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Telecommunication Development Bureau

DRAFT REPORT OF THE 1ST ITU-D ACADEMIA NETWORK MEETING

Background

ITU Plenipotentiary Conference 2014 (PP-14) recognized the important role and valuable input that academia, universities and their associated research establishments can provide to the work of the three Sectors of the ITU. In accordance with Resolution 169 (Rev. Busan, 2014), with the exception of some treaty-level conferences, ITU Academia Members are now invited to participate in global and regional conferences, workshops and activities of the Union.

The ITU Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT) is exploring creative ways and innovative collaborative mechanism for Academia Members to be more actively engaged in ITU-D activities, to network and share ideas and experience and to elaborate roadmaps addressing common areas of interest.

In this context, following an agreement reached at the Management Coordination Group (MCG), a previous informal meeting of Academia representatives held in April 2015 as well as numerous bi-lateral discussions, the BDT organized the 1st ITU-D Academia Network Meeting (ITUDANM-1) on 11th September 2015, as a side-event to the 2nd Meeting of ITU-D Study Group 2.

The objectives of the Academia Network are, among others:

1. To provide ITU Academia representatives with a forum to discuss their specific goals, objectives, projects and issues in the framework of their participation in the work of the ITU;
2. To provide ITU Academia representatives with a platform to exchange best practices, share experiences and success stories to help them better serve the needs of their respective communities in terms of socio-economic development and sustainable development goals.

3. To sustain the efforts of Academia in fostering academic research in the field of telecommunications/ICTs in accordance with the mandate of ITU-D and specifically Study Groups.
4. To provide Academia and other ITU stakeholders with a networking platform to share quality scientific, academic and managerial knowledge in the field of telecommunications/ICTs.

To achieve the objectives, the ITUDANM-1 focused on the relevant mechanisms to be developed for three main themes: 1) creation of an ITU scientific/academic journal, the **ITU Journal**; 2) discussion of a **platform for exchange** of staff, faculty and students and for harmonized of ICT-related syllabi; and 3) explore **research funding mechanisms/platforms**, for the benefit of ITU Academia Members.

Introductory Remarks

On behalf of the ITU, **Dr Chaesub Lee, Director of the ITU Telecommunication Standardization Bureau (TSB)** welcomed the participants. Dr Lee highlighted the importance of the work carried out by Academia, Universities and Research Institutes as well as of their participation in ITU's work. He thanked the BDT for initiating the ITU-D Academia Network which is seen as an excellent complement to the Kaleidoscope developed by the TSB. *"This will further enrich the wealth of initiatives that are blossoming following the decision of the Plenipotentiary Conference to open wide the doors of the Union to Academia, Universities and their associated Research Institutes"* he said.

Dr Eun-Ju Kim, Chief of Innovation and Partnership Department, ITU Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT), introduced the objectives of the meeting and its organizational structure, while emphasizing the importance of exploring and establishing mechanisms for the main three themes, to identify and to serve better the needs of ITU-D membership, especially academia communities, in the longer term.

Session 1: ITU Journal

Professor Ahmad Sharafat, Chairman, ITU-D SG 2, and Session Leader highlighted the importance of advancing ITU's professional position, impact, and visibility in sharing, promoting, and fostering telecommunication/ICT innovations. To do so, ITU is proposed to publish an ITU Journal highlighting key emerging telecommunication/ICT challenges and issues in a converged ICT ecosystem relating to ITU and its Membership be published on a regular basis.

The ITU Journal would highlight and promote progress, development, and innovation in telecommunication/ICT infrastructure, technologies, services, solutions, and applications worldwide from socio-economic aspects to technical and engineering ones. Thus, it can be read and referenced by professionals and researchers in the governments, policy-makers, regulators, academia, as well as public and private industry.

Such a Journal would require an Editorial Board, to be run by the Academia themselves and composed of internationally recognized scholars, professionals, scientists, researchers and engineers.

Based on the above, the meeting addressed the following questions:

- What themes should the ITU Journal cover in the next two years?
- What should be the profile of the Editorial Board Members? Who could be recommended?

Participants of the meeting suggested the three following main themes to be addressed by the ITU Journal in the next two years:

- ICT for Sustainable Development
- Bridging the Digital Divide
- Best Practices

All themes discussed are reported in Annex 1 to this report.

