□□ Workshop Sessions

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- Day 1 Session 3: Group exercise briefing
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- Day 3 Session 2: Group work session
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Day 1 Session 1: Introduction to ICT landscape and frameworks

Time: 5:00 UTC - 6:30 UTC

Objective: This session invites participants to explore the regional ICT and digital rights landscape, develop an understanding of key frameworks and structures, and examine the powers and processes that create them. It will also help participants to identify the structures of governance and regulation, as well as recognise the opportunities and challenges that arise across different sectors and countries in South Asia as a result of these regulations.

Session plan:

The session will aim to cover questions such as:

- What are the national and international structures that shape ICT policy and digital rights (standards, treaties, laws, policies)?;
- What have been the kinds of laws passed in South Asia in relation to ICTs?
- Who are the key stakeholders in ICT governance? What roles do they play in decision making?
- What has been the impact of ICT policies in South Asia on human rights?
- What is a rights-based approach to ICT policy-making? Why is it important?

**Reading materials are hyperlinked, please click the text to access*

Reading Materials:

- The APC ICT Policy Handbook
- GISWatch - WSIS+20: Reimagining Horizons of dignity, equity and justice for our digital future
- Introduction to digital rights - South and Southeast Asia
- Freedom on the Net 2025 - An Uncertain Future for the Global Internet
- United Nations resolutions, decisions and reports on human rights and technology

Presentation Slide

Day 1 Session 2: Access and inclusion

Time: 7:00 UTC - 8:30 UTC

Objective: The focus of this session is to develop participants' understanding of meaningful access and the regulatory frameworks that enable Internet connectivity. It will also invite participants to examine the digital divide, its effects on marginalised groups, and policies and initiatives designed to promote inclusion. This session will further incorporate case studies in the region that illustrate how these issues play out in practice, enabling them to connect theoretical perspectives with lived realities.

Session plan:

The session will aim to cover questions such as:

- What do we mean by meaningful access?
- What are the regulatory and policy frameworks that shape internet connectivity in South Asia? What are the gaps?
- What are the challenges to digital inclusion (including the gender digital divide and the importance of an intersectional approach)?
- What are some initiatives or models that could be useful to address issues of access and inclusion (community networks, universal access funds etc.)?

**Reading materials are hyperlinked, please click the text to access*

Reading Materials:

- APC - Seeding change: A new framework to address the digital divide in Asia
- AfterAccess: ICT access and use in Asia and the Global South
- Gender and Digital Access Gaps and Barriers in Asia: But What About After Access?

Presentation Slide

Day 1 Session 3: Group exercise briefing

Time: 9:00 UTC - 10:00 UTC

Objective: Participants will come together in this session to engage with these themes of digital rights: access, freedom of expression, and privacy. Using relevant case studies, they will be divided into breakout groups and tasked with 1) analysing the issues and 2) designing advocacy strategies targeting actors such as governments, the public, or platforms. Conducted as a group activity, the session allows participants to work on a case study collaboratively with a small group of peers

Exercise sheets

Group 1 - Case Study on Access and Inclusion

- ***Participants: Cho (facilitator), Ananya, Monisha, Al Noman***

Group 2 - Case Study on Freedom of Expression

- ***Participants: Zana (facilitator), Annika, Anamul, Ankit***

Group 3 - Case Study on Privacy and Surveillance

- ***Participants: Pavitra (facilitator), Radhit, Maitree, Pamodi***

Day 2 Session 1: Freedom of expression

Time: 5:00 UTC - 6:30 UTC

Objective: This session is aimed at exploring the laws protecting freedom of expression across the South Asian region, while also examining the restrictions placed on this right within different legal systems. Participants will look closely at laws addressing hate speech, sedition, blasphemy, and defamation in their regional contexts. The session will further provide a brief historical overview of these laws and restrictions, tracing how they continue to surface in both offline and online spaces today.

Session plan:

The session will aim to cover questions such as:

- What are the provisions that cover freedom of expression in international human rights law and national legislation in South Asia?
- What does international law say regarding conditions for restrictions on freedom of expression, and how does it compare to the kinds of restrictions we see in South Asia (hate speech, sedition, blasphemy, defamation and mis/disinformation etc.)?
- What kinds of laws are being passed in South Asia in relation to freedom of expression online? How does this differ from how freedom of expression is regulated offline?
- What is the role of platforms with respect to freedom of expression online? What impact does the current policy approach towards platforms in South Asia have on freedom of expression online? What needs to change?

