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| PLENARY MEETING | | **Addendum 17 to Document WTDC-17/23-E** |
|  | | **4 September 2017** |
|  | | **Original: Russian** |
| ITU Member States, members of the Regional Commonwealth in the field of Communications (RCC) | | |
| DRAFT Revision to WTDC Resolution 37 - Bridging the digital divide | | |
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| **Priority area:**  Resolutions and Recommendations  **Summary:**  Given the common thematic nature of the issues relating to bridging the digital divide considered in Resolutions 37, 50 and 54, as well as the overall increase in the level of integration of ICTs in all areas of life, the above documents should be merged in Resolution 37 and Resolutions 50 and 54 then suppressed.  **Expected results:**  WTDC-17 is invited to examine and approve the merging of Resolution 37 (Rev. Dubai, 2014), Resolution 50 (Rev. Dubai 2014) and Resolution 54 (Rev. Dubai 2014), as set forth in the annex hereto.  **References:**  Resolution 37 (Rev. Dubai, 2014), Resolution 50 (Rev. Dubai, 2014), Resolution 54 (Rev. Dubai, 2014) of WTDC | | |

**MOD** RCC/23A17/1

RESOLUTION 37 (REV. BUENOS AIRES, 2017)

Bridging the digital divide

The World Telecommunication Development Conference (Buenos Aires, 2017),

recalling

*a)* Resolution 50 (Rev. Dubai, 2014) of the World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC), on the optimal integration of information and communication technologies;

*b)* Resolution 11 (Rev. Buenos Aires, 2017) of WTDC, on telecommunication/information and communication technology services in rural, isolated and poorly served areas and indigenous communities;

*c)* Resolution 20 (Rev. Buenos Aires, 2017) of WTDC, on non-discriminatory access to modern telecommunication/information and communication technology facilities, services and related applications;

*d)* Resolution 23 (Rev. Dubai, 2014) of WTDC, on Internet access and availability for developing countries and charging principles for international Internet connection;

*e)* Resolution 46 (Doha, 2006) of WTDC, on assistance and promotion for indigenous communities in the world: Information society through information and communication technology;

*f)* Resolution 68 (Rev. Dubai, 2014) of WTDC, on assistance to indigenous peoples within the activities of the Telecommunication Development Bureau in its related programmes;

*g)* Resolution 69 (Rev. Hammamet, 2016) of the World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly (WTSA), on non-discriminatory access and use of Internet resources and telecommunications/information and communication technologies;

*h)* Resolution 139 (Rev. Busan, 2014) of the Plenipotentiary Conference, on the use of telecommunications/information and communication technologies to bridge the digital divide and build an inclusive information society;

*i)* Resolution 123 (Rev. Busan, 2014) of the Plenipotentiary Conference, on bridging the standardization gap between developing and developed countries;

*j)* Resolution 135 (Rev. Busan, 2014) of the Plenipotentiary Conference, on ITU's role in the development of telecommunications/information and communication technologies, in providing technical assistance and advice to developing countries and in implementing relevant national, regional and interregional projects;

*k)* that Resolutions 30 and 143 (Rev. Busan, 2014) of the Plenipotentiary Conference highlight that what countries need, as reflected in the two resolutions, is for the digital divide to be bridged, as a fundamental goal;

*l)* Action Line C7 of the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society, covering the following ICT applications:

• e-government

• e-business

• e-learning

• e-health

• e-employment

• e-environment

• e-agriculture

• e-science,

noting

that broadband connectivity has the potential to bridge the digital divide,

recognizing

*a)* that the telecommunication environment has undergone significant changes since WTDC‑10;

*b)* the continuing disparity in the access to ICTs between different countries, regions of one country and also various social groups of the population arising from differences in the level of social and economic development of the countries and regions, and also from the well-being of various groups of the population, referred to as the "digital divide";

*c)* that development in information and communication technologies (ICTs) has continued to reduce the cost of relevant equipment;

*d)* that numerous studies endorse the conclusion that investments in broadband infrastructure, applications and services contribute to sustainable and inclusive economic growth for peoples;

*e)* that the introduction of new applications and services has also resulted in bringing down telecommunication/ICT costs;

*f)* that in many ITU Member States regulations have been adopted dealing with regulatory issues such as interconnection, determination of tariffs, universal service, etc., designed to bridge the digital divide at the national level;

