

PLENARY MEETING

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Paraguay (Republic of)

PROPOSALS FOR THE WORK OF THE CONFERENCE

BRIDGING THE INTERNATIONAL CONNECTIVITY DIVIDE

The Republic of Paraguay is of the view that, despite the efforts of Member States and international and regional organizations to promote the deployment of infrastructure and the advance of telecommunication services, the disparity between countries persists, making it impossible for them to develop fully.

Thus it considers that, to meet the challenge of bridging the digital divide, of which international connectivity is a crucial aspect, a global environment of cooperation is required, as indicated in § 50 of the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society.

Background

In spite of the impressive growth and expansion of telecommunication services worldwide since the world telecommunication development conference (WTDC) held in Buenos Aires in 1994, many areas of major concern still exist, especially in Africa¹, and considerable disparities persist, and the digital divide between developing and developed countries continues to widen.

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and phases of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) represented an opportunity to define a global strategy for narrowing the digital divide from the development standpoint.

International connectivity is one area in which the divide is very evident, representing an obstacle to the full development of countries.

Opinion 1 (Geneva, 2013) of the World Telecommunication/ICT Policy Forum (WTPF) rightly points out that enabling the interconnection of international, national and regional networks through Internet exchange points (IXPs) may be an effective way to improve international Internet connectivity and to reduce the costs of such connectivity.

¹ "Study on International Internet Connectivity in Sub-Saharan Africa" (March 2012),
<http://www.itu.int/md/T13-SG03-130527-TD-PLN-0026/en>

This viewpoint is in fact already expressed in § 3.7 of the International Telecommunication Regulations (Dubai, 2012), according to which: "*Member States should create an enabling environment for the implementation of regional telecommunication traffic exchange points, with a view to improving quality, increasing the connectivity and resilience of networks, fostering competition and reducing the costs of international telecommunication interconnections.*"

However, IXPs are not the only measure that can be taken to reduce the cost of international Internet connectivity for the developing countries. Indeed, Supplement 2 (05/2013) to Recommendation ITU-T D.50 analyses a number of other measures in some detail.

In addition, WTPF Opinion 2 (Geneva, 2013) also considers that Member States, Sector Members and other interested parties should do all they can to foster an enabling environment for the greater growth and development of broadband connectivity.

Proposal

The Republic of Paraguay proposes that the plenipotentiary conference adopt a new resolution seeking to bridge the international connectivity divide.

ADD PRG/74/1

DRAFT NEW RESOLUTION [PRG-1]

Bridging the international connectivity divide

The Plenipotentiary Conference of the International Telecommunication Union (Busan, 2014),
considering

- a)* Resolution 101 (Rev. Busan, 2014) of this conference, on Internet Protocol-based networks;
- b)* Resolution 139 (Rev. Busan, 2014) of this conference, on telecommunications/information and communication technologies to bridge the digital divide and build an inclusive information society;
- c)* Goal 2, Inclusiveness – Bridge the digital divide and provide broadband for all, of the Strategic plan for the Union for 2016-2019, adopted in Resolution 71 (Rev. Busan, 2014) of this conference;
- d)* the commitment in Resolution 37 (Rev. Dubai, 2014) of the World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC), on bridging the digital divide, "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 the World summits, the Tunis Agenda and the strategic plan for the Union";
- e)* Resolution 50 (Rev. Dubai, 2014) of the WTDC, on optimal integration of information and communication technologies;
- f)* Resolution 77 (Dubai, 2014) of the WTDC, on broadband technologies and applications for greater growth and development of telecommunication/information and communication services and broadband connectivity;
- g)* Resolution 17 (Rev. Dubai, 2014) of the WTDC, on implementation of regionally approved initiatives at the national, regional, interregional and global levels, which refers to the need to coordinate and harmonize efforts to develop telecommunication infrastructure at the national, regional, interregional and global levels;
- h)* Resolution 23 (Rev. Dubai, 2014) of the WTDC, on Internet access and availability for developing countries¹ and charging principles for international Internet connection, which instructs the Director of the Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT) to undertake studies on the structure of international Internet connection costs for developing countries, with emphasis on the influence and effects of the connection mode (transit and peering), secure

