BNNRC

BNNRC is a national networking body working for building a democratic society based on the principles of free flow of information, equitable & affordable access to Information & Communication Technology (ICT) for remote & marginalized population. BNNRC is registered body with NGO Affaires Bureau & Ministry of Law, Justice & Parliamentary Affairs, Government of Bangladesh as a trust and established in 2000 as per Article 19 charter of UN bill of rights

BNNRC now strives for following core interventions to achieve PRSP and WSIS action plan and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs):

1. Awareness on correlations of ICT, poverty alleviation and Institutionalization of Democracy;
2. Establishment of ICT Resource Center and Promotion of Radio Listeners Club as primary ICT catalyst in remote rural areas;
3. Advocacy and Campaign for Bridging the Digital Divide/Information Divide;
4. Piloting ICT4D projects at rural areas to create show case examples for greater multiplication
5. Establishment of Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Services (RACES) for Disaster Preparedness.

Bangladesh in line of WSIS Declaration and Plan of Action

Declaration of Principles	Plan of Action	GoB	NGOs / CSOs
An Information Society for All: The key principles for building an inclusive information society that have been agreed by all are:	**Action Lines**	**The Government of Bangladesh** has given immense importance to **ICT** for development for economic growth and poverty reduction. To develop this sector, the government has taken several projects and programs. Bangladesh government has adopted a comprehensive IT Policy. There are also some legal policy adopted such as IPR and an IT act has been enacted. A National ICT Task Force has been set up and is operational. There are several committees working to foster the projects and programs: The Executive Committee of National ICT Task Force, National Committee of Bio-Technology, National Council for Science and Technology with an Executive Committee. Five Technical Committees on Crop Bio-Technology, Animal and Fish Bio-Technology, Medical Bio-Technology, Bio-Safety and Bio-Diversity have been formed.	**Different NGOs & CSOs** have started working for the development of an Efficient Information Society. Some NGOs have included fostering of Information & Communication Technology into their mandates. Along with the raised universal voice of ensuring development through ICT, local NGOs & CSOs have realized the importance of integration of activities with it. Besides different organizations BFES, YPSA, Dwip Unnayan Sangstha, Speed Trust, COAST trust etc A national networking body (**Bangladesh NGOs Network for Radio & Communication)** has also started its operation for ensuring assistance in various regards.
1. The role of governments and all stakeholders in the promotion of ICTs for development: Building a people-centred Information Society is a joint effort, which requires cooperation and partnership among all stakeholders.	**1.** An effective **participation** of governments & all stakeholders in the promotion of ICT4D.	**Public-Private Partnership:** Ministry is closely working in collaboration with the ICT industry, educational institutions for building the technical ICT skills of young people of the country. Need based ICT services including training facility have been identified for mass participation and curriculum has been developed. Bangladesh Computer Council has taken a project titled "Assistance to Secondary Schools for Introducing Computer Course" under which computer and accessories are given to secondary schools and one teacher	**NGOs and CSOs** are maintaining close liaison with respective government offices for updating and being updated. Besides, some NGOs are working in implementing different govt. projects. Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Board, Ministry of Science and Information & Communication Technology, Information Ministry are BNNRC major stake holders. Young Power in Social Action

		of those schools are also given ICT training. Taka eighteen crore has been allocated to seven universities to develop human resources through offering Post Graduate Diploma (PGD) in IT so that skilled manpower and trainers are available for ICT development activities. More universities are being brought under this program. The grant is given to these universities to conduct a standard 1 year Post Graduate Diploma Course in ICT. A Bangladesh -Korea Institute of Information and Communication Technology (BKIICT) is being set up at the Bangladesh Computer Council with Technical Assistance of 1 million dollar from Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA). In order to disseminate ICT services including ICT education and training to disperse locations outside the capital Dhaka city, Government has taken up a project 'Conducting Standard Computer Training Courses in the Divisional Headquarters'. Ministry of Science and Information & Communication Technology, in cooperation with the public/private sector, has taken program to produce quality professionals and skilled manpower in ICT to ensure the success of the software and IT Enabled Services (ITES) industries by introducing ICT Internship Award Program in country.	(YPSA) in Chittagong and Dwip Unnayan Sangstha in Hatiya are working in development of competent manpower in IT sectors. They are providing computer courses of various duration. Besides a number of organizations are offering IT enabled services at remote areas in a very low cost, sometime even in no cost.
2. Information and communication infrastructure: an essential foundation for inclusive information for a well-developed information & communication network infrastructure should be developed with a policies to create a favorable climate for stability, predictability	**2. Building** an Information & communication infrastructure: that is an essential foundation for the Information Society.	Bangladesh is expecting to be connected through optical fiber backbone by the year 2005 which will create an ample scope to develop its IT horizon vigorously. Bangladesh tele-density has been improved quite significantly and mobile connection is expanded the services most of the corners of remote villages. Internet connectivity expanded to the sub-	**In a variety of ways, NGOs & CSOs** are working to contribute in the development of a suitable environment for spreading of ICT. Most of these organizations have turned their operation into automated. They are connected to the information highway, able to gather and share information

