PLENARY MEETING

ELEVENTH SERIES OF TEXTS SUBMITTED BY THE EDITORIAL COMMITTEE TO THE PLENARY MEETING

The following texts are submitted to the Plenary Meeting:

Source	Document	Title
WGLDCs	189(Rev.1)	Special programme for least developed countries
		Resolution WGLDCs-1 Special actions for the least developed countries
		Resolution WGLDCs-2 Gender and telecommunication policy in developing countries

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Annex: 12 pages

SPECIAL PROGRAMME FOR LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES

A programme to make a difference

Introduction

Ever since ITU started giving assistance to the least developed countries (LDCs) under Resolution 19 of the Plenipotentiary Conference (Malaga-Torremolinos, 1973), the assistance has been provided on an *ad hoc* basis to meet certain gaps at administrations' request. From 1992, the situation was partially corrected with the introduction of a programme approach to assistance, such that certain selected priority areas were addressed. The small amount of funds available meant, however, that ITU assistance had to remain catalytic and was spread rather thinly for the increasing number of LDCs.

Past actions have produced mixed results. For a few LDCs there have been noteworthy successes, but for many the situation has not improved. On the contrary, it has worsened in some cases and is likely to continue to do so for various reasons such as lack of political will, shortage of competent staff to organize the restructuring of the sector so as to engender competition, to operate and manage networks efficiently, etc. In others, civil strife has compounded the scenario. Moreover, the current telecommunication environment, characterized by, *inter alia*, the shift from voice to multimedia networks, globalization and deregulation, has to be considered a strategic issue which calls for innovative action.

New strategy

It is proposed to introduce a new strategy which seeks to concentrate the Union's efforts on a number of selected LDCs each year, with the support of the recipient country itself and other development partners that the Union will mobilize to help. Such assistance could be initiated through a preliminary visit by a BDT official to an LDC which has expressed an interest. This initial assessment should, in particular, take into account the existence and availability of national or subregional expertise that could be of service in subsequent stages and, where appropriate, propose initiatives, in the context of BDT's training activities, conducive to the prior emergence of such expertise.

Selection of the countries could be on the basis of their interest in these activities and their willingness to help finance the projects.

On the basis of negotiations, the countries concerned, BDT, ITU-D Sector Members, the private sector, financial institutions such as the World Bank, regional banks, etc., will participate in financing these projects. The projects will cover different areas, e.g. preparation/implementation of a master plan, restructuring of the telecommunication sector, introduction of new technologies/services and implementation of a pilot activity, etc., or a combination of areas as selected by the host country in consultation with the BDT experts. In this way, those involved (experts/consultants) would be available to the country over a given period (say, one year or more), and reasonably large funds would be spent to make an impact and a difference.

It is important that the countries selected show their interest by their participation in pilot projects or other selected activities. During the period between plenipotentiary conferences, well over half of the LDCs (the neediest) will have received this type of concentrated assistance, which is designed to produce concrete results and to make a difference.

The establishment of partnerships will be an important factor in the success of the programmes. Such partnerships may be realized through formal agreements or informal arrangements, as may be determined by the partners concerned.

Objectives, targets and follow-up

Objectives

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.

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 per 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.

Follow-up

BDT shall develop a mechanism for monitoring and evaluating the Special Programme for LDCs.

Priority areas

The regular assistance to LDCs (workshops/seminars/fellowships) would continue, but would also be limited to priority areas identified in Section 4.3 a)-d) of Document WTDC98/12, and with the addition of a fifth area as decided by the Working Group of the Plenary on LDCs, namely:

1)   Introduction of new technologies

2)   Sector restructuring

3)   Rural telecommunication development

4)   Human resources development/management

5)   Financing and tariffs.

The suggested action under each of the above priority areas follows below.

ANNEX

Special Programme for least developed countries, 1999-2003

NB   This is not a programme as such. It is a list of actions on the new priority areas for the next cycle as contained in Section 4 of WTDC Document 12 and as modified by the Working Group of the Plenary. The activities are generic in nature, from which the focal points concerned will each year derive an annual programme of action covering national, regional and global activities/projects.

