

Information and Communications Technology Policy for Afghanistan

Final Report

*ICT Policy Development and Implementation Seminar for
Afghanistan
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia,
October 14-18, 2002*

**Asia-Pacific Development Information Programme
United Nations Development Programme
(UNDP-APDIP)**

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Information and Communications Technology Policy for Afghanistan

Final Report ICT Policy Development and Implementation Seminar for Afghanistan Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, October 14-18, 2002

Executive Summary

This report represents the results of discussions held by a group of Afghan government officials at an information and communications technology (ICT) policy seminar sponsored by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) through its Asia-Pacific Development Information Programme (APDIP).

Taking into account various Afghan Government policy documents such as the draft *National Development Framework*, the *National Telecommunications Policy*, and the *Telecommunications Development Strategy*, the group identified challenges, issues, and process for developing and implementing a national ICT policy for Afghanistan.

It was recognized that the issues related to the building of physical infrastructure have largely been addressed by the telecommunications policy and development strategy documents. However, the complementary information and capacity building issues that together with the infrastructure issues form the basis for a comprehensive ICT policy remained to be dealt with.

The paper puts forward three objectives to be pursued by the strategy:

1. Network Access
2. Information and Knowledge Access
3. Government Use of ICT

Five principles are also advanced to guide the development and implementation of policy:

1. An interconnected and interoperable network of networks
2. Collaborative public and private sector development
3. Competition in facilities, products and services
4. Privacy protection and network security
5. Lifelong learning as a key element in ICT policy.

Citing a vision to build a high-quality, low-cost ICT network for Afghanistan, the report outlines the public policy issues and recommends the process by which a national ICT policy for Afghanistan should be developed in consultation with stakeholders.

The public policy issues are summarized in the form of questions and will form the basis for consultation with all levels of Afghan society:

1. How fast will the advanced ICT networks be built and how will network improvements be financed?
2. What is the proper balance between competition and regulation?
3. How should copyright and intellectual property issues be addressed?
4. What measures are needed to support Afghan cultural and other content-based products and services?
5. What controls, if any, should be placed on the information that is put on the network?
6. How can ICT be used to improve government services to the public and government operations?
7. How can personal privacy and security of information be protected?
8. How can ICT best be used to improve the growth and competitiveness of Afghan business?
9. How can Afghans be assured of universal access to essential services at reasonable cost?
10. What consumer awareness and learning opportunities should be provided to enable Afghans to be effective users of ICT?

The Minister of Communications will consider establishing a National Information and Communications Technology Council (NICTC) formed of a core group of the UNDP/APDIP ICT policy seminar participants and by representatives from various levels of Afghan society. The NICTC would be tasked with carrying out stakeholder consultations and to make recommendations to the Minister on a national ICT policy that respects the overall social, economic and cultural goals of the Afghan government.

Information and Communications Technology Policy for Afghanistan

Final Report ICT Policy Development and Implementation Seminar for Afghanistan Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, October 14-18, 2002

Introduction

Information and communications technology (ICT) can be a powerful enabler of development goals because its unique characteristics dramatically improve communication and the exchange of information to strengthen and create new economic and social networks.

Recognizing this fact, a group of senior Afghan government officials representing a cross-section of Afghan government ministries, and H.E. Mohd. Masoom Stanekzai, Minister of Communications for Afghanistan, attended an ICT Policy Development and Implementation Seminar sponsored by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) through its Asia-Pacific Development Information Programme (APDIP) in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, October 14-18, 2002. The purpose of the seminar was to identify the challenges, issues and process for developing and implementing a national ICT policy for Afghanistan.

The five-day seminar consisted of a series of presentations from Malaysian government ICT policy and regulatory experts and APDIP personnel, supplemented by ICT policy tutorials and brainstorming sessions led by a skilled facilitator. See **Annex 1** for a summary of the main points of discussion at the seminar. Many of these ideas will serve as points of departure for the consultative discussions on the policy issues raised by this report.

While focusing on ICT policy development and implementation, the seminar discussions also kept in mind the three strategy pillars of the draft *National Development Framework* issued by the Afghan Assistance Coordination Authority in April 2002. The first pillar is to use humanitarian assistance and social policy to lay the foundations for the formation of sustainable human capital. The second is the use of external assistance to build infrastructure that lays the basis for private-sector-led strategy of growth. The third pillar is the creation of sustainable growth where the private sector becomes both the engine of growth and the instrument of social inclusion through the creation of opportunity. Cutting across all these activities are the issues of security, of administrative and financial reform, and of gender.

