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| ITU'S ROLE AND OUR VISION FOR ITU-T |
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| **Abstract:** | This contribution provides the European view on ITU´s role and the European vision for ITU-T. |
| **Contact:** | Mihail IonNational Authority for Management and Regulation in Communications of Romania | E-mail: mihail.ion@ancom.ro |

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GENERAL MATTERS

The ITU’s Context role

1 Since the founding of ITU in 1865 the world has seen great technological change in telecommunications technologies. The pace of technological change has accelerated and now ICT technologies underpin every industrial development and all walks of life.

2 This presents twin challenges: the ITU must keep pace with the digital revolution and address the new technological challenges, yet it has to maintain focus on its competence and expertise in order to have a concrete impact.

3 The objectives of the ITU, taking into account the ITU Strategic Plan, should be to increase worldwide connectivity, to facilitate the development of digital infrastructures and technologies and bridge the digital divides, and to contribute to wider objectives such as the WSIS action lines and the achievement of the SDGs. The ITU should take into account the work of other UN agencies and relevant SDOs by recognizing the work they are doing in the digital field and seeking to cooperate with them as appropriate.

4 In delivering its objectives, the ITU’s work should be focused within the expert remit of its three sectors, i.e., telecommunications standards, radiocommunication and support for developing countries while leveraging the synergies between the sectors following a ‘One ITU’ approach. Broader initiatives by the ITU should focus on increasing international and multi-stakeholder co-operation, recognizing and supporting the complementary roles played by other actors.

5 The key technological change for the ITU to respond to is the ongoing digitalization of telecommunications and the development of new and emerging digital technologies as they relate to its core work. We need the ITU to play an important role in this ever-changing landscape. With a focused response to this change in line with the specific programme of work and expertise of its three sectors, there is great potential for the ITU to achieve the above objectives.

6 With these considerations in mind, ITU can serve as a valued place for discussion - ensuring that stakeholders have an open venue where challenging issues can be addressed and competing priorities aligned. In this way the ITU can seek to engage the capacity of the whole sector to help address the challenges faced by developing countries and deliver the economic and social benefits of ICTs/telecommunications for all.

Vision for ITU-T

7 International standardization work in telecommunications/ICTs is vital. It can help achieve a global interconnected infrastructure of telecommunications/ICTs, and avoid costly market battles over preferred technologies, thereby supporting an environment where users can access affordable services worldwide regardless of underlying technology.

8 There is a complex standardization landscape in the field of ICTs. With its strong relationships with Member States, particularly from developing countries, the ITU has a unique role to play. This needs to be a strategic role which will add value alongside other SDOs, including by building and strengthening partnerships and engaging the capacity of the whole sector. Only by attracting expertise, both private and public, will its standardization work remain world-class.

9 The ITU can play a valuable role not only by developing its own standards but also by fostering understanding of the broader environment to provide information and guidance to Members; by raising awareness of internationally recognised standards developed by other bodies, alongside its own standards; and sign-posting Members to other relevant organizations as appropriate.

10 In its ways of working, ITU-T should strengthen its collaboration with industry, academia and non-government stakeholders, listen to the private sector, civil society and the technical community beyond its own membership, also in order to attract new members and hereby enhance the diffusion of its standards throughout the world. Its processes should include Sector Members, to ensure operational expertise and practical impacts are fully taken into account. It should collaborate with other relevant organizations, recognizing the broader landscape and policy environment in which it operates, understanding where it can add value and collaborating proactively with other organizations for the greater good.

11 It should be a priority for ITU-T to support developing countries, including proactive reaching-out to governments and other stakeholders to enable them to participate, focusing on action to meet practical development challenges, and signposting countries to organizations that can address their needs, including by facilitating access to specific resources located in these organizations. At the same time the T sector should not duplicate the work of the D sector, and work should be appropriately allocated between sectors, including re-allocation where necessary in order to use more efficiently the limited resources both of ITU and its members. The work of ITU-T should remain technical. It is legitimate for Member States to support each other by sharing and discussing best practices on policy matters, but it is for the D sector to facilitate such work.

12 In its ways of working, ITU-T should be more open and transparent, promoting accessibility, fairness and diversity. It should make decisions based on evidence and by durable consensus and should monitor its impact to learn lessons from experience. Only standardization work that is robustly evidence-based will remain relevant and valuable.