

**THE SEVENTH APEC MINISTERIAL MEETING ON THE
TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION INDUSTRY (TELMIN7)
(23-25 April 2008, Bangkok, Thailand)**

**BANGKOK DECLARATION
“Digital Prosperity: Turning Challenges into Achievement”**

1. We, APEC Ministers responsible for the Telecommunications and Information Industry, gathered in Bangkok, Thailand from 23-25 April 2008. We reflected on the challenges for APEC economies and expressed our strong determination and reaffirmed our continued efforts to turn such challenges into opportunities and achievements with a view to making contributions to digital prosperity for the wider economic and social development of our economies. We also noted with satisfaction that the Leaders’ Brunei Goal of Tripling Internet Access within the Asia-Pacific region set in 2000 had been achieved.
2. We welcomed the APEC Economic Leaders' Declaration entitled "Strengthening Our Community, Building a Sustainable Future" in Sydney, Australia, 2007, in which APEC Economic Leaders indicated their collective commitment to regional economic integration, to free and open markets, to the security of our people, and to address the challenges of climate change. We agreed that APEC Telecommunications and Information Working Group (TEL) continues to respond appropriately to our Leaders’ directions, as well as work towards achieving the Bogor Goals of free and open trade and investment in the Asia Pacific region by 2010 for developed economies and 2020 for developing economies and also noted that our Leaders agreed to accelerate efforts toward regional economic integration in a variety of sectors including telecommunications.
3. Similarly, as Leaders stressed the crucial importance of the World Trade Organization (WTO)’s rules-based, global trading system and their determination to bring Doha Round to an early and successful conclusion, we reaffirmed our support for that objective and encouraged TEL to further promote liberalization within APEC economies.
4. We noted that a key foundation for the Asia Pacific Information Society (APIS) is the on-going development of Asia Pacific Information Infrastructure (APII). We reaffirmed our commitment to strengthen the APII and to promote the APIS to be able to respond effectively to the rapid pace of convergence and to overcome the digital divide.
5. We also noted the APEC Ministers’ Statement of 2007 that APEC economies should continue our efforts to strengthen protection and enforcement of Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) in the region in order to foster the development of knowledge-based economies, expand investment opportunities, and promote economic growth.
6. We welcomed the APEC TEL Chair’s report and commended the work of the TEL in pursuing the priorities set at our last meeting in Lima, which focused on next generation networks and technologies, mutual recognition arrangements, regulatory reform, capacity building, protecting electronic information systems of essential infrastructure and services, and enhancing cyber security.

Looking forward, we requested the Working Group to advance its work with an emphasis on the following areas:

Challenges and Strategies to Promote Universal Services

7. Ensuring universally accessible ICT infrastructure and services to bridge the digital divide is crucial to our future social and economic prosperity. We applauded the remarkable progress made in the APEC region by individual member economies towards achieving the Brunei Goal of universal Internet access by 2010. We further asked the TEL to encourage economies to continue their efforts to expand the reach of networks with the ambitious goal of achieving universal access to broadband by 2015.

8. To achieve our common goals, we encouraged intensified efforts to support effective universal service strategies that are appropriate to each economy. These efforts should include innovative policies, regulatory frameworks and programs to meet the needs of unserved or underserved communities using ICT in a sustainable manner.

Changing Market Profiles and Flexible Regulatory Frameworks

9. Digital prosperity and ICT development require a regulatory environment that encourages competition, technology neutrality, investment and innovation in markets driven by rapid changes in technology, business models and services. A sustainable ICT industry should be responsive to the needs of consumers. We therefore encouraged active and open consultation on policy and regulatory developments to enhance the policy process and to ensure that competition is encouraged and that consumers and market participants are fully informed, especially as we have seen technologies converging in a 'next generation' environment.

10. We encouraged the TEL to examine appropriate policy and regulatory responses in order to maximize the economic and social benefits of these developments. Capacity building activities should be a priority to equip regulators for their task, to support competition and domestic regulatory reform, and to ensure that consumers are adequately informed and equipped to deal with the opportunities and challenges that face them.

11. Consistent with the wider APEC agenda, we also stressed the importance of trade and investment liberalization and facilitation in the telecommunications and information sector to support regional economic integration, noting that our Leaders have called for a report on this topic at their next meeting. We asked the TEL to develop a full response that will facilitate the wider APEC agenda with particular attention to measures to support innovative and secure cross-border business services, and to provide users with seamless cross-border telecommunications and value-added services at competitive prices.

12. Recognizing the rapid convergence of communications technologies or services, we encouraged continued sharing of information and experiences in order to enhance our common understanding of the implications for policy and regulatory frameworks.

13. We recognized the improved market access for telecom products offered through participation in a Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MRA) for Conformity Assessment, and encouraged those economies that have not yet implemented the MRA to take the necessary steps do so. We also noted that the MRA on equivalence of technical requirements is being developed to allow economies with similar technical requirements to recognize them as equivalent and reduce the number of tests needed for a product to be marketed in multiple economies and encouraged all economies to participate actively in finalizing this MRA. In combination, these two MRAs represent a substantial streamlining of regulatory processes and access to global markets.

