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|  | World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly (WTSA-24) New Delhi, 15–24 October 2024 | |  |
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| PLENARY MEETING | | Addendum 21 to Document 35-E | |
|  | | 13 September 2024 | |
|  | | Original: English | |
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| African Telecommunication Union Administrations | | | |
| PROPOSED MODIFICATIONS TO RESOLUTION 79 | | | |
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| **Abstract:** | This contribution proposes to update WTSA Resolution 79 to address the growing problem of e-waste generated from the telecommunication sector that often ends up in the informal sector in developing countries with critical environmental and health concerns.  It also aims at encouraging sustainable standards for a formal e-waste handling strategy that can promote the circular economy. | |
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Introduction

Increasing global demand for electronic devices had rippled into e-waste generation with detrimental effects in developing countries. This proposal encourages Member States, particularly the developing countries, to develop legislations on e-waste handling.

This proposal recognizes the role of manufacturers of electrical and electronic equipment in handling disposed gadgets. Equipment producers are to consider sustainable disposal procedures into their product designs and manufacturing. A holistic approach to achieve this is for the International Electro-technical Commission (IEC) to develop sustainable standards for global e-waste handling mechanism.

MOD ATU/35A21/1

RESOLUTION 79 (Rev. New Delhi, 2024)

**The role of telecommunications/information and communication technologies in handling and controlling e-waste from telecommunication and information technology equipment and methods of treating it**

*(Dubai, 2012, Geneva, 2022, New Delhi, 2024)*

The World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly (New Delhi, 2024),

recalling

*a)* Resolution 182 (Rev. Bucharest, 2022) of the Plenipotentiary Conference, on the role of telecommunications/information and communication technologies (ICTs) in regard to climate change and the protection of the environment;

*b)* Resolution 66 (Rev. Kigali, 2022) of the World Telecommunication Development Conference, on ICT and climate change;

*c)* § 19 of the Hyderabad Declaration (2010), stating that the formulation and implementation of policies for proper disposal of e-waste are of great importance;

*d)* the Basel Convention (March, 1989) on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal, which characterizes certain wastes resulting from electrical and electronic assemblies as hazardous;

*e)* § 20 of Action Line C7 (E-environment) of the Geneva Plan of Action of the World Summit on the Information Society (Geneva, 2003), calling for governments, civil society and the private sector to be encouraged to initiate actions and implement projects and programmes for sustainable production and consumption and the environmentally safe disposal and recycling of discarded hardware and components used in ICT;

*f)* the Nairobi Declaration on the Environmentally Sound Management of Electrical and Electronic Waste, and the adoption by the ninth Conference of the Parties to the Basel Convention of the Work Plan for the Environmentally Sound Management of E-waste, focusing on the needs of developing countries[[1]](#footnote-1)1;

*g)* Resolution 7 (Rev. Geneva, 2022) of this assembly, collaboration with the International Organization for Standardization and the International Electrotechnical Commission on promoting gender equality in ITU Telecommunication Standardization Sector (ITU-T) activities;

considering

*a)* that, owing to the advancement in telecommunications and information technology, consumption of and demand for electrical and electronic equipment has been continuously increasing and this in turn has led to a marked increase in the amount of e-waste generated, which has had a negative impact on the environment and public health, particularly in the developing countries;

*b)* that ITU and relevant stakeholders (such as the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Development Programme for the Basel Convention, and International Electro-technical Commission (IEC)) have a key role in strengthening coordination between interested parties to study the effects of e-waste;

*c)* Recommendation ITU-T L.1000 of the ITU Telecommunication Standardization Sector (ITU-T), on the universal power adapter and charger solution for mobile terminals and other handheld ICT devices, and Recommendation ITU-T L.1100, on the procedure for recycling rare metals in ICT goods;

*d)* that electrical and electronic equipment and devices are designed for use across borders,

recognizing

*a)* that governments have an important role to play in limiting e-waste impacts by formulating appropriate strategies, policies and legislation;

*b)* that most of the e-waste from the telecommunication/ICT sector, particularly obsolete and discarded user devices like mobile phones, end up in the informal sector without formal disposal procedures;

