



**Chief Executives Board
for Coordination**

CEB/2009/HLCM/ICT/8
21 April 2009

12th Meeting of the CEB ICT Network

United Nations, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
Bangkok, 24 March 2009

Discussion summary and conclusions

1. Opening of the Meeting

1. The 12th session of the ICT Network opened by thanking Ms. Susana Malcorra for guiding the Network for the previous three years and welcoming Ms. Angela Kane, Under-Secretary-General for Management for the United Nations Secretariat in her capacity as the ICT Network Chair.
2. Mr. Peter Van Laere, on behalf of the UNESCAP Executive Secretary, welcomed the Network to the ESCAP facility, noting the important role ICT plays in their daily operations. The Chair then welcomed new participants (notably representatives of UNHCR, UNICEF, IOM and UNESCAP), returning participants who have not been able to attend recent meetings and longer-standing members.
3. The Network adopted the agenda with the addition of an item under Any Other Business.

2. ICT: Adding Business Value

4. Introducing the first agenda item, Adding Business Value, the Chair noted that the current economic climate has led many organizations to seek greater business value from their administrative investments, including ICT, and that organizations increasingly depend on substantial business cases to demonstrate value prior to investment.
5. The Chair pointed out that while the Network has previously focused on the instruments used to measure the business value of ICT initiatives, organizations across the UN system have introduced innovative ICT applications that others may find useful. She invited members to present to the Network examples of systems or solutions which demonstrate the concept of adding value with ICT. These presentations were intended to act

as a forum for sharing ideas as well as generate a discussion as to the types of applications from which agencies in the UN system and their stakeholders will derive the most benefit.

6. UNHCR presented their recent adoption of Skype as one of several organizational initiatives intended to improve working conditions and employee retention in non-family duty stations. Since the implementation of Skype did not replace an existing system, the agency decided not to conduct a detailed business case. Instead, they approached the project as a pilot to determine Skype's value as one element in their plans to address problems related to isolation in the deep field environment, including high divorce rates among staff members in these situations. In addition, the project addressed the rising covert and unsupported use of the application within the organization.
7. UNHCR began working in cooperation with Skype to introduce changes in the application, some of which have hindered its widespread adoption by other organizations, even within the enterprise suite offered by the company. Network security issues, especially firewall and proxy management, were addressed and may be incorporated into future commercial versions. The result is a global solution to that has proven to be of value to UNHCR staff and that complements other HR activities. In addition to improvements in network and desktop security, measuring the success of this project must also include workforce satisfaction and retention. The presentation also noted that due to the success of the collaboration between Skype and UNHCR, Skypecasts have been added to the Public Relations toolkit and have featured UNHCR's Goodwill Ambassadors.
8. During the discussion, ICT Network members observed that significant challenges remain before the UN System can accept Skype as a system-wide solution. For example, organizations noted that Skype remains focused on a single user and therefore does not scale very well to an enterprise environment. Drawing from their own experiences with Skype, the World Bank echoed the social welfare benefits of using this tool and UNDP reported they have integrated Skype into their telephone system. The Network expressed appreciation to UNHCR for presenting this case and requested them to distribute further policies that may support the technical implementation of this tool including, for example, integration with existing (PBX) systems. UNHCR agreed to report back on progress and outlining lessons learnt and best practices. These will include networking guidelines for the benefit of other Network members and will initially be directed to those organizations with a field presence.
9. In the second presentation, WFP shared their observations on the role of ICT and its potential to deliver value within the organization. The presentation began by illustrating two perspectives on the position of the ICT department within an organization; the budget perspective, which for WFP demonstrated

responsibility for only 25% of overall ICT expenditure, and the “task category” perspective, which plotted the value chain of ICT along a continuum that began with basic infrastructure maintenance and extended up to the high value-adding tasks of process re-engineering and business transformation, noting that 70% of many CIO’s time is spent performing the more basic tasks.