This report outlines a number of public policy issues that were acknowledged at the seminar as being fundamental to the development of a national ICT policy for Afghanistan. Many of these issues associated with the building of physical communications infrastructure are readily apparent, and have largely been addressed by the *National Telecommunications Policy Paper* (July 2002) and the *Telecommunications Development Strategy* (October 2002) issued by the Ministry of Communications. See **Annex 2** for a summary of recent telecommunications reform and development accomplishments in Afghanistan.

But many other issues have yet to be fully articulated. These issues are complementary to the physical infrastructure issues and deal with the information component of ICT, i.e. content, knowledge and entertainment. Together, these two sets of issues (physical infrastructure and information) form the basis for a comprehensive ICT policy. Over time, these issues will evolve and change as new ICT networks, products and services are introduced.

The report further seeks to propose a strategy for the development and implementation of a national ICT policy for Afghanistan. The Afghanistan ICT strategy must be flexible to help address and adapt to a complex and rapidly changing environment. Informed participation of all strategy stakeholders and coordinated investment of the collective resources of Afghanistan will be essential if the benefits of ICT are to be realized. Government leadership is required to develop and implement a national strategy.

The national ICT policy should be made in Afghanistan, by Afghans, for Afghans. It should be consistent with Afghanistan's history, economic realities, the international context, and the country's unique cultural and social requirements. Recognizing the economic, cultural and social implications of a national ICT policy, seminar participants identified three basic objectives to be pursued by the strategy:

- Network Access – ICT networks must be accessible and affordable to all Afghans
- Information and Knowledge Access – ICT policies for universal access to information and knowledge are crucial if Afghans are to take their rightful place in the global economy
- Government Use of ICT – Government must use ICT to improve its operations and services.

Five principles were advanced to guide the development and implementation of the policy:

1. An interconnected and interoperable network of networks
2. Collaborative public and private sector development
3. Competition in facilities, products and services
4. Privacy protection and network security
5. Lifelong learning as a key element in ICT policy.

It was agreed that the Islamic Transitional Government of Afghanistan, through the Ministry of Communications, should provide the national leadership needed to mobilize the necessary commitment, resources and participation of all stakeholders. Only by working together will the many economic, social and cultural benefits of ICT be realized by the Afghan people.

Vision

The goal for Afghanistan is to build a high-quality, low-cost ICT network, in order to give all Afghans access to the employment, educational, business, health care and entertainment opportunities of the digital age, whoever and wherever they may be.

Mission

The government, in consultation with all stakeholders, should develop a national ICT strategy that will ensure an appropriate balance between commercial and public interests, and among the needs of large and small business, public institutions and individual Afghans. This strategy should be distinctively Afghan, respecting Afghanistan's history, socio-economic and cultural realities, and the international context.

Clearly, the strategy must go beyond developing a plan to build infrastructure or to put computers into offices and homes. It involves preparing Afghans to use ICT so that they can benefit from the enhanced capabilities. It means reviewing and updating legislation that may unintentionally constrain the use of ICT to conduct business. It involves government using new technology to deliver services more effectively, and creating a fiscal climate that encourages investment and innovation.

Objectives

The following three objectives are central to the vision of the national ICT policy:

1. Network Access

Universal access at reasonable cost to ICT networks will be an important factor in promoting employment, economic growth and social well-being. In the *National Telecommunication Policy Paper*, the government has declared that it is a fundamental right of all citizens to have access to diverse means of communication. Although it has to be acknowledged that this is a very long-term objective, the government will support all immediate steps to meet its ultimate goal. The regulatory commission shall develop specific indicators of ICT access, and shall identify targets for moving toward universal access nationwide within an achievable time frame.

2. Information and Knowledge Access

Just as there should be universal access to the network, so should there be universal access to information and knowledge. In the knowledge economy, success will depend on learning new and more efficient ways to gain access to a variety of information and knowledge-based resources. In the same vein, lifelong learning will become imperative in a society where individuals must cope with ever-present change. ICT will become the medium that will provide Afghans in all parts of the country the opportunity to acquire knowledge and skills. In this regard, special attention must be paid to gender to ensure that specific programmes are directed to enhancing the capabilities of girls and women.

