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| **Abstract:** | This document summarizes contribution of the ITU Regional Offices to the implementation of the ITU-T four-year rolling operational plan as requested by the Resolution 25 (Rev. Bucharest, 2022) of the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference. |

**1 Introduction: ITU Regional Presence**

ITU has offices in the six BDT regions:

* [Africa](https://www.itu.int/itu-d/sites/africa/)
* [Americas](https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Regional-Presence/Americas/Pages/default.aspx)
* [Arab states](https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Regional-Presence/ArabStates/Pages/default.aspx)
* [Asia and the Pacific](https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Regional-Presence/asiapacific/Pages/default.aspx)
* [Commonwealth of Independent States](https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Regional-Presence/CIS/Pages/default.aspx)
* [Europe](https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Regional-Presence/Europe/Pages/default.aspx)

[ITU Regional presence](https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Pages/Regional-Presence.aspx) counts as of today an overall of thirteen field offices, which include five regional offices in Addis Ababa (Africa), Bangkok (Asia and the Pacific), Brasilia (Americas), Cairo (Arab States), Moscow (CIS countries), and the ITU office for Europe at ITU headquarters, as well as eight area offices, located in Africa, Americas and Asia and the Pacific.

The revised Resolution 25 (Rev. Bucharest, 2022) on strengthening the ITU regional presence, mentioned in section 1 below, has enhanced the need for a stronger regional presence.

Regional and area offices play a key role in facilitating discussions on regional matters and in the dissemination of information and results of activities of all three Sectors of the Union and the General Secretariat, while avoiding the duplication of such functions with headquarters, and collaborating with the regional telecommunication organizations to make synergies and avoid duplication of activities and efforts.

2 ITU Plenipotentiary Resolution 25 (Rev. Bucharest, 2022)

ITU Plenipotentiary Resolution 25 (Rev. Bucharest, 2022) “Strengthening the ITU regional presence” confirms the reporting mandates for the Regional and Area offices to the advisory groups of each Sectors:

“further resolves

*3 that regional and area offices shall regularly provide reports to the Sector advisory groups, as appropriate, and to inform the Directors of BR, TSB and BDT on regional activities related to their respective Sectors,*

3 TSB mechanisms of coordination with the Regions

At the initiative of the TSB Director, conference calls and face-to-face meetings were organized whenever possible, on a regular basis between the regional and areas offices and the TSB senior management, covering each time overviews, updates, and briefings of activities organized by each TSB department in the various regions.

These coordination activities, as well as the establishment of a TSB Focal Point for the Regions (reference to the instructs the Directors of the Radiocommunication Bureau and the Telecommunication Standardization Bureau), were conducted keeping in mind the One ITU concept and implementation, with the goal of improving coordination and increasing the efficiency of the overall operations, events and activities in the Standardization Sector in each of the Regions.

The use of this coordination mechanism is a tool that has led to a significant improvement in the overall coordination with regional and areas offices in terms of events and activities.

4 Africa – Regional Office for Africa

In collaboration with the Standardization Bureau (TSB), the ITU Regional Office for Africa has engaged with different countries and regulators to create awareness on the ITU Digital Financial Services (DFS) Security Lab, delivery of Security Clinics, and related capacity building activities for knowledge transfer to facilitate the setup of DFS Security Labs. Countries engaged so far include but are not limited to; Zimbabwe, Malawi, Kingdom of Eswatini, Nigeria, The Gambia, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda, East African Communications Organisation (EACO), Communication Regulators Association of Southern Africa (CRASA), West Africa Telecommunications Regulators Assembly (WATRA) and further discussions are ongoing to engage additional countries.

Supporting and encouraging collaboration on work of the ITU-T Focus Groups on; Artificial Intelligence for Health (FG-AI4H), Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Internet of Things (IoT) for Digital Agriculture (FG-AI4A) with different Partners that include WHO, FAO among others.

ITU ROA is contributing to the successful preparation of the upcoming TSB workshop on 11 May 2023 in Bangalore, India, on the theme "The Future of Television for South Asia, Arab, and Africa regions". Typically, Africa Region will be contributing to the high-level roundtable that will be focusing on the policy enablers for the successful and impactful future television services. It will also be analyzing emerging trends, government policies, industry challenges and opportunities will be discussed with government institutions from South Asia, Africa and Arab regions. A first speaker from Africa Telecommunications Union (ATU) and possibly a second one from Africa Union of Broadcasting (AUB) will be taking part in that roundtable to voice Africa's vision while contributing to enrich the debates.

Additionally, Africa Region will be actively taking part in the second session on "The enabling role of regulators" aiming at presenting regional case studies and regulatory approaches for successful and impactful television services highlighting the importance of analogue to digital conversion, new applications and spectrum management. That session will analyze the supporting role played by regulatory frameworks and the impact of digital TV services on future growth through regulatory models and the amendments to the licenses of digital TV broadcasters mindful of privacy, piracy and copyright considerations. A speaker from one of the regulatory authorities in Africa (PURA from The Gambia) will be representing the continent in that session.

