

PROPOSAL 15

Submitted by the following Member States:

Germany (Federal Republic of), Austria, Belarus (Republic of), Bulgaria (Republic of), Spain, Estonia (Republic of), Finland, France, Italy, Liechtenstein (Principality of), Luxembourg, the Netherlands (Kingdom of), Norway, Poland (Republic of), the Slovak Republic, Slovenia (Republic of), the Czech Republic, Romania, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Sweden, Switzerland (Confederation of) and Turkey

Updates to Resolution 36, the Tampere Convention

Background

The recent tragic events in the world have demonstrated the seriousness and magnitude of potential disasters that may cause dramatic human suffering. They have left millions of people homeless, hundreds of thousands of people dead, and have devastated infrastructure. In all of these cases, the world has been reminded of the important role that telecommunications and ICT play.

An appropriate response to disasters depends upon the timely access to accurate data from the often remote and inaccessible sites of crises. Reliable telecommunication links are indispensable at every level of disaster management. In 1998, the Intergovernmental Conference on Emergency Telecommunications (ICET-98) was held in Tampere, Finland from 16 to 18 June. The conference agreed in the Tampere Convention on the Provision of Telecommunication Resources for Disaster Mitigation and Relief Operations. This Convention provides the legal framework for the use of telecommunications in international humanitarian assistance, reduces regulatory barriers, and protects providers of telecommunication assistance while safeguarding the interests of the host country. ITU was one of the organizations that were in the forefront during the drafting of this legal document. The Convention came into effect on 8 January 2005 following its ratification by thirty States. To date, thirty five countries have ratified the Tampere Convention.

Analysis

The ratification process of the Tampere Convention has been slow. ITU should play an active role in the promotion of the ratification implementation of this Convention.

The Tampere Convention is an international tool for ensuring fast communication in disasters. The Convention came into force just two weeks after the tsunami in 2005 as the thirtieth country ratified it, but the ratification process is still in the beginning. In order to foster the practical implementation of the Convention, a wider understanding and cooperation between governments is needed, in particular, more countries should ratify the Convention.

Proposal

Resolution 36 regarding the telecommunications resources in the service of humanitarian assistance has been considered by several recent plenipotentiary

conferences. Last time it was revised at the conference in Marrakesh, 2002. Resolution 36 i.a. instructs the Secretary-General to work closely with the United Nations Emergency Relief Coordinator to support Member States in their work towards their national adherence to the Tampere Convention.

Furthermore, Resolution 36 urges administrations to work towards the entry into force of the Tampere Convention. As the Tampere Convention had entered into force in 2005, the resolution requires updating with a view to:

- considering reasons leading to the low ratification rate of the Tampere Convention and seeking to identify impediments to the implementation of the Convention;
- speeding up the ratification process of the Tampere Convention, taking into account that the Convention has now entered into force.

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RESOLUTION 36 (Rev. ~~ARRAKESH, 2002~~Antalya, 2006)

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Telecommunications¹ in the service of humanitarian assistance

The Plenipotentiary Conference of the International Telecommunication Union (~~Antalya, 2006~~),

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endorsing

a) Resolution 644 (Rev.WRC-2000) of the World Radiocommunication Conference (Istanbul, 2000) on telecommunication resources for disaster mitigations and relief operations;

b) Resolution 34 (~~Rev.Doha, 2006~~) of the World Telecommunication Development Conference on the role of telecommunication/s/ICT in early warning and mitigation of disasters and humanitarian assistance;

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c) the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society adopted by the second phase of the WSIS, paragraph 91,

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considering

a) that the Intergovernmental Conference on Emergency Telecommunications (Tampere, 1998) adopted the Tampere Convention on the provision of telecommunication resources for disaster mitigation and relief operations;

b) that the second Tampere Conference on Disaster Communications (Tampere, 2001) invited ITU to study the use of public mobile networks for early warning and the

¹ The term "telecommunications" includes information and communication technologies (ICTs) consistent with the definition to be found in No. 1012 in the Annex to the ITU Constitution entitled: Definition of Certain Terms Used in this Constitution, the Convention and the Administrative Regulations of the International Telecommunication Union.

dissemination of emergency information, and the operational aspects of emergency telecommunications such as call prioritization;

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c) that the International Conference on Emergency Communications 2006 (ICEC-2006) was held in Tampere, 19-20 June 2006,

noting

that activities are being undertaken at the international, regional and national levels within ITU and other relevant organizations to establish internationally agreed means for the operation of systems for public protection and disaster relief on a harmonized and coordinated basis,

recognizing

a) the seriousness and magnitude of potential disasters that may cause dramatic human suffering;

b) that the recent tragic events in the world clearly demonstrate the need for high-quality communications services to assist public safety and disaster relief agencies in minimizing risk to human life and to cover the necessary general public information and communication needs in such situations;

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c) the important enabling role of telecommunications² working towards the establishment of standards-based monitoring and worldwide early-warning systems linked to national and regional networks and facilitating emergency disaster response all over the world, particularly in high-risk regions,

convinced

that the unhindered use of telecommunication equipment and services is indispensable for the provision of effective and appropriate humanitarian assistance,

further convinced

that the Tampere Convention provides the necessary framework for such use of telecommunication resources,

resolves to instruct the Secretary-General

1 to work closely with the United Nations Emergency Relief Coordinator to support Member States which so request in their work towards their national adherence to the Tampere Convention,

2 in close collaboration with the United Nations Emergency Relief Coordinator, to assist Member States which so request with the development of their practical arrangements for the implementation of the Tampere Convention,

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urges Member States

to work, as a matter of priority, towards ratification, acceptance, approval or accession to the Tampere Convention,

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further urges Member States Parties to the Tampere Convention

to take all practical steps for the application of the Tampere Convention and to work closely with the operational coordinator as provided for therein.

² See footnote 1.