



CxO MEETING

6 December 2022, Dubai, United Arab Emirates

COMMUNIQUÉ

High-level industry executives (CxOs) met with the senior management of the ITU Telecommunication Standardization Bureau to exchange views on industry priorities and related standardization activities in Dubai, UAE, 6 December 2022. Telecom Review hosted the meeting with the support of the UAE Telecommunications and Digital Government Regulatory Authority, du, TELUS, IBM, and Huawei.

CxOs discussed industry priorities in the areas of artificial intelligence and machine learning (AI/ML), environmental sustainability, sustainability reporting, the metaverse, quantum information technologies, and IMT-2020/5G and beyond.

CxOs shared views on means to support and capitalize on the growing synergy between industry and academia in the development and application of information and communication technologies (ICTs), particularly in the field of AI/ML.

CxOs also received executive briefings on the outcomes of previous CxO meetings, ITU standardization work on quantum information technologies, and the AI-based mapping of ITU activities to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) developed by the ITU Telecommunication Standardization Bureau.

AI/ML and data

Network optimization is becoming increasingly challenging, and essential, as networks grow in complexity to support the coexistence of a progressively diverse range of ICT applications and services.

CxOs noted that AI/ML is playing a key part in this optimization, highlighting the value of the growing collaboration between industry and academia on AI/ML demonstrated by initiatives such as the ITU AI/ML in 5G Challenge.

CxOs encouraged ITU studies towards new standards for metadata management in support of AI/ML.

CxOs called on ITU to stimulate the collaboration necessary to support widespread access to computing resources and high-quality data for AI/ML training and evaluation. CxOs also expressed support for the increasing interaction of MENA and ITU AI/ML sandboxes.

Environmental sustainability

Industry aims to improve networks' energy efficiency to achieve net-zero emissions and uphold circular economy principles to eliminate e-waste.

CxOs noted the value of relevant ITU standards and associated collaboration with other bodies to develop cohesive standards for sustainable digital transformation in areas such as metering; energy efficiency; circularity; and minimizing the environmental footprint of ICT goods, networks and services, including equipment manufacturing.

CxOs highlighted the significance of innovative data centre cooling solutions and AI/ML in improving energy efficiency and optimizing ICT infrastructure's use of renewable and low-carbon energy, again noting the value of relevant ITU standards.

Sustainability reporting

Various companies have highlighted their commitment to the SDGs but have yet to coalesce around a common reporting framework and metrics to evaluate their progress towards these global goals.

CxOs agreed that these companies and industry analysts would benefit considerably from such a common reporting framework, in particular associated guidance on relevant metrics and key performance indicators to evaluate progress towards each goal.

CxOs urged ITU to develop this framework for the ICT sector and thereby support the harmonization of ICT companies' SDG reporting.

Metaverse

Innovation to enable the metaverse is gaining a prominent position in ICT companies' business strategies and motivating considerable investment in enabling technologies.

CxOs discussed the relevance of metaverse worlds to entertainment, cities and industrial activities, highlighting the growing demand for supporting standards in areas such as AI/ML; immersive multimedia; Internet of Things; digital twin; environmental sustainability; and 5G and beyond-5G network infrastructure, capabilities, performance and integration.

Developing countries' metaverse ambitions should be duly considered in the development of such standards, emphasized CxOs.

CxOs cautioned that this growing demand for standards, and the accelerating emergence of standardization projects to meet this demand, could create challenges to the coordination of relevant standardization activities.

This recognition motivated CxOs to encourage ITU to take up a leading role in promoting collaborative and coordinated standards development, noting the proposal to create a new ITU focus group on the metaverse to be considered by the upcoming meeting of the ITU Telecommunication Standardization Advisory Group (TSAG) in Geneva, 12-16 December 2022.

Quantum information technologies

Quantum information technologies will be capable of solving problems beyond the reach of classical information technologies. Although these quantum information technologies are sure to bolster security defences, CxOs cautioned that they would also bring greater strength to attacks.

CxOs noted that the success of quantum information technologies would demand standards supporting the efficient, cost-effective and environmentally sustainable deployment of quantum devices and their interoperability.

Quantum information technologies such as Quantum Key Distribution (QKD) are quantum-safe and ready for large-scale deployment, with commercial QKD solutions now on the market, noted CxOs.

CxOs highlighted their support for ITU's ongoing standardization work on security and network aspects of quantum information technologies as well as the leading role that ITU continues to play in promoting the effective coordination of quantum-relevant standardization activities, noting the proposal to create an ITU Joint Coordination Activity on quantum information technologies to be considered by the upcoming meeting of TSAG.

5G and beyond

Networks are evolving to enable the interconnection of all types of physical or virtual entities with the support of precise performance assurance and the coordinated utilization of computing, storage and network resources.

Intelligent systems for network management and control are key to the development of highly service-oriented networks, said CxOs.

CxOs discussed challenges and opportunities presented by Open RAN, including the need for further discussion on issues such as interoperable standardized solutions and security and network complexity challenges across open segregated networking technologies. RAN quality of service (QoS) testing techniques should be applicable to all RAN architectures and the evaluation of their sustainability impacts, emphasized CxOs.

CxOs discussed the QoS evaluation of 5G at 6GHz and encouraged more study and field tests on 6GHz for 5G advanced and beyond, noting that the 6GHz spectrum is under study in the ITU Radiocommunication Sector and on the agenda of the ITU World Radiocommunication Conference 2023.

The participating organizations were:

In Dubai: APTelecom; Arab ICT Organization; Emirates Integrated Telecommunications Company (EITC) (du); Huawei Technologies Co., Ltd.; IBM; Medeverse; Nokia Corporation; Rohde & Schwarz GmbH & Co. KG; SENKO Advanced Components; Sofrecom; Telecommunications and Digital Government Regulatory Authority (TDRA); Telecom Review Group; TELUS Communications Inc.; TTC; ZTE Corporation

Online: Alliance for Telecommunications Industry Solutions (ATIS); AT&T; British Telecom Plc; Catronic; China Telecommunications Corporation; Cisco Systems; Telefon AB - LM Ericsson; Etisalat Egypt; Fujitsu Limited; Orange; pureLiFi; Telkom SA Ltd.