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| PLENARY MEETING | **Document WTDC-17/42-E** |
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| United States of America |
| Contribution of the United States of America to the 2017 World Telecommunication Development Conference |
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**Introduction**

The United States is pleased to participate in the 2017 International Telecommunication Union (ITU) World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC-17) in the historic city of Buenos Aires. We congratulate and thank the Government of Argentina and the ITU for hosting this important conference, noting that WTDC-17 has a special distinction because together we are celebrating the twenty-five years of achievements of the ITU Development Sector (ITU-D) in the city that hosted the world’s first WTDC in 1994.

During the past quarter-century the world has made tremendous progress in the diffusion and uptake of telecommunications and information communication technology (ICT) services and in increasing access to broadband. This progress reflects the continued success of public-private and multi-stakeholder cooperation, market and regulatory reforms, technological innovation, and commitments on the part of diverse stakeholders, including the membership of the ITU.  In that regard, the ITU-D’s studies, projects, and regional initiatives supporting infrastructure development, an enabling policy environment, digital inclusion, and human and institutional capacity building have contributed significantly to accelerating the diffusion, access, and use of telecommunications and ICTs, including broadband globally. The ITU-D is ideally situated to facilitate the advancement of the global information economy.

***USA Priorities for WTDC-17***

The United States believes that it is important for the Buenos Aires Action Plan to outline priorities and programs that effectively address the needs of developing countries and lead to tangible outcomes through a strong, results-based Strategic Plan and output-based Action Plan. The United States therefore approaches WTDC-17 with two overarching goals: (i) building upon the gains achieved, to work with others to further advance ICTs in developing countries; and (ii) to preserve and enhance ITU-D’s role as a modern, forward-looking, knowledge platform to exchange experiences and views, engage in capacity building, and develop voluntary telecommunication and ICT best practices that are appropriate and useful for a diverse Membership, particularly developing countries.

***Advancing ICTs in Developing Countries***

The theme for WTDC-17, ICTs for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), is especially emblematic of our times. The United States recognizes the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs as a global framework for collective engagement for development and a milestone agreement in pursuit of global peace and prosperity. As the first WTDC following the ten-year review of progress on the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) and following the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, WTDC-17 offers an opportunity to reinforce the importance of telecommunications/ICT development and to establish priorities and objectives that will ensure continued progress and redoubled success. Per its strategic plan, the ITU-D has an important role in fostering the development of infrastructure and the establishment of an enabling policy and regulatory environment conducive to sustainable telecommunication/ICT development. We support the ITU-D’s continued focus in these areas, through the framework provided by the WSIS Action Lines. WTDC’s success lies in addressing issues related to telecommunications/ICTs to improve the lives of the world’s people, particularly those in developing countries.

The United States strongly supports national responsibility as stressed in the 2030 Agenda and the mobilization and effective use of domestic resources as part of the robust engagement of all stakeholders, including the private sector. The 2030 Agenda is a common rallying point for the international community and the private sector to share the burdens and seize the opportunities inherent in addressing global development challenges; including, the benefits of the global information economy that should be available to all. It is essential for ITU-D to promote the involvement of all stakeholders who play a part in the policy, regulatory, economic and financial aspects in the advancement of the global information economy.

In its 25th Anniversary year, ITU-D is well placed to promote partnerships between stakeholders as it works to ensure that the benefits of the global information economy are available to all. Partnerships in this ecosystem will help mobilize resources and support capacity-building efforts in critical areas. This, in turn, will foster international cooperation and an enabling environment that will provide pragmatic solutions to the challenges of the day.

***ITU-D’s Role as a Modern Platform for Knowledge***

ITU-D is notable for its ability to engage with a broad array of stakeholders in an open and transparent manner, addressing timely and important issues that are generated through a bottom-up, Membership-driven process. The development by Member States and Sector Members of voluntary guidelines and best practices substantially assists efforts to increase digital inclusion, develop advanced networks and create a stable and predictable regulatory environment.

Furthermore, information exchange in the D Sector in such an open and non-binding environment best promotes the skills and mutual cooperation necessary for all Members to effectively participate within and across all three sectors of the ITU. ITU-D’s continuing ability to meet members’ needs through voluntary guidelines, principles, information exchanges, and best practices will continue to drive its forward-looking agenda. Equally important, the Sector’s uniquely flexible approach successfully attracts private industry interested in sharing knowledge as part of capacity building.

