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**Contribution by the United States of America**

DISCUSSION PAPER: CONSIDERATION OF CONDITIONS FOR ON-SITE EMERGENCY MEDICAL SUPPORT AT ITU CONFERENCES AND MEETINGS HELD AWAY FROM GENEVA

1. **Introduction**

The ITU has long recognized the advantage of holding some ITU conferences and meetings in countries other than the country of the Headquarters. In such cases, the Secretary General is responsible to work with the inviting country to ensure that adequate premises are made available to support the smooth functioning of the meeting, such as “various installations and facilities as well as the planning and organization of logistic services.” (Resolution 144 (Rev. Busan 2014)).

Particularly in the case of treaty conferences and assemblies, the ITU negotiates and concludes a detailed Host Nation Agreement with the inviting Member State that covers in great detail the requirements for hosting such an ITU event, including meeting room requirements, information technology and audio-visual specifications, office space, safety and security. Council is responsible to review model host-country agreements, including the requirements for basic infrastructure that are prepared by the Secretary General.

Over the years, this practice has led to many successful Conferences and Assemblies held outside of Switzerland. However, our experience with a serious medical emergency at the recent World Radiocommunication Conference indicates that there is a need to review and improve the conditions the ITU requires for host nations in terms of provision of basic medical facilities and support for the safety of ITU delegates and staff. We believe that it would be beneficial to have an initial discussion of this important matter by the CWG-FHR to prepare for a fuller consideration by Council 2020.

1. **Background**

On the third day of WRC-19, a member of the United States Delegation suffered a critical medical event at the conference venue that required emergency medical attention. Fortunately, members of the highly skilled ITU security team immediately rendered basic life support and saved our delegate’s life. The United States remains exceedingly grateful for the swift and effective response by the ITU staff. However, the absence of basic life support equipment, such as an automatic defibrillation device (AED), and the timing and availability of on-site medical support and emergency transport, were factors which should be addressed in future Host Nation Agreements and other arrangements for ITU meetings held outside of Headquarters.

Looking forward, with the upcoming construction of the new Headquarters building, it can be expected that many more ITU meetings will be hosted by countries outside of Switzerland. Thus, Council should ensure that the arrangements that the ITU concludes with host nations are sufficient to not only efficiently advance the work of the ITU, but also to ensure the safety of ITU delegates and staff. These arrangements should include a minimal level of emergency medical facilities and staff to be available during all working hours, as well as fully-equipped ambulances staffed by trained and certified emergency medical technicians and/or paramedics.

1. **Proposal for Discussion**

The United States submits this paper in the hope that the Union can take some benefit from our recent experience in order to improve its processes and requirements to ensure that basic on-site medical support is available to our delegates and ITU staff at future ITU meetings and Conferences. Such a discussion could lead to minimum standards and equipage of medical facilities for basic life support, should such lists not presently exist.

Should it be the case that such standards do exist, then they need to be fortified to include audits to ensure their fulfillment accompanied by training and drills by the local team to ensure everyone knows how to timely respond in the case of an emergent medical need. Such standards and requirements may need to be added to Resolution 144 on Host Nation Agreements and other documents employed by ITU in making arrangements for meetings and conferences. Such a study could start with a review of existing UN and ITU medical requirements and procedures and a review of how the ITU has handled such requirements at past meetings and conferences. It might be also useful to survey how the UN and other UN bodies handle these requirements.

Existing international standards that could be used as starting points for discussion include (but are not limited to) CEN 1789:2007 (the European Union standard for ambulances and medical transportation vehicles). Discussion could also occur on whether ITU meeting emergency medical protocols should follow either the “transport-centered” EMS model favored in much of the English-speaking world, or the physician-led EMS model favored in much of the European Union). Such an examination and any potential recommendations that result should be completed in advance of the 2022 Plenipotentiary Conference for a possible modification of Resolution 144.

1. **Conclusion**

The United States requests that CWG-FHR have an initial discussion regarding review and possible improvements to the medical requirements that are included in Host Nation Agreements to ensure the safety of ITU delegates and staff to meetings and Conferences outside of the headquarters. We look forward to working with ITU staff and our colleagues to improve our procedures together.

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