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|  | | **Document** **TDAG17-22/****52-E** |
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| China (People’s Republic of) | | |
| PROPOSALS TO MODIFY WTDC-17 DECLARATION | | |
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| **Summary:**  Almost all the countries neighboring each other on the land have been connected by the trans-border optical fiber cables. However, they are only used to address the bilateral communication needs of neighboring countries and fail to form trans-multi-country international transmission channels. As a result, a huge amount of trans-border terrestrial cable resource is not fully utilized. This is mainly due to the lack of an international convention and related agreements for the transit of terrestrial cables. The ITU-T Study Group 3 has already established a question to study the tariff and charging standards and rules for the trans-multi-country optical fiber terrestrial cables.  **Action required:**  TDAG is invited to consider this document and take the required action.  **References:**  N/A | | |

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## Introduction

Almost all the countries neighboring each other on the land have been connected by the trans-border optical fiber cables. However, they are only used to address the bilateral communication needs of neighboring countries and fail to form trans-multi-country international transmission channels. As a result, a huge amount of trans-border terrestrial cable resource is not fully utilized. This is mainly due to the lack of an international convention and related agreements for the transit of terrestrial cables. The ITU-T Study Group 3 has already established a question to study the tariff and charging standards and rules for the trans-multi-country optical fiber terrestrial cables.

The resources of domestic backbone networks, which are dispersed in countries around the world, can be fully utilized by developing an international convention governing the transit of international optical fiber terrestrial cables and supporting the deployment of trans-multi-country terrestrial cable networks, which together can form multiple international terrestrial information channels to connect the vast number of countries in Asia, Europe, Africa, and South America. This will greatly enhance the abilities of countries, especially land-locked and least-developed countries, to access the Internet and help to reduce broadband access costs. This will optimize and enhance the facilities of global communication networks, and contribute greatly to the Connect 2020 Agenda and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

## Proposal

It is proposed to include in the WTDC-17 Declaration some contents on the development of an international convention on the operation of trans-multi-country terrestrial cables and the promotion of connectivity of the trans-multi-country terrestrial cable networks. The specific modifications are as follows:

**Preliminary Draft WTDC-17 Declaration**

The World Telecommunication Development Conference (Buenos Aires, 2017), which took place in Buenos Aires, Argentina, under the theme of "ICT for Sustainable Development Goals” (ICT④SDGs),

**Recognizes that**

1. Telecommunications/ICTs are a key enabler for social and economic development; and consequently for accelerating the timely attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals and Targets set out in the **Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**;

b) Telecommunications/ICTs also play a crucial role in various areas such as health, education, agriculture, governance, finance, commerce, disaster risk reduction and management, climate change mitigation and adaptation; particularly in least developed countries (LDCs), small island developing States (SIDS), landlocked developing countries (LLDCs) and countries with economies in transition;

c) Access to modern, secure and affordable Telecommunication/ICT infrastructure, applications and services offers opportunities for improving peoples' lives and ensuring that sustainable development across the world becomes a reality;

d)Widespread conformance and interoperability of telecommunication/ICT equipment and systems through the implementation of relevant programmes, policies and decisions can increase market opportunities and reliability and encourage global integration and trade;

e) Telecommunication/ICT applications can be life-changing for individuals, communities and societies at large, but they canalso increase the challenge of building confidence and security in the use of telecommunications/ICTs;

f) Broadband access technologies, broadband-enabled services and ICT applications offer new opportunities for interaction among people, for sharing the world's knowledge resources and expertise, for transforming peoples' lives and for contributing to inclusive and sustainable development across the world;

g) Despite all the progress made during past years, the digital divide still remains, and is compounded by disparities in access, use and skills between and within countries, in particular between urban and rural areas, as well as in the availability of accessible and affordable telecommunications/ICTs, particularly for women, youth, children, indigenous people and persons with disabilities and specific needs;

h) ITU is committed to improving people’s lives and making the world a better place throughtelecommunications and information and communication technologies (ICTs);

**Therefore declares that**

1. Universally accessible and affordable telecommunications/ICTs are a fundamental contribution towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030;

2. Innovation is critical to increasing the access to high-speed, high-quality and highly-connected ICT infrastructure and services. An international convention on the operation of trans-multi-country optical fiber terrestrial cables is necessary for increasing the connectivity between the trans-multi-country optical fiber cable networks and fulfilling the Connect 2020 Agenda and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

3. With convergence, policy-makers and regulators should continue to promote widespread, affordable access to telecommunications/ICTs, including Internet access, through fair, transparent, stable, predictable and non-discriminatory enabling policy, legal and regulatory environments, including common approaches to conformance and interoperability that promote competition, increase consumer choices, foster continued technological and service innovation and provide investment incentives at national, regional and international levels;

4. New and emerging technologies such as big data and the Internet of Things should be harnessed for purposes of supporting global efforts aimed at further development of the information society;

5. Digital literacy and ICT skills, as well as human and institutional capacity in the development and use of telecommunications/ICT networks, applications and services should be enhanced to enable people to contribute to ideas, knowledge and human development;

6. Measuring the Information Society and providing the proper indicators/statistics are important for both Member States and the private sector with the former being able to identify gaps that need public policy intervention, and the latter, in identifying and finding investment opportunities;

7. An inclusive information society should take into account the needs of persons with disabilities and specific needs;

8. Building trust, confidence and security in the use of telecommunications/ICTs requires further international cooperation and coordination between governments, relevant organizations, private companies and other stakeholders.

9. Cooperation between developed and developing countries as well as among developing countries are encouraged as this paves way for technical cooperation, technological transfer, and joint research activities;

10. Public-private partnerships need to be further strengthened in order to identify and apply innovative technological solutions and financing mechanisms for inclusive and sustainable development;

11. Innovation should be integrated into national policies, initiatives and programmes to promote sustainable development and economic growth through multi-stakeholder partnerships, between developing countries and between developed and developing countries to facilitate technology and knowledge transfer;

12. International cooperation should be continuously enhanced amongst ITU Member States, Sector Members, Associates, Academia, and other partners and stakeholders to pursue sustainable development, through the use of telecommunications/ICTs;

13. ITU membership and other interested parties should cooperate in implementation of Connect 2020 global telecommunication/information and communication technology goals and targets.

Accordingly, we, the delegates to the World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC-17), declare our commitment to accelerate the expansion and use of telecommunication/ICT infrastructure, applications and services for the timely attainment of the **Sustainable Development Goals and Targets set out in the Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**.

The World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC-17) calls upon ITU Member States, Sector Members, Associates, Academia and all other partners and stakeholders to contribute towards the successful implementation of the Buenos Aires Action Plan.

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