



INTERNATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATION UNION TELECOMMUNICATION DEVELOPMENT BUREAU

**WORLD TELECOMMUNICATION DEVELOPMENT
CONFERENCE (WTDC-98)**

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For action

Agenda item: 2.3

PLENARY MEETING

Note by the Chairman

OPERATIONAL PLANNING IN THE TELECOMMUNICATION DEVELOPMENT SECTOR

SOME STRATEGIC CONSIDERATIONS

The purpose of this contribution is to offer some observations on how the Telecommunication Development Sector can be strengthened and sustained in an environment of rapid social and economic transformation toward the information and knowledge-based societies of the future. The Development Sector has a key role to play in minimizing the gap between the "information rich" and "information poor" - a task that has resulted in demonstrable successes in such areas as direct assistance to developing countries to strengthen, expand and harmonize their telecommunication networks and services, in resource development and mobilization, and through the establishment of strategic partnerships and alliances as well as cooperation arrangements with other concerned international and regional organizations. Moreover, the ITU-D telecommunication indicator series and development databases provide an excellent source of information which has been shared and disseminated widely. Given the relatively brief existence of the Development Sector, significant and measurable progress has been made.

It is against this background that the second World Telecommunication Development Conference, and indeed the Plenipotentiary Conference itself, need to reflect on how the ITU-D can build on its achievements to best serve the needs of the ITU membership, particularly in the least developed countries. In examining the priorities of the Development Sector in the draft Strategic Plan for the Union 1999-2003, the "catalytic" and facilitating role of the ITU-D is highlighted in encouraging all the actors in telecommunications to work together in telecommunication development. In this regard, it is noted in the Convention that one of the principal duties of the Director of the BDT is to:

"work collegially with the other elected officials in order to ensure that the Union's catalytic role in stimulating telecommunication development is strengthened" (CV224).

In putting forward its recommendations to the Additional Plenipotentiary Conference in 1992, the High Level Committee, established to review the structure and functioning of the ITU, emphasized in the interest of harmonizing the objectives of the Union with the functions of the BDT:

"to act as a catalyst in mobilizing resources for development, and in promoting the establishment of favourable lines of credit, by creating awareness among the governmental authorities of developing countries of the importance of telecommunications in national development and of the priority which might be assigned to this sector, and also by cooperating with international and regional financial and development organizations." (Recommendation 29).

While the draft Strategic Plan for ITU-D lists a series of objectives with regard to the implementation of this catalytic function, it would be useful for the BDT to provide the ITU membership with clearly demonstrated and measurable results in its efforts to mobilize resources and advise developing countries on a range of policies and restructuring models for generating more internal funds for telecommunication development. Given the very modest percentage of telecommunication investment coming from multilateral sources (in the 5 to 10% range), efforts need to be enhanced to increase the share of funds originating from these sources.

It is suggested that the process by which progress in achieving the stated objectives of ITU-D can be measured could be considerably enhanced through the presentation of annual operational plans which set out the activities planned to be undertaken during any given year. Such activities could be presented and classified into two general categories - ongoing work and special projects or studies having a fixed duration as a means of realizing the stated strategic objective of the BDT to implement a programme of internal reform. Given the obvious symmetry between the strategic plan for the Development Sector and the production of operational planning exercises, it is suggested that this management tool could be effectively utilized in measuring progress in achieving the objectives of the various organizational units of the Bureau. Such plans could clearly establish the workload scenarios, the measures taken to deal with such scenarios, the resources available to undertake various tasks, and could establish various benchmarks or milestones which would also facilitate the process by which the evaluation of progress could be undertaken.

