

Telecommunication Development Sector



**Regional Preparatory Meeting for the Americas Region
(RPM-AMS) for WTDC-14**

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TITLE: Amendment to Resolution 37 – Bridging the digital divide
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Brief description

Proposal to update the text in order to reflect a number of ideas towards bridging the digital divide and encouraging Member States to take actions to this end.

RESOLUTION 37 (Rev. [HyderabadSharm el-Sheikh, 20102014](#))**Bridging the digital divide**

The World Telecommunication Development Conference ([HyderabadSharm el-Sheikh, 20102014](#)),

recalling

a) Resolution 37 (Rev. [DohaHyderabad, 20062010](#)) of the World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC);

b) Resolution 139 ([AntalyaRev. Guadalajara, 20062010](#)) of the Plenipotentiary Conference,

recognizing

a) that the telecommunication environment has undergone significant changes since WTDC-~~0610~~;

b) that there is still a need to show clearly what the digital divide is, where it occurs, and who suffers from it;

c) that development in information and communication technologies (ICT) has continued to reduce the cost of relevant equipment;

d) that in many ITU Member States regulations have been adopted dealing with regulatory issues such as interconnection, determination of tariffs, universal service, etc., designed to bridge the digital divide at the national level;

e) that the introduction of competition in the provision of telecommunication/ICT services has also continued to reduce telecommunication/ICT costs to users;

f) that national plans and projects for the provision of telecommunication services in developing countries contribute to reducing costs to users and bridging the digital divide;

fg) that the introduction of new applications and services has also resulted in bringing down telecommunication/ICT costs;

gh) that there is still an ongoing need to create digital opportunities in developing countries¹, taking advantage of the revolution that ICTs have witnessed and are currently witnessing;

hi) that various activities are being executed towards bridging the digital divide by many international and regional organizations, such as, in addition to ITU, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), the United Nations economic commissions, the World Bank, the Asia-Pacific Telecommunity (APT), the regional economic communities, the regional development banks and many others, and that such activity has increased following the conclusion of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) and the adoption of the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society, particularly in relation to implementation and follow-up,

¹ This includes the least developed countries, small island developing states, landlocked developing countries and countries with economies in transition.

considering

- a) that, even with all the developments mentioned above, in many developing countries and especially in rural areas, telecommunications/ICTs, particularly in relation to the Internet, are still not affordable to the majority of the people, as is evident at present;
- b) that each region, country and area should tackle its own specific issues regarding the digital divide, while stressing the importance of cooperation in this area at regional and international level in order to benefit from experience gained;
- c) that many developing countries do not have the necessary basic infrastructure, long-term plans, laws, appropriate regulations and such like in place for telecommunication/ICT development;
- d) that the use of radiocommunication and satellites to provide access for local communities located in rural or remote areas without increased connection costs due to distance or other geographical characteristics is an extremely useful tool for bridging the digital divide;
- e) that satellite broadband services support communication solutions offering high connectivity, speed and reliability in both urban areas and rural and remote areas, and thus constitute a fundamental driver of economic and social development for countries and regions;
- f) that the development of radiocommunication technology and satellite systems enables sustainable and affordable access to information and knowledge, through the provision of communication services with high connectivity (broadband) and wide coverage (regional or global reach) which contribute significantly to bridging the digital divide, efficiently complementing other technologies and enabling countries to be connected directly, quickly and reliably;
- g) that Programme 1 of the Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT) under the Hyderabad Action Plan, on information and communication infrastructure and technology development, provides assistance to developing countries in the area of spectrum management and in the efficient and cost-effective development of rural, national and international broadband telecommunication networks, including by satellite.

further considering

- a) that the distribution of the benefits brought about by the ICT revolution is not equitable between developing and developed countries, and between social categories within countries, taking into account the commitments of both phases of WSIS to bridge the digital divide and transform it into a digital opportunity;
- b) that equitable access to information and the transition of the countries of the developing world into knowledge economies and into the information age will enhance their economic, social and cultural development, in implementation of the aims of the Geneva Plan of Action and Tunis Agenda and of Goal 2 (~~Bridging the national and international digital divides in ICTs~~ To provide assistance to developing countries in bridging the digital divide by achieving broader telecommunication/ICT-enabled socio-economic development) in Resolution 71 (Rev. ~~Antalya~~ Guadalajara, 20062010) of the Plenipotentiary Conference on the strategic plan for the Union for ~~2008~~2012-20142015, which is expected to be maintained in the new plan for ~~2012~~2016-20152019, taking into consideration that such access shall be affordable;
- c) that in 2015, the United Nations General Assembly will assess the outcomes and implementation of both the Millennium Development Goals and the WSIS Tunis Agenda.

