|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **Document CWG-Internet-20/3-E** |
| **1 October 2024** |
| **Original: English** |
|  |  |
| Contribution by Paraguay (Republic of), and Armenia (Republic of), Azerbaijan (Republic of), Central African Republic, Mexico, Nepal (Federal Democratic Republic of) |
| PROPOSAL TO DISCUSS ABOUT CONNECTIVITY ASPECTS FOR LLDCs |
| PurposeThis contribution aims to address the challenges that Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) face in accessing and using the Internet due to, among other factors, affordability, limited technical infrastructure, poor connectivity and International public policy issues.Action requiredThe Council Working Group on International Internet-related public policy issues is invited to **consider the proposals** herein and **take appropriate actions**, if needed.\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_References[Resolution 102 (Rev. Bucharest, 2022)](http://www.itu.int/en/council/Documents/basic-texts-2023/RES-102-e.pdf); [Resolution 140 (Rev. Bucharest, 2022)](https://www.itu.int/en/council/Documents/basic-texts-2023/RES-140-e.pdf); [Council Resolution 1305 (Mod. 2019)](https://www.itu.int/md/S19-CL-C-0136/en); [Geneva Declaration of Principles](https://www.itu.int/net/wsis/docs/geneva/official/dop.html) and [Tunis Agenda for the Information Society](https://www.itu.int/net/wsis/docs2/tunis/off/6rev1.html); [WCIT Resolution 1 (Dubai, 2012)](https://www.itu.int/en/wcit-12/Documents/final-acts-wcit-12.pdf); [Measuring digital development – Facts and Figures: Focus on Landlocked Developing Countries (2024)](https://www.itu.int/hub/publication/d-ind-ict_mdd-2024-2/); [Report on the implementation of the Strategic Plan and the activities of the Union (May 2023 – April 2024)](https://www.itu.int/en/council/planning/Documents/Report-activities-2023-2024.pdf) |

Introduction

In view of the fact that the *Council Working Group on international Internet-related public policy issues*, through its mandate, is tasked to identify, study and develop matters related to international Internet-related public policy issues, and to disseminate its outputs throughout ITU's membership, the Republic of Paraguay would like to draw the attention of Member States to the challenges faced by Landlocked Developing Countries in terms of connectivity.

Full access to the Internet is still a goal that must be pursued considering the different and unique contexts faced by countries. In this regard, Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) deal with challenges that other countries do not, due to their special circumstances. It is imperative that we identify ways to sufficiently address difficulties, such as affordability, less developed ICT infrastructure, connectivity gap and an enabling international environment, to advance the development efforts related to ICTs in these countries.

Discussion

– **Affordability:** In most LLDCs, prices are typically higher than the world medians. According to Facts and Figures: Focus on Landlocked Developing Countries (2024), in LLDCs the price gap between mobile and fixed broadband is wider than elsewhere in the world. The fixed broadband basket typically costs more than twice the global median in LLDCs in general. This clearly reflects the disproportionate costs faced by landlocked developing countries in terms of internet access.

– **ICT infrastructure:** Less developed ICT infrastructure is a major barrier to internet access. At 85 kbit/s on average, an Internet user in an LLDC can use about a third of the international bandwidth compared to the world average. This shows that LLDCs are not taking full advantage of the benefits offered by the digital world, especially considering that currently approximately 90% of jobs have a digital dimension. It is important to stress that these infrastructural difficulties are aggravated by the lack of investment flows, both nationally and internationally, and by the tariffs paid in concept of right of passage of submarine telecommunications.

– **Connectivity gap:** Only 39 per cent of the population in LLDCs is online compared with 67 per cent of the world’s population using the Internet. Indicators that often measure connectivity such as Internet use, mobile phone ownership, mobile and fixed subscription levels, affordability of entry-level mobile and fixed broadband often show that LLDCs have numbers below the world average in these areas. For LLDCs meaningful connectivity is a critical element in bridging the digital divide and increasing competitiveness, reducing costs, and enabling LLDCs to fully reap the benefits of digital advancements globally.

– **An enabling international environment:** It is of utmost importance to have public policies at the international level that consider specific needs and challenges of LLDCs with operational objectives and adequate means of implementation. Since LLDCs face dependencies on other countries to connect them to the world, it is key that transit countries and other relevant partners pay attention to these special circumstances to contribute to meaningful connectivity.

Proposal

Based on the above discussion, the following topic is suggested to the Council Working Group on Internet for the next open consultation:

 **Alternative 1:** What can be done to ensure meaningful connectivity for LLDCs?

 **Alternative 2:** What strategies can be adopted to ensure meaningful connectivity for LLDCs?

1 **Alternative 1:** What can transit countries and other relevant stakeholders do to ensure meaningful connectivity for LLDCs?

 **Alternative 2:** How could transit countries and other relevant stakeholders contribute to ensuring meaningful connectivity for LLDCs?

2 How could the costs faced by LLDCs for the right of transit of telecommunication lines be reduced?[[1]](#footnote-1)

3 What measures or mechanisms could be adopted in the event that a landlocked country faces an unusual situation that leaves it without connection?

4 What incentives should be created to generate greater investment flows in connectivity in LLDCs?

– Considering paragraph 23 of the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society (recognition of "areas in need of greater financial resources and where current approaches to ICT for development financing have devoted insufficient attention to date. These include: (…) b. (…) Landlocked Developing Countries and other locations presenting unique technological and market challenges. (…)").

 **Alternative 1:** What has been done in terms of public and development financing and what can be done in the future in cooperation with states and other relevant stakeholders to improve connectivity in LLDCs?

 **Alternative 2:** What experiences are known in terms of public and development financing and what can be done in the future in cooperation with States and other relevant stakeholders to improve connectivity in the LLDCs?

5 What specifics product, services and target/outcome indicators should be included in the next ITU Strategic Plan for a clear framework for support of LLDCs?

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

1. It is important to mention that, in the case of Paraguay, costs have been significantly reduced. However, for other countries in other regions, it might be an interesting issue to be addressed. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)