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| **Agenda item: PL 3.3** | **Document C18/99-E** |
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| Note by the Secretary-General |
| Contribution from mexico |
| review of the regional presence of the international telecommunication union |

I have the honour to transmit to the Member States of the Council a contribution submitted by **Mexico**.

 Houlin ZHAO
 Secretary-General

CONTRIBUTION FROM MEXICO

REVIEW OF THE REGIONAL PRESENCE OF THE INTERNATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATION UNION

Summary

Review of the existing regional presence of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) further to implementation of the recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit of the United Nations system regarding the “Effectiveness of the ITU Regional Presence”.

Action required

Request the ITU Secretary-General to include in his report on the implementation of Resolution 25 (Rev. Busan 2014) “Strengthening the regional presence” an analysis of those recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit of the United Nations system regarding the “Effectiveness of the ITU Regional Presence” that have been implemented, and to analyse the possibility of implementing the remaining recommendations through a set work plan.

In addition, the Council is requested to include this information in the report it is to submit to the plenipotentiary conference, and to study whether or not it would be appropriate to set up a working group on strengthening and improving ITU’s regional presence.

REVIEW OF THE REGIONAL PRESENCE OF THE INTERNATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATION UNION IN THE AMERICAS REGION

Introduction

Resolution 25 (Rev. Antalya, 2006) of the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference instructed the Secretary-General of ITU to request the United Nations Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) to evaluate the effectiveness of the ITU regional presence. Council-09 was presented with the JIU report entitled “Effectiveness of the ITU Regional Presence” (Document C09/55), containing a full analysis of the ITU regional offices and making recommendations to improve the effectiveness of those offices by strengthening the Union’s presence and optimizing the resources available to them.

Subsequently, Resolution 25 (Rev. Busan, 2014) “Strengthening the regional presence” instructed the Secretary-General to submit each year to the Council a report on the resolution’s implementation, and thus to report to Council-18.

In view of the foregoing, the Administration of Mexico is presenting a compilation of the recommendations issued by JIU in its report “Effectiveness of the ITU Regional Presence” in respect of the Americas region, and is putting forward for the Council’s consideration various measures that provide additional information on the progress made in implementing the recommendations.

## I The JIU report on the “Effectiveness of the ITU Regional Presence”

The report concluded that there was a need to streamline and strengthen the network of existing area offices by merging some of them or providing more human resources, giving due attention to the needs of each of the regions.

Thus, the United Nations Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) made the following recommendations to improve the working methods and procedures of the regional offices:

i) Rationalize and streamline the existing network of area offices, based on objective criteria, with a view to concentrating human resources in the regional offices

ii) Periodically review the network of area offices

iii) Approve a clearly formulated mandate for the ITU regional presence with specific mandates for each of the regional offices

iv) Ensure that the regional offices efficiently and effectively represent ITU as a whole, to which end the Directors of the Radiocommunication and Standardization Bureaux should formulate and clearly articulate the expected contributions from the regional offices; improve information sharing on the activities and concerns of their Sectors; and contribute to the enhancement of the human and financial resource capabilities of the regional offices

v) Review the staffing table of the regional presence, including the rationalization of the grade structure

vi) Abolish the practice of delaying the announcement of vacancies and institutionalize a succession planning policy

vii) Conduct a training needs assessment for field personnel to enhance their skills and facilitate continuous learning and career development opportunities

viii) Ensure the ITU staff mobility policy both between field offices and between headquarters and the field offices

ix) Ensure that the activities requested of the regional offices match the human and financial resources available

x) Submit to the Council an action plan, with clear timelines, on the specific measures to be taken toward the delegation of authority to the regional offices

xi) Review the existing financial and administrative rules and regulations, including the monitoring and accountability systems, with a view to ensuring adequate regulation of delegated authority

xii) Ensure that the activities of the regional offices are included in the work programme of the Internal Audit Unit

xiii) Delineate the distribution of work between headquarters and the regional offices

xiv) The Director of BDT should determine a set of performance indicators, and conduct systematic performance evaluations of the activities of the regional offices.

xv) Review the internal working and operational procedures with a view to streamlining and simplifying them; ensure the involvement of heads of regional offices in the review process and inform the Council of the outcome

xvi) Review the mandate and functions of the Projects and Initiatives Department with a view to securing a shared vision of project development with the regional offices

xvii) In the framework of the adoption of the next strategic plan, assess and articulate a clear vision of the development activities of ITU, including the content, form and volume of activities

xviii) Foster cooperation between the regional offices and United Nations development organizations in the field to elaborate and implement action plans to incorporate information and communication technologies into development programmes with a view to enhancing development cooperation and coordination

xix) The regional offices should elaborate and implement strategic action plans to strengthen partnerships with the private sector.

