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| **Council 2017 Geneva, 15-25 May 2017** |  |
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| **10 April 2017** |
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| Report by the Secretary-General | |
| STRENGTHENING THE REGIONAL PRESENCE | |

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| Summary  The purpose of this document is to report on the implementation of Resolution 25 (Rev. Busan, 2014). Document [C17/INF/11](http://www.itu.int/md/S17-CL-INF-0011/en) contains six annexes in relation to this document. Document [C17/INF/12](http://www.itu.int/md/S17-CL-INF-0012/en) presents the preliminary results of the survey of satisfaction with ITU’s regional presence.  Action required  The Council is invited to **note** this report.  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  References  [*Resolution 25 (Rev. Busan, 2014)*](http://www.itu.int/pub/S-CONF-PLEN-2015)*; Council documents* [*C17/INF/11*](http://www.itu.int/md/S17-CL-INF-0011/en) *and* [*C17/INF/12*](http://www.itu.int/md/S17-CL-INF-0012/en) |

# 1 Background

1.1 The strengthening of the regional presence is an evolving process. Since 1994, a range of measures have been taken in this regard to enable the Union to be as close as possible to its membership and to effectively deliver timely and high quality results at country and regional levels.

1.2 PP-14 revised Resolution 25 on the strengthening of the regional presence. The importance of the role of the regional and area offices in the preparation and implementation of the strategic plan as well as the fact that regional and area offices represent the entire Union were emphasized.

1.3 The measures taken have already yielded significant results that have been regularly reported to the Council. Work continues on strengthening ITU’s regional presence. The purpose of this document is to report on the consolidated results in implementing Resolution 25 (Rev. Busan, 2014).

1.4 This report sets forth information on the action plan and regional initiatives implementation. It provides detailed information on the 2016 budget implementation for regular and extra-budgetary sources of funding. It also offers particulars on the staffing level of the various regional and area offices as well as other operational information such as fellowships, experts and internal expert missions.

1.5 Finally, this document presents the preliminary results of the survey of satisfaction with ITU’s regional presence, which are further described in Document [C17/INF/12](http://www.itu.int/md/S17-CL-INF-0012/en).

1.6 This document is supplemented by Information Document [C17/INF/11](http://www.itu.int/md/S17-CL-INF-0011/en) that contains the following annexes:

**Annex 1:** Summary of the 2016 operational plan and projects implementation level and summary of the 2016 Regional and Area offices expenditure

**Annex 2:** 2016 operational plan implementation level by region and objective

**Annex 3:** Breakdown of the 2016 regional and area offices expenditure by category of expenditure

**Annex 4:** 2016 Fellowships awarded and recruited experts

**Annex 5:** Summary of staffing level by Regional and Area offices

**Annex 6:** Breakdown of staffing level by Regional and Area offices

# 2 Achievements at regional level (operational plan, regional initiatives, and projects)

2.1 The implementation of the regional initiatives and the execution of programmes, projects, and activities are carried out in the field under the leadership of regional and area offices. The main results achieved are regularly reported to TDAG and the Council. They can also be found in the Quarterly Reports, which were introduced by the Bureau in 2013 to set forth details on the implementation of the strategic, financial, and operational plans, including at regional level.

Quarterly reports can be found at the following address: <http://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Pages/OperationalPlansPerformanceReports.aspx>

2.2 The 2016 ITU-D performance report provides all details concerning the contribution of the regional and area offices on the implementation of the strategic and operational plans of the ITU-D for the year 2016. The performance report can be found at the following address: <https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/TIES_Protected/PerfReport2016.pdf>

2.3 In 2016, the implementation of the operational plan included 212 actions for a total implementation level of CHF 2,612,000. The implementation level of technical cooperation projects amounted to USD 8,262,000 for 40 projects.

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| **Operational Plan implementation** | **Project implementation** |

 

2.4 Annexes 1 to 3 (Document [C17/INF/11](http://www.itu.int/md/S17-CL-INF-0011/en)) present the summary and breakdown of the 2016 operational plan and projects implementation level by region and objectives, as well as the 2016 expenditure by regional and area offices. Annex 4 presents 2016 information on:

* Number of fellowships granted by region
* Number of experts recruited by region

**2.5 Africa region**

2.5.1 In the Africa region, in collaboration with Member States in the region, the project implementation level for nine technical cooperation projects active in 2016 amounted to USD 1,940,000. 49 actions were implemented for an amount of CHF 579,000. ITU worked closely with the African Regional Organizations and Economic Communities (RECs) to facilitate countries migration from analogue to digital terrestrial television. Ten countries launched their migration process in 2016. A total of 12 countries had achieved their migration process in the region by end 2016.

