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Note by the Secretary-General

CONTRIBUTION FROM THE FEDERATIVE REPUBLIC OF BRAZIL ON FREE ONLINE ACCESS
TO THE FINAL REPORTS OF THE WORLD TELECOMMUNICATION DEVELOPMENT
CONFERENCE (WTDC)

I have the honour to transmit to the Member States of the Council a contribution received from
the **Federative Republic of Brazil**.

Dr. Hamadoun I. TOURE
Secretary-General

CONTRIBUTION FROM THE FEDERATIVE REPUBLIC OF BRAZIL ON FREE ONLINE ACCESS TO THE FINAL REPORTS OF THE WORLD TELECOMMUNICATION DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE (WTDC)

Summary

Brazil proposes the approval of free online access to the Final Reports of World Telecommunication Development Conferences, on a trial basis, from Council-13 to the Plenipotentiary Conference 2014 (PP-14).

Action required

Council is invited to analyse the proposal on free online access to the Final Reports of World Telecommunication Development Conferences and to approve the Draft Decision in Annex I.

References

ITU Constitution (CS) – Articles [1](#), [21](#), [22](#) and [24](#)

ITU Convention (CV) – Article [16](#)

[Decision 12 \(Guadalajara, 2010\)](#) – “FREE ONLINE ACCESS TO ITU PUBLICATIONS”

Decision 571 (Council, 2013) – “FREE ONLINE ACCESS TO THE ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATIONS”

[Document C13/21](#) – “SALES OF AND FREE ONLINE ACCESS TO ITU PUBLICATIONS”

1 Background: The role of the ITU-D and World Telecommunication Development Conferences (WTDCs)

1.1 Article 1 of the ITU Constitution states the purposes of the ITU in promoting *international cooperation, enhanced participation* of telecommunication entities in the activities of the Union and to *harmonize the actions of Member States towards a fruitful and constructive* collaboration. It also highlights the purposes of *promoting access to information and the extension of the benefits of the new telecommunication technologies to all the world’s inhabitants*.

1.2 Article 21 of the ITU Constitution defines the function of the Telecommunication Development Sector of the ITU (ITU-D) in fulfilling the purposes of the Union as stated in Article 1 of the Constitution.

1.3 Article 16 of the ITU Convention defines the duties of World Telecommunication Development Conferences (WTDCs) as the main outputs of the ITU-D. In addition to establishing work programmes and guidelines, Advisory and Study Groups’ chairmen, vice-chairmen, terms of reference and study questions, WTDCs

*“211 c) (...) should fix the objectives and strategies for the balanced worldwide and regional development of telecommunications, giving particular consideration to the **expansion and modernization of the networks and services of the developing countries** as well as the*

*mobilization of the resources required for this purpose. They shall serve as a **forum for the study of policy, organizational, operational, regulatory, technical and financial questions and related aspects, including the identification and implementation of new sources of funding;** “*

2 The outputs of World Telecommunication Development Conferences (WTDCs)

2.1 World Telecommunication Development Conferences (WTDCs) are held by the ITU every four years for the elaboration of guidelines for the work of the ITU-D. The last WTDC (WTDC-10) was held from 24 May to 4 June 2010 in Hyderabad, India. The next WTDC (WTDC-14) will be held from 31 March to 11 April 2014 in Sharm El-Sheik, Egypt.

2.2 The main outputs of WTDCs are:

- The ITU-D Action Plan (WTDC-14 will elaborate the ‘Sharm El-Sheik Action Plan”);
- The Strategic Plan of the ITU-D Sector to be approved by the subsequent ITU Plenipotentiary Conference;
- The Conference Declaration (WTDC-14 will elaborate the ‘Sharm El-Sheik Declaration”);
- ITU-D’s Advisory Group (TDAG) and Study Groups’ structures, terms of reference, chairmen, vice-chairmen and study questions;
- Regional initiatives for the six macro-regions of the globe (Africa, Americas, Arab States, Asia-Pacific, CIS and Europe), guidelines for their implementation and expected results;
- Reports of the outcomes of the regional preparatory meetings for WTDC;
- High-level policy statements from the Member States;
- Definition of Programmes and respective priority areas for the implementation of the core mandates of the ITU-D;
- Resolutions, Recommendations and Decisions on the management of the ITU-D’s structure and on the technical issues to be discussed at the Study Groups (there are 64 Resolutions currently in force).

