

**Seventh SG13 Regional Workshop on
“Standardization of Future Networks towards
Building a Better Connected Africa”**



Abuja, Nigeria, 3-4 February 2020



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**Africans participation in the work of
FGML5G: Need to embrace ITU
Standardization Secretariat Agenda**

BY

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Introduction

IF ONE CONTINUES TO DO THE SAME THING IN
THE SAME WAY, THEN THE PERSON SHOULD NOT
EXPECT A DIFFERENT RESULT

WILL THE EMBRACING OF THE NSS CHANGE
THE RESULT



Introduction

ITU Secretary-General, Houlin Zhao, in his WTISD (World Telecommunication and Information Society Day) 2019 message noted that:

- Setting standards is a fundamental pillar of ITU's mission as the specialized agency of the United Nations for information and communication technologies.
- ITU standards make it possible for one – to connect to the internet, enjoy a sports event on TV, listen to radio in your car or watch a video on your smartphone.
- the upcoming 5G standards, especially if coupled with artificial intelligence, will support a new range of applications which we will soon take for granted like from self-driving cars to safer and smart cities.
- ITU standards ensure interoperability, open up global markets and spur innovation and growth, they are good for developed and developing countries, and as well, help to accelerate ICTs for all Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).
- And called upon ITU Member States, industry members, small and big companies and academia, together with UN sister agencies, partners and all stakeholders, to support ITU's “Bridging the Standardization gap” programme for the prosperity and well-being for all.



Why is ITU interested in the establishment of National Standardization Secretariat

- ITU's commitment to Bridging the Standardization Gap (BSG) is a fundamental part of ITU's mission to connect the world.
- BSG is one of the 5 strategic objectives of ITU's standardization sector (ITU-T).
- The goal of the BSG programme is to address the disparities in the ability of developing countries, relative to developed ones, to access, implement and influence ITU's international standards.
- In this context, the BSG programme aims to facilitate the efficient participation of developing countries in ITU's standards-making process, to disseminate information about existing standards, and to assist developing countries in the implementation of standards

Culled from [BSG website](https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-T/gap/Pages/default.aspx) - <https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-T/gap/Pages/default.aspx>



WTISD 2019 Call for action

- In Resolution 123 (Rev. Dubai 2018), ITU stated its commitment to bridging the standardization gap by supporting developing countries in their efforts to enhance their capacity to participate in the development and implementation of international standards.
- By this, ITU calls upon Member States, Sector Members, Associates and Academia, small- and medium-sized enterprises from developing countries, the leadership of ITU study groups and advisory groups, and the leadership and staff of the ITU Secretariat **to not only commemorate WTISD-2019 but also to use it to raise awareness of the importance of “Bridging the Standardization Gap”.**
- **Relevant academic institutions were invited** to develop and offer undergraduate and postgraduate courses on standardization; and to develop studies on the relationship between standardization and innovation.
- **Member States and Sector Members were invited** to make financial and in-kind voluntary contributions to ITU for bridging the standardization gap; to undertake concrete actions to support ITU's initiatives; **to work with ITU and relevant academic organizations to enhance capacity building in the standardization field;** to proactively use the web-based and other tools consolidated by ITU such as guidelines, recommendations, technical reports, best practices and use cases to hasten the transfer of knowledge.



WTISD 2019 Call for action

- **Member States were also invited** to study the possibility of implementing "*National Standardization Secretariats*", taking into account the guidelines provided under ITU's Bridging the Standardization Gap (BSG) programme, in particular in developing countries; to continue the creation of national and regional standardization bodies, as appropriate, **and encourage the involvement of these entities in ITU standardization work and the coordination of meetings with ITU regional groups, mainly to enable developing countries to communicate about their standardization priorities and requirements;**
- **Member States were also invited** to encourage their experts, in particular young and women experts, to join ITU activities and events organized for developing standards. **to host standardization meetings as well as events (forums, workshops, etc.) related to ITU standardization activities in particular in developing countries;** to encourage and facilitate experts from small and medium-sized enterprises, academia and relevant actors, in particular young and women experts, to participate in ITU's standardization activities.
- **Regions were invited** to take an active part in the activities of regional groups within ITU study groups **and support regional organizations in establishing frameworks to stimulate regions' participation in international standardization activities; to create regional standardization bodies, as appropriate, and encourage joint and coordinated meetings of such bodies with regional groups within ITU study groups.**



Helping Developing Countries to Establish a National Standardization Secretariat – SDG 9 and 10

Gary Fishman, (ITU NEWS, APRIL 17 2014), noted that

- it is quite normal to see more attendees from developing countries than in the past, and that Establishing a national standardization secretariat process at home can turn these attendees into more effective participants in ITU-T standardization work.
- although some developing countries have been long-time participants in ITU-T, participation in the study groups has by-and-large included only limited developing-country representation, with active participation and contribution to the work coming mostly from developed countries.
- comparing today's situation with participation in the past, there has been a clear change, with a growing level of attendance from more regions of the world and from more developing countries, and that in the past 5 years or so, attendees of ITU-T Study Group meetings have included representatives from more than 40 countries that had not previously participated in ITU-T work at the study group level.

The question now is how are these developing countries going to start the establishment of NSS and what are the expected challenges that will hinder the NSS



Major difference between attendance and participation in ITU activities

Gary Fishman (ITU NEWS, APRIL 17 2014), also noted that

- Attendance by more representatives of developing countries is a significant step forward, but there is still a big difference between simply attending a meeting and participation by a well-prepared, well-managed, active delegation such as those seen from other countries more experienced in international standardization work, and that this difference can be attributed to one main factor – the existence of a '**national standardization secretariat**' (NSS) to manage a national preparatory process.
- this difference is not just one of numbers, but of the national process a country uses before, during and after an international standardization meeting.