2.5.2 ITU also facilitated the harmonization of policies and regulatory frameworks in the region that includes universalization of broadband, e-Health using mobile devices, and regional and sub-regional IXP to provide cost reduction of traffic. Guidelines and model National Broadband Plans were developed for Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries. Broadband strategies were developed for some countries. Universal Service/Access policies and regulations and ICT indicators workshops were held for Madagascar and Central African Republic. As co-chair of the Steering Committee and member of the Board, ITU fostered collaboration with and provided technical assistance to Smart Africa and hosted both meetings.

2.5.3 Cybersecurity was also among the priorities in the region and several countries were assisted with the establishment of Computer Incident Response Teams (CIRTs) and Cybersecurity maturity reviews. The third Regional Cyberdrill aimed at enhancing the national capacity of partner countries was also held.

**2.6 Americas region**

2.6.1 In the Americas region, in collaboration with Member States in the region, the project implementation level for six technical cooperation projects active in 2016 amounted to USD 2,847,000. Within the framework of the Operational Plan, 32 actions were implemented with an amount of CHF 693,000. Nine regional workshops and five forums on ICTs Indicators, E-Services and Applications, Emergency Telecommunications, Conformance and Interoperability, Radio related aspects, Telecommunication Policy and Regulation, Innovation on Transaction and Financing, Restructuring of Regulatory Authority, National ICT Plan development, ICT Accessibility, Transition to Digital Broadcasting and Master Plan on Spectrum Management were delivered. Seven online courses through ITU Academy were delivered on relevant issues such as Advanced Communication Networks, Regulatory trends and technologies for the modern management of the radio electric spectrum, ICT Services and Applications, Last Generation of Satellite Systems, and Technologies-Protocols and Applications of wireless networks.

2.6.2 Two studies were delivered on cloud computing for the Andean countries and e-health public management and innovation, case studies of Brazil, Mexico, and Peru.

2.6.3 Direct assistance on Cybersecurity, collaboration for the establishment of a disaster management system; support for early warning systems and for the establishment of community centers and school connectivity.

2.6.4 Assessment and preparation of roadmaps for the transition from analogue to digital broadcasting for two Central American countries.

2.6.5 Regarding Harmonized Conformance and Interoperability programs, one training on Type Approval testing for Mobile Terminals, Homologation Procedures and Market Surveillance was provided for 15 experts from 10 American countries; ITU staff drafted a Mutual Recognition Agreement for COMTELCA countries.

2.6.6 An online training on innovative communication tools for the strengthening of Indigenous people was delivered to over 180 indigenous in three modules: 1) Access, development and implementation of Web technologies and digital content; 2) E-commerce, mobile applications and other tools; and 3) Development of local indigenous communication networks.

2.6.7 Interactive maps of long distance terrestrial and submarine optical fiber systems for the Americas were enhanced and updated.

**2.7 Arab region**

2.7.1 In the Arab region, in collaboration with Member States in the region, the project implementation level for five technical cooperation projects active in 2016 amounted to USD 1,337,000. 39 actions were implemented for an amount of CHF 384,000. Under the Arab LDCs Regulatory and HCB programme, four regional workshops and nineteen trainings sessions were organized.

2.7.2 Regarding Harmonized Conformance and Interoperability programs, one training on Type Approval testing for Mobile Terminals, Homologation Procedures and Market Surveillance was provided for experts from six Arab countries. Assistance was provided to the Arab Maghreb Countries in the framework of the preparation for their common C&I regime. Two meetings were held in the Maghreb union HQ where the Action plan was discussed and agreed to be presented to the 2017 Maghreb ICT Ministers Council.

2.7.3 Assistance was provided to the Arab Incubators and Technoparks Network (ARTECNET) and AREGNET. A training on Incubation management was provided to 20 Arab Incubator Managers.

A Smart Learning Forum was organized and hosted by the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority, UAE.

2.7.4 ITU signed an agreement with the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology of Egypt to establish a regional innovation center for ICT Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities in Egypt.

