ITU Regional Development Forum for the Commonwealth of Independent States (RDF-CIS)

Samarkand, Republic of Uzbekistan, 26 October 2022

Original: Russian

REPORT

INTRODUCTION

Regional development forums are a platform for dialogue at the regional level between ITU and the Member States, Sector Members, Academia and other stakeholders with a view to strengthening cooperation and partnership in the interests of supporting the digital development of Member States and strengthening regional activities.

The aim of the Regional Development Forum for the Commonwealth of Independent States (RDF-CIS) for 2022 was to examine the outcomes from the regional initiatives (RIs) of the World Telecommunication Development Conference 2017 (WTDC-17), the participation of the countries of the CIS region in the global projects of ITU, and the results achieved. The forum devoted particular attention to participants' proposals relating to areas of ITU's work in the CIS region in the context of the new regional initiatives for 2023-2025 adopted at WTDC-22. The RDF-CIS allowed all stakeholders to take part in an open discussion of plans for implementing the initiatives, declare their voluntary commitments and national priorities, and exchange about experiences and practice.

The forum participants included more than 60 delegates from seven countries, with more than 20 participating online.

The present report covers the work of the forum and its outcomes.

The RDF-CIS programme and presentations are available on the RDF pages of the ITU website.

OPENING CEREMONY

Ms Natalia Mochu, the Regional Director for the CIS region, opened the event and on behalf of ITU and welcomed the participants.

Mr Konstantin Shulgan, Minister of Communications and Informatization of the Republic of Belarus, welcomed the forum participants, highlighting the contribution of Belarus in upgrading the status of the office to that of a regional office and outlining the primary accomplishments of cooperation with ITU, including the creation of resource centres in Minsk and Vitebsk for persons with hearing disabilities, the construction of an IP telephony centre, and the regular exchange of experience on measures to develop smart sustainable cities.

Mr Oleg Pekos, First Deputy Minister for Development of Information Technologies and Communications of the Republic of Uzbekistan, welcomed the participants on behalf of the host

country. Mr Pekos noted that cooperation with ITU set the standard for the interaction between an international organization and its member States, and for attention to their priorities and needs.

SESSION 1: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CIS REGIONAL INITIATIVES APPROVED BY WTDC-17

The session opened with a presentation by the ITU Regional Office providing an update on implementation of WTDC-17 regional initiatives, including projects and activities under the operational plan of the ITU Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT). The presentation also covered the participation of countries of the region in ITU's global projects.

ITU Member States and partners gave presentations with more detailed descriptions of projects being implemented jointly with ITU, technical assistance, and events held in 2018-2022 for each of the regional initiatives.

Highlights of implementation of WTDC-17 regional initiatives for 2018-2022

1   RI 1: *Development of e-health to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all, at all ages*:

•   Specialized multimedia training courses were developed for questions relating to e-health;

•   A regional workshop on e-health was held for Europe and CIS;

•   Recommendations were prepared for the construction of telemedicine networks at the local (community), regional (districts, regions) and national levels taking into account the specific situation of the countries in the region;

•   ITU online training on a country basis was conducted on questions relating to e-health for doctors and instructors of medical faculties, as well as technical experts and developers of e-health solutions;

•   A reference kit (Russian-only) was developed for assisting ITU Member States with the design and implementation of telemedicine stations, including stations using renewable power sources.

2   RI 2: *Use of telecommunications/information and communication technology to ensure inclusive, equitable, quality and safe education, including the enhancement of women's knowledge of information and communication technologies and e-government*:

•   An international technical assistance project was completed: the creation of a digital skills centre for women and youth in Uzbekistan;

•   Another international technical assistance project is nearing completion: the creation of a smart education ecosystem in Kostanay, Kazakhstan;

•   A project for the creation of an ICT centre for children who are hard of hearing was completed in Uzbekistan;

•   Online courses for women and girls were developed in Azerbaijan;

•   Annual training for IT teachers is being conducted in Kyrgyzstan (2019, 2021);

•   Support was provided for the creation of an advanced augmented reality/virtual reality training centre in Echmiadzin, Armenia;

