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| Proposed Modification of wtsa-12 resolution 54 - Creation of, and assistance to, regional groups |

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| **Abstract:** | This contribution proposes minor edits to Resolution 54 to help ensure that work of regional groups of ITU-T study groups is consistent with ITU mandates, to avoid duplication of work being done elsewhere, and to invite all members to assist developing countries by participating in the work of regional groups of ITU-T study groups. |

**Introduction**

In this contribution, the United States proposes minor edits to WTSA Resolution 54 (Rev. Dubai, 2012) “Creation of, and assistance to, regional groups” to affirm: (1) the importance of ensuring that the work of ITU groups is consistent with the mandates of the ITU, the ITU sectors, and for regional study groups, the parent study groups; and (2) the need to avoid duplication of work among ITU study groups, sectors, or other organizations. The United States also proposes edits that, consistent with WTSA Resolution 1 (Rev. Dubai, 2012) Section 2, and consistent with principles set out by the World Trade Organization to create international standards using open processes, invite ITU Members to participate in regional groups of ITU-T study groups meetings to maximize the ability of all members to assist developing countries, the importance of which is recognized by the Constitution, Convention, and numerous Resolutions.

**Discussion**

The importance of assisting developing countries in their participation in the work of the ITU-T is emphasized in the Constitution and Convention and in numerous resolutions in all three sectors. Article 17 of the Constitution, for example, states that “[t]he functions of the Telecommunication Standardization Sector shall be, bearing in mind the particular concerns of the developing countries, to fulfil the purposes of the Union relating to telecommunication standardization, as stated in Article 1 of this Constitution, by studying technical, operating, and tariff questions and adopting recommendations on them with a view to standardizing telecommunications on a worldwide basis.” The United States agrees and fully supports these activities. Resolution 123 (Rev. Busan, 2014) of the Plenipotentiary Conference, “Bridging the standardization gap between developing and developed countries,” is focused on efforts to increase the participation of developing countries in the standardization work of the Union. WTSA Resolution 54 is focused on one particular aspect of increasing this participation – the creation of, and assistance to, regional groups of ITU-T study groups.

In order to most effectively advance these ITU priorities, all members should have the opportunity to actively participate in and contribute to all ITU-T regional group meetings. Section 2.3.3 of WTSA Resolution 1 currently recognizes that any member may be invited to participate in regional groups of ITU-T study group meetings. This invitation for broad participation in the work of regional study groups is consistent with Article 14 of the Convention, which directs study groups to formulate “worldwide” telecommunications standards.

Edits proposed in this contribution remove the footnote currently found in WTSA Resolution 54 that could be interpreted as restricting the participation in regional study groups to members belonging to that specific region and adds an affirmative invitation to all members to participate in the work of regional groups of ITU-T study groups. This clarification to WTSA Resolution 54 is also in line with the decision on Principles for the Development of International Standards, Guides and Recommendations, adopted in 2000 by the Committee on Technical Barriers to Trade of the World Trade Organization.[[1]](#footnote-1) The decision, which identifies openess as a principle and procedure that should be observed when international standards are being elaborated, notes specifically that “*[a]ny interested member of the international standardizing body, including especially developing country Members, with an interest in a specific standardization activity should be provided with meaningful opportunities to participate at all stages of standard development*.”

Additionally this contribution proposes minor edits to this resolution to clarify the appropriate mandate of study groups (and their regional study groups) and to avoid duplicative work by these groups. Numerous Resolutions recognize the importance of avoiding duplication of work both within the ITU as well as with work being done by other organizations. In addition, all work should be done within the resources allocated in the financial plan of the Union.