10. The presentation suggested that by working with partners to deliver the more basic, utility-type, services, either with outsource providers like the UN International Computer Centre or shared services with other organizations, then ICT departments could devote their resources (people, funds and time) to performing more of the ICT-related activities that provide higher value. The presentation noted further that agencies became differentiated at the higher levels of the value chain; i.e. what constitutes value-added activities would differ across agencies based on their mandate, whereas at the utility level most ICT departments perform more or less the same functions (e-mail, shared file storage, application server management, etc). The presentation concluded by suggesting a direction the ICT Network could collectively take to move ICT up the value chain through coordinated delivery of basic services and challenged the network to (a) come to an agreement on the role of the CIO as an enabler of business value; (b) determine the areas that may engender common interest; (c) resolve any conflicts of interest that may arise between an individual organization’s objectives and cross-agency common ICT initiatives; (d) remove any inhibitors to common activities at infrastructure level; and (e) determine how the ICT Network Chair, as the link between the Network and the HLCM, can help support common initiatives.
11. In the third presentation, The World Bank Group explained that recent security-related events raised the profile of ICT operations at their institution and provided an opportunity to discuss ICT issues at the board level. Advancing beyond the discussion of infrastructure, utility or security services, this high-level involvement led to an emphasis on a cheaper, better and faster client focus. The main outcome was the decision to appoint a CIO at the World Bank Group level, with the ability to coordinate and leverage ICT investments of these agencies.
12. At the World Bank, effective ICT governance was recognized as a critical element in the achievement of efficiencies (through economies of scale) and to ensure an environment supportive of the delivery of business value. The practice of benchmarking was extended beyond conventional costing to a mechanism to evaluate decisions in other areas, including information security and governance and thereby incorporated within ICT decision making processes. The Bank presentation provided details on how this global perspective has resulted in the identification of three ICT business priorities: information security, web governance and a business-wide knowledge management programme.

13. During the discussion, the Chair affirmed the need for sharing similar experiences on ICT governance among Network members. While recognizing governance as a means to align ICT investments with business needs and ensure management support, the discussion that followed underlined the need to adapt the approach to organizations' own management and decision-making structures.
14. In the final presentation, UNFCCC provided an overview of a new institution-wide record management system. While based on regulatory requirements, ICT's business focus allowed for an analysis of other information based processes that could be improved through its introduction. After an analysis of the way business units performed their functions, ICT was able to integrate diverse information sources. This approach proved successful in the alignment of organization business needs to any Secretariat initiative and is planned for the introduction of a new ERP platform. ICT Network members recognized this as an excellent example of bridging the gap between utility responsibilities and the achievement of business transformation concurrently.
15. After thanking the presenters for their contribution to the topic of adding business value, the Network focused its discussion on the ways advanced videoconferencing technologies can add value to an organization's business operations. Specifically, the capabilities and value of the Cisco TelePresence product was the subject of some discussion, with the Network deciding to examine its technical capability, scalability, security and other characteristics, in order to determine its feasibility as a high-quality distance meeting tool. The ITU briefed the Network on recent events that benefited from using this technology while the UN Secretariat described recent discussions regarding the introduction of the Cisco TelePresence product into the organization, and the challenges it presented. Citing the adoption of new 3D telecommunication technologies by some organizations, the need to evaluate business opportunities and constraints presented by different technologies was recognized by all participants.
16. At the conclusion of the meeting, UNFCCC had also noted that like ITU, it is also planning a telepresence implementation to be completed by the end of 2009. Members raised concerns about the technical compatibility and security of emerging and proprietary solutions and highlighted the need to address the adoption of such solutions in a concerted manner. Recognizing the importance of momentum on this topic, WHO offered to organize and host the next meeting of the Inter-Agency Telecommunications Advisory Group as a forum to explore the technology issues behind advanced videoconferencing solutions.
17. **Outcome:**
 - **UNHCR, with contributions from other interested agencies and utilizing the ITAG as a forum for discussion as necessary, to lead**

this initiative beginning with a review of any existing Skype implementations within the UN system and examining all aspects of Skype that may impact an agency's implementation, including cost, security, value, network, sharing and scaling. UNHCR to report at the next session and share White Papers and any other material on Skype implementations prior to the next session.