•   A training centre for IP telephony was created in Belarus;

•   A regional seminar on cybersafety and the protection of children online was conducted for countries of Europe and the CIS;

- A regional forum was held on the protection of children online;

- The online multimedia distance-learning course on the safe use of Internet resources was updated and localized;

- A regional overview of the national regulatory framework for telecommunication/ICT equipment accessibility was produced;

- ITU online courses on ICT accessibility and web accessibility have been localized;

- Recommendations on accessibility of web content were developed;

- Training on inclusive technologies (Kyrgyzstan), a seminar on bringing ICT education to persons with hearing impairments (Belarus) and a regional online dialogue on digital inclusiveness for persons with disabilities were held.

3   RI 3: *Development and regulation of infocommunication infrastructure to make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe and resilient*:

- A cyberdrill was conducted for the CIS countries;

- A document was produced examining the experience of Moscow in putting the ITU-T Recommendations on building smart cities into practice;

- A feasibility assessment was carried out for the creation of a computer incident response centre in Kyrgyzstan;

- National training was conducted on "How to Build a CIRT Based on Open Source Tools" in Kyrgyzstan;

- ITU held two events, the forum "Smart sustainable cities: technological trends, success stories and future prospects" and ITU training on "Key performance indicators for smart sustainable cities to achieve the SDGs";

- A forum was held on "Smart sustainable cities: from concept to implementation";

- The "Workshop on Intelligent Transport Systems" was held;

- The Asia-Pacific-CIS inter-regional cyberdrill was held;

- An ITU study of broadband regulation policies and principles was published: "Report of BBA Regulation in CIS and Neighbouring Countries";

- The ITU Regional Cybersecurity Forum for Europe and CIS was held;

- A CIS regional dialogue on cybersecurity was held;

- A global cyberdrill was held;

- The ITU Forum "Smart sustainable cities: organizational and technical aspects" was held;

- The first national-level cybersecurity exercise was held in Kyrgyzstan;

- The Regional Regulatory Roundtable and Regional Economic Dialogue for the CIS Region were held;

- A study and recommendations on ICT infrastructure sharing in Armenia were produced;

- Broadband access weeks were held in Armenia, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan;

- Workshops were conducted on digital development of administrative/territorial divisions of Belarus;

- The ITU Arab-CIS Inter-Regional Cyberdrill was held.

4   RI 4: *Monitoring the ecological status and the presence and rational use of natural resources*:

•   An ITU workshop for Europe and CIS was held on "Using ICT to Save Lives";

•   An information system was created for monitoring the ecological status and the presence and rational use of natural resources;

•   Support was provided to the project "Regional E-waste Monitor CIS+Georgia".

5   RI 5: *Fostering innovative solutions and partnership for the implementation of Internet of Things technologies and their interaction in telecommunication networks, including 4G, IMT-2020 and next-generation networks, in the interests of sustainable development*:

•   The ITU International Research, Development and Testing Centre for New Equipment, Technologies and Services (phase 1) was created;

•   A regional workshop was held for the CIS countries on mobile number portability and conformance and interoperability of telecommunication equipment;

•   A regional forum was held on "Internet of Things, Telecommunication Networks and Big Data as basic infrastructure for Digital Economy";

•   The ITU forum "Internet of Things: future applications and services. Perspective 2030" and the fourth ITU Workshop on Network 2030 were held;

•   The second annual CIS and Central and South-Eastern European Spectrum Management Conference was held;

•   The third annual CIS and Central and South-Eastern Europe Spectrum Management Conference and the ITU workshop "How to achieve interference-free communication at the current technological stage" were held;

•   A regional workshop was held on deployment of VoLTE/ViLTE networks based on IMS;

•   Technical assistance was provided to Belarus on the unification of top-level data exchange processes and development of the necessary technical standard for the data format and exchange processes of next-generation systems for smart cities;

•   A training package on international cooperation in radio communications was developed: part 1, part 2, part 3;

•   A report was developed on "Network design 2030";

•   A report was prepared on "Development of recommendations for the creation and operation of regional IoT laboratories";

•   A report was prepared on "Development of recommendations for QoS requirements under degraded conditions due to pandemic-related demand peaks for the purpose of ensuring functional robustness of communication networks";

•   A report was prepared on "Development of recommendations for testing of augmented reality services on the model networks of regional laboratories";

•   An ITU workshop was held: "5G (IMT-2020) networks launch and operation experience";

•   A national training series on "Launch of networks of mobile communication of the next generation (IMT-2020/5G)" was held in Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, with another planned later in the year in Azerbaijan.

