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| Proposed modification of Resolution 44 - Bridging the standardization gap between developing and developed countries | | | |
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| **Abstract:** | This contribution proposes several revisions to Resolution 44 to enhance the participation and effective involvement of developing countries in the standardization activities in ITU-T, to build their capacity and to address their concerns; also to study the possibility of generating additional revenue for ITU‑T to support such activities. |

# 1 Introduction

Noting the significant effort exerted by the TSB to bridge the standardization gap, however there remains much work to be done by the TSB and by the collaborative work of all stakeholders. Noting that many of these activities require financial and human resources, hence ways and means to enhance the ITU-T resources should be envisaged to support the BSG activities.

# 2 Proposal

Several amendments to Resolution 44 are proposed below to achieve the desired goals of bridging the standardization gap and to take on board the concerns of developing countries in the standardization activities in the ITU-T study groups.

MOD AFCP/42A21/1

RESOLUTION 44 (REV. HAMMAMET, 2016)

Bridging the standardization gap between developing[[1]](#footnote-1)1   
and developed countries

(Florianópolis, 2004; Johannesburg, 2008; Dubai, 2012; Hammamet, 2016)

The World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly (Hammamet, 2016),

considering

*a)* that Resolution 123 (Rev. Busan, 2014) of the Plenipotentiary Conference, on bridging the standardization gap between developing and developed countries, instructs the Secretary-General and the Directors of the three Bureaux to work closely with each other in pursuing initiatives that assist in bridging the standardization gap between developing and developed countries on follow-up and implementation of the operative paragraphs of that resolution supporting coordination in this respect at the regional level through regional offices and organizations;

*b)* that Resolution 139 (Rev. Busan, 2014) of the Plenipotentiary Conference invites Member States to rapidly implement Resolution 37 (Rev. Dubai, 2014) of the World Telecommunication Development Conference on bridging the digital divide;

*c)* that Resolution 154 (Rev. Busan, 2014) of the Plenipotentiary Conference resolves to continue to take all necessary measures to ensure use of the six official languages of the Union on an equal footing;

*d)* that Resolution 166 (Rev. Busan, 2014) of the Plenipotentiary Conference, on the number of vice-chairmen of Sector advisory groups and other groups, seeks to promote more effective participation of developing countries;

*e)* that Resolution 169 (, Rev. Busan, 2014) of the Plenipotentiary Conference allowed the admission of the academia, universities and their associated research establishments from the developing countries to participate in the work of the three Sectors of the Union for 1/16 of the Sector Member contributory unit,

recognizing

*a)* that the harmonious and balanced development of the worldwide telecommunication facilities and services is of mutual advantage to the developing as well as the developed countries;

*b)* that the disparity between developing and developed countries in standardization has five components: disparity of voluntary standardization, disparity of mandatory technical regulations, disparity of conformity assessment, disparity in human resources skilled in standardization and disparity in effective participation in ITU-T activities;

*c)* that it is of high importance for developing countries to increase their participation in the establishment of telecommunication standards, and to improve their contribution in ITU-T study groups;

*d)* that coordination at national level in many developing countries to handle ICT standardization activities in order to contribute to work in ITU-T needs to be developed;

*e)* that development of guidelines and the establishment of national standardization secretariats could enhance the standardization activities at national level, the participation and the contribution of developing countries in ITU-T study groups;

*f)* that Resolution 71 (Rev. Busan, 2014) of the Plenipotentiary Conference, on the strategic plan for the Union for 2016-2019, lists enablers of the strategic goals and the objectives of the Union, among these enablers is to ensure efficient and accessible conferences, meetings, documentation, publications and information infrastructures, and one of the support processes to that enabler is the organization of conferences, assemblies, seminars and workshops (including translation and interpretation),

recognizing also

*a)* that Decision 12 (Rev. Busan, 2014) of the Plenipotentiary Conference confirmed free-of-charge online access for the general public to ITU-T Recommendations, Recommendations of the ITU Radiocommunication Sector (ITU-R), ITU-R reports, the basic texts of the Union (Constitution, Convention and General Regulations of the conferences, assemblies and meetings of the Union), and the final acts of plenipotentiary conferences;