*c)* that telecommunications/ICT can make a major contribution to alleviating the impact of e-waste;

*d)* that ongoing work and studies in ITU-T Study Group 5 under Question 7/5, on e-waste, circular economy and sustainable supply-chain management, may include aspects of environmental protection and sustainable design/manufacture and recycling of ICT equipment/facilities;

*e)* the various and current efforts in developing countries and regions related to e-waste management, notwithstanding the challenges that still persist;

*f)* the inadequate awareness of how to effectively manage e-waste in developing countries;

*g)* the impact of counterfeit ICT devices on e‑waste generation;

*h)* the role of the circular economy in reducing the global volume of e-waste and moving from the traditional linear production/consumption pattern to one that is sustainable;

*i)* that there is a lack of tools for measuring the environmental impacts of e‑waste and for assessing the environmental impact of telecommunications/ICTs;

*j)* that the informal sector remains the predominant sector for handling e-waste in developing countries;

*k)* that sustainable management of e-waste is essential to achieve the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals;

*l)* ongoing work in Study Group 2 of the ITU Telecommunication Development Sector (ITU‑D) under Question 6/2, on ICTs and the environment, studying strategies to develop a responsible approach to, and comprehensive treatment of, telecommunication/ICT waste;

*m)* that manufacturers of telecommunication/ICT equipment play significant role at the design stage for safe future dismantling and recycling of these equipment and devices when they become unserviceable,

recognizing further

*a)* that large quantities of used, and old, obsolete telecommunication/ICT hardware and equipment are exported to developing countries for supposed reuse;

*b)* that many developing countries are suffering from severe environmental hazards, such as water pollution and health risks, due to e-waste, including from the influx of new telecommunications/ICTs;

*c)* that the availability of counterfeit telecommunication/ICT hardware and equipment in developing countries exacerbates the challenge of handling and controlling e-waste,

resolves to instruct the Director of the Telecommunication Standardization Bureau, in collaboration with the Director of the Telecommunication Development Bureau

1 to pursue and strengthen the development of ITU activities in regard to handling and controlling e-waste from telecommunication and information technology equipment and methods of treating it;

2 to assist developing countries to undertake proper assessment of the magnitude/quantity of e-waste generated in a harmonized manner;

3 to address the handling and controlling of e‑waste and to contribute to global efforts designed to deal with the increasing hazards which arise therefrom;

4 to work in collaboration with the relevant stakeholders, including academia and relevant organizations, and to coordinate activities relating to e-waste among the ITU study groups, focus groups and other relevant groups;

5 to organize seminars and workshops to enhance awareness of the hazards and sustainable management of e-waste, particularly in developing countries, and gauge the needs of the developing countries, which are the countries that suffer most from the hazards of e-waste;

6 to assist developing countries and facilitate their work in the implementation of circular-economy principles;

7 to support developing countries in establishing robust strategies and implementing pilot projects in the management of e-waste for sustainable digital transformation,

instructs Study Group 5 of the ITU Telecommunication Standardization Sector, in collaboration with the relevant ITU study groups

1 to develop and document examples of best practice for handling and controlling e-waste resulting from telecommunications/ICT and methods of treating and recycling it, for dissemination among ITU Member States and Sector Members;

2 to develop Recommendations, methodologies and other publications relating to sustainable management of e-waste resulting from telecommunication/ICT equipment and products, and appropriate guidelines on implementation of these Recommendations;

3 to study the impact of used telecommunication/ICT equipment and products brought into developing countries and give appropriate guidance, taking into account *recognizing further* above, to assist developing countries,

invites Member States

1 to take all necessary measures to handle and control e-waste in order to mitigate the hazards which can arise from used telecommunication/ICT equipment;

2 to cooperate with each other in this area;

3 to incorporate e-waste management policies/processes, including their tracking, collection and disposal, in their national ICT legislations, strategies and take adequate measures in this regard;

4 to raise public awareness on the environmental hazards of e-waste;

5 to develop platforms or methods for the general public that are easy and user-friendly for managing and treating e-waste in an environmentally sustainable way,

encourages Member States, Sector Members and Academia

to participate actively in ITU-T studies on e-waste, through the submission of contributions and by other appropriate means.

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