



INTERNATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATION UNION TELECOMMUNICATION DEVELOPMENT BUREAU

**WORLD TELECOMMUNICATION DEVELOPMENT
CONFERENCE (WTDC-98)**

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PLENARY MEETING

Director, Telecommunication Development Bureau

REPORT ON THE REGIONAL TELECOMMUNICATION DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE FOR THE ARAB STATES (AR-RTDC-96)

The Regional Telecommunication Development Conference for the Arab States (AR-RTDC-96) took place in Beirut (Lebanon) from 11 to 15 November 1996. It was attended by 181 persons, including delegates and observers from 26 countries, representing administrations, recognized operating agencies, scientific or industrial organizations, and eleven international organizations.

The Conference was opened by the Prime Minister of Lebanon, H.E. Mr. Rafik Hariri, and chaired by Dr. Abdul Monem Youssef, Director-General of Telecommunications (Operation and maintenance). In addition to a Steering Committee and an Editorial Committee, the Conference set up three committees to deal respectively with policy and strategy, with network and services management and development, and with financing and tariff matters.

The main decision of the Conference was to adopt the Arab Book. The draft presented was amended following the decisions of the Conference, and the resulting Arab Book was circulated to the Member States in the Region. The Conference further adopted the Beirut Declaration, a Message from the Conference to the World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC-98, Valletta, Malta, 1998), and 12 Resolutions and 9 Recommendations, which are presented in Annex 1 for information and reference.

- For reasons of economy, this document is printed in a limited number of copies. Participants are therefore kindly asked •
to bring their copies to the meeting since no others can be made available.

ANNEX 1

**Declaration, message, resolutions and recommendations of the Regional Telecommunication
Development Conference for the Arab States (AR-RTDC-96)**

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Beirut Declaration

The States participating in this Regional Telecommunication Development Conference for the Arab States (AR-RTDC-96) convened in Beirut at the invitation of the International Telecommunication Union from 11 to 15 November 1996 and graciously hosted by the Lebanese Government,

considering

the Cairo Declaration and reaffirming all provisions thereof,

declare

that the most important achievement of this Conference is the adoption of the Arab Book concerning telecommunication development in the Arab world,

adopt

the following supplementary goals to those established by the Cairo Conference and invite the Arab States and relevant regional organizations to take steps to achieve them:

- 1) promotion of the use of telecommunications in the following fields:
 - telemedicine;
 - distance education;
 - environmental protection;
- 2) support to the Palestinian Authority, Somalia and the least developed Arab States for telecommunication development;
- 3) revitalization of priority regional projects and establishment of appropriate funding mechanisms;
- 4) accelerating the introduction of digital technology into radio broadcasting production;
- 5) adoption of common positions on call-back and refile services;
- 6) obtaining the necessary information to tackle the consequences of the entry into force of the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS);
- 7) securing financial resources for telecommunication development with private-sector participation;
- 8) establishment of the Arab integrated information infrastructure network, including GMPCS systems, for use in the technical, economic and social fields and in computing.

Message from AR-RTDC-96 to the World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC-98) (Valletta, Malta, 1998)

The Regional Telecommunication Development Conference for the Arab States (AR-RTDC-96) (Beirut, 11-15 November 1996), in full awareness of the importance of the second World Telecommunication Development Conference, is of the opinion that:

- 1 the results of both AF-RTDC-96 and AR-RTDC-96 are good reference inputs to WTDC-98;
- 2 the regional telecommunication policy books and papers should be used as basic material for the development of a worldwide book for development strategies;
- 3 the following themes and issues are expected to be considered by WTDC-98 in Valletta:
 - 3.1 BDT to act as a clearing house in the collection, analysis and dissemination to developing countries of information on the experience of the other developing countries for those issues of particular concern to the sector and in particular on the GMPCS introduction of and increased provision of rural telecommunication services;
 - 3.2 how to facilitate integration of the developing countries in the GII;
 - 3.3 how to assist developing countries in facing the challenges of the GATS Agreement and its economic consequences;
 - 3.4 how to assist developing countries in adapting to the constantly changing environment.

The Regional Telecommunication Development Conference wishes WTDC every success in its work.

Resolutions

RESOLUTION 1

THE ARAB BOOK

The Regional Telecommunication Development Conference for the Arab States (AR-RTDC-96)
(Beirut, 11-15 November 1996),

recalling

- a) that Resolution 2 of AR-RTDC-92 urged countries to study and propose appropriate national information and telecommunication policies that cover the regulation and operation of the sector;
- b) that, in accordance with that Resolution, a Regional Working Group on Telecommunication Policies and Strategies (WG-POL) was established to study specific issues related to policy and to elaborate a policy paper for the Arab States (*Telecommunication Policies for the Arab States - the Arab Book*),

noting

- a) that *the Arab Book* incorporates and synthesizes contributions from countries in the region and that it is of utmost importance to make it available to the Member States in the region;
- b) that *the Arab Book* emphasizes the importance of a well-conceived telecommunication policy and a sound regulatory framework, mindful of national circumstances and attentive to the advancement of technology;
- c) that a common reference framework facilitates policy harmonization and network integration;
- d) that any reference document on telecommunications, such as *the Arab Book*, requires regular updating in view of the rapid evolution of the sector,

considering

- a) that the restructuring of the telecommunication sector is happening at the same time that the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) is entering into force, which is opening up new challenges but also new opportunities for all countries in the world, including the Arab States;
- b) that the rapid and continuous development of the telecommunication environment and the convergence of telecommunication, computer and broadcasting technologies will call for new policies,

conscious

- a) that *the Arab Book* should be considered as a tool to assist the Arab States in facing the many challenges encountered in reforming the telecommunication sector;
- b) that the recommendations of *the Arab Book* offer full flexibility to each country to implement them as it sees fit, given its prevailing situation and objectives, and in accordance with its own public policy and juridicial, administrative and social framework,

resolves

- 1 to approve *the Arab Book* as amended by AR-RTDC-96;
- 2 to consider *the Arab Book* as a dynamic instrument to be reviewed and updated by the countries of the region with the help of ITU/BDT, as required by the evolution of the telecommunication sector,

instructs ITU/BDT

- 1 to incorporate the changes recommended by AR-RTDC-96 in *the Arab Book*;
- 2 to circulate *the Arab Book* to all Arab States and the concerned international, regional and subregional organizations.

