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| PLENARY MEETING | Addendum 33 toDocument 46-E |
|  | 23 September 2016 |
|  | Original: English |
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| Member States of the Inter-American Telecommunication Commission (CITEL) |
| Proposed modification of WTSA-12 Resolution 76 - Studies related to conformance and interoperability testing, assistance to developing countries |
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| **Abstract:** | This contribution presents a proposal for revised version of Resolution 76 considering the latest work on ITU-T and ITU-D regarding the Conformance and Interoperability (C&I) Programme. Besides, it promotes the encouragement of technical collaboration among Member States of C&I capacities, including the definition of relevant technical requirements for conformity assessment and procedures leading to interoperable use of ICT products.  |

Introduction

This contribution presents a proposal for a revised version of Resolution 76 considering the latest work of ITU-T and ITU-D regarding the Conformance and Interoperability (C&I) Programme, including conformity assessment systems.

Additionally, taking into account that the fast paced, growing relevance of Internet-of-Things devices and the volume such connected devices will benefit from an international effort towards standardization and a demand for interoperability aided, in part, by the development of test suites, this contribution promotes the encouragement of technical collaboration among Member States of C&I capacities, including the definition of relevant technical requirements for conformity assessment and procedures leading to interoperable use of ICT products.

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RESOLUTION 76 (REV.HAMMAMET, 2016)

Studies related to conformance and interoperability testing, assistance to developing countries[[1]](#footnote-1)1

(Johannesburg, 2008; Dubai, 2012; Hammamet, 2016)

The World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly (Hammamet, 2016),

recognizing

*a)* that interoperability of international telecommunication networks was the main reason to create the International Telegraph Union in the year 1865, and that this remains one of the main goals in the ITU strategic plan;

*b)* that conformity assessment is the accepted way of demonstrating that a product adheres to an international standard and is important in the context of World Trade Organization members' international standardization commitments under the Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade;

*c)* that conformance testing does not guarantee interoperability but would increase the chance of interoperability of equipment conforming to ITU standards;

*d)* that very few of the current ITU‑T Recommendations identify interoperability or conformance testing requirements;

*e* that Resolution 123 (Rev.Busan, 2014) of the Plenipotentiary Conference instructs the Secretary-General and the Directors of the three Bureaux to work closely with each other in pursuing initiatives that assist in bridging the standardization gap between developing and developed countries;

*f)* that technical training and institutional capacity development for testing and certification are essential issues for countries to improve their conformity assessment processes, to promote the deployment of advanced telecommunication networks and to increase global connectivity;

*g)* that it is not appropriate for ITU itself to enter into certification and testing of equipment and services that many regional and national standards bodies also provide for conformance testing;

*h)* that Article 17 of the ITU Constitution, while providing that the functions of ITU‑T shall fulfil the purposes of the Union relating to telecommunication standardization, stipulates that such functions are to be performed "bearing in mind the particular concerns of the developing countries";

*i)* that existing international approaches to conformity assessment provide a robust and well-functioning infrastructure,

further recognizing

that providing for interoperability should be an important consideration while developing future ITU‑T Recommendations,

considering

*a)* that there is an increasing number of complaints that equipment is often not fully interoperable with other equipment;

*b)* that some countries, especially the developing countries, have not yet acquired the capacity to test equipment and provide assurance to consumers in their countries;

*c)* that increased confidence in the conformance of information and communication technologies (ICT) equipment with ITU‑T Recommendations would increase the chances of end-to-end interoperability of equipment from different manufacturers, and would assist developing countries in the choice of solutions;

*d)* that the 2013 session of the ITU Council approved an updated conformance and interoperability (C&I) programme mandated by Resolution 177 (Rev. Busan, 2014) based on four pillars: Pillar 1: Conformity assessment; Pillar 2: interoperability events; Pillar 3: Human resource capacity building; and Pillar 4: Assistance in the establishment of test centres and C&I programmes in developing countries,

*e)* that the Plenipotentiary Conference adopted Resolution 177 (Rev. Busan, 2014) that recognizes that widespread conformance and interoperability of telecommunication/information and communication technology (ICT) equipment and systems through the implementation of relevant programmes, policies, and decisions can increase market opportunities and reliability and encourage global integration and trade;

*f)* that the World Telecommunication Development Conference adopted Resolution 47 (Rev.Dubai, 2014);

*g)* that the ITU Radiocommunication Assembly adopted Resolution ITU-R 62 (Geneva, 2015);

*h)* the importance, especially to developing countries, that ITU takes up a leading role in interoperability issues, with ITU-T taking lead responsibility for Pillars 1 and 2, and ITU-D for Pillars 3 and 4;

*i)* the executive summary of the ITU Conformance and Interoperability Business Plan report, highlighting important issues regarding the four pillars of the ITU C&I programme;

