|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Plenipotentiary Conference (PP-22) Bucharest, 26 September – 14 October 2022** |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
| PLENARY MEETING | **Addendum 12 to Document 76-E** |
|  | **1 September 2022** |
|  | **Original: English** |
|  | |
| Member States of the Inter-American Telecommunication Commission (CITEL) | |
| IAP 12 - Proposed draft new resolution [IAP-2]; | |
| Role of information and communication technologies in combatting global pandemics | |
|  | |

**Abstract**

At WTSA-20 and WTDC-21, there had been widespread interest in creating resolutions concerning the role of ICTs in combatting global pandemics. These attempts were not accepted because of a belief that such a resolution should exist at the plenipotentiary level. The present contribution proposes such resolution.

ADD IAP/76A12/1

Draft New Resolution [IAP-2]

Role of information and communication technologies in combatting global pandemics

The Plenipotentiary Conference of the International Telecommunication Union (Bucharest, 2022),

recalling

*a)* Resolution 202 (Busan, 2014) of the Plenipotentiary Conference on using information and communication technologies to break the chain of health-related emergencies such as Ebola virus transmission;

*b)* the United Nations General Assembly Resolution A/RES/74/270, on the global solidarity to fight the COVID-19, which calls on the United Nations system “to work with all relevant actors to mobilize a coordinated global response to the pandemic and its adverse social, economic and financial impact on all societies”;

*c)* UNGA Resolution 74/306 on “Comprehensive and coordinated response to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic”;

*d)* UN Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 3, “Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages”, as well as SDG 9, “Build resilient infrastructure, promote sustainable industrialization and foster innovation”, and SDG 11, “Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable” of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;

*e)* Article 40 of the ITU Constitution on the “Priority of Telecommunications Concerning, Safety of Life”;

*f)* Article 46 of the constitution, on distress calls and messages;

*g)* Chapter VII of the ITU Radio Regulations on “Distress and safety communications” and Article 5 of the International Telecommunication Regulations on the “Safety of Life and Priority of Telecommunications”;

*h)* Resolution 136 (Rev. Dubai, 2018) of the Plenipotentiary Conference - The use of telecommunications/information and communication technologies for humanitarian assistance and for monitoring and management in emergency and disaster situations, including health-related emergencies, for early warning, prevention, mitigation and relief;

*i)* Resolution 78 (Rev. Hammamet, 2016) of the World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly - Information and communication technology applications and standards for improved access to e-health services;

*j)* Article 5 of the International Telecommunication Regulations, on safety of life and priority of telecommunications;

*k)* Resolution 34 (Rev. Buenos Aires, 2017) of the World Telecommunication Development Conference, on the role of telecommunications/information and communication technologies (ICTs) in disaster preparedness, early warning, rescue, mitigation, relief and response;

*l)* Resolution 646 (Rev. WRC-19) on public protection and disaster relief;

*m)* Resolution 647 (Rev. WRC-19) on Radiocommunication aspects, including spectrum management guidelines, for early warning, disaster prediction, detection, mitigation and relief operations relating to emergencies and disasters,

recognizing

*a)* that the COVID-19 pandemic is a major public health crisis that disrupted public life;

*b)* the tragic events around the world related to the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, which clearly show the need to expand affordable access to high-quality, sustainable and inclusive telecommunications/ICTs;

*c)* the importance of telecommunication/ information and communication technology (ICT) networks, and their resiliency and scalability, in face of the COVID-19 pandemic, and their role in helping get more people online in this time of crisis, as well as, the gaps and needs for further developing connectivity;

*d)* the tragic events around the world related to the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, which clearly show the need to expand affordable access to high-quality, sustainable and inclusive telecommunications/ICTs;

*e)* the importance of access to relevant information about pandemics and epidemics to assist public safety, and support the work of health and disaster relief agencies and organizations;

*f)* the need to promote digital inclusion, to ensure that everyone has access to telecommunications/ICTs and to maintain continuity of everyday social, educational and economic interactions and leaving no one excluded by using telecommunications/ICTs;

*g)* affordable and effective telecommunications/ICTs are needed to minimize risks to human life and health, meet the urgent needs of the population for information and communication, support humanitarian assistance, and support economic responses for sustainable and inclusive recovery;

*h)* the need to foster digital literacy and skills for all regardless of their age, gender, ability or location to ensure that everyone has an equal opportunity to participate in and to support the continuity of information society provided by telecommunications/ICTs,

recognizing further

*a)* the ITU-WHO-UNICEF initiative in providing up to date information on COVID-19;

*b)* the continuous studies carried by relevant ITU-T Study Groups in using telecommunications/ICTs to facilitate the use of new and emerging technologies in mitigating global pandemics;