These characteristics have served the Sector well, generating timely and useful deliverables which reflect the experiences and best practices of many countries participating in WTDC-17 today. The United States will continue to support such an open and forward-looking forum that tackles the challenges and hastens the fruits of the global information economy.

WTDC-17 also is an important milestone on the path to the 2018 Plenipotentiary Conference. We must work together, in the spirit of cooperation and collaboration, to deliver sustainable and measurable results. We look forward to working with all participants to ensure a successful
WTDC-17, and we invite support for the following proposals:

***Summary of United States Proposals***

The United States joins with our partners in the Americas region to support a suite of revisions to the Development Sector’s enabling texts, including the ITU-D contribution to the ITU Strategic Plan, the ITU-D Action Plan, and the Buenos Aires Declaration that advance our conference theme and the U.S. commitment to Internet and broadband access. Our support for 19 CITEL Inter-American Proposals (IAPs) reflects the strong alignment within the Americas on our substantive priorities for the period 2018 – 2021:

• to promote and exchange information about new and innovative telecommunications/ICTs to expand broadband access in developing countries, including in rural areas and through wireless means;

• to enable communications during emergencies and disasters;

• to build capacity to strengthen cybersecurity;

• to champion digital inclusion for women, youth and those with disabilities and specific needs;

• to leverage the ITU’s role in the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) to help achieve the SDGs;

• And, in so doing, to modernize, update and strengthen our work in the Development Sector by supporting IAPs that merge together similar Resolutions[[1]](#footnote-1) and suppress Resolutions that have completed their original design and fulfilled their mission.[[2]](#footnote-2) We encourage Members from all regions to join the United States to adopt these proposals.

In this regard, revisions to the ITU-D rules of procedure proposed by the Americas region, among other things, would further enhance the ITU-D’s knowledge-sharing activities. These proposed changes encourage more interactive ways to organize the Sector’s work and help capture and preserve the experiences, ideas, and best practices shared by ITU Membership and contributors; and they provide options for a more diverse range of deliverables and outputs to meet developing countries’ needs earlier and more effectively during the next 4-year cycle.[[3]](#footnote-3)

Finally, we support continuation of the current scope of ITU-D activities, as well as renewed efforts to improve collaboration and increase synergies among BDT work programs, regional initiatives and the study groups. We invite the Conference to give serious consideration to proposals to combine study questions and to align study questions with ITU-D’s mandate, objectives and, priorities. We believe that clear links among study questions, Regional Initiatives and projects, coupled with the membership-driven bottom-up approach, will allow the ITU-D to maximize the use of human and financial resources, avoid duplication, and most importantly, better meet the needs of developing countries.

Together with the CITEL IAPs bearing the United States’ support, the following proposals reflect our priorities and recommended approaches for the ITU-D sector over the next four-year period.

**Table of proposals from United States of America**

| **Proposal Number** | **Addendum** | **Title** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 34 Rev. 1 |  | Proposed Modification of Resolution 2 |
| 37 Rev. 1 |  | NOC Proposal for Resolution 45: mechanisms for enhancing cooperation on cybersecurity, including countering and combatting spam |
| 42 |  | Contribution of the United States of America to the 2017 World Telecommunication Development Conference |
| 42 | Add 1 | Proposed modification of Study Question 1/1: Fixed Broadband Networks |
| 42 | Add 2 | Proposed modification of ITU-D Study Question 3/1: Access to cloud computing: challenges and opportunities for developing countries |
| 42 | Add 3 | NOC Proposal for ITU-D Study Question 3/2 – securing information and communication networks: best practices for developing a culture of cybersecurity |
| 42 | Add 4 | Proposed suppression (SUP) of ITU-D Study Question 9/2 – Identification of study topics in the ITU-T and ITU-R Study Groups which are of particular interest to developing countries  |

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1. IAPs supported by the United States propose to merge Resolutions 46 (Doha, 2006) and 68 (Rev. Dubai, 2014) related to assistance for indigenous peoples and communities, and Resolutions 50 and 54 (Rev. Dubai, 2014) covering ICT technology and applications. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. IAP 1 would supress Resolution 39 (Istanbul, 2002), the Agenda for connectivity in the Americas and Quito Action Plan. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. The referenced proposed revisions to the ITU-D rules of procedure can be found in IAP 27. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)