6   Detailed information was provided and the successful experience of countries in the region was reported for global ITU projects such as [Giga](#), [Connect2Recover](#), Child Online Protection ([Global COP Programme](#)), and the [Generation Connect](#) programme for young people.

7   Representatives of ITU Member State Administrations, Sector Members and Academia organizations discussed the principal results achieved in implementing the regional initiatives of WTDC-17.

Speakers included **Zhannat Dzhabasova,** head of the Centre for International Cooperation and Management Implementation at Dulatov Engineering and Economics University of Kostanay (Republic of Kazakhstan); **Abdulakhad Kuchkarov,** Deputy Director for start-up development at IT Park (Republic of Uzbekistan); **Gulnara Abdyllaeva**, Director of the Digital Innovation Academy (Kyrgyz Republic); **Kristine Gyonjyan,** Director of the Union of Operators (Republic of Armenia); **Vladimir Ivashko,** head of the scientific-technical department at Belarus State Academy of Communication (Republic of Belarus); **Irakli Kashibadze,** CEO Future Laboratory and Startup Central Eurasia; **Ruslan Abdikalikov**, Chairman of the Information Security Committee in the Ministry of Digital Development, Innovation and Aerospace Industry of the Republic of Kazakhstan; **Sharidzhon Gafurov**, Deputy Director of State Unitary Enterprise Cybersecurity Centre (Republic of Uzbekistan); **Mikhail Bunchuk**, senior digital development specialist at the World Bank; **Vadim Poskakukhin,** ITU spectrum management expert; **Alexey Borodin**, advisor to the Director General of Russian Satellite Communications Company (Russian Federation); **Igor Bukharev,** responsible for mobile number portability at the Radio Research & Development Institute (NIIR) (Russian Federation); and **Dmitry Ontoyev**, head of the analytic division in the department of information technologies of the city of Moscow (Russian Federation).

Detailed information on the implementation of the WTDC-17 regional initiatives can be found on the [ITU website](#).

SESSION 2: VISION 2025 – DIGITAL/ICT DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES OF THE CIS COUNTRIES

Session 2 opened with a presentation by the ITU Regional Office of the chief outcomes of WTDC-22 and the approaches to analysis of the current state of the development of countries, on the basis of ITU data. Based on national priorities for digital development and the strategic aims of the ITU Development Sector, the RDF-CIS participants discussed the tasks and projects to be implemented in 2023-2025 to achieve the five regional initiatives approved at WTDC-22.

Next, the RDF-CIS participants familiarized themselves with the activities of the study groups of the ITU Development Sector. Arseny Plossky, deputy laboratory head at the Radio Research & Development Institute (NIIR) (Russian Federation), described the structure of the ITU-D study groups for 2022-2025 and their working methods and emphasized the importance of study group contributions from the countries of our region, pointing out that the experience of developed countries was not always applicable to developing countries and that the experience acquired in the CIS region, piloting a variety of unique projects, deserved to be better known at the international level.

Principal conclusions:

The main session was structured around statements by ITU Member States, Sector Members, Academia, other partners and experts from ITU, outlining the main national priorities and making proposals relating to areas of ITU's work in the CIS region within the framework of the regional initiatives.

