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| PLENARY MEETING | **Document 43-E** |
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| General Secretariat | |
| WTSA-20 DRAFT NEW RESOLUTION | |
| THE ROLE OF TELECOMMUNICATION/INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES IN MITIGATING GLOBAL PANDEMICS | |
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| **Summary**  The World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly (WTSA-20, Geneva 2022) discussed contributions from three regions addressing the role of telecommunication/information and communication technologies in mitigating global pandemics.  WTSA-20 developed a draft Resolution on the role of telecommunication/ information and communication technologies in mitigating global pandemics (as found in Annex 1).  The Assembly, in recognizing the potential and benefit of having a Resolution on this subject matter for the entire Union and all three ITU Sectors, reached consensus a) not to create a WTSA-20 resolution on the topic; and b) to bring this draft Resolution to the attention of the Plenipotentiary Conference.  **Action required**  The Plenipotentiary Conference is invited **to consider** the text in Annex 1 and **to** **take any necessary actions** on this matter, as appropriate.  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  **References**  [*WTSA-20 Proceedings*](https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-T/wtsa20/Documents/2000V2E5.pdf) |

Houlin ZHAO  
 Secretary-General

ADD SG/43/1

Draft New Resolution [SG-1]

The role of telecommunication/information and communication technologies in mitigating global pandemics

The World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly (Geneva, 2022),

recalling

*a)* Resolution 74/270 of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), on global solidarity to fight the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), which calls on the United Nations system "to work with all relevant actors to mobilize a coordinated global response to the pandemic and its adverse social, economic and financial impact on all societies";

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

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

*d)* Article 40 of the ITU Constitution, on the priority of telecommunications concerning safety of life;

*e)* Article 46 of the Constitution, on distress calls and messages;

*f)* Article 5 of the International Telecommunication Regulations, on safety of life and priority of telecommunications;

*g)* Resolution 136 (Rev. Dubai, 2018) of the 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;

*h)* Resolution 175 (Rev. Dubai, 2018) of the Plenipotentiary Conference, on the use of telecommunication/information and communication technology accessibility for persons with disabilities and persons with specific needs;

*i)* Resolution 66 (Rev. Buenos Aires, 2017) of the World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC) on information and communication technology and climate change;

*j)* Resolution 646 (Rev. WRC-19) of the World Radiocommunication Conference (WRC), on public protection and disaster relief;

*k)* WRC Resolution 647 (Rev. WRC-19), on radiocommunication aspects, including spectrum-management guidelines, for early warning, disaster prediction, detection, mitigation and relief operations relating to emergencies and disasters;

*l)* Resolution 202 (Busan, 2014) of the Plenipotentiary Conference, on using information and communication technologies to break the chain of health-related emergencies such as Ebola virus transmission;

*m)* Resolution 73 (Rev. Geneva, 2022) of this assembly, on Information and communication technologies, environment, climate change and circular economy;

*n)* Resolution 78 (Rev. Geneva, 2022) of this assembly, on information and communication technology applications and standards for improved access to e-health services;

*o)* Resolution 98 (Rev. Geneva, 2022) of this assembly, on enhancing the standardization of Internet of things and smart cities and communities for global development;

*p)* WTDC Resolution 34 (Rev. Buenos Aires, 2017), on the role of telecommunications/information and communication technologies (ICTs) in disaster preparedness, early warning, rescue, mitigation, relief and response;

*q)* Resolution 45 (Rev. Hammamet, 2016) of the World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly (WTSA), on effective coordination of standardization work across study groups in the ITU Telecommunication Standardization Sector and the role of the ITU Telecommunication Standardization Advisory Group;

*r)* Resolution 140 (Rev. Dubai, 2018) of the Plenipotentiary Conference, on ITU's role in implementing the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as well as in their follow-up and review processes;

s*)* Opinion 5 of the World Telecommunication Policy Forum (WTPF-21), on use of telecommunications/ICTs in COVID-19 and future pandemic and epidemic preparedness and response,

recalling further

*a)* § 91 of the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society adopted by the second phase of WSIS;

