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## **REPORT**

### **INTRODUCTORY MEETING OF THE ESCWA KNOWLEDGE NETWORK STEERING COMMITTEE AND GLOBAL KNOWLEDGE NETWORK PORTAL TRAINING WORKSHOP BEIRUT, 2-4 AUGUST 2010**

#### **Summary**

Within the framework of the project on Knowledge Networks through ICT Access Points for Disadvantaged Communities, the Information and Communication Technology Division (ICTD) at the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) organized the last in a series of activities in a dual-purpose event which gathered the members of the ESCWA Knowledge Network Steering Committee for the first time and held a training for knowledge hub leaders on the administration and use of the newly developed knowledge portal. This event was held at the United Nations House in Beirut between 2 and 4 August 2010.

The main objective of the steering committee meeting was to bring together committee members to agree on terms of reference for the committee and devise a strategy/plan of action for the sustainability of the ESCWA Knowledge Network after the folding of the activities of the Knowledge Networks through ICT Access Points for Disadvantaged Communities (KN4DC) pilot project.

The training workshop aimed at introducing the Global Knowledge Network Portal and training knowledge hub managers on using it in order to ensure that it becomes and stays an active knowledge networking forum and the main platform for communication and knowledge exchange between the members of the network and the public at large.

On the one hand, the steering committee meeting finalized the terms of reference of the committee, elected the chair of the committee, decided to register the knowledge network as a non-governmental organization (NGO) in Lebanon, revised the criteria required to join the network and discussed the strategy for its sustainability. On the other hand, the training workshop allowed participants to practise the use of the regional and global knowledge portal and gathered feedback and suggestions regarding the enhancement of the portal.

In total, 16 participants, representing all knowledge hubs that are part of this project, contributed actively to the two meetings. ESCWA member countries represented in the meeting were Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, the Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen. Participants included the six members of the steering committee or their representatives, the secretariat of the network and 12 knowledge hub managers. It should be noted that the secretariat and some members of the steering committee or their representatives are also knowledge hub managers.

A number of recommendations and concluding remarks were drawn from the steering committee meeting and amendments to the portal were requested.

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## **Introduction**

1. The United Nations Development Account project entitled Knowledge Networks through ICT Access Points for Disadvantaged Communities (KN4DC), which was launched in mid-2006, is currently in its final stages of implementation. Led by the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) and jointly managed with the other United Nations regional commissions, namely the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), its main objective is to empower disadvantaged communities by transforming selected ICT access points/telecentres into networked knowledge hubs. By providing, developing, organizing, sharing and disseminating knowledge in areas of sustainable development that include employment, education, gender and health, the project should improve the living standards of the targeted communities.

2. At the global level, past project activities have included: (a) a global inception meeting that assembled all regional commissions and that included discussions and recommendations on the project activities; (b) the preparation of a global strategy covering the various processes needed for the transformation of ICT access points into knowledge hubs; (c) the development of a global portal that aims at facilitating the networking process between participating ICT access points/telecentres from various regions; and (d) a final global meeting that brought together all regional commissions and focused on the successes, shortcomings and expectations of the project.

3. Past project activities carried out at the regional level by participating regional commissions have included: (a) the review and assessment of ICT access points/telecentres in the region covered by a regional commission; (b) the selection, by a regional commission, of ICT access points/telecentres to be included as knowledge hubs in the pilot phase of the project; (c) the development of regional knowledge strategies; (d) the design and implementation of regional knowledge network portals; and (e) workshops aimed at sharing knowledge, strengthening the networking process and building the capacities of telecentre managers.

4. The objective of the Introductory Meeting of the ESCWA Knowledge Network Steering Committee (EKNSC) and the Global Knowledge Network Portal (GKNP) Training Workshop is the sustainability of knowledge networks beyond the lifetime of the current pilot KN4DC project. The meeting and the workshop will help meet this objective by:

(a) Bringing together, for the first time, the members of the EKNSC to agree on the terms of reference of the committee and to devise a strategy/plan of action for the sustainability of the ESCWA Knowledge Network;

(b) Training telecentre managers on the use and administration of the newly-created GKNP to ensure that it becomes and stays an active forum for knowledge networking and the main platform for communication and knowledge exchange between the members of the network and the public at large.

