

Agenda item: PL 3.4

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Report by the Secretary-General

STRENGTHENING THE REGIONAL PRESENCE

Summary

The purpose of this document is to report on the implementation of Resolution 25 (Rev. Guadalajara, 2010).

Action required

The Council is requested **to note** this report.

Reference

[Resolution 25 \(Rev. Guadalajara, 2010\)](#)

1. Background

1.1 The strengthening of the regional presence is an evolving process. Since 1994, a range of measures have been taken in this regard to enable the Union to be as close as possible to its membership and to effectively deliver timely and high quality results at country and regional levels.

1.2 These measures which have already yielded significant results have been regularly reported to the Council. Work continues on strengthening the ITU's regional presence. The purpose of this document is to report on the consolidated results in implementing Resolution 25 (Rev. Guadalajara, 2010).

2. Reviewed BDT structure and workflow

2.1 A multifaceted approach has been developed to respond to the challenge posed by the implementation of Resolution 25 (Rev. Guadalajara, 2010) within the budgetary limits.

2.2 The BDT structure was reviewed with the aim of better cascading ITU goals and objectives to the staff, specially the staff in the field. It now provides a sound basis for a horizontal relationship between headquarters and the field for the delivery of projects.

2.3 The BDT work flow has also been reviewed to ensure that the field offices play a proactive role in the implementation of programmes and projects under the consolidated regional initiatives.

2.4 While the headquarters set-up is geared towards global activities, strengthening the interaction between programmes and study group questions and building on their results in all BDT activities, the field offices focus on activities which require continuing and close interaction of ITU with Member States and regional/sub regional organizations (identification of needs and related activities and projects under the regional initiatives, project formulation and implementation, ITU representation and information dissemination) in cooperation with ITU headquarters.

2.5 Under this new set-up, the Regional Directors report directly to the BDT Director. The Regional Directors are members of the BDT Management Committee (ManCom) and therefore participate directly in the discussions on key strategy and policy issues affecting BDT operations, including budget preparation and resource allocation.

2.6 In close coordination with headquarters, regional offices are responsible for the implementation of the ITU Strategic Plan. Regional Directors have been given the authority to sign, on behalf of ITU, project documents for which the budget is below USD 150 000. They have similarly been given authority, within a specific ceiling per request, to make commitments from the ad-hoc assistance budget.

2.7 Effective access to BDT resources (training, expertise, IT resources) at headquarters contribute to empowering field offices and facilitating the delegation of authority.

2.8 Based on lessons drawn from the implementation of the Doha Action plan which was reported to WTDC-10, the elements for the planning process continue to be provided through consultation, needs assessment and prioritization carried out periodically by ITU regional and area offices.

2.9 Prioritization is a key consideration to better serve the membership. In keeping with the aims of result-based management and result-based budgeting principles, BDT continue to ensure that high-priority activities are adequately resourced in order to achieve the planned results.

2.10 Moreover, BDT processes are now aligned around a team-based project approach where experts are no longer scattered across the programmes at headquarters and the regional initiatives in the field. Instead, they are gathered into multidisciplinary teams and work according to the nature of a product or a project under the consolidated regional initiatives.

3. Improved BDT procedures and working methods

3.1 As a way of enhancing work efficiency, BDT working methods have been reviewed with a view to bringing processes in line with ISO general principles.

3.2 The recruitment procedure for external experts has been revised and simplified. The electronic expert recruitment system has been introduced for BDT with a 100 per cent electronic workflow both for headquarters and regional/area offices. As a result, the timeframe for recruiting external staff has been reduced from an average of three weeks to five days.

3.3 SAP travel system and supplier relationship management components are in use in BDT and regional/area offices. The requisite training has been provided.

3.4 Access to working methods has been improved for all BDT staff, via a dedicated web portal, alongside other important working tools such as actions/project planning and implementation follow-up, project guidelines, the action plan system (APS) user guide, and the document management system (DMS) for the creation and publication of documents. Significant developments are planned with regard to this Portal so as to improve the functionalities for our Membership.

3.5 A project plan has been put in place to improve the electronic working methods for regional and area offices, including Internet connectivity, IT equipment and knowledge transfer in the use of tools and systems.

3.6 A global overhaul of financial management-related activities and processes is being carried out at headquarters, including thorough analysis of decentralization possibilities for actions and programme implementation while still maintaining a rigorous control link between the field offices and headquarters.

3.7 The Expert Recruitment Platform has seen the expert recruitment process automated, and field offices are now able to hire experts in direct coordination with focal points at headquarters, via the web. Additionally, new Expert Roster software is under development, to provide a central platform for expert information management, evaluation, as well as database access, to be completely integrated with the ERP/HR system.

3.8 It is important to note that significant improvements have already been achieved to streamline BDT processes and increase ownership by the BDT Staff. The ongoing review of BDT working methods continues to be geared towards implementation and membership satisfaction.

4. Staffing

4.1 In line with the Joint Inspection Unit Recommendation (Rec. 5), the ITU management has approved the standardization and the rationalization of the grade structure and the review of the staffing table of the regional presence.

4.2 The new structure for all regional and area offices has been implemented and all recruitments have been completed within the budgetary limits. The table presented in Annex 1 shows the current staff allocation for all regional offices.

4.3 All previous "one professional" offices (Barbados, Cameroon, Chile, Honduras, Indonesia and Zimbabwe) now have one P5 (Area Representative) and one P3 member of staff, in addition to an administrative assistant. All P3 staff in each region have different competencies in order to complement each other in the region.

