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## UN Works with the Philippines to Close the Digital Divide

*Government officials receive ICT for development training in Tagaytay City on 17-19 February*

Bangkok (UN/ESCAP Information Services) – The Philippines, renowned as the “SMS capital of the world,” is set to receive a boost this week in its use of information and communication technology (ICT) to promote development, as forty chief information officers from the country’s central government agencies undertake a special UN training programme.

The United Nations Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development (APCICT) – part of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, the UN’s regional arm – has teamed up with the Career Executive Service Board (CESB) and the Development Academy of the Philippines to hold an inaugural national training of trainers workshop, in Tagaytay City, from 17-19 February. The training is part of APCICT’s *Academy of ICT Essentials for Government Leaders Programme*, a specially designed course which provides a comprehensive ICT for development curriculum.

While telecommunications infrastructure is one of the success stories in the Philippines, much more needs to be done in terms of ICT access, opportunity and utilization, according to Hyeun-Suk Rhee, APCICT’s director. “Bringing technologies to the people goes beyond the provision of infrastructure and hardware. The greatest need is for initiatives that encourage learning in different local contexts and facilitate exchanges of experiences and knowledge,” Rhee said.

An official ceremony to sign an agreement between APCICT and CESB to roll-out the *Academy* throughout the Philippines will be held during the workshop’s opening session.

In preparation for the workshop in the Philippines, a pilot national *Academy* workshop was held during October 2008 with 30 senior government officials from the Philippines to solicit feedback on the course content and delivery methodology. Subsequently, authors of the *Academy* training modules and local resource people from CESB have customized the *Academy* modules and added local case studies to meet training needs and increase the relevancy of the course.

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*Headquartered in Bangkok, ESCAP is the largest of the UN's five Regional Commissions in terms of its membership, population served and area covered. The only intergovernmental forum covering the entire Asia-Pacific region, ESCAP works to promote sustainable and inclusive economic and social progress. More information is available at [www.unescap.org](http://www.unescap.org).*

Similar initiatives are already underway in Afghanistan, India, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia and the Pacific island countries. APCICT has been working closely with over a dozen regional and national training institutions across Asia and the Pacific to customize, translate and deliver the *Academy* that take national needs and priorities into account.

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**About UN-APCICT:** A subsidiary body of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and located in Incheon, Republic of Korea, APCICT aims to strengthen the efforts of the member countries of ESCAP to use ICT in their socio-economic development through building human and institutional capacity for ICT.

For more information about the Academy, please visit <http://www.unapcict.org/academy>.

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