## **I. DISCUSSION TOPICS**

### **A. INTRODUCTORY MEETING OF THE ESCWA KNOWLEDGE NETWORK STEERING COMMITTEE**

#### *1. Introduction of members of the ESCWA Knowledge Network Steering Committee*

5. The first day of this event started with the introduction of the members of the steering committee. Their presentations included their experience in knowledge-sharing, operation of knowledge hubs, telecentres or access points in their country, as well as challenges and potential solutions. Members of the steering committee were assigned by the official entity ESCWA has been dealing with since the initial stage of the project. The following table lists the members of the steering committee:

Country	Name	Position	Organization
Egypt	Mr. Ekram Fathy	Senior IT Advisor	Ministry of Communications and Information Technology
Jordan	Mr. Nasser Khalaf	Manager	Knowledge Stations Programme
Lebanon	Mr. Gabriel Deek	President	Professional Computer Association
Syrian Arab Republic	Mr. Rakan Razzouk	Head	Syrian Computer Society
The Sudan	Mr. Ahmed Eisa	Chairman	Gedaref Digital City Organization
Yemen	Mr. Abdallah Said	Vice-president	Attakaful Association

6. Mr. Nasser Khalaf, Manager of the Knowledge Stations Programme and representing Jordan in the EKNSC, gave an overview on the Jordanian Knowledge Stations Programme, which was started by the Government of Jordan about 10 years ago and is affiliated to the National Information Technology Centre. Currently, the Knowledge Stations Programme is in the process of being transformed into a non-governmental organization (NGO). It consists of more than 180 knowledge stations located throughout Jordan. Once this programme turns into an NGO, large-scale funding from the Government will cease and a budget problem might arise since the cost of maintaining this programme with more than 220 employees and more than one million direct beneficiaries is quite high. The Government will, however, continue to provide minor funding to the knowledge stations through the use of e-services.

7. Mr. Ekram Fathy, Professor at the Engineering Faculty of the University of Cairo and Senior IT Consultant to the Egyptian Minister of ICT, represented Egypt in the EKNSC. About 10 years ago, Mr. Fathy launched the IT Clubs project in Egypt to service the local community by providing at least 15 personal computers (PCs) per club. Currently, more than 2,200 clubs exist nationwide. The Government of Egypt partnered with governmental and non-governmental institutions in the establishment of the IT clubs. The Government usually donated hardware and software and trained knowledge hub managers, while the other parties provided a location for the donated equipment and supplied the centres with such basic needs as electricity and water.

8. Mr. Ahmed Eisa, Chairman of the Gedaref Digital City Organization (GDCO) in the Sudan, represented the Sudan in the EKNSC. Mr. Eisa has been actively participating in the KN4DC project as a knowledge hub manager since the Sudan joined ESCWA in 2008. GDCO is a voluntary organization that has many programmes focusing mainly on farming, agriculture and education.

9. Mr. Gabriel Deek represented Lebanon in the EKNSC. He is the President of the Professional Computer Association (PCA), which was founded in 1996 and represents private IT service and product providers in Lebanon. In partnership with several such institutions as the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), PCA established around 60 telecentres in Lebanon between 1999 and 2010, each centre hosting between six and fifteen PCs and providing people in remote and rural areas with access to Internet as well as training. These telecentres were named PCA Internet Points of Presence or simply PiPOPs. The main problem presently faced by PiPOPs is funding. Thus, some of those PiPOPs have changed from being merely Internet access points and have become part of the PCA ICT Academy (PICTA), where full-fledged training is provided on various topics.

10. Mr. Nawar al-Awa, member of the Board of Directors of the Syrian Computer Society (SCS), was delegated by Mr. Rakan Razzouk to represent the Syrian Arab Republic in this steering committee meeting.

SCS is managing the ICT access points project in the Syrian Arab Republic, which is also known as ReefNet, a knowledge network established by the Syrian Ministry of Communication and Technology in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme. Later, the network was affiliated to the SCS, an NGO which is composed of ICT experts. The SCS has many such projects and initiatives as the establishment of the ICT access points which was triggered in 2008. Currently, around 40 access points exist across the Syrian Arab Republic, with the aim of reaching 85 by end of year 2012. These centres, in addition to providing access to the Internet, offer various IT courses.