RESOLUTION 2

IMPLEMENTATION OF REGIONAL PROJECTS AND REVITALIZATION OF THE MODARABTEL PROJECT

The Regional Telecommunication Development Conference for the Arab States (AR-RTDC-96) (Beirut, 11-15 November 1996),

recalling

- a) Resolutions 2, 3, 6, 8, 9, 10, 12 and 13 of the first Regional Telecommunication Development Conference for the Arab States, (Cairo, October 1992) promoting the implementation of specific Arab regional telecommunication development projects including, in particular, Phase II of the MODARABTEL Project (RAB-89-001);
- b) Recommendation 4 of the second meeting of AR-RDC-CC (Damascus, March 1995), calling for an update and implementation of the decision of AR-RTDC-92, reaffirming the importance of regional development projects for the Arab region and defining an order of priority for their implementation,

considering

- a) that telecommunications is one of the most vital elements for the reconstruction of national economies;
- b) that the existence, at the regional level, of coherent telecommunication networks and services is essential for development and integration of the Arab economies;
- c) the need to coordinate and harmonize Arab efforts to develop the telecommunication infrastructure in the Arab region;
- d) the vital importance of the regional telecommunication development projects endorsed by AR-RTDC-92, in terms of sectoral impact and quality;
- e) that it has not been possible, so far, to implement all these projects because of lack of necessary funds;

f) the satisfactory and encouraging results achieved by the MODARABTEL Project (Phase I) which helped, among other things, in the creation of cooperation networks between, on the one hand, the Arab experts themselves and, on the other hand, the Arab national operators, training establishments and research centres,

noting

- a) the outcome of the first meeting of AR-RDC-CC (Rabat, October 1993), identifying and defining the networks of the MODARABTEL Project Phase II;
- b) the express wish of the participants of the Preparatory Meeting for AR-RTDC-96 (Damascus, June 1996) that BDT, with the help of Member States and the partners for development, should find a possible solution for funding the implementation of the Arab regional telecommunication development projects;
- c) the recommendation of the Arab States Telecommunications Finance Colloquium (Amman, September 1996) that ITU/BDT evaluate different ways and means of implementing the Arab regional projects,

resolves

- 1 that ITU/BDT should evaluate different ways and means of implementing regional projects (activities) making the utmost use of available BDT resources and in particular those of the Regional Office, as well as possible use of expertise from the region;
- 2 that the ITU/BDT regular budget for the Arab region should be used to cover part of the costs envisaged¹;
- 3 that Arab Member States should contribute in kind and/or in cash to the budget foreseen for these projects;
- 4 that ITU/BDT should explore possible partnerships with Member States and Sector Members of the Development Sector in order to sponsor any activities within these projects of mutual benefit to the partners;
- 5 that regional cooperation should be strengthened;
- 6 that the MODARABTEL Project Phase II is to be reactivated;
- 7 that the remaining regional projects resulting from AR-RTDC-92 resolutions should be updated and implemented in the following order of priority: MODARABTEL, GLOSSARABTEL, TRAINTEL, RURETEL,

appeals

to international and regional financial and development institutions, the Member States and the Development Sector partners to participate in Arab regional development projects and support them financially.

¹ Note by the BDT: This request may apply within the limits of the Financial Regulations and taking into account the other needs of the region.

RESOLUTION 3

**TELECOMMUNICATION POLICY IN RURAL, REMOTE AND
POORLY SERVED AREAS**

The Regional Telecommunication Development Conference for the Arab States (AR-RTDC-96)
(Beirut, 11-15 November 1996),

considering

- a) that the Report of the Maitland Commission (The Missing Link) highlighted the fact that populations in many parts of the world have inadequate access to basic telecommunication services;
- b) that the World Telecommunication Development Conference (Buenos Aires, 1994), reaffirming the important and urgent need to provide access to basic telecommunication services for everyone, adopted Programmes 9 (Integrated rural development) and 12 (Telematics and computer networks) of the Buenos Aires Action Plan, as well as the Special Programme for the least developed countries (LDCs),

noting

- a) that very little progress has been made towards implementing the Maitland Commission's recommendations that everyone worldwide be brought within reach of basic telephone services;
- b) that the clear correlation between the availability of telecommunication services and economic and social development has been firmly established;
- c) that, in the economic climate prevailing in the 1990s, there are very few opportunities for external financial support at the international level and only limited opportunities at the national level, in order to support telecommunication services in rural, remote and poorly served areas of developing countries;
- d) that the provision of telecommunication services generates significant income and offers increasing potential, which might serve as the basis for the extension of telecommunication services to rural, remote and poorly served areas of developing countries,

recognizing

- a) that spectacular progress has been made in some developing countries through universal access to telecommunication services in rural and isolated areas countrywide, thereby demonstrating the economic and technical feasibility of projects to provide this type of service;
- b) that, in some areas and some developing countries, there is convincing evidence of the overall profitability of telecommunication services in rural and remote areas,

recognizing further

- a) that the provision of telecommunication services in rural and remote areas has to be profitable for the service provider, if the services in question are to be sustained;
- b) that there are several state-of-the-art technologies which may help to make the provision of telecommunication services to rural and remote areas more profitable;
- c) that access to telecommunication services in rural and remote areas can only be achieved through judicious choice of technological options allowing access to and maintenance of good quality and economical services,

resolves

to support the following principles recommended by ITU-D Study Group 2 as a basis for providing access to telecommunication services in rural, remote and poorly served areas:

1 Universal access

Universal access to telecommunication services should be offered at a convenient location in each community. The type and quantity of services must fully meet the community's needs, and the scope and volume of services should increase as demand grows and new applications emerge.

2 Rural telecommunication programme

Rural telecommunications must be introduced through a well-structured, rigorous and ordered programme covering several years, which develops and draws on local experience and expertise.

3 Regulatory framework

The regulatory body must monitor the sustained provision, quality and financial viability of telecommunication services, under the terms of the obligation to provide universal service, which requires that some attention be paid to commercial principles in the provision of telecommunication services.

4 Financial resources

In addition to public financial resources (with or without subsidies), the two other sources of financing are the service provider's own funds and national and international private-sector investments. In the first case, the funds are managed by the service provider for reinvestment purposes; in the second case, the provision of the rural telecommunication services has to be organized or regulated in such a way as to ensure its profitability.

5 Commercial approach

The operator providing rural telecommunication services must adopt a commercial approach, with the service operating on a commercial basis and with the aim of maximizing revenue and minimizing costs.

