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| African Telecommunication Union Administrations |
| African Member States position on ITU-T Restructuring |
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| **Abstract:** | This African Common Proposal is about the high-level principles for structuring, as well as ITU-T study group restructuring proposals, and proposed suppression of Resolution 82 so that RevCom end its activity at this Assembly.  |

# 1 Introduction

The World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly (WTSA), which takes place every four years, defines the structure, functioning and activities of the ITU-T for the coming study period. The last one was held from 20-29 November 2012 in Dubai and the next WTSA is scheduled to take place from 25 October to 3 November 2016.

To develop common African proposals on topics to be discussed at the next WTSA-16, the African Telecommunications Union has set up four working groups to reflect on the restructuring of ITU-T, its working methods, standardization issues and issues relating to reducing the standardization gap and related issues. These are the groups 1, 2, 3 and 4.

This document reproduces the conclusions of Working Group 1 work and reflects the African position on the issue of restructuring of ITU-T.

# 2 Initial proposals for ITU-T structuring

Based on proposals of the USA and Canada, TSAG, at its meeting in February 2016, agreed on the principles to be considered for the restructuring of ITU-T study groups.

Also, the Director of TSB has meanwhile made proposals for the ITU-T study groups’ structuring.

# 2.1 Principles for restructuring (TSAG)

TSAG has agreed on seven high-level SG structure principles that should be adopted formally by TSAG for guiding discussions towards SG restructuring, whereas the detailed explanation /expression of the principles was omitted and not included with these principles.

Contributions to this Assembly, WTSA-16, elaborate more on the principles for structuring the ITU-T, and African Member States were concerned of the details of some of these principles, which may need reconsideration.

First, regarding the seven principles agreed by TSAG, these are:

| High level SG restructuring principles |
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| A: Optimized structure |
| B: Clear mandates |
| C: Enhanced coordination and cooperation |
| D: Cost-effectiveness and attractiveness |
| E: Efficient and productive working methods |
| F: Timely identification of standardization needs |
| * ***G: Support for bridging the standardization gap***
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It was noted that the “G:” principle addresses directly the issue of BSG, and the description of this principle by RevCom was: *“The new structure should assist developing countries to bridge the standardization gap, such as the identification of measures to enhance participation in the work of the study groups, including the use of electronic working methods*.”.

So it seems that the perception of BSG is limited, e.g., enhancing the participation in the study groups including EWM, and in many instances BSG activities focus mainly on capacity building.

These are very relevant requirements; however, structuring of study groups should address more elaborate issues that address the needs and concerns of developing countries. This stems from the ITU Constitution (CS104) *“The functions of the Telecommunication Standardization Sector shall be, bearing in mind the particular concerns of the developing countries , …..”*; also from the preamble of the CS: *“taking into consideration of facilitating peaceful relations, international cooperation among peoples and economic and social development by means of efficient telecommunication services”.*

It has been noted in the globalization era that commercialization, competition and market forces are mostly in favour for the “strongest” (e.g., those with SMPs), and this applies to global markets the same as to local markets. Accordingly, the ITU-T Recommendations are developed to define elements in the global infrastructure of telecommunications/ICTs targeting improved global connectivity and offering innovative, affordable services, also avoiding costly market battles over preferred technologies. However, such technology battles still exist in the global arena as well as sometimes inside the ITU-T. The needs and concerns of developing countries are seldom considered during these battles.

For example, it is noted that two study groups among the eleven ITU-T study groups deal to a great extent with regulatory and policy matters; and from every-day practice, it appears that almost all of the topics that have regulatory or policy aspects are commensurate with negative impacts on developing countries! (e.g., Alternative Calling Procedures and call back, Numbering Misuse, IIC, Originating Identification spoofing and non-delivery, refiling, counterfeit devices, OTT, roaming charges, extraterritorial use of numbering and identification resources, etc.), which cause huge losses to developing countries’ national revenues, as well as its operating agencies. Even though the current standards may result in affordable access to services worldwide regardless of the underlying technology, still the above-listed sample of topics have overall negative socioeconomic impact on developing countries, and the associated standards are in many aspects not sufficiently supportive in this regard.

Such countries and their operating agencies usually do not have enough market power, negotiation power or technical know-how to counter such practices. Indeed, some of the technologies have the promise to provide affordable services on the long term (e.g., VoIP, OTT, etc.), but until this happens, standards should be developed with consideration of the current environment.

Therefore, African Member States are looking for an ITU-T study group structure that helps in developing standards which address effectively and promptly the concerns and needs of developing countries.