11. Mr. Abdullah al-Suhaibi, trainer and member of the Board of Directors of the Attakaful Association in Yemen, was designated by Mr. Abdullah Said to represent Yemen in this first meeting of the EKNESC. The Attakaful Association is an NGO located in Taiz, Yemen, which runs a multi-purpose technology community centre providing ICT services and training to the local community. Mr. al-Suhaibi has been active in the KN4DC project since 2008.

12. Mr. Nabil Eid, the elected Secretary of the ESCWA knowledge network, was present during the steering committee meeting. He reviewed the main responsibilities of the regional secretariat, which are to follow up with knowledge hubs on the implementation of projects and initiatives agreed by the steering committee, coordinate with knowledge hubs on problems faced and their solutions, relay experiences to other knowledge hubs and liaise with the steering committee.

## *2. Review of project activities*

13. Mr. Mansour Farah, Chief of the ICT Policies Section at the Information and Communication Technologies Division (ICTD) and project manager of KN4DC, presented to the steering committee a summary of the global and regional activities of the project conducted by ESCWA since its inception in 2006. They can be summarized as follows:

- (a) Holding an inception meeting in Beirut, in 2006;
- (b) Assessing the situation of ICT access points, in 2007, regionally and globally;
- (c) Enlisting of regional and global knowledge managers, in 2008;
- (d) Developing the regional knowledge portal, in 2008;
- (e) Organizing six workshops, between 2008 and 2010.

14. Mr. Farah moderated discussions on the nature of knowledge hubs, the knowledge network and the steering committees of the project.

15. With regard to the knowledge hubs, their first target is the local community, including individuals, women, youth and marginalized groups. In addition to that, these hubs should also provide services to other centres nationally, regionally and even globally through the use of the regional and global knowledge portal.

16. Every region will have its own steering committee, in addition to a global steering committee, formed by the chairs of the regional steering committees, which will coordinate global activities and knowledge exchange. Mr. Farah indicated that ESCWA, represented by Mr. Georges Younes, will remain a member of this regional KNSC. At present, the committee has no legal status; it could be established as an NGO or an international organization in Lebanon or any other ESCWA country. From a financial perspective, it would be a lot more feasible and time-efficient to hold all or most meetings and discussions online, via the knowledge portal, by creating a private forum only accessible to the steering committee members and, optionally, the secretariat. The presence of the secretariat in the committee meetings is essential for coordination purposes since the steering committee sets the policies, strategies and plans, while the secretariat handles their implementation. Thus, it is important to collaborate closely in order to ensure that activities proposed by the steering committee are practically feasible and can be executed by the knowledge hubs.

17. Concerning the knowledge network, the name proposed for it was ESCWA Knowledge Network. However, further investigation is necessary to check whether or not it is legally acceptable to use the term “ESCWA” in the name of an NGO or international organization. Furthermore, caution should be taken in associating this network to a region: ESCWA region refers only to the 14 ESCWA member countries, while Arab region refers to the 22 Arab countries that are part of the League of Arab States. These two regions are community-based regions. Western Asia Knowledge Network, another possible name for the network, is problematic, too. Western Asia may refer to a geographical region which excludes the African countries that are members of the network, namely Egypt and the Sudan, and may include Iran and Turkey. Thus, further discussion is required in order to find a proper name for the network.

### *3. Terms of reference of the ESCWA Knowledge Network Steering Committee*

18. The ESCWA project team had prepared a draft version of the terms of reference (TOR) of the steering committee which outlines the role and responsibilities of the EKNESC. These TOR were revised and discussed extensively by members of the steering committee, the secretariat and the ESCWA project team. The final version of the document was distributed to all participants of the meeting. The TOR of EKNESC may be found in annex II.

