

سېكرېتاري جنرال مينيسٽري أوف انفورميشن، كومونيكايشن اند كلچير مليسيا

**SECRETARY GENERAL  
MINISTRY OF INFORMATION, COMMUNICATIONS AND CULTURE, MALAYSIA**

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Your Excellency,

**MANAGEMENT AND FUNCTIONING OF THE INTERNATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATION UNION (ITU)**

I refer to Circular letter 143 dated 13<sup>th</sup> May 2009 and documents C08/48 and C08/49 regarding the above matter.

**Background**

2. First of all, Malaysia would like to take this opportunity to express its appreciation to you for all the initiatives that have been instituted to date to further enhance the overall management and functioning of the ITU so as to strengthen its position as a relevant, responsive, communicative and engaging entity in the light of the rapid changes that have taken place in the environment which it operates in today. Malaysia notes that the current reform initiatives of the ITU began at the Nice Plenipotentiary Conference (PP) in 1989 with Resolution 55 which resolved to carry out an in-depth review of the structure and functioning of the Union. Following an additional Plenipotentiary Conference in 1992, the Constitution and Convention of the Union were reviewed to fulfil the requirements of Resolution 55. In addition, there were further reform initiatives taken during the Kyoto PP in 1994 with respect to the rights and obligations of Sector Members (Resolution 15), as

well as the strengthening of the financial base of the Union (Resolution 39), which had led to the establishment by the Council in 1996 of the ITU-2000 Group with a mandate to prepare a report and recommendations on these issues including consequential changes to the structure of the Union, and to draft related changes to the Constitution and Convention. Some of the recommendations of the ITU-2000 Group were implemented by the Council and those that required amendments to the Constitution and Convention were forwarded to the 1998 Minneapolis Plenipotentiary Conference where many of the amendments were adopted.

3. At the same Conference, Resolution 74, which instructed Directors of the Bureaux to seek advice on necessary changes for improving the organization and working methods of their respective Sectors was endorsed. Based on the said Resolution, the Secretary-General was also requested to carry out a similar exercise with regard to the General Secretariat and, in particular, on the strengthening of the financial base of the Union and the management of human resources. Subsequently, the ITU Council was invited to establish an open working group of Member States and Sector Members to review the management, functioning and structure of the Union as well as the rights and obligations of Member States and Sector Members. The Working Group on Reform (WGR) was established by the Council at its 1999 session.

### **Strategy**

4. Malaysia notes with interest the measures that have been instituted thus far to operationalise the reform process in the ITU which involves a multiple fronts including the reporting structure, roles and accountability, number and tenure/term of elected officials, functioning of the Coordination Committee and election procedures. In addition, it is also interesting to note that several approaches have been adopted to introduce structural changes on the *modus operandi* of the ITU such as amendment to the basic instruments, adoption of new management techniques, setting-up of a conducive working environment for the staff, implementation of supportive IT systems and improving working procedures, processes and rules to mentioned a few of them. It has been generally acknowledged that substantial amounts of financial and other resources have been invested by the ITU over the years to accelerate the reform process so as to enhance its operational efficiency to the levels that can inspire continued demands and support for its services and activities among members.

5. Malaysia does not only support such an initiative but also considers the above move as another significant change in the *management culture* to further enhance members' values through infusing a *culture of high performance and excellence* and promoting *strong corporate governance* in the ITU. Given the above scenario and considering the wide scope and nature of the reform process in the ITU, including the technical nature of certain aspects of the reforms, I would like to outline, briefly, ideas to further enhance the operational content of the transformation initiatives and ensure their

successful implementation within the context of the current mandate for consideration and presentation at the next AP in October 2008. Based on the current practices of the organisations in the United Nations system and having considered the areas of strategic importance for the ITU, Malaysia has identified four priority outputs as follows that should be considered as a *quick-win strategic package* to accelerate the implementation of the transformation initiatives in the ITU.

### *Supportive Governing Body Assembly*

6. In terms of the governing body assemblies of the ITU, Malaysia is of the view that the current structure and frequency of the PP is an impediment to effective decision-making since the Council which governs in the interim has certain limitations to its powers. This is especially so as the PP is the only supreme body empowered to adopt and amend the basic instruments of the ITU. The frequency of the PP has been continually reduced during the history of the Union since the 1992 Additional Plenipotentiary Conference (APP) when it was decided that the PP would be convened regularly every four years instead of intermittently as in the past. Therefore, Malaysia is of the opinion that the timing and frequency of such a supreme organ needs to be reviewed and realigned with the practices of the majority of the other United Nations agencies which meet either on an annual or a biennial basis with reduced duration. This is in view of the fact that the four-year gap between each PP may render some decisions obsolete in view of the rapid changes taking place in the communications industry. In line with the above suggestion, one possible option to operationalise this idea would be to realign the sectoral conferences/assemblies in the same years as the PP but on a rotating basis.

