

RESOLUTION 25 (REV. DUBAI, 2018)

Strengthening the regional presence

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

considering

- a) the benefits to the population of telecommunications/information and communication technologies (ICTs) and the need to promote their greater availability in developing countries¹;
- b) that the development of national and regional telecommunication/ICT infrastructures assists in narrowing the national and global digital divides;
- c) the commitment of the ITU Member States to promoting access to telecommunications/ICTs at affordable prices, with special attention to the most disadvantaged, and to remote and hard-to-reach areas,

bearing in mind

- a) Article 1 of the ITU Constitution on the purposes of the Union, which include to promote and to offer technical assistance to developing countries in the field of telecommunications, and also to promote the mobilization of the material, human and financial resources needed for its implementation, as well as access to information;
- b) Resolution 123 (Rev. Dubai, 2018) of this conference, on bridging the standardization gap between developing and developed countries;
- c) Resolution 5 (Rev. Buenos Aires, 2017) of the World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC), on enhanced participation by developing countries in the activities of the Union;

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

- d)* Resolution ITU-R 48-2 (Rev. Geneva, 2015) of the Radiocommunication Assembly (RA), on strengthening the regional presence in the radiocommunication study group work;
- e)* Resolution 44 (Rev. Hammamet, 2016) of the World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly (WTSA), on bridging the standardization gap between developing and developed countries;
- f)* that, as stipulated in Article 5 of the ITU Convention, the Secretary-General shall coordinate the activities of the General Secretariat and the Sectors of the Union, taking into account the views of the Coordination Committee, with a view to assuring the most effective and economical use of the resources of the Union;
- g)* Resolution 59 (Rev. Buenos Aires, 2017) of WTDC, on strengthening coordination and cooperation among the three ITU Sectors on matters of mutual interest;
- h)* Resolution ITU-R 7-3 (Rev. Geneva, 2015) of RA, on telecommunication development including liaison and collaboration with the ITU Telecommunication Development Sector (ITU-D);
- i)* Resolution 18 (Rev. Hammamet, 2016) of WTSA, on principles and procedures for the allocation of work to, and strengthening coordination and cooperation among, the ITU Radiocommunication Sector (ITU-R), the ITU Telecommunication Standardization Sector (ITU-T) and ITU-D;
- j)* the 2009 United Nations Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) report, which made a number of recommendations on ways to improve the ITU regional presence;
- k)* the 2012 JIU report, in particular its recommendation 12, which recommends that the 2018 plenipotentiary conference should ensure that the role of the regional presence in achieving "One ITU" is mainstreamed in the strategic plan of the Union, and that the ITU Council should ensure that this role is appropriately cascaded down into the operational plans of each Sector;
- l)* the 2016 JIU report, which made a recommendation relating to the regional presence and noted that recommendations from its 2009 report remained relevant,

noting with appreciation

- a) Resolution 70/1 of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), on transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;
- b) UNGA Resolution 71/243, on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system;
- c) UNGA Resolution 72/279, on repositioning of the United Nations development system in the context of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review so as to better position the United Nations operational activities for development to support countries in their efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;
- d) that the Inter-Sectoral Coordination Task Force (ISC-TF) led by ITU Deputy Secretary-General was established to enhance coordination and collaboration among the three Bureaux and the General Secretariat, with a view to avoiding internal duplication of effort and optimizing the use of resources;
- e) the Inter-Sector Coordination Team on issues of mutual interest,

recognizing

- a) the difficulty faced by many countries, particularly developing countries with stringent budgetary constraints, in participating in the activities of ITU;
- b) that regional offices are an extension of ITU as a whole;
- c) that ITU's capacity to hold electronic meetings as provided for by Resolution 167 (Rev. Dubai, 2018) of this conference contributes to reinforcing the effectiveness of the Union's activities, including project implementation as set forth in Resolution 157 (Rev. Dubai, 2018) of this conference,

convinced

- a) that the regional presence is a tool that enables ITU to work as closely as possible with its membership, serving as a channel for disseminating information on its activities, developing closer ties with regional and subregional organizations and providing technical assistance to countries in special need;
- b) the importance of collaboration between the Radiocommunication Bureau (BR), the Telecommunication Standardization Bureau (TSB), the Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT) and the General Secretariat in order to promote and improve the work of the regional offices;
- c) that the regional and area offices enable ITU to be more aware of and more responsive to the priorities and specific needs of the regions;
- d) that resources are limited, and that efficiency and effectiveness are therefore key considerations for activities to be undertaken by ITU, as well as of the need to consolidate the technical expertise and knowledge of the human resources assigned to regional and area offices, to represent the three ITU Sectors;
- e) that, to be effective, the regional presence must have the necessary level of authority to meet the diverse requirements of the membership;
- f) that adequate online access between headquarters and the field offices significantly enhances technical cooperation activities;
- g) that all regional offices should have access to the same relevant electronic information available at headquarters, in order to be able to keep the countries of the region informed;
- h) that full engagement and commitment from the regional and area offices is fundamental for the successful implementation of the strategic plan for the Union, the operational plans of the three Sectors and General Secretariat, and the Buenos Aires Action Plan,