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RESOLUTION 54 (REV. HAMMAMET, 2016)

Creation of, and assistance to, regional groups

(Florianópolis, 2004; Johannesburg, 2008; Dubai, 2012; Hammamet 2016)

The World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly (Hammamet, 2016),

considering

1. that Article 14 of the Convention authorizes the creation of study groups with a view to standardizing telecommunications on a worldwide basis;

*b)* that Resolution 123 (Rev. Busan, 2014) of the Plenipotentiary Conference instructs the Secretary-General and the Directors of the three Bureaux to work closely with each other in pursuing initiatives that assist in bridging the standardization gap between developing[[2]](#footnote-2)1 and developed countries;

*c)* that Resolution 191 (Busan, 2014) recognized the basic principle of cooperation and collaboration among the Sectors is to avoid duplication of the Sectors’ activities and to ensure that work is carried out efficiently and effectively;

1. the following outcome for the Telecommunication Standardization Sector (ITU-T) in the Strategic Plan for the Union for 2016-2019, adopted in Resolution 71 (Rev. Busan, 2014), focused on the promotion of participation of membership, in particular developing countries, in the definition and adoption of non-discriminatory international standards with a view to bridging the standardization gap:
	* increased participation in the ITU-T standardization process, including attendance of meetings, submission of contributions, taking leadership positions and hosting of meetings/workshops, especially from developing countries;

*e)* that the work of certain study groups, particularly in relation to, among other things, tariff and accounting principles, next-generation networks (NGN) and future networks (FN), security, quality, mobility and multimediacontinue to be of strategic significance for developing countries,

recognizing

*a)* the relatively high level of participation and involvement of developing countries in the meetings of all the Study Groups of the ITU Telecommunication Standardization Sector (ITU-T);

*b)* that regional groups have been established within Study Groups 2, 3, 5, 11, 12, 13 and 17;

*c)* the satisfactory results obtained by the regional approach within the framework of the activities of the parent Study Group;

*d)* that the activities of most of these regional groups have become increasingly important;

*e)* the successful establishment of regional groups under Study Group 3, which leads studies relating to tariff and accounting matters (including costing methodologies) for international telecommunication services and study of related telecommunication economic, accounting and policy issues;

*f)* the sustainability of the regional groups of Study Group 3, and the encouraging start of regional groups established in accordance with this resolution;

1. the importance of observing the principles and procedures for transparency, openness, impartiality and consensus, relevance and effectiveness, and coherence and developing country interests, as set out by the World Trade Organization’s Committee on Technical Barriers to Trade with regard to developing international standards, guides and recommendations,[[3]](#footnote-4)

noting

*a)* the need to increase the participation of developing countries in the work of study groups, with a view to ensuring that their specific needs and concerns within the mandate of the ITU-T and its study groups are better taken into account;

*b)* the need to improve and strengthen the organization and working methods of the ITU-T study groups in the interests of enhancing the participation of developing countries, to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the international standardization work, and to avoid duplication of activities undertaken by other ITU sectors;

*c)* the importance of having appropriate consultative frameworks for the formulation and study of Questions, the preparation of contributions and capacity building;

*d)* the need for developing countries to be more present and more active within ITU‑T's standardization forums;

*e)* the need to encourage more inclusive participation in the work of ITU‑T, e.g. by academia and experts working in the field of international standardization of telecommunication/ information and communication technologies, particularly from developing countries;

*f)* the budgetary limitations, especially in developing-country institutions, for attendance at ITU‑T events of specific interest to them,

bearing in mind

that the application of the organizational set-up of regional groups and working methods consistent with the Rules of Procedures in Resolution 1 could serve to expand and improve the level of developing country participation in standardization activities and contribute to achieving the objectives of Resolution 123 (Rev. Busan, 2014),

taking into consideration

*a)* the experiences and lessons learned by the regional groups regarding the operational as well as organizational set-up and working methods;

*b)* the specific process for approving Recommendations foreseen for the regional groups of Study Group 3 in clause 9.2.1 of Resolution 1 (Rev. Dubai, 2012) of this assembly,

recognizing further

*a)* that a common and coordinated approach in regard to international standardization could serve to avoid duplication and foster the promotion of standardization activities in developing countries;

*b)* that joint meetings of regional groups of different ITU-T study groups, in particular if concatenated with a regional workshop and/or a meeting of a regional standardization body, could encourage the participation of developing countries in these meetings and increase the effectiveness of such joint meetings;