confirms

the importance of approaches to funding for bridging the digital divide in the Geneva Plan of Action, the Tunis Agenda and the strategic plan for the Union and their translation into equitable mechanisms for action, particularly in respect of issues related to Internet management, taking into consideration the special initiatives for promoting full gender equality, with regard for those with special needs, including

the disabled and incapacitated and the elderly, the youth initiative, issues related to indigenous peoples, telecommunications/ICTs for disaster relief and mitigation, and the child online protection initiative,

undertakes

to carry out work from which all countries, especially the developing countries, may benefit, with a view to establishing international methods and specific mechanisms to strengthen international cooperation for bridging the digital divide, through connectivity solutions which support sustainable and affordable access to ICTs, and, in parallel, to continue to shorten the time-frames for implementation of the Digital Solidarity Agenda, beginning with the Geneva Plan of Action, the outcomes of the Connect Africa the World summits and the Connect CIS summit, the Tunis Agenda and the strategic plan for the Union for 2012-2015, and to deploy parallel efforts from which all countries may benefit, in order to arrive at international methods and specific mechanisms for increasing international cooperation to bridge the digital divide,

resolves to request the Director of the Telecommunication Development Bureau

- 1 to continue to follow up its work pursuant to Resolution 8 (Rev. ~~Hyderabad~~Sharm el-Sheikh, 20102014) of this conference in creating social connectivity indicators for the digital divide, standard indicators for each country and a single index, in cooperation with the competent organizations in the relevant United Nations agencies, using available statistics so that charts can be compiled to illustrate the current situation of the digital divide in each country and region;
- 2 to continue to advocate the advantages of developing a low-cost high-quality ICT-customer computer, that can be directly connected to the ~~legacy~~ networks supporting the Internet and Internet applications, so that economies of scale can be achieved on account of their acceptability at the global level, taking into consideration the possibility of satellite use of this computer;
- 3 to continue to assist in developing a user-awareness campaign in order to build user trust and confidence in ICT applications;
- 4 to ensure that special programmes under the centres of excellence continue to address the specific issue of ICT training for poverty alleviation, and to give top priority to these centres;
- 5 to continue to ~~replicate~~ foster the development of innovative models ~~such as the Grameen Village Phone~~ in order to reduce poverty and bridge the digital divide in ~~other the~~ developing countries successfully;
- 6 to continue to identify key ICT applications in rural areas and to cooperate with specialized organizations with a view to developing a standardized user-friendly content format that overcomes the barrier of literacy and language;
- 7 to continue to assist in reducing access costs by encouraging manufacturers to develop appropriate technology scalable to broadband applications, this having been adopted as a key objective of the Union as a whole and ITU Telecommunication Development Sector (ITU-D) in particular, and having a low operating and maintenance cost;
- 8 to continue to promote the establishment of multipurpose community telecentres taking account of the local environment;
- 9 to encourage members to provide ITU with ICT rural experiences, which can then be put on the ITU-D website;
- 10 to continue to assist the Member States and Sector Members in developing a pro-competition policy and regulatory framework for ICTs, including online services and electronic commerce, as well as capacity building in connectivity and accessibility, taking into account the special needs of women and disadvantaged groups;

- 11 to continue to encourage development of broadcast-mode methods for promoting ICT uses in rural areas;
- 12 to continue to help in promoting greater participation of women in ICT initiatives, particularly in rural areas;
- 13 to promote the implementation of studies or projects, in collaboration with ITU-R, with a view to complementing national radiocommunication and satellite systems, in order to achieve optimum utilization of the orbit/spectrum resource, with the aim of stimulating the development and coverage of satellite broadband and bridging the digital divide;
- 14 to analyse the adoption of measures for collaboration with ITU-R, in order to support studies, projects or systems which seek to make efficient use of the orbit/spectrum resource for the provision of public international satellite services, with a view to achieving equitable access to satellite broadband and facilitating network connectivity between different areas, countries and regions, especially in the developing countries,

invites Member States

to consider promoting relevant policies to foster public and private investment in the development and construction of radiocommunication and satellite systems in their countries and regions, and to consider including the use of such systems in their national and/or regional broadband plans, as an additional tool that will help to bridge the digital divide and meet telecommunication needs, especially in the developing countries.

~~NOTE—When this resolution is implemented by BDT, the effect of the updating of Resolution 139 on bridging the digital divide by the forthcoming Plenipotentiary Conference (Guadalajara, 2010) must be taken into account.~~