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|  | **Second Inter-Regional Meeting (IRM-2) to prepare for the WTDC-21 Virtual, 13-14 December 2021** | | A close up of a sign  Description automatically generated |
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|  | | **Document** **IRM21-2/46(Rev.1)-E** | |
|  | | **8 December 2021** | |
|  | | **Original: English and Russian** | |
| Regional Commonwealth in the field of Communications (RCC) | | | |
| Draft revision of Resolution 37 (Rev. Buenos Aires, 2017)  “Bridging the digital divide” | | | |
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| **Agenda item:**  Item 5  **Summary:**  The document contains the proposal to modify Resolution 37 to make it more concise while maintaining the important substantive provisions, and adding the following requests for BDT Director: publish data on digital divide on the ITU website; report on the cooperation efforts with external stakeholders; create and maintain resource with information on the ITU-partnered institutions and UN agencies working in the field of digital divide.  The document contains a request for the Secretary-General to include the issue of the digital divide to the list containing the areas of mutual interest to the three Sectors and the General Secretariat.  **Expected results:**  Participants are invited to consider this document  **Reference:**  Resolution 191 (Rev. Dubai 2018) of the Plenipotentiary Conference, on the Strategy for the coordination of efforts among the three Sectors of the Union | | | |

RESOLUTION 37 (Rev. Buenos Aires, 2017)

**Bridging the digital divide**

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

*a* telecommunications/information and communication technologies()

*b)* that the digital divide is characterized by inequality in the technical and economic availability of telecommunication/ICT facilities and services, as well as in the level of regulatory environment, awareness and skills required to use them;

*c*World Summit for Information Society ()

*d*that Telecommunication/telecommunication/

*e*

*f)* that there is a clear connection between, *inter alia,* the affordability of telecommunications/ICTs in general, Internet access in particular, and the level of their use;

**recalling**

*a)* United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) Resolution 70/1, on transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;

*b*) Addis-Ababa Action Agenda of the 2015 Third International Conference on Financing for Development, endorsed by the Resolution 69/313 of UN General Assembly, and its commitment to bridging the digital divide;

*bc)* UNGA Resolution 70/125, on the outcome document of the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the overall review of the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS);

*d)* Resolution 135 (Rev. Dubai, 2018) of the Plenipotentiary Conference, on ITU’s role in the development of telecommunications/information communications technologies (ICT), in providing technical assistance and advice to developing countries[[1]](#footnote-1)1 and in implementing relevant national, regional and interregional projects;

*e)* Resolution 139 (Rev. Dubai, 2018) of the Plenipotentiary Conference, on the use of telecommunications/ICTs to bridge the digital divide and build an inclusive information society;

*f)* Resolution 191 (Rev. Dubai 2018) of the Plenipotentiary Conference, on the Strategy for the coordination of efforts among the three Sectors of the Union;

*g)* Resolution 200 (Busan, 2014) of the Plenipotentiary Conference, on the Connect 2020 Agenda for global telecommunication/ICT development;

*qi)* Resolution 16 (Rev. Buenos Aires, 2017) of this conference, on special actions and measures for the least developed countries (LDCs), small island developing states (SIDS), landlocked developing countries (LLDCs) and countries with economies in transition;

,

**recalling further**

*a)* the provisions of the Tunis Agenda for the information society, defining Action Lines falling under ITU's responsibility;

*b*

*c)* The global targets set by the Broadband Commission for Sustainable Development to be achieved by 2025,

*cd)* Article 1 on Purposes of the Union and Article 21 on Functions and Structure of Telecommunication Development Sector of ITU Constitution,

**acknowledging**

*a)* that the telecommunication environment has undergone significant changes in recent years and that progress has been made in implementing the outputs of Phases 1 and 2 of WSIS;

b) that ITU has committed itself to narrowing the digital divide in accordance with the WSIS outcomes, as well as the relevant Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs);

*c*Dubai82023telecommunication/

*d*

**acknowledging further**

*a)* ITU's role as a catalyst, and 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*

*c*,

**considering**

*a)* that the Covid-19 pandemic has demonstrated the critical importance of bridging the digital divide and of affordable connectivity worldwide;

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

*c)* 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;

*d*

*e*

*f*

*g)* 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;

