

RESOLUTION 209 (DUBAI, 2018)

Encouraging the participation of small and medium enterprises in the work of the Union

The Plenipotentiary Conference of the International Telecommunication Union (Dubai, 2018),

recalling

a) the report of the World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly (Hammamet, 2016) inviting the ITU Council to address as soon as possible the participation of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in the work of ITU, in particular in the Telecommunication Standardization Sector (ITU-T);

b) the decision taken by the Council at its 2017 session to start a pilot project until this conference for the participation of SMEs in the interested study groups of ITU-T and of the ITU Telecommunication Development Sector (ITU-D), under which SMEs may participate fully in the meetings of the study groups that decide to join the project, with limitations regarding their role in decision-making processes, including elections for management positions and the adoption of resolutions or recommendations;

c) that the ITU Telecom events since 2016 have focused on fostering the growth of SMEs in the digital ecosystem, and have recognized the information and communication technology (ICT) solutions invented by SMEs;

d) Sustainable Development Goals 8 and 9 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, on promoting sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all, and building resilient infrastructure, promoting sustainable industrialization and fostering innovation, especially targets 8.3, on promoting development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encourage the formalization and growth of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises, including through access to financial services, and 9.3, on increasing the access of small-scale industrial and other enterprises, in particular in developing countries¹, to financial services, including affordable credit, and their integration into value chains and markets;

e) that the United Nations General Assembly recognized the need to improve small business access to microfinance and credit, deciding to designate 27 June 2017 as Micro-, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises Day,

considering

a) that SMEs are essential to achieving national economic growth and development objectives, including advancing the digital ecosystems that are fundamental to sustainable economic development;

b) that SMEs are also central to reducing unemployment, especially for the young; advancement, globally, of gender mainstreaming and adoption of ICTs by women and girls; and promoting innovation and progress in the telecommunication/ICT sector;

¹ These include the least developed countries, small island developing states, landlocked developing countries and countries with economies in transition.

c) that SME innovation and growth is enabled through capacity building, through leveraging existing best practices, and through gaining knowledge of telecommunications and ICT, including relevant ICT technical standards and reports;

d) that, in many countries, mainly developing countries, SMEs have become prominent actors in the industrial expansion process, and in the growth of local production, coming to represent in some cases more than 90 per cent of the national industry;

e) that SMEs' identification of specific telecommunication and other ICT needs and their understanding of barriers to adoption of such telecommunications and other ICTs could be a valuable contribution to the work of the Union, as well as improving the human resources specialized in telecommunications/ICT whose knowledge may have an impact on national development;

f) the participation of SMEs in a pilot project in 2018 conducted by interested ITU-T and ITU-D study groups pursuant to the decision taken by the Council at its 2017 session,

recognizing

a) that SMEs' revenue, number of employees and domicile may have an impact on their available financial resources to participate as Sector Members;

b) that dissemination of the work of the Sectors to SMEs, particularly in developing countries, can build capacity, transfer telecommunications/ICTs and critical best practices, and serve as a factor in fostering national economic development,

resolves

- 1 to encourage the participation of SMEs as Associates in the Sectors of the Union by introducing reduced fees for such entities, pursuant to the provisions of this resolution, without the need for any amendment to Articles 2 and 3 of the ITU Constitution, and Article 19 of the ITU Convention or any other provision of the Convention, with a differentiated level of financial contribution during a trial period that will extend until the next plenipotentiary conference;
- 2 to set the level of the financial contribution for participation in each Sector of the Union at one-sixteenth of the value of the contributory unit for Sector Members in the case of SMEs from developed countries, and one-thirty second of the value of the contributory unit for Sector Members in the case of SMEs from developing countries, subject to ongoing review by the Council;
- 3 that acceptance of applications for participation shall be conditional on the support of the Member States of the Union to which these entities belong, attesting that the applicant is an SME in accordance with the country's definition thereof, and that, if such an entity is approved by their respective Member State as meeting national criteria for an SME, to be eligible for the SME reduced fees they must also have fewer than 250 employees as well as annual revenues below a maximum set by the Council;
- 4 that in no case can a subsidiary or affiliate of a company that would not qualify for reduced fees under this resolution be presented as an SME,

instructs the ITU Council

- 1 to add any appropriate additional clarifications to support implementation of this resolution;
- 2 to submit to the next plenipotentiary conference a progress report on the implementation of the trial and the participation of SMEs, and an economic sustainability analysis of SME participation, taking into account the assessment of the advisory groups of the three Sectors, the purpose which will be the adoption of a final decision regarding the above-mentioned participation,

instructs the Secretary-General and the Directors of the three Bureaux

- 1 to take necessary and appropriate action to implement this resolution;
- 2 to continue encouraging the participation of SMEs in the relevant activities of the Union,

invites the ITU Member States

to inform SMEs of this resolution and to support and encourage SMEs to join ITU and participate in its activities.

(Dubai, 2018)
