
WORKING GROUP OF THE PLENARY

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DRAFT RESOLUTION 139

**USE OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS/INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TO BRIDGE
THE DIGITAL DIVIDE AND BUILD AN INCLUSIVE INFORMATION SOCIETY**

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RESOLUTION 139 (REV. ~~GUADALAJARA, 2010~~BUSAN, 2014)

Use of Telecommunicationstelecommunications/information and communication technologies to bridge the digital divide and build an inclusive information society

The Plenipotentiary Conference of the International Telecommunication Union
(~~Guadalajara, 2010~~Busan, 2014),

recalling

Resolution 139 (~~Antalya, 2006~~Rev. Guadalajara, 2010) of the Plenipotentiary Conference,

recognizing

- a) that the social and economic underdevelopment of a large part of the world is one of the most serious problems affecting not only the countries concerned but also the international community as a whole;
- b) that there is a need to create opportunities for digital services in developing countries, including the least developed countries, small island developing states, landlocked developing countries and countries with economies in transition, taking advantage of the benefits of the revolution in information and communication technologies (ICTs);
- c) that the new architecture of telecommunication networks shows potential for offering more efficient and economic telecommunication and ICT services and applications, particularly for rural and remote areas;
- d) that the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) highlighted that the ICT infrastructure is an essential foundation for an inclusive information society, and called for the commitment of all States to placing ICTs and ICT applications at the service of development;
- e) that the WSIS+10 High-Level Event, an expanded version of the WSIS, held by the ITU in collaboration with UNESCO, UNCTAD and UNPD, recognizes in its Declaration on the application of the WSIS Outcomes that, since the Tunis Phase was held in 2005, the use of ICTs has increased considerably, which are now part of our everyday lives, accelerate socio-economic growth, contribute to sustainable development, increase transparency and accountability (when applicable), and offer new opportunities for both developed and developing countries to leverage the benefits offered by these new technologies;
- f) that, in turn, the Declaration of the WSIS+10 Vision for WSIS Beyond 2015 reaffirms that the objective of this Summit is bridging the digital, technology and knowledge divide and creating a people-centric, inclusive, open and development-oriented information society where everyone can create, access, utilize and share information and knowledge;
- eg) that the declarations of previous world telecommunication development conferences (WTDC) (Istanbul 2002, Doha 2006, ~~and~~ Hyderabad 2010, and Dubai 2014) have continued to

affirm that ICTs and ICT applications are essential for political, economic, social and cultural development, that they play an important role in poverty alleviation, job creation, environmental protection and the prevention and mitigation of natural and other disasters (in addition to the importance of disaster prediction), and that they must be placed at the service of development in other sectors; and that, therefore, opportunities offered by new ICTs should be fully exploited in order to foster sustainable development;

~~f/h)~~ that Goal 2 in [Resolution 71 \(Rev. Busan, 2014\)](#) of the Plenipotentiary Conference about the [Strategic Plan for the Union for 2016-2019](#), continues to declare [Strategic Plan for the Union for 2008-2011 and likewise the fundamental goal of the Strategic Plan for the Union for 2012-2015](#) that the aim is for ITU to assist in bridging the national, regional and international digital divide in ICTs and ICT applications by facilitating interoperability, interconnection and global connectivity of telecommunication networks and services, and by playing a leading role, within its mandate, in the multistakeholder participation process for follow-up and implementation of the relevant goals and objectives of WSIS, [and to focus on bridging the digital divide and provide broadband for all](#);

~~g/i)~~ that, even prior to WSIS, in addition to ITU activities, various activities were being executed by many organizations and entities to bridge the digital divide;

~~h/j)~~ that such activity by the Union has been increasing since the conclusion of WSIS and the adoption of the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society, particularly in relation to implementation and follow-up, in accordance with the strategic plan for the Union for [2008-2011-2016-2019](#) and the resolutions of the Plenipotentiary Conferences (Antalya, 2006 [and Guadalajara, 2010](#)),

recalling

a) Resolution 24 (Kyoto, 1994) of the Plenipotentiary Conference, on the role of ITU in the development of world telecommunications, Resolution 31 (Rev. Marrakesh, 2002) of the Plenipotentiary Conference, on telecommunication infrastructure and ICTs for socio-economic and cultural development, and Resolution 129 (Marrakesh, 2002) of the Plenipotentiary Conference, on bridging the digital divide;

b) that the Union's World Telecommunication Development Report has highlighted the unacceptable imbalance in the distribution of telecommunications and the imperative and urgent need to remedy that imbalance;

c) that, in this context, the first WTDC (Buenos Aires, 1994), *inter alia*, called on governments, international agencies and all other parties concerned to accord, particularly in developing countries, an appropriate higher priority to investment and other related actions for the development of telecommunications;

d) that, since that time, WTDCs have established study groups, developed work programmes and approved resolutions to promote digital opportunities, highlighting the role of ICT in a number of areas;

e) that Resolutions 30 and 143 (Rev. [Guadalajara, 2010](#) [Busan, 2014](#)) of this conference highlight that what countries need, as reflected in these two resolutions, is for the digital divide to be bridged, as a fundamental goal;

