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|  | **Second Inter-Regional Meeting (IRM-2) to prepare for the WTDC-21 Virtual, 13-14 December 2021** | | A close up of a sign  Description automatically generated |
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|  | | **Document** **IRM21-2/54-E** | |
|  | | **28 April 2021** | |
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| Regional Commonwealth in the field of Communications (RCC) | | | |
| Draft Resolution XX (Addis Ababa, 2021)  “Use of telecommunications/Information and Communication Technologies in combating the COVID-19 pandemic, mitigating and eliminating its consequences” | | | |
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| **Agenda item:**  Item 6.c  **Summary:**  This contribution contains Draft Resolution XX (Addis Ababa, 2021) “Use of telecommunications/Information and Communication Technologies in combating the COVID-19 pandemic, mitigating and eliminating its consequences”.  **Expected outputs:**  This document, contained a draft RCC Common proposal, has been submitted to the RPM-CIS (April 2021) for information.  **Reference:**  Resolutions 74/270 and 74/306 of the United Nations General Assembly ;  Resolution 136 (rev. Dubai, 2018) of the Plenipotentiary Conference;  Resolution 34 (rev. Buenos-Aires, 2017) | | | |

Draft **RESOLUTION ХХ (ADDIS ABABA, 2021)**

**Use of telecommunications/Information and Communication Technologies in combating the COVID-19 pandemic, mitigating and eliminating its consequences**

World Telecommunication Development Conference (Addis Ababa, 2021),

*recalling*

a) United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) Resolution 74/270 on global solidarity in the fight against coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19);

b) UNGA Resolution 74/306 on comprehensive and coordinated response to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic;

c) Sustainable Development Goal 3 “Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages”, as well as SDG 9 “Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation” and SDG 11 “Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable» the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;

d) Article 40 of the ITU Constitution on the priority of telecommunications related to the safety of human life;

e) Chapter VII of the ITU Radio Regulations for distress and safety communications and Article 5 of the International Telecommunication Regulations on the safety of human life and telecommunication priorities,

*recalling further*

a) Resolution 136 (Rev. Dubai, 2018) of Plenipotentiary Conference on the use of telecommunications/information and communication technologies for humanitarian assistance and for monitoring and management in emergency and disaster situations, including health-related emergencies, for early warning, prevention, mitigation and relief;

b) Resolution 34 (Rev. Dubai, 2014) of World Telecommunication Development Conference on the role of telecommunications/information and communication technology in disaster preparedness, early warning, rescue, mitigation, relief and response,

*recognizing*

a) that UNGA Resolution 74/270 calls on the United Nations (UN) system to work with all relevant actors in order to mobilize a coordinated global response to the pandemic and its adverse social, economic and financial impact on all societies;

b) that UNGA Resolution 74/306 recognizes that substantial digital divides and data inequalities exist within and among countries and regions, and between developed and all developing countries[[1]](#footnote-1), and that many developing countries lack affordable access to ICTs;

с) that UNGA Resolution 74/306 urges Member States and other relevant stakeholders to accelerate the catalytic role that digital technologies play in reducing the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on education, health, communication, commerce and business continuity;

d) that subparagraph “c)” of paragraph 20 of Action Line C7 (Electronic Environmental Protection) of the Geneva Plan of Action, which calls for the establishment of ICT-based monitoring systems for forecasting and monitoring the impact of natural and man-made disasters, especially in developing countries,