noting

- a) that the role of the ITU regional offices is to assist countries in the regions in many areas such as executing and following up projects, including ones related to the regional initiatives, bridging the standardization gap, capacity building related to frequency management, updating the regions on ITU activities and strengthening collaboration with the regional telecommunication organizations;
- b) that both the Plenipotentiary Conference and the Council have endorsed the principle that regional and area offices should be entrusted with clear and specific functions;
- c) that there should be greater cooperation and coordination among the three Bureaux and the General Secretariat in order to encourage participation by the regional offices in their respective spheres;
- d) that there is a need for ongoing evaluation of the resourcing requirement, including staff, for regional and area offices to deliver on their agreed mandates,

noting also

that regional and area offices represent the presence of the entire Union, that their activities should be linked to ITU headquarters and should reflect the coordinated objectives of all three Sectors and the General Secretariat, and that regional activities should enhance the effective participation of all members in ITU work,

resolves

- 1 to strengthen the functions of the regional offices so that they can play a part in implementation of the ITU strategic plan, programmes and projects, and the regional initiatives set out in Resolution 17 (Rev. Buenos Aires, 2017) of WTDC, within the available resources, including those allocated by the financial plan and from other relevant sources such as voluntary contributions;

2 that regional offices play a key role in facilitating discussions on regional matters and the dissemination of information and results of activities of all three Sectors of the Union and the General Secretariat, while avoiding the duplication of such functions with headquarters, and collaborating with the regional telecommunication organizations to avoid duplication of activities and efforts;

3 that the regional and area offices shall be empowered to make decisions within their mandate, while the coordination functions and the balance between ITU headquarters and the regional and area offices should be facilitated and improved;

4 that the regional and area offices should contribute, to the extent practicable, *inter alia*, to the annual four-year rolling operational plans of the General Secretariat and of the three Sectors, with content specific to each regional and area office, linked to the strategic plan for the Union for 2020-2023 and the Buenos Aires Action Plan, then set up and continue to publish the annual plan/events on the ITU website for implementation;

5 that regional and area offices shall actively engage in the implementation of the strategic plan for the Union for 2020-2023, in particular with respect to the four strategic goals, all sectoral and inter-Sectoral objectives and following up on the accomplishment of the strategic targets;

6 that regional and area offices shall actively engage in the implementation of the Buenos Aires Action Plan, in particular with respect to the four objectives and their respective outcomes, the outputs and the regional initiatives;

7 that the regional and area offices shall actively engage in the realization of the outcomes, indicators and key performance indicators as identified by the Buenos Aires Action Plan and by the Telecommunication Development Advisory Group;

8 that cooperation between the ITU regional and area offices, relevant regional organizations and other international organizations dealing with development and financial matters should continue to be improved, in the interests of optimizing the use of resources and avoiding duplication, and that Member States should be kept updated, through BDT, where necessary, in order to ensure that their needs are being met in a coordinated and consultative fashion;

9 that the regional offices shall be fully involved in the organization of all ITU events/meetings/conferences, in close collaboration with the General Secretariat, the relevant Bureau(x) and the regional organizations, taking into consideration the priorities identified by the membership in the regions, in order to increase efficiency in the coordination of such events, avoid duplication of events/topics and derive benefit from synergy between the Bureaux and regional offices;

10 that, for the effective performance of their duties, regional offices must have sufficient resources, within the resources allocated by the financial plan, including the technological platforms to hold electronic meetings and utilize electronic working methods, and also to disseminate relevant information through the various existing electronic tools to their respective Member States;

11 that the objectives and outcomes identified in the strategic plan for the Union for 2020-2023, along with the four-year rolling operational plans of the General Secretariat and the three Sectors and the review criteria identified in annex to this resolution, shall be used to review the regional presence, and, where regional and area offices do not meet the agreed review criteria, the Council should assess the reasons and take the necessary corrective actions that it considers appropriate, in consultation with the countries concerned;