~~f)~~ [Resolution 143 \(Rev. Guadalajara, 2010\)](#) of this conference,

endorsing

1 Resolution 16 (Rev. Hyderabad, 2010) of WTDC on "Special actions and measures for the least developed countries, small island developing states, landlocked developing countries and countries with economies in transition", which calls upon other Member States and Sector Members to establish partnerships with these countries, either directly or through BDT, in order to bring increased investment into the ICT sector and to stimulate the modernization and expansion of networks in these countries in a bold attempt to reduce the digital divide and to achieve the ultimate goal of universal access in line with the Geneva Plan of Action, the Tunis Commitment and the Tunis Agenda;

2 Resolution 37 (Rev. ~~Hyderabad, 2010~~ Dubai, 2014) of the WTDC on "Bridging the Digital Divide";~~this subject,~~

3 Resolution 50 (Rev. Dubai, 2014) of WTDC on "Optimal integration of information and communication technologies";

4 Resolution 44 (Rev. Dubai, 2012) of WTSA on "Bridging the standardization gap between developing and developed countries",

considering

a) that, even with all the developments described above and the improvement observed in some respects, in numerous developing countries ICTs and ICT applications are still not affordable to the majority of people, particularly those living in rural or remote areas;

b) that each region, country and area must tackle its own specific issues regarding the digital divide, with emphasis on cooperation with others in order to benefit from experience gained;

c) that many countries do not have the necessary basic infrastructure, long-term plans, laws, regulations and such like in place for the development of ICT and ICT applications;

d) that the least developed countries, small island developing states, landlocked developing countries and countries with economies in transition still face particular problems in bridging the digital divide;

e) that it is necessary to study and analyze the social, demographic, economic and technological context of the communities in which it is intended to deploy infrastructure and implement plans for capacity building,

considering further

a) that telecommunication/ICT facilities, services and applications are not only the consequence of economic growth, but a prerequisite for overall development, including economic growth;

b) that telecommunications/ICTs and ICT applications, are an integral part of the national, regional and international development process;

c) that a favorable environment that includes -the necessary policies, skills and technical capacities to use and develop technologies -is considered to be as important as infrastructure investments;

ed) that recent progress, and particularly the convergence of telecommunication, information, broadcasting and computer technologies and services, are agents of change for the information and knowledgeage;

de) that there is a continuing need in most developing countries for investment in various development sectors, while giving priority to investment in the telecommunication/ICT sector, in view of the pressing need for telecommunications/ICTs to support growth and development in other sectors;

ef) that, in this situation, national e-strategies should be linked to overall development goals and guide national decisions;

fg) that it continues to be necessary to provide decision-makers with relevant and timely information on the role and general contribution of ICTs and ICT applications to overall development plans;

gh) that past studies undertaken at the initiative of the Union for assessing the benefits of telecommunications/ICTs and ICT applications in the sector have had a salutary effect in other sectors and are a necessary condition for their development;

i) that the use of terrestrial and satellite systems to give access to local communities located in rural or remote areas without increasing connection costs due to distance and other geographic characteristics, must be considered an extremely useful tool to bridge the digital divide;

j) that satellite broadband services make it possible to provide cost-effective communications solutions with great connectivity, speed, and reliability in metropolitan, rural and even remote areas, becoming an essential engine for the economic and social development of our countries and regions;

stressing

a) the important role played by telecommunications/ICTs and ICT applications in the development of e-government, labour, agriculture, health, education, transport, industry, human rights, environmental protection, trade and transfer of information for social welfare, and in the general economic and social progress of developing countries, especially those living in rural or remote areas;

b) that telecommunication/ICT infrastructure and applications are central to achieving the goal of digital inclusion, enabling universal, sustainable, ubiquitous and affordable access to information;

c) the role played by telecommunications in e-health programs to provide distance healthcare services on the basis of which effective access to healthcare services shall be promoted in highly marginal and demographically scattered regions;

mindful

a) that the Hyderabad Declaration emphasized the important role that governments, policy-makers and regulators should play to promote widespread affordable access to telecommunications/ICTs through fair, transparent, stable, predictable, non-discriminatory, enabling legal and regulatory environments that promote competition, foster continued technological and service innovation and encourage investment incentives; that the Dubai 2014 declaration stated that, with convergence, policy-makers and regulators should continue to promote widespread, affordable access to telecommunications/ICTs, including Internet access,

through fair, transparent, stable, predictable and non-discriminatory enabling policy, legal and regulatory environments, including common approaches to conformance and interoperability that promote competition, increase consumer choices, foster continued technological and service innovation and provide investment incentives at national, regional and international levels;

b) that goals in the strategic plan for the Union for ~~2012-2015~~2016-2019 are aimed at enabling and fostering the growth and sustained development of telecommunication networks and services, at facilitating universal access so that people everywhere can participate in, and benefit from, the emerging information society, and at providing assistance to developing countries in order to bridge the digital divide by achieving broader telecommunication/ICT-enabled socio-economic development;

