed, highlighting the importance of ICT infrastructure, application and services and the country has experienced remarkable growth in the telecoms sector in the past 5 years. Partnerships in ICT sector include the establishment of a local computer-assembly in 2004 to make PCs accessible to Yemenis. 2004 also witnessed the launch of mobile phones by two private companies, Sabafon and Spacetel.

31. The Palestinian experience of by Sharek Youth Forum was discussed in a presentation entitled "A Step Forward - Providing Youth with Skills, Training and Employment Opportunities through ICT Initiatives". Sharek was originally launched in 1996 as a UNDP initiative targeting youth development in Palestine, and became independent in 2003. It coordinates 22 centres in Gaza and West Bank, in partnership with municipalities, NGOs and the private sector. One of its main projects is 'A Step Forward', which offers career guidance for graduate students, especially in ICT, as well as offers field training, ICT courses and access to ICT centres. Some of the successful initiatives targeting youth include: providing ICT skills and training; education through ICT; and promoting partnerships between Sharek and the public and private sectors to generate employment opportunities for youth (e-career).

32. ESCWA's ICT Policies Team Leader, Mr. Mansour Farah, also highlighted one of its successful PPPs in the presentation "Partnership for Community Development - The Smart Community Project (SCP)". The objective of the SCP is to increase employment and reduce poverty in rural areas through empowering local and capacity building. Each SCP consists of two complementary facilities, the Multipurpose Community Centre (MTCC), and the Agro-Food Production Unit (AFPU), where sustainability is assured by the interaction between the MTCC and the AFPU, as well as collaboration with the local community and municipality. Currently, there are SCPs in Iraq, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen, initiated through Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) with the government and NGOs in these countries.

L. Group discussions

33.   Group discussions took place on the third day during panels led by GKP on potential regional projects, as well as during the closing session of the Workshop in an expert panel comprised of panellists from the four co-organizers of the Workshop: ESCWA, GKP, the Ministry of ICT, and IP3.

34.   During the GKP-led discussions, participants from different sectors and organizations introduced their work. Among them were:

(a)   Netcorps: A Jordanian NGO aiming to promote community development through the application of ICT. The organization trains people/students from local communities in ICT and soft skills so they can in turn train others, and also promotes entrepreneurship within youth;

(b)   Jordan Computer Society: provides market training for graduates to make them more employable and ready for the market, within affordable training programs;

(c)   Palestinian Ministry of Economy: facilitates elements that will help Palestine towards a knowledge society. The economic and political instability in the country has been a strong incentive to use ICTs to overcome these obstacles;

(d)   Lebanese Ministry of Telecommunications: The Ministry's role is supportive of NGOs, not just financially but in planning and regulation as well. The private sector is very powerful, helping to promote ICT diffusion. Broadband uptake is mainly due to dynamism of private sector, even though the market is not yet regulated.

35.   Having explored the nature of each other's work and projects, participants found many commonalities and complementary aspects that were then utilized in the group exercise at the end of the third day, to come up with viable regional partnerships. For example, a regional ICT incubator network was suggested, capitalizing on the existing ICT incubator projects in the Syrian Arab Republic, Iraq and Palestine. Other ideas suggested for the GKP Regional Partnership Programme via the MENA Regional Workplan included:

(a)   Regional e-Shop for women in rural areas (handicrafts);

(b)   ICT for the preservation of the environment; bringing together students from ICT and environment programmes together in incubator to help the environment at the regional level;

(c)   ICT Project for peace based on telecenters and websites;

(d)   Learning objects including storyboards and leaflets using online and offline material for promoting development, and raising awareness on health issues;

(e)   Learning portal for community development and SMEs to help graduates gain adequate skills to enter labour force;

(f)   Arab Electronic and Mobile Payment Gateway serving merchants and consumers;

(g)   Virtual Career Centre;

(h)   E-Research Repository for Arab researchers and thinkers.

36.   An expert panel concluded the final day of the Workshop, with the objective of recapping the key points learned during the Workshop and exploring the roadmap and future of PPP in CIT in the ESCWA region. The panel discussion was facilitated by Mr. Ayman El-Sherbiny, First IT Officer in ESCWA ICTD. The list of of panellists included representatives from GKP, IP3, MoICT and ESCWA. Discussion revolved around challenges and opportunities of PPP in ICT pertinent to the ESCWA region, and recommendations to

bring the full benefits of PPP to stakeholders entrusted to build the information society in the ESCWA region.

37.   It was generally agreed that PPP is not a goal in itself, but a means to an end. In the context of ICT, and particularly for building a regional information society, PPPs as well as MSPs are considered as means to achieve socio-economic development goals.

