Question 13/1:   Promotion of infrastructure and use of the Internet in developing countries

STUDY GROUP 1

SOURCE: CHAIRMAN OF FOCUS GROUP ON QUESTION 13/1

TITLE: REPORT OF THE FOCUS GROUP MEETING

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The Focus Group on Question 13/1 met on 31 August and 2 September 1999.

A number of documents were allocated to the Focus Group for information and action. Of particular interest for the ongoing study were the documents submitted by the Peoples Republic of China (1/082), INTELSAT (1/083), and the ITU-SPU (1/073), as well as the first partial draft of the Focus Groups's report (1/077).

Another set of documents relates to liaison activities with the ITU-T, coming from the Joint Experts Group (1/048), ITU-T Study Group 3 - Working Party 3/3 (1/061), and a summary on liaison activities by the Chairman of the Focus Group (1/050). Based on this inputs, a liaison statement to the Standardization Sector was agreed as contained in Annex 1 to this report.

The Focus Group agreed to continue its work in its present structure and offered to act as contact for the ITU-T Study Groups for Internet and IP-based network issues in ITU-D's Study Group structure, except for the regulatory issues that we are proposing to be dealt within the framework of Question 9/1 (see the proposal below).

The Focus Group agreed not to enlarge the scope of Question 13/1 to avoid an increase of workload beyond the available human resources dedicated to the Focus Group activities. This approach was already supported by the April 1999 TDAG meeting.

The Focus Group further agreed to dedicate a chapter of its report to voice over Internet in order to raise awareness and to improve knowledge. This chapter will be of a descriptive nature.

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However, in the absence of a Service Description necessary for the Full Featured Service (FFS) as currently defined by the TIPHON Project, the Focus Group felt it impossible to study the economic impact of this service in general or in particular for developing countries. However, it would be really helpful for Study Group 1, in order to better answer those questions, to get informed as soon as a service description of the full featured service will be available.

The Focus Group proposes that the study of the regulatory impact of voice over Internet and "IP telephony" for developing countries should be considered under Question 9/1 - Impacts of the introduction and utilization of new technologies on the regulatory environment of telecommunications. To facilitate the task of the Rapporteur's Group on Question 9/1 the Focus Group proposes that the ITU Secretariat will provide input on the issue for the next foreseen meeting of this Group and encourage contributions to be submitted to the Study Group Secretariat on the present status of the discussion, if any, concerning regulatory implications of voice over Internet.

The Focus Group took note that it was not contacted in order to contribute to the content related to the activities of the Development Sector of the Secretary General's Report on IP-related issues.

With respect to the ongoing work to finalise the report and the Recommendation(s), the Focus Group agreed to the general concept as contained in Document 1/077, but decide to take on board various useful proposals (e.g. glossary,licensing for ISPs) to improve the product.

The Focus Group encourages the strengthening of co-operation with other International Organisations (e.g. WTO, OECD) dealing with similar issues, as well as with NGO-type Internet organisations, and Internet industry, mainly to decrease the workload for the rapporteurs and to avoid duplication of work.

The Chairman reminded the Group that after identifying the areas where more input is needed, he will continue to work on further contributions received. In order to allow a smooth processing, contributions should be submitted by the end of **February 2000**.

FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME

The Focus Group envisages a meeting in **April 2000** in order to finalize the report and the Recommendation(s), if a sufficient number of contributions have been received by the above-mentioned deadline. The meeting will take place either in Singapore or in Africa, most likely in Senegal.

This tight schedule is needed, because the Group intends to submit its final draft report, including the Recommendation(s), to Study Group 1 next year (September 2000) for consideration and adoption. Thus, the documents must be submitted to the Study Group Secretariat by **June 2000**.

