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| **Council Working Group on Financial and Human Resources Fifteenth meeting – 11 and 12 January 2022** |  |
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| **English and Spanish** |
| Contribution by Mexico | |
| Strengthening ITU regional presence | |

**Summary**

This document contains a proposal for further action on Regional Strengthening by implementing the recommendations that emerged from PwC's ITU Regional Presence report on existing projects, regional initiatives, and Forums.

**Required actions**

It is invited to submit proposals to implement the recommendations that emerged from the PwC report on ITU's regional presence.

**Introduction**

Regarding, Resolution 25 "Strengthening Regional Presence" (Rev. Dubai, 2018) which urged member countries, inter alia, to strengthen the roles of the Regional Offices to actively participate in the implementation of ITU's Strategic Plan, programmes and projects.

Pursuant to the results of Resolution 616 of the ITU Council in 2019, where it was reaffirmed the need to strengthen the regional presence by increasing the usefulness and effectiveness of all Regional Offices in all ITU activities, and it was agreed to entrust the Secretary General with hiring an independent external consultant, in order to execute the global programmatic, strategic and financial evaluation and a review of the ITU Regional Presence program.

According to the report on ITU's regional presence, PwC recommended an action plan for strengthening ITU's regional presence with four lines of implementation, broken down into fifteen recommendations and 50 support actions.

It is also important to note that Resolution 1114 of the ITU's Administrative Council, whereby the ITU's regional offices network is created, states that “modern telecommunications techniques should be used to improve the flow of information and further improve the management of the regional presence. "

In this regard, this paper aims to present proposals on the implementation of the recommendations that emerged from the PwC ITU Regional Presence report.

**Discussion**

In July 2020, the PwC report was presented, documenting the results of the review of ITU's Regional Presence and including detailed recommendations for improving ITU's Regional Presence, as well as an action plan for the implementation of the recommendations.

In this regard, the report recommends that the strategic positioning of the regional presence should be oriented towards bringing the technical expertise of the entire ITU closer to its membership; supporting the preparation and participation of representatives from the various regions; facilitating and organizing the transfer of technical knowledge; actively promoting collaboration and dialogue between countries and regions; designing and delivering technical assistance to developing countries in close collaboration with other UN organizations and other relevant partners; leveraging additional resources and mobilizing the membership in line with the strategic goals and global objectives listed in the Strategic Plan.

In this context, it also explains that the performance of field offices depends on the effective, prompt and efficient completion of key administrative procedures that are primarily managed at Headquarters, and recognizes that talent management is instrumental to the organization’s ability to adapt to evolving regional priorities. A diverse and agile workforce is a key asset in this context.

Members' expectations on the possible modification of the regional operating model also recognize the need to increase ITU's relevance in a rapidly changing and increasingly competitive environment in order to allow it to position its regional presence in a dynamic context, to pay attention to the quality of technical expertise, and to develop the capacity to adjust its action at scale and to intensify its efforts to build partnerships and mobilize resources.

During the last WTDC-21 Regional Preparatory Meeting for the Americas (RPM-AMS) held in virtual format on 26-27 April 2021, the regional priorities for the Americas Region for the period 2022-2025 were defined:

- AMS-1: Deployment of modern, resilient, secure, and sustainable telecommunication/ICT infrastructure;

- AMS-2: Enhancement and expansion of digital literacy, skills and inclusion programs, especially among vulnerable populations;

- AMS-3: Effective support for the digital transformation and innovation ecosystems in the Americas through scalable, funded, and sustainable connectivity projects;

- AMS-4: Development of enabling policy and regulatory environments to connect the unconnected through accessible and affordable telecommunications/ICTs that support the achievement of SDGs and progress towards the digital economy

The proposed priorities are premised by principles of universality, equity and affordability to connect the unconnected, expand broadband infrastructure, provide the necessary skills and tools to enhance and accelerate innovation and digital transformation in the region, and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. The priorities focus on the needs of all developing countries in the region, including Least Developed Countries (LDCs), Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs), and Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in the Americas region.

**Proposal**

Considering the recommendations and information specified above, and the progress presented in the dashboard by the Council's Working Group on Financial and Human Resources, the following set of proposals is proposed to implement the recommendations that emerged from the PwC's report on ITU's regional presence:

* According to the theme about deployment of the future regional delivery model, specifically under the sub-theme of consolidating the current RO/AO network in objectives 3.1. 2 on redeploying the current RO/AO capacity to achieve critical mass we consider it is important to decentralize ITU staff so that they are located in as many countries in the region, even working since their place of origin; to expand dialogue and cooperation with research centers, with the network of universities in the Americas region; and a further rapprochement of ITU with micro, small and medium enterprises because of their relevance for the digital transformation. This will make it possible to assist most of the Member States and a reorganization with a regionalized vision that builds a geographical and socio-economic unity of all the actors that develop a digital ecosystem.
* On the same topic, but in objective 3.1.4 regarding the relocation of office facilities with other UN agencies, it is important to expand the presence in North America through officials located in this geographical area.
* On the issue of internal coordination mechanisms, the regional presence should operate under a digital technology scheme (teleworking), made up of collaborators from various countries in the region, which allows for the constant and continuous participation of all ITU Member States in the Americas, mitigating budgetary problems. This is relevant at the present time, when the ITU's travel possibilities and budget are limited.
* In this context, pursuant to RO and AO decision-making and in the framework of sub-theme 3.3 on enhancing the autonomy of the regional presence, we consider it important that, in order to facilitate the responsiveness of the activities of the Regional Offices with empowerment and control with a certain degree of autonomy, one option to be discussed is that report hierarchically to the Deputy Secretary-General in order to increase the level of internal coordination between the three ITU offices.

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