



Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT)

**Third Meeting of the Telecommunication
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Note by the Director

INTERIM REPORT ON SPECIAL PROGRAMME FOR THE LDCs

1. Introduction

The WTDC-98 approved a Valletta Action Plan (VAP) which included, in its Chapter 3, Special Programme for the Least Developed Countries.

The Programme adopted 5 priority areas, namely

- Introduction of new technologies
- Sector restructuring
- Rural telecommunication development
- Human resources development/management
- Financing and tariffs

which were seen as critical to the faster development of telecommunications in these countries. It also set out objectives and targets to be achieved during the cycle 1999-2003. Most importantly a new strategy was adopted to **concentrate** the Union's assistance to a few countries at a time in order to achieve tangible results and a greater impact on telecom network development and growth. The ITU Council in 1999 adopted the criteria for the selection of a handful of LDCs each year and early in 2000 the BDT Director officially launched the programme with the following countries being selected to for the year 2000:

AFR Region: Chad, Comoros, Ethiopia and Tanzania
AM Region: Haiti
AR Region: Sudan
ASP Region: Cambodia

It is to be noted that the African continent currently has 33 of the 48 LDCs listed by the UN General Assembly. The List is due for review in December 2000 and it is hoped that some LDCs may be removed from this list.

Telecom penetration is one of the key indicators, which spurs socio-economic development which may lead to a country's "graduation" from the list.

2 Criteria for selection of countries

Countries will be selected by ITU on the basis of the following criteria:

- a) Country with an extremely low main line (ML) density, below 0.5 ML per 100 inhabitants.
- b) Country with a sufficiently absorptive telecommunication organization where assistance will be put to good use.
- c) Country with a stable environment and a leadership willing to implement agreed strategies.
- d) Country emerging from a disaster or civil strife but offering sufficient stability and security.

3. Objectives

The overall objectives of the special Programme for LDCs are set out in Chapter III of the VAP and are:

- a) To reform the telecommunication sector so as to introduce new structures which are more conducive to faster and sustained telecommunication development, with well managed and modern networks.
- b) To increase the penetration of telecommunication services so as to achieve universal access to those services.

4. Targets

- a) To meet fully the demand for telecommunication services in urban areas. This means virtually eliminating the waiting list for services by the year 2005, which translates into an average urban main line (ML) density of 10 par 100 inhabitants.
- b) To achieve a rural ML density of 2 ML per 10.000 inhabitants. This density would not yet amount to easy access to telecommunication services as suggested in the Missing Link report, but would be a bold move in that direction.

5. Proposed Actions

Activities have been proposed for each of the 7 selected countries such as to provide a stimulus to the telecommunication development programme in the country.

The actions are derived from one or more of the 5 priority areas retained in Chapter 3 of the Special programme. The rationale behind each priority area is

- a) sector restructuring: to create a favourable environment for private sector investment and faster growth;
- b) introduction of new technologies: to modernize and expand the network and to introduce novel services;
- c) rural telecom development: as a direct route towards universal access;
- d) HRD/M: for sustainability of the management and operation of the services:

(e) financing and partnerships: for increased investment in the sector.

The specific actions to be financed by the BDT are indicated in the Operational Plan.

6. Financing of the Programme

The BDT has programmed CHF 1.06 million in year 2000 Operational Plan budget in Chapter 3 for the Special Programme for LDCs. It is expected that other BDT programmes in the various Chapters of the VAP will accord due priority to LDCs as indicated in Resolution 16 of the WTDC. But all this assistance remains largely catalytic. The bulk of the telecom development funds must therefore come from the countries themselves and from their partners. It is for this reason that the ITU/BDT assistance must be specifically directed:

- (a) to help engender partnerships to bring about increased investment in the sector
- (b) to create the conditions at country level that are conducive to the flourishing of those partnerships, viz. a reformed and restructured sector with an autonomous and strong Regulatory Body to facilitate and oversee the actions of various players.

Among the key partners of the ITU-D are its Sector Members as specifically mentioned in the VAP Chapter 3. Other traditional partners - the Financing Institutions and UN Agencies and Funds will no doubt continue to contribute towards increased investment in the telecom sector. It is proposed to hold a Partnership Meeting, or Donors a Table Meeting to examine various proposals/projects as will have been identified for possible financing

7. Work Plan

The overall programme will be implemented according to the following schedule:

Activity	Completion date
1. Selection of Countries	3 rd week Dec. 1999
2. Launch of Programme	1 st week Jan. 2000
3. Interim Report to TDAG	1 st week Mar. 2000
4. Actions Agreed by Countries	2 nd week Mar. 2000
5. TORs, EQT specs	4 th week Mar. 2000
6. Progress Report to Council	1 st week Apr. 2000
7. Selection of New Countries for 2001	4 th week June. 2000
8. Fielding of Consultants, order of Eq.	4 th week Aug. 2000
9. Progress Report to TDAG	1 st week Sep. 2000
10. Reports, Recommendations	4 th week Nov. 2000
11. Partnership Meeting	2 nd week Oct. 2000
12. Resource Mobilization	continuous
13. 1 st evaluation	December 2000
14. 2 nd evaluation	June 2001

8. TDAG Guidance

TDAG is requested to provide its observations and guidance on the implementation of the Special Programme for the LDCs.

