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| PLENARY MEETING | **Addendum 9 toDocument WTDC-17/19-E** |
|  | **16 August 2017** |
|  | **Original: French** |
| Member States of the African Telecommunications Union |
| REVISION OF WTDC RESOLUTION 37 |
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| **Priority area:**– Resolutions and Recommendations**Summary:**This contribution provides a proposal for resolution streamlining and consists in merging Resolutions 54 and 70 with Resolution 37 and suppressing Resolutions 54 and 70.**Expected results:**Revision to WTDC Resolution 37 (Rev. Dubai, 2014) and merge with Resolutions 54 and 70 (Rev. Dubai, 2014) which are suppressed.**References:**WTDC Resolution 70 (Rev. Dubai, 2014), Resolution 54 (Rev. Dubai, 2014) and Resolution 37 (Rev. Dubai, 2014) |

**MOD** AFCP/19A9/1

RESOLUTION 37 (REV. buenos aires, 2017)

Bridging the digital divide

The World Telecommunication Development Conference (Buenos Aires, 2017),

recalling

*a)* Resolution 37 (Rev. Hyderabad, 2010) of the World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC);

*b)* Resolution 65 (Rev. Hyderabad, 2010) of WTDC;

*c)* Resolution 74 (Rev. Hyderabad, 2010) of WTDC;

*d)* Action Line C7 of the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society, covering the ICT applications referred to therein;

*e)* Resolution 139 (Rev. Guadalajara, 2010) of the Plenipotentiary Conference;

*f)* Resolution A/RES/70/1 of the United Nations on the sustainable development goals,

recognizing

*a)* that the telecommunication environment has undergone significant changes over recent years and that progress has been made in implementing the outputs of Phases 1 and 2 of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS);

*b)* that there is still a need to show clearly what the digital divide is, where it occurs, and who suffers from it;

*c)* that development in information and communication technologies (ICTs) has continued to reduce the cost of relevant equipment;

*d)* that in many ITU Member States regulations have been adopted dealing with regulatory issues such as interconnection, determination of tariffs, universal service, etc., designed to bridge the digital divide at the national level;

*e)* that the introduction of competition in the provision of telecommunication/ICT services has also continued to reduce telecommunication/ICT costs to users;

*f)* that national plans and projects for the provision of telecommunication services in developing countries contribute to reducing costs to users and bridging the digital divide;

*g)* that the introduction of new applications and services has also resulted in bringing down telecommunication/ICT costs;

*h)* that there is still an ongoing need to create digital opportunities in developing countries, including the least developed countries, small island developing states, landlocked developing countries and countries with economies in transition, taking advantage of the revolution that ICTs have witnessed and are currently witnessing;

*i)* that various activities are being executed towards bridging the digital divide by many international and regional organizations, such as, in addition to ITU, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), the United Nations economic commissions, the World Bank, the Asia-Pacific Telecommunity (APT), the regional economic communities, the regional development banks and many others, and that such activity has increased following the conclusion of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) and the adoption of the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society, particularly in relation to implementation and follow-up;

*j)* that the BYND2015 World Youth Summit participants, in the Declaration of Costa Rica 2013, called for equitable and universal access to ICTs, particularly for women and girls, as well as other groups marginalized by the digital divide, and called for the United Nations, the international community and all Member States to consider their words and put them into action;

*k)* that the sustainable development goals (SDGs), officially known under the title "Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development", are a set of 17 "global goals" with 169 targets aimed at ending poverty, protecting the planet and ensuring prosperity for all,

recognizing further

*a)* ITU's role as a catalyst, and in particular that of ITU‑D as coordinator and promoter of the rational use of resources in the context of the various projects intended to narrow the digital divide;

*b)* that most ITU Member States have adopted integrated connectivity policies with a view to making affordable ICT services more accessible to citizens, as an indispensable tool in reducing the digital divide;

*c)* that it is necessary to coordinate the efforts of both the public and private sectors to ensure that opportunities arising from the information society yield benefits, especially for the most disadvantaged;

*d)* that the integration models supported by the ITU Member States are an element that integrates, facilitates and does not exclude, one which takes into account the individual characteristics of all existing projects, respecting their autonomy and independence;

