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**Afghanistan's Digital Divide Set to Narrow Following Collaboration Agreement
with UN-APCICT**

Incheon, Republic of Korea (UN/ESCAP Information Services) – An agreement promoting the use of information and communication technology (ICT), signed today by the Afghan Government and the United Nations, is expected to contribute greatly to Afghanistan's efforts to bridge the digital divide – the gap between those who benefit from digital technology and those who do not.

The agreement formally marks the beginning of a collaboration between Afghanistan's Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (MCIT) and the United Nations Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development (UN-APCICT), a subsidiary body of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP). UN-APCICT is charged with strengthening the efforts of ESCAP's member countries to use ICT in their socio-economic development through building human and institutional capacity for ICT.

The MCIT's Deputy Minister and Director-General, Barialay Hassam and Mohammad Aimal Marjan, respectively, and Ms. Hyeun-Suk Rhee, APCICT's director, attended the signing ceremony at APCICT's office in Incheon, in the Republic of Korea.

The collaboration will see MCIT utilize the *Academy of ICT Essentials for Government Leaders Programme*, a training curriculum developed by APCICT. The *Academy* consists of eight core modules that begins with ICT basics and builds up to more advanced ICT for development topics.

In order to impart this training curriculum to policy makers and government leaders throughout the Asia-Pacific region, APCICT seeks to partner with national organizations in strengthening national ICT capacities and providing relevant knowledge and skills needed to fully leverage opportunities presented by ICTs to achieve national development goals. The *Academy* programme will be customized to meet the needs of Afghanistan's policy makers and government leaders.

Today's signing also marks the first occasion where an agreement has been made to have the *Academy* implemented nationally. Similar collaborations are being finalized for national implementation in Mongolia and the Philippines and for sub-regional implementation in the Pacific Island countries.

For more information on the *Academy*, please visit <http://www.unapcict.org/academy>

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