Operational planning would also be useful from the point of view of evaluating the work associated with study programmes which it is anticipated will form the basis of the Valletta Action Plan. BDT staff must be provided the tools to oversee work undertaken in relation to these programmes, in order to ensure, *inter alia*, that there exists a measure of symmetry between these tasks and related work being undertaken in the Bureau itself. It would be useful as well, as part of the operation plan and in recognition of the Bureau's catalytic function, to closely monitor work being undertaken in other international and regional organizations in order to optimize the use of resources and to avoid duplication. An operational plan also provides an opportunity to report on the results of work in the advisory bodies of the Sector.

An additional area where the production of an annual operational plan would be useful is in relation to the implementation of the decisions of the ITU Council and in response to the relevant recommendations of the ITU-2000 Working Group. For example, in recognition of the need to diversify the financial bases of the Union and pursuant to Council Resolution 1113, the Secretary-General, in consultation with the Directors of the three Bureaux, was instructed to identify products and services that could be subject to cost recovery and to develop appropriate detailed provisions and associated procedures, including fee schedules based on full cost allocation, for consideration by the 1998 Council. An operational plan could outline, not only a possible range of products and services which could be subject to cost recovery, as far as the ITU-D is concerned, but also those products and services which could also be subject to possible revenue generation.

Other issues relate to strengthening the relationship between the ITU and regional telecommunication organizations and to regional presence. While it is noted in the draft Strategic Plan the ITU-D should "strengthen the regional presence by increasing the decentralization of functions and authority to field offices and by strengthening the coordination functions of headquarters", an operational plan could include an implementation strategy and timetable for the decentralization of functions. Moreover, consistent with ITU-2000 Recommendations R.7/2 and R.27, the identification of measures to increase the synergy, strategic partnerships and cooperative arrangements between the ITU, particularly through its regional presence, and regional telecommunication organizations, including the possibility of work sharing, could be addressed specifically in an operational plan.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Committee of the WTDC dealing with policies and strategies, in the consideration of issues associated with both structural reform and finance, and in conjunction with the review of the Strategic Plan for ITU-D in the Plenary, identify the essential components of annual operational plans for the Development Sector in the interest of increasing transparency and accountability. This action should help achieve the stated priority objective in the Strategic Plan for ITU-D to "continue to improve its structure and working methods with a view to serving its clients better in delivering higher-quality products and services".

The proposed text for a resolution to be adopted by the WTDC on this matter is attached.

DRAFT RECOMMENDATION

**OPERATIONAL PLANNING IN THE INTERNATIONAL
TELECOMMUNICATION UNION**

The World Telecommunication Development Conference (Valletta, 1998),

considering

- a) the interest of developing countries, particularly the least developed countries, in ensuring that their requirements are reflected in the programmes and activities of the three Sectors of ITU as well as the General Secretariat;
- b) the expectation of developing countries for ITU to present a range of policy and structural options that will generate resources for telecommunication development;
- c) that, in presenting such options, the ITU needs to provide the membership with clearly demonstrated and measurable results in an effort to mobilize resources and advise developing countries on a range of policies and restructuring models for generating more internal funds for telecommunication development,

recognizing

- a) that the process by which progress in achieving the stated objectives of ITU can be measured could be considerably enhanced through the presentation of annual operational plans which set out the activities planned to be undertaken during any given year;
- b) that, given the symmetry between the strategic plan for the Union and the production of operational planning exercises, the introduction and use of this management tool could establish workload scenarios, measures taken to deal with such scenarios, the resources available to undertake various tasks, and could establish various benchmarks or milestones which could facilitate the evaluation of progress in achieving the stated objectives;
- c) that annual operational plans for ITU could be effectively utilized, *inter alia*, to outline a possible range of products and services which could be subject to cost recovery, to highlight measures being contemplated and/or implemented to strengthen the relationship between ITU and other international and regional organizations, to monitor progress in the implementation of the programmes of the Union, etc.,

recommends to invite

the ITU Council to establish an ad hoc group open to representatives of Member States and Sector Members to prepare proposals concerning the implementation of operational and financial planning on an ITU-wide basis for consideration by the 1998 Plenipotentiary Conference.