5 Americas – Regional Office for the Americas

The ITU Regional Office for the Americas and its Area Offices, in Chile (South America), Honduras (Central America) & Barbados (Caribbean), have continued close coordination with TSB on all activities carried out in the Americas region.

Monthly coordination calls with the TSB Director and TSB Management team have been held. They were supplemented by consultations at the operational level, wherever relevant or needed.

The following activities are planned or have already been implemented by the ITU Office for the Americas in collaboration with TSB:

**Coordination meeting with subregional telecom organizations**

* COMTELCA: July 2022; Telecom authorities of Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panama, and Dominican Republic to exchange views on the ways to strengthening the relationship between TSB and COMTELCA and bilaterally between TSB and each country of the listed above.
* ITU field offices in the Americas continue to coordinate outreach, promotion, and support activities for the three ITU sectors, including the TSB in alliance with regional and subregional organizations, like CITEL, COMTELCA and CTU.
* The Regional Office of the Americas has carried out permanent monitoring and supported the coordination, started in 2022, for the meeting of Study Group 9 in the city of Bogotá Colombia at the end of 2023 and the organization on the same date of the seminar on the future of television for the Americas. Also, there are ongoing efforts to host a Week of Innovation and Deployment of New Technologies, including ITU-T Study Group 20.
* The Regional Office has been supporting the implementation of the TSB Digital Financial Services (DFS) Security in the countries of the Americas, mainly in Mexico, Brazil, Peru, and Guatemala. Also, Dominican Republic expressed their interest to implement the ITU Digital Financial Services Security.
* WTSA: Communications between CITEL and the TSB were managed by the Americas Regional Director during WTSA 2022. CITEL meetings were attended, and relevant information was passed to WTSA Coordination meetings. Bilateral meetings between the TSB Director and delegations from the region were coordinated and informed.

**Accessibility**

* The regional event “Accessible Americas: ICTs for ALL” takes place every year in November and represents a knowledge sharing platform on the development of ICT accessibility in benefit of countries and institutions and provides good practices in digital inclusion. TSB supported the event by providing expertise to the event particularly in the field of Accessibility standards for products and services”.
* In 2022 “Accessible Americas: ICT for ALL” was carried out in Brasilia, Brazil, from 16 November to 18 November 2022, as a presential event.

**Rural Connectivity**

* A presentation on Rural Connectivity, Smart Cities and Smart Villages was given to Universidad Nacional del Altiplano, Peru, in the framework of a Symposium, October 27 and 28, 2022.
* **Youth Digital Inclusion.** Signed December 2021, in 2022 the ITU together with its partner “Fundación Gran Chaco” (FGC) began implementing the project entitled “Youth Digital Inclusion” to promote ICT capacity development activities in benefit of youth from the Gran Chaco region, a remote territory in Argentina, Bolivia and Paraguay, home to vulnerable rural and indigenous communities, as well as to support these countries with the development of national strategies to build an enabling environment for youth innovation and entrepreneurship. In doing so, the project will use diverse outcomes from ITU-T Study Group 20.

#### 6 Arab States - Regional Office for the Arab States

The ITU Regional Office for the Arab have continued close coordination with TSB on all activities carried out in the Arab region.

Monthly coordination calls with the TSB Director and TSB Management team have been held. They were supplemented by consultations at the operational level, wherever relevant or needed.

ITU Arab regional office have regular coordination with Arab League of Arab States’s Standardization Team (AST) and TSB for WTSA-20 preparations. In this regard, the following meetings have been coordinated by ITU Arab regional office in collaboration with TSB:

* The 15th of Arab Standardization Team (AST) meeting for Preparation of WTSA-20, 15-16 April 2020
* Arab Standardization Team (AST) working groups meetings, April- Sept 2020
* Arab Standardization Team (AST) participation in the Interregional Meeting for Preparation of WTSA-20, 18 September 2020
* The 16th of Arab Standardization Team (AST) meeting for Preparation of WTSA-20, 2 Sept 2021

ITU Arab regional office is promoting TSB activities in the Arab Region and on regular basis through all the regional communications channels including but not limited to, the official regional twitter account and regional member states what’s-up group. In addition, the following activities are planned or have already been implemented by the ITU Office for the Arab in collaboration with TSB:

* ITU Global Event on Emerging Technology for Connectivity: Accelerating Digital Transformation in LDCs, LLDCs, and SIDS webinar from 5-9 July: Regional Sessions on:
* Blockchain and cybersecurity challenges and opportunities for digital finance
* Smart Cities and Communities
* GSR-21 Arab Regional Economic Dialogue (Arab RED21), 3 June 2021
* Training on DFS Security Lab, Oct-Nov 2021
* Establishment of a Regional ITU IPv6 and IoT Expertise Centre for Arab region in collaboration and with support of Telecommunication and Post Regulatory Authority of Sudan (TPRA), Dec 2021
* Regional Training Workshop on IPv6 and IoT Strategy, Policy and Implementation for Arab States, Khartoum, Sudan, 17-19 May 2022
* Training courses on certified IPv6 and IoT for Arab Region-Silver level, 30 Oct-03 Nov 2022
* Training courses on certified IPv6 and IoT for Arab Region-Gold level, 27 Nov-01 Dec 2022
* ITU and NTRA-Egypt project titled “Promote development of Smart Sustainable Cities & Communities Telecom Infrastructure in Egypt”. The project document development is under finalization.