## II Present situation regarding the regional offices

The Secretary-General’s report to Council-18 on “Strengthening the regional presence” indicates that in 2017 efforts were made to improve the ITU regional presence through measures designed to meet the requirements of each region and provide quality products and services.

It is noted that the implementation of the BDT operational plan included 239 actions for a total implementation level of 2.4 million CHF, while the implementation level of technical cooperation projects amounted to 9.4 million USD for 48 projects.

The report also makes clear how each of the ITU Sectors contributed to implementation of the strategic and operational plans of ITU-R, ITU-T and the General Secretariat. For example, the Radiocommunication Bureau and BDT organized spectrum-related workshops, seminars, meetings, and capacity-building activities, especially for the developing countries. At the same time, with the Telecommunication Standardization Bureau focus is placed on the ITU-T study group regional groups, and on the various forums held on different topics such as IoT, artificial intelligence, and so forth.

The report also analyses the structure and staffing level in each region. In this regard, it is recognized that the structure and staffing level take into consideration the JIU recommendations while at the same time the capacity of regional and area offices continues to be strengthened through the recruitment of associate technical experts and support staff under regional initiatives and projects.

Lastly, it is worth noting the satisfaction survey on the ITU regional presence, for which 129 responses were received from Member States, Sector Members, Associates, Academia and international and regional organizations.

The following salient results were obtained:

• The vast majority of the participants in the survey indicated that they were familiar with the activities of ITU, including at the regional level, and considered the staffing level of the regional and area offices appropriate, although it was pointed out that, with the increased number of activities, staffing in the offices should be increased.

• The vast majority of the participants in the survey indicated that they are in regular contact with ITU, at least several times a month or more, and that the quality of responses to inquiries is generally deemed of higher quality. The regional offices come second in terms of contact points.

• Most participants consider that the activities of the regional offices are pertinent and that there is no duplication with the activities undertaken by other international/national organizations. The majority of participants consider that the regional initiatives are properly addressed by the regional offices and that they positively contribute to the fulfillment of the objectives and outcomes of the strategic plan. However, the view is also held that the regional offices do not properly represent all the Sectors of the Union.

• Only half of the participants in the survey are familiar with the ITU website for regional offices information and consider that the quality and pertinence of the information on ITU regional presence provided on the ITU website are of higher quality. However, the majority of the participants in the survey considered that the ITU website should have specific regional focus for news and events in the relevant language.

Proposal

Although the ITU regional presence has evolved positively over recent years as a result of implementation of various of the JIU recommendations, greater benefits would definitely be reaped by further implementing the remaining recommendations.

The Mexican Administration is therefore of the view that further steps should be taken to implement Resolution 25, particularly in regard to the following *resolves* sections:

*1) to continue the review of the strengthening of ITU regional presence in the interval between two consecutive plenipotentiary conferences;*

*2) to strengthen the functions of the regional offices so that they can play a part in the implementation of programmes and projects in the framework of the regional initiatives, within the resources allocated by the financial plan;*

*3) that regional offices play a key role in facilitating discussions on regional matters and the dissemination of information and results of activities of all three Sectors of the Union, while avoiding the duplication of such functions with headquarters.*

Thus, the Mexican Administration proposes that the Council request the Secretary-General to include in his report on the implementation of Revolution 25 (Rev. Busan, 2014) “Strengthening the regional presence” an analysis of the recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit of the United Nations system, and to analyse the possibility of implementing the remaining recommendations through a set work plan. The following recommendations are particularly salient:

• Reduction in the number of offices in the Americas region, in order to make better use of available resources

• Analysis of whether the regional offices should be under the supervision and mandate of the General Secretariat rather than BDT, since the intention is for the regional offices to represent ITU as a whole and not solely BDT

• Study of measures to increase the participation of ITU-T and ITU-R by, for example, recruiting staff specialized in the requirements of each region, thus ensuring that the regional offices properly represent all Sectors of ITU

• Pertinence of the ITU website having specific regional focus for news and events in each region in the relevant language.

Lastly, the Council is invited to include this information in its report to the plenipotentiary conference and examine whether it would be appropriate to set up a working group on strengthening and improving the ITU regional presence.

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