International Telecommunication Union

Brazil (Federative Republic of)

FREE ONLINE ACCESS TO ITU-R RECOMMENDATIONS

1   Introduction

By this document the administration of Brazil aims to address the topic of "*Free Online Access to ITU-R Recommendations*" within the context of the agenda item "Decisions of Council-09". It intends to provide to the Radiocommunication Advisory Group (RAG) a concise vision over the theme and, among other aspects, a brief translation of the Brazilian experience during the trial period of free online access to ITU-R Recommendations. The present information may be valuable as a support for the RAG during its analysis of this matter.

It must be noticed that several discussions over this subject have taken place within the different deliberative bodies of ITU over the last years. A final decision is expected for the next Plenipotentiary Conference 2010, to be held in Mexico, in October 2010.

2   About the objectives of ITU-R as in the Strategic Plan for the Union (2008-2011)

By briefly analyzing some of the main sectoral objectives of ITU-R, as set out by the Plenipotentiary Conference (Antalya, 2006) thought Resolution 71, Strategic Plan for the Union (2008-2011), we may reinforce the perception that the subject under discussion is closely aligned with most of the targets defined for the Radiocommunication Sector in the period of 2008-2011. To be more specific in the examination, Objectives 1, 3 and 4 shall be mentioned[1]:

"..   *Objective 1 - To promote, foster and ensure cooperation and coordination among* ***all Member States in decision making on radiocommunication*** *issues, with participation of Sector Members and Associates, as appropriate.*

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       Objective 3 – ***To produce Recommendations*** *on radiocommunication services in order to achieve connectivity and interoperability in applying modern ICTs.*

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[1] Main objectives for ITU-R extracted from Resolution 71 (Rev. Antalya, 2006), PP-06 "Strategic plan for the Union for 2008-2011 (Antalya, 2006)".

*Objective 4 - **To respond to the needs of the membership by disseminating information and know-how on radiocommunication issues,** by publishing and distributing relevant materials (e.g. reports and handbooks), in coordination and collaboration, as appropriate, with the other Bureaux and the General Secretariat.*

..." [bold emphasis added]

Having those objectives in mind, we may reflect, and recognize, that to foster the participation of all Members on the decision-making processes, it may be seen as a key role of ITU to be constantly seeking easier and cost-effective mechanisms to stimulate the involvement of all stakeholders, including those less economically advantaged.

In that sense, the analysis should encompass the different kinds of impacts, positive and negative, always considering the benefits to be reverted to the membership in case of a positive decision.

Another issue is that not only the production of recommendations is important, but also the improvement of those already in force, which may be a resultant translation of **Objective 3**. By allowing easier ways of accessing the already approved recommendations, relevant ideas regarding applicable revisions to the current recommendations may be stimulated, and also, a wider and deeper participation of developing countries and LDC´s in that process might be achieved as well. Furthermore, considering that the output for achieving the **Objective 3** is not only to convene events such as workshops, WRC, SG and WP´s meetings, but to produce high quality acts and recommendations, once again we come to a conclusion that would support the acceptance of the proposal.

3   ITU-T Case

The theme "Free online access to ITU documents" has long been discussed in ITU. One of the major milestones of it was the Council 2006 Session, in which it has been approved, by Decision 542, a trial period to free online access to Portable Document Format (pdf) versions of ITU-T Recommendations to free online public access, for a 09 (nine) month period, up to the following Council Session (2007).

During the Council Session 2007, the Secretary-General reported some statistics on ITU-T website access during the trial period for free online access (Document C07/32). The numbers were very significant, and by comparing the amount of ITU-T Recommendations downloads during the 4 (four) initial month of 2007 to the number of those which have been sold in same period of the previous year, it can be seen a very impressive result. The result was that the number of downloads reached around 1,000,000 against 2,532 sold Recommendations, which means around 39,500% of increase on the number of accesses to ITU-T Recommendations. Another relevant point was the monthly increase on new IP addresses accessing the website, accounted to around 15,000 each month. Noting these arguments, it is a fact that the decision had surely resulted in an outstanding increase on the visibility of ITU-T works. The SG had also **mentioned that TSAG[2] had advised TSB Director** in order to recommend Council to authorize permanent free online access to ITU-T Recommendations.

