

RESOLUTION 25 (REV. BUCHAREST, 2022)

Strengthening the ITU regional presence

The Plenipotentiary Conference of the International Telecommunication Union (Bucharest, 2022),

considering

a) the benefits of telecommunications/information and communication technologies (ICTs) and the need to promote their greater availability for all, in particular in developing countries¹;

b) that the development of national and regional telecommunication/ICT infrastructures assists in narrowing the national and global digital divides and achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals;

c) the efforts of the ITU Member States to promote access to telecommunications/ICTs at affordable prices, with special attention to the most disadvantaged, including people in vulnerable situations and in remote and hard-to-reach areas,

considering further

a) the relevant provisions of Article 1 and Article 21 of the ITU Constitution and Article 5 of the ITU Convention;

¹ These include the least developed countries, small island developing states, landlocked developing countries and countries with economies in transition.

b) the relevant resolutions and decisions of this conference on the strategic, financial and human resources plans for the Union for 2024-2027 and related matters, including, among others, Resolution 157 (Rev. Bucharest, 2022) of this conference, on strengthening of the project execution and monitoring functions in ITU, and Resolution 135 (Rev. Bucharest, 2022) of this conference, on ITU's role in the durable and sustainable development of telecommunications/ICTs, in providing technical assistance and advice to developing countries and in implementing relevant national, regional and interregional projects;

c) relevant resolutions and decisions of the main conferences and assemblies of the three Sectors of ITU on enhanced participation by developing countries in the activities of the Union, strengthening the regional presence in the work of the study groups, and bridging the standardization gap between developing and developed countries;

d) relevant ITU Council decisions on the regional presence regarding, *inter alia*, the report by an external company on review of ITU's regional presence (2020);

e) reports of the United Nations Joint Inspection Unit (JIU), which made recommendations to improve the ITU regional presence and highlighted the need to mainstream regional presence in the strategic plan for the Union and to appropriately cascade it down into the operational plans of each Sector in order to achieve "One ITU",

noting with appreciation

a) the efforts of ITU to implement United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) resolutions, in support of United Nations operational activities to promote development and assist Member States in their activities to implement UNGA Resolutions 70/1, on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and 70/125, on the overall review of the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society;

- b) relevant UNGA resolutions on reaffirming the role and functions of the United Nations development system at the regional level and the need to continue to make it fit for purpose in supporting, *inter alia*, the implementation of the Doha Programme of Action of the 5th United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and the Quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system, recognizing the specificities of each region;
- c) that the Inter-Sectoral Coordination Task Force, led by the ITU Deputy Secretary-General, was established to enhance coordination and collaboration among the three Bureaux and the General Secretariat, with a view to avoiding internal duplication of effort and optimizing the use of resources;
- d) the efforts of the Inter-Sector Coordination Group on issues of mutual interest, which is composed of representatives from the three advisory groups, in identifying subjects of common interest and mechanisms to enhance collaboration and cooperation;
- e) the work being carried out by the Ad Hoc Group of the Council Working Group on financial and human resources (CWG-FHR) on the regional presence review, especially its recommendation to produce and publish a regional presence dashboard so as to allow the membership to access the status of the work plan;
- f) the adoption of the ITU Accountability Framework, established to further strengthen accountability mechanisms within the Union,

noting with concern

- a) the external auditor's special reports and documents of the Working Group on internal controls, presented to the Council in 2019-2022, recommending actions for more effective management to strengthen internal controls across ITU in order to avoid fraud in the future;
- b) the need to improve the number and distribution of staff members at regional and area offices, by duty station and by category,

recognizing

- a) the difficulty faced by many countries, particularly developing countries with stringent budgetary constraints, in participating in the activities of ITU;
- b) that regional and area offices are an extension of ITU as a whole;
- c) that ITU's capacity to hold fully virtual meetings and physical meetings with remote participation, as provided for by Resolution 167 (Rev. Bucharest, 2022) of this conference, contributes to reinforcing the effectiveness of the Union's activities, including project implementation as set forth in Resolution 157 (Rev. Bucharest, 2022) of this conference,

