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ITU-APT Foundation of India (IAFI)

PROPOSAL FOR A NEW RESOLUTION ON ITU'S ROLE IN BRIDGING THE DIGITAL DIVIDE BY FACILITATING DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY USING SATELLITE SYSTEMS:

Area of Proposal

___ Programmes
___ Study Groups and Associated Questions
___ TDAG/ITU-D Working Methods
___ Declaration
___ Action Plan
__ Regional Initiatives (Priorities)
___ General ICT Development Issues
_X_ Resolutions/Recommendations/Decisions
___ Others

Summary:

To harness the transformative potential of satellite systems in bridging the persistent digital divide, particularly for Least Developed Countries (LDCs), Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs), and Small Island Developing States (SIDS), this proposal calls for the ITU-D to establish a new resolution. This resolution will focus on strengthening international and regional interconnection to accelerate digital inclusion and drive digital economy development.

This document has been revised in accordance with the discussions during the last meeting of APT WTDC 25-3

Expected Results:

Delegates are invited to review this proposal.

References:

ITU-D Resolution- 218 (PP, Bucharest, 2022):
ITU's role in the implementation of the "Space2030" Agenda: space as a driver of sustainable development, and its follow-up and review process

I Background and Rationale:

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During the APT WTDC25-3 meeting, IAFI submitted a contribution (INP-34) proposing a new resolution regarding the development and deployment of satellite systems to provide connectivity to underserved and remote areas, in line with the objectives of the "Connect the Unconnected". Member States including Japan, Iran, Australia, and Indonesia, along with GSMA, raised concerns about proposing a new resolution focused on a specific technology. Iran also highlighted the issue of unauthorized Non-Geostationary Satellite Orbit (NGSO) satellite earth stations. The Chair encouraged IAFI to consider these comments.

In response, IAFI re-submitted a revised proposal (INF-13) at the WTDC-25-4 meeting. This new version adopted a broader, technology-agnostic approach. This was in light of a detailed proposal submitted by India to the WP-4A meeting (WP-4A/536), which was widely supported by the members.

Due to the late submission, IAFI's contribution was designated an information document (INF-13). Although it was presented in the WG-2 meeting, no further discussion could be held. This revised contribution incorporates the feedback from previous meetings, focusing on a strategic framework that is inclusive of various technologies while highlighting the unique potential of satellite systems and addressing regulatory concerns already under discussion within the ITU.

II Summary:

IAFI proposes a new WTDC Resolution aimed at accelerating the attainment of universal, meaningful, and affordable connectivity, especially in hard-to-reach areas. This resolution recognizes that to truly connect the un-connected, a multi-faceted, technology-agnostic approach is essential. However, it also underscores the pivotal role of specific advanced technologies, such as satellite systems, in overcoming significant geographical and infrastructural barriers.

Satellite systems, including geostationary (GSO) and non-geostationary (NGSO) constellations, are uniquely positioned to bridge the persistent digital divide. They are particularly vital for Least Developed Countries (LDCs), Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs), and Small Island Developing States (SIDS), which often lack extensive terrestrial infrastructure. By championing a strategic, inclusive approach that leverages the full potential of these advanced technologies, the ITU can empower communities worldwide, driving tangible progress toward the "Connect the Unconnected" initiative and the broader United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

III Proposal:

Proposal has been further refined in accordance with the discussions during the APT WTDC 25-3 and 4 meeting. Considering the rapid advancements in satellite technology, IAFI through this proposal calls for a new WTDC resolution for BDT to support rollout of satellite systems to connect the unconnected.

PROPOSAL FOR A NEW RESOLUTION ON ITU'S ROLE IN BRIDGING THE DIGITAL DIVIDE BY FACILITATING DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY USING SATELLITE SYSTEMS

Resolution xx (2025, Baku)

The World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC-25),

recalling

a) Resolution 218 (PP, Bucharest, 2022) on ITU's role in the implementation of the "Space2030" Agenda, which emphasizes the importance of equitable access to space resources for sustainable development,

b) the increasing global demand to bridge the digital divide and provide universal, meaningful, reliable and affordable connectivity, especially in underserved and remote areas;

c) Resolution 123 (Rev. PP-2022 Bucharest) on Bridging the standardization gap between developing and developed countries

c) Role of advanced technologies, especially satellite systems to promote use of broadband services and contribute to overcome significant geographical and infrastructural barriers.