III. LAUNCH EVENT: BROADBAND FOR DEVELOPMENT - PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN ALCATEL-LUCENT AND ESCWA

38.   On the third day, ESCWA and Alcatel-Lucent launched a joint report on "Broadband for Development in the ESCWA Region: Enhancing Access to ICT Services in a Global Knowledge Society" during a press conference held at the MoICT.

39.   Mr. Yousef Nusseir, Chief of the ICTD of ESCWA, gave the opening speech, in which he outlined the activities of ESCWA's ICT Division, as well as ESCWA's vision on the concept of broadband for development and its partnership with Alcatel-Lucent. He highlighted the role of new technologies such as broadband and wireless in closing the digital divide and achieving sustainable socio-economic development in the region, specifically leading to improvements in healthcare, education and public services. Mr. Nusseir elaborated on the broadband boom since the 1990s and the regional imbalance in its distribution, with the MENA region scoring only 1 per cent of the total number of broadband subscribers. He went on to explain how the UNESCWA partnership with Alcatel-Lucent presents a good example of the PPP approach to bridging the digital divide, in that it capitalizes on the two organizations' complementary expertise. He noted that the report highlights the vast development potential in the ESCWA region as it moves towards the broadband revolution, and that it is meant to help stakeholders in the development of broadband in the ESCWA region.

40.   Mr. Thierry Albrand, Vice President of Alcatel-Lucent, gave the next speech, in which he explained how the joint publication came about as part of the ESCWA plan of action to bridge the digital divide, and was incepted during the WSIS preparatory conference in Damascus in 2004. He went on to describe the Alcatel-Lucent Digital Bridge Initiative, which firmly believes in the role of ICTs as levers for socio-economic development. In less than 10 years, Internet users will reach 1 billion, most of whom are limited to urban and suburban areas, while access is still scarce in rural and isolated areas. Additionally, in many emerging countries, Internet access is expensive and in narrowband mode; the availability of relevant content is key to widening the reach and access of the Internet. Mr. Albrand then elaborated on the two main activities of the Digital Bridge Initiative: developing pilot projects in rural areas and emerging countries, and developing relevant content, applications and services for local communities.

41.   ESCWA's ICT policies Team Leader, Mr. Mansour Farah, gave a brief overview of the ESCWA and Alcatel-Lucent joint report, which was initiated with a Memorandum of Understanding in 2005. He pointed out that the rationale behind the report is not just to produce a study, but essentially to develop a tool to promote action. The study highlights how broadband is changing the landscape of telecoms and providing a chance for accelerated socio-economic development, and is based on complementary know-how from one of the world leaders in telecoms (Alcatel-Lucent) and from a United Nations regional arm for socio-economic development (ESCWA).

42.   Mr. Souheil Marine, Digital Bridge Manager at Alcatel-Lucent, then elaborated the findings and recommendations from the report. Some of the main findings include the dramatic pick-up of broadband access in developed countries due to competitive bundled package, and the need to focus on factors having an impact on supply and demand of broadband in the region. Recommendations included bringing down broadband prices with bundle service offers; improving regional connectivity and peering; improving technical and human factors related to quality of service; providing relevant local Arabic content and applications; and including broadband access as part of Universal Service obligation for operators.

IV. ORGANIZATION OF WORK

A. VENUE AND DATES

43.   The Meeting was held at the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology in Amman, Jordan, from 26 February to 1 March 2007.

B. OPENING

44.   Mr. Mansour Farah, Senior Information Technology Officer and ICT Policies Team Leader of the ICTD of ESCWA emphasized that this Workshop is a concrete way of showing how PPPs can work, with its mix of NGOs, international organizations and private companies.

45.   Mr. Amr Hamdy Abdelghany Managing Director of A.G.ENT Consulting and GKP representative prefaced the opening speeches, stating that he hoped this Workshop would be the start of a number of ICT partnerships in the MENA region.

46.   Mr. Yousef Nusseir, Chief of the ICTD of ESCWA delivered the opening speech of the Meeting. In the speech, Mr. Nusseir touched on the convergence of public, private and civil societies and the vital role that partnerships play in development, especially in ICT sector. He highlighted the main objective of the Workshop in increasing the capacity of public and private institutions in ESCWA member countries in establishing PPPs focused on building the information society at the national and regional levels. He pointed out that ESCWA's regional plan of action emphasizes the need for multi-stakeholder partnership to implement ICT projects, and that specific partnership models such as PPPs can be adopted to build on the combined strength of the two sectors. Even though there are few success stories in region, Mr. Nusseir emphasized that those few have been very successful and should be studied and analysed for best modalities and lessons learned. He then went on to outline the structure of the Workshop and topics to be discussed, which cover PPP operational and structural aspects as well as selected country case studies. He also drew attention to the fact that an Alcatel-Lucent /ESCWA broadband publication will be launched on the third day of the Workshop.