*g)* that the introduction of competition in the provision of telecommunication/ICT services has also continued to reduce telecommunication/ICT costs to users;

*h)* that national plans and projects for the provision of telecommunication services in developing countries contribute to reducing costs to users and bridging the digital divide;

*i)* that the integration models supported by the ITU Member States are an element that integrates, facilitates and does not exclude, one which takes into account the individual characteristics of all existing projects, respecting their autonomy and independence;

*j)* that the integration models propose ways to increase the profitability of existing infrastructure, to lower the cost of developing and implementing ICT projects and platforms, to provide for the sharing of expertise and skills, and to foster intraregional and extraregional technology transfers;

*k)* that it is necessary to coordinate the efforts of both the public and private sectors to ensure that opportunities arising from the information society yield benefits, especially for the most disadvantaged;

*l)* that there is still an ongoing need to create digital opportunities in developing countries, including the least developed countries, small island developing states, landlocked developing countries and countries with economies in transition, taking advantage of the revolution that ICTs have witnessed and are currently witnessing;

*m)* that various activities are being executed towards bridging the digital divide by many international and regional organizations, such as, in addition to ITU, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), the United Nations economic commissions, the World Bank, the Asia-Pacific Telecommunity (APT), the regional economic communities, the regional development banks and many others, and that such activity has increased following the conclusion of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) and the adoption of the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society, particularly in relation to implementation and follow-up;

*n)* that the BYND2015 World Youth Summit participants, in the Declaration of Costa Rica 2013, called for equitable and universal access to ICTs, particularly for women and girls, as well as other groups marginalized by the digital divide, and called for the United Nations, the international community and all Member States to consider their words and put them into action,

noting

*a)* that digital literacy is a requirement for closing the digital divide;

*b)* that developing countries benefit from integrating ICTs into educational systems, by providing a more effective education experience and ensuring that all students obtain the skills necessary to succeed in a knowledge-based economy and society;

*c)* that the benefits extend beyond the students:

– to their families, who may benefit from access to ICTs;

– to the local community, by leveraging schools transformed into digital literacy training centres for all citizens; and

– to the broader community, by significantly increasing broadband and ICT penetration;

*d)* that such a transformation will improve education, assist in connecting all citizens globally, and facilitate the effective use of national resources for the future of children and society;

*e)* that countries and communities have limited education budgets which have to be apportioned among many different needs, and so studies on the relative benefits of ICTs in educational systems will help countries and communities make informed decisions,

considering

*a)* the role of ITU, in particular that of the ITU Telecommunication Development Sector (ITU‑D) as coordinator and promoter of the rational use of resources in the context of the various projects intended to narrow the digital divide;

*b)* the many stakeholders in the public, private, academic, non-governmental organizations and multilateral sectors who are seeking to bridge this divide;

*c)* the progress accomplished in the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS);

*d)* that, even with all the developments mentioned above, in many developing countries and especially in rural areas, telecommunications/ICTs, particularly in relation to the Internet, are still not affordable to the majority of the people, as is evident at present;

*e)* that each region, country and area should tackle its own specific issues regarding the digital divide, while stressing the importance of cooperation in this area at regional and international level in order to benefit from experience gained;

*f)* that many developing countries do not have the necessary basic infrastructure, long‑term plans, laws, appropriate regulations and such like in place for telecommunication/ICT development;

*g)* that the use of radiocommunication systems, in particular satellite systems, to provide access for local communities located in rural or remote areas without increased connection costs due to distance or other geographical characteristics is an extremely useful tool for bridging the digital divide;

*h)* that satellite broadband systems support communication solutions offering high connectivity, speed and reliability in both urban areas and rural and remote areas, and thus constitute a fundamental driver of economic and social development for countries and regions;

*i)* that the development of radiocommunication technologies and deployment of satellite systems enable sustainable and affordable access to information and knowledge, through the provision of communication services with high connectivity (broadband) and wide coverage (regional or global reach), which contribute significantly to bridging the digital divide, efficiently complementing other technologies and enabling countries to be connected directly, quickly and reliably;