*e)* that the integration models propose ways to increase the profitability of existing infrastructure, to lower the cost of developing and implementing ICT projects and platforms, to provide for the sharing of expertise and skills, and to foster intraregional and extraregional technology transfers,

considering

*a)* that, even with all the developments mentioned above, in many developing countries and especially in rural areas, telecommunications/ICTs, particularly in relation to the Internet, are still not affordable to the majority of the people, as is evident at present;

*b)* that each region, country and area should tackle its own specific issues regarding the digital divide, while stressing the importance of cooperation in this area at regional and international level in order to benefit from experience gained;

*c)* that many developing countries do not have the necessary basic infrastructure, long‑term plans, laws, appropriate regulations and such like in place for telecommunication/ICT development;

*d)* that the use of radiocommunication systems, in particular satellite systems, to provide access for local communities located in rural or remote areas without increased connection costs due to distance or other geographical characteristics is an extremely useful tool for bridging the digital divide;

*e)* that satellite broadband systems support communication solutions offering high connectivity, speed and reliability in both urban areas and rural and remote areas, and thus constitute a fundamental driver of economic and social development for countries and regions;

*f)* that the development of radiocommunication technologies and deployment of satellite systems enable sustainable and affordable access to information and knowledge, through the provision of communication services with high connectivity (broadband) and wide coverage (regional or global reach), which contribute significantly to bridging the digital divide, efficiently complementing other technologies and enabling countries to be connected directly, quickly and reliably;

*g)* that the programmes of the Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT) under its action plans, on information and communication infrastructure and technology development, has provided assistance to developing countries in the area of spectrum management and in the efficient and cost‑effective development of rural, national and international broadband telecommunication networks, including satellite,

considering further

*a)* that the distribution of the benefits brought about by ICTs and the digital economy is not equitable between developing and developed countries, and between social categories within countries, taking into account the commitments of both phases of WSIS to bridge the digital divide and transform it into a digital opportunity;

*b)* that equitable access to information and the transition of the countries of the developing world into knowledge economies and into the information age will enhance their economic, social and cultural development, in implementation of the aims of the Geneva Plan of Action and Tunis Agenda and of Goal 2 (To provide assistance to developing countries in bridging the digital divide by achieving broader telecommunication/ICT-enabled socio-economic development) of the strategic plan for the Union for 2012‑2015 in Resolution 71 (Rev. Guadalajara, 2010) of the Plenipotentiary Conference, which is expected to be maintained in the new plan for 2016-2019, taking into consideration that such access shall be affordable;

*c)* that implementation of the 2015-2020 sustainable development goals (SDGs) as adopted in September 2015 by the United Nations General Assembly will play a major role in narrowing the digital divide and the WSIS+10 Statement and WSIS+10 Vision for WSIS Beyond 2015;

*d)* the continuing disparity between those who have and those who do not have access to information and communication technologies (ICT), referred to as the "digital divide";

*e)* the many stakeholders in the public, private, academic, non-governmental organizations and multilateral sectors who are seeking to bridge this divide;

*f)* the lessons learned from the implementation of Action Line C7 of the Tunis Agenda;

*g)* that the goal of using and disseminating ICTs is to bring benefits in all aspects of our daily life, and that ICTs are enormously important in facilitating citizens' access to ICT applications;

*h)* that the sharing of infrastructure will lead to considerable savings in the cost of provision of services and applications;

*i)* that the dissemination of these applications must give due regard to local needs in terms of language, culture and sustainable development;

*j)* that one of the principal advantages of satellite is access to remote, local communities without increased connection costs due to distance or to the geographical features of the areas in which the societies are located;

*k)* that the security and privacy of these applications require the building of confidence in the use of ICT;

*l)* that asICT is being continuously integrated into all sectors of society, the applications referred to in Action Line C7 of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) are triggering profound changes in social productivity and hastening a major leap forward in industrial productivity, thus creating a good opportunity for developing countries to raise their level of industrial development and improve social and economic growth;

*m)* that sharing of experiences and best practices among ITU members will help to facilitate deployment of ICT applications,

bearing in mind

*a)* that this continuing difference in access to ICTs leads to an extreme escalation of social disparities, with negative impacts on the social and economic environment in the various regions excluded from use of ICTs;

*b)* the interest shown by WSIS in ICT integration and the role of the three ITU Sectors in this regard;