### *4. Eligibility criteria for joining and expanding the ESCWA knowledge network*

19. Mr. Nabil Eid had devised a set of eligibility criteria that any ICT access point or telecentre wishing to join the knowledge network will have to comply with, such as the non-profit nature of the centre and the type of services offered. Following the meeting, Mr. Eid amended the document as per comments and suggestions received during this first meeting of the steering committee and later distributed it to the committee members. This document may be found in annex III.

20. It was agreed that there will be two levels of membership in the knowledge network: active member and affiliate/associate member. An active member conducts meetings and workshops and actively participates in knowledge sharing and networking. An affiliate/associate member operates access points with limited activities related to knowledge generation and sharing of activities.

### *5. Strategy and plan of action for the ESCWA Knowledge Network Steering Committee*

21. The steering committee discussed an ESCWA proposed strategy document that outlines the main functions to be performed by EKNESC; the importance of establishing strategic partnerships with governmental and non-governmental institutions that will contribute to the sustainability of the knowledge hubs and network; the efforts that EKNESC should exert in order to raise funds; and the promotion of the knowledge network and its activities through proper media channels in order to attract a larger target audience. Members of EKNESC suggested to further study the strategy document and finalize it in the coming few weeks. The draft strategy may be found in annex IV.

22. As a background document, a report which had been developed by the regional knowledge manager for the KN4DC project in the ESCWA region was distributed to the steering committee. The document summarized the strategy of transformation from ICT access points into knowledge hubs, the building blocks and activities of knowledge hubs, the sustainability of the centres as well as the roles of ESCWA and of knowledge hubs in the KN4DC project.

### *6. Election of a chairperson for the ESCWA Knowledge Network Steering Committee*

23. A legal presence for the ESCWA knowledge network – or a variation of this name – is a must since that entity will need to sign memoranda of understanding, establish partnerships with official entities, and raise and disburse funds. Following discussions between the members of EKNESC, it was unanimously agreed that this network would be registered in Lebanon as a regional organization or an NGO.

24. Since EKNESC requires a chairperson, as is the case of all committees and working groups, it was agreed, by consensus, that Mr. Gabriel Deek be assigned as the first chairperson of this committee, particularly since he has the experience needed to establish such organizations in Lebanon. With regard to the periodicity and rotation of chairpersons, members of the committee decided to tackle this issue in a future meeting of the committee, after the legal status is clarified.

#### *7. Presentations on knowledge hubs in the ESCWA region*

25. On the second day of the meeting, knowledge hub leaders met the members of EKNESC and introduced themselves with a brief summary of the operation of the knowledge hubs they represent. Their presentations included success stories, lessons learned, problems faced and solutions adopted.

#### *8. Introduction to the global knowledge portal*

26. Following the original regional knowledge portal, ESCWA had contracted a consultant to develop a new global portal that accounts for the suggestions of its users, namely knowledge hub leaders, and that builds on the lessons learned from its experience with the initial portal. This portal was quasi-completed and hosted on an ESCWA server specifically for this meeting.

27. Mr. Ziad Ghorayeb, main focal point for the development of the new portal, demonstrated to the steering committee and knowledge hub leaders the look-and-feel of the new portal. The portal now caters for cooperation at the global and regional levels through specialized networks and allows knowledge sharing between all members of the knowledge networks with support for text, documents, images and multimedia files.

#### *9. Specialized global and regional networks*

28. The last day of the event was launched with the briefing of the knowledge hub leaders on the outcomes of the steering committee meeting. This session discussed the expansion of the committee when new countries join the network, the main goal of the committee which is to work for the sustainability and expansion of the network by raising funds and the legal status of the knowledge network.

29. Mr. Farah continued with discussions regarding the regional and global specialized networks that are being established by the knowledge networks of the various regional commissions. He highlighted the importance of interaction within the ESCWA region to activate the regional specialized networks, using the Arabic language, and with knowledge hubs from the African, Asia-Pacific, Eurasian or Latin American network in order to activate the global networks, in the English language. The main tool required for this interaction is the newly developed global knowledge portal.

### **B. GLOBAL KNOWLEDGE NETWORK PORTAL TRAINING WORKSHOP**

#### *10. Training on the global knowledge portal*

30. Mr. Makram Saleh, one of the developers of the portal, provided a thorough training session to the knowledge hub leaders on how to use and manage the portal. Mr. Saleh had developed a manual for that portal and went through all the options found on the current version of the portal.