RESOLUTION 4

SPECIAL TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO THE PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY

The Regional Telecommunication Development Conference for the Arab States (AR-RTDC-96) (Beirut, 11-15 November 1996),

recalling

Resolution 32 of the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference (Kyoto 1994),

recalling further

the Memorandum of Cooperation signed between the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and UNESCO on 9 December 1993 in Grenada, and the Cooperation Agreement signed between ITU and UNESCO,

considering

the ITU's policy of assistance to the Palestinian Authority for the development of its telecommunication sector,

considering further

that a developed telecommunication network is of the utmost importance for the future of Palestine economically and socially,

noting

the Action Plan involving the General Secretariat and the three ITU Sectors,

noting further

the BDT's long-term technical assistance to Palestine for the development of its telecommunications, pursuant to Resolution 32 of the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference (Kyoto, 1994), and the urgent need for assistance to be provided in the various fields of information, informatics and communication,

requests the Director of the BDT

- a) to continue and enhance the technical assistance provided to the Palestinian Authority for the development of its telecommunications;
- b) to assist in the mobilization of resources for the implementation of BDT projects for the development of the telecommunications;
- c) to provide a periodical report on various experiences in liberalization and privatization of telecommunications and their positive and/or negative impacts on the development of the sector;
- d) to request the Director-General of UNESCO to continue to take all possible measures to develop human resources and information, informatics and communication infrastructures for the benefit of social, economic and cultural development of the Palestinian people, in close collaboration with ITU/BDT,

calls upon the ITU Members

to cooperate with the Director of BDT in assisting the Palestinian Authority, financially and technically, for the implementation of BDT projects for improvement and development of the Palestinian telecommunication network, as well as training of the Palestinian staff,

requests the Secretary-General and the Directors of the BR and TSB

to continue to give consideration to the following aspects:

- a) ITU membership;
- b) obtaining an international country code;
- c) notification of frequency assignments;
- d) obtaining radio call signs.

RESOLUTION 5

SPECIAL MEASURES FOR THE LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES IN THE ARAB STATES REGION

The Regional Telecommunication Development Conference for the Arab States (AR-RTDC-96) (Beirut, 11-15 November 1996),

recalling

Resolution 12 of the Regional Telecommunication Development Conference for the Arab States (Cairo, 25-29 October 1992),

recalling further

Resolution 1 of the World Telecommunication Development Conference (Buenos Aires, 1994) and Resolution 30 of the Plenipotentiary Conference (Kyoto, 1994),

noting

the very wide diversity of the state of telecommunication development in the various LDCs in the Arab States region,

concerned

that a number of LDCs in the Arab States region, such as Somalia and Sudan, are afflicted by civil strife which disrupts telecommunications and other development,

instructs the Director of the BDT

1 to continue to review the state of telecommunications in the Arab LDCs with a view to adopting strategies designed to bring about genuine improvement in telecommunication development and services;

2 to continuously review the five priority areas adopted by WTDC-94 with a view to revising them at WTDC-98. As an interim measure, to include sector reform and restructuring as an additional priority area for the Arab LDCs,

requests the Secretary-General

to request the next Plenipotentiary Conference to create a specific budget for LDCs from the regular budget and to increase the funds allocated to LDCs from all sources,

calls upon the ITU Members

to cooperate with the BDT in assisting the Arab LDCs in implementing special projects for the improvement of their telecommunication networks, and, as far as Somalia is concerned,

considering

Resolution 34 of the Plenipotentiary Conference (Kyoto, 1994), as well as Resolution 30 of the same Conference for LDCs in general,

further requests the Secretary-General

to establish a detailed action plan for the rehabilitation and restructuring of the telecommunication network as soon as the situation permits, having regard to guidelines issued by the United Nations.

RESOLUTION 6

ALTERNATIVE CALLING PROCEDURES (CALL-BACK)

The Regional Telecommunication Development Conference for the Arab States (AR-RTDC-96) (Beirut, 11-15 November 1996),

recalling

- a) Resolutions 21 and 22 of the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference (Kyoto, 1994);
- b) the recommendation of the Working Group on Tariffs of the Arab States Telecommunications Finance Colloquium (Amman, September 1996),

noting

the reports that ITU-T Study Group 3 submitted to the 1996 Council with a view to:

- a) requesting the adoption of a resolution on alternative calling procedures;
- b) informing it on the progress of a study on the apportionment of revenues in providing international telecommunication services,

noting also

Resolution 1099 of the Council on alternative calling procedures on international telecommunication networks,

taking into account

Resolution 29 of the World Telecommunication Standardization Conference (Geneva, 1996) on alternative calling procedures on international telecommunication networks, which calls upon, *inter alia*, ITU-T Study Groups 2, 3 and 11 to continue studies on the matter,

recognizing

the need to introduce tariff reforms in order for tariff and accounting rates to be more cost-orientated,

resolves

- 1) to invite all the ITU Members to cooperate in eliminating the harmful effects of alternative calling procedures;
- 2) to encourage the Arab operators to adjust accounting rates between them and with other foreign operators and carriers so as to be more cost-orientated, within the framework of their tariff rebalancing policies;
- 3) to encourage Arab administrations to continue adopting a unified position towards harmful and unauthorized alternative calling procedures;
- 4) to encourage Arab administrations through collaborative efforts to build a unified position during the meetings of relevant study groups of both ITU-D and ITU-T;
- 5) to request the ITU Sectors concerned to discuss jointly the refiling issue in order to achieve results based on the spirit of Resolution 21 of the Plenipotentiary Conference (Kyoto, 1994);
- 6) to request the ITU-D to play the lead role regarding the implementation of Resolution 22 of the Plenipotentiary Conference (Kyoto, 1994), and Resolution 23 of the Plenipotentiary Conference (Nice, 1989) regarding the apportionment of revenues to the benefit of developing countries, in particular the LDCs, taking into account, in particular, the foreseen development of GMPCS which may have a significant impact on the accounting rate system and practices.

RESOLUTION 7

TARIFFS

The Regional Telecommunication Development Conference for the Arab States (AR-RTDC-96) (Beirut, 11-15 November 1996),

considering

- a) that in most Arab countries international tariffs have been high;
- b) that competition, both direct and indirect, is now increasing. Practices such as call-back and refile - which have been declared illegal in most Arab countries - are having a negative impact on telecommunication revenues in the region, which threatens international cash generation for future investment in the network;
- c) that even though rebalancing of accounting rates will lead to lower international tariffs, and may thus reduce these practices, it will not eliminate them,

resolves

- 1** to request ITU/BDT to assist administrations in developing their tariff policy based on:
 - implementation of analytical accounting;
 - establishment of cost-based tariffs;
 - provision of knowledge on how to deal with tariffs in an inflationary environment;
- 2** to encourage administrations to consider rebalancing of their tariffs;
- 3** to encourage administrations to participate more actively in the work of ITU-T Study Group 3;

4 to encourage administrations to harmonize their international tariff policies in order to minimize the harmful effect of call-back and refile on revenues.