& fair competition at all levels & should be implemented in a manner that will attracts private investment for ICT infrastructure development.		district level. Tk 300 core has been earmarked in Bangladesh Bank as Equity and Entrepreneur fund (EEF) for facilitating the ICT/Software and agro based Industries.	whenever they feel it necessary. Again, different organizations are establishing ICT centers at the very remote areas to ensure the easy access to ICT. In the coastal zone (disaster prone areas) YPSA has established an alternate way of communication as a measure for disaster preparedness and reducing devastating effects of unforeseen disasters. BNNRC along with some other like minded organizations are constantly thriving for establishing Community Radio, Amateur Radio, Citizen Band Radio and Radio Listeners Club which in turn attach the rural–illiterate population with the mainstream in respect to the access to information.
3. Access to information and knowledge: The ability for all access and contribute information, ideas and knowledge is essential by removing all barriers and making affordable access to software, which is an important component of a truly inclusive Information Society.	**3. Access** to information and knowledge benefits individuals, organizations and communities to develop.	**Scientific Research & Development (R&D) in ICT:** Research and development activities in ICT are be strengthened. ICT is being used to spur the development of innovative programs and research in other sectors such as, agriculture, biotechnology, environment, etc. The Ministry of Science and Information Technology has allocated Tk. 12 core for conducting research in Science, Technology and ICT.	**In the rural, remote and detached areas of Bhola district,** local people has invented measure to make themselves connected to the tele-comm structure. They have invented a technology using high-raised antenna with bamboo, which ultimately broaden the T&T area coverage significantly and effectively. Organizations engaged in establishing and operating ICT centers in villages, are coming up new usage of ICT for the villagers. Besides, disseminating information on agriculture, health, hygiene, education etc. they are also setting up Bulleting Board System (BBS).

		Contributions of Scientific and Industrial Research: Bangladesh Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (BCSIR) is carrying out research on various fields of Research and Development (R&D) related to important sectors of the country such as, agriculture and biotechnology, food and food products, medicine, polymer and natural products, fuel and energy, building materials, applied Physics, Instrument fabrication and chemical products.	For understandable limitations, NGOs & CSOs are yet to be able to contribute reasonably in to Scientific and Industrial Research.
4. Capacity building: The use of ICTs in all stages of education, training and human resource development should be promoted, taking into account the special needs of persons with disabilities and disadvantaged and vulnerable groups. To achieve a sustainable development of the Information Society, national capability in ICT research and development should be enhanced.	**4.** Everyone should have the necessary skills to benefit fully from the Information Society. Therefore **capacity building** and **ICT** literacy are essential**.**	**Development of Software industry for Local and Export market:** Strategies for software industry emphasizes to include increased local utilization of software capabilities, increased earnings through software export, and employment generation. In order to popularize the use & application of computers, the government has exempted custom duties and VAT on computer hardware, software & accessories. This has appreciably increased the computer utilization & doubled the yearly computer growth rate from 20 % to 40 %. Government has offered tax holiday for the IT industry and set up an ICT Incubator to promote the sector. The **ICT education** could provide young people with opportunities to develop ICT literacy through the education system and / or ICT training facilities, and also provide them with affordable access to computers and the Internet**.**	**For Increasing ICT literacy,** development organizations are conducting trainings and workshops. BNNRC has arranged workshops for increasing capacity of using ICT in organizational levels. Again, at every ICT and multimedia centers, along with providing services, training offering are available. As the organizations have been transforming into automated office environment, the employees at the micro level, become ICT literate.
5. Building confidence and security in the use of ICTs: Strengthening the trust framework, including information security & network security, authentication, privacy & consumer protection, is a prerequisite for the development	**5. Building** confidence & security in the use of ICTs.	**Institutional Frameworks for ICT – Legislative Laws & Regulations:** For substantive growth of ICT sector in a shortest time, it is essential to create an enabling environment, appropriate policies and legislative frameworks. The ICT & IPR Law is enacted.	**In the development of Legislative laws and regulatory environment,** leading organizations are assisting in formulation of institutional frameworks. BNNRC are continuously advocating for