A large variety of profiles have been proposed with regard to Members of the Editorial Board: representatives from Academia, the industry, the civil society, journalists, philosophers, etc. from developed and developing countries. Some individuals were also identified and their names will be brought to the attention of ITU Secretary General.

Session 2: Global Exchange Platform

The session was introduced by **Dr. Supong Limtanakool, Executive Vice President for External Affairs, Bangkok University, and Session leader.**

Practice shows that insufficient or poorly targeted digital literacy, in particular for younger generations, has become an issue and hinders access to job markets, in particular for leaders and managers to be.

It is proposed to develop a Global Exchange Platform (ITU-GXP), possibly utilizing the ITU-D Innovation Platform, to identify ITU Membership needs, especially from Academia, to exchange best practices and to foster collaboration among ITU Academia members and possibly ITU-D Sector Members. This platform would also support to design harmonized and well-adapted curricula, also in the field of applied telecommunications/ICTs, to exchange staff, faculty and students, to open a fruitful dialogue with the industry to assess future trends and needs in human capacity building and higher-level education.

The meeting then addressed the two following questions:

1. What would you like inter-academia collaboration to cover in the next three to five years?
2. What should be the role of the ITU to make this happen?

Participants made several proposals to leverage inter-academia collaboration:

- Creation of a joint Master Programme (education).
- Development of joint curricula and course materials in areas of common interest (e.g. ICT, geopolitics)
- Funding support for research.
- Exchange (of students, R&D, experience) and providing the tools for that purpose (including online tools).
- Open Data & access to the documents.
- Development of programmes for PhDs and also internships & fellowships.
- Creation of an International Recognized Academic Board.

With regard to the role that ITU can play to make this happen, the following elements were proposed:

- Making audiovisual more accessible.
- Producing a Publication/Journal and ensuring open access to those documents
- Development of best practices.
- Organizing ITU workshops & conferences.
- Developing an ITU platform to network (also involving private sector to help academia).
- Producing unified terminology.
- Adopting recommendations for Education Policy.
- Fostering collaboration between Academic and industry Sector Members.
- Identifying Member States and ITU Sector Members that can contribute to support academic research.
- Ensuring that issues that are discussed at ITU (e.g. policy and regulatory matters) be included in the syllabus to transmit knowledge to young generation.

Session 3: Research Funding Mechanisms and Platforms

Introduction of the session was made by **Dr. Loretta Anania, Scientific Officer, DG Connect, European Commission, and Session Leader.**

Based on the fact that a concern for Academia communities is to access to funds to carry out their research, the session was invited to share experiences in this domain and to explore potential funding mechanisms that would provide support to Academia Members and the research community.

The meeting discussed the need of resources for academic research and explore some potential ways to leverage funding for innovation and research projects (e.g. collaborative research, co-created technologies). ITU was foreseen as a key player to support its Academic Members by fostering collaboration for identification of common goals and attract potential partners from the public and the private sector due to its unique relationship with its Member States and Sector Members.

ITU-D Innovative Platform

A short presentation of an interactive *ITU-D Innovation Platform* developed by the BDT was made to learn and gather the inputs before it is formally launched. This platform is proposed to serve the Members to build innovation capacity, for which ITU-D membership engages and interacts through the Platform for demand-driven innovation.

Final Remarks/Closure

Mr Brahima Sanou, BDT Director, thanked the Session Leaders as well as all the participants for their active engagement and valuable contributions. He stressed the full commitment of ITU with regard to the outcomes of the meeting: ITU Journal and platform to foster collaboration between

Academic and industry Sector Members and to identify stakeholders from the public and private sector that can contribute to support academic research.

The BDT Director informed the participants that the BDT aims to carry out an academic/scientific Study on Impacts of ICTs for the Socio-Economic Development in connection with ITU Academia members. He invited Prof. Ahmad Sharafat to facilitate this study.

Ways Forward

The participants are invited to consider themes for future discussions to take place on-line and at the occasion of a 2nd ITU-D Academia Network meeting. Participants expressed the view that while working on-line most of the time, a face-to-face meeting should be organized, at least once a year.

Useful Links

- 1st ITU-D Academia Network Meeting website:
<http://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Membership/Pages/AcademiaNetwork01.aspx>
 - Meeting Pictures:
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/itupictures/albums/72157658592646075>
 - Meeting Video Clip:
https://youtu.be/bZNEpXqBJ_s
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Annex 1

ITU JOURNAL – POTENTIAL THEMES

