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The above-mentioned Council document is proposed as an information document to the TDAG.  
It can be reached at: <http://www.itu.int/md/S08-CL-C-0028>.

Agenda item: PL 4.4

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## Report by the Secretary-General

### STRENGTHENING THE REGIONAL PRESENCE

#### Summary

The purpose of this document is to provide the Council with a status report on the implementation of Resolution 25 (Rev. Antalya, 2006) on Strengthening the Regional presence.

#### Action required

Council is requested to **note** the progress made in implementing Resolution 25 (Rev. Antalya, 2006) and **provide guidance** on the implementation of the evaluation requested by PP-06.

#### References

*Resolution 25 (Rev. Antalya, 2006)*

## 1. Background

1.1 Bearing in mind the results of past implementation of Resolution 25 (Kyoto, 1994; Rev. 1998; Rev. 2002), Resolution 25 (Rev. Antalya, 2006) calls for further strengthening of the Regional Presence to enable ITU to work as closely as possible with its membership, improve the dissemination of information on its activities and develop closer ties with regional and sub-regional organizations.

1.2 The Resolution emphasizes adequate staffing of the field offices, empowering the regional offices to make decisions within their mandate, improvement of working methods and procedures and further embracing of the activities of the General Secretariat and the three Sectors in the regional offices.

## 2. Staffing of the Regional Presence

2.1 The Director of the BDT has consistently taken action to fill vacant posts in the field offices, given the new requirements under the ICT changing environment and within allocated budgetary resources. For empowering the regional presence and to address the immediate human

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capacity needs in the regions, two senior professional posts were filled in late 2007. Recruitment of two further professional posts was achieved in early 2008, and decisions are expected in the near future of the filling of another two professional posts.

2.2 It has also been noted that staff in Regional Offices have been in the same post for a long time. Moreover, only staff from the region are posted in that regional office. Management is currently studying mobility in the regional offices as well as between Headquarters and Regional Offices. This will of course be included in the JIU Report, but in the meantime, management is considering voluntary mobility among staff.

- As of 30 June 2008, the staffing of the field offices is as follows:

Field Offices	Staff Members			Expenditure 2007
	D	P	G	CHF (000)
<b>AFRICA</b>				
RO Addis Ababa	1	2	3	789
AO Dakar		3	2	793
AO Harare		2	1	540
AO Yaounde		1	1	285
<b>AMERICAS</b>				
RO Brasilia	1	2	2	864
AO Bridgetown		1	1	377
AO Santiago		..*	1	196
AO Tegucigalpa		1	1	275
<b>ARAB STATES</b>				
RO Cairo	1	3**	4	983
<b>ASIA &amp; PACIFIC</b>				
RO Bangkok	1	3***	3	540
AO Jakarta		1	1	302
<b>CIS</b>				
AO Moscow		2	1	283
<b>TOTAL</b>	4	21	21	6,227

Note:

\* P5 incumbent retired mid-2007. Vacancy Notice published, recruitment expected shortly;

\*\* Replacement of 2 P5 staff to take place during 2008 for staff who retired.

\*\*\* In addition to the recently appointed P5 & P4, there is one short-term P3 staff.

### 3. Empowering the Regional Offices

3.1 The BDT carried out several actions aimed at empowering the Regional Offices, among which the most significant are:

- Greater and more direct input on BDT activities from the Regions, deeper collaboration between Headquarters and field staff and a more adequate distribution of tasks were focused in the re-organization of the Bureau. The new structure and working interactions

further encourage full use of the professional expertise of field staff to perform coordination and representation functions on behalf of Headquarters.

