



# INTERNATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATION UNION TELECOMMUNICATION DEVELOPMENT BUREAU

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

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*For action*

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**Agenda item: 3.1**

**PLENARY MEETING**

## **Contribution by ASETA**

### **PROPOSAL FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A TELECOMMUNICATION CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE IN THE ANDEAN SUBREGION**

#### **I Background**

- Resolution No. 6 of the World Telecommunication Development Conference held in Buenos Aires (WTDC-94), considering the value of cooperation between global and regional telecommunication bodies and the need for the establishment of working relations with non-governmental organizations, and taking into account the existence of regional decisions calling on the regional telecommunication bodies to cooperate with ITU with a view to avoiding duplication of efforts and accelerating development, invites the regional telecommunication organizations to collaborate with ITU in jointly convening development coordination meetings and encourages the BDT to work actively with the regional organizations in the planning and implementation of various telecommunication projects.
- ASETA, the Association of State Telecommunication Undertakings of the Andean Community, was set up in 1972 as an international telecommunication organization to support the harmonious development of telecommunications in the five Andean countries (Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela).
- In the first stage of its development, ASETA served as the representative of telecommunication undertakings and as official technical adviser to the authorities in the process of subregional integration. It then went on to become an integrated forum for exchanges among the various players in the sector. This new role, approved by the ASETA governing body, was notified to and approved by the Andean Committee of Telecommunication Authorities (CAATEL), which supports this move and has, moreover, appointed ASETA to act as its standing consultative body, i.e., its specialized permanent secretariat with responsibility for implementing its decisions.
- By a decision of its Council, ITU has undertaken to finance the initial activities of telecommunication centres of excellence in the Americas Region. This interesting initiative

should be supported in the Region in order to obtain additional funds to guarantee the continuation of the activities.

- The purpose of a centre of excellence is to establish mechanisms in the Region for the training and deployment of experts in policy and strategy, regulation, modern management and advanced technologies. A centre of excellence would likewise become a permanent forum for the discussion, exchange, initiation and development of policies in the fields of telecommunications, restructuring, business strategy, technological development, corporate management, and human resources management and development.
- At the last meeting of the Andean Committee of Telecommunication Authorities (CAATEL), in response to initiatives by CONATEL of Venezuela and CONATEL of Ecuador for the inclusion of that idea among the joint proposals for WTDC-98, the national telecommunication administrations of the countries of the Andean Community expressed support for the idea of setting up a centre of excellence in the subregion. Other initiatives proposed in CAATEL, concerning the establishment of forums, ITU-D involvement in project development, improvement of cooperation machinery within BDT and among its members, and the strengthening of the ITU-D regional presence, are consistent with the desired aim of establishing such a centre of excellence.

## **II Analysis**

The new climate of liberalization and competition in the subregional telecommunication market, as a result of the globalization of the world economy, constitutes a major challenge for the players in the sector and, in particular, for the telecommunication authorities, which bear responsibility for guiding the development of their networks and services, so that the companies concerned have the facilities they need to play their part, with a chance of success, in the new global environment.

Given the existing discrepancy in levels of development between the industrialized and the developing nations, importance has been attached within ITU to the role to be played by ITU-D in the efforts to eliminate or reduce this disparity, working in close cooperation with the Sector Members, the regional telecommunication organizations and the cooperation agencies for development and finance, bearing in mind the need to rationalize use of the scarce resources available.

The administrations of the subregion, being aware of this situation, have repeatedly referred to the need, both at the Andean level with regard to ASETA and at the level of the Americas Region with regard to CITEL, for these regional telecommunication bodies to cooperate with ITU in order to accelerate development.

If such cooperation is to be put into practice, it is necessary to decide on suitable mechanisms for achieving the most important regional development objectives, with an eye to project identification, assignment of responsibilities and implementation of follow-up and evaluation of exercises, having regard to the participation of the ITU Regional Office and the decentralized and complementary work of the telecommunication organizations in the region.

By decision of the Andean subregional telecommunication authorities, ASETA has been appointed to act as a standing consultative body, with functions of executive support for the Andean Committee of Telecommunication Authorities. As a result of that decision, ASETA will be able to realize its newly proposed goal of becoming an integrated forum for interaction among the various players in the field of Andean telecommunications, in order to take full advantage of its potential for the development of the sector.

The decision by the authorities recognizes ASETA's ongoing work in support of the aim of speeding up the harmonious development of telecommunications in the subregion, and the capabilities and resources it has succeeded in mobilizing over the many years of its institutional existence, which guarantees the necessary permanence and fitness for this new role.

The decision by ITU to establish centres of excellence as a regional mechanism for the provision of high-level specialized training, assistance, consultancy and information services in priority areas of telecommunications and for the additional purpose of establishing an integrated forum for the exchange of opinions and experiences concerning telecommunication development in the region, is fully consistent with the vision of the Andean Community telecommunication authorities at subregional level and with the pattern of development followed by ASETA.

The tasks to be performed by the centre of excellence call for constant monitoring, the application of cost-cutting and time-saving measures, direct and permanent contact with authorities, regulatory bodies and operators, and experience with the provision of the required services.

All this can be achieved efficiently if the centre's geographical coverage is not too extensive, if its scope is subregional and if as a coordinating agency it can use an existing permanent body which has the necessary contacts, resources for the work and means of communication with the different players and is experienced in the organization of international events, the provision of technical support, the launching of initiatives and the coordination of training programmes. In the Americas Region there are a number of subregional bodies that meet these requirements, and in the particular case of the Andean subregion, this role is performed by ASETA.

Bearing in mind that the centre of excellence should seek to be self-financing, we consider it desirable to take advantage of the presence of an established body, with proven procedures and experience in the sale of services to cover the cost of its activities, which is moreover providing services of the kind envisaged for the centre of excellence.

These subregional centres of excellence would join forces to form a regional centre of excellence, which would fulfil a supervisory and administrative role in harmonizing and rationalizing the process of regional development.

### **III Proposal**

It is proposed that a centre of excellence should be set up in the Andean subregion, at ASETA headquarters in the city of Quito, Ecuador. The centre would operate in coordination with service providers in the subregion, forming a network of existing institutions recognized for their capacities in specific areas of telecommunications.

Similarly, other centres of excellence could be established in other subregions, and they would have their coordination offices at the headquarters of their respective telecommunication agencies.

The centre of excellence of the Americas Region would be made up of all the subregional centres of excellence.