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| **Regional Preparatory Meeting  for WTDC-17 for CIS (RPM-CIS)** | P:\SUP\Logos\Post-150th Anniv\ITU-logo-UNblue.jpg |
| **Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic, 9-11 November 2016** | |
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| **8 November 2016** |
| **English only** |
| **Director, Telecommunication Development Bureau** | |
| Regional Development Forum for the CIS SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS | |

**Summary:**

The document contains summary of the discussions of the Regional Development Forum that took place in Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic, on 8 November 2016.

**Expected results:**

N/A

**References:**

N/A

**Background**

ITU Regional Development Forum for the CIS (RDF-CIS) was organized by the Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT) of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) in Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic on November 8, 2016 at the kind invitation of the State Committee of Information Technologies and Communications of the Kyrgyz Republic. The Forum was held on the eve of the Regional Preparatory Meeting for WTDC-17 for CIS (RPM-CIS) to be held from 9 to 11 November 2016. The RDF-CIS’s main objective was to provide a platform for reviewing the implementation of the CIS regional initiatives approved by WTDC-14, to discuss partnership and resource mobilization activities in the CIS, and to define perspective areas of ICT development beyond 2017 in the context of contributing to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. The outcome will be submitted as an information document to the RPM-CIS. More than 100 participants representing 9 Member States from the CIS area and 2 Member States from outside the region attended the Forum. The list of participants can be found [here](http://www.itu.int/md/D14-RPMCIS-ADM-0001/en). This report provides an overview of the issues discussed, as well as the issues identified during in the course of the Forum. The agenda can be found [on the website](http://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Conferences/WTDC/WTDC17/RPM-CIS/Documents/RDF_CIS_16_Agenda_EN.PDF).

**Opening Ceremony**

The opening remarks were provided by the following high-level speakers Mr Bakyt Sharshembiev, Chairman, State Committee of Information Technologies and Communications of the Kyrgyz Republic; Mr Brahima Sanou, Director, Telecommunication Development Bureau, International Telecommunication Union; Mr Alexander Avanessov, UN Resident Coordinator/UNDP Resident Representative in the Kyrgyz Republic; Mr Nurudin Mukhitdinov, Director General, RCC Executive Committee. The Opening Ceremony was moderated by Mr Murataly Djamanbaev, Rector of the Kyrgyz State Technical University.

Mr Murataly Djamanbaev, Rector of the Kyrgyz State Technical University welcomed all participants at the Kyrgyz State Technical University, in 2017 celebrating it’s the 62nd anniversary. He highlighted that the University is leading in training specialists in field of engineering and ICTs and is closely cooperating with the ITU as its academia member. Series of projects were implemented by the University in close cooperation with ITU that will be presented during RDF and RPM. University if ready for cooperation in the future.

Mr Bakyt Sharshembiev, Chairman of the State Committee of Information Technologies and Communications of the Kyrgyz Republic, welcomed all participants on behalf of the Government and underlined its commitment towards the implementation of ICTs and support to ITU. He noted that ICTs are perceived as natural enabler of sustainable development and have the potential to unlock new opportunities for socio-economic growth. He underlined that currently, education, healthcare, infrastructure and development of public services are current priorities of Kyrgyz Republic. He highlighted the importance of cross sectoral dialogue on ICTs and drew attention to the fact that RDF attracted several stakeholders from different sectors, e.g. health, education, finance, as well as several international organizations, business community, academia and other stakeholders from CIS and those from outside of the CIS region

Mr Brahima Sanou, Director of the ITU Telecommunication Development Bureau, welcomed all participants to the RDF and eligible participants, to the RPM for the World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC-17), stressing that the regional initiatives have been and will remain one of his first priorities because it is through their implementation that a difference could be made in the lives of the people on the ground. He stated that as we embark on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), policy makers, regulators, private sector, development partners and all stakeholders within the ICT ecosystem need more than ever to establish an inclusive, multistakeholder and collaborative dialogue to achieve socio-economic development. RDF is a perfect platform for such dialogue. He underlined the need for establishing a structured dialogue with other sectors of life and in this context he drew attention to recent BDT initiatives facilitating such dialogue, including ITU and UNESCO Policy Forum which brought together ministers of education and ministers of ICTs for the first time to explore the role that policies and cross-sectoral collaboration can play in fostering innovation and the use of mobile technology to improve the quality, equity and accessibility of education; the Global Symposium for Regulators (GSR) reached out to the financial sector by organizing a Global Dialogue on Digital Financial Inclusion with the support of Gate Foundation; ITU and WHO inter-ministerial round table to discuss the use of ICTs to improve universal health coverage, the adoption of digital technology in the health sector and the importance of continuous cross-sectoral collaboration. He also added that ITU and Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), developed an e-Agriculture Strategy Guide to help Member States to adopt a strategic approach in making the best use of ICT developments in agriculture. He drew attention to the WTDC-17 that will take place in Buenos Aires, Argentina, from 9 to 20 October 2017 under the theme ICT④SDGs and will be preceded by the series of Regional Preparatory Meeting. 2017 will also mark the 25th anniversary of the establishment of the ITU Development Sector. The anniversary is an opportunity not only to celebrate but also to reflect on the future. Year-long celebrations are planned that will culminate at WTDC-17. All stakeholders were kindly invited to contribute to the preparatory process of WTDC-17.