2.7.5 Building confidence in the use of ICTs was also among the priorities in the region and continuous support was provided to members through workshops, summits, trainings and studies in the field of cybersecurity and child online protection, in partnership with stakeholders in the region.

2.7.6 An annual regional Cyber Security Summit and Annual Regional Cyber Drill were organized in collaboration with ITU-ARCC. Human and institutional capacity-building programmes were provided as well to Arab countries as side training to these events. Mauritania was assisted in the development of its national cybersecurity strategy.

**2.8 Asia and the Pacific region**

2.8.1 In the Asia and the Pacific region, in collaboration with Member States in the region, the project implementation level for 20 technical cooperation projects active in 2016 amounted to USD 2,138,000. 48 actions were implemented for an amount of CHF 453,000.

2.8.2 The key emphasis was on capacity building and specialized assistances in the areas of spectrum management monitoring and developing national frameworks for cross border RF interference management, policy, regulatory and legislative frameworks, cybersecurity and child online protection, broadband, conformance & interoperability, broadcasting, ICT applications, satellite coordination, licensing and numbering, quality of service, ICT Indicators and Statistics, Internet of Things, IPv6, Internet exchange Points, e-health, e-agriculture, and other technical and regulatory assistances.

2.8.3 Continuous support to members was provided during times of emergency and natural disasters with the deployment of emergency satellite and related equipment as well as development of framework for emergency communications.

2.8.4 In the area of training, emphasis continued to focus on smart sustainable technologies, e-applications, cloud computing, IPv6 infrastructure security and transition, internet exchange points, cybersecurity and child online protection, ICT indicators and statistics, broadband technologies and roadmaps, conformity and interoperability, ICT Indicators and statistics, Internet of Things, spectrum economics, monitoring and automation tools (with emphasis on SMS4DC), preparing for international conferences, developing e-strategies (agriculture, health, postal service, telecommunication), cost modeling including tariff and pricing, and broadcasting among others.

**2.9 CIS region**

2.9.1 In the CIS region, 16 actions were implemented in 2016 for an amount of CHF 268,000. Four WTDC-14 Regional Initiatives (RIs) were fully completed.

* + 1. Major outputs of CIS RIs in 2016: database for storing data on technical solutions for child online protection and software for choosing optimal technical solution (<https://contentfiltering.info/>); automated distribution system of unsafe and safe lists of Internet resources (<http://bwld.online/>); creation of Internet Access and Training Centre for users with motor and speech disabilities in Republic Sakha, Russian Federation (10 working places); Internet Access and Training Centre for persons with hearing disabilities in Minsk, Republic of Belarus (10 working places); software for diagnosis of human susceptibility to one or more channels of information perception and Methodological requirements to e-learning resources; and a report on the current situation in the CIS in building confidence and security in the use of ICTs.

2.9.3 Following demand from ITU membership in the CIS region, areas of technical cooperation, capacity-building activities and regional discussion in 2016 included digital switchover, implementation of WRC-15 outcomes, mobile number portability, 4G/5G, cybersecurity, applications, and rural connectivity. Throughout the year 11 workshops, seminars, and trainings were organized, attracting more than 500 participants in total from more than 15 countries.

**2.10 Europe region**

2.10.1 In the Europe region, in collaboration with Member States in the region, 28 actions were implemented in 2016 for an amount of CHF 235,000. Efforts to strengthen the implementation mechanism for the region were continued, including coordination of actions with diverse relevant organizations in the region such as CEPT, EU, EC, ECO, ENISA, EBU, EBRD, RCC, Council of Europe and the UN, including UN ECE, R-UNDG, UNIDO, UNCTAD, and FAO.

2.10.2 Throughout the year, more than 17 workshops, seminars, expert group meetings on broadcasting, broadband, accessibility, cybersecurity, innovation, and human capacity building were organized, attracting more than 2000 participants in total from more than 30 countries. In addition, human capacity of more than 250 professionals was built through the European Network of Centers of Excellence (CoEs) that offered 17 training opportunities. A special online training for Europe on Public Procurement of Accessible ICTs and Services, delivered under the ITU Academy, attracted more than 50 professionals. Special forums were organized jointly with European Commission (focusing on broadband) and European Union Agency for Network and Information Security (focusing on cybersecurity) strengthening regional coherence.