convinced

- a) that the regional presence enables ITU to work as closely as possible with its membership, serving as a channel for executing programmes, projects and activities, disseminating information on the Union's activities, developing closer ties with regional and subregional organizations and providing technical assistance to countries with specific needs;
- b) the importance of collaboration between the Radiocommunication Bureau (BR), the Telecommunication Standardization Bureau (TSB), the Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT) and the General Secretariat in order to promote and improve the work of the regional and area offices and mainstream the "One ITU" concept, to serve the membership;
- c) that the regional and area offices enable ITU to be more aware of and more responsive to the priorities and specific needs of the regions;
- d) that activities within the framework of the regional presence system are based on principles derived from the criteria of coherence, relevance, control, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability;
- e) that both the Plenipotentiary Conference and the Council have endorsed the principle that regional and area offices should be entrusted with clear and specific functions, and that, to be effective, the regional presence must have the necessary level of authority to meet the diverse requirements of the membership;

- f)* that resources are limited, and that efficiency and effectiveness are therefore key considerations for activities to be undertaken by ITU, as well as of the need to consolidate the technical expertise and knowledge of the human resources assigned to regional and area offices, to represent the three ITU Sectors;
- g)* that adequate online access between headquarters and the regional and area offices significantly enhances technical cooperation activities;
- h)* that all regional and area offices should have access to the same relevant electronic information available at headquarters, in order to be able to keep the countries of the region informed;
- i)* that full engagement and commitment from the regional and area offices is fundamental for the successful implementation of the strategic plan for the Union, the operational plans of the three Sectors and General Secretariat, and the ITU Telecommunication Development Sector (ITU-D) action plan,

noting

- a)* that the role of the ITU regional and area offices is to assist countries in the regions in many areas, such as in execution of and follow-up to projects, including ones related to the regional initiatives, bridging the standardization gap, capacity building related to frequency management, updating the regions on ITU activities and strengthening collaboration with regional telecommunication organizations;
- b)* that there should be greater cooperation and coordination among the three Bureaux and the General Secretariat in order to encourage participation by the regional and area offices in their respective spheres;
- c)* that there is a need for ongoing evaluation of the resourcing requirement, including staff, for regional and area offices to deliver on their agreed mandates,

noting also

- a) that regional and area offices represent the entire Union, that their activities should be linked to ITU headquarters and should reflect the coordinated objectives of all three Sectors and the General Secretariat, and that regional activities should enhance the effective participation of all members in ITU work;
- b) the recruitment of United Nations coordination officers in the ITU regional offices, preparing strategies and deepening and expanding coordination with United Nations resident coordinator's offices, the United Nations Development Coordination Office and United Nations country teams, which lead ITU to better engage in the reform of the United Nations development system, and, in particular, contribute to development of the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework at country level;
- c) that regional and area offices, in performing their respective functions, should seek to avoid duplication of activities and efforts, and maximize efficiency and optimize human and financial resources,

resolves

- 1 to continue to strengthen the functions of the regional and area offices so that they can play an important role in implementation of the ITU strategic plan, programmes and projects, and the regional initiatives set out in the Kigali Action Plan, pursuant to Resolution 17 (Rev. Kigali, 2022) of the World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC), within available resources, including those allocated by the financial plan and from other relevant sources such as voluntary contributions and sponsorships;
- 2 that regional and area offices play a key role in facilitating discussions on regional matters and the dissemination of information and results of activities of all three Sectors of the Union and the General Secretariat, while avoiding the duplication of such functions with headquarters;

