

## RECOMMENDATION ITU-D 12

**Telecommunication support for the protection of the environment****Question 7/2: Telecommunication support for the protection of the environment**

The World Telecommunication Development Conference (Valletta, 1998),

*considering*

that Agenda 21, in particular Chapters 35 and 40 thereof, Resolution 8 of the World Telecommunication Development Conference (Buenos Aires, 1994) and Resolution 35 of the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference (Kyoto, 1994), recognize that the telecommunication network can offer, among other services, reliable means of supporting programmes planned by environmental protection agencies, mainly by carrying timely information from point to point,

*endorsing*

the conclusions and recommendations of the Symposium on the Role of Telecommunication and Information Technology in the Protection of the Environment (Tunis, 1996) and Resolutions 8 and 11 dealing with the same matter and adopted, respectively, by the second African Regional Telecommunication Development Conference (Abidjan, 1996) and the second Arab States Regional Telecommunication Development Conference (Beirut, 1996),

*recognizing*

- a) that the telecommunication technologies in use today can offer effective facilities for monitoring natural hazards and environmental damage caused by human activities such as accidents in chemical factories, harmful forestry activities and pollution in harbours, rivers and lakes;
- b) that the importance of using telecommunications as a powerful tool in the protection of the environment is not focused enough in the environmental policies of many countries;
- c) that it is important for the telecommunication environmental communities at the national and international level to set up and to strengthen cooperation between them;
- d) that information communication will help in resolving environmental problems through the dissemination and sharing of environmental information for international cooperation and by fostering environmental awareness;
- e) that various problems have arisen due to overcrowding of urban areas, resulting in increasing concerns in areas such as waste management and unauthorized human settlements;
- f) that telecommunication networks will provide attractive alternatives for the benefit of the environment, such as:
  - improving efficiency of physical distribution and human transportation;
  - promoting and facilitating telecommuting, tele-education, etc.;
  - improving efficiency and levels of waste management;
  - disseminating information on waste recycling initiatives,

*recommends that ITU Member States and Sector Members*

**1** take a real initiative, through their respective telecommunication authorities, to provide all the possible support, directly or indirectly, in collaboration with the respective environmental authorities, in promoting telecommunication applications devoted to the protection of their environments and encouraging training and human resources development in that field;

**2** consider all technologies which could assist in environmental protection activities such as monitoring of air, river, harbour and sea pollution, remote sensing, wildlife studies, forestry development, etc.;

- 3 recognize the need for a national environmental protection policy with due emphasis on the important role which telecommunications can play in providing such assistance;
- 4 create special awareness among policy/decision-makers to help them gain a better understanding of the issue of telecommunications and the environment;
- 5 take into account the importance of an integrated approach for collecting, processing and disseminating environmental information at national, regional and international levels and take all necessary steps towards implementing such an approach;
- 6 pay particular attention to satisfying the basic telecommunication needs of small communities living in rural and remote areas, in order to help them establish industries in accordance with the concept of sustainable development, to be extended to other social and economic activities, and promote sustainable development of other social and economic activities, thereby minimizing migration of these communities into urban areas which ultimately causes urban congestion;
- 7 utilize telecommunication networks and services effectively in situations where a reduction of energy consumption could be achieved, such as teleconferencing, substituting telecommunications for travel, which will reduce the degree of pollution as well as the potential risk of accidents, and reducing paperwork, thereby ultimately saving the environmental resources and preserving nature.

*requests BDT*

- 1 to enlarge its current activities focused on conducting pilot projects in developing countries, in partnership with development partners, which are vital in the follow-up of Question 7/2;
  - 2 to work with administrations and regional telecommunication organizations on the telecommunication provisions of the draft International Convention on Natural Disaster Mitigation, taking into account, on one hand, the decisions of the Istanbul Conference in June 1996 and the Caribbean regional workshop (CTU/ITU/UNDHA) in November 1996 and, on the other hand, the current efforts of the Working Group on Emergency Telecommunications (WGET) and UNDHA, e.g. in the Washington meeting (September 1997) and the Rome meeting (November 1997), leading up to the Intergovernmental Conference on Emergency Telecommunications in June 1998 in Finland.
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