4.4 In addition, drawing on networks of highly specialized experts, the capacity of field offices in specific areas of expertise continues to be strengthened through the recruitment of associate technical experts and support staff under regional initiatives and projects.

4.5 Moreover, efforts are being pursued with a view to encouraging Member States to consider seconding experts to the ITU field offices, including through participation in the Junior Professional Officer (JPO) and United Nations Volunteer (UNV) programmes.

5. Implementation of Regional Initiatives

5.1 In order to more effectively respond to the needs of the membership and ensure that ITU direct assistance is coherent and makes a positive impact on the ground, a new approach for the implementation of Regional Initiatives has been adopted. This new approach considers Regional Initiatives as the main deliverables of BDT at country level and aligns operational planning activities and projects with the themes or topics identified as Regional Initiatives under the Hyderabad Action Plan.

5.2 To further their implementation, the BDT project execution function has been strengthened. BDT is leveraging more regional initiatives by focusing on projects that are sustainable and scalable while ensuring a transfer of ownership for a greater impact on the telecommunication/ICT environment.

5.3 However, regional initiatives can quickly become outdated due to changing needs and conditions in the regions. They require regular revisiting and customization of their role and objectives by the Member States and Sector Members in order to reflect the changing needs, priorities and circumstances of stakeholders.

5.4 To this end, under the direct leadership of the ITU regional offices, with the support of the entire BDT, the Regional Development Forums (RDF) have been re-designed with the aim of providing Member States with an opportunity to review the consolidated regional initiatives and provide feedback to help prioritize their implementation.

5.5 The RDFs provide a setting for ITU to inform the decision-makers of ITU Member States and Sector Members on the main trends in ICT development. The RDFs also, and equally importantly, provide a setting for key stakeholders to provide the ITU with feedback on the implementation of the Operational Plan.

6. Quarterly Reports on achievements at the regional level

6.1 The implementation of the regional initiatives and the execution of programmes, projects and activities are carried out in the field under the leadership of regional and area offices. The main results achieved are regularly reported to TDAG and Council. They can also be found in the Quarterly Reports, which have been introduced in 2013 to set forth details on the implementation of the strategic, financial and operational plans, including at regional level. Copies of these Quarterly Reports were made available and were well received during the various Regional Preparatory Meetings for WTDC-14 organized during 2013. They can also be found at the following address: <http://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Pages/OperationalPlansPerformanceReports.aspx>.

7. Strengthening the cooperation with Regional Telecommunication Organizations

7.1 Cooperation with ITU regional and area offices, relevant regional organizations and other international organizations dealing with development and financial matters continues to improve.

7.2 Working as One ITU in coordination with the General Secretariat and the three Bureaux, regional offices provide the necessary support to ensure the effective preparation of ITU global meetings (e.g. WRC, WTSA, etc.) in close cooperation with regional organizations. ITU has been increasingly involving regional organizations in joint events and activities.

ANNEX

Department	Personnel Subarea	Pay Scale Group	Employee Group	Employees
Africa Region	Addis Ababa	D-1	Fixed Term	1
		G-2	Fixed Term	1
		G-4	Fixed Term	1
		G-5	Fixed Term	1
		G-6	Fixed Term	1
		P-3	Fixed Term	1
		P-4	Fixed Term	1
		P-5	Permanent/Continuing	1
			Result	8
	Dakar	G-5	Permanent/Continuing	2
		P-3	Fixed Term	1
		P-5	Permanent/Continuing	1
				Result
	Harare	G-5	Fixed Term	1
		P-3	Fixed Term	1
		P-5	Permanent/Continuing	1
				Result
	Yaounde	G-5	Fixed Term	1
		P-3	Fixed Term	1
		P-5	Fixed Term	1
			Result	3
		Result	18	
Americas Region	Brasilia	D-1	Fixed Term	1
		G-5	Fixed Term	1
		G-6	Fixed Term	1
		P-2	Fixed Term	1
		P-4	Permanent/Continuing	1
		P-5	Fixed Term	1
			Result	6
	Bridgetown	G-5	Fixed Term	1
		P-3	Fixed Term	1
		P-5	Fixed Term	1
				Result
	Santiago	G-5	Fixed Term	1
		P-3	Fixed Term	1
		P-5	Fixed Term	1
				Result
	Tegucigalpa	G-5	Fixed Term	1
		P-3	Fixed Term	1
		P-5	Fixed Term	1
				Result
			Result	15

Department	Personnel Subarea	Pay Scale Group	Employee Group	Employees
Arab Region	Cairo	D-1	Fixed Term	1
		G-2	Fixed Term	2
		G-3	Permanent/Continuing	1
		G-5	Fixed Term	2
		G-6	Fixed Term	1
		P-2	Fixed Term	1
		P-3	Fixed Term	1
		P-4	Fixed Term	1
		P-5	Fixed Term	1
		Result		11
	Result			11
Asia-Pacific Region	Bangkok	D-1	Permanent/Continuing	1
		G3	Fixed Term	1
		G-5	Fixed Term	1
		G-5	Permanent/Continuing	1
		G-6	Permanent/Continuing	1
		P-3	Fixed Term	1
		P-4	Permanent/Continuing	1
		P-5	Permanent/Continuing	1
		Result		8
	Jakarta	G-5	Fixed Term	1
		P-3	Fixed Term	1
		P-5	Fixed Term	1
		Result		3
	Result			11
Area Office for CIS	Moscow	G-5	Fixed Term	1
		P-3	Permanent/Continuing	1
		P-5	Permanent/Continuing	1
	Result			3
TOTAL STAFF				58