Mr Alexander Avanessov, UN Resident Coordinator and Representatives of other UN Agencies, underlined that UN system is strongly committed and engaged in the process of development of the information society at the regional level. At the regional level UN and UNDP has been working with Governments and other stakeholders on several ICT related projects, for instance in field of medicine, creation of electronic systems improving service delivery of local administrations, or preparation of action plans for development of ICTs at the national level, as ICTs are key to promote development in many sectors of the economy and in people’s lives. He stressed that ICTs will play an important role in monitoring of implementation of the SDGs. ICTs will offer an unique opportunity for collection of data necessary for the follow-up and monitoring of the implementation of the national sustainable development plans. In Kyrgyzstan UNDP has been carrying out several actions, including recently with Ministry of Health, implementing national e-health system. Mr Avanessov underlined that UNDP is interested in work with all stakeholders including ITU. Implementation of infrastructure still remains an important priority in particular in rural areas, where 60% of Kyrgyz population is living. Also the development of applications, in particular e-commerce and e-banking might offer unique value to the citizens in the future. Moreover capacity building at the level of municipal servants might be important milestone for e-governance.

Mr Nurudin Mukhitdinov, Director General of the RCC Executive Committee, welcomed all participants on behalf of the RCC while drawing attention to the ongoing preparatory work leading towards the WTDC-17. He informed participants about the 25th anniversary of RCC and used this opportunity to recognize key stakeholders for great cooperation during this time.

**Session 1: Implementation of the CIS Regional Initiatives approved by WTDC-14**

The session was devoted to the results of the implementation of the five CIS regional initiatives approved by WTDC-14: CIS RI 1 Creating a child online protection center for the CIS Region; CIS RI2 Ensuring access to telecommunications/ICT services for persons with disabilities, CIS RI3 Introduction of training technologies and methods using telecommunications/ICT for human capacity building, CIS RI4, Development of broadband access and adoption of broadband and CIS RI5 Building confidence and security in the use of ICTs.

The session reviewed the projects implemented in 2015 and 2016 at A.S. Popov Odessa National Academy of Telecommunications, Ukraine, Institute of Electronics and Telecommunications under Kyrgyz State Technical University named after I. Razzakov, Kyrgyz Republic, Belarusian State Academy of Communications, Republic of Belarus, and Moscow Technical University of Communications and Informatics, Russian Federation. Furthermore, implementation plans for 2017 on regional initiative "Development of broadband access and adoption of broadband in the CIS" were identified. Presentations on the implementation of four (RI 1, 2, 3 and 5) of the five Regional Initiatives were made, highlighting accomplishments, challenges and planned next steps. In addition, a presentation on the planned steps for implementation of RI 5 was provided.

* Participants highly appreciated ITU activities in child online protection at regional and international levels, including development of guidelines and multimedia training courses for children, parents, teachers, private and public sectors representatives, as well as ITU activities in human capacity building, including introduction of telecommunications/ICT in education. The participants also mentioned that projects implemented within the CIS regional initiatives in 2015 and 2016 led to a significant contribution to corresponding ITU areas of action, as well as to the implementation of UN SDGs.
* Participants pointed out the viability of the following areas:
* Further development of systems for providing pupils, parents and teachers with information on the safe use of Internet resources. Translation of training courses created within the regional initiative on child online protection to ITU official languages as well as to national languages of the CIS countries.
* Active circulation of training courses and guidelines in the field of child online protection created within corresponding regional initiative among stakeholders, primarily educational establishments.
* Improvement of educational technologies and methods using telecommunications/ICTs.
* Further training courses, training sessions and seminars on introducing telecommunications/ICTs into education and human capacity building, including in rural areas, and also for persons with disabilities.
* The participants appreciated the reports on implementation of centers for persons with disabilities in Kyrgyzstan and Belarus and the support of ITU and UNESCO Institute for Information Technologies in Education (UNESCO ITE).
* There was a proposal to create an inter-university lab to provide recommendations on centers for training teachers on using accessible ICTs for the education of persons with disabilities.
* UNESCO ITE proposes to create an open portal for CIS countries to promote inclusive education for persons with disabilities through accessible ICTs and assistive technologies.
* Russia, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan have developed an open online educational portal to share educational resources that can be freely downloaded. This portal is currently in the testing phase. This portal can be further developed to share educational resources at all universities in the CIS region, for example to translate educational materials in other languages into the Russian language.
* The ITU CIS Area Office has begun conducting analysis of legislation and state policies to promote the adoption of and access to broadband that build the foundation for the implementation of RI4 in 2017. ITU members are invited to support this work to enable a comprehensive analysis of broadband in the region.
* Comprehensive data on user behavior on accessing ICTs has been used to create profiles for a range of different types of users in order to develop training materials and awareness raising campaigns and security related tools to foster building confidence and security in the use of ICTs.