RESOLUTION 8

SOURCES OF FINANCING, RESOURCE MOBILIZATION AND PRIVATE-SECTOR INVOLVEMENT IN BOTH

The Regional Telecommunication Development Conference for the Arab States (AR-RTDC-96) (Beirut, 11-15 November 1996),

considering

- a) that large amounts of investment are needed for the development of reliable telecommunication infrastructure and efficient telecommunication services in the region;
- b) that the majority of countries in the region will no longer be able to fully finance these investments from traditional sources, namely internal cash generation and government-backed funding;
- c) that most governments are facing budgetary constraints and multilateral and bilateral lending is declining for telecommunication infrastructure;
- d) that a growing number of developing countries have involved the private sector in various ways in their telecommunication sector. Thus, there are now many experiences to evaluate and compare in deciding on how best to involve the private sector in a manner that reflects each country's unique environment;
- e) that in order to facilitate and encourage private investment, an important prerequisite is a clear and transparent regulatory environment. This includes most importantly the separation of operation from regulation and the establishment of an independent regulatory authority;
- f) that there are various methods of private financing which may be adopted before the regulatory framework is perfected. These include revenue-sharing schemes based on variations of Build-Operate-Transfer (e.g., BOCT, BTO, BOO, BLO), new subscribers (e.g., charging cost-based connection charges), property developers (e.g., developers installing telecommunication infrastructure in new buildings) and local concessions (e.g., for public payphones), etc.;
- g) that, furthermore, the development of capital markets and financial institutions could be instrumental in mobilizing resources through private funding, particularly from national and regional markets;
- h) that governments also need to establish clear priorities, goals and policies for the telecommunication sector;
- i) that an operator enjoying extensive managerial and financial autonomy is in a better position to mobilize resources and implement commercial policies that are more geared to customer requirements and to consider different scenarios with regard to association with the private sector;
- j) that, in cases of privatization of the incumbent operator, the strategy and the process need to be thought through as an integral part of a sector reform programme. Intermediate steps have to be considered, such as the corporatization and commercialization of the State entity;
- k) that there is, however, a danger of converting a public monopoly into a private monopoly;

l) that competition is essential and where exclusivity privileges are to be granted, they should be limited and contingent upon the achievement of specific coverage (particularly for rural areas), service quality and accessibility targets in keeping with those recommended in the Arab Book for telecommunication development in the Arab States, which has been submitted to this Conference for consideration and adoption,

resolves

- 1 to request BDT:
 - a) to draw up an inventory of relevant developing country lessons and experiences with private-sector participation and mobilization of resources;
 - b) to assist (at their request) the Arab administrations in implementing appropriate financing arrangements;
- 2 to encourage Arab States:
 - a) to allow private participation in telecommunications, where appropriate, by identifying niche segments where the private sector can be effective, through the provision of capital and know-how, and to make available to consumers cost-effective and modern telecommunication services;
 - b) to grant full autonomy to the public operator, thereby enabling it to use its own revenue as a source of financing, to implement new forms of management and to develop a commercial policy that is more geared to customer requirements so as to provide more resources for self-financing;
 - c) to establish a clear, stable and transparent regulatory framework including setting up an independent national regulatory authority;
 - d) to explore the variety of ways that private capital can be involved in the development of their telecommunication sector.

RESOLUTION 9

APPLIED RESEARCH AND TRANSFER OF TECHNOLOGIES IN THE ARAB STATES

The Regional Telecommunication Development Conference for the Arab States (AR-RTDC-96)
(Beirut, 11-15 November 1996),

considering

- a) that the highly advanced technology that is increasingly being used worldwide has widened the scope and complexity of modern telecommunications;
- b) that Arab countries would benefit from technology transfers in a wide range of fields, from basic to new telecommunication technologies;
- c) that, in order to master advanced technology and the evolution of service development - thereby closing the knowledge gap and creating employment opportunities - Arab countries need to rapidly mobilize the resources required for building and strengthening their own human skills and capabilities in applied research and development;

d) that technology transfer among developing countries can be promoted further, in addition to the transfer of technology from developed countries or through international organizations,

recalling

a) Resolution 6 of AR-RTDC-92 on the promotion of Arab cooperation in applied research and in related areas of higher scientific and technical education;

b) Resolution 10 of AR-RTDC-92, calling for the continuation of the activities of the Regional Project for Modern Arab Telecommunications equipment (MODARABTEL), which includes a collaboration network for applied research,

resolves

to request ITU/BDT

1 in close collaboration with Member States, to activate the MODARABTEL network for applied research;

2 to identify the prerequisite conditions for creating and/or strengthening national, subregional and regional applied research centres;

3 to prepare proposals for subregional cooperation agreements in these fields;

4 to promote the exchange of information among donor and recipient countries under Question 5/1 of ITU-D Study Group 1, on "Industrialization and Transfer of Technology",

calls upon

UNESCO and other concerned development partners to assist the ITU in this undertaking,

invites the Arab States

1 to harmonize the programme of activities of the existing research centres around priorities which are of the utmost importance and interest for the region and its overall development;

2 to encourage cooperation between Arab and foreign research centres for the transfer of knowledge and technology know-how in the field of telecommunications.

RESOLUTION 10

DISTANCE EDUCATION IN THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

The Regional Telecommunication Development Conference for the Arab States (AR-RTDC-96) (Beirut, 11-15 November 1996),

recalling

a) the Action Plan emanating from the World Declaration on Education for All, adopted by the World Conference in Jomtien (Thailand) in March 1990, advocating the use of new information and communication technologies to improve access to education and meet the goals of education for all;

b) Recommendation 1 of the World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC-94) in Buenos Aires, on the application of telecommunications to health and other social services;

- c) the Buenos Aires Action Plan (BAAP) formulated by WTDC-94 and approved by the Plenipotentiary Conference (Kyoto, 1994), and in particular Programme 10 on broadcasting infrastructures;
- d) Resolutions 11 and 12 of AR-RTDC-92 on human resources management and development,
noting with satisfaction

the initiatives undertaken by ITU and UNESCO under the cooperation agreement between the two organizations for telecommunications, information, informatics and communication, in particular within the framework of BAAP Programmes 10 and 12,

considering

- a) that telecommunication and information technologies have an important role to play in promoting widespread access to education and improving the quality of education, particularly through the capabilities they offer for continuous training and further training of education staff;
- b) the extremely promising pilot distance education project for the continuous training of education staff by means of interactive television developed in collaboration between ITU, UNESCO and the Government of Morocco;
- c) the undeniable impact of the new techniques developed under that project on innovation in electronic components, software and teaching approaches;
- d) the ITU's interest in the development of interactive distance training systems involving various forms of communication (voice, image, graphics, etc.) supported by different transmission media (telecommunications, television and informatics) and capable of reaching a wide audience;
- e) that it would be useful to set up pilot projects in order to identify the most viable solutions for interactive distance training,

resolves

- 1** to stress the importance of pursuing the development of new interactive distance training technologies;
- 2** to request BDT to support implementation of the pilot distance training project by interactive television developed in collaboration with UNESCO and the Government of Morocco;
- 3** to invite all financing and development agencies and the private sector to provide financial and material support for implementation of the project;
- 4** to encourage other countries to conduct similar pilot projects to the one undertaken in Morocco, in cooperation with ITU and UNESCO, national, regional and international organizations and public and private professional partners, taking due account of the results of Morocco's experience.

