



INTERNATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATION UNION TELECOMMUNICATION DEVELOPMENT BUREAU

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

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PLENARY MEETING

Secretary-General

REPORT ON IMPLEMENTATION OF RESOLUTION 7 OF WTDC-94

PROVISION OF TELECOMMUNICATION RESOURCES FOR DISASTER MITIGATION AND RELIEF OPERATIONS

1 Introduction

The question of the provision of telecommunication resources for disaster mitigation and relief operations was one of the considerations which prompted the United Nations General Assembly in 1989 to proclaim the period 1990-1999 the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction. Since the 1991 Tampere Conference, this topic has been the subject of numerous activities within ITU and other relevant bodies.

2 Role played by ITU

2.1 The World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC) held in Buenos Aires in 1994 adopted Resolution 7 on disaster communications and requested the Secretary-General to work closely with the United Nations Department of Humanitarian Affairs with a view to increasing the Union's involvement in disaster communications. In adopting that Resolution, WTDC took a decisive step forward on a subject which seemed to have been dormant since 1991. The quality of the text adopted by WTDC was a key factor in the implementation of the "Tampere Declaration".

2.2 The Plenipotentiary Conference (Kyoto, 1994) adopted Resolution 36, in which it instructed the Council to address the issues of WTDC Resolution 7 and take appropriate action towards its implementation, taking into account in particular the need to draw up an international convention on disaster communications, as indicated in the Tampere Declaration (1991) annexed to WTDC Resolution 7.

2.3 After considering the reports by the Secretary-General (Documents C96/53 and C97/14), the Council confirmed the necessity of full-scale involvement in these activities by the three Sectors, particularly in the following fields:

- a) preparations for the adoption, by an intergovernmental conference, of an International Convention on the Facilitation of Telecommunications for Disaster Mitigation and Relief Operations;
- b) encouraging measures to apply the ITU resolutions relevant to disaster telecommunications;
- c) exchanging and disseminating information concerning emergency telecommunications and promoting cooperation in the use of field telecommunications.

2.4 Statements were also devoted to this subject during the Strategies Summit at the Telecom 95 Forum (Geneva, 1995) as well as at the regional Telecom Forums which followed and at the African Regional Development Conference (Abidjan, 1996).

3 Towards the adoption of a global convention

The United Nations Department of Humanitarian Affairs, through its ad hoc Working Group on Emergency Telecommunications and in collaboration with other interested organizations (including ITU), has drawn up a draft Convention on disaster telecommunications. This draft Convention should be adopted by the Intergovernmental Conference to be held at Tampere from 16 to 18 June 1998 at the kind invitation of the Finnish Government. Under this Convention, it is foreseen that ITU may take on the specific role of technical coordinator with responsibility for information exchange. The draft Convention was submitted as a background document to WRC-97, which adopted Resolution PLEN-1. This Resolution urges administrations to give their full support to the adoption of the said Convention and its national implementation. In this connection ITU, as technical coordinator of the Convention, would need to develop and maintain several databases (telecommunication resources inventory, assistance action plans and lists of measures taken for reducing or removing regulatory barriers). It should also be pointed out that ITU-R, in connection with Question ITU-R 209/8, is studying the problem of the contribution of the mobile services (amateur and associated satellite services) to the improvement of disaster communications. Other activities will need to be undertaken by ITU-D if WTDC-98 so wishes.