3. Government Use of ICT

The role of government as a model user of ICT is significant to the successful broadening of ICT applications. The government has already begun to use ICT to modernize and improve the way it operates by through the implementation of the Afghanistan Information Management System for information management and donor tracking. Significant savings and improved quality of service may be possible for the government through the use of ICT. The government must find best practice solutions in delivering e-government programmes and services to spur the growth of ICT and national development. The strategic use of public ICT procurement can stimulate development and innovation.

Implementation Principles

Implementation of the national strategy should be guided by five principles:

1. An interconnected and interoperable network of networks

Existing and planned public and private networks must be linked together to create a seamless information and communications infrastructure. Entering through any one network will provide a gateway to all others and to a rich variety of development and information, cultural and entertainment products and services. Ultimately, the infrastructure must be ubiquitously available, and must be interactive and able to provide appropriate bandwidth capability. The requirement for open and fair interconnection is recognized in the *National Telecommunications Policy Paper*.

2. Collaborative public and private sector development

For the foreseeable future, the government will play a leading role in ICT sector development. A sustainable financing strategy for both the immediate and long-term is needed. In the near term, it is imperative that donor funds be allocated to assist with urgent development priorities.

While private capital is effectively being harnessed for limited network projects, market conditions in Afghanistan suggest that the government will need to lead the network rehabilitation effort. It will be difficult to secure investment purely from private sources on the scale required to provide even a minimum level of modern network functionality.

For large projects, financing structures that encourage private investment (wholly-owned private service providers, joint ventures with Afghan Telecom, build-operate-transfer arrangements, and so on) will be explored. The immediate task, however, is to quickly improve social and economic opportunities for the Afghan people by substantially supplementing existing operations. Over time, the government will define a roadmap for corporatization and eventual privatization of state-owned network operations.

3. Competition in facilities, products and services

A fair and competitive environment is the cornerstone of the *National Telecommunications Policy*. Pro-competitive policies will be applied to the greatest extent possible in all aspects of ICT development. Open network architecture, open access policies, common technical standards and open source software will permit the entry of all firms (or individuals) who wish to supply equipment, products or services. This will encourage new ideas, new technologies and new partners.

If market forces are allowed to work as they should, Afghans will benefit from a greater choice and lower prices. Encouraging and safeguarding competition, working to eliminate bottlenecks, and protecting consumers against market failures will be public policy priorities.

4. Privacy protection and network security

ICT networks will multiply the flow of information and the related privacy and security challenges must be addressed. The basis of the solution already lies in the *National Telecommunications Policy*, which assures the protection of consumers of telecommunications services from unwarranted use of private customer information by network operators. However, the principles of privacy protection may need to be enshrined in legislation. In addition, ICT network services must be secure from piracy and unauthorized access and the network itself must be reliable and able to provide uninterrupted service in emergency situations.

5. Lifelong learning as a key element in ICT policy

The opportunity to learn is essential for the Afghan people to manage the transition to a knowledge-based society successfully. Accordingly, there is a need to develop learning opportunities for the new environment. Efforts should include the development of distance and e-learning programmes that reach out to women and school children, for upgrading work-related skills, and the stimulation of free and

open source software development. It will be important to involve key users such as NGOs, cooperatives and community groups in using ICT in learning.

Public Policy Issues

Afghanistan already has in place two key building blocks for a national ICT policy in the form of the *National Telecommunications Policy* issued in July 2002, and the *Telecommunications Development Strategy* issued in October 2002. These documents tackle critical aspects of building communications infrastructure. However, a number of complementary public policy issues related to content and capacity building must be addressed before further progress can be made towards the development of a national ICT policy.

These public policy issues, ranging from competition to culture, and from access to learning, can be summarized in the form of questions that should be discussed and debated by representatives of all levels of Afghan society:

Issue 1 How fast will the advanced ICT networks be built and how will network improvements be financed?

The cost of upgrading and ensuring full interconnection of existing and new networks will be high. The *Telecommunications Development Strategy* recognizes that Afghanistan's immediate reconstruction needs cannot be met solely through private sources. Revenues from existing operations are insufficient to restore productive capacity to the sector. The need for capital investment is acute. In the near term, Afghanistan urgently requires assistance from the international donor community to support priority projects that will help ensure the success of the overall development program. Given these constraints, how fast a pace should Afghanistan set for the development of infrastructure? How can public policy or regulatory measures accelerate the process?

Issue 2 What is the proper balance between competition and regulation?