1   RI 1: *"Developing infrastructure to promote innovation and partnerships in the introduction of new technologies – the Internet of Things, including the industrial Internet, smart cities and communities, 5G/IMT-2020 and next-generation NET-2030 communication networks, quantum technologies, artificial intelligence, digital health, digital skills and environmental protection"*

The following speakers made statements on this topic: **Rizat Nurshabekov**, Director of the State Radio Frequency Service (Republic of Kazakhstan); **Konstantin Savin**, ITU expert on 5G and future networks; **Mikhail Bunchuk,** senior digital development expert at the World Bank; **Alexey Borodin**, advisor to the Director General of Russian Satellite Communications Company (Russian Federation); **Vahan Hovsepyan**, Director for relations with communities and State policy at RIPE NCC.

Proposals were tabled to carry out the following measures:

•   hold a regional seminar bringing together all the countries of Central Asia and Region 3 on the subject of freeing up and utilizing the 700 MHz band to advance implementation of fourth and fifth generation networks and bridge the digital divide;

•   hold a regional seminar on using satellite communications to bridge the digital divide;

•   conduct national 5G training, including subsidiary topics (initiatives and technologies for the development of transport systems, in particular IPv6, optical switching systems, implementation of VOLTE technology, new 2030 networks, use of AI in networks, autonomous networks);

•   incorporate in the group's work the use of test stands for testing equipment and technologies in the context of 5G implementation created within ITU-T.

International organization partners reported an interest in expanding cooperation with ITU on the development of 5G networks, last-mile connection, and bridging the digital divide with public-private partnerships. Continuing the exchanges of experience with infrastructure projects of other organizations in the United Nations system, in particular the UNESCAP Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway, was deemed to be essential.

2   RI 2: *"Cybersecurity and personal data protection"*

The following speakers made statements on this topic: **Ruslan Abdikalikov**, chair of the Information Security Committee in the Ministry of Digital Development, Innovation and Aerospace Industry (Republic of Kazakhstan); **Mikhail Bunchuk,** senior digital development expert at the World Bank; **Sharidzhon Gafurov**, deputy director of State Unitary Enterprise Cybersecurity Centre (Republic of Uzbekistan); **Vladimir Ivashko,** head of the scientific-technical department at the Belarus State Academy of Communication (Republic of Belarus); **Maria Bolshakova,** deputy head of laboratory, Radio Research & Development Institute (NIIR) (Russian Federation); **Kristine Gyonjyan,** Director of the Union of Operators (Republic of Armenia).

Proposals were tabled to carry out the following measures:

•   hold regional seminars for exchanging experiences on the evolution of the regulatory framework and enforcement practice in cybersecurity and the protection of personal information;

•   conduct capacity-building training for State authorities on cyberincident response.

Some of the successful projects involving international technical assistance might be replicated or taken further, including projects on:

•   creation and capacity-building for computer incident response services and teams;

- improving cyberliteracy within the population, in particular the cybersafety habits of young people.

In view of the successful experience of the region, as seen in the first session, it was proposed to prepare a joint contribution on online child protection for a meeting of the ITU Council group concerned and for Study Group 2 (Question 3/2).

International organization partners proposed continuing joint analysis of cybersecurity and coordinating it with ITU's Global Cybersecurity Index.

3   RI 3: *"Creating an enabling legal and regulatory environment to accelerate digital transformation"*

The following speakers made statements on this topic: **Irakli Kashibadze,** CEO Future Laboratory and Startup Central Eurasia; **Abdulakhad Kuchkarov,** Deputy Director for start-up development at IT Park (Republic of Uzbekistan); **Laura Taganova,** CEO Loca; **Konstantin Savin**, ITU expert on 5G and future networks; **Vladimir Ivashko,** head of the scientific-technical department at the Belarus State Academy of Communication (Republic of Belarus); **Vahan Hovsepyan**, Director for relations with communities and State policy at RIPE NCC.

Proposals were tabled to implement the following measures:

- hold regional training on questions of State administration, regulation and coordination of digitalization processes drawing on experience worldwide (e.g. Korea, India, Kenya);
- develop a digitalization roadmap and easily understandable common approaches for assessing digital maturity at the level of a sector or organization;
- provide support for the development and strengthening of the regulatory framework for the introduction of innovative business models to strengthen the national start-up ecosystem;
- conduct start-up training on using technologies such as AI and VR;
- hold a regional hackathon for young people to promote open-source programmes and tools.

