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MOD ARB/36A25/1

RESOLUTION 76 (Rev. Geneva, 2022)

Studies related to conformance and interoperability testing, assistance to developing countries[[1]](#footnote-1)1, and a possible future ITU Mark programme

(Johannesburg, 2008; Dubai, 2012; Hammamet, 2016; Geneva, 2022)

The World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly (Geneva, 2022),

recalling

*a)* that Resolution 123 (Rev. Dubai, 2018) of the Plenipotentiary Conference instructs the Secretary-General and the Directors of the three Bureaux to work closely with each other in order to step up actions intended to reduce the standardization gap between developing and developed countries;

*b)* that Resolution 200 (Rev. Dubai, 2018) of the Plenipotentiary Conference resolves to reaffirm a shared global vision for the development of the telecommunication/information and communication technology (ICT) sector, under the Connect 2030 agenda ", envisaging "*an information society, empowered by the interconnected world, where telecommunications/ICTs enable and accelerate social, economic and environmentally sustainable growth and development for everyone*";

*c)* that Article 17 of the ITU Constitution, while providing that the functions of the ITU Telecommunication Standardization Sector (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";

*d)* Resolution 177 (Rev.Dubai, 2018) of the Plenipotentiary Conference, on conformance and interoperability (C&I);

*e)* Resolution 197 (Rev. Dubai, 2018) of the Plenipotentiary Conference, on facilitating the Internet of things (IoT) and smart sustainable cities and communities;

*f)* Resolution 47 (Rev. Buenos Aries, 2017) of the World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC), on enhancement of knowledge and effective application of ITU Recommendations in developing countries, including C&I testing of systems manufactured on the basis of ITU Recommendations;

*g)* Resolution ITU‑R 62 (Rev. Geneva, 2015) of the Radiocommunication Assembly, on studies related to testing for conformance with Recommendations of the ITU Radiocommunication Sector (ITU‑R) and interoperability of radiocommunication equipment and systems,

recognizing

*a)* ITU progress in implementing the ITU Conformance and Interoperability Programme (C&I) which was reported in the ITU annual report (2018-2019) in Council 2019 session;

*b)* that emerging technologies such as IoT, IMT-2020 …etc., have increasing requirements for C&I testing;

*c)* 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;

*d)* *the progress work done by ITU-T Conformity Assessment Steering Committee (CASC) under the leadership of ITU-T Study Group 11 appoint ITU technical experts to work with International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) to assess laboratories with competence to test according to ITU-T recommendations*;

*e)* that CASC, in collaboration with the IEC, has established operational procedure aimed at appointing technical experts to assess testing laboratories with competence to test according to ITU-T Recommendations providing a joint IEC/ITU certification scheme for assessing ICT equipment for conformity with ITU‑T Recommendations;

*f)* that ITU‑T has launched a Product Conformity Database and is progressively populating it with details of ICT equipment having undergone testing for conformity with ITU‑T Recommendations;

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

*h)* that, at its 2016 session, the ITU Council updated the action plan for the C&I programme initially established in 2012, the pillars of which are: 1) conformity assessment, 2) interoperability events, 3) human resource capacity building, and 4) assistance in the establishment of test centres and C&I programmes in developing countries;

*i)* that providing for interoperability should be an important consideration when developing future ITU‑T Recommendations;

*j)* that testing for conformity with ITU‑T Recommendations should help in efforts to combat counterfeit ICT products;

*k)* that enhancing Member States' capabilities for conformance assessment and testing and the availability of national and regional conformance assessment testing facilities may help combat counterfeit telecommunication/ICT devices and equipment,

considering

*a)* ;

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

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

*d)* that increased confidence in the conformance of 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;

*e)* the importance, especially to developing countries, that ITU takes up a leading role in implementation of the ITU C&I programme, with ITU‑T taking lead responsibility for Pillars 1 and 2, and the ITU Telecommunication Development Sector (ITU‑D) for Pillars 3 and 4;

*f)* the priorities of Members States , especially the developing countries to combat and deter counterfeit devices,

noting

*a)* that C&I 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 in reducing the cost of systems and equipment procurement by operators, particularly in the developing countries, whilst 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 availability of equipment tested as per ITU‑T Recommendations for C&I may provide the basis for achieving a greater choice of solutions, greater competitiveness and more economies of scale,

taking into account

*a)* that ITU‑T regularly carries out testing activities, including ITU‑T study group pilot projects, to assess C&I;

*b)* that ITU standardization resources are limited, and C&I testing requires specific technical infrastructure;

*c)* that different 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 as ITU role a global organization/ specialized agency to promote the development of telecommunication/ ICT need to implement a Mark to guarantee the C&I of the equipment and services;

*h)* This scheme of joint Mark between ITU and IEC is of great interest to developing countries, this scheme establishing the conformity of Radio and ICT products would be efficient only if it covers the majority of developing countries, with Mutual Recognition Agreements (MRAs) established in this domain between different signatories’ countries; In that case, we consider such schemes can allow protection of consumers, and protect markets against counterfeit products

*i)* This scheme of joint Mark between ITU and IEC present delicate points to deal with and to find an international consensus about, especially for developing countries. The issues for the conformity scheme raised are the following:

