

APPENDIX 5 (to Annex C)

Programme 5 **Programme for least developed countries¹, countries in special need², emergency telecommunications and climate-change adaptation**

1 Background

1.1 Least developed countries

ITU assistance to the least developed countries (LDCs) goes back to 1971, when the Union accorded special assistance to LDCs through the implementation of relevant plenipotentiary conference resolutions. In 2002, direct assistance to LDCs was delivered for the first time to a small group of countries on a biennial basis. This facilitated monitoring and evaluation of the impact made by the concentrated assistance to beneficiary countries. In 2006, the programme was expanded to include small island developing states and emergency telecommunications. Every decade, the United Nations holds a special conference on the LDCs. For the decade 2001-2010, the third United Nations Conference on the LDCs was held in Belgium and it adopted the Brussels Programme of Action. The fourth United Nations Conference on the LDCs will be held in 2011, in Turkey.

1.2 Small island developing states

Small island developing states (SIDS) face similar challenges to LDCs. They face increased vulnerability, which principally arises from their isolation, small size, small population, limited local capital for productive investment and topography. The United Nations Barbados Programme of Action and § 16 of the Geneva Declaration of Principles of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) outline the challenges and needs of SIDS and LDCs.

1.3 Landlocked countries

Landlocked countries face the challenge that they are cut off from sea resources such as fishing, but more importantly they have no access to seaborne trade which makes up a large percentage of international trade. To deal with the constraints facing landlocked countries, the International Ministerial Conference of Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries and Donor Countries and International Financial and Development Institutions on Transit Transport Cooperation was held in Almaty, Kazakhstan, in 2003 and adopted the Almaty Programme of Action. The United Nations has established a programme for this group of countries.

¹ The list of least developed countries is subject to review by the United Nations Committee for Development Policy.

² Small island developing states, landlocked developing countries, low-lying coastal countries and countries emerging out of war situations or affected by natural disasters.

1.4 Emergency telecommunications

Increasingly, natural disasters are causing considerable loss of life and disrupting national economies, severely weakening the affected countries. While neither natural nor man-made hazards can be entirely prevented, information and communication technologies (ICTs) can help reduce their impact and avoid them turning into disasters that impede sustainable development. Over the years, ITU has passed many resolutions on mechanisms to use ICTs to save lives. Article 40 of the ITU Constitution addresses the "priority of telecommunications concerning safety of life".

1.5 Climate change

The process established by the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the ongoing negotiations of its Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee are important international actions aimed at addressing the threat of climate change, mitigating its adverse impacts and assisting all ITU Member States, especially LDCs and countries in special need, in adapting to its adverse consequences. With respect to the role climate change plays in natural disasters, modelling indicates that, in future, continued increases in greenhouse gas concentrations may drive more extreme weather events. All countries, particularly small island developing states, least developed countries, landlocked developing countries (LLDCs) and low-lying coastal countries are vulnerable to global climate change and rising sea levels. These countries are susceptible to a range of natural hazards such as cyclones, hurricanes, landslides, storm surges, droughts, flooding, tsunamis, earthquakes and volcanoes. Their limited land size and resources and geographical isolation can exacerbate the potential impact of these phenomena. Climate change will see climate/weather-related events occurring more frequently and having an intense impact on water resources, land use and marine ecosystems, thus in turn affecting the economies of LDCs, SIDS and LLDCs.

2 Purpose

The objectives of this programme are as follows:

- 2.1 The programme will be valued for its quality and timely delivery of concentrated assistance for the general socio-economic development of countries through ICTs, focusing on the specific needs of LDCs and countries in special need.
- 2.2 The programme seeks to increase the average telephone density in these countries to 15 main lines (ML) per 100 inhabitants³ and the number of Internet connections to 15 users per 100 inhabitants by 2015.

³ See the ITU publication on the mid-term review on the implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action adopted the third United Nations Conference on the LDCs. A new publication will be released for the fourth United Nations Conference on the LDCs in 2011.

- 2.3 The programme promotes universal access to ICTs in LDCs, SIDS and LLDCs, and provides assistance to developing countries in disaster risk reduction, with the aim of helping these countries attain internationally agreed development goals, such as the Millennium Development Goals, by the year 2015⁴. With this improved access, these countries could use ICTs as a development enabler.
- 2.4 The programme seeks to provide assistance in disaster prevention, preparedness and relief/response and telecommunication infrastructure reconstruction/rehabilitation in countries affected by disasters.
- 2.5 The programme seeks to provide assistance to developing countries in the use of ICTs to mitigate and address the effects of climate change, taking into account the impact of ICTs on the environment.

3 Priority areas

There are three priority areas in this programme:

3.1 Assistance to LDCs and countries in special need

Promote universal access to telecommunications/ICTs in LDCs, SIDS and LLDCs, with the aim of helping these countries attain internationally agreed development goals, such as the Millennium Development Goals, by the year 2015⁵, through the provision of concentrated assistance.

3.2 Universal access⁶

Under this priority area, to promote universal, ubiquitous, equitable and affordable access to telecommunications/ICTs. Assistance will be provided to countries in establishing national mechanisms to achieve universal access in both underserved rural and urban areas⁷. It is also important to promote teleworking so as to allow citizens in LDCs, SIDS and LLDCs to live in their societies and work anywhere. On average, 70 per cent of the population in these countries live in rural areas and tend to migrate to urban areas in search of employment. This priority area focuses on:

- 3.2.1 rural telecommunication development;
- 3.2.2 development of appropriate infrastructure and introduction of new technologies and services;
- 3.2.3 ICT policies and strategies;
- 3.2.4 human resource development and training to increase the capacity of LDCs, SIDS and LLDCs to innovate and to participate fully in, and contribute to, the information society⁸.