7. Secondly, the Constitution and Convention are the basic instruments of the ITU. The provisions of the Constitution and Convention are further complemented by the Administrative Regulations, namely, the International Telecommunication Regulations and the Radio Regulations. Therefore, in the interest of consistency of legislations, Malaysia is of the view that treaties such as the Radio Regulations should come under the responsibility of the supreme governing organ of the ITU or PP instead of the sectoral governing assembly or World Radio Conference. Thirdly, the organizational structure comprises three distinct vertical Sectors which largely govern their own areas of responsibility, namely, the Radiocommunications Sector (ITU-R), the Telecommunications Standardization Sector (ITU-T) and the Telecommunications Development Sector (ITU-D). In spite of significant differences among the kinds of activities undertaken in the three Sectors including their working methods, all the three sectors have similar internal structures. Thus further evaluation needs to be carried out to determine appropriate internal structures for the respective sectors of the ITU so to reflect its priorities in fulfilling its mandate .

### *Conducive Governance Environment*

8. From the perspectives of governance structure, the ITU is an intergovernmental organization in which government administrations and non-governmental organizations and entities, essentially from the private sector, cooperate but with different rights and obligations. Another special feature is that most of the substantive work of the ITU is produced by the Member States and Sector Members themselves through joint works in study groups and working groups. The last unique characteristics of the ITU with regard to the governance structure, is the existence of Sector Members, especially the important role played by the latter in the activities of the Union. Given this scenario, Malaysia is of the opinion that the idea of allowing representatives of Sector Members and the Chairmen of the Sectoral Advisory Groups an opportunity to convey their views on matters pertaining to their respective subject matters merit consideration since it is in line with the principles of good governance and current practices of the organisation of the United Nations system in which observers are given the right to participate in the debates of the governing bodies in accordance with prescribed procedures.

9. In addition, Malaysia also acknowledges that, the governance of the ITU by the Council as legislative organ is assured mainly through setting policies, strategies and the appropriation of resources. Another oversight responsibility of the Council which is considered to be a key aspect of overall governance is to ensure that human, financial and other resources made available are efficiently and effectively applied to achieve the policy directives and missions established for the ITU. Besides the issues pertaining to the structure of the Council mentioned above, their numerical composition and mix of expertise and experience may also impact on the effectiveness of their oversight function. It is for the reason of efficiency in the legislative process that Malaysia would like to suggest that the idea of rationalizing the Council membership be considered so as to achieve more efficient, effective and action-oriented forms of legislative processes in the ITU. This is all important as the larger numerical composition of legislative organs or the Council is expected to result in longer sessions which in turn would result in higher costs of governance.

### *Enabling Management Structure*

10. It has been widely acknowledged that a system of elected officials can offer some checks and balances on the exercise of powers. On the other hand, it has been observed that in the context of the ITU, the said managerial structure could also be one factor which inhibits the ITU in its response to the rapid pace of technological and landscape changes in the communications industry. For example the proposal to create a focal point at senior level for mobile telephony few years ago, which was unduly delayed due to lack of consensus in the Coordination Committee is a case in point. To prevent the ITU from the risk of being bypassed by the industry players as is already happening in the

field of technical standards, Malaysia suggests that a unitary management structure with only the post of Secretary General is subject to election be studied for possible adoption. The appointment of the Deputy Secretary General and Directors of the three Bureau should be carried out by the Secretary General after consultations with the PP. For example in the United Nations, the executive head is the Secretary-General who is elected by the General Assembly on the recommendation of the Security Council for a five year renewable term. Other Under-Secretaries-General as well as Assistant Secretaries-General of the United Nations Secretariat are appointed directly by the Secretary-General.

11. Under the proposed unitary systems, it is further suggested that a new high-level management committee which will replace the present Coordination Committee and be responsible for strategic and operational management aspects of the ITU be established. Secondly, as part of an enhanced management system, a comprehensive framework of accountability together with adequate mechanisms for the evaluation of the performance of officials should be introduced. To is crucial to enable the Secretary General to establish a comprehensive framework on the delegation of authority in administrative and financial matters for consideration and subsequent implementation by the ITU. At the same time, the internal oversight functions of the ITU need to be further strengthened in line with the decision of the final session of the Council and PP 2006. In this regard the possibilities of providing greater autonomy and independence to the post of Internal Audit both in respect of appointment, termination and access to the governing body to present its activities should be considered so as to assist members in carrying out their oversight responsibilities effectively. The use of risk analysis and issuing of an internal audit manual should be introduced to strengthen an internal audit systems and procedures. In addition, annual reports summarizing evaluation activities, major findings and follow-up as well as future plan should be submitted to the governing body for future guidance.