31. Many suggestions were provided to Mr. Saleh by the trainees on how to improve the portal from their perspectives. It was agreed that all changes that can be introduced into the portal would be completed within the coming three to four weeks.

## **II. RECOMMENDATIONS**

32. Following the three-day event, several recommendations were made by members of the steering committee as well as by knowledge hubs leaders. Those recommendations are listed below:

(a) Recommendations related to the Introductory Meeting of the ESCWA Knowledge Network Steering Committee:

- (i) The TOR of EKNESC will be adopted by mid-September 2010 and posted on the portal;
  - (ii) Eligibility criteria to join the network will be adopted by mid-September 2010, keeping in mind that there may be two types of membership in the network: active member or affiliate/associate member;
  - (iii) The strategy for EKNESC that was described in a document presented by ESCWA will be revised, finalized and posted on the portal by the end of September 2010;
  - (ix) EKNESC will use online tools to meet as often as possible in order to reduce the overall cost of operation;
  - (x) Knowledge hubs should focus mostly on servicing the local community and providing knowledge needed by various subcommunities;
  - (vi) Mr. Gabriel Deek will act as the first chairperson of EKNESC. Periodicity and rotation of the committee chair will be discussed at a later meeting;
  - (vii) With regard to the use of ESCWA in the name of the regional network, further discussions are needed;
  - (viii) The regional network will be registered in Lebanon as a regional organization or an NGO and a bank account will be created;
  - (ix) ESCWA will be a member of EKNESC;
  - (x) The secretariat will be invited to participate in all meetings of EKNESC.
- (b) Recommendations related to the Global Knowledge Network Portal Training Workshop:
- (i) The portal will be enhanced based on the suggestions of knowledge hub leaders;
  - (ii) Knowledge hub leaders will ensure that specialized regional and global networks are activated on the knowledge portal as soon as it is put into production, but not later than September 2010.

## **III. ORGANIZATION OF WORK**

### **A. VENUE AND DATE**

33. The Introductory Meeting of the ESCWA Knowledge Network Steering Committee and the Global Knowledge Network Portal Training Workshop were held between 2 and 4 August 2010 at the United Nations House in Beirut, Lebanon. The meeting of the steering committee was scheduled on 2-3 August, while the training workshop was scheduled on 3-4 August.



## B. OPENING

34. Mr. Yousef Nusseir, Director of ICTD at ESCWA, opened the steering committee meeting by welcoming participants to the United Nations House and to Lebanon. He mentioned that the implementation of KN4DC was launched in 2006 and should be closed during September 2010. He went on to say that, as of the fourth quarter of 2010, ESCWA and other United Nations regional commissions will no longer be managing this project, but will remain at the disposal of newly formed steering committees and will provide expert advice as needed. Mr. Nusseir expressed his hope that the steering committee will move this project from the pilot phase to a knowledge-rich production phase. He also stressed the importance of the sustainability of this initiative in the post-ESCWA phase and the high impact of external funding on maintaining the network activities and development results in disadvantaged areas. He opined that three factors contribute to putting barriers to sustainability: (a) depletion of funds; (b) excessive broadening of topics that causes loss of focus; and (c) changing of positions that creates a vacuum in implementation teams.

## C. PARTICIPANTS

35. Participation in this event included those attending the steering committee meeting and those being trained on using the new knowledge portal. In total, 16 participants were present from six ESCWA member countries. The detailed list of participants may be found in annex I.

## D. AGENDA

36. The agenda of the three-day event is set forth below:

- (a) Introductory Meeting of the ESCWA Knowledge Network Steering Committee:
  - (i) Introduction of the Members of EKNESC;
  - (ii) Review of Project Activities;
  - (iii) Terms of Reference of EKNESC;
  - (iv) Eligibility Criteria for Joining and Expanding the ESCWA knowledge network;
  - (v) Strategy and Plan of Action for EKNESC;
  - (vi) Election of a Chairperson for EKNESC;
  - (vii) Presentations on Knowledge Hubs in the ESCWA Region;
  - (viii) Introduction to the Global Knowledge Portal;
- (b) Global Knowledge Network Portal Training Workshop:
  - (i) Training on the Global Knowledge Portal;
  - (ii) Specialized Global and Regional Networks.