of the Information Society & for building confidence among users of ICTs. Spam & cyber-security should be dealt with at appropriate national and international levels.			ensuring even dispersed tele-density. Mass-line Media Center, BFES, VOICE, BNNRC, YPSA, Focus all are the part of a movement for developing framework for establishing Community Radio. and Community connectivity in terms of rural areas internet connection
6. Enabling environment: An enabling environment at national and international levels is essential for the Information Society. ICTs should be used as an important tool for good governance.	**6.** To maximize benefits of the Information Society, government need to create a trustworthy, transparent & non-discriminatory legal, regulatory & policy environment.	To develop an enabling environment on Internet use, services and to ensure quality services the government has formulated/adopted related legal and regulatory framework. Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) has established under the Telecommunication Act 2001 to ensure enabling environments for the sector. Mass awareness has been increased which made popular the ICT use at all level.	**For ensuring Enabling environment**, NGOs & CSOs are constantly trying to increase the mass awareness level on usage and effectiveness of ICT. For upholding good governance at least at the organizational levels, most of the national organizations have been automated. For creating a favorable policy environment, they are also putting inputs.
7. ICT applications: benefits in all aspects of life: The usage and deployment of ICTs should seek to create benefits in all aspects of our daily life. ICTs should also contribute to sustainable production and consumption patterns and reduce traditional barriers, providing an opportunity for all to access local and global markets in a more equitable manner.	**7.** ICT applications can support sustainable development, in the fields of public administration, business, education and training, health, employment, environment, agriculture and science within the framework of national **e-strategies.**	**National Portal** is under development process to uphold country image worldwide and also by which citizen to government (C to G) relationship is expected to be enhanced.. **e-Governance**: Governments are using ICT to improve the quality and efficiency of public services delivery systems. To this end ICT may help government strengthen internal information flows, accountability and transparency, and procurement of goods and services.	**Most of the organizations** now maintain web-sites which they update regularly. Some big houses (BRAC, Proshika) uses B2C and B2B portals for networking the delivery of their products and services. BNNRC has a plan to publish an independent web-portal (gateway) through which any one can access to the websites and services of organizations, currently engaged in ICT activities.
8. Cultural diversity and identity, linguistic diversity and local content: The Information Society should harness & preserve cultural heritage for the future by all appropriate methods.	**8.** Cultural diversity and identity, linguistic diversity and local content.	Bangladesh has long cultural history and potential of archeological background. The UNESCO declares two World heritages and the International Mother Language day (21 February), which also derived from Bangladesh language movement history.	**For patronizing cultural diversity** and resorting local contents, YPSA has started production of medias and narrow casting of those through cable network at Sitakund, Chittagong.

		Bangladesh Government is committed to the cultural preservation and shares the information to the world through communication technology. Bangladesh has done the standardization of Unicode compliant Bangla Keyboard and Fonts.	A project of DUS is in the pipeline, through which they are planning to create, cast and save local contents of fisher-folk at Hatiya Island.
9. Media: Our commitment to the principles of freedom of the press and of freedom of information, as well as those of the independence, pluralism and diversity of media, which are essential to the Information Society.	**9. Media** have an essential role in the development of the Information Society and are recognized as an important contributor to freedom of expression and plurality of information.	Government is considering the Freedom of Press as an important right. Media are also encouraged to collect and publish necessary information related to ICT4D. The electronic and satellite media is encouraged to promote media services worldwide.	**Right to Information** - yet to be enacted as an act, is one of the major mandates of BNNRC, SUPRO, MMC, Voice and some other like minded organizations. These organizations have been working to attain cent per cent press freedom in Bangladesh for a pretty long time.
10. Ethical dimensions of the Information Society: The Information Society should respect peace & uphold the fundamental values of freedom, equality, solidarity, tolerance, shared responsibility, & respect for nature.	**10.** It is the responsibility of every state to ensure the ethical dimensions of the Information Society.	**Gender Equity:** Steps are taken to bridge the ICT gender divide within the country by eradicating factors that restrict equal access to ICT through greater use of both new and traditional ICT as tools for development and for greater voice and empowerment of women. Bangladesh believes in equal right where applicable for disable/disadvantaged group to access the ICT facility.	**In the implementation phase,** not as a rule but as a practice, all the development organizations try to prefer adolescent girls and women to include into the program coverage.
11. International and regional cooperation: The core competences of the ITU in the fields of ICTs—assistance in bridging the digital divide, international & regional cooperation, radio spectrum management, standards development and the dissemination of information—are of crucial importance for building the Information Society.	**11.** International and regional cooperation among all stakeholders is vital in implementation of this plan of action and needs to be strengthened with a view to promoting universal access and bridging the digital divide, *inter alia*, by provision of means of implementation.	Bangladesh Foreign Policy is based on friendly relationship with others. Government of Bangladesh is participating in all international and regional activities related to WSIS process. As well as encourages the collaboration and partnership with any private sectors and foreign investments in the field of ICT.	**For strengthening International and regional cooperation**, organizations have started working with a vision of narrowing the digital divide. **Bangladesh NGOs Network for Radio and Communication (BNNRC)** is advocating to ensure even distribution of tele-connection and radio spectrum among the population of all walk of life. Some organizations are campaigning to ensure an enabling environment for information

			disseminations.
Towards WSIS Phase 2 (Tunis)	A preparatory meeting will be held in the first half of 2004 to review those issues of the Information Society, which should form the focus of the Tunis phase of the WSIS, and to agree on the structure of the preparatory process for the second phase.	Bangladesh Government has a WSIS Cell to develop a strategic plan to implement the Plan of Action & Declaration of Principles of WSIS. There is a committee has been formulated with all stakeholders for sharing information, consultation on WSIS and for the preparation for the Tunisia Phase. Chief Executive of the Ministry is leading this process.	

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