Finally, on the 5th September 2007, during the Third Plenary Meeting of Council 2007, the agenda item "Online access to ITU-T Recommendations" was brought into discussion. Based on the recommendation from the Director of TSB**, founded by TSAG´s advice on the matter**, it was agreed that ITU-T Recommendations would be made available free of charge, on a permanent basis.

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[2] Report 17 – "Report of the TSAG meeting held in Geneva (26 February – 1 March 2007)".

Also, a number of councillors further recommended that the practice be extended to other ITU Sectors, notably the Radiocommunication Bureau. As commonly known, the final decision was to provide free online access to ITU-T Recommendations for everybody, both Members and Non-Members, worldwide.

In the ITU-T case, it is visible by the records that the Telecommunication Standardization Advisory Group, TSAG, in its duties as an advisory body, played a crucial role on the process of approval of free online access to ITU-T Recommendation. Brazil expects that RAG may further express its vision over the matter, by possibly recommending BR to support the adoption of free online access to ITU-R Recommendations on a permanent basis.

As for ITU-R documents, besides Brazil, other Administrations such as Japan[3], United Arab Emirates[4] and the Russian Federation[5], for example, have already expressed their views, in some way, supporting the free online access to ITU-R Recommendations.

Brazil has made two contributions to ITU Council 2008 and 2009 Sessions, where it has provided a chronological compilation of the free online access theme background in ITU. A detailed record on the subject can be accessed in the documents C08/53 and C09/84.

4   Financial concerns and the benefits for the Membership

The imminent financial impact on the Union incomes, if a "pro-free access" decision is taken on a permanent basis, is quite evident. Historically, ITU-R Recommendations related to Mobile Services, Radiowave Propagation, Broadcasting, Fixed and Satellite Services are some examples of highly demanded documents. They might respond to significant financial resources for the Union.

Although a financial impact is a real concern, it must not be forgotten that the benefits and outcomes resulted by the increase of developing countries and LDCs participation in the work of the Union is something that can't be economically measured. To that issue, Brazil understands that ITU is certainly driving special attention, considering the Union's remarkable efforts towards the inclusion of those countries, over the years, in its processes.

Today, the digital medias for online distribution have radically reduced the delivery costs of information. These costs would certainly occur, in the past, if ITU-R decided to provide free "hard copies" of its documents. Undeniably, a measure allowing free distribution of hard copies wouldn't be viable. Nowadays the figure has changed with the electronic online distribution advantages, which lead marginal costs of distribution to go down substantially.

According to SG report[6] to the Council 2009 Session, last September, comparing the revenue for the same period in 2008 from ITU-R Recommendations, exclusively from ITU Members, the **loss of income** from ITU-R Recommendations Annual Online Subscriptions during the first 6 months of 2009 was SFr. **160,000**. The total number of ITU-R Recommendations downloaded during the trial period via TIES password or an Annual Online Subscription increased **40%** in 2009 over the same period of 2008. **Furthermore, the Council was invited to confirm free access to ITU-R Recommendations taking into consideration the projected shortfall of income for future.**

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[3] Contribution submitted to 15th Meeting of RAG - Document RAG08-1/5.

[4] Contribution submitted to Council 2009 Session – Document C09/69.

[5] Contribution submitted to Council 2009 Session – Document C09/81.

[6] Report by the Secretary General, Council 2009 – Trial Free Online Access to ITU-R Recommendations and Basic Texts of the ITU – Document C09/63.