*c)* the "Call to Action" of the Broadband Commission for Digital Development, to include ICT networks, services and applications as enablers of sustainable development,

noting

*a)* that digital literacy is a requirement for closing the digital divide;

*b)* that developing countries benefit from integrating ICTs into educational systems, by providing a more effective education experience and ensuring that all students obtain the skills necessary to succeed in a knowledge‑based economy and society;

*c)* that the beneficiaries of such integration will be not only the students, but entire populations;

*d)* that such a transformation will improve education, assist in connecting all citizens globally, and facilitate the effective use of national resources for the future of children and society;

*e)* that countries and communities have limited education budgets which have to be apportioned among many different needs, and so studies on the relative benefits of ICTs in educational systems will help countries and communities make informed decisions,

confirms

the importance of approaches to funding for bridging the digital divide in the Geneva Plan of Action, the Tunis Agenda and the strategic plan for the Union and of their translation into equitable mechanisms for action, particularly in respect of issues related to Internet management, taking into consideration measures for promoting full gender equality, with due regard for people with specific needs, including persons with disabilities and age-related disabilities, youth and indigenous peoples, telecommunications/ICTs for disaster relief and mitigation, and the child online protection initiative,

undertakes

to carry out work from which all countries, especially the developing countries, may benefit, with a view to establishing international methods and specific mechanisms to strengthen international cooperation for bridging the digital divide, through connectivity solutions which support sustainable and affordable access to ICTs, and, in parallel, to continue to shorten the time-frames for implementation of the Digital Solidarity Agenda, beginning with the Geneva Plan of Action, the outcomes of the Connect the World summits, the Tunis Agenda and the strategic plan for the Union,

resolves to request the Director of the Telecommunication Development Bureau

1 to continue to follow up the work pursuant to Resolution 8 (Rev. Dubai, 2014) of this conference in creating social connectivity indicators for the digital divide, standard indicators for each country and a single index, in cooperation with the competent organizations in the relevant United Nations agencies, using available statistics so that charts can be compiled to illustrate the current situation of the digital divide in each country and region;

2 to continue to advocate the advantages of developing low‑cost, high‑quality ICT-customer computers, that can be directly connected to the networks supporting the Internet and Internet applications, so that economies of scale can be achieved on account of their acceptability at the global level, taking into consideration the possibility of satellite use of this computer;

3 to continue to assist in developing a user-awareness campaign in order to build user trust and confidence in ICT applications;

4 to ensure that special programmes under the centres of excellence continue to address the specific issue of ICT training for poverty alleviation, and to give top priority to these centres;

5 to continue to foster the development of innovative models in order to reduce poverty and bridge the digital divide in the developing countries successfully;

6 to continue to identify key ICT applications in rural areas and to cooperate with specialized organizations with a view to developing a standardized user‑friendly content format that overcomes the barrier of literacy and language;

7 to continue to assist in reducing access costs by encouraging manufacturers to develop appropriate technology scalable to broadband applications and having a low operating and maintenance cost, this having been adopted as a key objective of the Union as a whole and ITU Telecommunication Development Sector (ITU‑D) in particular;

8 to encourage members to provide ITU with ICT rural experiences, which can then be put on the ITU‑D website;

9 to continue to assist the Member States and Sector Members in developing a pro-competition policy and regulatory framework for ICTs, including online services and electronic commerce, as well as capacity building in connectivity and accessibility, taking into account the specific needs of women and disadvantaged groups;

10 to continue to encourage development of broadcast-mode methods for promoting ICT uses in rural areas;

11 to continue to help in promoting greater participation of women in ICT initiatives, particularly in rural areas;

12 to promote the implementation of studies or projects and activities, in collaboration with the ITU Radiocommunication Sector (ITU‑R), with a view, on the one hand, to complementing national radiocommunication systems, including satellite systems, and, on the other, to increasing knowledge and capacities thereof, in order to achieve optimum utilization of the orbit spectrum resource, with the aim of stimulating the development and coverage of satellite broadband for bridging the digital divide;