*j)* that Programme 1 of the Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT) under the Hyderabad Action Plan, on information and communication infrastructure and technology development, has provided assistance to developing countries in the area of spectrum management and in the efficient and cost‑effective development of rural, national and international broadband telecommunication networks, including satellite,

further considering

*a)* that the distribution of the benefits brought about by the ICT revolution is not equitable between developing and developed countries, and between social categories within countries, taking into account the commitments of both phases of WSIS to bridge the digital divide and transform it into a digital opportunity;

*b)* that equitable access to information and the transition of the countries of the developing world into knowledge economies and into the information age will enhance their economic, social and cultural development, in implementation of the aims of the Geneva Plan of Action and Tunis Agenda;

*c)* that Goal 2 (To provide assistance to developing countries in bridging the digital divide by achieving broader telecommunication/ICT-enabled socio-economic development) in Resolution 71 (Rev. Busan, 2014) of the Plenipotentiary Conference, on the strategic plan for the Union for 2016-2019, declares that the aim is for ITU to assist in bridging the national, regional and international digital divide in ICTs and ICT applications by facilitating interoperability, interconnection and global connectivity of telecommunication networks and services, and by playing a leading role, within its mandate, in the multistakeholder participation process for follow-up and implementation of the relevant goals and objectives of WSIS, and to focus on bridging the digital divide and providing broadband for all;

*d)* that, in 2015, the United Nations General Assembly assessed the outcomes and implementation of both the Millennium Development Goals and the WSIS Tunis Agenda and adopted Resolution A/70/1 Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,

confirms

the importance of approaches to funding for bridging the digital divide in the Geneva Plan of Action, the Tunis Agenda and the strategic plan for the Union and of their translation into equitable mechanisms for action, particularly in respect of issues related to Internet management, taking into consideration measures for promoting full gender equality, with due regard for people with specific needs, including persons with disabilities and age-related disabilities, youth and indigenous peoples, telecommunications/ICTs for disaster relief and mitigation, and the child online protection initiative,

undertakes

to carry out work from which all countries, especially the developing countries, may benefit, with a view to establishing international methods and specific mechanisms to strengthen international cooperation for bridging the digital divide, through connectivity solutions which support sustainable and affordable access to ICTs, and, in parallel, to continue to shorten the time-frames for implementation of the Digital Solidarity Agenda, beginning with the Geneva Plan of Action, the outcomes of the Connect the World summits, the Tunis Agenda and the strategic plan for the Union,

resolves

that the Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT), in collaboration with the Telecommunication Standardization Bureau and the Radiocommunication Bureau, continue to adopt the necessary measures to implement regional projects derived from the non-exclusive integration models which it has acquired, to link all stakeholders, organizations and institutions of the various sectors in an ongoing relationship of cooperation in which information is disseminated over networks, so as to narrow the digital divide in line with the outputs of Phases 1 and 2 of WSIS,

resolves to request the Director of the Telecommunication Development Bureau

1 to continue to follow up the work pursuant to Resolution 8 (Rev. Dubai, 2014) of this conference in creating social connectivity indicators for the digital divide, standard indicators for each country and a single index, in cooperation with the competent organizations in the relevant United Nations agencies, using available statistics so that charts can be compiled to illustrate the current situation of the digital divide in each country and region;

2 to continue to advocate the advantages of developing low‑cost, high‑quality ICT-customer computers, that can be directly connected to the networks supporting the Internet and Internet applications, so that economies of scale can be achieved on account of their acceptability at the global level, taking into consideration the possibility of satellite use of this computer;

3 to continue to assist in developing a user-awareness campaign in order to build user trust and confidence in ICT applications;

4 to ensure that special programmes under the centres of excellence continue to address the specific issue of ICT training for poverty alleviation, and to give top priority to these centres;

5 to continue to foster the development of innovative models in order to reduce poverty and bridge the digital divide in the developing countries successfully;

6 to continue to identify key ICT applications in rural areas and to cooperate with specialized organizations with a view to developing a standardized user‑friendly content format that overcomes the barrier of literacy and language;

7 to continue to assist in reducing access costs by encouraging manufacturers to develop appropriate technology scalable to broadband applications and having a low operating and maintenance cost, this having been adopted as a key objective of the Union as a whole and ITU Telecommunication Development Sector (ITU‑D) in particular;

8 to assist and support developing countries in researching and assessing difficulties and challenges in the operation and maintenance of multipurpose community telecentres in rural and remote areas, with a view to advising developing countries on models of multipurpose community telecentres, including digital inclusion, in rural and remote areas adapted to local circumstances;