*b)* that annual reports presented at the ITU Council regarding policies of free on-line access to ITU publications indicate that said policies have been able to raise the level of awareness regarding standardization activities carried out at the ITU and to promote greater participation of developing countries in these activities;

*c)* that, under the strategic plan for the Union for 2016-2019, ITU-T is to work to "provide support and assistance to developing countries in bridging the standardization gap in relation with standardization matters, information and communication network infrastructure and applications, and relevant training materials for capacity building, taking into account the characteristics of the telecommunication environment of the developing countries";

*d)* that the interpretation in some ITU-T meetings needs to be provided so as to contribute in bridging the standardization gap and to ensure maximum involvement of all delegates, in particular those from developing countries;

*e)* that interpretation is essential to help all delegates, especially those from developing countries, to be fully aware and engaged on standardization decisions that take place in ITU-T meetings;

*f)* that TSAG plays a vital role and takes decisions that impact the work of all study groups,

taking into account

*a)* that while ITU has made significant progress in defining and bridging the standardization gap, the developing countries are still encountering multifarious difficulties in ensuring their efficient participation in the work of ITU-T, especially the budgetary limitations, thus the actual participation by developing countries, where it exists, is usually limited to the final approval and implementation stages, rather than in the preparation of proposals prepared in the various working groups;

*b)* that the biennial budget structure now includes a separate expenditure line item for bridging the standardization gap activities, while at the same time voluntary contributions are being encouraged, and a management mechanism for this line item has been implemented by the Telecommunication Standardization Bureau (TSB) in close coordination with the Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT);

*c)* that ITU's programmes for fostering partnerships, under the patronage of ITU‑T, continue to strengthen and expand the assistance ITU provides to its members, particularly developing countries;

*d)* the importance of having appropriate consultative frameworks for developing countries for the formulation and study of Questions, the preparation of contributions and capacity building;

*e)* that the organizational set-up and working methods of ITU-T study groups could serve to improve the level of developing-country participation in standardization activities;

*f)* that joint meetings of regional groups of different ITU-T study groups, in particular if concatenated with a regional workshop and/or a meeting of a regional standardization body, will encourage the participation of developing countries in these meetings and increase the effectiveness of such meetings;

*g)* that ITU can further improve both the quality and quantity of developing-country active participation in standardization work of ITU-T through the role of (TSAG) and ITU-T study groups' vice-chairmen and chairmen who are appointed on a regional representation basis, and can be charged with specific responsibility in mobilizing participation from their regions;

*h)* that TSAG agreed to create a mentor role in ITU-T study groups for coordination with representatives from developed and developing countries with the objective of sharing information and best practices with regard to the application of ITU-T Recommendations in order to enhance standardization activities in developing countries and in the regional groups,

recalling

*a)* that Resolution 1353 of the ITU Council recognizes that telecommunications and ICT are essential components for developed and developing countries for achieve sustainable development, and instructs the Secretary-General, in collaboration with the Directors of the Bureaux, to identify new activities to be undertaken by ITU to support the developing countries to achieve sustainable development through telecommunications and ICT;

*b)* the relevant conclusions of the Global Standardization Symposium,

resolves

1 that the action plan annexed to this resolution, having the objective of bridging the standardization gap between developed and developing countries, should be continued and be reviewed on an annual basis to take into account the requirements of developing countries;

2 that ITU-T, in collaboration with the other Sectors, as appropriate, shall develop a programme to assist developing countries in developing methods that facilitate the process of linking innovations to the standardization process;

3 that, subject to Council approval, there should be free online access to the manuals, handbooks, directives and other ITU material related to understanding and implementation of ITU‑T Recommendations, particularly in the area of developing, planning, operation and maintenance of telecommunications equipment and networks;

4 to support, within available or otherwise contributed resources, and on a case-by-case basis, the coordinated creation of regional groups of ITU-T study groups, and encourage cooperation and collaboration of these groups with other regional standardization entities;

5 to maintain in the annual budget of the Union a separate expenditure line item for bridging the standardization gap activities, while at the same time voluntary contributions should be further encouraged;

6 to study the possibility of generating additional revenue for ITU-T, through identifying new financial resources not related to the voluntary contributory units mentioned above;