⁴ Relevant WSIS references: §§ 10, 11, 12, 80, 88, 90, 97, 100, 101, 106, 113, 119 of the Tunis Agenda, and §§ 2, 6, 10, 16, 26 of the Tunis Commitment.

⁵ Relevant WSIS references: §§ 10, 11, 12, 80, 88, 90, 97, 100, 101, 106, 113, 119 of the Tunis Agenda, and §§ 2, 6, 10, 16, 26 of the Tunis Commitment.

⁶ Action Lines B2, B3, C2, C11, D2, E of the Geneva Declaration of Principles, and §§ 26, 90, 107 of the Tunis Agenda.

⁷ Relevant WSIS references: §18, D2 of the Tunis Commitment.

⁸ Relevant WSIS references: §§ 9, 23, 26, 49, 59, 87, 95 of the Tunis Agenda.

3.3 Emergency telecommunications

This is a global priority area for all ITU Member States. It seeks to ensure that assistance is provided to ITU Member States in disaster preparedness, early warning, dissemination of understandable warnings to those at risk, disaster relief/response and telecommunication network rehabilitation. This includes:

- 3.3.1 promoting technical cooperation and enhancing the capacity of countries, particularly LDCs, SIDS and LLDCs, to utilize ICT tools;
- 3.3.2 working expeditiously towards the establishment of standards-based monitoring and worldwide early-warning systems linked to national and regional networks, and facilitating emergency disaster response all over the world, particularly in high-risk regions;
- 3.3.3 providing assistance to countries in the development of national emergency telecommunication plans;
- 3.3.4 strengthening and expanding ICT-based initiatives for providing medical (e-health) and humanitarian assistance in disasters and emergencies;
- 3.3.5 identifying and establishing partnerships with relevant organizations dealing with the use of active and passive space-based sensing systems for the purpose of disaster prediction, detection and mitigation;
- 3.3.6 promoting regional and international cooperation for easy access to, and sharing of, information for disaster management, and exploring modalities to facilitate participation of all countries with economies in transition;
- 3.3.7 ensuring that disaster-resilient features are incorporated in telecommunication networks and infrastructure;
- 3.3.8 making ICT-based solutions available to members, including wireless and satellite-based technologies, in order to establish basic communications for the coordination of humanitarian work during and following disasters and emergencies;
- 3.3.9 carrying out infrastructure damage assessments after disasters strike, and assisting countries to reconstruct and rehabilitate telecommunication infrastructure using such technologies as geographical information systems (GIS).

3.4 Climate-change adaptation

Owing to various climate-change impacts, assistance should be provided to countries in:

- 3.4.1 mapping areas vulnerable to natural disasters and developing computer-based information systems covering the results of surveys, assessments and observations, as part of the development of adequate response strategies, adaptation policies and measures to minimize the impact of climate change and climate variability;
- 3.4.2 formulating comprehensive strategies and measures;
- 3.4.3 providing assistance to developing countries in formulating national and regional strategies and measures on the use of ICTs to help mitigate and respond to the devastating effects of climate change;

- 3.4.4 assisting developing countries in the use of data from active and passive satellite-based remote sensing systems for climate monitoring, disaster prediction, detection and mitigation of the negative effects of climate change;
- 3.4.5 facilitating Member States' participation in bilateral, regional and global research, assessments, monitoring and mapping of climate impacts, and development of response strategies;
- 3.4.6 assisting countries in considering the importance of environmentally sound disposal of ICT equipment.

4 Deliverables and means

4.1 Creation of tools

The goal is to develop guidelines, handbooks, web-based solutions and associated toolkits through both the programme and the work of the study groups in order to address the specific needs of LDCs, SIDS and LLDCs and the challenges of disasters and climate change for all ITU Member States, taking into account the ongoing activities of the other Sectors.

4.2 Training materials

Training materials in this domain are critical for raising awareness and developing and upgrading skills in both emergency telecommunications and climate-change adaptation.

4.3 Assistance to members

Assistance to members can take the form of initiatives led by ITU, through the organization of thematic workshops, meetings and seminars on the priority areas identified above, or through the provision of specific expert assistance to elaborate a project by a given Member State or group of Member States. This includes the establishment of an appropriate regulatory and legal framework⁹ and designing national emergency telecommunication and climate-change adaptation plans.

4.4 Information sharing

Seminars and workshops are important information-sharing mechanisms, but sustainable information sharing can be achieved through the use of dedicated web-based platforms developed by ITU on thematic subjects, and presented in a seamless manner to ensure synergies and good visibility of the work undertaken.

4.5 Partnership

The goal is to negotiate and conclude partnership arrangements with various stakeholders in order to mobilize resources.

⁹ See the Tampere Convention.

5 Relationship with other activities

- 5.1 Provide advice, expertise and support to ITU-D regional offices, including direct assistance to members and ITU projects and projects undertaken within the framework of ITU regional initiatives.
- 5.2 Collaborate closely with ITU-D programmes and initiatives, ITU-D study groups, as well as the ITU Radiocommunication Sector (ITU-R), the ITU Telecommunication Standardization Sector (ITU-T) and the General Secretariat.
- 5.3 Cooperate with other regional and international organizations on joint activities and products.
- 5.4 Undertake activities related to relevant WTDC resolutions: 16, 25, 26, 34, 57, 60, 66 and 69.