RESOLUTION 11

**THE ROLE OF TELECOMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIES
IN THE PROTECTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT**

The Regional Telecommunication Development Conference for the Arab States (AR-RTDC-96)
(Beirut, 11-15 November 1996),

recalling

Resolution 8 of the World Telecommunication Development Conference (1994) and Resolution 35 of the Kyoto Plenipotentiary Conference (1994), on the contribution of telecommunications for the protection of the environment,

considering

- a) the important role telecommunication and information technologies could play in protecting the environment and in promoting sustainable development activities at low risk to the environment;
- b) that the latest telecommunication and information technologies can be extremely useful in implementing and conducting environment protection activities;
- c) that the application of telecommunication technology can reduce paper consumption and thus combat deforestation;
- d) that telecommunication and information technologies may make a significant contribution to the development of rural areas;
- e) that there is a need to disseminate information on these technologies,

considering further

the results of the study undertaken by ITU-D Study Group 2 under Question 7/2 assigned to it by WTDC and in collaboration with the competent international and regional organizations, as well as the results of the International Symposium on the role of telecommunication and information technology in the protection of the environment (Tunis, 17-19 April 1996),

recommends

- 1** that all Arab telecommunication authorities take the initiative to provide, directly or indirectly, in collaboration with the respective environmental authorities, all the possible telecommunication means and services to support the promotion of applications aiming at the protection of their respective environment;
- 2** that the use of space technologies be considered for environmental protection activities such as monitoring air, river, harbour and sea pollution, remote sensing, wildlife studies, forestry development and others;
- 3** that the need for national environmental protection policies be taken into account, with due emphasis on the role which telecommunications can play in providing such protection;
- 4** that special awareness among the policy/decision makers be created to gain a better understanding of the issue of telecommunications and environment;

5 that the importance of an integrated network for collecting, processing and disseminating environmental information at national, regional and international levels be recognized and all necessary steps be taken towards implementing such networks;

6 that the basic telecommunication needs of small communities be satisfied in order to help them establish clean industries, thereby reducing as much as possible the migration of populations to urban areas, which causes urban congestion;

7 that telecommunication networks and services be utilized in situations where reduction of energy consumption could be achieved, for example by substituting telecommunication for travel, by using teleconferencing and by reducing paper consumption, thereby ultimately contributing to saving environmental resources,

requests the Director of the BDT

1 to draw up and implement a comprehensive plan of action in the form of a global operational telecommunication-environment project on the development and use of telecommunication and information technologies for the protection of the environment and sustainable development. This project will be of an interregional nature with regional and/or subregional components and will take account of the specific characteristics and needs of the different regions/subregions concerned;

2 to pursue the preparation of the policy document started by Study Group 2 aimed at promoting the use of all kinds of telecommunication and information technologies, especially space technologies, for environmental protection applications;

3 to establish a framework for regional and international cooperation which will enable all those concerned (governments of developed and developing countries, manufacturers and consumers of technology, private sector, international organizations, United Nations specialized agencies, etc.) to carry out, promote and develop projects, in particular pilot projects, to ensure optimum use of the most appropriate telecommunication and information technologies for the protection of the environment and sustainable development;

4 to organize seminars, regional workshops, training and research programmes, exhibitions and other activities in order to deepen reflection on the matter and heighten awareness among all those concerned of the value of implementing multilateral and bilateral projects within the framework of international cooperation and to consider, if necessary, holding an international conference with the aim, *inter alia*, of establishing a framework and carrying out pilot projects in this area at regional, subregional and national levels, in cooperation with international organizations and with the support of international telecommunication operators;

5 to develop and disseminate appropriate course material for conducting training programmes on the subject and disseminate information on telecommunication and information technology applications for the protection of the environment and sustainable development.

RESOLUTION 12

**MECHANISMS FOR MONITORING, EVALUATION AND PROGRESS REVIEW
OF THE CONFERENCE'S RESOLUTIONS**

The Regional Telecommunication Development Conference for the Arab States (AR-RTDC-96)
(Beirut, 11-15 November 1996),

noting

- a) the need for the Arab States to coordinate the development of their telecommunications;
- b) the need to establish a mechanism to monitor, review the progress of and evaluate implementation of the resolutions/recommendations of regional telecommunication development conferences for the Arab States between two development conferences;
- c) the need to associate and involve in this monitoring process the Arab States, the regional and international organizations concerned, as well as the development partners;
- d) the mandate of the Council of Arab Telecommunication Ministers and of the Arab Permanent Telecommunications Committee (PTC);
- e) the purpose of the ITU and its long-standing traditional cooperation with world entities concerned with telecommunication issues;
- f) ITU/BDT's catalytic role, as defined by the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference (Nice, 1989),

recalling

Resolution 1 of AR-RTDC-92, establishing an Arab regional development conference Coordination Committee (AR-RDC-CC), for cooperation and coordination of telecommunication development in the region and for implementation and follow-up of related resolutions adopted during development conferences,

considering

the experience gained through the AR-RDC-CC's work during the last four-year cycle,

resolves

- 1** that the AR-RDC-CC's activities be continued under the new name of "AR-RTDC-CC";
- 2** that the AR-RTDC-CC be composed of high-level representatives of:
 - the Arab States ministries responsible for the telecommunication sector,
 - the Arab Permanent Telecommunications Committee of the League of Arab States,
 - the Arab subregional telecommunication organizations,
 - the regional and international organizations concerned with telecommunications,
 - the regional and international financial organizations and funding banks,
 - the development partners,
 - ITU/BDT;
- 3** that the representatives of the members of the Coordination Committee should be individuals designated by name by the administrations, operating companies and international and

regional organizations concerned, and should assume continuity of representation during the period between two development conferences at least;

4 that the monitoring and implementation of Conference's resolutions by the Coordination Committee should be a continuous process during the period between its annual meetings through direct mutual contacts among its members, by means of correspondence, telephone and telefax,

resolves further

1 that the mandate of the AR-RTDC-CC should be to:

