



Australian Government

**Department of Broadband,
Communications and the Digital Economy**

Dr Hamadoun Touré
Secretary-General
International Telecommunication Union
Place des Nations
CH-1211 Geneva 20
Switzerland

Response to Circular letter 143

Dear Dr Touré

Thank you for Circular letter 143 in which you invited comments on the management and functioning of the Union, in relation to Resolution 147 (Antalya, 2006) and documents C08/48 and C08/49.

Australia has chosen to comment on five matters raised in the documents: accountability of the advisory groups, contributory unit, cost recovery services provided by the Union, Sector Members and Associates, and amendments to the Constitution and Convention. These comments are provided below.

Responsibility, accountability and transparency of the advisory groups

Australia is in favour of retaining the existing provisions concerning the Telecommunication Standardisation Advisory Group (TSAG), taking into account the existing roles and responsibilities of TSAG as reflected, in particular, in WTSA Resolution 22 (Johannesburg, 2008) and Plenipotentiary Resolution 122 (Antalya, 2006).

Contributory unit

While we support the provisions for Member States to freely choose a contributory class, Australia has sought to accommodate the possibility of changes in the level of the contributory unit within our overall commitment to the ITU. In addition to Australia's contribution of 13 units, we provide approximately 2 units to the Development Sector as a voluntary contribution – this flexible contribution would allow us to absorb most changes in the level of the contributory unit. Our preference, of course, is to maintain the contributory unit at close to the current level in order to maximise our commitment to the Development Sector.

We appreciate the efforts that the Secretary-General and the Administration and Finance Department are undertaking in order to balance the budget at a time of difficult financial constraints. We also recognise those Member States that have recently increased their level of contribution to the ITU. In light of the possibility of the level of the contributory unit being maintained at a similar level for a long period, we would welcome a review of the procedure for setting the level of the contributory unit with a view to simplifying the process.

Services provided by the Union

Australia supports cost recovery for appropriate services provided by the Union. We believe that further discussions should be undertaken on the principles for applying cost recovery to certain ITU products and services. In particular, Australia's contribution to the Council Working Group for the Elaboration of the Draft Strategic Plan and the Draft Financial Plan 2008-2011 (document WG-SP-FP-06/19) highlighted a number of additional principles that could be considered when reviewing Plenipotentiary Resolution 91. These included benchmarking cost recovery processes where appropriate (which was partly incorporated into Resolution 91 at PP-06) as well as the possibility of market-testing, outsourcing or accrediting external providers to deliver the product or service where appropriate.

Sector Members and Associates

Australia supports Resolution 71 adopted by the 2008 World Telecommunication Standardisation Assembly to consider the admission of academia, universities and their associated research establishments to participate in the work of the ITU-T. While we support the existing membership categories for Sector Members and Associates, it is important that other relevant organisations are able to participate where they can make a contribution to the work of the ITU and assist the ITU to remain at the cutting edge of technology standardisation.

Amendments to CS/CV and Compilation of Final Acts

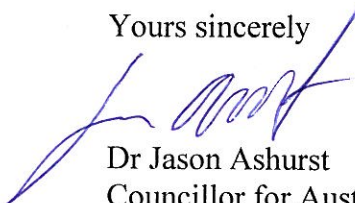
In the context of the discussion of possible changes to the processes for amending the Constitution and Convention, Australia wishes to note that at the 2002 Plenipotentiary Conference we submitted a proposal for reform and simplification of the Constitution and Convention (PP-02 Contribution 13). One goal of the proposed amendments was to make changes so that provisions needing more frequent review were relocated to other instruments, noting that PP-02 ultimately did not adopt the substance of this proposal.

With this previous proposal in mind, we would welcome further study on suggestions that could simplify the ratification process for Member States. While Australia is aware that the ratification process can be complex, we acknowledge our treaty-level obligations as a Member State of the ITU and we seek to comply with them in good faith including timely ratification of amendments to the basic instruments, subject to our national procedures.

In addition, we support the comments from other Member States in relation to the timing, duration and functioning of the Council Working Groups, which are particularly important issues for those regions at some distance from the ITU Headquarters in Geneva.

In relation to the other matters noted in the Circular letter 143 we support the existing arrangements but, of course, welcome further consideration and discussion of these issues. We reserve our right to modify our position on each of these issues as they are considered by Council and the 2010 Plenipotentiary Conference.

Yours sincerely



Dr Jason Ashurst
Councillor for Australia
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14 August 2009