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| **Ad Hoc Group of the CWG-FHR on the ITU Regional Presence Review****Second meeting - Virtual, 20 April 2021** |  |
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|  | **Document CWG-FHR-AH-RegPres-2/3-E** |
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| **English only** |

**Contribution by the United States of America**

**Introduction**

The United States is pleased to submit this contribution to the Ad Hoc Group on ITU Regional Presence Review (Ad Hoc Group) of the ITU Council Working Group on Finance and Human Resources issues (CWG-FHR) for its discussion and consideration during itsApril 20th, 2021 meeting. The United States recognizes the importance of ITU regional presence as a valuable means for the ITU to work closely with the membership in order to facilitate greater efficiency and wider participation at lower cost for all members, especially those from developing countries. The Ad Hoc group should produce recommendations regarding a path forward on regional presence for Council decision. To accomplish this, the Ad Hoc Group must first focus on strategic positioning principles of ITU regional presence before structure is considered. Form should follow function.

**Discussion**

ITU Plenipotentiary 2018 modified Resolution 25 (Rev. Dubai, 2018) *Strengthening Regional* *Presence* (Res.25) to, inter alia, review ITU regional presence in the light of certain factors, including the following criteria: decentralization to ensure greater efficiency at lower cost, accountability and transparency, assistance for developing countries to participate in ITU activities, possible duplication of functions of the ITU headquarters and the regional offices and the extent of fulfilment of the provisions of Resolution 17 (Rev. Buenos Aires, 2017) of the World Telecommunication Development Conference.

The United States concurs with the view, currently reflected in Res. 25, that the regional offices exist to serve all membership in all three sectors, and as a matter of general practice, the regional offices should coordinate with headquarters and with the Sectors to obtain relevant information and expertise to meet membership needs. The United States recognizes the importance of the ITU regional presence as a valuable means for the ITU to work closely with the membership to facilitate greater efficiency and wider participation at lower cost for all members, especially those in the developing world.

The U.S. supports the vital role of the regional offices in contributing to the creation of One Union with the ability to respond to and liaise closely with regional and developing country issues and concerns. Such presence should consider financial implications as well as efficient management practices in which financial reporting and accountability systems are aligned with those of headquarters. The U.S. does not support the decentralization of ITU functions to regional offices in any manner that would reduce transparency, accountability, and the concept of One ITU. Proper functioning of the regional offices dictates a close alignment of the activities of the regional offices to the ITU Strategic Plan and an ability of the regional offices to respond to matters pertaining to the three sectors of the ITU. We support many of PwC’s proposed guiding principles for ITU’s Regional Presence, specifically, clarity of purpose, drive for impact, and accountability as they support the above goals.

The extensive PWC Report provides proposed strategic positioning of ITU’s Regional Presence and we find merit with many such as:

* Bringing the technical expertise of ITU as a whole closer to its membership, thus helping to enhance the relevance and effectiveness of the activities of the three Sectors through joint planning and collaboration.
* Actively fostering cross-country and cross-regional collaboration and dialogue, engaging with key stakeholders such as Regional Telecom Organizations and the regional offices or hubs of other UN Agencies on the basis of common assessments, joint strategic planning and coordinated support for the countries in the region.
* Designing and delivering technical assistance for developing countries in close collaboration with other UN Agencies and other relevant partners. This assistance should be in line with the mission of the Union, which is to “promote, facilitate and foster affordable and universal access to telecommunication/information and communication technology networks, services and applications and their use for social, economic and environmentally sustainable growth and development”.
* Leveraging additional resources and mobilizing the membership in line with the strategic goals and global targets listed in the Strategic Plan.

We look forward to our continuing discussion with colleagues on this very important issue.

**Recommendation**

The United States strongly supports a focus on the strategic positioning principles of ITU regional presence to achieve an efficient, accountable Regional Presence that is Fit for purpose, prior to an evaluation of structure. The four strategic positioning statements highlighted above form a solid foundation for a strategic vision of the important role of the regional offices.

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