*acknowledging*

a) the severity and magnitude of potential disasters, including disease outbreaks such as the COVID 19 pandemic, which can cause immense suffering to people;

b) the significant role of telecommunications/ICTs in improving effectiveness of the response to emergencies caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and their prevention and mitigation;

c) the tragic events around the world related to the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, which clearly show the need for a high-quality telecommunications/ICT infrastructure;

d) the need to combine global efforts to develop and implement strategies and initiatives to combat the COVID-19 pandemic, using telecommunications/ICTs and telemedicine systems, taking into account specific national circumstances;

e) the significant potential of telemedicine and telemedicine-based treatment using telecommunications/ICTs to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic, as face-to-face consultations between healthcare providers and patients can pose a potential risk to both parties;

f) the special role of implementing solutions based on Artificial Intelligence and Big Data technologies in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic to monitor population movements, predict the evolution of disease outbreaks and conduct research for the development of a vaccine or treatment;

g) the need for collection and prompt dissemination of relevant information to assist public safety and support the work of health and disaster relief agencies;

h) the need to minimize risks to human life and health and the need to meet the urgent needs of the population for information and communication, which requires the effective functioning of telecommunication/ICT systems and affordable access to them necessary to ensure effective and appropriate humanitarian assistance, as well as measures to mitigate social consequences and economic response measures for sustainable and inclusive recovery, in particular to ensure continuity in the educational process and to safeguard jobs, especially for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs);

i) that information needs to be accessible to all social groups and disseminated in local languages so as to ensure its maximum use;

j) the need for close cooperation between the State and private sectors for taking prevention measures, mitigation and providing assistance in emergencies caused by the pandemic;

k) the need for a common understanding of which network infrastructure components are required to provide rapidly-installed, interoperable, robust telecommunication/ICT capabilities in humanitarian-assistance and disaster-relief operations for epidemic-related emergencies and to mitigate their adverse social, economic and financial impacts,

*bearing in mind*

a) the important leading roles of governments, the private sector, civil society, the technical community and other stakeholders in enabling affordable connectivity for all and the need for all stakeholders to work collaboratively together to this end;

b) the important leading roles of international organizations in offering support and best practice for the development of affordable connectivity and supporting humanitarian assistance and efforts to eliminate and mitigate the COVID-19 pandemic consequences;

c) a wide range of ITU standards as well as regulations to ensure the effective use of telecommunication/ICT systems and applications to meet various social, economic and industrial challenges, including remote working, learning, telemedicine, etc. in providing assistance during various emergencies;

d) ITU best practices on how ICTs can be used to manage communications infrastructure supporting the exchange of timely information on disease-related emergencies such as Ebola transmission;

e) ITU's already launched initiatives on using telecommunications/ICTs to defeat COVID-19, including with other UN organizations and the private sector, including the Global Network Resiliency Platform (#REG4COVID), webinar series on Digital Cooperation during COVID19 and beyond,

*resolves to instruct the Director of the Telecommunication Development Bureau*

1 to continue to promote the early development and application of telecommunication/ICT innovations focused on the development and operational deployment of telecommunication/ICT infrastructure, in particular those based on the use of Artificial Intelligence and Big Data, contributing to the effectiveness of humanitarian assistance and relief operations in disasters and emergencies situations caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, as well to the mitigation of adverse social, economic and financial impacts for all countries;

2 to support administrations in the areas defined in this Resolution by taking appropriate action during the implementation of the ITU-D Action Plan;

3 to support administrations in preparing and finalizing their national response and relief plans to the COVID-19 pandemic, including in considering the aspect of the necessary enabling regulatory and policy environment to support the development and effective use of telecommunications/ICTs to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic as well as to strengthen the role of the ITU regional and area offices in this process;

4 to facilitate collaboration between administrations and regional telecommunication organizations with all stakeholders in assisting the deployment of telecommunication/ICT communications in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic;

5 to assist administrations in using mobile radio and broadcasting networks to promptly disseminate warnings and alerts to the public in areas that may be affected by the COVID-19 pandemic;

6 on the basis of studies conducted in ITU-D in collaboration with other ITU Sectors, expert organizations, relevant UN organizations and international and regional organizations, accelerate the study of telecommunication/ICT aspects related to the provision of necessary actions, aimed in particular at providing broadband access , creation and implementation of solutions based on Artificial Intelligence, Big Data and telemedicine to combat the COVID-19 pandemic, mitigate and eliminate its consequences;

7 to report regularly to Study Groups and the Telecommunication Development Advisory Group on activities on the implementation of this Resolution, including actions under regional initiatives;