- a) contribute to the regional coordination of telecommunication development and to the process of regional integration within the Arab States;
- b) coordinate international cooperation in telecommunication development at the intraregional, regional and subregional levels;
- c) promote exchange of information and permanent consultations between the countries of the region, on the one hand, and all international, regional and national organizations concerned, as well as other development partners, on the other;
- d) assist ITU in the preparation of future AR-RTDCs, in particular in the preparation of a summary report on the progress of implementation of resolutions adopted by the previous conferences, and of proposals for further actions at international, regional and subregional levels;

2 that the organizational set-up and working methods should be as follows:

- a) the AR-RTDC-CC should meet once a year. It should, however, be able to convene extraordinary meetings;
- b) the participating organizations would be required to host such meetings in turn and provide all necessary facilities;
- c) every year, one of the Member countries shall be chosen as a lead country, to host and chair the annual meeting of the Coordination Committee. The lead country, with the support of ITU/BDT, will have the responsibility for coordination and follow-up of work during the period until the next annual meeting;
- d) ITU/BDT, including its Cairo Regional Office, should provide the executive secretariat and support for the day-to-day monitoring and follow-up of the implementation of AR-RTDC resolutions, as well as for the AR-RTDC-CC meeting proceedings;
- e) ITU/BDT, in its capacity as the executive secretariat of the Coordination Committee, should issue a biannual progress report on the implementation of conference resolutions;
- f) ITU/BDT should ensure the coordination of activities generated by the AR-RTDC-CC with similar activities in the region, so as to avoid duplication of work and optimize the use of available resources.

Recommendations

RECOMMENDATION 1

REGIONAL AND SUBREGIONAL COOPERATION

The Regional Telecommunication Development Conference for the Arab States (AR-RTDC-96) (Beirut, 11-15 November 1996),

considering

- a) the existence of international and regional organizations that are specialized in the field of telecommunication development;
- b) the existence of international and regional organizations or entities that are active in resource mobilization for investments for the implementation of telecommunication development projects;
- c) Resolution 6 of the World Telecommunication Development Conference (Buenos Aires, March 1994), encouraging cooperation between ITU/BDT and regional organizations,

recalling

the "Cairo Declaration" of the Regional Telecommunication Development Conference for the Arab States (Cairo, October 1992), inviting the Arab States and the regional organizations to cooperate in the development of the Arab telecommunication sector,

noting

that it is essential for the countries of the Arab region to:

- a) recognize the similarity of their objectives and the complementarity of their needs;
- b) combine their resources in order to optimize their results; and
- c) take, collectively, maximum advantage of the region's resources and capabilities,

recommends

that the members of the Arab region, with possible assistance from ITU/BDT:

- 1** examine in depth the mandates and operational structures of the Arab regional and subregional organizations active in the telecommunication field, in order to avoid any duplication and to promote complementarity;
- 2** define a strategy and associated mechanisms for bilateral and multilateral cooperation among international, regional and subregional organizations and States involved in the development of telecommunications in the Arab region, ensuring that all actions taken contribute to the same objective and are conducted at the lowest possible cost, for each and for all;
- 3** request ITU/BDT to collaborate more closely with the regional and subregional telecommunication organizations of the Arab region, in order to better define a programme of assistance which is best suited to the telecommunication development needs of the Arab countries.

RECOMMENDATION 2

INFORMATION INFRASTRUCTURE FOR THE ARAB STATES

The Regional Telecommunication Development Conference for the Arab States (AR-RTDC-96) (Beirut, 11-15 November 1996),

considering

- a) Kyoto Resolution 31, "Telecommunication Infrastructure and Socio-Economic and Cultural Development", and particularly the paragraph to the effect that "the recent spectacular progress, and particularly the convergence of telecommunication and computer technologies and services, has transformed telecommunications into an agent of change for the information age";
- b) Programme 12 of the ITU/BDT Buenos Aires Action Plan on "Development of Telematics and Computer Networks" as well as the growing number of informatic initiatives and projects taking place in the Arab States,

noting

the efforts being deployed in order to organize a regional symposium on the Arab World and the information society under the auspices of ITU and UNESCO within the framework of the Regional Arab Information Technology Network (RAITNET) (Tunis, 31 March - 4 April 1997),

recognizing

the growing strategic importance of information infrastructures and their potential for improving quality of life for every citizen of the Arab States, promoting the economic integration of the Arab States and improving trade and other linkages with the global community,

urges administrations

to note the critical importance of telecommunication networks for the exchange of multimedia information and to facilitate and promote the development of electronic communications and networks such as the Internet by adopting the appropriate regulatory, tariff and service provision policies, and by making available appropriate infrastructures,

requests ITU/BDT

- 1** in collaboration with other development partners, to make the governments of the Arab States aware of the relevance of information infrastructures and to assist in the establishment of national policies for information infrastructures in the Arab States;
- 2** to establish an appropriate mechanism for coordination among the administrations and the various partners involved (ESCWA, UNESCO, etc.) which will draw up an inventory of service requirements and associated constraints and formulate an action plan for the development of information technology in the Arab States;
- 3** in collaboration with the parties concerned, to take the necessary steps in order to produce a White Paper similar to the Arab Book, as a thought-provoking document offering the Arab States possible approaches for the development of their information infrastructures.

RECOMMENDATION 3

IMPLEMENTATION OF MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEMS FOR TELECOMMUNICATIONS

The Regional Telecommunication Development Conference for the Arab States (AR-RTDC-96)
(Beirut, 11-15 November 1996),

considering

the objective of Programme 11 "Information Services" of the ITU/BDT Buenos Aires Action Plan, which is to establish a detailed and comprehensive database covering the telecommunication sector for the use of partners, and of Programme 7 "Improvement of Maintenance", including the implementation of management information systems to monitor quality of service,

noting

- a) that BDT has continuously, particularly since the adoption of the Buenos Aires Action Plan, been expanding its cooperation activities in the Arab States towards the establishment of modern management tools such as the computerized management information system;
- b) that it is important for telecommunication managers in the Arab States to be able to base their decisions on objective assessments of network performance, and that major efforts have already been made by the administrations of the region to implement management information systems at the national level,

recommends that administrations

- 1** should, at the national level, each set up a management information system;
- 2** should devise a management information system project which takes account of national systems with a view to:
 - enhancing network performance;
 - improving network utilization and efficiency;
 - reducing operating and investment costs,

requests ITU/BDT

- 1** to provide the administrations with a formal framework for the development of national management information systems, together with a prototype system;
- 2** to assist the administrations in the development of management information systems with access to a comprehensive and reliable database;
- 3** to promote cooperation amongst Arab States by helping to define a common strategy for improving quality and by facilitating the exchange of experience between administrations.