Government policy has moved away from supporting monopolies towards greater reliance on market forces. However, this transition must be handled carefully, to ensure that the benefits of competition are in fact realized. How quickly can pro-competitive policies be applied to all aspects of ICT infrastructure and services? What legislative, policy and regulatory changes are required to provide a forward-looking, integrated and market-oriented environment? How can flexibility be built into these frameworks so that they can stay abreast of rapidly changing technologies?

Issue 3 How should copyright and intellectual property issues be addressed?

The potential for piracy of protected works and the consequent economic losses is a concern to creators and producers. The new digital environment raises a host of intellectual property questions. What measures, if any, does Afghanistan have in

place to protect to protect Afghan creators' rights? What should Afghanistan's position be with respect to various international conventions?

Issue 4 What measures are needed to support Afghan cultural and other content-based products and services?

In developing content and applications for ICT, the role of Afghan culture must not be neglected. Just as ICT has the potential to "bring down borders" between nations, so are there potential negative effects. Larger cultures can dominate smaller ones and define the "global culture" by sheer economic force. What domestic cultural policies are required to ensure a strong Afghan presence on the information infrastructure?

Issue 5 What controls, if any, should be placed on the information that is put on the network?

Offensive content on the network presents complex issues for Afghans and their government. A balance must be struck between ensuring freedom of expression and imposing controls to deter harm, particularly to children. Should there be a gatekeeping function to control what information is available? Is this technically possible? What should be the role of government in this area?

Issue 6 How can ICT be used to improve government services to the public and government operations?

The role of government as a model user of ICT is significant to the successful introduction of ICT to Afghanistan. How can ICT be used to improve public access to information collected by the government in areas of government responsibility such as health, education and agriculture, and to provide other e-government services? How can the government make effective use ICT to streamline its internal operations? How can the government use public procurement of ICT as a tool to stimulate business development and to foster innovation?

Issue 7 How can personal privacy and security of information be protected?

The interconnection of networks increases the flow of personal and business information. Existing data such as financial accounts, educational and medical records can be sent across national borders and sold or integrated with other databases. Because of the potential for abuse, there is a need for privacy protection. What measures does government need to take to protect the privacy and security of information?

Issue 8 How can ICT best be used to improve the growth and competitiveness of Afghan business?

ICT underpins the evolution towards a knowledge-based society. ICT will thus have a profound impact on how Afghan businesses organize and operate. What legislative

provisions are required to ensure that commercial arrangements transacted electronically are valid and enforceable? Are legislative amendments required to remove impediments to electronic commerce by business and governments? What other measures are required to encourage electronic commerce?

Issue 9 How can Afghans be assured of universal access to essential services at reasonable cost?

The *National Telecommunications Policy* and the *Telecommunications Development Strategy* seeks to ensure that all Afghans, have access to affordable communications – whoever and wherever they may be. What measures will be needed to ensure that all Afghans, including those in remote areas, those who are functionally illiterate, and other groups with special needs such as girls as women, have access to an adequate range of services? Should the government play a role in establishing and/or promoting pilot networks – for example, community or specialized networks?

Issue 10 What consumer awareness and learning opportunities should be provided to enable Afghans to be effective users of ICT?

In the information society, success in school, the workplace, and everyday life will depend on learning new and more efficient ways to rapidly access a variety of information and knowledge based resources. Users will need to understand how to access and how to use ICT effectively if they are to derive the full benefits of these services. How will Afghan consumers and small businesses be encouraged to explore the opportunities that ICT will present? Are public awareness and training programmes needed? Who should be responsible for designing and delivering these programmes? In other words, how can we best develop familiarity and confidence so that all Afghans take advantage of the opportunities for learning, working, creating new jobs, and interacting on new economic, social and cultural levels?

The Road Ahead

The Afghan ICT policy is a work in progress. Actions taken on a day-to-day basis are influencing its development. The private sector and international donors continue to invest in new facilities. Businesses and consumers are beginning to seek and demand new choices. The government is also a key player. It is responsible for a number of important legislative, policy and regulatory instruments that will influence the development of ICT systems in Afghanistan.

Many of the questions raised in this report are being confronted now, but they will evolve as advanced networks and new services are introduced. The answers must therefore be flexible enough to remain relevant over the longer term. These public policy issues are too important to be left to any single organization or narrow set of interests. They are too important to be left unanswered for long.

The Afghan national ICT policy can only be achieved collaboratively through the informed participation of all stakeholders and the coordinated investment of collective resources. It is time to start the process of study and consultation with the industries that will build the ICT system; with those who will provide the content it will carry; and with the businesses, institutions, and ordinary citizens who will benefit from its availability.