- 3 that the regional and area offices should continue to strengthen their relations with regional and subregional telecommunication organizations and with United Nations organizations, through ongoing cooperation, to stimulate the mutual exchange of experience and assistance with the implementation of the ITU regional initiatives and other activities;
- 4 that the regional and area offices shall be empowered to make decisions within their mandate, while the coordination functions and the balance between ITU headquarters and the regional and area offices should be facilitated and improved;
- 5 that the regional and area offices should contribute to the annual four-year rolling operational plans of the General Secretariat and of the three Sectors, with content specific to each regional and area office, linked to the strategic plan for the Union for 2024-2027 and the Kigali Action Plan, then set up and continue to publish the annual plan/events on the ITU website for implementation;
- 6 that regional and area offices shall actively engage in the implementation of the strategic plan for the Union;
- 7 that regional and area offices shall actively engage in the implementation of the Kigali Action Plan, in particular with respect to the thematic priorities and their respective outcomes, outputs and regional initiatives consistent with the overarching ITU strategic plan;
- 8 that the regional and area offices shall actively engage in the realization of the outcomes identified in the Kigali Action Plan and shall engage in development of the related key performance indicators by the Telecommunication Development Advisory Group;
- 9 to foster improved collaboration between the ITU regional and area offices, relevant regional organizations, United Nations agencies and other international organizations dealing with telecommunication development and financial matters, in the interests of optimizing the use of resources and avoiding duplication, and that Member States should be kept updated, through BDT, where necessary, in order to ensure that their needs are being met in a coordinated and consultative fashion;

10 that the regional and area offices shall be fully involved in the organization of all ITU events/meetings/conferences, in close collaboration with the General Secretariat, the relevant Bureau(x) and the regional organizations, taking into consideration the priorities identified by the membership in the regions, in order to increase efficiency in the coordination of such events, avoid duplication of events/topics and derive benefit from synergy between the Bureaux and regional and area offices;

11 that, for the effective performance of their duties, regional and area offices must have sufficient human and financial resources, within the resources allocated by the financial plan, including the technological platforms to hold fully virtual meetings and physical meetings with remote participation and utilize electronic working methods, and also to disseminate relevant information through the various existing electronic tools to their respective Member States;

12 that the strategic goals and thematic priorities identified in the strategic plan for the Union, along with the four-year rolling operational plans of the General Secretariat and the three Sectors, shall be used to review the regional presence, and, where regional and area offices do not meet the agreed review criteria, the Council should assess the reasons and take the necessary corrective actions that it considers appropriate, in consultation with the countries concerned;

13 that, to promote the participation of developing countries in ITU activities, delegates of any developing countries which have made input contributions to ITU events can be eligible for a fellowship if the related budget allows;

14 to strive to increase human and financial resources in regional and area offices for the implementation, *inter alia*, of regional initiatives, to the extent practicable, within the limits of budgetary resources,

further resolves

1 whenever requested by the Council, but at least once in the interval between two plenipotentiary conferences, to review the ITU regional presence;

2 that regional and area offices need to pay greater attention to LDCs, develop per-country assessments and action plans in terms of telecommunication/ICT development and report to the Council, as part of the overall regional presence report;

3 that regional and area offices shall regularly provide reports to the Sector advisory groups, as appropriate, and inform the Directors of BR, TSB and BDT on regional activities related to their respective Sectors,

instructs the ITU Council

1 to continue including an item on strengthening of the regional presence on the agenda of each ordinary session of the Council in order to examine its evolution and adopt decisions for its continuing structural adaptation and operation, with the aim of fully implementing the mandate and the objectives of the strategic and financial plans for the Union through the coordination and complementary aspects of activities between ITU and regional and subregional telecommunication organizations;

2 to take into account the requirements of the Union's membership and give effect to the decisions adopted at conferences and assemblies of the Union, bearing in mind *instructs the ITU Council 4* below;

3 to allocate the appropriate human and financial resources within the financial limits established by the Plenipotentiary Conference to implement this resolution;

4 to report to the next plenipotentiary conference on the progress made in implementing this resolution, taking into account the implementation of relevant JIU reports and recommendations of CWG-FHR, the external and internal auditors, the Independent Management Advisory Committee and the Working Group on internal controls, and Ethics Office reports, among others, including the results of the review of the regional presence referred to in *further resolves 1* with a view to strengthening the regional presence;

