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| ENHANCING PRIVATE SECTOR ENGAGEMENT IN THE ITU-D |

**Summary:** The importance of the private sector engagement in the work of ITU-D has been highlighted by WTDC-14. This document presents an overview of strategies and actions being undertaken to promote private sector engagement in the ITU-D.

**Action required:** TDAG is invited to note the document and to provide guidance as deemed appropriate.

**References:** PP Resolutions 136 (Rev. Busan, 2014) and 157 (Rev. Busan, 2014); and WTDC Outputs 2.1 and 2.3 (Dubai, 2014), Resolutions 30 (Rev. Dubai, 2014), 32 (Rev. Dubai, 2014), 34 (Rev. Dubai, 2014), 52 (Rev. Dubai, 2014), and 71 (Rev. Dubai, 2014).

1. **Background**

The Plenipotentiary Conference (PP-14) adopted Resolution 200 (Busan, 2014) on The Connect 2020 Agenda for *Global Telecommunication/ICT Development* and ITU’s Goal 4 on *Innovation and Partnership*, which highlight the importance of innovative multi-stakeholder engagements, expanded public-private partnerships, and bilateral and multilateral cooperation.

The World Telecommunication Development Conference in 2014 (WTDC-14) also recognized the importance of collaboration with the private sector as critical for the success of the ITU-D mission as reflected in Outputs and Resolutions adopted during the Conference.

Amongst the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the post-2015 development agenda, Goal 17 outlines the need to “Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development” to encourage and promote effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships, building on the experience and resourcing strategies of partnerships.

1. **Strategic Objectives**

The following plans and actions are under implementation in order to continue to attract and enhance engagement of private sector entities in a convergent ICT ecosystem in line with ITU-D Strategic Objectives:

* **Enhance engagement of ITU-D Private Sector:** Engagement with private sector members is to be strengthened for better understanding and addressing of expectations, needs and areas of mutual benefits as well as for encouraging more active participation and contributions to
ITU-D activities, projects, initiatives, programmes and events and attract new ITU-D Sector Members.
* **Develop innovative partnership and networking opportunities in converged ICT ecosystem:** Innovative and customized initiatives and projects are to be developed and implemented, taking into account the increasing diverse nature of ITU-D Sector membership, especially private entities beyond the traditional ICT players.
1. **Key Actions**

**3.1 Output 2.1 Policy and Regulatory Programme**

ITU-D Output 2.1 calls upon the provision of global platforms for policy-makers, regulators and the private sector to address issues of common interest, share experiences and best practices, and discuss ways to help countries achieve their goals of growing digital economies. In this sense, it is worth mentioning some global and regional platforms as below.

For the first time, the Industry Leaders’ Debate was held on 14 May 2016, in parallel with the regulators’ track during the last day of GSR-16. The debate brought together over 30 participants from the private sector and debated the impact of open innovation and new business models on collaborative regulation followed by the session of regulatory KPIs in a 1st to 4th Generation regulation context. Participants acknowledged that more efforts need to be considered by regulators and policy makers to foster new opportunities and encourage an environment that fosters greater investment and innovation, and that this type of environment should be based on a dialogue between stakeholders and regulators and clear understanding of the differences between the regulatory policies and ICT sector goals. Regulatory KPIs was also encouraged as a tool to monitor measure the changes taking place in the telecommunication/ ICT regulatory environment and facilitating both the benchmarking and identification of evolutionary trends in legal and regulatory frameworks and supporting business investments by the industry.

The 6th and 7th [Private Sector Chief Regulatory Officers (CRO) meetings](http://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Conferences/CRO/Pages/default.aspx), held in 2016, brought together senior industry executives to share experiences and exchange ideas on how to strengthen the private sector’s involvement and engagement in global, regional and national initiatives and to identify mechanisms to better foster an enabling regulatory environment for future development of the sector.

These meetings discussed key proposals for pilot experimentation between the private sector and regulators. In particular, the Universal Financial Access 2020 (UFA) proposal presented under the CRO platform was supported by the participants who agreed to create a CRO Working Group on Digital Financial Inclusion (CRO WG – DFI).

The [1st CRO WG on DFI](http://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Conferences/CRO/Pages/default.aspx) meeting was convened on 15 November 2016 and agreed on the need to focus on: (i) designing and sharing legal and regulatory frameworks at reginal and national levels; (ii) developing frameworks for sharing best practices and expanding public-private partnerships; and (iii) implementing pilot projects at national levels with interest partners to contribute to achieving SDGs, Goals 8, 9, 10, 11 and 17 in particular. Potential pilot countries and interest stakeholders have been identified and status of implementation will be shared at the upcoming CRO Meeting in July, 2017, as a pre-event to [GSR-17](http://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Conferences/GSR/Pages/GSR2017/default.aspx).

**3.2 Output 2.3 Innovation and Partnership**

**Resolution 30 (Rev. Dubai, 2014)** on “Role of the ITU Telecommunication Development Sector in implementing the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society” requests that necessary initiatives be taken to encourage partnerships with a high priority pursuant to the outcomes of WSIS and its review process. The [WSIS Forum 2016](https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2016/) proved to be an efficient mechanism for coordination of multi-stakeholder implementation activities focused on innovation, partnerships and the link between ICTs and the Global Sustainable Development Agenda.