2.10.3 Twinning programmes became recognized as an effective mechanism for transfer of knowledge in diverse areas, including broadband and broadcasting (involving Albania, Hungary, Poland, and Slovenia). Assistance was provided to Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, and Poland in the fields of innovation, broadcasting, broadband, cybersecurity, and ICT applications. Assistance was also provided to Serbia in response to WTDC Resolution 33 and PP Resolution 126.

**3 Contribution to other Sectors and the General Secretariat**

3.1 Regional and area offices contributed to the implementation of strategic and operational plans of ITU-R, ITU-T, and the General Secretariat as follows:

**3.2 ITU-R**

3.2.1 With the objective of informing and assisting the ITU membership on radiocommunication-related matters, in particular developing countries, BDT and BR continued to organize spectrum-related workshops, seminars, meetings, and capacity-building activities, with the support of the Regional Offices and in cooperation with the relevant international organizations and national authorities. In that direction, during 2016 the following events were organized, among others:

* Two Regional Radio Seminars (RRS) in Port of Spain (Trinidad and Tobago) and Apia (Samoa) respectively
* Americas week on Digital Broadcasting and Regional Conference on Spectrum Management, in Mexico D.F., Mexico
* ITU International Satellite Symposium 2016, in Bali, Indonesia
* ITU Symposium and Workshop on Small Satellite Regulation and Communication Systems, in Santiago, Chile
* ITU International Symposium on the Digital Switchover, in Geneva, Switzerland
* 4th Latin-American Telecommunication Congress, Cancun, Mexico

Those events fostered human capacity building on the use of the radio-frequency spectrum and the satellite orbits, as well as the application of the provisions of the ITU Radio Regulations.

3.2.2 In addition, direct assistance was provided (upon demand) to Azerbaijan, Bhutan, El Salvador, Gabon, Malaysia, Jordan, and Peru to support their national spectrum management activities, long-term frequency management for mobile broadband, as well as transition to digital broadcasting and the allocation of the digital dividend.

**3.3 ITU-T**

3.3.1 Regional Groups within ITU-T Study Groups have proven effective mechanisms to assist in bridging the standardization gap by stimulating effective participation in ITU-T Study Groups and increasing the number and quality of contributions from developing countries that could eventually lead to standards. ITU-T has 15 regional groups (13 groups are active): six for Africa, three for the Americas, three for the Arab region, two for Asia and the Pacific, and one for the Regional Commonwealth in the field of Communications and the CIS region (RCC/CIS).

3.3.2 Under the Bridging the Standardization Gap (BSG), there were 12 Regional Standardization Forums (figure below) held for or in developing countries during this study period (2013-2016) which covered a wide range of themes, including Human exposure to EMF, Quality of Service, Smart Water Management, International Mobile Roaming, Mobile financial services, digital identify and big data ,etc., as well as tutorials on the ITU-T working methods.

3.3.3 BDT and TSB have been jointly organizing Regional Economic and Financial Forums that are held back-to-back with SG3 Regional Groups, since the 1990s. Every year, four such joint meetings used to be held in the four regions of Africa, Asia-Oceania, Arab States, and Latin America and the Caribbean.

3.3.4 The successful hands-on capacity-building training conducted by ITU T SG3 since early 2014 has been extended to other study groups and their regional groups. These BSG Hands-On sessions are geared towards assisting developing countries in acquiring the right skills and capabilities for international standards-making and to draft contributions for meetings. The sessions focus on the development of practical skills to maximize the effectiveness of developing countries’ participation in the ITU-T standardization process, covering topics including strategies for participation in Study Groups, drafting Contributions, presenting proposals, collaborative working methods and means of gaining support and building consensus.

3.3.5 In order to ensure continued and enhanced coordination between the regional offices and the work of ITU-T, a schedule of regular conference calls has been put into place between the Directors of the Regional offices, the TSB Director and his senior management.

**3.4 General Secretariat**

3.4.1 With the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which acknowledges the important role of ICTs as a critical enabler for advancing the globally agreed sustainable development goals (SDGs), cooperation between the ITU regional and area offices with relevant regional and other international organizations dealing with development and financial matters will continue to be enhanced. Levering ITU membership in the UN development system, and as a financial contributor to the UN Resident Coordinator system, to ensure that the enabling ICT dimension is adequately reflected in United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFS) and equivalent documents as well as in poverty reduction strategies will be strengthened.

