**Poland’s contribution for public consultation on the development of a new ITU Strategic Plan for 2016-2019**

**Establishment of the formal coordination mechanism concerning development projects in the field of telecommunications between the ITU and third party organisations.**

*This contribution is to draw attention to the untapped potential that can be harnessed for the benefit of the developing world through the establishment of an effective and well-targeted cooperation between the ITU and organizations having resources, expertise and interest in the ICT filed*

**Background**

The International Telecommunication Union is the world leading intergovernmental organization in the field of ICT. The ITU in general, and the Development Bureau in particular, possess **un undisputed and long-standing record of continuous commitment for *the development, expansion and operation of telecommunications networks and services, particularly in developing countries*** (ITU Constitution, Art. 21b). Through years of operation it gained unparalleled institutional capacity and human resources of the highest quality as well as significant competence in implementation of ICT projects.

Moreover, according to the ITU Constitution Art. 21d, one of the ITU-D functions is ***to mobilize the resources to provide assistance in the field of telecommunications*** to developing countries.

In that perspective, it is worth noting that the ITU is however not the only institution tasked with and interested in capacity building and facilitating sustainable growth driven by ICTs. There is a number of regional and global bodies of intergovernmental character that enjoy a well-established reputation for running successful ICT projects in the LDCs, sharing in fact the ITU’s objectives in that field. The likes of the European Union, The World Bank, The European Investment Bank or the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development can be listed as examples.

There have already been cases of successful cooperation on ICT projects involving the ITU and other multilateral stakeholders. For the HIPSSA project the ITU and the European Union joined their efforts in a LDCs-targeted task which aimed at providing “Support for the establishment of harmonized policies for the ICT market in the ACP[[1]](#footnote-1) states”. HIPSSA addressed regulatory challenges standing in the way of the beneficiary countries in their attempts to create a conducive environment for massive investments in ICT infrastructures. The general objective was to provide support to creating harmonized policies for ICT for each beneficiary country in Sub-Sahara Africa. Around 40 beneficiary countries were involved in carrying-out of this project, as well as institutions such as ECOWAS, African Union, African Telecommunication Union, World Bank.

That experience is a great example and an opportunity to draw from in order to take the ITU’s operational approach to a truly global and multilateral level of results-based networking.

**Proposal**

**The idea behind this way of thinking, which Poland has already put across on different occasions (eg. RPMs for WTDC-14) is to work for greater openness of the ITU so that is reaches out beyond its boundaries and try to incorporate third party institutional approach in order to find regional and global synergies especially for the LDCs.**

Poland believes that, when put against the preliminary agreed structure of the Strategic Plan for the Union for 2016-2019, the establishment of a **formal coordination mechanism** **could form one of the strategic goals and targets of the Union.** There is an urging need not only to consolidate ITU relevance in the fast changing ICT environment but above all to mobilize different resources (financial and human) in times of economic crisis. Bringing the following proposal to discussion, Poland wishes to recall ITU-D objectives deriving from ITU-D rolling operation plan for 2012-2015: “*To assist the membership in maximizing the utilization of appropriate new technologies, including broadband, to develop their telecommunication/ ICT infrastructures and services, and to design and deploy resilient telecommunication/ICT network infrastructures*.” Without resources mobilized some the basic tasks of the ITU could run the unwanted risk of failure.

**Given the circumstances the approach of managing, harnessing and putting to work joint efforts coming from different stakeholders sharing the same objectives may well be the very model for the ITU of the future**, a model of multilateral amplification[[2]](#footnote-2) in a global perspective rather than the one of overlapping activities.

**Financial implications for the ITU**

Poland believes that implementation of this proposal would not generate additional costs for ITU budget. The travel expenses of BDT and its staff may increase, however, the negative effect could be mitigated with the use of virtual participation tools and ICTs. In consequence, the fulfilment of ITU-D mission could be easier to achieve and the overall cost for the ITU could be smaller due to the possibility to benefit from the financial contribution of the institutions approached.

**Process**

Poland takes the view that with this approach high on the ITU strategic plan 2016-2019, for the project to take effect, the General Secretariat should:

* examine this proposal and prepare legal, financial and strategic mechanism of potential cooperation,
* enlist organizations to be approached and reach out to them with bilateral or multilateral proposals on enhanced collaboration in the ICT projects.
* where appropriate, foster enhanced and formal cooperation between ongoing ITU- third party projects,
* report annually back to the ITU Council regarding implementation of this proposal.

1. African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States  [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Just to give an example of potential leverage in 2013 alone, the World Bank conducted 9 big projects in the field of telecommunications bringing in approx. 850mln $. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)