As reflected in **Resolution 32 (Rev. Dubai, 2014 )** on “International and regional cooperation on regional initiatives”, the BDT has been encouraging private sector to engage and cooperate with member countries in the regional initiatives mentioned in the Resolution, including countries with special needs.

* The Regional Development Fora (RDFs) and other regional events have been organized in several regions in 2015 and served as platforms to discuss and agree on areas where multi-stakeholder partnerships could be explored especially for the role of entrepreneurship including operators from the private sector.
* BDT has also undertaken innovation dialogues with multi-stakeholder partners for formulating innovation policies and creation of linkages between innovation and SMEs as well as enhancing partnership with OECD, UNIDO, UNCTAD and other entities.

**Resolution 34 (Rev. Dubai, 2014)** on “The role of telecommunications/ICTs in disaster preparedness, early warning, rescue, mitigation, relief and response” calls for the role of multi-stakeholders including the private sector in providing telecommunication/ICT equipment and services, expertise and capacity-building assistance to support disaster relief and recovery activities, particularly through the ITU Framework for International Cooperation in Emergencies ([IFCE](http://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Emergency-Telecommunications/Pages/PartneringforDisasterReduction.aspx)). Development of Satellite Communication Capacity and Emergency Communications Solutions for the Pacific is being implemented in close partnership with the private sector. 

The 2nd Global Forum on Emergency Telecommunications ([GET-2016](http://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Emergency-Telecommunications/Pages/Events/2016/GET-2016.aspx)): SAVING LIVES", which took place in Kuwait City, Kuwait, from 26-28 January 2016, has increased the awareness and capacity of countries to take advantage of ICTs for emergency telecommunication and enhanced the dialogue between disaster-management experts, including governments, the private sector, international organizations and non-governmental organizations, including humanitarian organizations. The Forum discussed trends and emerging technological innovations, financing mechanisms, country case studies, challenges in deploying ICTs in disaster zones, climate change issues and the role of the private sector and other non-state stakeholders, amongst others.

**Resolution 52 (Rev. Dubai, 2014)** on “Strengthening the executing agency role of the ITU Telecommunication Development Sector” emphasizes the importance of establishing partnerships between the public and private sectors as an efficient means of implementing sustainable ITU projects.

* In 2016, over 20 partnership arrangements including sponsorship activities have been concluded with various stakeholders, including private sector. (More information on agreements signed is available in INFO DOC/1).
* It is also worth highlighting [mHealth for Non-Communicable Diseases Programme](http://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/ICT-Applications/eHEALTH/Be_healthy/Pages/Be_Healthy.aspx), which is being implemented through public-private partnerships including UN agencies (e.g., ITU and WHO), governments, Bupa, Verizon foundation, IFPMA, Novartis, Sanofi, GSK, the NCD Alliance etc.

**Resolution 71 (Rev. Dubai, 2014)** on “Strengthening cooperation between Member States, Sector Members, Associates and Academia of the ITU Telecommunication Development Sector, including the private sector” has been implemented through various ITU-D meetings, initiatives and partnership: e.g.,

* [ITU-D Study Groups](https://www.itu.int/net4/ITU-D/CDS/sg/index.asp?lg=1&sp=2014) continued to provide an opportunity for the ITU-D Sector membership, including private sector, to share experiences, ideas and strategies to address telecommunication/ICT priorities. The diverse nature of Sector Members, Associates and increasing number of Academia is fostering fertile ground for collaboration amongst membership on innovative areas and outreaching to new members.
* BDT organized a [Partnership Dialogue on ICTs④SDGs](https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Membership/Pages/events/2016/PartnershipDialogueICT4SDGs/AcademiaNetwork01.aspx) which was attended by over 70 participants. The Dialogue provided a platform for ITU-D Members and partners, including public and private sector entities, academic institutions and other stakeholders for strengthened awareness and engagement in the activities of the BDT by sharing existing services and products as well as cross-sectoral partnership opportunities for the attainment of the SDGs.
* Increased cooperation with international organizations is also being explored (e.g. FAO, WHO, UNIDO, UNCTAD and ITC, amongst others) in order to outreach to other private sector entities already associated with these organizations and promote potential networking actions with Member States, Sector members, Associates and Academia on areas related to innovation, start-ups, technoparks, and incubators.
* Global and/or regional initiatives for sustainable and inclusive development (e.g., sustainable supply of electricity to telecommunication/ICT facilities in rural and remote areas, mHealth, youth employment and entrepreneurship, innovation incubators, etc.) can be further enhanced with the private sector across different areas, from agriculture, health, transportation, and finance to education in the converged ICT eco-system.
1. **Ways forward**

The private sector is a driver of innovation, productivity and technological efficiencies and will remain an important player in terms of investment for sustainable economic growth, job creation, and transformation towards an inclusive society and digital economy.

BDT, therefore, will continue to enhance collaboration and synergies with existing private sector entities in the converged ICT ecosystem through enhanced partnership with industry associations, regional and international organizations and their existing networks and affiliated members, as well as through existing and new BDT events at global levels and at regional levels. Increased sponsorship opportunities to ITU-D membership in which the private sector can increase visibility, brand promotion and showcasing of their products and solutions.

Private sector is invited to participate in [WTDC-17](http://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Conferences/WTDC/WTDC17/Pages/default.aspx) and its [Regional Preparatory Meetings](http://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Conferences/WTDC/WTDC17/Pages/default.aspx) and contribute to ITU-D sector’s work to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

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