## E. DOCUMENTS

37. The list of the documents, including presentations, submitted to the event is available on the ESCWA website at: <http://www.escwa.un.org/information/meetingdetails.asp?referenceNum=1326E>.

Annex I\*

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## Annex II

### **KNOWLEDGE NETWORKS THROUGH ICT ACCESS POINTS FOR DISADVANTAGED COMMUNITIES**

#### **ESCWA KNOWLEDGE NETWORK STEERING COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE**

##### **Composition**

The ESCWA Knowledge Network Steering Committee (EKNSC) shall be composed of active and committed representatives, preferably from ESCWA member countries, who shall be designated for a two-year renewable term. The members of the committee shall be closely acquainted with the concept and work of multi-purpose technology community centres and knowledge networks.

##### **Functions**

The members of the EKNSC shall:

- (a) Coordinate the work and initiatives of the ESCWA knowledge network and define its priorities and strategies in consultation with stakeholders;
- (b) Facilitate and create platforms for better coordination and enhanced complementarity among members of the regional network as well as those of other global and regional knowledge networks;
- (c) Develop and implement regional work programmes that will benefit the communities originally targeted by KN4DC, with an emphasis on youth and women;
- (d) Liaise with the steering committees of the KN4DC global and regional networks to encourage the cross-fertilization of ideas and to improve regional and global cooperation;
- (e) Encourage communication, the exchange of experience, best practices and lessons learned between knowledge hubs and knowledge networks, regionally and globally;
- (f) Promote fundraising and mobilization of resources in support of the initiatives, activities and events of the knowledge network;
- (g) Promote the objectives of KN4DC through outreach with similar networks, Governments, business leaders, civil society, academic institutions and technology communities;
- (h) Bring to the attention of the global steering committee regional perspectives and inform it of regional developments and initiatives;
- (i) Prepare reports on activities and outcomes to stakeholders in the region, including Governments, business leaders, civil society, academia and technology communities;
- (j) Report periodically to the global steering committee.

### Annex III

## **KNOWLEDGE NETWORKS THROUGH ICT ACCESS POINTS FOR DISADVANTAGED COMMUNITIES**

### **ADMISSION OF NEW MEMBERS TO THE ESCWA KNOWLEDGE NETWORK ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA**

#### **Introduction**

The ESCWA knowledge network was limited, in its pilot phase, to 13 knowledge hubs. At this stage, the ESCWA knowledge network is ready to expand. To ensure that the objectives of the network are met, hubs interested in joining it must meet the requirements listed below.

#### **Eligibility criteria**

In order to be admitted to the ESCWA knowledge network, hubs must:

- (a) Be situated geographically in the ESCWA region;
- (b) Be, or be part of, a non-profit organization;
- (c) Offer services and programmes that cater for the needs of the target groups of the network, namely poor and disadvantaged communities, while putting special emphasis on programmes that improve the situation of women and youth;
- (d) Use various ICT tools, particularly websites, to disseminate knowledge that is relevant to the improvement of the lot of the communities they serve;
- (e) Commit to communicate regularly, particularly through the ESCWA Knowledge Network Portal, with other hubs that are part of the network in order to exchange information about experiences and best practices that would benefit the target groups of the network;
- (f) Show willingness to partner with and work closely with other ESCWA knowledge network members, similar networks, Governments, business leaders, civil society, academia and the private sector to achieve the goals of the network;
- (g) Coordinate with and report regularly to the secretariat of the network.

## Annex IV

### **KNOWLEDGE NETWORKS THROUGH ICT ACCESS POINTS FOR DISADVANTAGED COMMUNITIES**

#### **ESCWA KNOWLEDGE NETWORK STEERING COMMITTEE STRATEGY**

##### **Background**

Launched in mid-2006, the United Nations Development Account project entitled Knowledge Networks through ICT Access Points for Disadvantaged Communities (KN4DC) is currently in its final stages of implementation. Led by ESCWA and co-jointly managed with other United Nations regional commissions, namely the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), its main objective is to empower disadvantaged communities by transforming selected ICT access points/telecentres into networked knowledge hubs. By providing, developing, organizing, sharing and disseminating knowledge in areas of sustainable development that include employment, education, gender and health, the project should improve the living standards of the targeted communities.

