



Executive Report

ITU week in the Americas

ITU Regional Economic and Financial Forum of Telecommunications/ICTs for
Latin America and the Caribbean - 13 to 14 June 2016

Regional Development Forum for the Americas Region (RDF) - 15 June 2016

Meeting of the Study Group 2 Regional Group for the Americas Region (SG2RG-
AMS) - 14 (afternoon) June 2016

Meeting of the Study Group 3 Regional Group for Latin America and the
Caribbean (SG3RG-LAC) of the ITU Telecommunication Standardization Bureau
(TSB) - 16 to 17 June 2016



ITU Regional Economic and Financial Forum of Telecommunications/ICTs for Latin America and the Caribbean - 13 to 14 June 2016

Summary Report

The ITU Regional Economic and Financial Forum of Telecommunications/ICTs for Latin America and the Caribbean took place on 13 and 14 (morning) June 2016.

The Regional Economic and Financial Forum of Telecommunications/ICT focused, among other interesting subjects, on connecting the unconnected in a digital converged world, the economic and financial issues in a converged broadband environment and the new challenges in the digital ecosystem

The Forum was attended by 103 delegates (65 from administrations) from 12 countries, including representatives of ministries, regulatory bodies, operators, industry and regional associations, and invited experts.

At the end of the event, the Anatel's representative thanked the BDT for having organized the Forum, which had provided the participants with a good opportunity to hear excellent presentations and explanations by international experts and to share the experiences and knowledge of various countries.

Regional Development Forum for the Americas Region (RDF) - 15 June 2016

General Overview

The ITU Regional Development Forum for the Americas region was held in Brasilia, Brazil on 15 June 2016.

The Forum was organized by ITU in collaboration with CGI.br and Brazil's telecommunications regulator Agência Nacional de Telecomunicações Agência (Anatel)

The Forum reviewed progress made in the implementation of the Dubai Action Plan with particular emphasis on the five Regional Initiatives for the Americas and actions needed to improve access to broadband and internet.

"The implementation of the Regional Initiatives is at the center of our actions and activities", said Mr. Brahima Sanou, Director of the ITU's Telecommunication Development Bureau. "It is through their implementation that we can make a difference at national and regional levels."

He noted that ICTs will play a vital role in the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals SDGs adding that, "the Regional Development Forum represents an excellent platform for ITU, policy makers, the private sector, development partners and all stakeholders to share views on the real progress made in the development of the telecommunication/ICT sector in the Americas Region."

Mr. Sanou told the Forum that significant efforts are underway to prepare for the World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC-17) to be held in October 2017.



Addressing the Forum, Mr. João Rezende President of ANATEL, highlighted the successful partnership existing between ITU and ANATEL. He added, "this Forum opens up more opportunities to strengthen links and knowledge sharing between telecommunication/ICT institutions in the region with a view to improving on service delivery."

During the Forum, Mr. Bruno Ramos, ITU Regional Director for the Americas, presented a status report on the implementation of the five Regional Initiatives. He said, "the Regional Initiatives are a one stop guide to the implementation of concrete measures which will help to bridge the digital divide, and thus build an inclusive information society in the Americas."

The Regional Initiatives for the Americas focus on the following areas: emergency telecommunications; spectrum management and transition to digital broadcasting; development of broadband access and adoption of broadband; reduction of telecommunication service prices and Internet access costs; and capacity building to engage in global ICT policy, with special focus on improving cybersecurity and developing countries' participation in the existing Internet governance institutions.

The Regional Development Forum also included innovative proposals to accelerate the development of telecommunications in the region, and provided contributions to the Regional Preparatory Meeting for WTDC-17, including the bases for preparing the draft WTDC-17 Action Plan.

Summary Report

The Regional Development Forums (RDF) provided an opportunity for high-level dialogue between ITU/BDT and decision-makers of ITU Member States and Sector Members. They served as a platform for assessing strategic orientations that may have an impact on BDT's regional work plan in between World Telecommunication Development Conferences (WTDCs). In this context, this Forum reported on the activities of the Dubai Action Plan, with particular emphasis on regional initiatives in order to get feedback from Membership to adjust BDT's work in each region of the world. The Regional Development Forum for the Americas discussed in detail the five regional initiatives approved by WTDC-14, providing Members with an opportunity to exchange experiences and best practices in the implementation of these initiatives in the framework of the ITU Strategic Plan for 2016-2019.

The RDF was divided in 4 sessions.

Session 1: Review of the implementation of the Regional Initiatives for America 2015-2018

A review of the implementation of the Regional Initiatives adopted at WTDC-14 with emphasis on lessons learned.

The presentation is in Annex.

Session 2: Interactive definition of concrete activities that contribute to the implementation of existing regional initiatives.

It is recognized that Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) can generally support improvements in productivity, management effectiveness,

connectivity, and quality of services offered to all persons; regardless of age, location, sex or economic situation i.e. contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals. The RO of the Americas had earlier shared their plans and regional initiatives. While the benefits of ICT cannot be disputed, there are several concerns especially in implementation. One fundamental impediment is sourcing funds/financing. This session sought to discuss and to better understand the measures that could be adopted to improve financing/funding and ultimately, project implementation.