5   Brazilian experience during the trial period

As an example of the importance of the free access in the viewpoint of a developing country, Brazil may address its own experience. During the trial period of free online access to ITU-R Recommendations, the Brazilian Administration has been able to identify new opportunities to prepare contributions to ITU-R Study Groups and Working Parties, being able to act more efficiently and effectively in many areas. During the last year, Brazil has been able to increase its participation, not only contributing with informative documents, but also elaborating proposals for revisions of Recommendations on both ITU-T and ITU-R Sectors. The number of contributions submitted by the Brazilian Administration to ITU-R had increased around 23% in 2009 (trial period), comparing to 2008. Furthermore, those submitted to other international fora had increased almost 85%. The increment on these figures might have been contributed by the free trial period.

Although Brazil presently may be considered as a fast-growing emerging country, the resources for research and development in the country are still limited. Many institutions, such as universities, research and development institutes, or even small and medium technology development SME's[7], so far need to be encouraged to expand their activities related to telecommunications matters. The possibility of providing those with access to ITU-R Recommendations for free is a measure that certainly would foster their activities, and stimulate them to participate in the work of the Union.

The free online access to ITU-R Recommendation is being considered a very important achievement among the professionals working directly with ITU-R issues. Before the trial period, some participants, mostly new participants, had strong difficulties while following the discussions. That is because they did not have access to basic documents, which were some initial Recommendations over the themes under discussion. One example is related to IMT Recommendations, such as M.1645 and M.1822. These documents give general visions over the framework and overall objectives for and services supported by IMT. Many participants did not have access to those documents until the free online trial period. Another example of important accomplishment during the year 2009, eased by the free online ITU-R Recommendations, were the Brazilian proposals for the revision of some ITU-R Recommendations, done under SG 6 working parties. Internal discussions towards many Brazilian contributions could be certainly improved by the free trial period.

6   Asymmetry of information and visibility over ITU-R and ITU-T works

The convergence of telecommunication technologies has been provoking correlated discussions and studies throughout the different SG´s or WP´s in both ITU Sectors. The current free access to ITU-T standards is an outstanding achievement for international telecommunications, once it gives great visibility to the work of ITU-T, and its technical standards over a large number of different areas of ICTs. However, this movement should be symmetric, which means it should happen on both Sectors of the Union in order to avoid a possible future asymmetry of information between the work being conducted on both Sectors, ITU-T and ITU-R. An equal easy access to both Sectors Recommendations will permit the Membership better knowledge, not only on standards regarding network operations, and internetworking, as those created by ITU-T, but also to standards needed for promoting interference-free operations of radiocommunication systems, assuring the necessary performance and quality in operating radiocommunication systems, as those produced by ITU-R. It is appropriate to mention that some themes are being increasingly brought into discussion on both Sectors, such as PLT, IMT, Digital TV, Fixed-Mobile Convergence, NGN, Vehicular Communications and many others. Each Sector plays a vital role from what concerns to its

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[7] Small and Medium enterprises.

responsibilities, so their outputs should be equally provided for the membership. Some recent liaison statements between study groups in both Sectors might be an example of this trend.

The convergence also leads to another situation in which some recommendations produced by one Sector might be referenced in recommendations produced by the other Sector. Taking that into consideration, the access to both Sectors recommendations should be feasible and proportional to avoid partial understanding on the subject. As one example, we may mention the Recommendation ITU-R BT.1699-1, for Harmonization of Declarative Application Formats for Interactive TV, which revision had an effective participation of Brazil. The Recommendation was produced by ITU-R, and in the document, two informative references to ITU-T Recommendations are made, ITU-T J.200 and J.202, since their subjects are correlated.

In that sense, it can be thought that the equitability between access to ITU-T and ITU-R documents is an important issue, since unbalanced movements between both Sectors might lead to future asymmetries.

7   Conclusions

The Brazilian Administration expects that the present information, in addition to those already provided in previous Council 2008 and 2009 Sessions, might be valuable to RAG while formulating its final position over the theme of Free Online Access to ITU-R Recommendations. Brazil understands that RAG, while performing its duty to advise the Director of the Radiocommunication Bureau on ITU-R issues has a crucial role during the decision-making process over matters affecting the Sector. The strong participation of RAG in favor of this subject, to be decided by the next Plenipotentiary Conference 2010, might be decisive by now.

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