Past project activities carried out at a regional level by participating regional commissions have included: (a) the review and assessment of ICT access points/telecentres in the region covered by a regional commission; (b) the selection, by a regional commission, of ICT access points/telecentres to be included as knowledge hubs in the pilot phase of the project; (c) the development of regional knowledge strategies; (d) the design and implementation of regional knowledge network portals; and (e) workshops aimed at sharing knowledge, strengthening the networking process and building the capacities of telecentre managers. At a global level, past project activities have included: (a) a global inception meeting that assembled all regional commissions and that included discussions about and recommendations on project activities; (b) the preparation of a global strategy covering the various processes needed for the transformation of ICT access points into knowledge hubs; (c) the development of a global portal that aims at facilitating the networking process between participating ICT access points/telecentres from various regions; and (d) a final global meeting that brought together all regional commissions and that focused on the successes, shortcomings and expectations of the project.

To ensure the continuity of the benefits of the project beyond the closing date of its pilot phase, participating regional commissions have either created, or are in the process of creating, regional steering committees. The main objective of the steering committees is the sustainability and expansion of existing knowledge networks. This document will set forth a draft strategy for the steering committee of the knowledge network in the ESCWA region. It has an accompanying document that describes the terms of reference of what would be henceforth known as the ESCWA Knowledge Network Steering Committee (EKNSC).

##### **Functions**

The main functions of EKNSC are:

- (a) Supervision of the work and initiatives of the ESCWA knowledge network and the definition of its priorities and strategies;
- (b) Preservation of the characteristics of the ESCWA knowledge network while expanding it;
- (c) Mobilization of resources and fund-raising in support of the initiatives, activities and events of the knowledge network;

(d) Creation and facilitation of programmes that are aimed at better coordination among members of the regional network and those of other regional and global knowledge networks;

(e) Development of and follow-up on the implementation of regional work programmes/plans that will benefit the communities originally targeted by KN4DC, with an emphasis on youth and women;

(f) Liaison with the steering committees of the KN4DC global and regional networks;

(g) Promotion of the exchange of experience, best practices and lessons learned between knowledge hubs and knowledge networks, regionally and globally.

### **Partnerships**

The sustainability of the benefits of the KN4DC project depends highly on the capacity of the steering committee to partner with stakeholders that had previously participated in the activities of the project or those that may, in the future, bring added benefits. Potential stakeholders/partners include, but are not limited to, national Governments, international organizations, intergovernmental organizations, the private sector, civil society, media, academia and the general public. In this regard, the steering committee will:

(a) Promote various partnering possibilities to potential KN4DC stakeholders;

(b) Liaise with international bodies, multinationals and various such philanthropic societies as the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), telecentre.org and the Al Maktoum Foundation, to secure partnerships in order to achieve the goals of the KN4DC project.

### **Funding**

EKNSC will make every effort to raise funds, seek sponsorships and mobilize resources to support various activities, initiatives and events having objectives that correspond to those of the KN4DC project. EKNSC will also assist and offer guidance to KN4DC stakeholders in their effort to seek funds that will ensure sustainability of the existing or support the implementation of new initiatives.

### **Media**

EKNSC will endeavour to promote awareness of the objectives and activities related to the ESCWA knowledge network. In this regard, the steering committee will:

(a) Raise awareness of policymakers on knowledge hubs and networks;

(b) Launch national and regional awareness campaigns and publish press releases to promote the KN4DC project, its objectives and activities;

(c) Encourage knowledge hubs to keep their websites updated;

(d) Coordinate with the secretary of the ESCWA knowledge network to ensure that the latest related news and updates are published on the knowledge portal.

### **Other activities**

In addition to the tasks described in the sections above, the steering committee will organize and/or participate in regional and international conferences, seminars and workshops to promote EKNSC.