Introduction of new technologies

a)   New technologies and new services

•   Seminars/workshops on:

–   **GMPCS:** in accordance with Opinion 5 of the first World Telecommunication Policy Forum

–   Assistance on IMT-2000

–   **Internet:** to cover various aspects of a potentially complex service

–   **Wireless loop access**: for extending services easily to areas not yet covered by the local cable network. Assistance will compare the advantages of TDMA and CDMA while cost benefit studies will include spectrum pricing

–   **Technological convergence**

–   **Broadband transmission over existing copper wire loops:** to increase the capacity of existing local copper cables in order to connect more subscribers to the network

–   **Digital audio and video broadcasting:** as covered in Questions 1/2 and 8/2 of the 1994-1998 study period

–   **Planning:** as covered under PLANITU and other general planning issues

–   **Spectrum management:** as widely supported in responses to the questionnaire

–   Telemedicine, tele-education and other services

•   Dissemination of outputs of Question 1/2 of the 1994-1998 study period

•   Dissemination of outputs of Questions 3/1, 5/1, 6/2, 7/2 and 8/2 of the 1994-1998 study period

•   Dissemination of outputs of Question 2/2 of the 1994-1998 study period

b)   Planning

- Continuing implementation of PLANITU at country level
- Updating the guidelines for the preparation of business-oriented development plans
- Dissemination of outputs of Question 2/2 of the 1994-1998 study period

c)   Spectrum management

- Seminars/workshops on BASMS
- Updating/upgrading software on BASMS and translation into various languages

Sector restructuring

- Assistance in sector restructuring (general)
- Assistance in legislation on telecommunication entities and regulation
- Assistance in setting up regulatory bodies and monitoring the regulatory framework
- Assistance to newly-created telecommunication private companies
- Policy choices in a new telecommunication environment
- Dissemination of outputs of Question 2/1 of the 1994-1998 study period
- Fostering partnerships

Rural telecommunication development

- Undertake pilot projects and community telecentre studies
- Implement pilot projects and community telecentres
- Seminars/workshops on new technologies for rural telecommunications
- Disseminate outputs of Question 4/2 of the 1994-1998 study period
- Application of GMPCS in rural/remote areas
- Establish policy to promote universal access

Human resources development/management

a)   Training

- Support for and/or strengthening of regional or subregional training centres
- Support for national training centres
- Training in computerized subscriber management system (CSMS), telecommunication management network (TMN) techniques
- Training managers of training centres in relevant training techniques

- Management techniques
- Computer-based training
- Training in the convergence of cellular and wireless local loop (WLL) technologies with existing technologies

b) Management

- Seminars/workshops for senior/middle-level telecommunication managers
- Seminars/workshops on financial management and resource mobilization
- Seminars/workshops on network management
- Seminars on legal and regulatory aspects
- Mandevtel
- Dissemination of outputs of Question 5/2 of the 1994-1998 study period

c) Maintenance

- Seminars/workshops on CSMS and TMN techniques
- Development of CSMS
- Preparation of TMN based guidelines
- Dissemination of outputs of Question 3/2 of the 1994-1998 study period

Financing and tariffs

- Fostering partnerships on investment in telecommunications and assisting LDCs in obtaining soft loans on concessional terms
- Assistance in trade in services as per relevant WTO agreements and Opinion B of the second World Telecommunication Policy Forum
- Dissemination of outputs of Question 4/1 of the 1994-1998 study period
- Assistance in tariff studies and their implementation
- Assistance to LDCs to develop a cost-based tariff policy and to modulate the effects of the reduction of the accounting rate

Other actions

Fellowships

Fellowships will be provided to promote the participation of LDC representatives in BDT activities, particularly study groups. These fellowships will cover mainly individual training and group training (workshops/seminars) and participation in certain meetings/conferences.

Equipment

Equipment (computer software and hardware) may be donated to LDCs as it becomes available. Network equipment and test gear may be provided for pilot activities. Partners are encouraged to inform BDT of the availability of equipment that could be donated to LDCs.

Projects

Technical cooperation projects and other activities executed by BDT under UNDP and other funding arrangements.

Regional activities

LDCs may benefit from any regional or subregional initiatives such as the United Nations Special Initiative on Africa: African Information Society.

