

RESOLUTION 16 (Rev. Baku, 2025)

Special actions and measures for the least developed countries, small island developing states, landlocked developing countries and countries with economies in transition

The World Telecommunication Development Conference (Baku, 2025),

recalling

- a)* United Nations resolutions concerning programmes for least developed countries (LDCs), small island developing states (SIDS), landlocked developing countries (LLDCs) and countries with economies in transition;
- b)* Resolution 79/194 of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), on information and communication technologies (ICTs) for sustainable development;
- c)* UNGA Resolution 78/160, on science, technology and innovation for sustainable development;
- d)* UNGA Resolution 70/1, on transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;
- e)* 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),

considering

- a)* Resolution 30 (Rev. Bucharest, 2022) of the Plenipotentiary Conference, on special measures for LDCs, SIDS, LLDCs and countries with economies in transition;
- b)* Resolution 25 (Rev. Bucharest, 2022) of the Plenipotentiary Conference, on strengthening the regional presence;
- c)* Resolution 131 (Rev. Bucharest, 2022) of the Plenipotentiary Conference, on measuring ICTs to build an integrating and inclusive information society;

- d)* Resolution 135 (Rev. Bucharest, 2022) of the Plenipotentiary Conference, on ITU's role in the durable and sustainable development of telecommunications/ICTs, in providing technical assistance and advice to developing countries¹ and in implementing relevant national, regional and interregional projects;
- e)* Resolution 139 (Rev. Bucharest, 2022) of the Plenipotentiary Conference, on the use of telecommunications/ICTs to bridge the digital divide and build an inclusive information society;
- f)* Resolution 214 (Bucharest, 2022) of the Plenipotentiary Conference, on artificial intelligence (AI) technologies and telecommunications/ICTs;
- g)* Resolution 218 (Bucharest, 2022) of the Plenipotentiary Conference, on ITU's role in the implementation of the "Space2030" Agenda: space as a driver of sustainable development, and its follow-up and review process;
- h)* Resolution 37 (Rev. Baku, 2025) of this conference, on bridging the digital divide,

recognizing

- a)* that telecommunications/ICTs are a key tool for implementing the WSIS vision beyond 2015 and a key enabler for social, environmental, cultural and economic development, and consequently for accelerating the timely attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals and associated targets;
- b)* the unique vulnerabilities and challenges faced by LLDCs and SIDS, particularly those in the Pacific, owing to geographical isolation, limited economies of scale, infrastructure constraints, and significant time zone differences – factors that create persistent barriers to full participation in ITU processes, access to technical and financial assistance, and opportunities for capacity building and institutional development;
- c)* the Lagatoi Declaration on Digital Transformation of the Pacific, with its commitment to build an inclusive, connected and digitally empowered Pacific, taking into account the Pacific's unique geographic, economic and social challenges;

¹ These include the least developed countries, small island developing states, landlocked developing countries and countries with economies in transition.

d) the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent and Pacific Islands Forum Leaders' commitment for a well-connected region that ensures inclusion, and accessible, secure and affordable ICT infrastructure and services;

e) that the African Union Agenda 2063 envisions the establishment of world-class infrastructure across the continent to support inclusive and sustainable economic growth, while promoting full and productive employment and ensuring decent work for all;

f) that the African Union Digital Transformation Strategy for Africa (2020–2030) aspires to create an inclusive and integrated digital economy and society that improves the quality of life for citizens, strengthens and diversifies the economic landscape, and reinforces Africa's ownership of its digital future;

g) that many new and emerging telecommunication/ICT services and technologies offer significant potential to help close digital divides, improve the resilience and robustness of telecommunication/ICT networks and tackle the challenges faced by LDCs, SIDS, LLDCs and countries with economies in transition,

noting

a) Resolution 1 (Dubai, 2012) of the World Conference on International Telecommunications, on special measures for LLDCs and SIDS for access to international optical fibre networks;

b) the striking imbalance in telecommunication/ICT development between these countries (LDCs, SIDS, LLDCs and countries with economies in transition) and other countries, the persistence of which exacerbates the digital divide, which can exclude women and girls and create accessibility divides for persons with disabilities and persons with specific needs;

c) that accessible and affordable telecommunications/ICTs for rural and remote areas are critical to bridging the digital divide, and that network operators, including telecommunication/ICT complementary access networks and solutions, can play a role to this end;

- d)* that these countries and countries in special need are vulnerable to extreme levels of devastation to their telecommunication/ICT infrastructure resulting from natural disasters, and often lack the capacity to effectively respond to, and recover from, such calamities, potentially deepening the digital divide in those countries;
- e)* the existence of countries which owing to geographical and political conditions have limited access to terrestrial and marine international cable systems;
- f)* that SIDS are working together to define shared development priorities and regional commitments on digital transformation, resilience and inclusion, which is gaining recognition within the international community;
- g)* that fully realizing the benefits of new and emerging telecommunication/ICT services and technologies will require bridging digital divides and achieving universal access;
- h)* that despite the significant potential of new and emerging telecommunication/ICT services and technologies, including space-based connectivity solutions, to expand connectivity and coverage and improve national telecommunication/ICT resilience, many developing countries face unique challenges, requiring further capacity building in order to effectively access and benefit from those solutions,

appreciating

the special measures taken for the benefit of these countries in the form of concentrated assistance provided under the ITU Telecommunication Development Sector (ITU-D) action plan,

noting with concern

- a)* that, despite all the measures taken so far, the telecommunication networks in many of these countries remain in a very poor state of development in urban, semi-urban, rural and remote areas;
- b)* that the geographical situation of SIDS and LLDCs is an obstacle to the establishment of international telecommunication network connectivity with these countries;
- c)* that multilateral and bilateral flows of technical assistance and investment finance to these countries are constantly declining;