12 that, to promote the participation of developing countries in ITU activities, delegates of any developing countries which have made input contributions to ITU events can be eligible for a fellowship if the related budget allows,

further resolves

- 1 to review the ITU regional presence in the light of the criteria contained in the annex to this resolution;
- 2 that regional offices shall regularly provide reports to the Sector advisory groups, as appropriate, and to inform the Directors of BR and TSB on regional activities related to their respective Sectors,

instructs the ITU Council

- 1 to include strengthening of the regional presence as an item on the agenda of each ordinary session of the Council in order to examine its evolution and adopt decisions for its continuing structural adaptation and operation, with the aim of fully implementing the mandate and the objectives of the strategic and financial plans of the Union through the coordination and complementary aspects of activities between ITU and regional and subregional telecommunication organizations;
- 2 to take into account the requirements of the Union's membership and give effect to the decisions adopted at conferences and assemblies of the Union;
- 3 to allocate the appropriate financial resources within the financial limits established by the Plenipotentiary Conference to implement this resolution;
- 4 to report to the next plenipotentiary conference on the progress made in implementing this resolution, taking into account the relevant JIU reports, among others;
- 5 to analyse the performance of regional and area offices based on the annual report of the Secretary-General, the results of the satisfaction survey conducted by the Secretary-General, the strategic plan for the Union for 2020-2023, the four-year rolling operational plans of the General Secretariat and the three Sectors and the evaluation criteria identified in the annex to this resolution, and to take appropriate measures and establish guidelines and recommendations for improving and strengthening the ITU regional presence;
- 6 to continue to consider further implementation of the recommendations from JIU reports relating to the regional presence;

7 to consider the outcomes of the review conducted by the Secretary-General and take appropriate action,

instructs the Secretary-General

1 to facilitate the task of the Council by providing all necessary support for strengthening the regional presence as described in this resolution;

2 to adapt, where necessary, the prevailing terms and conditions of host-country agreement(s) to the changing environment in the respective host country, after prior consultations with countries concerned and the representatives of the regional intergovernmental organizations of the affected countries;

3 to conduct an overall review on ITU regional presence, taking into consideration the elements contained in the annex to this resolution, and report to the 2020 session of the Council, including suggesting appropriate measures to ensure the continued effectiveness and efficiency of the ITU regional presence;

4 to submit each year to the Council a report on the regional presence containing, for each specific regional office, detailed information on how the goals and objectives identified in the strategic plan and the four-year rolling operational plans of the General Secretariat and the three Sectors are being delivered in the context of the results-based management framework; the report should include detailed information on:

- i) staffing, including number of staff members and category of employment;
- ii) finances, including budget allocated to the offices and expenses per objective and output, in accordance with the Buenos Aires Action Plan;
- iii) activities related to the three Sectors, outcomes of projects, including regional initiatives, events/meetings/conferences and regional preparatory meetings, and attraction of new Sector Members, in coordination with regional intergovernmental organizations;
- iv) fellowships awarded;

5 to conduct, once every four years, within the existing financial resources, a survey of the level of satisfaction of Member States, Sector Members and regional telecommunication organizations with ITU's regional presence, and to present the results in a report to the session of Council prior to each plenipotentiary conference;

6 to continue to engage with the United Nations, other United Nations development system entities and Member States with a view to supporting full implementation of UNGA Resolutions 71/243 and 72/279,

instructs the Secretary-General, in close consultation with the Directors of the three Bureaux

1 to ensure that all planned activities of the three Sectors and the General Secretariat in the regions are consolidated into the parts of the operational plans relating to the regions and implemented under the coordination of the regional offices;

2 to ensure that the annual operational plans of the regional offices are based on input from the respective regions prior to implementation;

3 to report annually on the implementation of all activities of the three Sectors and the General Secretariat in the regions under the coordination of the regional offices,

instructs the Director of the Telecommunication Development Bureau

1 to implement the following measures for further strengthening the regional presence:

- i) to strengthen the regional and area offices by identifying functions which could be decentralized and implementing them as soon as possible;
- ii) to strive to have in the regional offices staff who have expertise in each of the three Sectors;
- iii) to review the internal administrative procedures pertaining to the work of the regional offices, with a view to their simplification and transparency and enhancing work efficiency;

- iv) to assist countries in implementing the regional initiatives defined in the Buenos Aires Action Plan, in accordance with Resolution 17 (Rev. Buenos Aires, 2017);
- v) to establish clear procedures for consulting Member States, in order to prioritize the consolidated regional initiatives and keep Member States informed on project selection and funding;
- vi) to solicit specialized input from the regional and area offices to better inform decision-making and address the crucial needs of the ITU membership in the region;
- vii) to provide the regional and area offices with greater flexibility, including, but not limited to:
 - functions relating to the dissemination of information, provision of expert advice and hosting of meetings, courses and seminars, as well as availability of all electronic tools required to carry out these activities;
 - any functions and tasks that may be delegated to them relating to the preparation and implementation of their allocated budgets;
 - ensuring their effective participation in discussions on the future of the Union and on strategic issues concerning the telecommunication/ICT sector,

instructs the Director of the Telecommunication Development Bureau, in close consultation with the Secretary-General and the Directors of the Radiocommunication Bureau and the Telecommunication Standardization Bureau