c) that the Geneva Declaration of Principles adopted by WSIS recognized that policies that create a favourable climate for stability, predictability and fair competition at all levels should be developed and implemented in a manner that attracts more private investment in telecommunications and in ICT infrastructure;

d) that, in many ITU Member States, independent regulatory bodies have been established to deal with regulatory issues such as interconnection, determination of tariffs, licensing and competition, designed to promote digital opportunities at the national level,

appreciating

the various studies that have been carried out as part of the programme of technical cooperation and assistance activities of the Union,

resolves

1 that implementation of Resolution 37 (Rev. ~~Hyderabad, 2010~~Dubai, 2014) should continue to be followed~~up without delay~~;

2 that the Union should continue to organize, sponsor and conduct necessary studies in order to highlight, in a different and changing context, the contribution of ICTs and ICT applications to overall development;

3 that the Union should continue to act as a clearing-house mechanism for the exchange of information and expertise in this regard, within the implementation of the Hyderabad-Dubai 2014 Action Plan and in partnership with other appropriate organizations, and implement initiatives, programmes and projects aimed at promoting access to telecommunications/ICTs and ICT applications⁷²;

4 that the ITU, in cooperation with the relevant organizations, continue its task of preparing adequate ICT reference indicators for measuring the digital divide, collecting statistical data, measuring the impact of ICTs, and facilitating a comparative analysis of digital integration, which will continue to be a fundamental need in support of economic growth,

continues to invite

the administrations and governments of Member States, agencies and organizations of the United Nations system, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, financial institutions and providers of telecommunication equipment and services and ICTs to extend their support for the satisfactory implementation of this resolution,

continues to encourage

all agencies responsible for development aid and assistance, including the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and regional and national development funds, as well as donor and recipient Member States of the Union, to continue to attach importance to ICTs in the development process and to accord a high priority for resource allocation to this sector,

instructs the Secretary-General

- 1 to bring this resolution to the attention of all interested parties including, in particular, UNDP, IBRD, regional funds and national development funds for cooperation in implementing this resolution;
- 2 to report annually to the ITU Council on the progress made in the implementation of this resolution;
- 3 to arrange for the wide dissemination of the findings resulting from the activities carried out in accordance with this resolution,

instructs the Director of the Telecommunication Development Bureau, in coordination with the Directors of the other Bureaux, as appropriate

- 1 to continue to assist the Member States and Sector Members in developing a pro-competitive policy and regulatory framework for ICTs and ICT applications;
- 2 to continue to assist Member States and Sector Members with strategies that expand access to telecommunication infrastructure, particularly for rural or remote areas;
- 3 to evaluate models for affordable and sustainable systems for access to information in rural or remote areas, communications and ICT applications on the global network, based on studies of these models;
- 4 to continue to conduct, within available resources, case studies concerning telecommunications/ICTs in rural areas and, if appropriate, to deploy a pilot model using IP-based technology, or equivalent thereof in the future, to extend rural access;
- 5 to promote and facilitate collaborative actions between the different Sectors of the Union to carry out studies, projects, and inter-related activities identified in Action Plans of the Sectors, whose aim is to complement the development of the national telecommunication networks,
- 6 to continue to support member states by providing database of experts in the required field and to fund the necessary actions for bridging the digital divide for developing countries within resources allocated by the financial plan,
- 7 -to strengthen cooperation and coordination with the relevant international and regional organizations, in particular those of the developing countries in the activities related to bridge the digital divide,

instructs the Director of the Radiocommunication Bureau

to implement actions, in coordination with the Director of the Telecommunication Development Bureau, in order to support studies, projects- and, at the same time, promote joint activities whose aim is to build capacities for an efficient use of the orbital spectrum resource with the purpose of achieving affordable access to satellite broadband and facilitate connectivity between networks, and between different zones, countries and regions, especially in developing countries,

instructs the Council

- 1 to allocate adequate funds, within approved budgetary resources, for the implementation of this resolution;
- 2 to review the Secretary-General's reports and take appropriate measures to ensure the implementation of this resolution;
- 3 to submit a progress report on this resolution to the next plenipotentiary conference,

invites Member States

- 1 to continue to undertake concerted action in order to achieve the objectives of Resolution 37 (Rev. ~~Hyderabad, 2010~~Dubai, 2014) of the WTDC, as was the case for Resolution 37 (Rev. ~~Doha, 2006~~Hyderabad, 2010), by supporting this resolution as revised at this conference-;
- 2 to conduct consultations with the beneficiaries of the infrastructure plans, programs and investment, considering current differences stemming from the social conditions and dynamics of the population so that there will be a correct appropriation of ICTs;
- 3 to promote the implementation of policies to promote public and private investments for the development and construction of Radiocommunication Systems, including satellite systems, in their own countries and regions, and to contemplate the inclusion of their use in the National and/or Regional Broadband Plans as an additional tool that will help bridge the digital divide and meet telecommunication needs, especially in developing countries.