



## **African Telecommunications Union**

### **ATU REPORT TO AUC STEERING TECHNICAL EXPERT COMMITTEE (STC)**

#### **1. INTRODUCTION**

As part of its activities, ATU's mission is to support its member states in defining regional priorities for the ICT Radiocommunications, Standardization and Development sectors as well as the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference and contributes to implement at regional level all pertinent decisions, resolutions and initiatives adopted by regional and global conferences.

As such, the ATU in the past period has organized several workshops and meetings on areas of interest to the region in the above sectors and this has contributed significantly to the final conclusions of the world conferences held at intervals of four years under the framework of the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) such as the World Radiocommunications Conference (WRC-15), World Telecommunications Standardization Assembly (WTSA-16), the World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC-17) and the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference (PP-18).

#### **2. SPECTRUM AND RADIOCOMMUNICATIONS**

##### **2.1 Introduction – the role of ATU in spectrum administration in Africa**

The role of ATU in spectrum management in Africa is mainly in three areas:

- Preparation for international spectrum conferences in particular the ITU's World Radiocommunications Conference (WRCs) and the associated Radiocommunications Assemblies (RAs).
- Capacity building of the policy makers and spectrum planning, licensing, and monitoring personnel. This is mainly done via specialised capacity building workshops in collaboration with partners including ITU and private sector.
- Harmonization of spectrum usage in Africa with focus on high impact areas such as the digital dividend and Earth Stations in Motion.

In carrying out these roles, ATU works in close collaboration with and supported by the ITU, AUC, Regional Economic Committees (EAC, ECCAS, ECOWAS and SADC) and the private sector in particular the ATU associate members.

## **2.2 Preparations for 2019 World Radiocommunications Conference**

The role of the radio spectrum to ICTs is increasingly crucial and so are the various forums that define its use. At the world level and under the framework of the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) and nearly every four years, World Radiocommunication Conferences (WRCs) are held. The role of the WRCs is to revise the Radio Regulations which is the worldwide international treaty governing the utilization of both terrestrial and satellite radio-frequency spectrum resource including satellite orbit positions. A WRC, lasting for about a month, is held under an agenda pre-defined by the preceding WRC and is the most important world decision making assembly on the radio spectrum. WRC decisions are mainly driven by continental positions over a given matter and are normally reached via consensus. The WRC decisions have a huge and lasting impact on radiocommunications and ICTs in general world over.

The forthcoming WRC is the 2019 World Radiocommunication Conference (WRC-19). The WRC-19 will be held from 28 October to 22 November 2019 and shall be preceded by the Radiocommunication Assembly 2019 from 21 to 25 October 2019. The ITU Member States are being consulted regarding the venue in Sharm el-Sheikh (Egypt) (see [ITU CL-17/39](#)). ATU has since written a circular letter to all African countries to support Egypt in hosting the WRC-19. Radiocommunication Assemblies (RA) are responsible for the structure, programme and approval of radiocommunication studies.

WRC-19 has various agenda items. Of the various, the following are seen to be key to Africa:

- Identification and designation of additional spectrum for mobile communications (WRC-19 AI 1.13)
- Possible allocation of spectrum for satellite communications in the range in 51.4 – 52.4GHz band (WRC-19 AI 9.1 (issue 9.1.9))
- Identification and designation of spectrum for Railway Communications Systems (WRC19 AI 1.11)
- Identification and designation of spectrum for Intelligent Transport Systems (WRC-19 AI 1.12)
- Possible allocation of spectrum for Amateur service in 50 - 54MHz band (WRC-19 AI 1.1)

In order to adequately prepare for WRC-19, ATU agreed to have four (04) African preparatory meetings for WRC-19. Two of these have been held. APM19-1 (1st African Preparatory meeting for the World Radiocommunication Conference 2019) was held in Nairobi in September 2016, while, APM19-2 was held in Dakar in September 2017. Two more preparatory meetings are scheduled: APM19-3 in 2018 and APM19-4 (final) in 2019. Discussion in these meetings is mainly based on proposals from the Regional Economic Communities (EAC, ECCAS, ECOWAS

and SADC), as well as African country proposals and those from, AUC, partner organizations and private sector.