In view of the proposals, the possibility was mooted of inviting start-ups to RI 1 training and workshops.

Wrapping up the discussion, **Natalia Mochu**, the Regional Director for the CIS region, confirmed the interest of several countries in the region in improving the regulatory structure and understanding of aspects of digital transformation. Attention was drawn to the fact that the Global Symposium for Regulators held periodically by ITU was already engaged in studying best practices. Ms Mochu invited countries to participate in the forthcoming symposium, to be held in Egypt in June.

4   RI 4: *"Digital skills and information and communication technology accessibility for the public, in particular for persons with disabilities"*

The following speakers made statements on this topic: **Zhannat Dzhabasova,** head of the Centre for International Cooperation and Management Implementation at Dulatov Engineering and Economics University of Kostanay (Republic of Kazakhstan); **Kristine Gyonjyan,** Director of the Union of Operators (Republic of Armenia); **Vladimir Ivashko,** head of the scientific-technical department at the Belarus State Academy of Communication (Republic of Belarus); **Gulnara**

Abdyllaeva, Director of the Digital Innovation Academy (Kyrgyz Republic); **Mikhail Bunchuk**, senior digital development specialist at the World Bank.

Proposals were tabled to implement the following measures:

- improve children's cybersafety skills, aiming to cover as many children and schools as possible, and holding national workshops on current issues for protecting children in cyberspace;

- translate training materials on protecting children in cyberspace into the national languages;

- conduct surveys among children concerning cybersafety on the Internet;

- support equipment upgrades for centres for persons with disabilities and training programmes;

- hold practical workshops to train persons with disabilities on ICTs;

- create inclusive training centres for persons with disabilities, women and girls, and older persons, to cover vocational upgrading and enhance employment and information safety awareness;

- organize training on new technologies for ICT specialists and IT teachers in rural schools;

- conduct training and hold courses for public administration specialists to upgrade their digital skills and teach them about using smart technologies.

Some of the successful projects involving international technical assistance might be replicated or taken further, including the experience of ITU in creating resource centres and digital skills centres. International organization partners expressed an interest in joint work in that area.

5   RI 5: *"Development of smart cities and communities"*

The following speakers made statements on this topic: **Vladimir Ivashko,** head of the scientific-technical department at the Belarus State Academy of Communication (Republic of Belarus); and **Evgeniy Solovyov,** junior specialist at OJSC Giprosvjaz (Republic of Belarus).

Proposals were tabled to implement the following measures:

- help foster collaboration between centres of expertise and test laboratories in the region;

- develop professional upgrade training for the staff of the public administration (technical experts and managers) for computer literacy and the introduction and utilization of smart technologies;

- hold regional forums and invite speakers with practical experience in the introduction of technologies, to exchange experiences on the development of smart sustainable cities and the evolution of the corresponding regulatory framework;

- facilitate the broader utilization of open data;

- produce information resources for creating and running businesses;

- reinforce capacities for the development of technical standards;

- develop concepts for roadmaps and key performance indicators.

CLOSING CEREMONY

In her closing address to RDF-CIS participants, Ms Natalia Mochu, the Regional Director for the CIS region, thanked all meeting participants for the productive joint efforts throughout the 2018-2022

period. She expressed appreciation for the commitment and initiative of ITU Member States in the CIS region, international partners, and partners from the private sector, academic organizations and community groups, thanks to which great results had been achieved in the implementation of the WTDC-17 regional initiatives. The active discussions were a sign of the high level of interest in accomplishing the regional initiatives of the new cycle. She emphasized that the proposals tabled would be taken into consideration in planning the work of the Regional Office for the next three years.

The RDF-CIS participants thanked the ITU Regional Office for the CIS region and the Republic of Uzbekistan for the excellent organization of the event. They acknowledged the contribution of the Regional Office to the success of the implementation of the WTDC-17 regional initiatives and the measures of the operational plan. The participants reiterated their support and resolve to cooperate actively with the ITU Regional Office in implementing the regional initiatives of WTDC-22.