#### 7 Asia and the Pacific - Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific

#### The ITU Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific coordinates closely with TSB on activities carried out in the Asia-Pacific region. Consultations are held at the operational level, wherever relevant or needed. The ITU Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific has also been providing support to the TSB with APT and with regional standardization bodies.

#### What follows are some of the specific activities that the Regional Office coordinated/assisted TSB with:

**Smart Sustainable Cities**

* ITU Regional Office presented in December 2022 at the ‘**International Conference on Innovation, Technology Transfer and Cooperation for Addressing Climate Change’** hosted by Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology (APCTT), a regional institution of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP). The presentation featured an overview of ITU-T’s work under Study Groups 5 and 20, as well as U4SSC.

**Project on Enhancing the Development of Standards and Frameworks for Critical Technologies in Southeast Asia**

* Following consultations with TSB and discussions with the Government of Australia’s Department for Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), the ITU team successfully signed a grant agreement on 4 June 2021 with DFAT on this project, under its Cyber and Critical Tech Cooperation Program. This project was successfully extended in 2022 for the full four-year duration and is now slated to end in June 2024.
* The project focuses on Artificial Intelligence (AI) and the potential gender and social biases linked with them. The project will enhance the development and implementation of AI standards, frameworks, policies, and initiatives at regional and national levels across Southeast Asia, which considers diverse stakeholders needs. The project’s initial focus will be on the Indonesia, Malaysia. The Philippines, and Thailand, and will also look at the regional context in Southeast Asia.
* The Project is built on four outputs:
  + **Indicative Output 1**: Research outputs on the state of critical technology standards, frameworks, policies, and initiatives, including the capacity gaps among stakeholders, in Southeast Asia.
  + **Indicative Output 2:** Training/Workshops and knowledge sharing activities on Critical Technologies for policymakers in primary beneficiary countries in Southeast Asia.
  + **Indicative Output 3:** Multi-stakeholder Network of Female Policy Makers created at the subregional, regional and global levels.
  + **Indicative Output 4:** Country-specific support provided to assist the policymakers and regulators in the development and implementation of standards, frameworks, policies, and initiatives.

**ITU-T SG9 Meeting and ITU Workshop on "The Future of Television for South Asia, Arab and Africa Regions “(9 – 18 May 2023)**

* ITU Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific served on the Programme Committee of the ITU-T workshop on The Future of Television for South Asia, Arab and Africa Regions, scheduled for 11 May 2023. The ITU Regional Office facilitated the inclusion of speakers from South Asia ministries and regulators at the workshop.

**Co-ordination regarding ITU-T events and Participation in TSB related meetings**

* The ITU regional focal point participated in various WTSA prep meetings and other meetings as required. In this reporting period, this included:
  + 35th APT Standardization Program Forum (ASTAP-35), Bangkok, Thailand, 17 – 20 April 2023
  + 1st Meeting of APT Preparatory Group for WTSA-24 (APT WTSA24-1), Bangkok, Thailand, 21 April 2023

#### 8 Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) - Regional Office for the CIS Region

#### 1. In February 2023 Municipality of Bishkek, the capital of Kyrgyzstan, adopted a Smart City programme 2023-2033 which is based on the U4SSC studies and ITU-T Recommendations provided by the RO CIS in the previous year.

#### 2. On 19-20 April ITU-D organized a Forum “Smart Sustainable Cities: past, present and future” in Minsk, Belarus with the participation of TSB colleagues, who made a presentation on the role of international organizations in creating Smart Sustainable Cities.

#### 3. On 23-25 May ITU-D is organizing a Forum on Future Networks in Tashkent, Uzbekistan in close cooperation with TSB staff and ITU-T experts. The Forum includes training on C&I and BSG and is held back-to-back with the ITU-T Regional Group of the SG11.

#### 9 Europe - ITU Office for Europe

The ITU Regional Office for Europe has continued close coordination with TSB on all activities carried out in the Europe region. Monthly coordination calls with the TSB Director and TSB Management team have been held. They were supplemented by consultations at the operational level, wherever relevant or needed. The following presents the sample of activities have been carried out in close coordination and contribution by TSB:

* Strengthened coordination with UNOPS Serbia leading towards roll out of a special national project focusing on Smart Cities (2022/2023)
* 5G Techritory (October 2022)
* Accessible Europe (December 2022)
* EaPeReg workshops on spectrum management and broadband development (March 2023)
* Strengthened dialogue with the European Commission aiming at identification of areas of cooperation (meeting at EU Delegation, bilateral meetings; April/May 2023)
* ITU Regional Development Forum (May 2023)

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