ANNEX 1

Liaison Statement

SOURCE: STUDY GROUP 1, FOCUS GROUP ON PROMOTION OF
INFRASTRUCTURE AND USE OF THE INTERNET IN DEVELOPING
COUNTRIES

TITLE: LIAISON STATEMENT TO ITU-T STUDY GROUPS 2, 3 AND 13

APPROVAL: Agreed at the Meeting of ITU-D Study Group 1, 30 August – 3 September 1999

FOR: Information

SUBJECT: Studies arising from the ETSI TIPHON Project request for an E.164 Numbering resource

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ITU-T Study Group 2, Working Party 1/2, Question 1/2 "Applications of numbering and addressing plans for fixed and mobile services" , at its meeting 3-13 November 1998 issued a liaison statement directed to ITU-D Study Group 1 Focus Group on promotion of infrastructure and use of the Internet in developing countries for action and reply by April 1999 namely to take into account the economic and regulatory impacts of Voice over Internet for developing countries, in particular LDCs.

In co-operation with ITU-T Study Group 13, the Lead Study Group within the ITU-T in respect of IP development, experts of ITU-T Study Groups 2, 3 and ITU-D Study Group 1 involved in the study of Numbering for IP Telephony met in Geneva at the ITU Headquarters on the 29th and 30th of April 1999. This Joint Expert Group (JEG) meeting compiled a list of 42 questions for clarification which it felt should be addressed by the respective Groups during their ongoing studies of Internet or IP-based network issues.

The impact of voice over Internet applications and "IP Telephony" on the economy and the regulatory regime of Developing Countries as well as the study of the questions arising from the JEG meeting were not explicitly mentioned as subjects to be studied by the Focus Group in its Terms of Reverence. The Focus Group is working toward providing practical suggestions for increasing Internet infrastructure build-out and use. In particular, it focuses on how to create a capital-attracting, pro-competitive policy environment that will foster infrastructure build-out, as well as the policy environment suited to best foster Internet development. This question is also geared toward developing human capacity in technical expertise related to the Internet.

Study Group 1, on the other hand, will carefully consider the inputs provided by the above mentioned ITU meetings and will address it in the scope of its reports to the extent possible.

Study Group 1 identified the questions Q 34, Q 39, Q 41 and, Q 42 to be relevant for its work.

However, in the absence of a Service Description necessary for the Full Featured Service (FFS) as currently defined by the TIPHON Project, it was felt impossible to study the economic impact of this service for developing countries. Further, Study Group 1 decided not to enlarge the scope of Question 13/1 to avoid an increase of workload beyond the available human resources dedicated to the Focus Group activities. This approach was already supported by the April 1999 TDAG meeting.

Voice over Internet is just one of the many applications using this infrastructure once it is established. While the main target of bringing Internet into Developing Countries is to narrow the information gap, the Focus Group decided to dedicate a chapter of its report to Voice over Internet in order to raise awareness and to improve knowledge. This chapter will be of a descriptive nature.

The Focus Group presented a first partial draft report to Study Group 1 at the meeting in September 1999. The Group intends to submit its final draft report including the recommendation(s) to Study Group 1 next year (September 2000) for consideration and adoption. In the meantime, updates or revisions of this report will be put on the Focus Group's web discussion board. The board is restricted to registered members (to register, please address the contact) and can be reached at the following web address *http://wwwp.itu.ch:8080/~2/login.* The board can also be reached from the web address *http://www.itu.int/ITU-D-UniversalAccess/* - visible under the Internet section.

Study Group 1 decided to include the study of the regulatory impact of voice over Internet and "IP telephony" for developing countries under Question 9/1 - Impacts of the introduction and utilization of new technologies on the regulatory environment of telecommunications. To facilitate the task of the Rapporteur's Group on Question 9/1 the Study Group 1 requests that ITU Secretariat will input on this issue for the next forseen meeting of the Rapporteur's Group and to encourage contributions to be submitted to the Study Group Secretariat on the present status of the discussion, if any, concerning regulatory implications of voice over Internet

As the Rapporteur's Group on Question 9/1 has just started its activities, regretably we cannot supply ITU-T with new inputs regarding the possible regulatory impact of voice over Internet and "IP telephony" for developing countries.

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