*j)* the ITU Product Conformity Database, as an informative, voluntary listing of products that conform to ITU-T Recommendations;

*k)* that an ITU C&I Portal website has been established, which is being continuously updated,

noting

*a)* that conformance and interoperability requirements to support testing are essential components for developing interoperable equipment that is based on ITU‑T Recommendations;

*b)* that considerable practical experience exists within the ITU‑T membership regarding the production of relevant testing standards and the testing procedures on which the actions proposed in this resolution are based;

*c)* the need to assist developing countries in facilitating interoperable solutions which can help reduce the cost of systems and equipment procurement by operators, particularly in the developing countries, whilst promoting the improving product quality and safety;

*d)* that when interoperability experiments or testing have not been performed, users may have suffered from the lack of interconnection performance between equipment from different manufacturers;

*e)* that technical collaboration and knowledge sharing on ICT matters among Member States are building blocks to an interconnected and interoperable society,

taking into account

*a)* that ITU‑T has in the past occasionally initiated conformance and interoperability testing, as reported in Supplement 2 to the ITU‑T A-series Recommendations;

*b)* that the ITU standardization resources are limited and conformance and interoperability testing requires specific technical infrastructure;

*c)* that a different set of expertise is required for developing test suites, interoperability testing standardization, product development and product testing;

*d)* that it is of advantage if interoperability testing is done by users of the standard who were not involved in the standardization process itself, rather than the standardization experts who have written the specifications;

*e)* that collaboration with a range of external, conformity assessment (including accreditation and certification) bodies is therefore necessary;

*f)* that some forums, consortia and other organizations have already established certification programmes;

*g)* that the fast paced, growing relevance of Internet-of-Things devices and the volume of such connected devices will benefit from an international effort towards standardization and a demand for interoperability aided, in part, by the development of test suites,

resolves

1 that ITU‑T study groups develop the necessary conformance testing Recommendations for telecommunication equipment as soon as possible;

2 that ITU-T Study Group 11 coordinate the Sector’s activities related to the ITU C&I programme across all study groups;

3 that ITU-T Study Group 11, as well as other study groups, continue to undertake activities within the C&I programme, including pilot projects on conformance/interoperability testing;

4 that ITU‑T Recommendations to address interoperability testing shall be progressed as quickly as possible;

5 that ITU‑T should continue supporting the Telecommunication Development Sector (ITU-D), which is responsible for the development of programmes to:

i) assist developing countries in associated with Pillar 3 dealing with capacity-building, and with Pillar 4 in the establishment of test centres C&I programmes in developing countries, aiming at promoting regional integration and common C&I programmes;

ii) assist developing countries in establishing regional or subregional conformance and interoperability centres and encourage cooperation with governmental and non-governmental, national and regional organizations and international accreditation and certification bodies;

iii) encourage technical collaboration among Member States of C&I capacities, including the definition of relevant technical requirements for conformity assessment and procedures leading to interoperable use of ICT products,

6 that conformance testing requirements shall provide for verification of the parameters defined in the current and future ITU‑T Recommendations as determined by the study groups developing the Recommendations, and for interoperability testing to take into account user needs and in consideration of the market demand, as appropriate,

instructs the Director of the Telecommunication Standardization Bureau

1 in cooperation with the Radiocommunication Bureau and the Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT), to continue to conduct as necessary exploratory activities in each region in order to identify and prioritize the problems faced by developing countries related to achieving interoperability of telecommunication/ICT equipment and services;

2 in cooperation with the Director of BDT, based on results of *instructs the* *Director of the Telecommunication Standardization Bureau*1 above, to implement the action plan agreed by the Council at its 2013 session;

3 in cooperation with the Director of BDT to implement an ITU conformance and interoperability programme for possible introduction of a database identifying products’ conformance and origin;

4 to involve experts and external entities as appropriate;

5 to submit the results of these activities carried out under the Action Plan, to the Council for its consideration and required actions,

instructs the study groups

1 to continue to identify existing ITU‑T Recommendations that would be candidates for conformance and interoperability testing, and to consider conformance and interoperability aspects for potential future work taking into account the needs of the membership;

2 to prepare the ITU‑T Recommendations identified in *instructs the study groups* 1 above, with a view to conducting conformance and interoperability tests as appropriate;

3 to cooperate, as appropriate, with interested stakeholders to optimize studies to prepare test specifications especially for those technologies in *instructs the study groups* 1 above, taking into account user needs and in consideration of the market demand for a conformity assessment programme,

invites the Council

to consider the Director's report referred to in i*nstructs the Director of the Telecommunication Standardization Bureau* 5 above,

invites Member States and Sector Members

1 to contribute to the implementation of this resolution;

2 to encourage national and regional testing entities to assist ITU‑T in implementing 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)