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**Project: Knowledge Networks through ICT Access Points for Disadvantaged Communities (KN4DC)**

**Introductory Meeting of the ESCWA Knowledge Network Steering Committee (KNSC) and**

**Global Knowledge Network Portal (GKNP) Training Workshop**

**Beirut, 2-4 August 2010**

***Preliminary Information Note***

**1. Background**

Launched in mid-2006, the United Nations Development Account project entitled "Knowledge Networks through ICT Access Points for Disadvantaged Communities" is currently in its final stages of implementation. Led by ESCWA and co-jointly managed with other United Nations Regional Commissions (RCs) – namely ECA, ECE, ECLAC and 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 on a regional level by participating RCs have included: (a) The review and assessment of ICT access points/telecentres in the region covered by an RC; (b) The selection by an RC 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. On a global level, past project activities have included: (a) A global inception meeting that assembled all RCs and that included discussions about and recommendations on the project’s 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 RCs and that focused on the successes, shortcomings and expectations of the project.

The next planned activity, subject of this information note, is the “Introductory Meeting of the ESCWA Knowledge Network Steering Committee (KNSC) and Global Knowledge Network Portal (GKNP) Training Workshop.” Scheduled to take place in Beirut between 2 and 4 August 2010, this gathering will bring together, for the first time, members of the project’s newly-formed steering committee and telecentre managers.

**2. Objectives**

The main objective of the meeting and of the workshop is the sustainability of knowledge networks beyond the lifetime of the current KN4DC project. The meeting and the workshop will help meet this objective by:

a) Bringing together, for the first time, the members of the ESCWA Knowledge Network Steering Committee (KNSC) to devise a strategy and a plan of action for the future running, administration and sustainability of the ESCWA knowledge network after the folding of the activities of the KN4DC project;

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

**3. Topics**

The KNSC meeting will cover the following topics:

* Past and future activities of the project from the perspective of participating telecentres;
* The terms of reference, i.e. the role, duties and responsibilities of the KNSC;
* Coordination of KNSC activities with those of the secretariat of the KN4DC project;
* The eligibility criteria for joining and expanding the ESCWA knowledge network.

The GKNP training workshop will cover the following topics:

* Management, administration and sustainability of the newly-created GKNP;
* Data creation, data entry and improvement of the aforementioned global portal.

**4. Expected outcome**

The main outcomes will be: (a) A list containing the eligibility criteria for the expansion of the ESCWA knowledge network; (b) The terms of reference of KNSC; (c) The election of a chairperson for KNSC; (d) A strategy and a 1-year action plan for the aforementioned committee; and (e) Recommendations on the administration and improvement of the newly-created GKNP.

**5. Participants**

The KNSC meeting will be attended by members of the ESCWA Knowledge Network Steering Committee who were selected from national and regional organizations that operate and/or manage telecentres in various ESCWA member countries and by the secretariat of the ESCWA knowledge network. Participants in the GKNP training workshop will include the managers of the telecentres/knowledge hubs that are part of the KN4DC project and the aforementioned secretariat.

**6. Venue and dates**

The KNSC meeting will take place on 2 and 3 August 2010 and the GKNP training workshop on 3 and 4 August 2010. Both will be held at the UN-House, Riad El Solh Square in Beirut, Lebanon.

**7. Language**

The working languages of the meeting will be Arabic and English. There will be no simultaneous translation. Participants are expected to be familiar with both languages.

**8. Additional information**

Enquiries and requests for additional information should be addressed to:

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