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| PLENARY MEETING | Document  |
|  | 7 October 2016 |
|  | Origin: Zambia |
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| COMMENTS ON DOCUMENTS 47 ADDENDUM 8 AND 48 ADDENDUM 14 ON REGIONAL GROUPS AND THE PROPOSED DRAFT REVISION OF RESOLUTION 54 (DUBAI, 2012) CREATION OF, AND ASSISTANCE TO, REGIONAL GROUPS |
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| **Abstract:** | This contribution provides comments on document 47 Addendum 8 on Regional Groups and the proposed draft revision of Resolution 54 as well as Document 48 Addendum 14 also on the Proposed Modification Of Wtsa-12 Resolution 54 - Creation Of, And Assistance To, Regional Groups. It concludes by proposing that no changes are made to Resolution 54.  |

Discussion

Document 47 Addendum 8 proposes to have one regional group for each region accredited in the relevant ITU-T study groups of interest. While this may appear to provide a certain level of synergy and cost savings, cognizance should be taken of the practical implications and possible pitfalls of such a proposal. It is our considered view that the creation of one regional group for each region accredited in the relevant ITU-T Study Groups may in fact disadvantage some groups on account the following:

1. **Diverse/divergent mandates**

Document 47 highlights the increasingly interrelated nature of questions under study as on of the key motivations behind the proposal. However, the table below highlights just how diverse and in a number of cases, unrelated the study groups are:

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| **Study Group** | **Mandate / Area of Responsibility**  |
| 2 | Operational aspects of service provision and telecommunication management |
| 3 | Tariff and accounting principles including related telecommunication economic and policy issues |
| 5 | Environment and climate change |
| 9 | Television and sound transmission and integrated broadband cable networks |
| 11 | Signalling requirements, protocols and test specifications |
| 12 | Performance, quality of service and quality of experience |
| 13 | Future networks, including cloud-computing, mobile and next-generation networks |
| 15 | Networks, technologies and infrastructures for transport, access and home |
| 16 | Multimedia coding, systems and applications |
| 17 | Security |

Merging the regional groups of the aforementioned study groups into one would inadvertently create not only an administrative burden in terms of scheduling meetings and mobilizing all the relevant ITU personnel and Delegates across such a wide spectrum of expertise, but would also result in certain Groups being overshadowed by the more active and prominent Groups.

1. **Level of maturity and activity**

Study Group 3 has been a pioneer in the development of regional groups and currently has 6. The aforementioned regional groups are the longest standing and most mature. Merging the regional groups would penalize those groups that have been active and those that have a large number of meetings to schedule throughout the year.

For instance, in 2016 the African Group of Study Group 3 was the most active and received 41 contributions compared to 4 and below in the other Study Groups as illustrated in the chart below:

Merging the above study groups would ultimately disadvantage the less active groups and also dilute the effectiveness of the Study Group 3 Regional Groups.

Further Study Group 3 has been identified as a unique platform as provided for under section 9.2.1 of Resolution 1 which gives study group 3 the power to develop regional recommendations and reads in part “A Study Group 3 regional group shall decide on its own to apply this procedure (TAP/AAP) for the limited purpose of establishing regional tariffs.” Merging the regional groups would ultimately affect the status of Study Group 3.

One of the proposed modifications contained in Document 48 Addendum 14 reads as “all Member States and T-Sector Members shall be invited to participate in all regional groups of ITU-T study group meetings,”

It is our considered view that regional groups are established with a view to ensuring that their specific needs and concerns are better taken into account from the specific regions perspective. As such inviting Non-Member states of the region and Sector Members to attend regional group meetings would be counterproductive and may distort the spirit of Resolution 54 in ensuring that the specific needs and concerns of the region are taken into account.

Proposal

In view of the foregoing, we propose that no changes be made to resolution 54 as proposed in document 47 Addendum 8, with particular reference to point g) under *noting* and points 1, 2 and 3 under the *resolves* of the proposed revised resolution and document 48 Addendum 14 with particular reference to point 3 under the resolves of the proposed revised resolution.