

4th SASEC ICT Working Group Meeting
8-9 October 2008, Delhi, India

Joint Statement

1. The SASEC ICT Working Group, being a forum for the development and provision of social and economic services through information and communication technology (ICT), intend to build a co-operative partnership in the development of the existing technological capabilities and applications of the region for their mutually obtainable benefit.
2. The SASEC ICT Working Group recognizes that potential social and economic benefits can be derived from an efficient and affordable ICT via the linking of SASEC countries' existing ICT infrastructure and enhancing the regional ICT connectivity.
3. The SASEC ICT Working Group further recognizes the need to promote collaboration among SASEC countries in ICT applications and services, with a view to leveraging capabilities and opportunities between them.
4. The SASEC ICT Working Group desires to facilitate the development of human resources, enhance the availability of government services, increase the access of all communities to technology, and promote the development of trade and ICT industries through collaboration of each other.
5. The SASEC ICT Working Group further desires to implement integrated ICT co-operation programs aimed at fostering the development, access, and applications of ICT technology in SASEC countries.
6. With this vision, the member countries of the SASEC ICT Working Group, i.e., Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, and Nepal, encourage each other to work collaboratively to develop and implement strategies (i) to promote closer co-operation and exchange of information pertaining to the development and applications of ICT in accordance with the relevant laws and regulations of each country on the basis of mutual interest and benefit, and (ii) to improve the social and economic participation by the people in all communities within each country, by providing access to appropriate ICT support and infrastructure which best meets their needs and abilities.
7. Under this framework of collaboration, the member countries of the SASEC ICT Working Group will, in the medium-and long-term, endeavor to undertake and accomplish the regional ICT development programs recommended by the SASEC ICT Development Master Plan.
8. In a concrete form, the member countries of the SASEC ICT Working Group agree to participate in, and collaborate with each other to implement, the SASEC Information Highway Project and thereby help each other realize expected project benefits accruing from the SASEC regional network that will directly connect SASEC countries with robust data interchange capacity, the SASEC village network that will expand ICT-accessibility in remote rural areas in the region, and the SASEC research and training network that will improve human resources, regional knowledge, and innovation and businesses for ICT.