With this purpose in mind, the Minister of Communications said at the seminar that he would consider establishing a National Information and Communications Technology Council (NICTC). The NICTC could be partly modeled on the Malaysian National Information Technology Council (NITC), which made a presentation to the seminar group earlier in the week. For an overview of the Malaysian NITC see **Annex 3**. The nucleus of initial members for the Afghan NICTC would be drawn from the original participants of the ICT policy seminar in Kuala Lumpur. To this nucleus, could be added representatives from industry, labour, and public interest groups, as well as the country-at-large. Donor groups might be invited to participate in the NICTC on occasion as observers and advisers.

The NICTC could subdivide itself into working groups to study related issues and carry out stakeholder consultations. Recommendations would be made to the Minister of Communications on a national ICT policy to govern the evolution of Afghanistan's information and communications infrastructure and services respecting the overall social, economic and cultural goals of the Afghan government.

*(Note: This report was drafted by the Asia-Pacific Development Information Programme based on discussions at the ICT Policy Development and Implementation Seminar for Afghanistan, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, October 14-18, 2002. The contributions of the seminar participants listed in **Annex 4** are gratefully acknowledged.)*

UNDP-APDIP, Kuala Lumpur, 26 October 2002.

Annex 1

Information and Communication Technology Policy Development and Implementation Seminar for Afghanistan

**Organized and hosted by Asia-Pacific Development Information Programme,
(UNDP-APDIP), Kuala Lumpur, 14-18 October, 2002**

Summary of Group Discussion Points

1. Infrastructure Development

- National assets such as country Top Level Domain, Frequency should be reclaimed.
- Setting up AFNIC.
- IP enabling the existing infrastructure to use it more cost effective and provide new services in five main cities.
- Installation of the five more VSAT's in other provinces and connecting them with the existing VSAT's.
- Broad band (back bone) infrastructure, which will connect far ends of the country and to the world, should be completed.
- Local Internet exchange points should be established to keep domestic traffic local to save the international bandwidth.
- An infrastructure ready for transfer to new platforms technologies should be designed in order to meet the future needs such as migration from IPv4 to IPv6.
- In order to grow, the local IT industry will need a suitable support infrastructure, i.e., telecommunications and information data banks. Development of the telecommunications sector will entail deregulation, liberalization, privatization, and the creation of a competitive market.
- New technologies which should be relevant, advance, sustainable, cost effective and quick to deploy should be introduces.
- Establish IT parks and incubators, equipped with modern facilities and matchless incentives, to provide a one-stop shop for prospective investors in the IT industry.
- A Telecom Policy has already been notified and defines the broad objectives of the Government for the telecom sector.
- A massive IT promotion and awareness campaign should be undertaken.
- The Internet is likely to continue to revolutionize the way people communicate and access information. To promote Internet and its use in Afghanistan, it is necessary to establish ISP's and provide low-cost and reliable access to the international bandwidth, widespread public access to

networked computers, a base of educated and trained users and providers and support for the development of national Internet content.

- A developed local software industry will not only meet Afghanistan's own needs, but will also serve as a training ground for capturing export markets.
- Information Technology recreational centers are needed to develop the software industry. These centers should provide workspace, utilities, telecom, and other infrastructure facilities of international standard where the skills of the local programmers should be improved.
- Databases provide quick and easy access to information, which greatly facilitates the work and increases the productivity of businesses and institutions. National databases should be developed; access to these databases should be made possible, which is essential for coordinated and informed decision-making and for efficient planning. National databases are thus an important part of the IT infrastructure.
- Putting together supporting infrastructure required for the digital economy such as financial payment systems, certification authorities etc.

2. IT Training

Investments in IT training are expected to yield quick results. Policy recommendations include:

- Take steps to strengthen existing IT training institutions and encourage the setting up of new IT training institutes, update and standardize curriculum, introduce new technologies through linkages with global IT firms, develop strong local faculties, and provide student scholarships.
- Organize teacher training on a top-priority basis to meet the growing demand for qualified teachers in IT and for upgrading their skills regularly. To rapidly increase the annual production of IT manpower, crash-training programs should be launched.
- Government emphases on IT education in primary and secondary schools should be elaborated.
- ICT training centers should be expanded to five main cities in the country.
- Special ICT center for the teachers in 10 cities should be established and teacher should use relevant technology such as radio to communicate with students.
- To ensure maximum utilization of existing facilities, encourage universities and high schools to collaborate with the private sector in conducting training programs during vacations and at other times when the facilities are not in use.
- Introduce mandatory IT literacy courses for all levels of civil and military personnel.
- Make a special effort to train and induct women in the IT sector.
- Make extra efforts to educate and train people with special needs in order to give them equal opportunity in the society and bridge the digital divide.
- Manpower development is imperative for the local IT industry in order to achieve the goals set for the reconstruction of the country.