The participants noted that Regional Initiatives are an effective platform for reinforcing the enabling role of ICT for achieving Sustainable Development Goals. The participants also noted that exchange of best practices in the implementation of regional initiatives contributes to the development of international cooperation in the field of telecommunications/ICT, as well as expressed their opinion on whether it is rational to include in regional development forums agenda the issue of using results of the initiatives already implemented in other regions to meet the needs of the region holding the forum.

**Session 2: Partnership and Resource Mobilization in the CIS**

The session was devoted to partnership and resource mobilization in the CIS. The session reviewed two presentations related to e-health (*E-health Implementation in the Kyrgyz Republic* and *AKDN eHealth Program*) and one on the *Multistakeholder Partnership on ICT4SDGs in CIS*.

Best practices exchange and in-depth discussion revealed a number of problems faced by the CIS countries in developing practical solutions facilitating ICT services development in the field of e-health, for example:

* Lack of regulatory legal acts on the introduction of e-services;
* Problems in material and financial support of IT processes;
* Insufficiency of qualified personnel at all levels and turnover;
* Weak infrastructure in the regions;
* Untrained personnel in the regions;
* Poor interagency cooperation.

The participants noted, among other things, the importance of developing e-health strategies and technical solutions in e-health, including telemedicine, digital processing of medical information, patient-specific medical records, electronic outpatient card, electronic medical history for each patient, etc.

The participants also noted that it is viable to engage representatives of private sector and universities with no prior ITU involvement in regional and global ITU events in order to raise investment for implementing ITU projects of high importance. Moreover, the participants stated that it is necessary to develop a comprehensive strategy on increasing motivation of Sector Members, Associates and Academia for engagement in ITU activities, including participation in ITU-D Study Groups, ITU-Telecom and Kaleidoscope events, contests of innovation projects, and other ITU events. ITU offers several programs facilitating partnership building and offering outreach opportunities. Mobilized resources serve to further assist Member States. Attention of the stakeholders was drawn to the ICT Development Fund of ITU that allows Least Developed Countries and countries in need to benefit from seed funds to initiate ICT related projects.

**Session 3: Perspective Areas of ICT Development beyond 2017 in the context of contributing to the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**

The session was devoted to perspective areas of ICT development beyond 2017 in the context of contributing to the implementation of SDGs.

The participants noted, among other things, the following perspective directions on the contribution of ICTs towards achievement of SDGs beyond 2017:

* The 17 SDGs cover all aspects of economy, and countries are in the process of developing their national strategy for all 17 SDGs.
* ICTs have changed the society and ICTs can be used to achieve the SDGs.
* Training and education to develop human resources was identified as a key to promoting sustainable development, along with an emphasis on science and culture.
* Sustainable development relies on incentivizing the private sector coupled with transparent, harmonized development-oriented regulations.
* Market liberalization fosters infrastructure roll out even in mountainous and rural areas.
* More work is needed to ensure access to broadband services in rural areas.
* There is also a continuing need to build the competencies and skills of ICT experts and government officials and to raise awareness of senior government officials on the sustainable development power of ICT tools.
* There is need to accelerate the launch of interactive online services and open data.
* Mobile technologies are leading the way in fostering sustainable development.
* Connectivity and applications are just two elements of sustainable development that lead to services such as e-government, e-health and e-education. There is also need to focus on fostering the enabling digital layers that will determine the success of future digital development. These new layers include data, which has become the currency of the digital world, and platforms that enable everyone to become a digital services provider and to develop new business models.

In the wrap up session the chairman highlighted key areas of discussion noted above. He indicated that through effective implementation mechanisms, such as ITU-D Regional Initiatives, growth of the ICT sector may be ensured, while advancing implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

The BDT Director reiterated importance of international cooperation and dialogue while encouraging all stakeholders to participate in the preparations toward the World Telecommunication Development Conference 2017 with the overall theme ICT4SDG.

Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic

November 8, 2016

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