



# INTERNATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATION UNION TELECOMMUNICATION DEVELOPMENT BUREAU

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

Valletta, Malta, 23 March - 1 April 1998

**Document 9-E  
3 December 1997  
Original: French**

**For action**

---

**Agenda item 3.3**

**PLENARY MEETING**

## **Director, Telecommunication Development Bureau**

### **ACTIVITIES OF BDT IN THE FIELD OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND THE ENVIRONMENT**

Further to its expressed concerns with regard to worldwide environmental degradation in its many forms and keen to ensure that the telecommunication sector makes its own contribution to the global environmental protection effort, the international telecommunication community adopted:

- 1) Resolution 8 (World Telecommunication Development Conference, Buenos Aires, March 1994); and
- 2) Resolution 35 (Plenipotentiary Conference, Kyoto, September - October 1994).

Both Resolutions were based on agenda 21, adopted at the Earth Summit held in Rio de Janeiro in June 1992, and more particularly on Chapters 35 and 40 thereof, dealing respectively with science for sustainable development and information for decision-making.

In pursuance of these Resolutions, ITU/BDT embarked on a process the first stage of which was the organization of an International Symposium on the Role of Telecommunication and Information Technologies in the Protection of the Environment and achievement of sustainable development.

The symposium was held in Tunis (Tunisia) from 17 to 19 April 1996. It was attended by more than 80 high-level experts from all corners of the globe, representing for the first time at the international level the telecommunication community, the environment community and certain international organizations. Through the contributions made (case studies, pilot projects, etc.), the Symposium provided an opportunity to demonstrate in practical terms the importance of the role played by telecommunication and information technologies in the protection of the environment and achievement of sustainable development.

The Symposium ended its work by adopting conclusions and recommendations. These stress, among other things, the development and implementation of a global Telecommunication-Environment project, organized around four work programmes concerned with such matters as:

- 1) preparation and implementation of pilot projects;
- 2) organization at the regional level of seminars, workshops, training and research, programmes, exhibitions, etc.;
- 3) preparation of case studies.

Encouraged by the results of the Symposium, and particularly by its recommendations, which were endorsed in the form of resolutions by the African Regional Telecommunication Development Conference (Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, 6-10 May 1996) and by the Regional Telecommunication Development Conference for the Arab States (Beirut, Lebanon, 11-15 November 1996), ITU/BDT embarked on the second phase of its initiative, concentrating on operational activities. These are based on **pilot projects**, their basic objective being to assist the developing countries concerned, when they approach ITU partners (mainly from interested developed countries (public and private sector members of ITU-D)), regional and international financing institutes and international organizations concerned with environmental issues, with a view to obtaining the means and resources they require to implement their corresponding pilot projects.

Such assistance may be financial, technical or both, depending on what is offered.

To this end, four pilot projects, from Tunisia (Ministry of the Environment and Land Use Planning), Senegal (Ecological Monitoring Centre for Natural Resources and Management) and Benin (Ministry of Rural Development - National Centre for Remote Sensing and Forest Coverage Monitoring), have been sent to the partners referred to above. These are:

- **Pilot project No. 1 (Tunisia):** Establishment of a terrestrial and space telecommunication infrastructure for the "Elbiiâ 21" integrated information system on the environment and sustainable development in Tunisia;
- **Pilot project No. 2 (Tunisia):** Establishment of a satellite-based network for the remote monitoring of sea water quality;
- **Pilot project No. 3 (Senegal):** Proposed support for natural resources management: telecommunications and bush fire control;
- **Pilot project No. 4 (Benin):** Pilot project for natural disaster warning system.
- **Pilot project No. 5 (Morocco):** Project for an information server on the environment of the countries of the South Mediterranean region.

It should be noted that Pilot project No. 2 has already received formal backing to the amount of \$US 20 000 from British Telecom (United Kingdom) for funding of the "computer resources" component, and that an agreement in principle has been signed with Final Analysis (United States) for the provision of assistance in the installation of the laboratory buoys and giving free access to the experimental satellite FAISAT-2v for a period of six months.

In addition, ITU/BDT has obtained an agreement in principle from Nusantara Communications Inc. (United States) for the provision of engineering assistance in the installation of the telecommunication equipment for Pilot projects No. 3 and No. 4.

BDT has also received a pilot study entitled "Information server on the environment of South Mediterranean countries" prepared by Morocco (Ecole Mohhamadia d'Ingénieurs-Rabat). The finalized project is expected shortly.

Contributions to the Tunis Symposium enabled the rapporteur for Study Group 2's Question 7/2 to complete his final report on the study of this matter.

Finally, it should be noted that BDT has embarked on consultations with such agencies as FAO, UNEP, UNESCO, WMO, UNITAR and the Secretariat of the Convention to combat desertification to establish a framework for cooperation in the field of environmental protection using telecommunication technologies, and to try at the same time to identify, plan and organize specific joint activities.

The reactions thus far received in this connection are encouraging, in particular that of UNITAR, with which it has been agreed to define the organization, jointly and in cooperation with other United Nations bodies, of subregional seminars focusing on the promotion of telecommunication and information technologies for the protection of the environment and achievement of sustainable development, in which training will form the pivot around which the planned activities will revolve.

ITU/BDT could, moreover, as it develops its activities, include among its points of reference the Environmental Charter of European Telecommunication Network Operators, which constitutes a good example for other regions.

#### FUTURE ACTIVITIES

	1998	1999	2000	2001
ARAB REGION				
• Seminar	X			
AFRICA REGION				
• Seminar	X			
• Pilot projects <i>(Four pilot projects thus far received; others are expected shortly)</i>	X			
• Case studies	X			
ASIA REGION				
• Seminar		X		
• Pilot projects		X		
• Case studies		X		
AMERICAS REGION				
• Seminar			X	
• Pilot projects			X	
• Case studies			X	
EUROPEAN REGION				
• Seminar				X
• Pilot projects				X
• Case studies				X