RECOMMENDATION 4

**GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TRADE IN SERVICES
(NEGOTIATIONS ON BASIC TELECOMMUNICATIONS)**

The Regional Telecommunication Development Conference for the Arab States (AR-RTDC-96)
(Beirut, 11-15 November 1996),

considering

the results of the Uruguay Round multilateral trade negotiations, and the traded aspect of telecommunications,

considering further

the General Agreement on Trade in Services and the negotiations on basic telecommunications,

conscious

of the impact these might have on the telecommunication sector in the Arab countries, taking into account particularly the considerable investment they have made in developing their telecommunication infrastructure,

conscious also

that many countries in the region remain unclear about the implications of joining the WTO,

recommends that Arab telecommunication administrations

- 1** enhance coordination at the national level among the various ministerial departments concerned by the multilateral trade negotiations and/or set up, if necessary, an interministerial national committee on these matters;
- 2** formulate national strategies, having regard to the specific features of the telecommunication sector;
- 3** participate actively in the work of the group of Arab telecommunication administrations to study the impact of the GATS on the telecommunication sector and follow up the relevant recommendations contained in the Arab Book;
- 4** step up cooperation within the Arab region and identify common approaches on the issue,

requests ITU/BDT

- 1** to take the necessary steps to intensify the dissemination of relevant information and studies concerning developments in the negotiations on basic telecommunications and their impact on the telecommunication sector in the Arab countries and to convene information meetings on these matters;
- 2** to provide Arab telecommunication administrations with the necessary assistance and expertise in this field:
 - to assist in clarifying/informing about relationships between WTO and ITU, and their respective roles in dealing with telecommunication trade issues;

- in collaboration with other international organizations concerned, to assist the Arab countries in grasping the implications of membership of WTO for the telecommunication sector, preparing their schedules, negotiating, and participate in the ongoing negotiations on basic telecommunications;
- 3** to provide the necessary support to the working group of Arab administrations set up to study the impact of the GATS and the negotiations on basic telecommunications.

RECOMMENDATION 5

TELEMEDICINE IN THE ARAB COUNTRIES

The Regional Telecommunication Development Conference for the Arab States (AR-RTDC-96) (Beirut, 11-15 November 1996),

recalling

Recommendation 1 of the World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC) in Buenos Aires, March 1994, which focused on the application of telecommunications for health and other social services,

recognizing

the potential of telemedicine to meet health care needs in remote and rural areas,

conscious

- a) of the work which has been carried out on the impact of telecommunications on health care under Question 6 in ITU-D Study Group 2;
- b) of the experience which some Arab countries have already gained in the telemedicine field;
- c) of the Resolution on Telemedicine adopted at the African Regional Telecommunication Development Conference (Abidjan, 6-10 May 1996),

conscious also

- a) of the increasing competition in the telecommunication sector;
- b) that a number of countries have established universal service obligations (USOs) as a means of ensuring that all competitors contribute to the extension of telecommunications to remote and rural areas which might not otherwise be economically served and that, even where competition has not yet been introduced, often the public telecom operator (PTO) has USOs anyway,

considering

- a) the need to extend adequate health care to all citizens;
- b) the need for collaboration between health officials and telecommunication operators in order to implement telemedicine services;
- c) that it is desirable to establish some pilot projects in order to help identify the most cost-effective solutions to the provision of health care to those living in remote and rural areas,

invites all Arab countries

- 1 to promote collaboration between health care officials and telecommunication operators in order to identify solutions to meet health care needs, especially in remote and rural areas and for those on the move and those who might not otherwise have access to the quality of care available in urban hospitals;
- 2 to consider initiating one or more telemedicine pilot projects in remote and rural areas;
- 3 to share the results of their experiences so as to identify the most appropriate, cost-effective and sustainable solutions,

further invites the Director of the BDT

- 1 once approved, to make available copies of the current draft of the Telemedicine Report to ministries of health as well as ministries of communications as soon as possible so that officials can see what telemedicine experience other countries have;
- 2 to convene a world telemedicine symposium for developing countries in 1997 so that the experience of developing countries can be shared, especially in regard to the costs and benefits of different experiences, and to foster the adoption of global solutions.

RECOMMENDATION 6

DEVELOPMENT OF A COMPUTERIZED SUBSCRIBER MAINTENANCE SYSTEM (CSMS)

The Regional Telecommunication Development Conference for the Arab States (AR-RTDC-96) (Beirut, 11-15 November 1996),

considering

- a) that the Arab telecommunication networks are undergoing radical technical changes as a result of the switch from analogue to digital systems and the introduction of new services;
- b) that all network maintenance and management activities primarily concern switching, transmission and power infrastructures and that the outside plant is often pushed into the background,

recognizing

- a) that the outside plant, which is the portion of the network visible to the customer, is the Achilles' heel of the network;
- b) that, in this situation, maintenance is often given little attention or priority;
- c) that, nevertheless, telecommunication network maintenance is of major concern to managers, although the resources allocated for the purpose still fall short of actual requirements;
- d) that the customers increasingly want access to services with the requisite level of quality,

convinced

that improved maintenance of the network and particularly of the outside plant will have a multiplier effect on customer satisfaction as well as on operator revenues,

having noted

that the first World Telecommunication Development Conference adopted a special programme for least developed countries (LDCs) comprising, *inter alia*, maintenance activities and particularly the development of a guide on the introduction of a computerized subscriber maintenance system (CSMS) and a pilot project for the CSMS,

having noted further

the interest of the operators for this project,

requests

that CSMS project activities in the Arab countries should take into account the specific realities of these countries,

requests the BDT

to take all the necessary measures to ensure that:

- 1 the guide on the introduction of a computerized subscriber maintenance system is elaborated within one year to respond to the expectations of the Arab countries;
- 2 appropriate software model(s) are developed for the benefit of the Arab countries;
- 3 the guide and software are widely distributed among the Arab countries;
- 4 Arab experts participate in the CSMS project;
- 5 development partners are involved in the CSMS project and particularly in the financing and implementation of pilot projects in the Arab countries.

