



**1st PREPARATORY MEETING OF THE AFRICAN GROUP
FOR THE WORLD TELECOMMUNICATIONS
STANDARDIZATION ASSEMBLY (WTSA-12)
DURBAN, SOUTH AFRICA, 21-22 May 2012**

FINAL REPORT

May 2012

1. Introduction

At the kind invitation of the Republic of South Africa, , the second preparatory meeting of the African Region for World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly (WTSA-12) was held in Durban, South Africa, from 21 to 22 May 2012. The WTSA-12 will be held in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, from 20 to 29 November, 2012.

The main objective of the meeting is to harmonize African positions on various topics to be addressed at the WTSA-12 and develop the preliminary views of Africa that will be sent as contributions to the ITU.

This meeting was attended by 186 delegates from 31 Member States, Associate Members and 31 Observers (NEPAD, SADC, International Organizations or Representatives of other Regional Group).

The list of participants is attached as Annex 1.

2. Official Opening ceremony

The opening ceremony was presided over by Mr. Gift Buthelezi, on behalf of the Minister of Communication of the RSA. The following officials also addressed the meeting:

- Mr. Abdoukarim SOUMAILA, Secretary General of ATU;
- Mr. Andrew RUGEGE, ITU Regional Director, Addis Ababa
- Malcolm Johnson Director of ITU-T;

3. Election of the Bureau

After consultation with delegations, the following bureau was elected:

- President: Jim PATERSON (South Africa)
- Vice President: GUINENA Sherif (Egypt)
- Reporters: Idrissa GASSAMA (Senegal); Christopher Wambua (Kenya)

4. Adoption of the draft work programme

The proposed work program was adopted without amendments. See annex 3.

Session A: Information on the preparation of WTSA-12 and major issues for the ITU-T programme and working methods

The ITU-T presentations briefed delegates on the status of preparation for WTSA-12, including the structures of the WTSA, candidatures, study groups and working methods.

Presentation 1:

The presentation of Mr. Malcolm Johnson, Director of TSB, focused on the process of preparing for WTSA-12 which will be held in Dubai from 20th to 29th November 2012 and the various elective positions in the ITU-T Study Groups.

1. Participation in events

In his presentation, Mr. Johnson pointed out the objectives and conditions of participation by Member States and observers, and the structure of WTSA, namely the five statutory committees of the conference

He further informed the meeting on the practical aspects of WTSA-12, including issues related to accommodation (hotels), procedures and deadlines for submission of contributions and candidatures. During WTSA-12, ITU will run some side events, including an exhibition and side meetings on e-health.

2. Applications

The Director of TSB reminded member countries on the positions to be filled including the management of the following ITU-T Study Groups: SG2, SG3, and SG 15. The deadline for submission of candidatures is on 20th September 2012. The ATU Secretary General called on member countries in the region to forward their respective candidates through ATU General Secretariat for coordination.

Presentation 2:

Mr. Alexander NTOKO made a presentation which focused mainly on the ITU-T study groups and working methods.

1. Study groups

He briefed delegates on the proposals made in respect to revamping the activities of study groups 9 and 11, and proposals for the approval of two Recommendations of Study Group 15. He also highlighted the main study groups of TSB and their mandates.

2. Working methods

Mr. NTOKO recalled working methods in reference to Resolution 1 of WTSA-08. He further explained the procedures of study groups and focus groups as provided for in Recommendations A4, A5 and A7.

Session B: Hot topics in standardization by Mr. Vijay Mauree

The high-interest topics in standardization that will feature prominently in WTSA-12 include e-health, Internet of Things/Machine-to-Machine communications, intelligent transport systems, disaster relief, SMART grid, conformance and interoperability, ICTs and Climate change, cloud computing, and accessibility. Member states in the region were urged to participate in the ongoing ITU-T capacity building workshops, study groups and focus group meetings in order to follow discussions on the hot topics and to provide their input/contributions.

These hot spots, 36 in number - at focus groups and study groups include:

- Coordination at the focus group on issues such as IPTV,
- Review of the following recommendations:

- D195 and D156 (at the CE3),

- D992 (ADSL), G9960 (FO flexible) and G984 (FO passive network), MPLS, Y1731 (Ethernet) at the EC15;
 - Cyber security and identity at the CE17;
 - Multimedia, video compression (H264) at the CE16;
 - Power line carrier (smart grid), climate change;
 - Accessibility
 - Internet and machine-machine communication
 - E-health;
 - System Intelligent Transportation;
 - Cloud computing;
 - Natural Catastrophe [disaster relief]

Mr. Vijay's presentation is available on the ITU website.