Promoting a Safe and Trusted ICT Environment for Digital Prosperity

14. The use of information and communications networks and services exposes all of us to a broad range of risks, which affects the integrity of our information systems and our safety and security as well as our confidence in their use.

15. An environment that offers protection for users, especially for minors and other vulnerable groups and supports the security of personal and business information is essential for promoting and maintaining the trust and confidence of consumers and businesses in online communications. We encouraged continued collaboration and sharing of information and experience between member economies to support a safe and trusted ICT environment.

16. A key priority is the development of effective responses to ensure security against cyber threats, malicious attacks and spam. We therefore called for ongoing efforts to provide users including SMEs within APEC economies with the knowledge and skills they need to deal effectively with these threats and to cultivate a culture of security. We also encouraged continued sharing of information, experiences and practices on the protection of electronic information systems of essential infrastructure and services. We noted that in this context, a trusted and secure on-line environment is fundamental to facilitate electronic transactions.

Enhancing Outreach Activities on Cyber Security

17. Cyber security is a global and cross-jurisdictional problem which requires governments, law enforcement agencies, industries, business and consumers to work together across borders to develop multilateral approaches. We therefore recognized the need not only to develop and implement domestic cyber security strategies but also to build cross-border collaboration between economies and cooperative work between APEC and other organizations on security initiatives to counter threats to networks, in particular electronic information systems of essential infrastructure and services.

18. We commended the TEL for its outreach activities to facilitate the work of key stakeholders including Computer Emergency Response Teams (CERTs), Computer Security Incident Response Teams (CSIRTs), law enforcement officials, legislators and others to combat malicious attacks and enhance cyber security.

19. We also commended the collaboration with other international organizations such as ASEAN, ITU and OECD to share experiences and develop best practice approaches to cyber security and to enhance our collective security.

20. We stressed the need for ongoing efforts that will assist governments and the private sector to work together to combine innovation with security, and to protect electronic information systems of essential infrastructure and services. In particular, we encouraged APEC economies to undertake training and exercises designed to enhance response capabilities and to test continuity and contingency plans in the event of a cyber attack.

21. We recalled our previous Ministerial statement from 2005 in Lima, Peru, that urged the enactment of comprehensive domestic legislation relating to cyber security and cybercrime that is consistent with international legal instruments including the Convention on Cybercrime (2001) and relevant United Nations General Assembly Resolutions, and recommended that each economy review its progress in this area.

ICT Capacity Building for a Prosperous Future

22. We noted the on-going capacity building activities on the use of ICT for empowering rural and remote communities and acknowledged the benefits of cooperation with other APEC fora. We encouraged member economies to further develop sustainable community-based programs including public-private partnerships to build capacities and to meet their socio-economic development needs.

23. We encouraged further work to ensure that all APEC economies benefit from innovative technologies and services, recognizing the potential transformative nature of advanced and emerging technologies. We also encourage continued sharing of information and demonstration of new and advanced technologies, including cooperative projects such as grid computing and testbeds that could benefit all economies.

24. We recognized the vital role played by ICT in all phases of emergency preparedness, early warning and disaster mitigation, rescue and relief operations, delivery of humanitarian assistance and recovery efforts. We called upon TEL to collaborate, as appropriate, with other organizations with a view to contributing to broader APEC efforts in this area.

25. We commended the progress made in the area of MRAs and urged TEL to continue its capacity building initiatives in order to assist economies to better implement the MRAs with appropriate levels of conformity assessment infrastructure and capability.

Way Forward

Recognizing the critical enabling role of ICT for sustained economic development and prosperity of APEC economies, we therefore:

26. Encouraged TEL to further explore areas of work in which the use of ICT can improve public services, raise business efficiencies, enhance our quality of life, and assist in addressing global issues such as climate change and natural disasters;

27. Encouraged TEL to work within its mandate, as appropriate, to enhance and strengthen collaboration with other APEC fora, and other organizations particularly in the areas of capacity building and human resource development;

28. Acknowledged the importance of convergence for digital prosperity and called upon the TEL to discuss regulatory and policy approaches that correspond to a continuously changing market environment;

29. Commended and encouraged the continued openness of TEL to the important contributions of international and regional organizations, the private sector, user groups and academia in driving technological innovation, information dissemination and broader economic development and prosperity;

30. Encouraged wider cooperation with other APEC fora dealing with such issues as the application of telecommunications and information services, electronic commerce, intellectual property rights and facilitating regional trade and investment to ensure that best value is obtained from the contribution that the telecommunications and information sector could make to the wider work of developing the security and prosperity of the APEC region;

We agreed to present this Declaration to the Economic Leaders' Meeting and Ministerial Meeting in Lima, Peru in November 2008.

We requested TEL to report on the implementation of this Declaration to the next APEC TELMIN.