Chapter 4

Execution of technical cooperation projects and other direct assistance under UNDP and other funding arrangements for the regions:

> Africa
>
> Americas
>
> Arab States
>
> Asia and the Pacific

RESOLUTION WGLDCs-1

SPECIAL ACTIONS FOR THE LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES

The World Telecommunication Development Conference (Valletta, 1998),

recalling

Resolution 1 of WTDC-94 and Resolution 30 of the Plenipotentiary Conference (Kyoto, 1994), Resolutions 2 and 5 of AF-RTDC-96 and AR-RTDC-96, respectively, and the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) statement on universal access and the right to communicate,

concerned

a)   that, for a variety of reasons, the telecommunication networks in a number of least developed countries (LDCs) remain in a very poor state of development in both urban and rural areas;

b)   that multilateral and bilateral flows of technical assistance and investment finance to LDCs are constantly declining,

cognizant

of the fact that improved telecommunication networks in these countries will be the major force behind their socio-economic recovery and development,

resolves

to endorse the new priority areas for the next four years and the associated programme of action for LDCs,

instructs the Director of BDT

1   to implement fully a programme of assistance for the LDCs as contained in [Annex 1 to Document 189(Rev?)], funding coming initially from the commitment, as in Buenos Aires, to dedicate at least 70 per cent of BDT funds to these priorities for LDCs;

2   to give priority to LDCs in implementing other BDT programmes of assistance to developing countries;

3   to pay special attention to suburban and rural telecommunication development with a view to achieving universal access to telecommunication services;

4   to strengthen the unit for LDCs, within existing resources, by grouping together the officials responsible for implementing actions in the priority areas selected in order to enhance coordination of assistance to LDCs,

requests the Secretary-General

1   to request the Plenipotentiary Conference (Minneapolis, 1998) to allocate a specific budget for LDCs with a view to enabling BDT to undertake increased and programmed activities for the LDCs;

2   to continue enhancing the assistance provided to LDCs through other resources, and in particular through untied voluntary contributions as well as any surplus income from world and regional telecommunication exhibitions and forums;

3   to seek and propose new and innovative measures capable of generating additional funds to be used for telecommunication development in the LDCs,

calls upon governments of the LDCs

1   to accord higher priority to telecommunication development and to adopt measures and policies that are conducive to bringing about faster development of telecommunications in their countries;

2   in selecting technical cooperation activities financed by UNDP, to accord high priority to telecommunication activities/projects,

calls upon other Member States and Sector Members

to establish partnerships with LDCs, either directly or with the assistance of BDT, in order to bring increased investment into the telecommunication sector and to stimulate the modernization and expansion of networks in those countries.

RESOLUTION WGLDCs-2

GENDER AND TELECOMMUNICATION POLICY
IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

The World Telecommunication Development Conference (Valletta, 1998),

considering

a)   the purposes of the Union as set out in Article 1 of the Constitution (Geneva, 1992) include promoting "the extension of the benefits of the new telecommunication technologies to all the world's inhabitants";

b)   the responsibility of ITU-D to facilitate and enhance telecommunication development by offering, organizing and coordinating technical cooperation and assistance activities;

c)   the Beijing Declaration - United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women (1995) - which seeks to ensure that women have equal access to information and communication as a means of furthering the advancement and empowerment of women and girls,

recognizing

a)   that telecommunications play a fundamental role in promoting social, political and economic development;

b)   that women in their multiple roles make a very important contribution to both social and economic life, particularly in the struggle against poverty in developing countries, and play a key role in shaping the attitudes, welfare and development of future generations;

c)   that full participation in policy and decision-making and access to telecommunication services will enable women and other groups who have been traditionally disadvantaged to derive benefits and make more effective contributions,

further recognizing

a)   that the inadequate deployment of telecommunication infrastructure in rural areas makes it particularly difficult for women in such areas to gain access to information and telecommunication services;

b)   that, while complex processes of convergence of technologies, liberalization and restructuring produce multiple impacts on employment in the telecommunication sector, e.g. creating jobs, demand for new skills and training, they may also lead to job losses when insufficient attention is paid to those needs;

c)   that making better use of human resources and skills of women significantly adds to the pool of talent which will be needed in the new information society;

d)   that women constitute a substantial and often under-served consumer market for information and communication technologies,