Session C: ICT Standardization gaps in the African region

Bridging the standardization gap in developing countries is one of the three strategic goals of ITU-T. Ongoing ITU activities towards bridging the standardization gap include enhancing standardization capability mainly through mentorship and enhanced participation of developing countries; developing human resources; establishment of regional groups; and through use of the Bridging Standardization Fund (BSF) to promote increased participation of the developing world in standardization work. The presentation also highlighted the problems hampering the participation of developing countries in ITU-T standardization work, and ITU-T's interventions and recommendations towards addressing the identified bottlenecks. Member countries commended ITU-T on its ongoing initiatives towards bridging the standardization gap. ITU-T was, however, urged to re-tool the mentoring programme to make it continuous and to align it with the unique needs and circumstances of member states, and newcomers/participants in ITU-T study groups.

Session D: WTSA-12 - Regional preparation Reports

The presentations at session D by Dr. Raynold C. Mfungahema (Tanzania) and Richard Hill helped to inform member states on priority topics that may be subject to contributions for the African region and learn about the proposals from other regions.

Presentation 1: ATU Presentation on African countries involvement in ITU-T activities and participation in WTSA 12, by Raynold C. Mfungahema (Tanzania)

The presentation highlighted the existing ITU-T Study Groups and their mandates, and the ongoing preparatory activities in the African region towards WTSA-12. Some of the high-interest topics for the region include testing and certification; migration from IPv4 to IPv6; ICT and Climate Change; cyber-security and accessibility. Member states in the region were urged to consider adopting the leadership format used during the WTSA-08 to develop and to forge consensus on the region's Common Proposals. Member countries were urged to ensure that they meet the deadlines for submission of resolutions/proposals and candidates for the various study groups and TSAG. Member

countries submitting contributions/resolutions were urged to forward them through the ATU General Secretariat for consideration as African common proposals subject to garnering sufficient consensus from the region.

Presentation 2: ITU presentation on Regional Preparations- Reports by Mr. Richard Hill

Most regions have not submitted proposals/contributions, which suggest that Africa is not lagging behind in this respect. There were no major discussions on the structure of the ITU-T Study Groups. It was noted that there is very limited activity in respect to proposals on the existing resolutions. However, proposals have been made on the review of Resolutions 32, 35, 44, 46, 48, and 56. Member states in the region were urged to follow up on the proposals/resolutions from other regions and individual member countries to familiarize themselves with the thinking of other jurisdictions and regions.

Member countries urged ITU-T to update the table on the status of proposals/resolutions submitted so far and circulate the same to member states.

Session E: WTSA-12 - Open Discussion

Ghana Presentation on full implementation of ITU-T RES. 76 by Isaac Boateng

Ghana presented a proposal calling for full implementation of Resolution 76 on conformance testing and interoperability on account of the persistence of the problems that implementation of this resolution was meant to address, most notably the high cost of proprietary equipment, lack of user affordability and incompatible standards. This situation is creating negative impact on African economies due to increase in digital divide and existence of obsolete and legacy ICT equipment that cannot interconnect seamlessly with modern NGN networks. Full implementation of Resolution 76 is envisaged to increase probability of interoperability, and facilitate better exposure for vendors, among other benefits. Ghana, therefore, requested D/TSB to intensify efforts to ensure full implementation of Res. 76 during the next study period, and vendors to support TSB efforts in bridging the digital divide through adopted resolutions. Ghana urged the African Group to support TSB efforts in implementing Conformance and Interoperability database programme. Director, TSB, apprised member countries on the progress made so far and the challenges experienced in fully implementing Resolution 76. Member countries expressed unanimous support to this proposal, and urged Ghana to develop the proposal to a resolution for consideration during WTSA-12.

Côte d'Ivoire contribution on development of common proposals for Africa (Guy Michel Kouakou)

Côte d'Ivoire proposed a framework for the development of common proposals for the region for consideration during WTSA-12. A table was proposed for use in acquiring information on progress made at the country level on the implementation of the existing WTSA resolutions. The same table will be used to gather information on the candidates nominated to various elective positions in the ITU-T Study Groups. Member countries expressed support to this proposal, and resolved to use the table to evaluate progress

made in the implementation of WTSA resolutions. ITU informed member states that it has a report on the status of implementation of WTSA resolutions. ATU General Secretariat was requested to facilitate the preparation of the report in liaison with member countries. The Secretariat was also urged to coordinate the 3rd Africa Regional preparatory meeting for WTSA-12 at an appropriate time.