13 to analyse the adoption of measures for collaboration with ITU‑R, in order to support studies, projects or systems and, at the same time, to implement joint activities which seek to build capacities in efficient use of the orbit/spectrum resource for the provision of satellite services, with a view to achieving affordable access to satellite broadband and facilitating network connectivity between different areas, countries and regions, especially in the developing countries,

resolves to instruct the Director of the Telecommunication Development Bureau

1 to continue to conduct detailed studies on ICT applications, focusing on the eight areas referred to in Action Line C7 of the WSIS Geneva Action Plan, and ICT applications for industry, as well as studies on the requirements for sustainable management and investment in telecommunications that enable access to these applications and services, relying upon the expertise acquired in the implementation of that action line, and taking into consideration the means available for implementation (whether wireline, wireless, terrestrial, satellite, fixed, mobile, narrowband or broadband);

2 to facilitate discussion and exchange of best practices regarding the challenges and benefits of implementing projects or activities relating to e‑applications referred to in WSIS Action Line C7 through strategic partnerships;

3 to take into consideration the importance of the security and confidentiality of the ICT applications highlighted in WSIS Action Line C7 and of protection of privacy, in order to facilitate discussions regarding guidelines, tools, strategies and mechanisms; improve collaboration between government authorities; implement user-friendly government services, potentially including integration and personalization of services; improve the quality of e‑government services; and increase awareness of such services;

4 to promote the sharing of Member States' strategies, best practices and technological platforms, increased technical support and training for these various WSIS Action Line C7 applications, and the sharing of guidelines and best practices for these applications with the developing countries, *inter alia* through a regional and/or global collaborative network based on the creation and/or strengthening of ICT applications referred to in WSIS Action Line C7;

5 to work with respective sectors and other partners related to their ICT applications referred to in WSIS Action Line C7, with emphasis on services for remote and rural areas of developing countries;

6 to continue to promote the development of telecommunication standards for e‑health network solutions and interconnection with medical devices in the developing-country environment of, in conjunction with the ITU Radiocommunication Sector and the ITU Telecommunication Standardization Sector in particular;

7 to continue to make these applications a major strand for the activities of the relevant BDT programme, focusing on its key role for the implementation of study Questions related to ICT applications for the previous and forthcoming study periods;

8 to circulate the outputs of these activities on applications to all Member States on a regular basis;

9 to continue to inform forthcoming WTDCs of the lessons learned and of any amendments the Director may propose with a view to updating this resolution;

10 to ensure that the necessary resources within the budgetary limits are allocated to the above actions,

resolves

1 that the Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT) continue to adopt the necessary measures to implement regional projects derived from the non-exclusive integration models which it has acquired, to link all stakeholders, organizations and institutions of the various sectors in an ongoing relationship of cooperation in which information is disseminated over networks, so as to narrow the digital divide in line with the outputs of Phases 1 and 2 of WSIS and the WSIS+10 High-Level Event for beyond 2015;

2 that BDT collaborate closely, through the ITU regional offices, with ITU Member States in order to implement these regional projects, in addition to maintaining an active communication channel between the strategic stakeholders and playing a central role,

invites

international financial institutions, donor agencies and private‑sector entities to assist and to develop different business models in developing ICT applications referred to in WSIS Action Line C7, including public-private partnership projects and programmes in developing countries,

invites Member States

*a)* to consider promoting relevant policies to foster public and private investment in the development and construction of radiocommunication systems, including satellite systems, in their countries and regions, and to consider including the use of such systems in their national and/or regional broadband plans, as an additional tool that will help to bridge the digital divide and meet telecommunication needs, especially in the developing countries;

*b)* when implementing Resolution 17 (Rev. Dubai, 2014), on implementation of regionally approved initiatives at the national, regional, interregional and global levels, to select a project among those proposed for the regions that reflects optimal integration of ICTs with the aim of bridging the digital divide,

invites Member States and Sector Members

1 to incorporate, in their e‑government strategies and programmes, actions to encourage the use of ICTs to improve collaboration between government authorities, actions to encourage the implementation of user-friendly services, potentially including integration and personalization of services to improve the quality of e‑government services, and actions to increase awareness of such services;

2 to participate actively in regional and global collaborative forums dealing with experiences and best practices in the implementation of e‑government strategies and programmes,

encourages Member States and Sector Members

to support the collection and analysis of data and statistics on e‑applications services, such as ICT applications in industry, e‑government and e‑health and ICT in education, that will contribute to public policy design and implementation as well as enabling cross-country comparisons.

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