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| **Agenda item: PL 2** | **Document C24/98-E** |
| **21 May 2024** |
| **Original: Spanish** |
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| Contribution from Mexico |
| STRENGTHENING THE REGIONAL PRESENCE |
| **Purpose**The Administration of Mexico invites the Council to consider its proposals with respect to strengthening the regional presence in connection with Resolution 25.**Action required by the Council**The Council is invited to **consider** and **discuss** the proposals.\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**References**[*Resolution 25 (Rev. Bucharest, 2022) of the Plenipotentiary Conference*](https://www.itu.int/en/council/Documents/basic-texts-2023/RES-025-e.pdf)*; Council documents* [*C20/74*](https://www.itu.int/md/S20-CL-C-0074/en)*,* [*C23/25*](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0025/en)*,* [*C23/INF/7*](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-INF-0007/en)*,* [*C24/25*](https://www.itu.int/md/S24-CL-C-0025/en)*;* [*Document TDAG-24/12.*](https://www.itu.int/md/D22-TDAG31-C-0012/en) |

Background

Resolution 25 of the Plenipotentiary Conference, on strengthening the ITU regional presence, highlights "the importance of collaboration between the Radiocommunication Bureau (BR), the Telecommunication Standardization Bureau (TSB), the Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT) and the General Secretariat in order to promote and improve the work of the regional and area offices"

The resolution also instructs the Director of the Telecommunication Development Bureau "to strive to have in the regional and area offices staff who have expertise in each of the three Sectors "and, in close consultation with the Secretary-General and the Directors of BR and TSB, to take the necessary measures "to ensure that the activities of BR and TSB are effectively incorporated in the regional and area offices", "to strive to ensure that each region has at least one professional with relevant skills and knowledge to act as the focal point for each of the three Sectors, reporting to the regional director" and "to take the necessary measures to improve the exchange of information, in a timely manner, between headquarters and regional and area offices;". Lastly, the resolution resolves that "the coordination functions and the balance between ITU headquarters and the regional and area offices should be facilitated and improved" and "that, for the effective performance of their duties, regional and area offices must have sufficient human and financial resources, within the resources allocated by the financial plan".

At its 2019 session, the Council adopted Decision 616, which instructed the Secretary-General to conduct a review of the organization's regional presence in a bid to improve its efficiency and effectiveness. The review was entrusted to the company PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) and, in November 2020, the Council took note of the review contained in Document [C20/74](https://www.itu.int/md/S20-CL-C-0074/en), which called for consideration of "the level of autonomy accorded to regional offices, and potential adjustments to improve efficiency and effectiveness". At the 2023 session of the Council, information was provided on a workplan created by the secretariat for the implementation of the PwC recommendations within its remit by 2023 ([C23/25](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0025/en)). To that end a dashboard was made available so that the membership could track the status of the workplan: <https://www.itu.int/en/council/ties/Pages/regional-presence-dashboard.aspx>.The dashboard indicates it was most recently updated in May 2023 and that action is being taken towards enhancing the autonomy of the regional presence in relation to the ITU accountability framework.

At the 17th meeting of the Council Working Group on Financial and Human Resources (CWG-FHR), held in February 2024, the ITU secretariat presented a contribution ([CWG-FHR-16/10](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CWGFHR16-C-0010/en)) setting out criteria to guide deliberations on establishing future ITU regional and area offices. In this connection, it was decided to send a liaison statement to the Telecommunication Development Advisory Group (TDAG) and the Inter-Sector Coordination Group (ISCG) for their review and comments to the 2024 session of the Council.

Furthermore, it is worth noting that the information provided by the General Secretariat in Document [C24/25](https://www.itu.int/md/S24-CL-C-0025/en) shows a disparity in the implementation of the activities of the different regional offices; for example, upon comparison, it can be seen that the ITU Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (RO-ASP) carried out more activities than other regional offices.

Moreover, at the TDAG meeting to be held in May 2024, Document [TDAG-24/12](https://www.itu.int/md/D22-TDAG31-C-0012/en) will be presented, which describes the process undertaken by BDT in planning the activities currently deployed under the 2024 ITU-D operational plan (OP-24), and mentions that the allocation of funds for each of the regional offices varies from 7 to 8 per cent, while more than half of the OP-24 budget (54%) has been directed towards outputs with a global focus.