- 1 to take the necessary measures to further strengthen the regional presence as an extension of ITU as whole, as well as measures to ensure that the activities of BR and TSB are effectively incorporated in the regional and area offices, as described in this resolution;
- 2 to support the review of the ITU's regional presence, taking into account the elements set out in annex to this resolution;

3 to review and determine the appropriate posts, including permanent posts, in regional and area offices, and strive to ensure that each region has at least one professional with skills and knowledge relevant to each of the three Sectors, reporting to the regional director, including by training existing staff, while hiring specialized staff on an as-needed basis to meet particular needs;

4 to fill in a timely manner vacant posts in the regional and area offices, where appropriate, planning staff availability and giving due consideration to the regional distribution of staff positions and the knowledge and the expertise in the three Sectors of the Union to the extent possible;

5 to ensure that the regional and area offices are given sufficient priority among the activities and programmes of the Union as a whole, and that, to supervise the implementation of funds-in-trust projects and projects financed from the ICT Development Fund, they have the required autonomy, the decision-making authority and the appropriate means;

6 to take the necessary measures to improve the exchange of information between headquarters and field offices;

7 to strengthen the human resource capabilities and provide the regional and area offices with a measure of flexibility in terms of the recruitment of professional staff as well as support staff,

instructs the Directors of the Radiocommunication Bureau and the Telecommunication Standardization Bureau

1 to continue coordinating with the Director of BDT in enhancing the ability of the regional and area offices to provide information on their Sectors' activities, as well as the necessary expertise, to strengthen cooperation and coordination with the relevant regional organizations and to facilitate the participation of all Member States and Sector Members in the activities of the three Sectors of the Union;

2 to provide Sectoral regional activities through regional offices.

*(Kyoto, 1994) – (Rev. Minneapolis, 1998) – (Rev. Marrakesh, 2002) – (Rev. Antalya, 2006) –
(Rev. Guadalajara, 2010) – (Rev. Busan, 2014) – (Rev. Dubai, 2018)*

ANNEX TO RESOLUTION 25 (REV. DUBAI, 2018)

Elements for review of the ITU regional presence

The review of ITU's regional presence takes into account: the functions assigned to its regional offices under Annex A: "Generic activities expected of the regional presence" of Resolution 1143 adopted by the ITU Council at its 1999 session, and in *resolves* 1 to 11 of Resolution 25 (Rev. Dubai, 2018) of the Plenipotentiary Conference; the recommendations of the United Nations Joint Inspection Unit reports referred to under *bearing in mind* and the development system reforms referred to under *notes with appreciation* in that resolution; and other pertinent decisions.

The review of the regional presence should take into account, but not be limited to, the following elements:

- a) the extent of fulfilment of the provisions of Resolution 25 (Rev. Dubai, 2018) by the Telecommunication Development Bureau, the General Secretariat and the other two Bureaux, as appropriate;
- b) how further decentralization could ensure greater efficiency at lower cost, taking into consideration accountability and transparency;
- c) the result of past surveys of the level of satisfaction of Member States, Sector Members and regional telecommunication organizations with ITU's regional presence;
- d) assistance for developing countries to participate in ITU activities;
- e) the extent of possible duplication between the functions of ITU headquarters and the regional offices;
- f) the extent of fulfilment of the provisions of Resolution 17 (Rev. Buenos Aires, 2017) of the World Telecommunication Development Conference;
- g) the degree of autonomy in decision-making currently accorded to regional offices, and whether greater autonomy could enhance their efficiency and effectiveness;

- h) the effectiveness of collaboration and coordination between the ITU regional offices, regional telecommunication organizations and other regional and international development and financial organizations;
- i) how regional presence and the organization of activities in the regions can enhance the effective participation of all countries in ITU work;
- j) the resources currently made available to the regional offices for reducing the digital divide;
- k) the optimal overall structure of the ITU regional presence, including the location and number of regional and area offices.

This review should be conducted with input from and in consultation with Member States and Sector Members, also seeking input from regional offices and regional and international organizations, as appropriate.

A report on this review should be submitted by the Secretary-General to the Council at its 2020 session for consideration and appropriate action.