*h)* strategies,

**considering further**

*a)* that it is important to promote openness of telecommunications/ICTs for all, access to telecommunication/ICT services, their technical and economic availability, use in all countries and regions, as well as by all people, including women and girls, youth and vulnerable groups, indigenous peoples , elderly people and people with disabilities and special needs;

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

**confirms**

*a*) the importance of approaches to transparent funding for bridging the digital divide in the Geneva Plan of Action, the Tunis Agenda and the strategic plan for the Union and their translation into equitable mechanisms for action, particularly in respect of issues related to Internet management, having regard to women and girls, youth and vulnerable groups, indigenous peoples, the elderly and persons with disabilities and special needs, telecommunications/ICTs for disaster relief and mitigation, and the child online protection initiative,

*b*) that the international and regional financial institutions and other organisations have programmes aimed at bridging the digital divide, and that these funding and technical assistance programmes are essential to bridging that divide in developing countries, especially landlocked, least developed and small island developing countries,

**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 telecommunication/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 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,

**invites the Secretary-General**

1) to include the subject of the digital divide in the list containing the areas of mutual interest to the three Sectors and the General Secretariat,[[2]](#footnote-2)

2 to suggest to the Inter-Sectoral Coordination Group on Issues of Mutual Interest (ISCG) that it consider the digital divide a subject of mutual interest to the three sectors,

**resolves to request the Director of the Telecommunication Development Bureau**

1

telecommunication/in order to bridge the digital divide;

3 to continue to follow up BDT’s work pursuant to Resolution 8 (Rev. Addis Ababa, 2021) 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 and the relevant United Nations agencies, using available statistics so that information on the current situation for each country and region in terms of the digital divide is continuously available online on the ITU website in a clear and user-friendly manner;

24 to continue to advocate the advantages of developing low‑cost, high‑quality telecommunication/ICT customer equipment, that can be directly connected to the networks supporting the Internet and Internet services and applications, so that economies of scale and social benefit can be achieved on account of their acceptability at the global level, taking into consideration the possibility of satellite use of this equipment and to ensure that human rights are placed at the centre of regulatory frameworks and legislation on the development and use of digital technologies to this end;

5,

6inviting Sector Members

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

8telecommunication/ICT telecommunication/

9 bridging the digital divide between urban and rural areas

10women and girls, youth and vulnerable groups, indigenous peoples, the elderly and and special needs telecommunication/

11

2bridging the digital divide

13

14 to continue to identify key telecommunication/ICT applications in rural areas and to cooperate with toe;

5 e

16 to continue to take measures to develop cooperation, while ensuring a high level of transparency, with the international financial institutions, donor agencies and private sector associations, regarding projects aimed at bridging the digital divide, as well as inform Member States of the status of these efforts on a regular basis, and to create and maintain a resource on the ITU website where members of the Union can find information on ITU-partnered institutions and UN agencies that have available programmes for funding and technical assistance related to bridging the digital divide;

17 comply with this Resolution

18the implementation of this Resolution

**invites**

international financial institutions, donor agencies and private‑sector entities to assist and to develop capacity in bridging the digital divide, including public-private partnership projects and programmes in developing countries in a transparent manner,

**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. Addis Ababa, 2021) of this conference, on implementation of regionally approved initiatives at the national, regional, interregional and global levels, consider the possibility of implementing projects in the framework of regional initiatives on bridging the digital divide that reflects optimal integration of telecommunication/ICTs;

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 create policy conditions for effective competition in the domestic internet access services market as an important factor for lowering the cost of Internet access for users and service providers;

**invites Member States and Sector Members**

1 to support the collection and analysis of data and statistics on e‑applications and services, such as telecommunication/ICT applications in industry, e‑government and e‑health and telecommunication/ICT that will contribute to public policy design and implementation as well as enabling cross-country comparisons related to the digital divide, while taking into consideration the need to apply relevant legislation, especially in relation to privacy ;

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

3 to participate in the study of the role of telecommunication/ICTs in education systems by contributing their own experiences regarding the implementation of telecommunication/ICTs for achieving universal education worldwide.

4

5 to consider expanding the implementation of projects and programs to promote international development of the telecommunication / ICT sector, including with the participation of ITU, in order to bridge the digital divide and provide information on such projects and programs to BDT.

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1. 1 These include the least developed countries, small island developing states, landlocked developing countries and countries with economies in transition. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. [Such list is maintained by the ITU Secretary-General in accordance with the Resolution 191 of the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference] [↑](#footnote-ref-2)