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

cross-border connectivity and the availability and cost of backhaul and long-haul physical infrastructure;

i) Resolution 44 (Rev. Dubai, 2012) of the World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly (WTSA), on bridging the standardization gap between developing and developed countries;

j) Resolution 69 (Rev. Dubai, 2012) of the WTSA, on non-discriminatory access and use of Internet resources,

considering further

a) 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;

b) 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;

c) that the core competences of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) in the fields of information and communication technologies (ICTs) – assistance in bridging the digital divide, international and regional cooperation, radio spectrum management, standards development and the dissemination of information – are of crucial importance for building the information society, as stated in § 64 of the Geneva Declaration of Principles,

recognizing

a) that the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) represented an opportunity to identify a global strategy for narrowing the digital divide from the development standpoint;

b) 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;

c) that the developing countries have limited human and financial resources to cope with the ever-increasing technology gap;

d) that, in spite of the impressive growth and expansion in telecommunications/ICTs recorded in the African region since WTDC (Valletta, 1998), many areas of major concern still exist and considerable disparities persist in the region, and the digital divide continues to widen;

e) that, in spite of the impressive growth and expansion in telecommunications/ICTs recorded in the Americas region since WTDC (Valletta, 1998), many areas of major concern still exist and considerable disparities persist in the region, and the narrowing of the digital divide continues to be a priority,

aware

a) that each Member State is seeking to establish its own policies and regulations in order to narrow as effectively as possible the digital divide between those who have access to communication and information and those who do not;

b) that Resolutions 30 (Rev. Busan, 2014) and 143 (Rev. Busan, 2014) of this conference highlight that what countries need is for the digital divide to be bridged, as a fundamental goal;

noting

- a) that Recommendation ITU-T D.50, on international Internet connection, recommends that administrations take appropriate measures nationally to ensure that parties (including operating agencies authorized by Member States) involved in the provision of international Internet connections negotiate and agree to bilateral commercial arrangements, or other arrangements as agreed between administrations, enabling direct international Internet connections that take into account the possible need for compensation between them for the value of elements such as traffic flow, number of routes, geographical coverage and cost of international transmission, and the possible application of network externalities, amongst others;
- b) that in spite of the rapid growth of the Internet and IP-based international services, international Internet connections remain subject to agreements which, for the developing countries, have not achieved the required balance in regard to charges between developed and developing countries;
- c) that the composition of costs for operators, whether regional or local, is, in part, significantly dependent on the type of connection (transit, peering or indefeasible right of use) and the availability and cost of backhaul and long-haul infrastructure;
- d) that the cost of transit is an obstacle for development of the Internet in developing countries, especially landlocked developing countries;
- e) that in view of the fact that access to information and sharing and creation of knowledge contribute significantly to strengthening economic, social and cultural development, thus helping countries to reach the internationally agreed development goals and objectives, this process can be enhanced by removing barriers to universal, ubiquitous, equitable and affordable access to information;
- f) that continuing technical and economic development require ongoing studies in this area by the relevant ITU Sectors, in particular best practices for reducing the cost of international Internet connectivity (transit and peering);
- g) that efficient networks and costs enable increased traffic volumes, economies of scale and a shift from transit connections to peering arrangements where appropriate;
- h) that a reduction in the costs of international connectivity will stimulate access to and benefit from the Internet,

taking into account

- a) the commitment by ITU and its Member States to achieving the Millennium Development Goals;
- b) the Geneva Declaration of Principles and Geneva Plan of Action adopted at the first phase of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) (Geneva, 2003) and the Tunis Commitment and Tunis Agenda for the Information Society adopted at the second phase of WSIS (Tunis, 2005), and in particular § 27 and § 50 thereof, relating to international Internet connectivity;
- c) the four targets set by the Broadband Commission for Digital Development, in its report of September 2013, for making broadband universal and boosting affordability and uptake thereof, namely: making broadband policy universal; making broadband affordable; connecting homes to broadband; and getting people online;

d) *recognizing that g)* of the WTDC Dubai Declaration, which maintains that "despite all the progress made during past years, the digital divide still remains, and is compounded by disparities in access, use and skills between and within countries";

e) *therefore declares that 1* of the Dubai Declaration, which states that "promoting and making available affordable and accessible broadband infrastructure, with appropriate policy and strategy, is a fundamental enabling platform that fosters innovation and drives the development of national and global economies and the information society";

f) *therefore declares that 2* of the Dubai Declaration, in which it is stated that "access to affordable, reliable and secure telecommunication/ICT networks, including broadband, and to related services and applications, can facilitate economic, social and cultural development and implement digital inclusion through these means";

g) the output of Objective 1 of the WTDC Dubai Action Plan (DAP) regarding the strengthened capacity of members to develop and implement ICT strategies and policies as well as to identify methods and approaches for the development and deployment of infrastructure and applications;

h) Opinion 1 (Geneva, 2013) of the World Telecommunication/ICT Policy Forum (WTPF), which expresses the view that enabling the interconnection of international, national and regional networks through Internet exchange points (IXPs) may be an effective way to improve international Internet connectivity and to reduce the costs of such connectivity, with regulation only when necessary to promote competition, and invites Member States and Sector Members to work in a collaborative manner to achieve various objectives, including to promote public policies aimed at permitting the local, regional and international Internet network operators to interconnect through IXPs;

i) Supplement 2 to Recommendation ITU-T D.50, "Guidelines for reducing the costs of international Internet connectivity", which determines that it is important to find ways and means to reduce the cost of Internet subscriptions and proposes guidelines for reducing the cost of international Internet connectivity, including the establishment of Internet exchange points (IXPs), mirror sites, submarine cable rollout and local content,