* 1. The recognition of conformity testing laboratories requires an ITU - IEC certification scheme and such proposed approach for the moment is fully similar to IEC certification which is a very strict scheme and which demands a lot of resources in terms of highly qualified persons and requires significant investment in equipment and financial resources to perform IEC audit and its maintenance, calibration of test equipment , assistance actions and training of qualified technicians;
	2. It is not obvious that customers (manufacturers or exporters of Radio and ICT products ) will voluntarily adhere to such scheme that can be costly for them, regarding to specific need for these customers they have alternative markets with less restrictive schemes , such as the European market with CE marking or the North American market with FCC marking;
	3. Also in this proposed scheme there is a need to go through the recognition of test reports delivered by recognized Test Laboratory (TL) via notified certified bodies by the IEC-ITU (NCB), for the moment the developing countries does not have such structures that also require a lot of resources in terms of highly qualified persons and which will be expensive for recognition in terms of audit and its maintenance;
	4. The establishment of such structure in developing countries needs time and resources and can confiscate the right of national organizations, to decide on product conformity to third-party organizations (pending the recognition of such bodies according to this scheme),

resolves

1 to invite ITU‑T study groups to continue working on the pilot projects for conformity to ITU‑T Recommendations and continue developing the necessary C&I testing Recommendations for telecommunication equipment as quickly as possible;

2 to continue working with IEC and other certification bodies to recognise testing laboratories with competence to test according to ITU-T Recommendations and issue joint Mark on behalf of ITU;

3 that ITU‑T Study Group 11 coordinates the Sector's activities related to the ITU C&I programme across all study groups;

4 that ITU‑T Study Group 11 continues to undertake activities within the C&I programme, including pilot projects on conformance/interoperability testing;

5 that ITU‑T, in collaboration with the other Sectors as appropriate, shall develop a programme to:

i) assist developing countries in capacity building on C&I (Pillar 3) and establishing test centres in developing countries, aimed at promoting regional integration and common C&I programmes (Pillar 4);

ii) assist developing countries in establishing regional or subregional C&I centres and encourage cooperation with governmental and non-governmental, national and regional organizations and international accreditation and certification bodies, to prevent any overlaps caused by or imposed on ICT equipment;

iii) improve the mutual recognition of C&I testing results, mechanisms and data analysis techniques between different regional testing centres;

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 consider market demand, as appropriate;

7 that a set of methodologies and procedures should be developed for remote testing using virtual laboratories;

8 that ITU, being a world standardization body, can address the impediments to harmonization and growth of worldwide telecommunications and promote the visibility of ITU standards (ensure interoperability), by means of having an ITU testing mark regime, taking into account the technical and legal implications, if any, and/or any revenue-generating possibilities,

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 to implement the action plan agreed and subsequently revised by the Council (Documents C12/48, C13/24, C14/24, C15/24 and C16/24);

3 considering *resolves*7, to accelerate the implementation of Pillar 1, so as to ensure gradual and smooth accomplishment of the other three pillars and the possible implementation of the ITU Mark;

4 in cooperation with the Director of BDT, to implement an ITU C&I programme for possible introduction of a database identifying products' conformance and origin;

5 to publish an annual plan of C&I activities which could attract more members' participation;

6 to facilitate the development and implementation of an ITU‑T C&I test laboratory recognition procedure;

7 to involve experts and external entities as appropriate;

8 to define and propose as soon as possible to member states a global system for measurements of conformity and interoperability for ICT equipment according to ITU recommendations with specifying all technical details and financial requirements and to include the progress to the action plan report to the Council;

9 to clarify the role of national conformity bodies in the proposed global system for measurements of conformity and interoperability for ICT equipment mentioned in *resolve 2*;

10 to submit the results of the activities carried out under the action plan to the Council for its consideration and required actions;

11 in cooperation with the Director of BDT, to play an active role with real implication in training processes in this field and to attribute the necessary funds,

instructs the study groups

1 to accelerate accomplishing the pilot projects started by ITU‑T study groups and continue to identify existing ITU‑T Recommendations that are candidates for C&I testing, taking into account the needs of the membership, and that are capable of providing end-to-end interoperable services on a global scale, adding to their content, if necessary, specific requirements within their scope;

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

3 to continue and enhance cooperation, as appropriate, with interested stakeholders, including other SDOs, forums and consortia, in order to optimize studies to prepare test specifications, especially for those technologies in *instructs the study groups* 1 and 2 above, taking into account user needs and in consideration of the market demand for a conformity assessment programme;

4 to submit to CASC a list of ITU‑T Recommendations which could be candidates for the joint IEC/ITU certification scheme, taking into account market needs,

instructs the ITU Telecommunication Standardization Sector Conformity Assessment Steering Committee

to study and define a procedure to recognize testing laboratories that are competent to test according to ITU‑T Recommendations, in collaboration with existing certification schemes such as that of IEC,

invites the Council

to consider the Director's report referred to in *instructs the Director of the Telecommunication Standardization Bureau* 8 above,

invites Member States and Sector Members

1 to contribute to the implementation of this resolution by, including, but not limited to:

i) actively providing requirements for testing activities on C&I through contributions to related study groups;

ii) considering potential collaboration on future C&I activities;

iii) contributing to the Product Conformity Database;

2 to encourage national and regional testing entities to assist ITU‑T in implementing this resolution;

3 to encourage all member states to join this system and to sign MRAs in this field , which implicate a real worldwide and effective system for combating non-conforming equipment and to protect international markets and consumers.

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