

RESOLUTION 64 (Rev. Baku, 2025)

Protecting, supporting and empowering users/consumers of telecommunication/information and communication technology services

The World Telecommunication Development Conference (Baku, 2025),

considering

- a)* Resolution 196 (Rev. Bucharest, 2022) of the Plenipotentiary Conference, on protecting telecommunication service users/consumers;
- b)* Resolution 84 (Rev. New Delhi, 2024) of the World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly, on studies concerning the protection of users of telecommunication/information and communication technology (ICT) services;
- c)* United Nations guidelines on consumer protection, reviewed and approved by the United Nations General Assembly in Resolution 70/186 of 22 December 2015, which establish the main characteristics that consumer protection laws must have, the institutions in charge of enforcing them, and compensation systems so that they can be effective;
- d)* Resolution 188 (Rev. Bucharest, 2022) of the Plenipotentiary Conference, on combating counterfeit and tampered telecommunication/ICT devices;
- e)* Resolution 189 (Rev. Bucharest, 2022) of the Plenipotentiary Conference, on assisting Member States to combat and deter mobile device theft;
- f)* § 13 e) of the Geneva Plan of Action of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), which states that governments should continue to update their domestic consumer-protection laws to respond to the new requirements of the information society;
- g)* §§ 4.4 and 4.5 of Article 4 of the International Telecommunication Regulations;
- h)* Goals 2 and 3 of the ITU Connect 2030 Agenda, on bridging the digital divide and providing broadband for all, and managing challenges resulting from telecommunication/ICT development, respectively;

i) the work of Study Group 1 of the ITU Telecommunication Development Sector on user/consumer information, protection and rights;

j) the regional workshop on increasing consumer awareness and mechanisms to promote informed consumer decision-making, held in Brasilia from 18 to 20 June 2024, with the objective of identifying and sharing international best practices on consumer protection and empowerment frameworks and mechanisms, including effective strategies and initiatives to increase consumer awareness,

taking into account

a) ITU's mandate to serve as lead facilitator for Action Lines C5 and C6 of the WSIS Geneva Plan of Action;

b) that the basic principles of user/consumer relations include education and outreach on the appropriate consumption and use of products and services, in order to guarantee freedom of choice and fairness in contracting, together with clear and appropriate information of these products and services, with the correct information such as specification of quantities, characteristics, composition, quality and price, taking into account the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;

c) that information is the main input of the digital economy and for meaningful and sustainable digital transformation, for which reason it is recognized that the cross-border flow of personal user/consumer data demands the observance of national laws and regulations;

d) that it is necessary to continue work in promoting user empowerment and updating and redefining the protection of needs of users/consumers in an increasingly connected world, considering new and emerging telecommunication/ICT technologies and services;

e) that there is a need to promote digital skills among users/consumers of telecommunication/ICT services, including to enable them to represent and pursue their own interests within the market, noting that users/consumers will have diverse needs based on their own circumstances;

- f)* that similar measures to protect, support and empower, as well as to enhance the level of digital skills, should be taken with respect to users/consumers of telecommunication/ICT services with disabilities or specific needs, as well as other vulnerable groups¹;
- g)* that the establishment of effective protection for users/consumers must also take into account issues like their economic interests and preferences, economic analysis of user/consumer choice in the telecommunication/ICT market, information about security and protection of their personal data, the coordinated fight against device theft, and advances in financial services, among others;
- h)* that policies on information transparency make it possible to increase the level and quality of the information provided by operators and stakeholders to users/consumers, especially on new and emerging telecommunication/ICT technologies and services, to mitigate information asymmetry in the market and to empower users/consumers to pursue their interests;
- i)* that the same policies should ensure access to telecommunications/ICTs for vulnerable population groups, in conditions of use comparable to all other users/consumers;
- j)* that telecommunication/ICT services provided to users/consumers should be based on quality standards;
- k)* that vulnerable population groups in the digital environment are at increased risk of fraudulent activities, including telephone and Internet fraud, and therefore special measures are required to protect them and improve their digital skills,

¹ Vulnerable groups are intended to include women and girls, persons with disabilities and persons with specific needs, older persons, youth, marginalized communities and Indigenous Peoples.

resolves

to continue efforts to develop guidelines and best practices on support, protection and empowerment for telecommunication/ICT users/consumers, especially in relation to new and emerging technologies, covering key areas such as empowerment of users/consumers in the decision-making process and access to clear, transparent information on available services, tariffs and rates, their quality and security, service resilience, user/consumer choice, and the protection of personal data, among other aspects,

instructs the Director of the Telecommunication Development Bureau, in collaboration with the Directors of the Radiocommunication Bureau and the Telecommunication Standardization Bureau