*b)* item c) of § 20 of Action Line C7 (E-environment) of the Geneva Plan of Action adopted by the first phase of WSIS, on establishing monitoring systems, using ICTs, to forecast and monitor the impact of natural and man-made disasters, particularly in developing countries[[1]](#footnote-1)1, least developed countries and small economies,

recognizing

*a)* that the new COVID-19, pneumonia of unknown cause first reported to the World Health Organization (WHO) in late 2019, is a major public health crisis that has disrupted public life and dramatically changed the global society, including quarantine, strict social distancing, imposing a blockade, declaring a state of emergency, and even harsher measures to mitigate the spread of the disease;

*b)* that since such pandemics can cause numerous confirmed cases and deaths and could eventually lead to global economic crisis and depression, telecommunications/ICTs, and in particular new and emerging technologies, play a more prominent role in connecting remote populations allowing them to pursue their regular lives while preventing direct contact from each other and can help predict and monitor global pandemics;

*c)* the ongoing studies being carried out by relevant ITU-T study groups in using telecommunications/ICTs to facilitate the use of new and emerging technologies in mitigating global pandemics;

*d)* the REG4COVID platform created by the Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT) as a way to collect information and case studies on responses to COVID-19 pandemic,

recognizing further

*a)* ITU's support for business resilience and the promotion of participation of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises;

*b)* ITU/WHO/United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) initiatives in providing up-to-date information on COVID-19;

*c)* that ICTs are an important and integral component of multi-hazard early warning systems and common alerting protocol, that manage and deliver alerting messages to those in affected areas and wider at national or international level, thereby allowing them to take action to mitigate the impacts of the hazard;

*d)* Recommendation ITU-T X.1303, on the common alerting protocol (CAP), which is a simple but general format for exchanging all-hazard emergency alerts and public warnings over all kinds of ICT networks, allowing a consistent warning message to be disseminated simultaneously over many different warning systems, thus increasing warning effectiveness while simplifying the warning task,

taking into account

*a)* some Member States have been transparent, open and adaptive in the process of robust testing, vigorous tracing and quick treatment of the patients to minimize the human suffering and to contain socio-economic consequences;

*b)* that such actions were enhanced by the use of telecommunications/ICTs in addition to finding cures and vaccines;

*c)* that these Member States are being asked to share their best practices on how they responded to COVID-19 using telecommunication/ICTs and how telecommunications/ICTs help social distancing, rapid testing and quick tracing to flatten the curve in the global pandemic;

*d)* that it is of further importance to take necessary measures pre-emptively before unexpected pandemics occur and travel around the world to prevent unnecessary deaths;

e) that ITU plays a role in the telecommunications/ICTs which are used for forecasting, monitoring and mitigating the impact of natural and man-made disasters, particularly in developing countries,

considering

*a)* that such necessary measures include ITU-T's crucial role in providing its deliverables such as Recommendations, technical reports and white papers to facilitate the use of telecommunications/ICTs at a suitable time and place for the right purpose of preventing the spread of global pandemics;

*b)* that ITU-T has already developed a number of Recommendations on telecommunications/ICTs, understanding the rising importance of telecommunications/ICTs that will impact a wide range of industries in the future;

*c)* that since a single ITU-T Recommendation cannot cover entirely developing ICT solutions to overcome global pandemics, it is crucial for ITU-T to harmonize these different Recommendations from a holistic point of view,

bearing in mind

*a)* that ITU-T's deliverables can act as useful references when deploying ICT solutions, which help people by keeping them alerted by predicting and detecting their surrounding environment;

*b)* that a culture of avoiding direct contact may carry on even after the pandemic ceases and such culture may dramatically shift the paradigm of the majority of industries including not only health care but also education, transportation and distribution;

c) that the change of culture requires leveraging and facilitating the use of telecommunications/ICTs, which is especially important to assist Member States to ensure timely access to information and infrastructure,

noting

*a)* the critical role played by telecommunications/ICTs to facilitate the use of new and emerging technologies in the fight against COVID-19;