- **ITAG – Examine Cisco TelePresence product and other videoconferencing solutions, especially the technical compatibility, scalability within current infrastructure, security and proprietary standards. While the ITAG will take this further and report back to the ICT Network, any discussion at the ITAG would benefit from a preliminary analysis by a small working group. Agencies interested in participating in this activity contact CEB Secretariat.**
- **WHO, working with the CEB Secretariat and the UN Secretariat, to host the next ITAG meeting.**
- **ITU/UNFCCC - At next session present status on ITU and UNFCCC implementations of Cisco solution.**

3. System-Wide Business Practices

18. Introducing the business practices agenda item, the Chair noted that in the past months many discussions have taken place with Member States as potential donors. As part of that process, the Steering Committee for Business Practices agreed on a list of tentative priorities to pursue should funds become available, taking into consideration the readiness of organizations to begin work on the initiatives, the advancement of work already under way and the potential impact of projects upon full implementation. The Network recognized that while funding remains uncertain, the scope of some initiatives will be reduced while others are put on hold. Consequently, discussion on the subject of ICT Business Practices focused on progress made on pilot implementation of One UN system Directory and the Data Centre Consolidation study, both of which received high priority from HLCM Steering Committee as well as the Shared Service Centres and benchmarking initiatives.

a. Shared Service Centres

19. As lead agency on the Shared Service Centre initiative, WFP recalled that this initiative contained many components, including examining the value of sharing basic ICT infrastructure among agencies and exploring how common procurement procedures could lead to financial benefits through economies of scale. On the procurement issue, WFP noted that discussions were proceeding with the procurement network, however the ICT Network agreed at its last meeting to define a small number of Long Term Agreements (LTAs) that would agencies would find most benefit, and these would be presented to the Procurement Network as a starting point.

20. Outcome:

- **CEB/WFP - Collect ideas for system-wide ICT LTA's for discussion with Procurement Network**
- **WFP - Build on WFP example of outsourcing infrastructure; identify potential partner agencies**
- **WFP - Report on progress measured (on value adding / strategic activities) by outsourcing ICT infrastructure**

b. Benchmarking

21. At its last meeting, the Network adopted the benchmarking tools and practices of the international financial institutions and agreed to review its progress in completing the spreadsheet after a trial period. Recognized outcomes of this exercise include the ability of organizations to better understand ICT spending patterns and establish cross-agency benchmarks for different categories of ICT expenditure. During the discussion, many agencies expressed a lack of clarity regarding the cost elements to include in the analysis and the methodology for aggregating these costs, and suggested that they would benefit from a conference call or videoconference dedicated to this topic. Further discussion, leading from the results of this initiative was, therefore, postponed until the next meeting.

22. Outcome:

- **CEB Secretariat to arrange teleconference to discuss issues hindering completion of the benchmarking template.**

c. Data Centre Consolidation

23. The lead agency for the data centre consolidation initiative, IAEA, recalled that the Network had agreed to focus the scope of the study to measuring the value to agencies of utilizing ICC shared services, and building on the results of the recently-released JIU report on ICT hosting. IAEA reported that work on the study should commence shortly, with the results reported at the next ICT Network meeting. As an adjunct to the study, IAEA suggested that ICT Network members with experience in off-shoring, out-sourcing and in-sourcing may wish to provide examples of these activities to share with the Network.

24. Outcome:

- **IAEA, through CEB Secretariat, to call for “success stories” to be shared with the Network. CEB Secretariat to facilitate timely collection of data requested by consultant.**

d. UN System Directory

25. UNICC provided an update to the Network on the status of the One UN directory project, which seeks to provide a centralized contact directory of UN system staff. The review recalled that at its 82nd Session, UNICC Management Committee agreed to host, without charge for the first year, the infrastructure for the Directory, which was originally developed by UNDP. It was noted that UNDP contributed to the design and implementation and has provided the core LDAP software. Members of the ICT Network were asked to nominate technical focal points for the service and consider the expansion of this facility to take advantage of UNICC's Global Messaging System. A teleconference was organized by UNICC jointly with UNDP to present the solution and answer technical questions. A number of technical questions were raised and responded to by UNICC. Noting the interest of a large number of agencies, the current status was summarized as follows:

- Deployed solution: UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, ICC
- Ready for deployment: WFP, FAO, UNAIDS, UNIDO, UNITAR, UNOPS, UNU
- Work in Progress: IAEA, ICAO, ICTY, ILO, ITU, OPCW, UN-DFS, WHO, UN Secretariat

26. UNDP stressed that integration with this service is optional and provides flexibility of data requirements. As a pilot that has been successful, future use of this service now relies on the number of agencies willing to join and share data. Discussions that followed clarified the current status of the governance committee, an outstanding issue to be furthered by CEB Secretariat. Acknowledging the potential value of this project, the Chair underlined the importance of marketing the business case and addressing security and privacy issues arising from the sharing of contact information. The Network agreed that these issues should be discussed within the governance committee, and involve the HR and Legal departments of each member organization as necessary.