1 to continue to support work aimed at raising awareness among decision-makers and regulatory agencies of the importance of keeping telecommunication/ICT users/consumers informed and empowered about the basic characteristics, quality, security, rates and prices of the different services offered by operators, and at creating and promoting other protection mechanisms to facilitate and support the expeditious exercise of users'/consumers' rights, and also of the value of empowering users/consumers within a competitive market to freely choose the services best suited to their needs;

2 to continue regular coordination and communication with the ITU Telecommunication Standardization Sector and the ITU Radiocommunication Sector on such topics as quality of service and quality of experience of telecommunication/ICT services within their remit that affect user/consumer protection;

3 to issue regular information on collaboration and joint efforts with other international organizations and entities involved in telecommunication/ICT user/consumer protection;

4 to invite Member States to create their end-user/consumer associations that can address issues relevant to this resolution;

5 to organize training programmes, such as workshops and seminars, in order to analyse best practices, to encourage training in telecommunication/ICT services, user/consumer education, education for sustainable consumption and data protection, and to formulate possible recommendations about tools and measures that provide support and protection for users/consumers of ICT services, with targeted training taking into consideration local contexts and the specific needs of users/consumers;

6 to support capacity building on the use of emerging analytical frameworks, considering the user/consumer decision-making process, to support informed and conscientious choices;

7 to facilitate capacity-building programmes to improve digital skills and awareness of user/consumer rights,

invites the study groups of the ITU Telecommunication Development Sector, each within its mandate

to continue developing guidelines and best practices to address emerging user/consumer-protection issues related to new and emerging telecommunication/ICT services and technologies, and protection of personal identifiable information,

encourages Member States

1 to empower users/consumers by developing policies that foster transparent and accessible provision of information and best practices in regard to user/consumer education and rights, and the characteristics, quality, security, rates and prices of telecommunication/ICT services from various providers, especially policies that facilitate the provision of free-of-charge, transparent, comparable, timely and accurate information and may empower users/consumers in the decision making process;

2 to consider the creation of an enabling, collaborative and fit-for-purpose regulatory environment that allows telecommunication operators to deliver telecommunication/ICT services to users/consumers, with the appropriate quality, while encouraging competitive, fair and affordable rates and prices, and in which users/consumers are able to effectively exercise choice within a competitive market to find the services best suited to their needs, and to encourage innovation within the telecommunication/ICT sector;

3 to foster measures to ensure that visiting users/consumers are provided with reliable telecommunication/ICT services of adequate quality, while roaming internationally, and to provide users/consumers with timely information about international roaming rates, and relevant applicable conditions;

4 to encourage telecommunication/ICT operators/providers to develop clear, simple offers at affordable prices, with easy-to-understand, transparent and accessible terms of service and contracts with features for persons with disabilities, while improving user/consumer-education practices;

5 to build the trust of telecommunication/ICT users/consumers in the utilization and leverage of telecommunications/ICTs by developing policies to guarantee and encourage the provision of quality services, and transparency of comparable, updated and accurate information, enabling users/consumers to make informed decisions about their services based on clarity, understanding and accessibility;

6 to include users/consumers with disabilities, persons with specific needs, older persons and other vulnerable groups, so that they have access to telecommunication/ICT services on an equivalent basis with others;

7 to consider improving digital skills among users/consumers of telecommunication/ICT services, particularly users/consumers who are persons with disabilities, persons with specific needs, older persons and other vulnerable groups;

8 to support the establishment of efficient, inclusive and transparent user/consumer redress mechanisms, using various platforms;

9 to engage with relevant stakeholders that can address issues relevant to this resolution;

10 to promote collaboration with the relevant stakeholders to strengthen user/consumer protection frameworks through the exchange of best practices, experiences and innovation solutions at national, regional and global levels;

11 to encourage telecommunication/ICT operators and service providers to pursue tailored approaches that support user/consumer protection,

invites Member States and Sector Members of the ITU Telecommunication Development Sector

to share inputs that will allow the effective dissemination of best practices and policies that they have implemented in regard to this resolution, taking into consideration ITU Recommendations, reports and guidelines, and to explore public-private partnerships for innovative solutions that will support users/consumers of telecommunications/ICTs.