taking into account further

a) *therefore declares that 9* of the Dubai Declaration, which establishes that "the ITU-D study groups should continue to contribute towards knowledge sharing and capacity building to be made available to the international community. In support of this objective, cooperation among the three ITU Sectors and with other organizations and expert groups should be further enhanced";

b) No. 196 of the Convention which provides that "the telecommunication standardization study groups shall pay due attention to the study of questions and to the formulation of recommendations directly connected with the establishment, development and improvement of telecommunications in developing countries at both the regional and international levels";

c) Resolution 81 (Dubai, 2012) of the WTSA, on strengthening collaboration,

recalling

a) § 18 of the Tunis Commitment, formulated during the second phase of WSIS (Tunis, 2005), in which it is stated that: "We shall strive unremittingly, therefore, to promote universal, ubiquitous, equitable and affordable access to ICTs, including universal design and assistive technologies, for all people, especially those with disabilities, everywhere, to ensure that the benefits are more

evenly distributed between and within societies, and to bridge the digital divide in order to create digital opportunities for all and benefit from the potential offered by ICTs for development";

- b) 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 information and communication technologies for socio-economic and cultural development, and Resolution 129 (Marrakesh, 2002) of the Plenipotentiary Conference, on bridging the digital divide;
- c) Resolution 178 (Guadalajara, 2010) of the Plenipotentiary Conference, on ITU's role in organizing the work on technical aspects of telecommunication networks to support the Internet;
- d) Resolution 35 (Rev. Hyderabad, 2010) of the WTDC, on support for development of the African information and communication technology sector;
- e) Resolution 39 (Istanbul, 2002) of the WTDC, on the agenda for connectivity in the Americas and Quito Action Plan;
- f) the workshop on "Apportionment of revenues and international Internet connectivity", held in Geneva, Switzerland, from 23 to 24 January 2012, the studies presented carried out by TSB, and the report thereof;
- g) the First Regional Connectivity Forum for the Americas, held in Asunción, Paraguay, on 4 August 2014, and the report thereof,

resolves

to promote greater collaboration and cooperation between ITU and relevant organizations through cooperation agreements, so that, within the scope of its competence, ITU plays a greater role in:

- i) reducing the costs of international connectivity;
- ii) increasing the development of technologies or practices, both for submarine cable rollout at lesser cost and in order to augment the capacity of fibres and reduce latency,

instructs the Director of the Telecommunication Standardization Bureau

to ensure that the ITU Telecommunication Standardization Sector (ITU-T) performs its role in technical issues, and to continue to contribute ITU-T expertise and to liaise and cooperate with appropriate entities on issues such as those indicated in Supplement 2 to Recommendation ITU-T D.50, as well as any other related technological developments and issues, including facilitating appropriate studies on these issues by relevant ITU-T study groups and other groups,

instructs the Director of the Telecommunication Development Bureau

- 1 to organize international and regional forums and carry out necessary activities, in conjunction with appropriate entities, for the period 2014-2018, to discuss policy, operational and technical issues on international connectivity, in accordance with this resolution and Resolution 23 of the WTDC;
- 2 to continue studies on the structure of international Internet connection costs for developing countries, with emphasis on the influence and effects of the connection mode (transit and peering), secure cross-border connectivity and the availability and cost of backhaul and long-haul physical infrastructure, as indicated in Resolution 23 of the WTDC, and to include studies on the development of technology or practices for submarine cable rollout at lesser cost,

instructs the Director of the Telecommunication Standardization Bureau and the Director of the Telecommunication Development Bureau

to coordinate the studies on the structure of international Internet connection costs for developing countries between both Sectors in order to avoid duplication of effort and ensure the effective use of resources,

instructs the Secretary-General

- 1 to report annually to the Council on the activities undertaken on these subjects;
- 2 to propose to the 2015 session of the Council that a special forum or workshop be convened under Resolution 2 (Rev. Guadalajara, 2010) of this conference, during the first quarter of 2017, to discuss all the issues raised in this resolution, preferably collocated with other relevant major ITU events,

instructs the Council

to consider the Secretary-General's report and, when appropriate, undertake further steps, and to study the Secretary-General's proposal calling for a forum to address all issues related to this resolution,

invites the Member States

- 1 to make progress in the coordination of regional policies to reduce the costs of international Internet connectivity, agreeing on concrete measures resulting in better conditions for the developing countries, including, among other objectives, the application of preferential fees (taxes or rates) by transit countries to the international links of landlocked developing countries;
- 2 to apply the Tunis Agenda in this regard, in particular § 50 thereof,

urges service providers

to negotiate and agree to bilateral commercial arrangements enabling direct international Internet connections that take into account the possible need for compensation between them for the value of elements such as, inter alia, traffic flow, number of routes, geographical coverage and the cost of international transmission.
