Question 7-1/1: Universal access/service

1 Statement of the situation or problem

1.1 In view of:

a) Document 1/192, submitted by the Administration of Benin, concerning the situation of developing countries, and particularly the least developed countries (LDCs), which lays emphasis on the situation of the majority of African countries.

b) Document 1/211 by the Rapporteur for Question 7/1, which stresses the need to find a solution for the financing of universal service through external sources in the case of developing countries, bearing in mind that where the economic dimension of a given country is very small, traditional solutions are inadequate when it comes to gathering the funds necessary to ensure the provision of universal service.

c) the fact that these problems are to be found in various regions and call for the involvement of developed countries, which are the natural sources of financing for LDCs, which is why it is considered necessary to examine the matter on a global rather than a regional basis.

1.2 Considering:

a) that the Rapporteur's Group on Question 7/1 has already completed a large part of its work and has yet to provide a response in respect of the matters referred to in the previous paragraph;

b) that the LDCs need to find solutions that will enable them to participate in the information society, and that universal access/service is an essential tool to that end;

c) that the required solutions call for the elaboration of new ideas aimed at identifying new forms of financing for the development of universal service in those countries, to which end it is necessary to set up a working party;

• that Document 1/RGQ7/022 provides important information on non-traditional sources of financing and can serve as a point of departure for undertaking the proposed studies.

• An appropriate analytical framework as well as an appropriate cost and revenue assessment are important factos from which a universal access/service strategy can be developed and tested in terms of its impact.

2 Question or issue proposed for study

To identify a range of strategic elements of a universal access/service policy and establish a framework to test their effectiveness and economic viability under different environments.
To identify non-traditional sources of financing for the development of universal access/service in developing countries, particularly the LDCs, which take account of the reality of their economies.
Particular account needs to be taken of the sparse geographic coverage, low teledensity (less than 1%) and scarcity of financial resources in those countries, within the context of a trend towards the privatization of former State owned entities and gradual liberalization of the sector - a context which, in the case of the countries in question, makes it all the more difficult to obtain the necessary financial resources to meet the objectives of accessibility, availability and affordability.
To describe the legislative and regulatory frameworks that will be necessary in order to permit access to these new forms of financing.

3   Description of expected output

- Detailed analytical models, including gender analysis, to carry out the development of a sustainable universal access/service policy.
- Proposals for non-traditional forms of financing for universal access/service for developing countries, and particularly LDCs.
- c)   Courses of action to be recommended to the various administrations for accessing those new forms of financing.

4   Required timing of expected output

Annual report.

5   Proposers/sponsors of the Question

Developing countries and LDCs.

6   Sources of input required for carrying out the study

a)   Contributions from Member States and Sector Members.

b)   International cooperation organizations.

c)   International finance bodies.

d)   Countries and/or associations of countries which provide funds for international cooperation.

e)   Surveys/benchmarking.

f)   Information available from ITU.

g)   Experts in the field of universal access/service.

7   Target audience for the output

Developing countries and especially LDCs.

8   Proposed methods for handling this Question

Given the nature of the proposed Question, the potential quantity of information sources required and the time that will have to be devoted to identifying solutions to the issues at hand, it is considered necessary that the question be addressed within a **study group** and if necessary by experts group over a multi-year study period (with submission of interim results).

9   Coordination

Resolution on Mainstreaming Gender in ITU Programmes to be taken in consideration.

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