*c)* the REG4COVID Platform that was created by the BDT as a way to collect information and case studies on the responses to COVID-19 pandemic;

*d)* Recommendation ITU-T X.1303, on Common Alerting Protocol (CAP) which is a simple but general format for exchanging all-hazard emergency alerts and public warnings over all kinds of ICT networks, allowing a consistent warning message to be disseminated simultaneously over many different warning systems, thus increasing warning effectiveness while simplifying the warning task,

noting

*a)* the significant potential of new and emerging telecommunication/ICT services and technologies, that facilitate telecommunications/ICTs can improve the response to emergencies caused by the COVID-19 pandemic as well as other pandemics and epidemics and improving the effectiveness of their prevention and mitigation;

*b)* that a culture more oriented towards virtual and remote activities may carry on even after the pandemic ceases and such culture may dramatically shift the paradigm of the majority of industries including not only healthcare but also education, transportation, distribution;

*c)* that the change of culture requires leveraging and facilitating the use of telecommunications/ICTs, which is especially important to assist Member States to ensure timely access to information and infrastructure,

is of the view

that expanding affordable access and connectivity to telecommunications/ICTs and new and emerging digital technologies, and advancing other related aspects such as digital inclusion and skills, will continue to play a critical role in helping to mitigate and manage the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic as well as future pandemics and epidemics,

resolves

1 to cooperate and offer assistance and support activities related to the use of new and emerging telecommunications/ICTs services and technologies by citizens, organizations, and, if possible, other countries, especially developing countries[[1]](#footnote-1)1, and to support, in collaboration with WHO and other UN organizations and stakeholders, sectors related to telecommunications/ICTs in order to help mitigate the effects of COVID-19 as well as future pandemics and epidemics and support the provision of humanitarian assistance and health services;

2 to continuing the spread of the awareness and knowledge to developing countries on the use of ICTs in emergencies and health-care;

3 to assist in the implementation of projects and programs, including in the international arena, that enable deployment and use of telecommunications/ICTs as a support tool in responding to the consequences of the COVID 19 pandemic;

4 to consider how stakeholders, including telecommunications/ICT providers, may contribute to supporting, if possible, jobs, especially for small and medium enterprises (SMEs), and to continue educational processes and initiatives during the COVID-19 pandemic, and mitigating its adverse social and economic consequences;

5 to assist in the implementation of projects and programs, including in the international arena, that enable deployment and use of telecommunications/ICTs as a support tool in responding to the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic;

6 to consider appropriate actions in the telecommunication/ICT sector aimed at reducing the severity and number of emergency situations caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, and aimed at alleviating its consequences, such as providing local communities with connectivity and information, especially in local languages, to help preserve human life;

7 to take an active role in developing and disseminating standards, guidelines and best practices in cooperation with other stakeholders for the use of telecommunications/ICTs in response to the COVID-19 and future pandemics;

8 to identify and share best practices, lessons learned, and effective measures for possible use in response to and preparation for potential future pandemics and epidemics,

instructs the Director of the Telecommunication Standardization Bureau

1 to institute a framework for achieving these objectives and continue to update Member States on how to tackle future and emerging global pandemics using ICTs;

2 to facilitate the exchange of best practices to mitigate the pandemic with all relevant SDOs and entities to create opportunities for cooperative efforts to support the active deployment and use of telecommunications/ICTs,

instructs the Director of the Telecommunication Standardization Bureau, the Director of the Radiocommunication Bureau and Director of the Telecommunication Development Bureau

1 to continue facilitating, through the development and implementation of international standards, emerging telecommunications/ICTs that are used to forecast, monitor and mitigate epidemics before being transformed to global pandemics;

2 to provide assistance, if requested, to Member States on updating their National Telecommunication emergency plans (NTEP) taking into account COVID-19 pandemic as well as future pandemics,

invites the Secretary-General

1 to continue to reinforce the ITU’s efforts, within its remit and in partnership with the World Health Organization (WHO) and other agencies and organisations, in collaboration with stakeholders to strengthen the resilience of telecommunication/ICT networks and services to meet the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic and increase pandemic preparedness and response;

2 collaborate with all relevant stakeholders, including the WHO and other United Nations agencies, in order to define and engage in information and telecommunication development programmes to respond to and address pandemics, such as COVID-19 infections, in areas within the scope and mandate of ITU,

invites Member States

1 to cooperate to raise awareness, build capacity, and share best practices and lessons in using telecommunications/ICTs to act quickly and pre-emptively throughout the global COVID-19 challenge as well as future pandemics;

2 to participate actively in the implementation of this resolution.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. 1 These include the least developed countries, small island developing states, landlocked developing countries and countries with economies in transition. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)