7 that interpretation shall be provided, based on the requests of participants, at the opening plenary of the study groups, closing plenary of working parties, the closing plenary of study groups, and the whole meeting of TSAG,

further resolves that ITU regional offices

1 be engaged in the activities of TSB in order to promote and coordinate standardization activities in their regions to support the implementation of the relevant parts of this resolution and to carry out the objectives of the action plan, and launch campaigns to attract new Sector Members, Associates and Academia from developing countries to join ITU-T, and to provide the necessary assistance to the regional groups of ITU-T study groups;

2 assist the vice-chairmen, within the offices' budgets, appointed with specific responsibilities including, among others, the following:

i) closely work with ITU members in the region in order to mobilize them to participate in ITU standardization activities to assist in bridging the standardization gap;

ii) make mobilization and participation reports to the ITU body concerning the region;

iii) prepare and submit a mobilization programme for the regions that they represent at the first meeting of TSAG or a study group and send a report to TSAG;

3 organize and coordinate the activities of the regional groups of ITU-T study groups,

invites the Council

in view of the above *resolves*, in particular *resolves* 7, to increase the ITU-T budgetary provisions for fellowships, interpretation and translation of documents for meetings of TSAG, ITU‑T study groups and regional groups of ITU‑T study groups,

instructs the Director of the Telecommunication Standardization Bureau, in collaboration with the Directors of Telecommunication Development Bureau and the Radiocommunication Bureau, within available resources

1 to encourage the formation of partnerships under the patronage of ITU-T as one of the means for financing and implementing the objectives of the action plan annexed to this resolution;

2 to consider, whenever possible, holding workshops concurrently with meetings of the ITU‑T regional groups, in coordination and collaboration with the Director of BDT;

3 to assist developing countries with their studies, particularly in respect of their priority questions and towards developing and implementing ITU-T Recommendations;

4 to continue the activities of the implementation group established within TSB to organize, mobilize resources, coordinate efforts and monitor work related to this resolution and the associated action plan;

5 to carry out the necessary studies on the role of innovation management and innovation stimulation programmes on bridging the standardization gap between the developed and developing countries;

6 to include in the TSB budget proposal to the ITU Council funds identified for the implementation of this resolution, taking into account financial constraints and existing and planned BDT activities;

7 to report on the implementation of this plan to future world telecommunication standardization assemblies and plenipotentiary conferences, with a view to reviewing this resolution and introducing the appropriate amendments in the light of implementation outcomes, as well as the budgetary adjustments needed to implement this resolution;

8 to provide support and assistance to developing countries, in drafting/developing a set of guidelines on the application of ITU recommendations at the national level of the requesting country in order to enhance their participation in ITU-T study groups, with the assistance of the ITU regional offices, for bridging the standardization gap;

9 to enhance use of electronic channels such as webinars or e-learning for education and training on implementation of ITU-T Recommendations;

10 to provide all necessary support and measures for creating and ensuring the smooth functioning of the regional groups, and to facilitate the organization of their meetings and workshops to disseminate information and increase understanding of new recommendations, in particular for developing countries;

11 to report on the effectiveness of the regional groups to the ITU Council,

instructs ITU-T study groups and the Telecommunication Standardization Advisory Group

1 to be actively involved in the implementation of the programmes set forth in the action plan annexed to this resolution;

2 to coordinate joint meetings of regional groups of ITU-T study groups,

further instructs the study groups

1 to take account of the specific characteristics of the telecommunication environment of the developing countries in the process of establishing standards in the fields of planning, services, systems, operation, tariffs and maintenance, and to provide solutions/options relevant to developing countries wherever possible;

2 to take appropriate steps to have studies carried out on questions connected with standardization which are identified by world telecommunication development conferences;

3 to continue liaising with study groups of the ITU Telecommunication Development Sector, where appropriate, when developing new or revised ITU-T Recommendations, on the specific needs and requirements of developing countries, in order to broaden the appeal and applicability of the Recommendations in those countries,

encourages Member States and Sector Members

to take the objectives set out in the action plan in the annex to this resolution into account in their participation in ITU‑T.

Annex  
(to Resolution 44)

Action plan for the implementation of Resolution 123 (Rev. Busan, 2014) of the Plenipotentiary Conference

# I Programme 1: Strengthening standard-making capabilities

1) Objective

• To improve the standard-making capabilities of developing countries.