8 to include in the curricula of the ITU Academy and Centers of Excellence programs on the use of telecommunications/ICTs for mitigating the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic,

*instructs the Director of the Telecommunication Development Bureau, in coordination with the Directors of the Radiocommunication Bureaux and the Telecommunication Standardization Bureaux*

1 to develop guidelines and summarize best practices on how telecommunications/ICTs can be used to define the communications infrastructure needed to support the exchange of timely information on pandemic-induced emergencies and responses, mitigate and assist communities, mitigate adverse social, economic and financial implications for all countries, taking into account the experience gained in the implementation of PP Resolution 136 and WTDC Resolution 34;

2 to provide developing countries, upon request, with technical assistance and support in the development of telecommunication/ICT infrastructure in the provision of telemedicine services, and capacity-building to help strengthen their respective telecommunication/ICT innovation ecosystems, and to provide distance learning and employment opportunities, especially in regarding SMEs;

3 to encourage the strengthening of public-private partnerships to develop inclusive, secure, sustainable, accessible and affordable telecommunication/ICT infrastructure to ensure that populations, especially people with disabilities and special needs and other vulnerable populations, have access to timely information on pandemic-induced emergencies and countermeasures, mitigation and assistance to the public;

4 to promote the development of the capacity and digital literacy of the population to increase the opportunities for quicker and easier transfer of the population to work and learning modes in a distance format and the introduction of the expanded and safe use of various tools that contribute to this process, and thereby maintain the continuity of economic, social and financial activities to maintain greatest possible in a time of pandemic and during elimination of its consequences;

5 to continue to work with other relevant international and regional telecommunication organizations to improve the digital skills toolkit to support Member States in developing national and regional strategies to combat the COVID-19 pandemic and its aftermath;

6 to promote the development of training and retraining programs for telecommunication/ICT professionals to manage pandemics of dangerous diseases based on e-health and telemedicine technologies;

7 to contribute to the preparation and publication of the “Review of ITU Member State Best Practices on Countering the Spread of COVID-19”,

*instructs the Secretary General*

1 to coordinate the cross-cutting activities of the Union and cooperate with other relevant UN agencies and stakeholders in the implementation of this Resolution;

2 to ensure the implementation of this Resolution within the resources provided by the Financial Plan 2020-2023 and the biennial budget approved by the ITU Council;

3 to submit to Council-2022 a comprehensive report detailing the activities and actions taken by the Union in pursuance of this Resolution and the obligations the Union assumes in relation to it;

4 to submit this Resolution to the 2022 Plenipotentiary Conference-2022,

*encourages Member States, Sector Members and Academia*

1 to cooperate and offer all possible assistance and support to consumers, organizations, and, if possible, other countries, especially developing countries, in the provision of humanitarian assistance and industries related to telecommunications/ICT, including for monitoring and controlling the epidemiological situation, early detection of outbreaks of epidemics, response, notifying the population about the measures taken, providing conditions for maintaining, if possible, jobs and continuing the educational process during a pandemic and mitigating its adverse social, economic and financial consequences;

2 to develop partnerships to reduce the barriers to access to relevant telecommunication/ICT-derived data needed to mitigate the impact of the global COVID-19 crisis consequences;

3 to coordinate on a regional basis with the help of ITU bodies and regional and international specialized organizations in order to draw up regional response and mitigation plans for the COVID-19 pandemic;

4 to assist in the implementation of international, regional, sub-regional, multilateral and bilateral projects and programs on the use of telecommunications ICTs as a tool to support the response to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, with the aim of breaking the chain of emergencies caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and facilitating its response including providing local communities with infrastructure and information, especially in local languages, to help preserve human life;

5 to participate actively in the development of standards, guidelines and best practices for the use of telecommunications/ICTs in emergencies and disasters caused by epidemics and pandemics.

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1. These include the least developed countries, small island developing states, landlocked developing countries and countries with economies in transition [↑](#footnote-ref-1)