Proposal

The Administration of Mexico notes with concern the information contained in Document [TDAG-24/12](https://www.itu.int/md/D22-TDAG31-C-0012/en) showing the allocation of funds by beneficiary region as mentioned above. The administration considers it necessary: to strengthen the regional offices, bearing in mind the regions' particular priorities and needs in order to address them; to encourage the participation of the entire membership in the work of the Union; and to ensure greater dissemination by the regional offices of the results of the activities of the three Sectors of the Union. For this reason, the regional and area offices should be provided with sufficient human and financial resources to achieve their objectives.

In addition, the Mexican Administration believes it is important that the regional offices have staff specialized in the three Sectors of the Union and that information be provided on the human resources available in each regional office. For example, in the case of the Regional Office for the Americas, the information available on the webpage does not mention the focal point for each Sector, as suggested in Resolution 25. Presenting this information in a visible manner could help Member States to facilitate communication and coordination regarding the activities of the three Sectors of the Union.

As for the events coordinated by the Regional Office of the Americas, it is noticeable that most of the events have been organized by the Telecommunication Development Sector (ITU‑D), such as Accessible Americas, ITU Policy and Economic Colloquium (IPEC) and America Cyberdrill. The Administration of Mexico considers that there is no balance in the events held by the three Sectors and that the events are mostly focused on the Development Sector.

It is important to provide Member States with the most up-to-date information on activities carried out by the three Sectors through the regional offices; however, when one visits the official ITU website and consults the "Regional Presence" sections for the Radiocommunication and Standardization Sectors, one is redirected to the ITU-D webpage.

Moreover, the Administration of Mexico has identified situations in which there is no communication between ITU headquarters in Geneva and the Regional Office for the Americas and therefore deems it necessary to have a better mechanism to coordinate the activities of the Union and improve communication between ITU headquarters and the regional offices.

Lastly, the Administration of Mexico considers it important that the membership is kept informed of progress, if any, in the implementation of activities under the responsibility of the General Secretariat related to strengthening the regional presence, which should have been completed before 2023 and which could be easily displayed in the dashboard mentioned above.

In view of the foregoing, the Administration of Mexico requests that the following elements be taken into consideration:

1) On the basis of the requirements under Resolution 25, the General Secretariat and the Director of the Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT) are requested to continue to provide the Member States with up-to date information on the expenditures of the regional and area offices, including the total number of staff for each regional and area office and their respective levels, in order to identify the regional and area offices that could be strengthened.

2) The regional offices should be given greater autonomy, especially with respect to the implementation of initiatives, projects and events; in addition, an analysis should be conducted of what steps can be taken to decentralize decision-making by the regional offices.

 The Administration of Mexico recognizes that the regional and area offices represent the entire Union; however, it considers that the regional offices should be more decentralized from ITU headquarters so that they have greater autonomy in decision-making on the various activities, initiatives and projects they carry out, while taking into consideration and ensuring appropriate accountability.

3) The Administration of Mexico considers it key for regional offices to have technical staff with knowledge and experience of the three Sectors of the Union, particularly dedicated staff from the Standardization and Radiocommunication Sectors, in order to strengthen and assist Member States' participation in the activities of these Sectors. In this connection, the ITU secretariat is requested to provide more information on the technical specialization of staff at each of the six regional offices, with a view to analysing the human resources available to the offices and identifying mechanisms to strengthen them.

 The Director of BDT is also requested to assist in the identification of focal points for each of the three Sectors in the regional offices who will report to the regional director, as stipulated in Resolution 25.

4) The Director of BDT should hold consultations with the Directors of the Radiocommunication and Standardization Bureaux, as well as with the regional offices, in order to identify expectations for the regional presence and the level of contribution of each Sector and share them with the membership, with a view to stepping up its cooperation and coordination with the regional offices.

5) The ITU secretariat should seek mechanisms to strengthen and increase participation in and coordination and communication on the activities, projects and initiatives of the regional offices with ITU headquarters.

6) Finally, with respect to the criteria for opening new area or regional offices, it is important that such criteria should include an analysis of the possible effects of relocating an existing office as a means of meeting the need identified

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