5 to ensure the effective performance of regional and area offices based on the annual report of the Secretary-General, the results of the satisfaction survey conducted by the Secretary-General, the regular review by the Council, the implementation of the strategic plan for the Union for 2024-2027 and the implementation of the four-year rolling operational plans of the General Secretariat and the three Sectors, and to take appropriate measures and establish guidelines and recommendations for improving and strengthening the ITU regional presence;

6 to consider the outcomes of the review conducted by the Secretary-General and take appropriate action;

7 to continue to oversee the regional presence dashboard, especially in regard to the relevant remaining actions, and provide accordingly any guidance as deemed appropriate;

8 to pay greater attention to the organizational culture and skills gap in the regional presence and provide the necessary up-to-date training accordingly;

9 to consider the possibility of increasing the budget allocated to the regional initiatives, taking into consideration the characteristics of the needs of each region;

10 to continue to oversee the implementation of the recommendations made by an external company on forensic audit for more effective management,

instructs the Secretary-General

1 to facilitate the tasks of the Council by providing all necessary support for strengthening the regional presence as described in this resolution;

2 to adapt, where necessary, the prevailing terms and conditions of host-country agreement(s) to the changing environment in the respective host country, after prior consultations with countries concerned and the representatives of the regional intergovernmental organizations of the affected countries;

3 to submit each year to the Council a report on the regional presence containing, for each specific regional and area office, detailed information on how the goals and objectives identified in the strategic plan and the four-year rolling operational plans of the General Secretariat and the three Sectors are being delivered in the context of Resolution 151 (Rev. Bucharest, 2022) of this conference, on the improvement of results-based management (RBM) in ITU; the report should include detailed information on:

- i) staffing of regional and area offices, including number of staff members, their category of employment and other factors in accordance with Resolution 48 (Rev. Bucharest, 2022) of this conference;
- ii) financial information, including budget allocated to the regional and area offices and expenses per thematic priority and planned output;
- iii) activities related to the three Sectors, outcomes of projects, including regional initiatives, events/meetings/conferences and regional preparatory meetings, and attraction of new Sector Members, in coordination with regional intergovernmental organizations;
- iv) fellowships awarded;
- v) how RBM, results-based budgeting and the human resources strategic plan are being implemented in each regional and area office;
- vi) how relevant recommendations from ITU's oversight bodies are being implemented in each regional and area office;

4 to conduct, once every four years, within the existing financial resources, a survey of the level of satisfaction of Member States, Sector Members and regional telecommunication organizations with ITU's regional presence, and to present the results in a report to the session of the Council prior to each plenipotentiary conference;

5 to continue to engage with the United Nations, other United Nations development system entities and Member States with a view to enhancing the system of the ITU regional presence and supporting implementation of relevant UNGA resolutions on this matter,

instructs the Secretary-General, in close consultation with the Directors of the three Bureaux

- 1 to take measures to further strengthen the regional presence as an extension of ITU as a whole, as well as measures to ensure that the activities of BR, TSB and BDT are effectively incorporated in the regional and area offices, as described in this resolution;
- 2 to ensure that all planned activities of the three Sectors and the General Secretariat in the regions are consolidated into the parts of the operational plans relating to the regions and implemented under the coordination of the regional and area offices;
- 3 to ensure the availability of expertise from the three ITU Sectors in the regional and area offices;
- 4 to ensure that the annual operational plans of the regional and area offices are based on input from the respective regions prior to implementation;
- 5 to report annually to the Council on the implementation of all activities of the three Sectors and the General Secretariat in the regions under the coordination of the regional and area offices,

instructs the Director of the Telecommunication Development Bureau

- 1 to implement the following measures for further strengthening the regional presence:
 - i) to identify functions which could be decentralized and implement them as soon as possible subject to the Council's approval;
 - ii) to strive to have in the regional and area offices staff who have expertise in each of the three Sectors;
 - iii) to review the internal administrative procedures pertaining to the work of the regional and area offices, with a view to their simplification and transparency and enhancing work efficiency;