2) Activities

• Developing guidelines to assist developing countries in their involvement in ITU‑T activities, covering, but not limited to, ITU-T working methods, formulating draft Questions and making proposals.

• Creating methods to increase the access of developing countries to essential technical information in order to enhance their knowledge and capacity (i) to implement global standards, (ii) to effectively contribute to the work of ITU-T, (iii) to include their own specificities and necessities in the global standard-making process, and (iv) to influence global standard-making discussions by having active roles in ITU-T study groups.

• Improving procedures and electronic tools for remote participation, in order to enable experts in developing countries to participate actively in ITU-T meetings (including TSAG, study groups, joint coordination activities, global standardization initiatives, among others), workshops and training, from their own countries.

• Conducting consultancy projects designed to support developing countries in the development of standardization plans, strategies, policies, etc. The outputs should be further transformed into best practices.

• Developing methods, tools and indicators for accurate measurement of the results and the level of effectiveness of the efforts and activities applied in bridging the standardization gap.

• Working with Sector Members, and in particular manufacturers, academia, and research and development organizations, on exchanging information on new technologies and requirements of developing countries, and on providing technical assistance to encourage the establishment of standardization programmes in academia and research and development organizations in the field of ICT.

# II Programme 2: Assisting developing countries with respect to the application of standards

1) Objective

• Assisting developing countries in:

• Ensuring that developing countries have a clear understanding of ITU‑T Recommendations.

• Enhancing the application of ITU‑T Recommendations in developing countries.

2) Activities

• To assist developing countries in:

• Establishing a standardization secretariat to coordinate standardization activities and participation in ITU-T study groups.

• Determining whether their existing national standards are consistent and in accordance with the current ITU‑T Recommendations.

• Actions to be performed by TSB with BDT cooperation:

• Developing a set of guidelines on how to apply ITU-T Recommendations, in particular on manufactured products and interconnection, with emphasis on Recommendations having regulatory and policy implications.

• Providing advice and assistance on how to better utilize and adopt ITU-T Recommendations in national standards.

• Compiling and maintaining a database containing information on new technologies that are standardized, as well as products that are compliant with ITU-T Recommendations.

• Organizing capacity-building events on the application of specific Recommendations and on methods of examining compliance of manufactured products with these Recommendations.

• Improving and promoting the use of an electronic forum for “questions and answers on standards” where developing countries can raise questions concerning their understanding and application of Recommendations and seek advice from study group experts.

# III Programme 3: Human resources capacity building

1) Objective

• To increase the human resources capacity of developing countries in ITU-T and national standardization activities.

2) Activities

• Promoting events, seminars, workshops and study group meetings at the regional and global levels to build capacities regarding matters relevant to standardization and the development of telecommunications and ICT in developing countries.

• In close collaboration with BDT and BR, providing training courses on standardization to developing countries.

• Providing more internship, secondment and short-term employment, etc., opportunities for developing countries at ITU.

• Encouraging the election of more candidates from developing countries to ITU‑T study groups chairmanship and vice-chairmanship positions.

• Encouraging secondment and short-term employment opportunities for experts from developing countries in test laboratories of international standards development organizations (SDOs) and manufacturers, in particular in the area of conformance and interoperability testing.

• Organizing in-depth tutorials on understanding and implementation of ITU-T Recommendations.

• Provide guidance and supportive material to developing countries to assist them in developing and providing undergraduate and postgraduate courses on standardization in their universities.

• Providing, through TSB, fellowships to eligible countries to attend relevant ITU-T meetings.

# IV Programme 4: Fundraising for bridging the standardization gap

*a)* Contributions to the action plan through the following forms of partnerships and other means:

• Partnership contributions

• Additional budget allocated by ITU

• Voluntary contributions by developed countries

• Voluntary contributions by the private sector

• Voluntary contributions by others.

*b)* Management of funds by TSB:

• The Director of TSB, in close coordination with the Director of BDT, shall be responsible for the management of funds raised as above, which shall be used principally for achieving the objectives of these programmes.

*c)* Principles for the use of funds:

• Funds are to be used for ITU‑related activities including, but not limited to, assistance and consultation, training of representatives of developing countries in ITU-T activities, as well as studying compliance examination, interconnection and interoperability programmes for developing countries (but not for the purchase of equipment).

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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)