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| Arab States Administrations | |
| Proposed modification to Resolution 52 | |
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RESOLUTION 52 (Rev. Geneva, 2022)

Countering and combating spam

(Florianópolis, 2004; Johannesburg, 2008; Dubai, 2012; Hammamet, 2016; Geneva, 2022)

The World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly (Geneva, 2022),

recalling

*a)* relevant provisions of the basic instruments of ITU;

*b)* the Declaration of Principles of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) states in § 37 that "Spam is a significant and growing problem for users, networks and the Internet as a whole. Spam and cybersecurity should be dealt with at appropriate national and international levels";

*c)* the WSIS Plan of Action states in § 12 that "Confidence and security are among the main pillars of the information society", and calls for "appropriate action on spam at national and international levels";

*d)* the relevant parts of Resolutions 130 (Rev. Busan, 2014) and 174 (Rev. Busan, 2014) of the Plenipotentiary Conference;

*e)* the report of the chairman of the two ITU WSIS thematic meetings on countering and combating spam, which advocated a comprehensive approach to combating spam, namely:

i) strong legislation

ii) the development of technical measures

iii) the establishment of industry partnerships to accelerate the studies

iv) education

v) international cooperation;

*f)* the relevant parts of Resolution 45 (Rev. Dubai, 2014) of the World Telecommunication Development Conference,

considering

*a)* that communications via mobile phone networks and exchanging e-mails and other telecommunications over the Internet has become one of the main means of communication between people around the world;

*b)* that the meaning of the word "spam" depends on each national perception of privacy and what constitutes spam from the national technological, economic, social and practical perspectives. In particular, its meaning evolves and broadens as technologies develop, providing novel opportunities for misuse of electronic communications. Although there is no globally agreed definition for spam, "unsolicited" and "bulk" are the two main terms commonly used when describing spam. This may include e-mail spam, instant messaging spam, social media spam, Web search engine spam, mobile phone messaging, phone calls ...etc,;

*c)* that as the use of ICT continues to expand and the Internet of Things (IoT) continues to grow and new platforms are introduced to the Internet; it is possible that spam vulnerabilities will increase; ;

*d)* that spam in all its forms as mentioned in *b* has become a widespread problem causing potential loss of revenue to Internet service providers, telecommunication operators, mobile telecommunication operators and business users particularly in developing countries, where high volumes of incoming and outgoing spam cause a severe exhaustion on the limited and costly bandwidth that is available in those regions;

*e)* that countering spam by technical means burdens affected entities, including network operators and service providers, as well as users who unwillingly receive such spam, with significant investments in networks, facilities, terminal equipment and applications;

*f)* that spam creates problems of information and telecommunication network security, and is increasingly being used as a vehicle for phishing and spreading viruses, worms, spyware and other forms of malware, etc. as well as the widespread practices of the use of voice spam and SMS of international origin in mobile phone networks such as voice call, and Bulk SMS, that, when calling back, users are routed to a call with high charges, such as an overseas premium call, causing significant user financial;

*g)* that spamming is used for criminal, terrorist, fraudulent or deceptive activities;

*h)* that spam is a global problem, with different characteristics in different regions, which affects many stakeholders and, therefore, requires collaborative work and international cooperation in law enforcement and technology, to address it and find technical solutions and develop prevention mechanisms against spam;

*i)* that addressing the issue of spam is a matter of urgency, in short, medium and long term;

*j)* that developing countries1 need more support from developed countries and the international community in facing the problem of spam in particular, and Internet security in general;

*k)* that relevant Recommendations of the ITU Telecommunication Standardization Sector (ITU‑T) and relevant information from other international bodies are available which could provide guidance for future development in this area, particularly with regard to lessons learned;

*l)* that technical measures to counter spam represent one of the elements of the approach mentioned in *recognizing further* *b)* above,

recognizing

*a)* that spammers are increasingly exploiting the cross-border nature of the Internet and the inefficiencies of cross-border cooperation and communications;

*b)* that there is no easy solution to counter spam, and a multifaceted and cooperative approach is necessary. Tackling spam issues not only requires technical solution, nor legal, but a combination of all of them and that needs cooperation between public and private stakeholders, and at the international level, is a key element for a comprehensive and effective strategy against spam;