47.   His Excellency, Mr. Bassem Rousan, Jordanian Minister of Information and Communication Technology, delivered the next speech. In his speech, he thanked ESCWA for organizing such a relevant and timely workshop, emphasizing that "coming together is a beginning; keeping together is progress and working together is success". The Minister then highlighted the efforts undertaken by the MoICT to maximize the utilization of ICT towards Jordan becoming an information society. He pointed out that the telecoms sector was fully liberalized in 2005 and is now mature and highly competitive, leading to dramatic improvements in productivity and efficiency. There is still a room for further acceleration, however, with a focus on strong areas like Internet and PC penetration, all of which cannot be accomplished without partnership. He further elaborated on several example of successful partnerships in Jordanian ICT initiatives such as: e-Village, the Jordan Education Initiative, and the National Broadband Network program that will connect schools, colleges and knowledge stations throughout Jordan, with 200 schools slated be connected this year. Mr. Rousan concluded on the important note that only needs-based public private model can ensure success and economic sustainability for such ICT projects.

C. PARTICIPANTS

48.   The Meeting was attended by 25 participants from seven ESCWA member countries (EMCs), namely Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen, as well as two from Algeria and Iran (both invited and covered by GKP, the co-organizer), and others from France, the United States of America, Australia and Malaysia. There were 38 participants in all, comprising experts from the academic sector, public sector, business community and international organizations. The list of participants is contained in annex I of this report.

49.   The agenda of the Meeting is summarized and set forth below:

1.   Opening and welcome notes.

2.   Training modules (1-4):

   (a) PPP Options and Structures for Infrastructure services;
   (b) Policy, Legal and Regulatory, and Institutional Frameworks for PPPs in ICT;
   (c) PPPs in ICT Appraisal and Feasibility Analysis Requirements;
   (d) Case Study.

3.   Training modules (5-8):

   (a) Introduction to Project Finance: Rationale, Structure and Financing Characteristics;
   (b) Tendering and Procurement Techniques for PPPs in ICT;
   (c) A Contract Compliance Unit, Monitoring the Technical Performance and Regulation;
   (d) PPP Institutional Frameworks: Developing PPP Units.

4.   GKP Discussion and Presentations:

   (a) Engaging GKP at the Global and Regional Levels;
   (b) Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships (MSP) - the Model, Benefits and Case Studies;
   (c) Constructing MSPs Part I and II;
   (d) Regional Partnership Programme (RPP) Process.

5.   Launch event: Broadband for Development - Partnership between Alcatel-Lucent and ESCWA.

6.   Participant Presentations:

   (a) ESCWA's Regional Plan of Action: Partnership;

   (b) Identification of Potential Public Private Partnerships in e-Government: a World Bank view;

   (c) IT Partnership principles/Arab Vision;

   (d) PPP for ICT Initiatives-Jordan Education Initiative;

   (e) Status of ICT partnerships in Yemen;

   (f) A Step Forward - Providing Youth with Skills, Training and Employment Opportunities through ICT Initiatives;

   (g) Partnership for Community Development - the Smart Community Project experience.

7.   Panel discussion on the future of PPP in the ESCWA region.

8.   Closing Session.

E. DOCUMENTS

50.   A list of the documents submitted to the Meeting is contained in annex II of this report, and available on the ESCWA website at: http://www.escwa.org.lb/divisions/ictd/events/26feb07.asp.

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LIST OF DOCUMENTS

Title

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1. Training Modules:

   PPP Options and Structures for Infrastructure Services

   Policy, Legal and Regulatory, and Institutional Frameworks for PPPs in ICT

   PPPs in ICT Appraisal and Feasibility Analysis Requirements

   Case Study

   Introduction to Project Finance: Rationale, Structure and Financing Characteristics

   Tendering and Procurement Techniques for PPPs in ICT

   A Contract Compliance Unit, Monitoring the Technical Performance and Regulation

   PPP Institutional Frameworks: Developing PPP Units

2. Presentations:

   Engaging GKP at the Global Level - GK3, Emerging People, Emerging Markets, Emerging Technologies

   Engaging GKP at the Regional Level - Introducing the MENA Regional Network

   Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships (MSP) - the Model, Benefits and Case Studies

   Regional Partnership Programme (RPP) Process

   ESCWA's Regional Plan of Action: Partnership

   Identification of Potential Public Private Partnerships in e-Government: a World Bank view

   IT Partnership principles/Arab Vision

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   Partnership for Community Development - the Smart Community Project experience

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