- By the end of December 2002 at least a core group of IT users should be trained in each ministry and institution.
- By the end 2003 at least 40 ICT professional trainers trained both inside and outside the country.
- By the end of 2004 a comprehensive training curriculum developed and ICT training institute become functional with training capacity of 400-600 people (government private sector and general public benefit).
- By the end of 2003 at least 30% of employs of government institutions, school teachers should be trained as users of ICT.
- Utilizing the development partners as training consultancy firms for consistency in transfer of the knowledge.
- Community communication centers and training centers for youth should be established in rural areas.

3. ICT and government

- Government should research and develop a statement of requirements regarding ICT in the country.
- A working group comprising of members representing different departments of the government and society should be organized, which should address the requirements.
- International standards and its implementation by public/government and private sectors should be designed.
- The government should be more of a facilitator than a restrictive regulator.
- A regulatory board should be formed consisting of competent members.
- National and Government support campaign for ICT promotion should be lunched.
- Special fund should be raised for the promotion of ICT in different parts of the country.
- In the government sector, knowledge of ICT is limited. The different departments and agencies are, therefore, technically at a disadvantageous position to take sound decisions in acquiring ICT, HR development program and operational support for their system. Therefore, the government agencies should be given priority in the training programs.
- Working Groups shall be formed to create awareness in all Government organizations about the utility of computers and IT.
- Develop new ways to use information technology to help solve the most pressing problems of human and economic development, education, health, poverty alleviation, rural development, and care for the environment.
- Government should support small, medium and micro enterprises development in the ICT sector.
- Role of Diaspora in ICT promotion and investment should be facilitated and encouraged.
- Participation in international forums on ICT and seeking support from ICT taskforce of UN should be given special attention.

- Afghans should retain the ownership of the industry.

4. ICT and Business

- In the new economy, information is a critical resource and the basis for competition.
- Awareness programmers should be arranged for the business class of the country in order to know the role of ICT in business and how can this technology help them do their business in good way.
- Databases should be developed, which should contain information about Afghan companies in the country and abroad.
- Information centers should be established, with the capability of providing information to both the local and international companies regarding the production in the country.

Annex 2

Telecommunications Accomplishments in Afghanistan To-Date

- Completion of National Telecommunications Policy
- Successful completion of National GSM Tender
- Rehabilitation of Telecoms Training Centre
- Restoration of approximately 45% of existing fixed network in Kabul city
- Agreements for training to start – USA, Pakistan, Iran
- Inter Ministerial communications almost completed (World Bank)
- Installation of VSAT satellite services for domestic long distance traffic in five major cities currently in progress (Herat, Kabul, Kandahar, Kunduz, Jalalabad)
- Commissioned 5000-line digital switch in Kandahar
- Concluded agreement with ITU to set up spectrum management and frequency planning department.
- Concluded agreement with ITU for technical assistance related to drafting of the new Telecommunications Law
- Engaged strategic technical assistance professionals from the UK and USA
- Recognition of the +93 country code by major international and regional carriers
- ICT centres being set up in Kabul and provinces (UNDP)
- Recovery of Afghanistan's .af domain name
- Established MoC web site (www.af-com-ministry.com)

Source: *Telecommunications Development Strategy*, Afghanistan Ministry of Communications, October 2002.

Annex 3

Malaysian National IT Council (NITC)

- Chaired by the Prime Minister of Malaysia
- Established in 1994 with the vision of creating a values-based Knowledge Society in line with the aspirations of Vision 2020
- Aims to enhance the development and utilization of ICT as a strategic technology for national development
- Acts as a think-tank at the highest level and advises the government on matters pertaining to the development of ICT in Malaysia

Annex 4

Information and Communication Technology Policy Development and Implementation Seminar for Afghanistan

Organized and hosted by Asia-Pacific Development Information Programme, (UNDP-APDIP), Kuala Lumpur, 14-18 October, 2002

Seminar Participants from Afghanistan

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Mr. Muhammad Moyen Marastyal
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Ministry of Justice

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