**Report of the inter-regional standardisation forum on "Operational issues on numbering, emergency service and OTTs",**
**22 October 2019, Dubai, UAE,**


The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) organized the **Inter-regional Standardization Forum on "Operational issues on numbering, emergency service and OTTs"** on 22 October 2019 in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. The Forum was kindly hosted by the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA) of the United Arab Emirates, in collaboration with the ITU Regional Offices for Arab States and for Africa. The forum was collocated with the following events:

- Inter-regional Arab-African Hands-on training on BSG (20-21 October 2019).

- ITU-T Study Group 2 Regional Group for Africa (SG2RG-AFR) and ITU-T Study Group 2 Regional Group for the Arab region (SG2RG-ARB) meetings (23-24 October 2019).

- ITU-T Study Group 3 Regional Group for the Arab region (SG3RG-ARB) meeting (23-24 October 2019)


The forum was attended by 57 participants from 23 countries. The programme of the Forum can be accessed on the ITU website:
https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-T/Workshops-and-Seminars/bsg/20191022/Pages/default.aspx

Mr Saif Bin Ghelaita, Executive Director, Technology Development Affairs, United Arab Emirates and Dr Bilel Jamoussi, Chief of the Study Groups Department, TSB, ITU provided opening speech. Mr Jamoussi also presented the TSB Director's report to TSAG on activities in ITU-T (from October 2018 to August 2019). He thanked the host for their very generous hosting and well organization.

Presentations on the following topics were provided and discussed in three thematic sessions (numbering and operation; OTTs; emergency service):

- effective and efficient national numbering resources administration
- Harmonization of Short Codes
- Revision of Country numbering Plan to include M2M numbering
- Call spoofing and numbering misuse
- Efraud (Electronic fraud) using E.164 Numbers, IMSI and USSD Codes
- Use of Network Colour Codes (NCC) in border sites
- E.164 numbers and OTTs
- Interworking with IP based network & deemed impermissible traffic
- Emergency numbers & Call location of emergency service

**Numbering and operation:**

Telecom numbering resources are divided into national and international resources, the demand is high for both types because of emerging technologies. Guidance on efficient and effective management of national numbering resources are needed to fulfil that demand. Registration of SIMs and numbers are believed important issue considering that different

countries have different legislation while subscribers not registered in a country where registration is not enforced can roam into the countries where registration is enforced via roaming agreement. This could also bring the risk of misuse and fraud. This can also happen to IoT/M2M even not yet now. This issue should be addressed by both SG2 and SG3 from economic and regulatory aspect.

Harmonization of short codes, which comprises of short code regularization and categorization, is necessary to restore harmony and efficiency in the allocation and usage of short codes in the industry.

 Updates to national numbering plan in Nigeria and UAE show an increasing trend to non-geographic numbering and allocate specific blocks for M2M numbering.

Originating and terminating calls without Calling Party Number (CPN), Call Line Identity (CLI) and Origin Identification (OI) unfavourably effect security, economic issues and user privacy. Member states are encouraged to implement WTSA resolution 65 and recommendation ITU-T E.157 on calling party number delivery.

Failure by National Regulatory Agencies (NRA) to update the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) about current numbering plans creates a vacuum, which fraudsters use to exploit and commit fraud. Member States are invited to tidy up their numbering plans and inform the ITU accordingly.

There is an increase in financial fraud using IMSI, E164 Numbers and USSD codes emanating from the convenience and ease in transferring money to any account, anywhere, anytime, and on any device with USSD functionality. This requires urgent intervention necessary to reduce or eliminate this fraud. Increased synergy of the communication and banking regulator is deemed to be necessary.

Consumers around the border areas suffer from unintended/accidental/forced roaming. This kind of roaming comes at a higher cost and yet a consumer has not crossed the border. East Africa states (Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda, South Sudan and Burundi) agreed to implement Network Colour Codes (NCC) in border areas as a means of minimising the unintended/accidental/forced roaming. Although these have been implement, the vice still exists. The Member States have now agreed to explore other non-technical options. Member States are invited to share their experience regarding minimising the unintended/accidental/forced roaming.

**OTTs**

Joint activities from regional level are called upon to investigate further:

- Definition of OTTs
- The extent to which these services are to be regulated
- Scope/range of OTT services
- Obligations of OTT players
- The economic impact of OTT services on  traditional   telecommunications services
- The use of national numbering resources as identifiers by OTTs

Member states of the Africa and Arab region are encouraged to participate in relevant discussions in ITU-T SG2, ITU-T SG3 and their regional groups.

**Emergency service**

Harmonization of emergency numbers is an important issue. There were ongoing discussions in ITU-T SG2 and its regional groups. Member states in Arab and Africa region are encouraged to share their experience and determine the emergency services in order to unify the emergency numbers regionally; SG2 support is sought to encourage all Member States to implement the unification of emergency numbers from national level.

The emergency service faces huge problems in improving the speed of responding to the emergency calls due to lack of location information. ITU-T SG2 has agreed a new work item TR.CLE on "Identify call location for emergency service". Member states in Africa and Arab region are encouraged to contribute on this draft new technical report of ITU-T TR.CLE (SG2-TD816).