*c)* that spam is used for both commercial (e.g. marketing) and non-commercial (e.g. fraudulent and deceptive) purposes;

*d)* that the global volume of spams is increasing in recent years to reach an average of hundreds of billions of spam emails sent daily, which represent more than 80% of the global email volume;2

*e)* that the percentage of geographical origins of email spams varies across the world, where some countries record high percentages;

*f)* that identifying actual spammers remains challenging, public-private partnerships between service providers and law enforcement may further improve the ability to identify spammers over time,

noting

*a)* the important technical work carried out to date in ITU‑T Study Group 17, and in particular Recommendation ITU‑T X.1231 and the ITU‑T X.1240 series Recommendations;

*b)* the pilot program of the GSMA association “Spam Reporting Service SRS” facilitating the notification of spam by consumers using an universal short code, and allowing participating operators to share information on attacks and act;

*c)* that while technical solutions represent crucial role in mitigating spams and that these solutions are continue to be developed to counter new methods of sending spams, few Recommendations on countering spam have been approved by ITU‑T Study Group 17 during Study Period 2017-2020;

*d)* that new and emerging technologies, in particular Artificial Intelligence (AI), have been used to fuel spam operations to create new forms of spams;

*e)* that new evolved forms of spams make use of social media, are widely used to influence public opinions, spread fake news, create and advertise misconceptions,

requests Secretary-General

to set up an initiative of an effective legislative and technical framework for international cooperation and coordination, to adopt global agreement on spam countering,

resolves to instruct the relevant study groups

1 to continue to support ongoing work, in particular in Study Group 17, related to countering spam and to accelerate their work on spam, taking into account *considering* b) and c), *recognizing* a) and b) and *noting* a), b), c) and d); in order to address existing and future threats of spam, as appropriate;

2 to continue collaboration with the ITU Telecommunication Development Sector (ITU‑D) and with the relevant organizations, including other relevant standards organizations (e.g. the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF) and (GSMA)), in order to continue developing, as a matter of urgency, technical Recommendations with a view to exchanging best practices and disseminating information through joint workshops, training sessions, etc.,

further instructs Study Group 17 of the ITU Telecommunication Standardization Sector

1 to report regularly to the Telecommunication Standardization Advisory Group on progress under this resolution;

2 to support ITU‑D Study Group 2 on countering and combating spam in its work providing technical training sessions and workshop activities in different regions related to spam policy, regulatory and economic issues and their impact for the benefit of regulators and telecommunications operators;

3 to continue its work on developing Recommendations, technical papers and other related publications,

instructs the Director of the Telecommunication Standardization Bureau

1 to provide all necessary assistance with a view to expediting such efforts, working collaboratively with relevant parties that combat spam with a view to identifying opportunities, raising awareness for such activities and identifying possible collaboration, as appropriate;

2 to create/update repository of legal frameworks and best practices and solutions on spam countering to be shared through ITU with all membership;

3 to study the feasibility of developing a platform that reflect live spam statistics, in order to maximize the usefulness of the information provided by the platform for all stakeholders;

4 to continue study – including sending a questionnaire to the ITU membership –indicating the volume, types (e.g. e-mail spam, SMS spam, spam in IP-based multimedia applications) and features (e.g. different major routes and sources) of spam traffic, in order to help Member States and relevant operating agencies identify such routes, sources and volumes and estimate the amount of investment in facilities and other technical means to counter and combat such spam, and prevent installation and operation of platforms emitting spams, taking into account work that has already been carried out;

5 to continue to cooperate with the Secretary-General's initiative on *requests Secretary-General* and with the Telecommunication Development Bureau in relation to any item concerning cybersecurity under Resolution 45 (Rev. Dubai, 2014), and to ensure coordination among these different activities;

6 to contribute to the report of the Secretary General to the ITU Council on the implementation of this resolution,

invites Member States, Sector Members, Associates and academia

to work collaboratively to implement this resolution,

further invites Member States

1 to take appropriate steps to ensure that appropriate and effective measures are taken within their national and legal frameworks to combat spam and its propagation;

2 to develop information sharing mechanisms between Member States of knowledge and law enforcement efforts to benefit every nation participating in the information society;

3 to work collaboratively with all relevant stakeholders to counter and combat spam.