9 to facilitate discussion and exchange of best practices regarding the challenges and benefits of implementing projects or activities relating to e-applications referred to in WSIS Action Line C7 through strategic partnerships;

10 to take into consideration the importance of the security and confidentiality of the ICT applications highlighted in WSIS Action Line C7 and of protection of privacy, in order to facilitate discussions regarding guidelines, tools and mechanisms; improve collaboration between government authorities; implement user-friendly government services, potentially including integration and personalization of services; improve the quality of e-government services and increase awareness of such services;

11 to encourage members to provide ITU with ICT rural experiences, which can then be put on the ITU‑D website;

12 to continue to assist the Member States and Sector Members in developing a pro-competition policy and regulatory framework for ICTs, including online services and electronic commerce, as well as capacity building in connectivity and accessibility, taking into account the specific needs of women and disadvantaged groups;

13 to continue to encourage development of broadcast-mode methods for promoting ICT uses in rural areas;

14 to continue to help in promoting greater participation of women in ICT initiatives, particularly in rural areas;

15 to promote the implementation of studies or projects and activities, in collaboration with the ITU Radiocommunication Sector (ITU‑R), with a view, on the one hand, to complementing national radiocommunication systems, including satellite systems, and, on the other, to increasing knowledge and capacities thereof, in order to achieve optimum utilization of the radio-frequency resource, particularly the digital dividend, and the orbit spectrum resource, with the aim of stimulating the development and coverage of satellite broadband for bridging the digital divide;

16 to analyse the adoption of measures for collaboration with ITU‑R, in order to support studies, projects or systems and, at the same time, to implement joint activities which seek to build capacities in efficient use of the orbit/spectrum resource for the provision of satellite services, with a view to achieving affordable access to satellite broadband and facilitating network connectivity between different areas, countries and regions, especially in the developing countries;

17 to ensure that the necessary resources within the budgetary limits are allocated to the above actions,

invites

international financial institutions, donor agencies and private-sector entities to assist and to develop different business models in developing ICT applications referred to in WSIS Action Line C7, including public-private partnership projects and programmes in developing countries,

invites Member States

1 to consider promoting relevant policies to foster public and private investment in the development and construction of radiocommunication systems, including satellite systems, in their countries and regions, and to consider including the use of such systems in their national and/or regional broadband plans, as an additional tool that will help to bridge the digital divide and meet telecommunication needs, especially in the developing countries;

2 when implementing Resolution 17 (Rev. Buenos Aires, 2017) of this conference, on implementation of regionally approved initiatives at the national, regional, interregional and global levels, to select a project among those proposed for the regions that reflects optimal integration of ICTs with the aim of bridging the digital divide;

3 to participate actively in regional and global collaborative forums dealing with experiences and best practices in the implementation of e-government strategies and programmes;

4 to provide the Telecommunication Development Bureau with details of work relating to monitoring and evaluation of the status, usage, quality and impact of e-government;

5 to participate in the study of the role of ICTs in educational systems by contributing their own experiences regarding the implementation of ICTs for achieving universal education worldwide;

6 to support the collection and analysis of data and statistics on e-applications services, such as ICT applications in industry, e-government and e-health and ICT in education, that will contribute to public policy design and implementation as well as enabling cross-country comparisons.

**SUP** RCC/23A17/2

RESOLUTION 50 (Rev. Dubai, 2014)

Optimal integration of information and communication technologies

The World Telecommunication Development Conference (Dubai, 2014),

**SUP** RCC/23A17/3

RESOLUTION 54 (Rev. Dubai, 2014)

Information and communication technology applications

The World Telecommunication Development Conference (Dubai, 2014),

**Reasons:** In order to more effectively combat the digital divide, it is necessary to:

a) update the document by incorporating in it the new information that has emerged in the last study period, in particular: Resolution 71 (Rev. Busan, 2014), Resolution 135 (Rev. Busan, 2014), Resolution 139 (Rev. Busan, 2014) of the Plenipotentiary Conference and UN General Assembly Resolution A/70/1 – Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;

b) merge the resolution with Resolution 50 on the optimal integration of information and communication technologies and Resolution 54 on information and communication technology applications;

c) suppress WTDC Resolutions 50 and 54.

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