2.3 All these nine main outputs of WTDCs are published by the ITU in a compiled document titled **Final Report of the World Telecommunication Development Conference**.

3 Access to the Final Report of the World Telecommunication Development Conference and other ITU Publications

3.1 Currently, access to any format of the compiled Final Report of WTDC, whether in CD/DVD Rom, printed paper or online PDF/Word document download, is charged **CHF 119**. It means that Member States, Sector Members, Academia Members, Associate Members and the general public have to pay that amount in order to have access to the nine main outputs of the Development Sector.

3.2 In the last few years, the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference and the ITU Council have been discussing the approval of free online access to some ITU publications under the argument that some of these publications fall into the core mandates of the Union and, thus, should not be

charged extra, and their availability to the general public should be financed by the contributory units already paid by the Membership.

3.3 It has also been discussed that charging for access to some of the ITU publications is paradoxical, considering that the ITU Membership that already contributes to the Union with annual contributory units, that perform the studies and elaborate the texts and that has to spend significant financial resources in travel and other costs related to attending ITU meetings, still have to pay to have access to the results of their own work.

3.4 In recognition of these arguments, PP-10 approved Decision 12, which provided free online access to the general public to ITU-T Recommendations, ITU-R Recommendations, ITU-R Reports, the basic texts of the Union and the final acts of Plenipotentiary Conferences.

3.5 In its 2012 Session, the ITU Council approved Decision 571, which provided free online access to the general public to the Administrative Regulations of the ITU, namely the International Telecommunication Regulations (ITRs) and the Radio Regulations (RRs).

3.6 In approving free online access to some ITU Publications, both of the aforementioned Decisions, according to the annual reports presented to Council, have resulted in the widespread *"(...) dissemination of ITU standards to a broader public, especially in developing countries with financial constraints. This wide outreach via free online access will help build the visibility of ITU's mission and mandate and reinforce ITU as a global telecommunication authority"*.

3.7 This current situation where the main publications of ITU are available free of charge online while access to the main outputs of the ITU-D sector are still being charged results in a considerable asymmetry of information between the sectors. Approving free online access to the main outputs of the ITU-D sector is the next logical step in increasing the awareness, knowledge and active participation of developing countries in the activities of the Union and to promote full convergence and synergy of the activities between the Sectors.

3.8 Furthermore, as the Hyderabad Action Plan of WTDC-10 itself states,

"(...) 25. This Hyderabad Action Plan is an important and relevant tool for helping to bridge the digital divide (...)",

and, according to previous experiences reported to the ITU Council, a proven successful method for facilitating access to WTDC Action plans and its other important outputs is to provide access to them free of charge online.

4 Proposal

4.1 In anticipation to the important results of WTDC-14, Brazil proposes that Council analyse, discuss and approve the policy on free online access to the Final Reports of World Telecommunication Development Conferences contained in the Draft Decision in Annex I.

4.2 Brazil also kindly requests that the ITU secretariat include information on the financial impact of the policies of free online access to the Final Reports of WTDCs in its annual report to Council, in accordance with Decision 12 (Guadalajara, 2010).

4.3 Furthermore, in light of the arguments expressed in this contribution, Brazil invites Council to discuss free online access to the technical handbooks for the implementation of the Recommendations of the three sectors of the Union.

4.4 Finally, Brazil kindly request that the ITU Secretariat provide information on the financial impact of providing ITU's handbooks free of charge online during the 2013 Session of Council, as a basis for discussion.