Presentation by Josephine Adou on behalf of Regional Study Group 3 for Africa on draft resolution on network externalities

Cote d'Ivoire made a presentation on a proposal for a draft resolution 256 on network externalities to be considered by WTSA-12. The Resolution seeks to bring clarity in the manner in which networks in the developing world levy a special tax called network externality on incoming calls from networks in the developed countries for use in bridging the digital divide. An earlier resolution on this subject was not endorsed by WTSA-08 as some countries expressed concerns over lack of clarity in the manner of computing the tax/levy. After deliberation, it was resolved that the Resolution be taken back to the ITU-T Study Group 3 for consideration and subsequent presentation to WTSA-12.

The resolution 256 on NE was endorsed during WTSA 2008 despite reservation by 20 or so countries. Since then two amendments have been done through annexes in the operationalization of the same.

Uganda proposal on a requirement to accompany new ITU-T Standards with implementation guidelines by Simon Bugaba of Uganda

The proposal emanates from a workshop held in Uganda where operators in Africa observed that they were unable to cope with speed at which new technologies were being developed. Uganda, therefore, proposed that every new ITU-T standard should be accompanied with implementation guidelines to guide in the deployment of these technologies in the region. Member countries expressed their support to the proposal, and urged Uganda to work closely with ATU to formulate the proposal in the recommended structure and format with inputs from the region.

Egypt presentation on the report on the 2nd Arab Region preparatory meeting by Dr. Sherif GUINENA

The meeting took place in Cairo 30th April to 2nd May 2012 to consider among others candidatures for the various positions in the ITU-T Study Groups and the draft resolutions from the Arab region. During the meeting, the Arab Group agreed on proposals to revise 7 draft resolutions. A new resolution on e-health was proposed and intentions were expressed in respect to revision of 10 more resolutions. On appointment of chairmen and vice chairman for study groups from ITU-T Sector Members, it was agreed that pre-coordination would be done taking into consideration geographical representation.

Member countries took note of the report, and were urged to study the proposals made by the Arab Region to explore areas of mutual interest and cooperation. ATU was requested to coordinate proposals and candidatures between the two regional groups.

Nigeria's proposals to ATU meeting on WTSA-12

Nigeria made a series of proposals in support of faster implementation of the resolutions on Conformance testing and Interoperability, and recommendations that encourage standardization of innovations. It proposes continued involvement of academia in ITU's standardization work, and the review of Quality of Service (QoS), Key Performance Indicators to align them with technological developments and industry trends. Nigeria proposed further refinement of the role of vice chairs (under Resolution 56), and maintenance of status quo in respect to the structure of the existing study groups. Nigeria proposed a new resolution or recommendation to obligate national governments to declare telecom infrastructure as critical national infrastructure.

Member countries expressed support to the proposals, and urged Nigeria to send a formal draft resolution to ATU for coordination.

Tanzania's presentation on milestones from WTSA-08

Tanzania briefed delegates on the milestones achieved in the East African sub-region in respect of implementation of the WTSA-08 resolutions. The milestones include the implementation of a conformance test centre in Tanzania with the support of ITU. Tanzania, following the endorsement of EACO, proposed review of supplement on Child Helpline which was adopted at the ITU SG 2. In addition, the EACO Standardization Group was created as a regional group by ITU-T following the recommendation of Tanzania to the ITU- SG 2.

Member countries took note of the milestones in the implementation of WTSA-08 resolutions in the East African sub-region.

ITU presentation on status of implementation of WTSA-08 Action Plan

ITU made a presentation on the status of implementation of WTSA-08 Action Plan. Most of the action plans have either being implemented or are at various stages of implementation.

The report on the status of implementation of WTSA-08 action plans is available on the ITU website. ITU informed member countries that this report shall be updated regularly. Member states were urged to go through the report as they prepare for WTSA-12.

Way forward

The meeting at the end of its work resolved on a roadmap for the development of African Common Proposals for WTSA-12. The roadmap provides for transformation of the proposals into draft resolutions by end of June 2012 and circulated to member countries through the ATU General Secretariat for further input/amendments. Subsequently the final resolutions shall be circulated to individual member states for adoption as African Common Proposals and eventual submission to ITU before the set deadline of 20th September 2012.

It was agreed that the deadline for MS to submit proposals to ATU is 30th June 2012 and we should also factor in The TSAG meeting to be held in June/July 2012

Dated at Durban, May 22, 2012

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