- d) that to date there are many countries in this category;
- e) the low level of resources allocated to the special programme for these countries,

aware

that improved telecommunication networks in these countries will constitute a major driver underpinning their social and economic recovery and their development, and can provide opportunities for sustainable livelihoods and drive digital transformation,

resolves

to endorse the new priority areas for the next four years, the associated programme of action for these countries and its implementation strategy,

instructs the Director of the Telecommunication Development Bureau

- 1 to continue efforts to support cooperation among the ITU membership on this issue and on mobilizing resources to address the needs of LDCs, SIDS (including Pacific island countries), LLDCs and countries with economies in transition, as well as populations that are underserved and face particular challenges, including through the Partner2Connect Digital Coalition;
- 2 to continue to review the state of telecommunication/ICT services in LDCs, SIDS, LLDCs and countries with economies in transition, as identified by the United Nations and needing special measures for the development of telecommunications/ICTs, and to identify areas of critical weakness requiring priority action;
- 3 to continue submitting to the ITU Council concrete measures intended to bring about genuine improvements and effective assistance to these countries, from the Special Voluntary Programme for Technical Cooperation, the Union's own resources and other sources of finance;
- 4 to implement fully the programme of assistance for these countries contained in the ITU-D action plan, noting the priorities of LDCs, SIDS, LLDCs and countries with economies in transition;

5 to give priority to requests received from these countries in implementing other Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT) programmes of assistance to developing countries that are intended to improve and provide effective assistance to these countries;

6 to pay special attention to suburban, rural and remote telecommunication/ICT development in these countries, particularly for remote communities, and the role that telecommunication/ICT complementary access networks and solutions can play in connecting the unconnected, with a view to achieving universal access to telecommunication/ICT services;

7 to foster the exchange of information and advisory services to facilitate an understanding in these countries of the roll-out of new and emerging telecommunication/ICT services and technologies, including space-based communication technologies, as well as related opportunities, risks and recommended enabling policy and regulatory considerations;

8 to continue to work towards providing the necessary administrative and operational structure for identifying the development needs of these countries and for proper administration of the resources appropriated for LDCs, SIDS, LLDCs and countries with economies in transition;

9 to actively seek to improve the human resources of ITU regional offices for executing initiatives to meet the needs and priorities of LDCs, SIDS, LLDCs and countries with economies in transition, within the available budget, and to maximize the regional presence;

10 to report annually on this matter to the Council, covering progress made in the implementation of this resolution and highlighting key achievements, challenges and recommendations for further action,

requests the Secretary-General

1 to request the Plenipotentiary Conference (Doha, 2026) to provide the necessary budget for these countries with a view to enabling BDT to undertake essential and programmed activities for them;

2 to continue enhancing the assistance provided to these countries through other resources, and in particular through unconditional voluntary contributions and appropriate partnerships, as well as any surplus income from world and regional telecommunication exhibitions and forums;

3 to propose new and innovative measures capable of generating additional funds to be used for telecommunication/ICT development in these countries, in order to benefit from the possibilities afforded by financial mechanisms in facing the challenges of utilizing ICT for development purposes, as stated in the WSIS Tunis Agenda for the Information Society;

4 to make every possible effort to encourage coordination and minimize duplication among financial institutions and international organizations in implementing this resolution,

calls upon governments of least developed countries, small island developing states, landlocked developing countries and countries with economies in transition

1 to continue to accord higher priority to ICT development and resilience building, as well as disaster response and risk reduction planning, and to adopt measures, policies and national strategies that are conducive to bringing about faster development of resilient telecommunications/ICTs in their countries, such as sector liberalization and the introduction of new technologies;

2 in selecting technical cooperation activities financed by bilateral and multilateral sources, to continue to accord high priority to telecommunication/ICT activities and projects;

3 to accord priority to the development of ICTs in national development plans;

4 to engage actively in regional and subregional cooperation to strengthen the voice of LDCs, SIDS, LLDCs and countries with economies in transition, particularly those in the Pacific, in promoting participation and driving global telecommunication/ICT development processes,

calls upon other Member States and Sector Members

1 to establish partnerships with these countries, either directly or through BDT, in order to bring increased investment into their ICT sectors and to stimulate the modernization, affordability and expansion of resilient telecommunication/ICT networks and systems, including access to international optical fibre networks, in these countries in a bold attempt to reduce the digital divide, which has the potential to exclude women and girls, and persons with disabilities and persons with specific needs, and to achieve the ultimate goal of universal access in line with the WSIS Geneva Plan of Action, Tunis Commitment, Tunis Agenda and vision beyond 2015 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;

2 to recognize the unique challenges faced by landlocked and doubly landlocked countries regarding the need to support coordination in developing terrestrial infrastructure for international connectivity.