RECOMMENDATION 7

PUBLIC SERVICE BROADCASTING AND THE EVOLVING ENVIRONMENT

The Regional Telecommunication Development Conference for the Arab States (AR-RTDC-96) (Beirut, 11-15 November 1996),

considering

- a) the impact of the evolving environment on the public service broadcasting role;
- b) the results of the study undertaken by ITU-D Study Group 2, under Question 8/2 assigned to it by WTDC, in collaboration with the competent international and regional organizations,

recommends

- 1 that ITU, UNESCO and the regional broadcasting unions, acting in cooperation, develop a model role and mandate definition of Public Service Broadcasting in developing countries that will serve to guide future developments of policy and the laws governing the PSB in those countries. This document should define a clear differentiation between the role of the PSB and that of the private commercial broadcaster;

2 that ITU, UNESCO and the regional broadcasting unions, acting in cooperation, investigate ways that the entry of digital technology into the PSBs in developing countries can be expedited, through technical assistance, feasibility studies, pilot projects and the identification of appropriate sources of capital funding and training, to bring them and the associated telecommunication systems the attendant operating efficiencies and performance enhancements. Technical assistance is also required to help in planning coordination and defining the strategy of the transition to digital sound and television broadcasting;

3 that ITU, UNESCO and the regional broadcasting unions, acting in cooperation, develop ways to allow PSBs in developing countries access to the global information infrastructure (GII) and other digital telecommunication networks to enable efficient sharing of productions, resources and material, as well as access to libraries and archives worldwide;

4 that ITU, in the Telecommunication Development, Radiocommunication and Telecommunication Standardization Sectors, take the necessary steps to ensure efficient coordination of strategies and programmes for the development of telecommunication and broadcasting services in developing countries, to the benefit of both services;

5 that ITU, working in cooperation with UNESCO, UNDP, the regional broadcasting unions and others, establish:

- the current and future requirements of the PSBs in developing countries for human resources development through training;
- the potential resources (conventional and electronic) required to meet those requirements, taking note of the linguistic and cultural aspects of this activity, in both spoken and printed forms; and
- the financial resources needed to carry out such training programmes;

6 that ITU, in all its Sectors, and the regional broadcasting unions, acting in cooperation, undertake proactive programmes to ensure an adequate representation of the PSBs in developing countries in activities at the international and regional levels that develop technology, equipment and standards, to ensure that their specific needs are considered and included,

requests the relevant ITU Sectors

to expedite work on relevant Recommendations on decoders of broadcasting satellite digital receivers and their conditional access, and to provide the required technical assistance on these Recommendations.

RECOMMENDATION 8

**IMPROVEMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT AND
DEVELOPMENT (HRM/HRD) IN THE ARAB STATES**

The Regional Telecommunication Development Conference for the Arab States (AR-RTDC-96)
(Beirut, 11-15 November 1996),

noting

- a) the important role of human resources in the process of telecommunication development;
- b) the existence of management, operational and maintenance problems affecting the quality and availability of telecommunication services;
- c) the process of restructuring the telecommunication sector and the separation between regulatory and operational functions, requiring new skills, knowledge and attitudes in human resources management,

recognizing

- a) that poor management is the main cause of the shortcomings with respect to the supply of high-quality services;
- b) the vast training needs to be met, both in technical and management domains, in order to support the development of telecommunications in the near future;
- c) the consequences for operators and regulators in the region lacking the required skills in human resources;
- d) that ITU/BDT is aware of countries' needs and has already been deeply involved in the development of their human resources:
 - using traditional and innovative methodologies; and
 - promoting the joint participation of the regional organizations and the private sector in this process;
- e) that activities to improve the quality of management are primarily targeted at senior management,

recommends that administrations

- 1** establish or inject dynamism into the policies, structures and appropriate means/tools for the management and development of human resources;
- 2** acquire an effective management information system incorporating the human resources data and indicators necessary for forward-looking management of resources;
- 3** derive maximum benefit from training centres through:
 - developing a policy for the marketing of training;
 - the specialization of training centres with a view to their operation within a training framework;
 - the use of distance-learning technologies;

4 maintain and reinforce, with the assistance of ITU/BDT if required, the human resources cooperation network existing between the Arab States, in order to establish cooperative programmes to help the organizations of the region in improving the quality of their human resources;

5 with national training centres, and in coordination with the regional training centres to be established:

- make the necessary efforts to modernize their methodologies to train people, using as much as possible the facilities provided by information technologies and telecommunication networks;
- be active in joining the ITU/BDT Virtual Training Centre; and
- become members of the Global Telecommunication University/Global Telecommunication Training Institute,

requests ITU/BDT

1 to take steps to make senior management in telecommunication administrations aware of the need to involve itself directly in the improvement of human resources and in the modernization of the management process, with a view to introducing, *inter alia*, the principles of total quality management, benchmarking and re-engineering as tools to manage the organizations;

2 to assist administrations (on request) in setting up appropriate structures and tools, particularly in the elaboration of human resources and vocational training development plans, in collaboration with financial backers and development partners in the telecommunication sector;

3 to promote cooperation among administrations, reinforcing the human resources cooperation network existing among the Arab States, as well as the cooperation among training centres, through the organization of regional meetings aimed at achieving agreement on the harmonization of management, training and training programme methods;

4 to continue its efforts (through the Teleproject and MANDEVTEL activities of BAAP Programme 2: HRD) in training top and middle level managers in management techniques. To this end, external resources through agreements with ITU should be incorporated in the process of training managers;

5 to continue its efforts to support administrations in the translation and Arabization of all the manuals and training materials produced in the BDT/HRD Unit;

6 to continue assisting countries in the areas of human resources development, organizing relevant meetings, workshops and seminars. To this end, regional associations and private organizations are encouraged to join ITU/BDT, in order to establish partnerships in line with their objectives of strengthening the human resources in the Arab States.

RECOMMENDATION 9

**FINANCING OF INTERNATIONAL, REGIONAL AND TECHNICAL
COOPERATION PROJECTS**

The Regional Telecommunication Development Conference for the Arab States (AR-RTDC-96)
(Beirut, 11-15 November 1996),

noting

- a) the detailed description of the BDT technical cooperation projects for the region;
- b) that projects will be prioritized using the criteria of sectoral impact and quality, rather than being funding-driven. As examples, MODARABTEL Phase II Project and telecommunication glossary were candidates for such prioritization,

considering

- a) that not all the regional projects foreseen by the 1992 Regional Telecommunication Development Conference for the Arab States (AR-RTDC-92) could become operational, due to lack of funding;
- b) the advantages of possibilities for implementing projects other than those traditionally used;
- c) that this Conference has reviewed priorities for regional activities based on the needs of the region,

requests

- 1** that ITU/BDT evaluate different ways and means of implementing regional projects (activities) making the utmost use of available BDT resources and in particular those of the Regional Office, as well as the possible use of expertise from the region;
- 2** that the ITU/BDT regular budget and other extrabudgetary resources, such as part of the TELECOM surplus, could be used to cover part of the costs envisaged²;
- 3** that ITU/BDT explore possible partnerships with regional financial institutions, Member States and Sector Members of the Development Sector in order to sponsor any activities within these projects of mutual benefit to the partners,

recommends

- 1** that Member States and Sector Members contribute in kind and/or in cash to the foreseen budget of these projects;
- 2** that regional cooperation be strengthened.

² Note by the BDT: This request may apply within the limits of the Financial Regulations and taking into account the other needs of the region.