*b)* that virtual meetings of study groups have been conducted by ITU-T;

*c)* the initiation of the AI for Good webinar series to encourage distanced participants who cannot travel due to the global pandemic;

*d)* that timely provision of ITU-T deliverables to develop ICT solutions to prevent the spread of global pandemics will make ITU-T deliverables more prominent and pervasive in the future society;

*e)* that ease of access to and better understanding of ITU-T deliverables will even help bridge the standardization gap,

resolves

1 to acknowledge that the role of telecommunications/ICTs will become more prominent in tackling global pandemics;

2 to collect and analyse the best practices of Member States in facilitating the use of telecommunications/ICTs to prevent the spread of global pandemics and lessons learned from their experience in containing the global crisis;

3 to identify existing deliverables and potential Recommendations of ITU-T based on the analysis of *resolves* 2 above;

4 to categorize the existing ITU-T deliverables for experts to easily and quickly search and adopt appropriate deliverables while developing ICT solutions in case of sudden occurrence of pandemics;

5 to publish the result of *resolves* 4 above online through various easily accessible appropriate multilingual publications;

6 to develop a standardization roadmap in order to facilitate better deployment of future ITU‑T deliverables and systematically organize and initiate work on potential Recommendations on relevant telecommunications/ICTs,

instructs the Director of the Telecommunication Standardization Bureau

1 to support the activities of the ITU-T members to fulfil the *resolves* above by establishing appropriate working groups;

2 to facilitate the exchange of best practices to mitigate the pandemic with all relevant standards-development organizations (SDOs) and entities to create opportunities for cooperative efforts to support the active deployment and use of telecommunication/ICTs;

3 to continue to update Member States on how ITU-T assists in tackling future and emerging global pandemics using ICTs;

4 to review and facilitate consultations to the future actions of ITU-T study groups in response to the *resolves* above and institute a framework to ensure appropriate implementation of this resolution;

5 to submit a report on the progress in the implementation of this resolution to the next WTSA in 2024;

6 to cooperate closely with the Director of BDT;

i) in continuing the spread of awareness and knowledge to developing countries on the use of ICTs in emergencies and health care through the implementation and promotion of international standards;

ii) in providing all means and support in increasing global connectivity and the digitalization of daily life,

instructs the Director of the Telecommunication Standardization Bureau in collaboration with the Director of the Radiocommunication Bureau and Director of the Telecommunication Development Bureau

1 to continue facilitating, through the development and implementation of international standards, emerging telecommunications/ICTs that are used to forecast, monitor and mitigate epidemics before they transform into global pandemics;

2 to provide assistance, if requested, to Member States on updating their national telecommunication emergency plans (NTEP) taking into account the COVID-19 pandemic as well as future pandemics,

instructs study groups of the ITU Telecommunication Standardization Sector, according to their mandate

1 to cooperate with other study groups of the Union to fulfil the *resolves* above by providing inputs to the working groups established under *instructs the Director of the Telecommunication Standardization Bureau* 1 above;

2 to consider new work items on telecommunications/ICTs to support applications and services that help to prevent the spread of global pandemics;

3 to liaise with other SDOs, as appropriate, to foster studies carried out by relevant ITU-T study groups and focus groups, sharing ongoing work to avoid duplication of work,

invites the Secretary-General

to continue cooperating with relevant organizations such as WHO, UNICEF, the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Food Programme (WFP) in providing up-to-date information and studying means to mitigate the effects of global pandemics and promote recovery,

invites Member States, Sector Members, Associates and Academia

1 to cooperate to raise awareness, build capacity and share best practices and lessons in using telecommunications/ICTs to act quickly and pre-emptively throughout the global COVID-19 challenge as well as future pandemics;

2 to participate actively in the implementation of this resolution.

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