**4 Structure and staffing level**

4.1 The BDT structure, reviewed in 2011, provides a sound basis for a horizontal relationship between headquarters and the field for the delivery of projects.

4.2 The structures as well as the staffing level of the various regional and area offices take into consideration the recommendations of the United Nations Joint Inspection Unit on ways to improve the ITU regional presence as well as the need to better respond to membership expectations.

4.3 The Regional Directors report directly to the BDT Director. The Regional Directors are members of the BDT Management Committee (ManCom) and therefore participate directly in the discussions on key strategy and policy issues affecting BDT operations, including budget preparation and resource allocation.

4.4 In addition, drawing on networks of highly specialized experts, the capacity of regional and area offices in specific areas of expertise continues to be strengthened through the recruitment of associate technical experts and support staff under regional initiatives and projects.

4.5 Moreover, efforts are being pursued with a view to encouraging Member States to consider seconding experts to the ITU regional and area offices, including through participation in the Junior Professional Officer (JPO) and United Nations Volunteer (UNV) programmes.

4.6 Annexes 5 and 6 provide the breakdown of the staffing level as of end 2016 for the regional and area offices by grade, region, and office.

**5 Support activities towards empowering regional and area offices**

5.1 Cash Management and Financial Guidelines for ITUs Regional/Area Offices were developed and transmitted to Regional/Area Offices in response to internal auditor’s recommendation.

5.2 Greater delegation of authority was given to the Regional Directors, not only as regards projects but also concerning the implementation of the operational plan and regional initiatives, i.e.:

* signature of projects and cooperation agreements which have a budget of up to USD 150,000,
* ad hoc assistance for new actions, and
* operational plan for budget allocation and management.

Other areas for delegation of authority to the Regional Directors are being explored and further studied.

5.3 Many processes were improved, automated, and made accessible for regional and area offices through a dedicated web portal, including:

* recruitment of experts
* travel requests
* Requests for commitment of expenditure (SRM)
* action/operational plan system (planning, monitoring, follow-up)
* supplier relationship management
* events coordination

5.4 Access to working methods have been further improved including tools for actions/project planning, monitoring and reporting, as well as the operational plan system (OPS). A large effort has been placed on minimizing the IT-related costs for all the six Regional Preparatory Meetings. Operational and infrastructure requirements have been re-assessed to drastically reduce equipment shipped and BDT IT Support has been conducted remotely from Headquarters in Geneva.

5.5 Significant improvements have been made with respect to connectivity and IT equipment for the Regional and Area Offices. A new BDT specification for IT equipment and their life-cycle was approved and will take effect in 2017, prioritizing the requirements of field offices whilst still benefiting all of BDT. Following the scheduled end-of-life deadline of certain connectivity equipment in the Regional Offices, new equipment has been procured which will, in 2017, replace several systems in all the Regional Offices, maximizing efficiency of data flow, expanding the VOIP connectivity between Regional Offices and improving the service availability in the Addis Office. BDT is currently piloting a proof-of-concept with the conference terminals manufacturer, to expand the use of video conferencing with external users without compromising neither security nor efficiency.

5.6 The regional and area offices are duly informed about all circular letters and correspondence regarding their respective regions sent by the secretariat in order to ensure proper follow-up as necessary.

**6 Survey of satisfaction with ITU’s regional presence**

6.1 To continue to improve the quality and efficiency of the services rendered to the membership by its Regional and Area Offices, the International Telecommunication Union has undertaken a survey of satisfaction with ITU’s regional presence.

The main objective of this survey is to evaluate the effectiveness of the ITU regional presence on the basis of Resolution 25 (Rev. Busan, 2014) and its annex. This involves an assessment of the level and quality of the services provided, the effectiveness of the network of ITU regional and area offices including their activities and services to the membership, as well as their collaboration with regional telecommunications organizations.

The survey was sent to all Member States, Sector Members, Associates, Academia, Regional Telecommunication Organizations, United Nations, Specialized agencies, and IAEA.

At the time this report was prepared, 129 responses had been received of which 88 from Member States and 41 from Associates, Academia, Regional Telecommunication Organizations, and specialized agencies. Document [C17/INF/12](http://www.itu.int/md/S17-CL-INF-0012/en) sets forth details on the preliminary results of this survey.

***Annexes:*** 6, presented in information Document [C17/INF/11](http://www.itu.int/md/S17-CL-INF-0011/en)

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