- b) Reinforcement of ITU's mandate and capacity as an executing agency continued. The Regional/ Area offices have been providing the necessary support in the development of small and large scale projects, as well as their monitoring and evaluation. The Regional Offices have also been working in collaboration with the BDT Projects Unit on the development of project documents under umbrella of the Regional Initiatives.
- c) In close coordination with the Regional Offices, Headquarters is working with potential donors and other partners to help fill the major gaps in access to ICT infrastructure and services in each region, including new initiatives such as the Connect the World events.
- d) In collaboration with the Conferences and Publications department, the BDT coordinated the stocking of all Regional Offices with copies of all ITU publications with the aim to capitalize on the Offices' capacity as an important vector for ITU's image and ITU-generated information. Some of the expected benefits include stimulation of local private sector interest in sector membership, ITU awareness raising with local academic networks, and raising of ITU profile in general at the field level. It is planned to extend this exercise to Area Offices to enhance Field involvement and the effectiveness of this network.
- e) Professional staff from Regional/Area Offices have been given the opportunity to attend ITU-D Study Group meetings, at the same time lending their expertise and using the meetings as a personal learning platform. A call for Training requirements for has also been made to all regions and these are being actively reviewed as part of the BDT Training Plan for the biennium.
- f) The establishment of Centers of Excellence (CoE) in all regions is contributing to the diversification and enhancement of the ITU Regional Presence, even though they are not *per se* part of the field offices.

#### **4. Improvement of Working Methods and Procedures**

- a) In the framework of the implementation of the team-based project approach, the BDT carried out several activities aimed at revision of administrative procedures and the implementation of new working methods, as follows:
- b) Under the new BDT working methods and procedures, the access afforded to Regional Offices to deal directly with the BDT units and support services at Headquarters is enhanced. Other procedures and processes are also under active review, and will take into account feedback from users in the field.
- c) The IT capacity of field offices has been improved. The bandwidth capacity of many of the Offices has been doubled, and more resources allocated for web/teleconferencing equipment, and for the upgrade of facilities for interactive and collaborative web-based meetings.
- d) Field access to information and other integrated systems has also improved. A new ITU-D Internal Web Portal was launched to provide internet access to all Offices and BDT Headquarters staff to BDT working tools and information. Components include: internal contact details, BDT "e-procedures", the Global Directory, the Operational Plan System (DAP), ICT Eye, links to ITU Regional WebPages, as well as links to UN Common System information (Security, DSA, Exchange rates, UNDP contact lists, etc). A new portal for ITU-D Projects has been developed in order to offer the Regional Offices automated capacity to oversee the implementation of projects financed from funds-in-trust and the ICT

Development Fund. The tool also aims at providing a Web promotional portal for ITU-D projects. The DAP system itself was overhauled to enable data entry and review from the Field, and significant automated improvements were made to the Expert Recruitment Process, seeing it take a more on-line approach. DAP Procedures are being revised and training updates are planned for Field and Headquarters staff. Heads of the Regional Offices were also given an overview of the new SAP-SRM Procurement System. Training is planned for assistants in the Regions. All Regional Area Offices also have access to ITU Portal.

- e) Activity Assessment and other Coordination Teleconferences are now held regularly with the express aim of improving information exchange between headquarters and field offices, and enhancing internal coordination.

## **5. Collaboration with the General Secretariat and the other Sectors**

- a) Field staff represents the ITU Secretary-General at important events taking place in their respective region, as needed.
- b) Under the ITU-D operational plan for 2007-2008, several regional/sub-regional meetings were organized jointly by BDT and TSB or BR, while others will be further coordinated and planned for 2009.
- c) Using this collaborative spirit between the BDT, TSB, BR and the Regional Offices as a basis, the ITU initiated the ITU Regional Development Forum as an annual event for each of the regions. The five Forums held to-date have been devoted to “Bridging the ICT Standardisation Gap in developing countries” and organized alongside regional preparatory meetings for [WTSA-08](#)<sup>1</sup>. Key themes for the 2009 ITU Regional Development Forums will be decided in close collaboration with the Regional Offices and will focus on the priority areas for each region.
- d) The BDT continuously seeks to strengthen the cooperation with regional and sub-regional organizations. For specific actions and detailed information, the ITU-D draft Operational Plan for 2009-2012 refers. The complete plan data can be found at <http://www.itu.int/ITU-D/pdf/op/OP2009-2012.PDF>.

## **6. Evaluation of the Regional Presence**

- a) Pursuant to Resolution 25 (Rev. Antalya, 2006), an evaluation on the effectiveness of ITU’s regional presence by an independent body is to be carried out. The United Nations Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) has been requested to have such an evaluation included in their work programme as early as possible, so that a report can be submitted to Council 2009, with a view to report to PP-10. The JIU has confirmed that the evaluation has been included in their work programme for 2009.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.itu.int/ITU-D/tech/indexevents.html>