d) that the Radiocommunication Assembly 2023 adopted the ITU-R Resolution 74 on activities related to the sustainable use of radio-frequency spectrum and associated satellite-orbit resources used by space services.
Please include reference to one of the PP 7 Sectoral Resolution addressing capacity boiling

considering

a) that the rapid advancements in satellite technologies present both opportunities and challenges for expanding digital inclusion.

b) that the challenges faced by developing countries, least developed countries (LDCs), small island developing states (SIDS), and landlocked developing countries (LLDCs) in accessing and utilizing satellite services due to technical, financial, and regulatory barriers and limitation;

c) that the challenges faced by developing countries, to deliver broadband digital connectivity and internet to remote, rural, and geographically locations such as mountainous

areas, islands, and disaster zones where other technologies can't be available to reach.

considering further

a) that the satellites technologies make it possible to deliver broadband digital connectivity and internet to remote, rural, and geographically challenging locations like mountainous areas, islands, and disaster zones where other technologies can't reach.

b) that the satellite-based networks can be deployed rapidly and at lower marginal cost, reaching dispersed populations and supporting national strategies for universal digital access.

c) that the satellites are integral to ITU-guided National Emergency Telecommunication Plans, providing redundant, disaster-resilient communications in crises or when terrestrial infrastructure is compromised.

d) that the ITU's focus on "connecting the unconnected," enabling communities to access education, healthcare, and economic opportunities and the like

recognizing

a) that the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) plays a central global role in supporting digital connectivity and addressing the digital divide through policy leadership, technical standards, capacity building, and collaborative initiatives.

b) that the ITU advocates for universal connectivity as a right and works with governments to develop strategies for expanding broadband access, especially in underserved and rural regions. It helps set international policy frameworks, such as the Broadband Commission for Sustainable Development, to ensure inclusivity and affordability in telecom infrastructure.

c) that ITU's Digital Inclusion program, inter alia, targets marginalized populations—women, persons with disabilities, youth, and indigenous peoples—with dedicated actions to foster equal participation in the digital economy.

d) that the satellites technologies are critical, among other means, to support ITU's digital inclusion program, providing fast, reliable, and wide-reaching connectivity—especially in regions where terrestrial infrastructure is limited or unfeasible.

e) that the importance of international cooperation in the development and deployment of satellite systems to ensure global connectivity and digital inclusion is among the fundamental tools;

taking into account

a) the unique role of ITU-R with respect to access to the radio-frequency spectrum and associated satellite orbits, consistent with Article 44 of the Constitution;

resolves

1. that the ITU development sector with support from ITU Radio Sector, actively encourage the deployment of satellite systems to provide digital connectivity to underserved and remote areas, in line with the objectives of the "Connect the Unconnected" focus of the ITU

2. that the ITU development sector's regional presence should be leveraged to promote regional cooperation and coordination in the deployment of satellite systems, with a particular focus on capacity-building and knowledge-sharing.

3. that the ITU should encourage the development of public-private partnerships to support the deployment of satellite systems and to ensure that the benefits of these systems are accessible, affordable inclusive for all.

4. that the ITU-D in close cooperation with ITU-R should collaborate with the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA) and other relevant UN entities to promote the sustainable and equitable use of outer space resources for connectivity and digital inclusion.

Instructs the Director of BDT and the Director of the BR

1. that the Director of the BDT in consultation with Director of the BR shall engage in high-level dialogue with relevant stakeholders, including satellite operators, industry associations, national regulators and international organizations, to foster strategic partnerships and promote the widespread benefits of satellite systems for global connectivity and digital inclusion.

2. that the Director of the BDT shall monitor the progress of the implementation of this resolution and provide regular updates to the WTDC on the status of satellite deployment and their impact on global connectivity initiatives including any challenges encountered in their widespread adoption.

3 that the Director of the BDT in close collaboration of Director of the BR should organize regular regional and global seminars, workshops and expert group meeting, to raise awareness about the transformative potential of satellite systems and to provide comprehensive training and capacity-building opportunities for developing countries.

invites Member States and Sector Members

1. to actively participate in and contribute to the development and deployment of various types of satellite systems to support the "Connect the Unconnected" initiative.

2. to share their national experiences, regulatory approaches and best practices in the authorization, regulation and management of various satellite systems including measures to foster competition and ensure affordability.

3. to provide voluntary contributions to support ITU activities related to the promotion, technical assistance and widespread deployment of satellite systems for global connectivity and digital inclusion.