*c)* that in developing countries, a few standardization experts are usually responsible for handling numerous standardization areas within their administrations,

resolves

1 to support, on a case-by-case basis, the coordinated creation of regional groups of ITU‑T study groups, and to encourage cooperation and collaboration of these groups within the mandate of the ITU-T and the parent study group with ITU-D and ITU-R, and regional standardization entities;

2 to invite the Council to consider providing support for the regional groups as appropriate;

3 that in view of the importance of assisting developing countries with their participation in the ITU-T, all Member States and T-Sector Members shall be invited to participate in all regional groups of ITU-T study group meetings,

invites the regions and their Member States

1 to pursue the creation of regional groups of parent ITU-T study groups in their respective regions in accordance with *resolves* 1 of this resolution, and to support their meetings and activities, as appropriate, in coordination with TSB;

2 to develop draft terms of reference and working methods for these regional groups, which are to be approved by the parent study group;

3 to create regional standardization bodies, as appropriate, and encourage joint and coordinated meetings of such bodies with the regional groups of ITU-T study groups in their respective regions, so that these standardization bodies act as an umbrella for such regional group meetings,

invites the regional groups thus created

1 to disseminate information about international telecommunication standardization and encourage the involvement of developing countries in standardization activities in their regions, and to submit written contributions, within the mandate of the parent study group and the ITU-T, to the parent study group reflecting the priorities of their respective regions;

2 to cooperate closely with the relevant respective regional organizations,

 *invites all ITU members*

to participate in all meetings of regional groups of ITU-T study groups, consistent with Resolution 1, to maximize the ability of all members to assist developing countries in the development of international standards on an open and transparent basis, the importance of which is recognized by the Constitution, Convention, and numerous resolutions,

instructs study groups and the Telecommunication Standardization Advisory Group

to coordinate joint meetings of the regional groups of ITU-T study groups,

instructs the Director of the Telecommunication Standardization Bureau, in collaboration with the Director of the Telecommunication Development Bureau, within the allocated or contributed resources that are available

1 to provide all necessary support within the resources allocated in the financial plan of the Union for creating and ensuring the smooth functioning of the regional groups;

2 to consider holding, whenever possible, workshops concurrently with meetings of the ITU-T regional groups;

3 to take all necessary measures within the resources allocated in the financial plan of the Union to facilitate the organization of meetings and workshops of the regional groups,

calls upon the Director of the Telecommunication Standardization Bureau

to cooperate with the Director of the Telecommunication Development Bureau in order to:

i) continue to provide specific assistance to regional groups;

ii) encourage the continuing development of computerized application tools within the resources allocated in the financial plan of the Union to assist the members of the regional groups;

iii) take appropriate steps to facilitate meetings of the regional groups to promote the necessary synergies among the three Sectors, and thereby improve the effectiveness and efficieny of the study groups and avoid duplication of work among the Sectors,

further invites the regional groups thus created

to cooperate closely with the relevant respective regional organizations, and to report on their work in their regions.

1. G/TBT/1 Rev. 12 (2015): The Decisions and Recommendations Adopted by the WTO Committee on Technical Barriers to Trade Since 1 January 1995 (see Annexes to Part 1, 2. Decision of the Committee on Principles for the Development of International Standards, Guides and Recommendations With Relation to Articles 2, 5, Annex 3 of the Agreement) ([https://docs.wto.org/dol2fe/Pages/FE\_Search/DDFDocuments/129845/q/G/TBT/1R12.pdf)](https://docs.wto.org/dol2fe/Pages/FE_Search/DDFDocuments/129845/q/G/TBT/1R12.pdf%29). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. 1 These include the least developed countries, small island developing states, landlocked developing countries and countries with economies in transition. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. G/TBT/1 Rev. 12 (2015): The Decisions and Recommendations Adopted by the WTO Committee on Technical Barriers to Trade Since 1 January 1995 (see Annexes to Part 1, 2. Decision of the Committee on Principles for the Development of International Standards, Guides and Recommendations With Relation to Articles 2, 5, Annex 3 of the Agreement) (https://docs.wto.org/dol2fe/Pages/FE\_Search/DDFDocuments/129845/q/G/TBT/1R12.pdf). [↑](#footnote-ref-4)