He recommended that an effective NSS can provide a route for a developing country to participate more actively in ITU-T standardization work, contributing to and influencing the ITU-T work programme and resulting standards.



ITU-T's core strategic objectives for the establishment of NSS

- At [Plenipot-10, Resolution 71](#) (Strategic Plan for the Union 2013-2016), was established “to assist in bridging the standardization gap between developed and developing countries”.
- ITU-T's assistance to developing countries is further supported by PP-10 Resolution 123 and [WTSA-12 Resolution 44](#), both titled “Bridging the standardization gap between developing and developed countries”.
- Programmes 1 and 2 of the Action Plan to implement WTSA-12 Resolution 44 specified that ITU has developed guidelines to assist developing countries in their involvement in ITU-T activities; conduct consultancy projects designed to support developing countries in the development of standardization plans, strategies and policies; and assist developing countries in establishing a standardization secretariat to coordinate standardization activities and participation in ITU-T Study Groups.



ITU-T's core strategic objectives for the establishment of NSS

- ITU-T actions in response to these Resolutions have included the granting of fellowships to aid the participation of representatives from some developing countries, offering online 'remote participation' tools, and developing support programmes within study groups such as the appointment of mentors and the holding of 'newcomer sessions' at each meeting.
- A recent deliverable, coming in direct response to the Resolution 44 Action Plan, has been the publication of the Guidelines that describe the benefits, establishment and operation of such a national body and, accounting for differences in standardization priorities and resources among developing countries, offer several options to increase the efficiency of a country's participation at various 'levels' of engagement with ITU-T.



Guidelines on the Establishment of National Standardization Secretariat for ITU-T

- This Guidelines recognize that many developing countries have limited resources to draw on for ICT standardization and that their public and private sectors' engagement with ITU-T Study Groups will develop over time, and that for countries with the greatest resource limitations, the Guidelines detail how to establish a NSS with very little new resources.
- The three options for a national process put forward by the Guidelines provide a structure through which developing countries can scale-up their participation in ITU-T incrementally. The Guidelines refer to these options as the “NSS-General Level”, for the most basic degree of involvement with ITU-T; the “NSS-Study Group Level”, where a country participates in a number of ITU-T Study Groups; and the “NSS-Full Sector Level”, at which a country will have become involved in close to all ITU-T Study Groups.



Roadmap to establish NSS

- The Guidelines cover the appointment of committee leaders and the scope of their responsibility and authority; public- and private-sector involvement in national advisory committees; the appointment of national contact points with ITU-T; the provision of national secretariat functions; and estimates of human and financial resource requirements, from the basic 'NSS-General Level' through to the 'NSS-Full Sector Level'.
- Appeals procedures are also described, accounting for cases in which parties believe that the procedures have not been followed appropriately.
- An accompanying Annex offers further guidance on the implementation of the Guidelines, providing step-by-step procedures to be followed in the operation of a NSS. Topics covered in the Annex include the development and approval of contributions to study group meetings; the establishment and preparation of national delegations to ITU-T meetings; responding to consultations on the approval or deletion of ITU-T Recommendations and Questions; and workload estimates for monitoring and responding to communications from the secretariat of ITU-T, to the Telecommunication Standardization Bureau (TSB).



African participation in the work of the FGML5G

- The FGML5G was established in Geneva during the ITU-T SG13 meeting of November 2017
- The Focus Group will draft technical reports and specifications for machine learning (ML) for future networks, including interfaces, network architectures, protocols, algorithms and data formats.
- An African, Engr Charles Chike Asadu serves as one of its Vice Chairman, with Slawomir STANCZAK Fraunhofer HHI, Germany as Chairman
- Outputs of the Focus Group approved by SG13 on are “Architectural framework for machine learning in future networks including IMT-2020” 01/2019 and [ITU's ML-Aware Network Architecture: Bringing Intelligence to Verticals](#) March 2019
- Next meeting is **8th meeting of FG ML5G, Beijing, China, 19-20 March 2020**
- Participation in FG-ML5G is free of charge and open to all. To receive updates and announcements related to this group, please subscribe to the FG-ML5G mailing list (see the "FG-ML5G Mailing lists" tab on the right of this page).
- Africans are therefore required to participate in this FG meeting and as well as other FG and SG meetings



Recommendations

- As there are increasing number of standardization work on new technologies going on, almost on daily bases, in the ITU-T activities, be it in Focus Groups, Study Group, etc, **it now behooves on African countries to critically study ITU-T NSS approach to enable effective participation of Africans in the standardization functions of the ITU.**
- **Need for survey of the level of participation of Africans on Administration by Administration bases in the ongoing work of ITU-T**
- **Need for creation of more awareness on the guideline for the establishment of NSS**
- **Need for funding opportunities for the African countries: example, TETFUND within the academia in Nigeria; Fellowship assistance from ITU for Academia Members and other private sector to be supported at Ministerial level; extension of the USPF to areas as capacity building amongst others.**



Takeaway

That Africa should as a matter of urgency take decisive position on:

- establishment of the NSS both at Administrative and Regional level.
- Improved participation in the FGML5G and other FG and SG meetings
- Lend support for the identification of focal point persons for ongoing works of the ITU-T under NSS guideline

THANKS FOR YOUR KIND ATTENTION

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