

Asian Development Bank
31s'Annual Meeting of the Board of Governors
Geneva 1998
Seminars April 27-29,1997
White Paper-information and Telecommunications Technology
*Prepared by Dr Robert F. Jenefsky, Associate Director, Centre for Socio-Eco-Nomic
Development*

Theme: Information and Communication Technologie

Background

This theme is particularly relevant for the following reasons:

- the rapid growth and convergence of the information technology and telecommunications industries, which are the key enablers of economic and social globalisation, transforming existing traditional industries (such as banking) while creating other new ones (e.g. hardware, software, services)
- the importance of these industries in Asian development

- the special role of Geneva in this process as
 - seat of the ITU and WIPO
 - home of CERN, where the World Wide Web was developed
 - host city to the headquarters of numerous high-tech firms (Digital, HP, Silicon Graphics, etc.)
 - the proposed future capital of the "cyber world"

Objectives

- Showcase Switzerland and Geneva as key players in Information Technology and Telecommunications
- Promote the creation of investment opportunities (1) for Asian companies in Switzerland and (2) for Swiss companies in Asia
- Exchange know-how on "best practices" in the use of these technologies in relevant areas

Approach

A mixed approach, consisting of hands-on use of Information Technology (through the installation of an e-mail conferencing system supporting Asian character sets, videoconferencing and distance learning events) plus topical seminars, moderated by sponsoring organisations, will be used.

Corporate Partners

It is expected that the large Geneva- and Swiss-based IT firms (Digital, HP, Silicon Graphics, Sun Microsystems, Oracle etc.), relevant international organisations (e.g. ITU) and Swiss Telecom will be interested in providing part of the infrastructure as well as in hosting seminars. In particular, either the Swiss Telecom "WelCom" teleconferencing system (used by the Davos Symposium) or the Oracle e-mail system (used at the April 1997 annual meeting of the EBRD governors in London can

be used, or both. The organisers will also actively encourage leading Asian IT firms to use the meeting as an opportunity to showcase their capabilities.

Topical Seminars

Seminars and round-table discussions can be organised on a number of topics, including:

The emerging Asian software industry and potential areas for partnership
Best practices in the use of Information Technology in public administrations Intellectual property protection in "cyberspace"
Technology transfer as an agent of sustainable economic development
Best practices in the use of Information Technology by NGOs working in Asia
Comparative examples of the use of distance learning as an instrument of development: Australia, China, Indonesia, Switzerland
Information technology in public health
Information technology for government-citizen communication systems
How Geneva is using Information Technology and Telecommunications to revitalise its economy Funding instruments for high-tech startups, etc.

Proposal

It is proposed to create a taskforce with the following responsibilities:

- Programme design
- Liaison with sponsors and fundraising
- Programme implementation, including creation of a specific website

Complementary Information

Centre for Socio-Eco-Nomic Development (CSEND)

CSEND is an independent, project-financed non-profit foundation, registered with the Geneva Chamber of Commerce. Specialising in organisational reform and institutional development worldwide, CSEND works to strengthen public administrations and public sector enterprises through the use of an interdisciplinary, socio-economic approach. Recent CSEND projects in China, Russia and Slovenia and other countries have been funded by international organisations such as UNDP, EBRD and ILO, as well as by bilateral development cooperation agencies such as SDC in Switzerland.

Dr Robert Jenefsky

Robert Jenefsky holds a doctorate in physics from the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Lausanne. A former visiting scientist at **CERN**, he has over 20 years' experience in senior management positions with Swiss and international companies in the Information Technology industry, including 15 years as marketing and research director at Digital Equipment Corporation.

A Swiss citizen, he is Associate Director of CSEND as well as senior consultant to META Group, an international technology assessment and research firm. He has extensive experience in organising major international events.