ANNEX

DRAFT DECISION

Free online access to the Final Reports of World Telecommunication Development Conferences

The Council,

noting

- a) Decision 12 (Guadalajara, 2010) of the Plenipotentiary Conference, on free online access to ITU publications, that approved free online access to ITU-T Recommendations, ITU-R Recommendations, ITU-R Reports, the basic texts of the Union and the final acts of Plenipotentiary Conferences;
- b) that Decision 12 instructed Council to undertake a holistic study on the costs/benefits of providing other texts of the Union, including the Administrative Regulations of the Union, free online;
- c) Council Decision 571 (2012), on free online access to the administrative regulations, that approved permanent free online access to the International Telecommunication Regulations (ITRs) and temporary free online access to the Radio Regulations, on a trial basis, until the 2014 Plenipotentiary Conference,

noting further

- a) Article 16 of the ITU Convention that defines as one of the duties of World Telecommunication Development Conferences (WTDCs) the expansion and modernization of the networks and services of the developing countries, and defines WTDC as a forum for the study of policy, organizational, operational, regulatory, technical and financial questions and related aspects, including the identification and implementation of new sources of funding;
- b) that the World Telecommunication Development Conference 2010 (WTDC-10) approved:
 - The Hyderabad Action Plan;
 - The draft strategic plan of the ITU-D Sector for 2012-2015;
 - The Hyderabad Declaration;
 - The structure of the Telecommunication Development Advisory Group (TDAG) and its chairman and vice-chairmen;
 - The structure of ITU-D's Study Groups, terms of reference, chairmen, vice-chairmen and study questions;
 - 28 regional initiatives for the six macro-regions of the globe (Africa, Americas, Arab States, Asia-Pacific, CIS and Europe), guidelines for their implementation and expected results;
 - The reports of the outcomes of the regional preparatory meetings for WTDC-10;
 - Five Programmes and respective priority areas for the implementation of the core mandates of the ITU-D;
 - 64 Resolutions on the management of the ITU-D's structure and on the technical issues to be discussed at the Study Groups;

considering

- a) that providing free online access to the instruments of the Union helps to fulfil the core purposes of the Union, as defined in Article 1 of the ITU Constitution;
- b) that, regarding the instruments of ITU that are intended to be incorporated in national law, Member States have de facto freedom to reproduce, translate and publish such texts on official government department websites as well as in official journals or equivalent publications, in accordance with their respective national law;
- c) that increased involvement in ITU activities is a fundamental step towards enhanced capacity-building and Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) development potential in developing countries, which will lead to a reduction of the digital divide;
- d) that in order to facilitate, increase and improve the participation of Member States and Sector Members from developing countries in ITU activities, these members need to be capable of interpreting and implementing ITU technical publications, the basic texts of the Union and the instruments of the Union;
- e) that an efficient way to ensure that developing countries have access to ITU publications is to provide them free of charge online,

considering further

that providing free online access to ITU publications may reduce the demand for paper copies of these documents, in alignment with the current ITU trend of soft format and of organizing paperless meetings, and with the overall goal of the United Nations to reduce paper usage and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions,

recognizing

that previous policies on free online access to some ITU publications have resulted in the widespread dissemination of ITU standards to a broader public, especially in developing countries with financial constraints, in improving the visibility of ITU's mission and mandate and in reinforcing ITU as a global telecommunication authority;

decides

- 1 to provide free online access to the Final Reports of World Telecommunication Development Conferences to the general public;
- 2 that paper and CD/DVD-Rom copies of the Final Reports of World Telecommunication Development Conferences will continue to be charged for on the basis of a two-tier pricing policy, whereby Member States, Sector Members and Associates and Academia pay a price based on cost recovery, whereas all others, i.e. non-members, pay a "market price"¹;

instructs the Secretary-General

to report to Council-14 and the 2014 Plenipotentiary Conference on the impact on revenues of the implementation of decides 1 and 2 above, and on means for balancing the financial impacts, if any are identified.

¹ The term "market price" is defined as the price determined by the Sales and Marketing Division, which is established to maximize revenues without being so high as to discourage sales.