**Reading materials are hyperlinked, please click the text to access*

Reading Materials:

- Global Information Society Watch 2017 special edition: Unshackling expression - A study on laws criminalising expression online in Asia
- Unshackling Expression: The Philippines Report
- Virtual Verdicts: A study on the criminalisation of online expression in Sri Lanka
- Unshackling Expression: The Nepal Report
- Freedom on the Net 2025

- Intermediary Liability 2.0
- Jurisprudence Shaping Digital Rights in South Asia
- Social Media and Hate Speech in India
- Content Take Downs on the World Wide Web - A Global Reality

🕮 Presentation Slide

Day 2 Session 2: Privacy, surveillance and data protection

Time: 7:00 UTC - 8:30 UTC

Objective: In this session, participants will learn to examine the different facets of privacy in the digital age and the regulations designed to protect these rights. They will investigate the impact of emerging technologies on privacy by considering the various forms of surveillance currently deployed in society alongside the enabling legal frameworks. This session will further focus on the rise of surveillance-related policies and their implications for the protection and promotion of digital rights.

Session plan:

The session will aim to cover questions such as:

- What is privacy in the digital age and why is it important?
- What are the ways in which the internet and other digital technologies are being used to infringe privacy and engage in surveillance?
- What are the legal and regulatory frameworks in south Asia that protect privacy, including data protection laws? What are the challenges and gaps?
- What are the ways in which legal frameworks in South Asia are being used to enable surveillance?
- What is the impact of such policies on freedom of expression, assembly and association and other rights, especially for marginalised groups?

**Reading materials are hyperlinked, please click the text to access*

Reading Materials:

- The misuse of Personal data protection laws across the Asia-Pacific
- Data Privacy and Data Protection – South and South East Asia
- A critique of consent in Information Privacy
- A Contextual Approach to Privacy Online

- The Age of Surveillance Capitalism
- Privacy and Surveillance, case laws in India
- Privacy and Surveillance, case laws in Sri Lanka
- Privacy and Surveillance, case laws in Pakistan
- Warning of 'Surveillance Capitalism' Nightmare
- Surveillance Capitalism

□□ Presentation Slide

Day 2 Session 3: Group work check-in

Time: 9:00 UTC - 10:00 UTC

Objective: This session provides an opportunity for participants to continue their group work and reflect on the case studies from their own experiences, through challenges they have encountered in their work and approaches they have employed. They will also engage in a feedback process with facilitators, allowing them to refine their approaches through this exchange.

Exercise sheets

Group 1 - Case Study on Access and Inclusion

- ***Participants: Cho (facilitator), Ananya, Monisha, Al Noman, Anuvind, Shalani***

Group 2 - Case Study on Freedom of Expression

- ***Participants: Zana (facilitator), Annika, Anamul, Ankit, Nuva***

Group 3 - Case Study on Privacy and Surveillance

- ***Participants: Pavitra (facilitator), Radhit, Maitree, Pamodi***

Day 3 Session 1: Gender and vulnerable groups

Time: 5:00 UTC - 6:30 UTC

Objective: This unit invites participants to examine the differentiated impacts of ICT policies on vulnerable groups, with particular attention to the special provisions that seek to protect gender and other marginalised communities in digital spaces. It also encouraged reflection on how vulnerable groups participate in policymaking processes and how rights-based, inclusive strategies can strengthen equity in the ICT environment.

Session plan:

The session will aim to cover questions such as:

- How do issues such as access, safety, and participation in digital spaces vary across gender, caste, class, ethnicity, disability, sexuality, and other identities in the context of South Asia?
- What are the regulatory frameworks and policies at the international and national level in south Asia that aim to safeguard vulnerable groups? How effective are they in practice?
- What are the challenges and gaps in the current approach to ICT policy-making in the region with respect to the protection of vulnerable groups?
- What are some strategies to ensure that ICT policy making includes a feminist, intersectional, rights-based approach?

**Reading materials are hyperlinked, please click the text to access*

Reading Materials:

- Access denied: Gender digital divide as a form of violence in South and Southeast Asia
- UN Women, Online and ICT -facilitated violence against women and girls during COVID-19
- Statistics of Vulnerable groups and the digital divides in Asia and Pacific: Social development division ESCAP, 2020
- A framework for developing gender-responsive cybersecurity policy

□□ Presentation Slide

Day 3 Session 2: Group work session

Time: 7:00 UTC - 7:45 UTC

Objective: During this collaborative block, participants will work in their breakout groups to refine their advocacy strategies by integrating insights from earlier sessions. Facilitators will offer guidance and feedback to help participants consolidate their approaches and strengthen their overall outcomes.

Day 3 Session 3: Final presentation and closing

Time: 8:00 UTC - 9:30 UTC

Objective: In this concluding session, participants present the outcomes of their group work and reflect on the lessons learned throughout the program. Each group will deliver a presentation, followed by feedback and questions from the facilitation team and peers. The session will also include a collective reflection on commonalities and differences across regions and countries.