The moderator, Mr. Cleveland Thomas introduced the 4 panelists who essentially gave brief remarks and proposed initiatives to generate continuing interest in the ICT sector. Their contributions generally fell within the 5 goals of the WTDC Dubai Action Plan. After discussions and exchanges between the panel and participants, the following are noteworthy general proposals that came from the discussions:

1. Every agency represented by participants at the meeting has a similar challenge to raise funds and implement projects;
2. The list of initiatives identified by the ITU's RO for the Americas adequately covers the more pressing issues faced by the region's ICT sector: cybercrime and security, spectrum, broadband, updated legislation and regulations, e-gov services online, emergency communications and policy, to name just a few;
3. Governments need to make ICT a priority and continue to invest in the sector and be less dependent on the private sector and donors for funding. Government could, for example, improve their efficiency in the public service sector which could reduce costs. The costs savings could then go towards investing in other critical ICT areas such as infrastructure and staff training;
4. Timely decisions may help to move the process forward in a sector that is extremely dynamic;
5. Simplification of processes and procedures for licenses and concessions, taxes concessions would attract potential investors who have complained that the bureaucracies are a disincentive;
6. Donors need to align funds to a country's needs and not based on their agencies interests;
7. Much attention is placed on the supply side of the sector (network expansion, apps etc) and not enough on the demand side for good and services. In this regard, it was proposed that markets especially SIDs should be encouraged to develop local content and local innovation etc.
8. Collaboration and cooperation between and among countries and agencies including donors would avoid duplication and waste rather than competing for the limited available funds.

At the close of the meeting participants were invited to meet with ITU representatives if they planned to implement a project and or interested in partnering with the ITU to implement same.

Session 3: Innovative proposals to accelerate the development of telecommunications in the region

This session presented how new players pose ICT innovate proposals to support development in the Americas.

Main topics:



Some of the main ICT problems are related with the incentives to investment in the sector, it is necessary to have a predictable legal framework for investors, since every investment needs a return. The countries have room for innovation, to boost investment and service offering. Other important issues are the sharing of infrastructure, mainly for mobile networks, and the case of spectrum trading that enabled operators to have better efficiencies through flexibility.

In the project, connect a school, connect a community, the community itself could defined many of the uses that have the internet with them. This allows the human and social development through social and technological inclusion. If projects are modular it will be easier to replicate. The technological changes should include moreover human, and are social considerations.

Some of the main challenges for ICTs are: insufficient vibrancy of market competition, market consolidation, broadband access prices not sufficiently affordable in many countries, resource and capacity limitations and ICT industries still nascent with minor contributions to overall GDP. For accomplish our ICT objectives, we need: vibrant competitive markets; regional collaboration for economies of scale; increased percentage of empowered users through awareness and capacity building; secure, robust network and commercial services; data literacy, availability and management.

Recommendations

- It is important to promote the use and application of ICT in all the sectors of the economy, as a tool for reducing the digital and social divide, by developing partnerships between the public and private sectors;
- Deepen the strategic and cross-cutting nature of ICT as a tool to stimulate productivity and competitiveness; ensure institutional coordination between the authorities responsible of the ICT sector to set public policy, regulation and funding of projects;
- To structure and implement sectorial plans, with an impact on other sectors of public administration and economics, as frameworks and comprehensive vision for the development of initiatives and projects massification of ICT;
- To promote and encourage the deployment of infrastructure and expansion of network coverage and services in the areas currently unserved;
- To promote conditions that allow offering greater affordability of low-income citizens and those living in rural areas;
- The Government must have clear vision of the future and it must also be a facilitator so that vision can be performed. Policies should be consistent with the regulation framework in the country, as well as the vision and goals are.

Session 4: ITU-D Sector and Inter Sectorial Objectives: a proposal from Americas to the draft ITU-D strategic plan.

This session provided contribution to the Regional Preparatory Meeting for WTDC-17 and the bases for preparing the draft WTDC-17 Action Plan.

Main topics:



The WTDC is an opportunity for experts to participate and interact with other participants, share success stories, recognize things that need improvement and change.

The BDT must include Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and targets in the Strategic Plan, identifying the challenges for implementation, as well as national priorities.

The vocation of the BDT is seeking access to communications, especially the digital inclusion. Access to ICTs is a challenge that will last long.

The WSIS establishes the role of governments and all stakeholders in the promotion of ICTs for development.

Recommendations

- The next regional and strategic initiatives must be ambitious because the challenges are great;
- Create simple regional initiatives to facilitate their implementation and achieve the objectives sought;
- Regional initiatives should be linked and adjusted according to the current situation in the Americas Region;
- To achieve the objective of access to communications, public and private sectors participation is needed;
- It is important to consider within the Plan of Action the development of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and targets, including indicators to monitor compliance with them.