#### *Streamlining And Harmonisation Of Basic Instruments*

12. As in most organizations of the United Nations system, the Secretary-General of the ITU serves as the link between its governance and management structures. Under Article 26 of the Constitution, in its capacity as Chairman of the Coordination Committee, the Secretary General is also responsible to the Council for all administrative and financial aspects of the Union's activities, as well as the most effective and economical use of its resources. In their capacity as members of the Coordination Committee, the functions of the other elected officials are to assist and advise the Secretary-General, while the latter must consult with them and take their views into account. There does, however, appear to be a certain ambiguity in the wording of the Constitution and Convention, which clouds the intent and leads to the interpretation that the Secretary-General is only required to coordinate rather than direct the activities of the Union. Furthermore, the responsibility and accountability of the Secretary-General does not extend to matters which fall under the exclusive competence of the Sectors. In the interest of clarity and the spirits of the

Constitution and Convention Malaysia believes that the relevant wording needs to be harmonised and streamlined

13. Secondly, there is also a need for a comprehensive framework to be established as guidance for the Secretary General in exercising authority to manage the resources entrusted to the Union. Although there are various documents containing mechanisms and procedures for delegating both authority, there does not appear to be a single formal instrument (such as a Service Order) defining the general principles on which delegation is based, classifying the differences between delegation of authority and the limits, scope and domains of the delegation of authority.

### Approach

14. Given the present-day organizational structure of the ITU, which may be described as *federal* in part reflects historical developments and the various experiences of the United Nations agencies that have embarked on the transformation initiatives, Malaysia is of the view that the adoption of a holistic approach through translating the reform initiatives into an appropriate long-term strategic plan supported by a detailed implementation plan which will define the timelines, priorities and desired resources and outcomes by taking into account the prevailing scenario of *the internal and external environment* of the Union is crucial to ensure an orderly, systematic and coherent implementation process of changes in the ITU. The idea is to give a more-clearer focus and direction to the organisation's serving members by concentrating on the areas in which it has comparative advantages. More importantly it will provide a basis for the governing body assemblies such as the PP and Council to guide the office with regard to the orientation of the activity and resource directions pertaining to the implementation of its transformation programmes.

15. As an approach to keep the momentum and accelerate the process of changes in the ITU, Malaysia proposes that the concept of rebranding be considered for adoption as a long term agenda of its reform programmes. This would mean the ITU needs to focus its resources and efforts to strengthen and rebuild brand identity which will reflect the new aspirations, real needs and expectations of its members and stakeholders in the context of the new environment as strategy to accelerate the reform process. Such rebranding of identity is vital to enable the ITU to educate the general public on the exact role it plays and evoke the right public perceptions and behaviours and, most importantly, a message that is relevant today. This is particularly sensible given the fact that rebranding is regarded as one of the reform processes aimed at positioning an organisations' image in response to the changes taking place in the environment that they operate in.

16. Furthermore, today, rebranding has evolved beyond simply being a mark of logo and become a renewed contract of faith between an organisation and its members in terms of promises of a consistent delivery of a service in a distinct manner which in turn will continue to inspire future demand for its services. It is also recognised as an effective management strategy to educate the general public about an organization's continuous relevance or renewed commitment towards the improvement of quality in service delivery as rebranding encompasses a real transformation in the manner an organization aspire to better serve its constituents as a strong brand identity becomes synonymous with quality which in turn reinforces the perception regarding image, credibility and relevance. To meet the potential expectations of the various stakeholders on the renewed commitment reflected in the new brand identity, parallel measures should be taken to intensify performance-oriented culture, improve the governance, strengthening institutional capacity, encouraging high performance standards and extending partnership and collaboration as strategies to address internal challenges.

### **Way Forward**

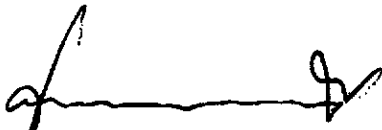
17. As a step to embark on rebranding exercise, Malaysia is of the view that there is an urgent need for the ITU to rationalize, inter alia, the structures, working methods and practices of legislative organs with a view to enhancing the effectiveness of their oversight functions. In this regard, the current working structures and modus operandi of the various oversight mechanisms like the Council Working, Advisory and Sectoral Study or Working Groups and major events of the Union including the ITU TELECOMS need to be reviewed and harmonised to optimise resources and maximise results. Based on the above suggestion, the timing and periodicity of all meetings and decision-making processes need to be reviewed with the view to possible consolidation where appropriate to achieve a high-level involvement and participation from all members. In this regard, special consideration should be given to the possibility of providing new mechanisms as an avenue to minimise the issues to be studied under the current structure which in turn will accelerate the overall decision-making process and enhance the quality of its outcomes. Lastly, Malaysia also finds that apart from the decision-making process, basic instruments of the ITU need to be comprehensively reviewed and given a new face-lifting. For example, certain administrative and non-technical provisions in the instruments could be changed to become administrative rules and procedures.

### **Conclusion**

18. In conclusion, Malaysia hopes that the above inputs will serve as a useful guide. While a considerable number of approaches is available on reform initiatives, experience of other organisations of United Nations system suggest that their effective implementation need to be supported by conducive organisational policies, strategies and good management practices and techniques including change management, sound human resource management, enabling information management, effective monitoring

and employees learning strategies. In addition, as transformation is a gradual and coherent process, an effective implementation requires fundamental change management culture. Since rebranding has been widely acknowledged as a reform process and powerful catalyst for enhancing confidence, demonstrating the effectiveness of collaborations and building consensus around a positive future agenda for the organisations, Malaysia strongly supports that the said concept to be considered for adoption and implementation by the ITU.

Thank You.



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Malaysia.