EBU

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EBU reply to the 1st public consultation on the ITU strategy for 2020-2023

The European Broadcasting Union (EBU) is very pleased to have the opportunity to contribute towards the ITU strategy for 2020-23. The EBU represents 73 public service broadcasters in 56 countries in Europe, the Middle East and North Africa. The EBU is, as the other broadcasting unions, sector member in all three ITU sectors and, together with its member organisations, contributes regularly to work in all three.

Public Service Broadcasting (PSB) is a key element in efforts to achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). ITU contribution to SDGs is aligned with EBU's goals, as well as with the broadcasting industry notably when it comes to alleviate poverty and reducing inequality (SDGs 1 and 10) through to free-to-air services guaranteeing access to information to all citizens (SDG 16). Broadcasting services are also crucial partners for ITU in ensuring communications in emergency situations (disaster early warning, crisis disaster management and recovery, SDGs 9 and 13).

In addition, broadcasters have a vital role in educating the public, promoting sustainable communities, building awareness of our global ecosystems and the impact of human activity on them, and in promoting civil society through access to information and news. In RAG discussions on the role of ITU-R with respect to the SDGs, EBU highlighted the role that developments in broadcasting play in achieving SDGs 4, 5 and 10 (quality education, gender equality and reduced inequality).

To meet these objectives, PSB service production and distribution must be safeguarded. PSBs have particular requirements in most cases imposed by corresponding national legal and regulatory frameworks which call for the application of appropriate technologies. Cost-efficient production and distribution of PSB content and services are crucial. Free-to-air distribution of services for a mass audience at given quality of service is often a mandatory obligation for PSBs. As far as wireless technologies are employed for production (e.g. wireless cameras, radio microphones, etc) and distribution (e.g. by means of terrestrial or satellite networks) of PSB services sufficient spectrum must be secured.

Therefore, the EBU supports that the ITU strategy continues to reflect measures to protect the ongoing benefits that PSB brings to society in order to further support the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Historically, PSB services have been delivered through dedicated broadcasting infrastructure. Increasingly the EBU and its members recognise that new technologies offer new opportunities to broadcasters and audiences alike to benefit from on-demand and personalised content and services.

Broadcasters are engaging in net neutrality issues, content protection debates, security measures, standardization of production and distribution technologies and the development of new audio/video formats and APIs. These are areas on which the connected world will increasingly depend if it is to thrive, and it is crucial that they are defined and developed in ways to meet society's needs.

Furthermore, the relevance of the ITU in many parts of the broadcasters' world is already being eroded: member states and regional organisations are deciding to use bands for IMT other than those agreed at WRCs; standards organisations like 3GPP are working independently of their ITU counterparts; the secondary status of wireless production technologies in the bands allocated to them has led some administrations to identify alternative frequency bands where greater protection can be assured; video and audio baseband standards are increasingly being supplanted by proprietary technologies.

The ITU needs to define and assert its role in the standardisation and promotion of these standards if it is not to be side-lined. Protection of radiocommunication services and systems is an international obligation within the remit of ITU. The ITU is therefore the pre-eminent international body with the competency to ensure compatibility between the various uses of radio frequencies for telecommunication purposes. For the ITU to do this effectively, close co-operation between ITU sectors is essential, as is close co-operation with other Standardization Organisations and their recognition of ITU's principal role. Certain rules under which the Study Groups of ITU work may also require reviewing. Shorter response times with regards to emerging trends and developments seem to be desirable. Furthermore, it can be observed that globally acting commercial standardisation organisations beyond the influence of the ITU such as 3GPP, SMPTE, IETF, etc., increasingly dominate and shape the development of global communication technologies and infrastructures. This environment is built on support from industry stakeholders around the world. In ITU, sector members have only limited influence relative to administrations. It may be necessary to review the role of sector members in future ITU processes.

The key trends in technology relevant to the ITU-R, T and D

The EBU would also like to highlight the following key trends in technology relevant to the ITU-R, T and D:

1. 5G baseband systems, interfaces, radio frequency standards, and spectrum allocations

    *   Development of standards and allocations that use in frequency bands of 6 GHz and above for 5G.

    *   Development of 5G standards that can be used for broadcasting.

    *   Development of standards that can be used for IoT and Artificial Intelligence in conjunction with broadcasting.

2. New Formats for Video and Audio

    *   Development of standards for systems with image quality beyond UHDTV.

    *   Development of standards for implementing Advanced Sound Systems, such as renderers.

    *   Development of production standards for immersive video and audio, such as high quality VR, AR, and MR.

- Development of new quality evaluation methods evaluating emotional response as a measure of quality.

3. Remote Storage and Clouds
   - Guidelines for cloud usage
   - Standardisation of storage formats

4. Measures for Security for Media Delivery and Usage
   - Development of guidelines for the prevention of piracy of audio visual content

5. Analysis of User Data
   - Guidelines for data analytics in order to allow service personalisation
   - Guidelines on privacy and child protection
   - Develop interaction methods