27. Outcome:

- **CEB: Facilitate formation of common directory governance committee**
- **UNDP/CEB: Convene Governance Body to develop marketing approach and build business case**
- **UNDP/UNICC: Proceed with activation of additional agencies on new platform**

4. ICT Special Interest Group Updates

28. As chair of the UNDG ICT Tasking Team, WFP provided an update on progress made supporting the One UN pilot implementation phases in Mozambique, Tanzania, Rwanda, Vietnam and Pakistan. The presentation indicated that the Tasking Team was addressing a range of technical issues, including ICT security practices and performance benchmarking UN offices. During the discussion, agencies requested more frequent information flow between the ICT Tasking Group and the Network.
29. The Tasking Team Chair also noted that the concept of a shared access to agency intranets was discussed at HLCM, which requested the ICT Network to develop a common technical approach for securely connecting organization intranets. Members recognized that the business case rested on the value country offices placed on the ability to access intranet information, as opposed to a global policy at headquarter level. The UNDG Tasking Team chair confirmed that interest in this service derived mostly from country-specific operations and agreed that each organization, when deciding to make content available, would maintain control of their own information. As focal point, the UDG agreed to further develop technical policies and practices required for information-sharing at the country level.
30. **Outcome:**
 - **ITAG – explore technical options for shared Intranet access**
 - **WFP: to improve headquarter access to pilot country project related updates**
31. Speaking for CABIO, the Oracle and PeopleSoft user group, UNDP reported progress on a range of inter-agency knowledge sharing initiatives and on the development of release roadmap at its meeting on 5 and 6 February in Washington D.C. Representing the UN system SAP ERP community (SAPSIG), WFP likewise provided the network with an update on its recent video-conference, which focused on inter-agency interest and involvement in UN Secretariat's ERP supplier negotiations with SAP
32. As agreed at last ICT Network meeting, an ad-hoc working group (currently comprising UNFCCC, OPCW, UNJSPF and UNFPA) was established to investigate the effect of UN system ICT policies on carbon emissions. UNFCCC provided an update on next steps of this group, which notably included the organization of video-conference and invited further involvement from the Network. It was noted that the UNEP Sustainable UN (SUN) project is addressing telepresence as a means to reduce travel and, thereby, carbon emissions. Following on from discussions earlier in the day on this subject, it was recognized that further analysis of this solution will also prove valuable to the Green ICT Working Group.
33. **Outcome:**
 - **UNFCCC – Organize a conference call to determine next steps and select a Chair.**

- **UNEP – Contact UNEP Paris to ensure alignment with ICT greening policies.**

5. Other Business

a. Business Continuity

34. The Network was informed of a recent report of the Secretary General on ICT Security, Disaster Recovery and Business Continuity for the United Nations (A/62/477), which resulted in a General Assembly draft resolution emphasizing the importance of close coordination of business continuity management policies among all United Nations entities. During its discussion, agencies agreed to create a compendium of current practices in the area of ICT business continuity that agencies can share, with a view towards developing best practices, and requested the recently-created ICT Information Security Special Interest Group to address this issue.

35. Outcome

- **CEB Secretariat - Convene Security Group and report back to Network**
- **CEB Secretariat - Compile business continuity plans for sharing among Network members**
- **UN Secretariat – Share recent lessons learnt and documentation with CEB Secretariat**

b. Next Meeting

36. In light of a preference for alternating meetings between Europe and North America, the date and venue of the next meeting was discussed between the Network and UNICC.

37. Outcome

- **The next meeting of the ICT Network will be hosted by ITU in Geneva, likely during the beginning of September 2009. ITU are to revert with a specific date.**
- **The following meeting will likely be hosted by the IMF in Washington D.C. in early 2010.**