

UN Joins Forces with Timor-Leste and Indonesia to Harness the Power of ICT for Development

A south-south initiative expands human capacity in using technologies effectively

Bangkok (UN/ESCAP Information Services) – More than 60 high-ranking Timorese officials will learn this week how information and communication technology (ICT) can be used to assist with making policy decisions and further development goals through a United Nations initiative underway across the Asia-Pacific region.

The workshop in Dili, which runs 7 to 10 July, is based on a curriculum developed by the UN Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development (APCICT), and comes on the heels of a session held last week for officials in Indonesia.

National and local government officials from around Timor-Leste will be trained on the first two modules of the “*Academy of ICT Essentials for Government Leaders*”, focusing on linkages between ICT and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and ICT for development policymaking. The MDGs are a set of ambitious pledges made by world leaders in 2000 to eliminate extreme poverty and hunger, combat AIDS, promote gender equality, and tackle other global ills, all by 2015.

The training is the first in a series led by the Directorate National for ICT, Ministry of Infrastructure, in close collaboration with APCICT and the University of Indonesia, and will be used to build a pool of Academy resource persons in Timor-Leste.

“APCICT is committed to facilitating South-South cooperation such as the case in Timor-Leste where we have supported a qualified resource person from the University of Indonesia to work with our partners in Timor-Leste,” said Hyeun-Suk Rhee, Director of APCICT. “The rich diversity of the South provides an excellent opportunity for forging mutually beneficial partnerships to work towards the common goal of sustainable social and economic development.”

From 30 June to 3 July in Solo City, **Indonesia**, 40 heads of ICT agencies/department of provincial and city governments were trained with the Bahasa Indonesia version of the comprehensive Academy curriculum, which had been translated by the University of Indonesia. The Ministry of Communication and Information Technology (MCIT), which is leading the Academy in Indonesia, had to increase the available slots for this third workshop due to demands from participants of previous workshops to come back for the training.

“The roll-out of the Academy in Indonesia is a manifestation of synergy between international agency, government, and university,” remarked Herry Abdul Aziz, Director of e-Government at MCIT. “The translation and delivery of the modules has removed language barriers and contributes significantly to comprehending the contents. We plan to disseminate the modules as much as possible to other government agencies in Indonesia.”

Headquartered in Bangkok, ESCAP is the largest of the UN's five Regional Commissions in terms of its membership, population served and area covered. The only intergovernmental forum covering the entire Asia-Pacific region, ESCAP works to promote sustainable and inclusive economic and social progress. More information is available at www.unescap.org.

In 2010, the Academy will be part of the national programme for Chief Information Officers' education.

For this third workshop, government officials were trained on modules 6 to 8 of the eight-module Academy curriculum that focus on Network and Information Security and Privacy, ICT Project Management, and Options for Funding ICT for Development. The first two workshops held in March and April imparted training on the earlier modules. All workshops were delivered in the national language by local resource persons that have undergone APCICT's training of trainers course.

There are still limits to conducting face-to-face training, especially with the large number of officials in Asian and Pacific countries that either need to be trained or retrained. In response, the APCICT recently launched its Virtual Academy (AVA – <http://ava.unapcict.org>), an online distance learning platform for the Academy that aims to diversify its delivery channel, maximize outreach and encourage continuous and self-learning. Discussions on developing an Indonesian version of AVA are underway.

About APCICT: A subsidiary body of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and located in Incheon, Republic of Korea, APCICT aims to strengthen the efforts of the member countries of ESCAP to use ICT in their socio-economic development through building human and institutional capacity for ICT.

National Academy roll-out in over a dozen other countries is ongoing. For more information on the Academy of ICT Essentials for Government Leaders, please visit <http://www.unapcict.org/academy>.

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