UN-ESWA
United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

WORKSHOP ON CYBER LEGISLATION AND ITS IMPLEMENTATION IN THE ESCWA REGION
15-16 December 2008, Beirut, Lebanon

Information Note

Background

An enabling environment is an essential component of the information society which relies for its development on a number of pillars, one of which being the enactment of cyber legislations which cover, among others, electronic communications, e-signatures, e-transactions, e-commerce, consumer protection, data protection, data privacy, cyber crimes and intellectual property rights. The effective and ethical use of cyberspace also necessitates the active involvement of international organizations and NGOs as well as that of the public and private sectors.

Most developed countries, as well as some developing countries, have modernized their legal and regulatory framework to meet the requirements that were brought forth by the adoption of new information technologies. Most ESCWA member countries, however, are still in the early stages of cyber legislation development and enactment. In order to narrow this legislative divide and to prevent the illicit and illegal use of cyberspace in the region, ESCWA member countries need to agree on a course of action that covers the formulation of cyberspace laws and the adoption of organizational and management directives.

Within this context, ESCWA initiated in 2007 its involvement in the domain of cyber legislations with two activities. The first activity was a study entitled “Models for Cyber Legislation in ESCWA Member Countries” which: (a) reviewed the status of regional and international cyber legislations; (b) compared the status of the region to that of other regions in the world; (c) proposed a set of directives and guidelines for formulating cyberspace legislations; and (d) illustrated the benefits of enacting more comprehensive and regionally harmonized cyber legislations. The study was complemented with a cyber legislation template which acts as a framework for the development of new national cyber legislations or for the amendment of existing ones.

The second activity was a Peer Consultation Meeting which was organized in December 2007 and aimed at presenting and discussing the aforementioned study and template. The meeting brought together a network of experts and institutions that are involved in the development, improvement and implementation of cyber legislations in the ESCWA region. The recommendations of this meeting stressed the importance of the study and of the template and recommended a set of future actions which highlighted the value of capacity-building and called for the enactment, improvement and harmonization of cyber legislations in the region.

ESCWA intends to continue its activities related to supporting the enactment of cyber legislations in member countries with the organization of a workshop on “Cyber Legislation and its Implementation in the ESCWA Region”.

Objectives

The direct objective of the Workshop is to provide training on the utilization of ESCWA’s cyber legislation template for the assessment and the development of national cyberspace laws. The training will include detailed explanation of the template’s sections, constituents and linkages. Selected case studies will highlight the template’s feasibility at the country level. The Workshop will also overview the progress achieved in developing cyber legislation in selected member countries.

The Workshop’s long-term objective is to harmonize cyber legislations in the ESCWA member countries through the use of this template and other practical measures in the legislative processes.
Topics

The main topics of the workshop include:
(a) An overview of the current status of cyberspace legislation in the ESCWA region;
(b) A presentation of the template on cyber legislation, its objectives and constituent parts;
(c) An itemized explanation of the template’s sections and of its linkages to corresponding laws;
(d) Case studies geared towards validating the applicability of the template to national cyber legislations;
(e) Discussion of the implementation of the template in ESCWA member countries;
(f) Highlights of cyber legislation development in selected member countries.

Outcomes

The workshop’s expected outcomes:
(a) Acceptance of the template as a measurement tool for the assessment of the status of cyber legislations in the ESCWA member countries;
(b) Enhancement of the methodology and expansion of the reach of national cyberspace laws in ESCWA member countries;
(c) Development of the cyber legislation drafting skills of ESCWA member countries;
(d) Enlargement of the network of experts and institutions involved in the development, improvement and implementation of cyber legislations in the ESCWA region.

Organization

The workshop is organized by the ICT Division of UN-ESCWA. It will be held at the UN House in Beirut on the 15th and 16th of December 2008.

Participants and Registration

Participants in the workshop will be individuals involved in the development of cyber legislations in ESCWA member countries. They will include representatives of ministries of justice, ministries of economy and ministries of telecommunications and information technology, preferably with a combined knowledge of the ICT and legal sectors.

Participants are requested to fill out the registration form and to submit it by email to escwa-ictd@un.org, before 21 November 2008.

Languages

Arabic and English are the working languages of the meeting. Participants are expected to be proficient in both languages as there will be no simultaneous Arabic/English translation.

Travel and Accommodation

Non-Lebanese participants are expected to inquire on their entry visa requirements to Lebanon and to secure one ahead of their anticipated travel date. ESCWA may provide assistance to participants holding Palestinian or Iraqi passports. The UN-ESCWA will cover the travel costs and Daily Subsistence Allowance (DSA) of selected participants from the region’s least developed countries.

Additional information

Submissions, inquiries and requests for additional information should be addressed to:

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