- iv) to assist countries in implementing the regional initiatives in accordance with resolutions of WTDC through transparent project funding mechanisms;
- v) to establish clear procedures for consulting Member States, in order to prioritize the consolidated regional initiatives and keep Member States informed on project selection and funding;
- vi) to solicit specialized input from the regional and area offices to better inform decision-making and address the crucial needs of the ITU membership in the region;
- vii) to provide the regional and area offices with greater flexibility, including, but not limited to:
 - functions relating to the dissemination of information, provision of expert advice and hosting of meetings, courses and seminars, as well as availability of all electronic tools required to carry out these activities;
 - any functions and tasks that may be delegated to them relating to the preparation and implementation of their allocated budgets;
 - ensuring their effective participation in discussions on the future of the Union and on strategic issues concerning the telecommunication/ICT sector;
 - empowering them to further contribute to the implementation of key organizational decisions;
- viii) to fully engage the regional and area offices in the activities of ITU-D, including those related to the Network of Women, Generation Connect and Partner2Connect initiatives;
- ix) to engage the regional and area offices in the capacity-building and development activities in the framework of the ITU Academy training centres;
- x) to make the utmost effort for the regional and area offices to support and facilitate the implementation of regional initiatives outlined in the Kigali Action Plan and requests for assistance made by Member States;
- xi) to allocate the necessary human resources to regional and area offices, by leveraging staff mobility policy, taking into consideration the characteristics of the needs of each region,

instructs the Director of the Telecommunication Development Bureau, in close consultation with the Secretary-General and the Directors of the Radiocommunication Bureau and the Telecommunication Standardization Bureau

- 1 to take the necessary measures to further strengthen the regional presence as an extension of ITU as a whole, as well as measures to ensure that the activities of BR and TSB are effectively incorporated in the regional and area offices, as described in this resolution;
- 2 to strongly encourage the participation of regional and area office staff in ITU conferences, assemblies and meetings, taking into consideration budget availability;
- 3 to support the review of the ITU's regional presence as defined under *further resolves* 1 above;
- 4 to review and determine the appropriate posts, including permanent posts, in regional and area offices, and strive to ensure that each region has at least one professional with relevant skills and knowledge to act as the focal point for each of the three Sectors, reporting to the regional director, including by training existing staff, while hiring specialized staff on an as-needed basis to meet particular needs;
- 5 to fill in a timely manner vacant posts in the regional and area offices, where appropriate, planning staff availability and giving due consideration to the regional distribution of staff positions and the knowledge and the expertise in the three Sectors of the Union to the extent possible;
- 6 to ensure that the regional and area offices are given the necessary priority among the activities and programmes of the Union as a whole, and that, to supervise the implementation of funds-in-trust projects and projects financed from the ICT Development Fund, they have the required autonomy, the decision-making authority and responsibility, and the appropriate means;
- 7 to take the necessary measures to improve the exchange of information, in a timely manner, between headquarters and regional and area offices;

8 to strengthen the human resource capabilities and provide the regional and area offices with a measure of flexibility in terms of the recruitment of professional staff as well as support staff;

9 to initiate internal consultations within the Sectors and with regional and area office staff to list expectations for the regional presence, and to define the type and appropriate level of contribution from each Sector;

10 to clearly communicate the linkage between the role played by an individual and the achievement of key objectives and priorities of the region concerned,

instructs the Directors of the Radiocommunication Bureau and the Telecommunication Standardization Bureau

1 to continue coordinating with the Director of BDT to provide information on their Sectors' activities, as well as the necessary expertise, and submit requests and/or proposals from regional and area offices, to strengthen cooperation and coordination with the relevant regional and United Nations organizations and to facilitate the participation of all Member States and Sector Members in the activities of the three Sectors of the Union in accordance with the "One ITU" concept;

2 to provide Sectoral regional activities through regional and area offices;

3 to identify focal points from BR and TSB to coordinate with regional and area offices.

(Kyoto, 1994) – (Rev. Minneapolis, 1998) – (Rev. Marrakesh, 2002) – (Rev. Antalya, 2006) – (Rev. Guadalajara, 2010) – (Rev. Busan, 2014) – (Rev. Dubai, 2018) – (Rev. Bucharest, 2022)