conscious

a)   that because of lack of access to alternative communications facilities and high illiteracy levels, women in developing countries rely on broadcasting media as their key source of information;

b)   that women and children are frequently most vulnerable during emergencies, and would benefit from improved access to emergency telecommunication services,

noting

a)   that there has been insufficient attention to understanding the impacts of telecommunication systems and technologies on women;

b)   that there have been few ITU telecommunication projects which have incorporated the perspectives and needs of women,

resolves

1   to establish a task force on gender issues to facilitate, develop and take forward a range of activities aimed at:

a)   ensuring that the benefits of telecommunications and the emerging information society are made available to all women and men in developing countries on a fair and equitable basis, (the terms of reference for the task force are attached);

b)   encouraging the recruitment, employment, training and advancement of women throughout the telecommunication field,

2   to incorporate the results of the Special Sessions on Gender Issues in the Valletta Action Plan;

3   to integrate a gender perspective in the campaign for a universal right to communicate,

requests that the Director of BDT

1   propose to the ITU Council the inclusion of a gender perspective in the ITU Strategic Plan;

2   report back to the next world telecommunication development conference on the results and progress made by the task force;

3   transmit this Resolution to the 1998 Plenipotentiary Conference,

further resolves that ITU-D

1   should make a commitment to integrate a gender perspective in its policies and work programmes, including human resources development activities, study groups, seminars, conferences and workshops;

2   should work closely with the task force to implement its programmes expeditiously;

3   should extend its data collection activities, including the telecommunications indicator series, to provide gender-disaggregated statistics;

4   should act as an enabling force for the development of an active network between various types of organizations of women involved in the information and telecommunication fields, including non-governmental organizations (NGOs);

5   should support efforts to identify technical and financial resources to carry out the programmes of the task force on gender issues,

also urges Member States, Sector Members and intergovernmental organizations

1   to review and, as appropriate, revise their policies and practices to ensure that recruitment, employment, training and advancement of women and men are undertaken on a fair and equitable basis;

2   to facilitate the employment of women in the telecommunication field, including at senior levels of responsibility in the telecommunication administrations, government and regulatory bodies, intergovernmental organizations and the private sector.

ANNEX

Terms of reference of the task force on gender issues

1   The Task Force on Gender Issues (TFGI) will comprise BDT representatives, appointed by the Director of BDT, as well as representatives of Member States, Sector Members, United Nations bodies, other regional/international organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and individual experts. The TFGI will be an "open" group, welcoming all persons and organizations with relevant expertise to join and participate in its work.

2   The TFGI shall be responsible to and report to the Director of BDT.

3   Members of the TFGI shall participate in all ITU-D activities to ensure that a gender perspective is included in its policies and work programmes, including human resources development activities, study groups, seminars, conferences and workshops.

4   The TFGI will be responsible for:

a)   securing financial and other resources to carry out this work, including through partnerships with the private sector, multilateral development finance bodies and other donors;

b)   defining its specific tasks, working methods and priorities.

5   The scope of work of the TFGI will include, but not be limited to, priority programmes of ITU-D (i.e., sector reform, regulation and legislation, rural development and universal access, technologies and applications, finance and economics, partnerships with the private sector, human resources development and management) and other projects such as broadcasting, development of telecentres, telemedicine, tele-education, telecommunications and trade, telecommunications as a social service, telecommunications and the environment, and telecommunications and disaster preparedness, and the universal right to communicate campaign.

6   The TFGI will serve as a source of expert advice, guidance and assistance to ITU-D in developing its policies, work programmes and projects in telecommunications. It will also keep ITU-D up to date with of progress made on gender issues by the United Nations system and Member States, and provide training for BDT staff on gender issues, as appropriate.

7   The TFGI will undertake a comprehensive range of activities to increase participation of women in policy and decision-making, operation and regulation of the telecommunication sector.

8   The TFGI shall assist ITU-D in raising awareness and disseminating information in order to sensitize all stakeholders in the telecommunication industry to the importance of these issues by working closely with existing women's communications networks, the Youth Network, the Platform for Communications and Democratization, and with specialist gender and development networks within the United Nations system, including those provided by UNIFEM and UNU-INTECH.

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