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Among any high‑level SG structure principles, there should be a principle which includes “Assisting in addressing the concerns of developing countries and in Bridging the Standardization Gap”, specifically:

• The new structure should assist developing countries to bridge the standardization gap, such as the identification of measures to enhance participation in the work of the study groups, including the use of electronic working methods, capacity building, sharing of information, technology transfer, etc.

• The new structure should consider the concerns of developing countries, in particular for those study groups that mainly develop recommendations having regulatory aspects.

# 2.2 TSB thoughts for ITU-T restructuring

According to the Director of TSB, the work of the existing ITU-T is not geared toward industries and market solutions. He suggested therefore that a restructuring of groups and study groups is carried out to compensate for this situation and to make the operation of ITU-T more efficient.

To this end, he proposed a reduction in the number of study groups to four domains according to aspects of telecommunications in which they operate. The recommendation was:

• Operational, policy and regulation based study groups (SG 2 and SG 3);

• Contemporary function based study groups (SG 5, SG 12 and SG 17);

• Services and applications based study groups (SG 9, SG 16 and SG 20);

• Infrastructure focused study groups (SG 11, SG 13 and SG 15).

The African Member States support in principle the restructuring proposed by the TSB. Based on these principles, it would be more efficient to make a reduction in the number of study groups. This would:

• facilitate cooperation between groups within the ITU-T and rightly reduce the correspondence with other Standardization Organizations;

• avoid the duplication of work;

• facilitate the participation of experts on a variety of topics;

• optimize the management of the budget for study groups; etc.

However, in order not to heavily affect the ITU-T activities by undertaking a radical transformation which may require a relatively long time to adapt, it would be prudent to make a more flexible way of reform.

**African Member States’ proposals for restructuring are as follows:**

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The African countries suggest that further discussions be conducted during the next study period to assess whether any restructuring is necessary, and defining the conditions and modalities of its implementation.

To this end, African countries suggest the creation of a working group of TSAG, preferably small, with a mandate to implement such a proposition. Thus, to carry out this work, the group may use the following approach:

• Assess the strengths and weaknesses of the current structure and organization of the ITU-T study groups;

• Evaluate the recommendations of the ITU-T and their implementation by the Membership and the Sector;

• Determine the optimized restructuring;

• Make any proposals.

The report of the work of this working group will be transmitted by TSAG to the ITU-T study groups at least one year prior to WTSA-20 to gather their views and comments for possible adoption at WTSA-20.

ITU will also invite Members to provide their views within the same time-frame.

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Proposals for study groups restructuring:

| Current ITU‑T SG | Proposed action | Description | Rationale and Resulting SG structure |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **TSAG** | NOC |  |  |
| **SG 2** | Option 1:SUP WP 2/2 | Transfer WP 2/2 to SG 13 | SG 2 will be focused on NNAI |
| Option 2:NOC WP 2/2 | Keep the current state of WP 2/2 | WP 2/2 is concerned with operational aspects, in harmony with SG 2’s operational mandate. |
| SUP Q4/2 | Move Q4/2 to SG 16 | Human Factors to move to SG 16 but as a separate Question from the Accessibility Question. |
| **SG 3** | NOC |  | Stable SG with considerable importance to developing countries. |
| **SG 5** | NOC |  | Stable SG with considerable importance to developing countries. |
| **SG 9** | MOD | Transfer the Questions related to QoS issues to SG12 | QoS related Questions should be studied in SG 12, where QoS issues are under its mandates. |
| **SG 11** | NOC |  | Important SG that should continue, in particular the mandates related to C&I and Counterfeiting. Collocated meetings with SG 13. |
| **SG 12** | MOD | Insert QoS Questions from SG 9 | Take into account all issues of QoS.  |
| **SG 13** | MOD | Option 1: Insert Questions addressed by WP 2/2 | SG 13 will be the leading SG on network management for existing and future networks. |
| NOC | Option 2: NOC |  |
| **SG 15** | NOC |  |  |
| **SG 16** | MOD | Insert Q4/2 from SG 2 | Concerned with MM, accessibility issues as well as human factors. |
| **SG 17** | NOC |  | Stable SG with considerable importance to developing countries. |
| **SG 20** | NOC |  | African MSs Support the creation, the Qs and mandates of SG 20, being of considerable importance to developing countries. |

# 3 The Review Committee RevCom

Noting that the Review Committee has fulfilled its mandates, the opinion of African Member States is that RevCom ends its activity at WTSA-16, and WTSA Resolution 82 be suppressed.

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RevCom ends its activity by WTSA-16.

SUP AFCP/42A32/5

RESOLUTION 82 (DUBAI, 2012)

Strategic and structural review of the ITU Telecommunication Standardization Sector

(Dubai, 2012)

The World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly (Dubai, 2012),

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