APM19-1 established six ATU WRC-19 working groups aimed at spearheading the region's technical preparations by way of developing recommendations to APMs. The six groups are handling each area of the WRC-19 agenda items (topics) as follows:

- WG 1 - Land mobile and fixed services
- WG 2 - Broadband applications in the mobile service
- WG 3 - Satellite services
- WG 4 - Science services
- WG 5 - Maritime, aeronautical and amateur services
- WG 6 - General issues

The 1st Meetings of the working groups was held in Nairobi-KENYA, 18 to 20 July 2017. The main objective of the meetings was to develop recommendations for APM19-2 on the various agenda items under their mandate and also consider other matters related to their area of work. Two more preparatory meetings are scheduled: one each in 2018 and 2019. Participation in the groups is open to African countries, AUC, ITU, partner organizations and private sector.

As with previous WRCs, ATU will convene the fourth and final preparatory meeting in 2019. At this final meeting, African common positions and proposals will be developed on as many of the agenda items and/or issues as possible. Also as with previous WRCs, Africa will actively participate at WRC-19 to ensure the interests of Africa are promoted and defended.

### **2.3 Harmonization of the Digital Dividend Spectrum Usage in Africa**

On request of the AUC, ATU validated the proposed guidelines on the harmonization of the Digital Dividend spectrum usage in Africa during the APM19-1. The validation focused on spectrum aspects of the proposed guidelines, namely: (1) the channelling plans for both the first digital dividend (DD1) and second digital dividend (DD2), (2) treatment of the existing CDMA systems in some countries, and (3) treatment of the guard band spectrum.

The proposed guidelines on the harmonization of the Digital Dividend spectrum usage in Africa are seen as key to promoting maximised economies of scale, avoidance of harmful interference and easy of future planning. Crucially, the proposed guidelines will promote expedited growth of mobile broadband – a crucial element in the continued and sustainability of social economic growth in Africa.

According to AUC, the proposal would be tabled by this seating of the AU ICT Ministers conference. As the proposed framework is being tabled, ATU requests the conference to

encourage African countries to expedite the migration. Without migration, the sought harmonization cannot be fully achieved.

## **2.4 Harmonization of Earth Stations in Motion (ESIMs)**

During APM19-1, ATU adopted a proposed framework for the development and establishment of frameworks/agreements for a harmonised approach to domestic licensing of ESIMs and mutual licence recognition (including type approval) of ESIMs in accordance with Resolution 156 (WRC-15). ESIMs are stations of the satellite communications terminals on board vehicles (e.g trucks), aircrafts and ships. The objective of the harmonized licensing framework is to:

- Simplify the national licensing process and facilitate seamless movement of duly authorized/licenced ESIMs within the sub-regions to allow for maximized benefit from the possibilities offered by the ESIMs technology.
- Create an environment of mutual benefit to countries of the sub-regions.
- Allow for an optimized operation of ESIMs in Africa to contribute to the development of broadband services.

Consideration that today, sub-regions are best suited to deal with proposal as they have the requisite mandate/protocols for such frameworks, the meeting tasked the ATU SG to pass-on the proposal to the sub-regions for their consideration. In ECOWAS, EACO and SADC, the framework is going through the sub-regional and national adoption as per the rules of the respective sub-regions. Meanwhile, AUC pledged to explore ways in which harmonisation could be done at a continental level via the available tools and mandate of the AUC. ATU welcome this pledge.

## **3. STANDARDIZATION AND DEVELOPMENT SECTOR**

### **3.1 ICT Standardization Sector**

In this area, where Africa is still lagging far behind, the key issues that have been raised by the members of the Union and have generated a lot of debate at the various regional meetings have focused on the following key topics:

- Counterfeit and mobile theft;
- Numbering, naming and addressing;
- International mobile roaming;
- Economic impact of the Over The Top (OTT) operators ;
- Open Source (OS);

- Cyber-security Privacy and Trust in Telecom/ICT;
- International Telecommunications Regulations (ITR) Review.

The actions launched by ATU consisted of organizing and contributing to several workshops on various themes: the new challenges of ICT regulation in Africa (OTT, Cloud Computing, IoT, ...); Quality of service (QoS), Cyber-security strategies and after WTSA-16, ATU organized a regional meeting to deliberate on WTSA-16 outcomes and to define an action plan for the implementation of these results especially those that have been identified by the Africa region. The meeting developed some recommendations and adopted an action plan as follows:

1. ATU and ITU-T to sign a partnership agreement to build capacity for regional expert on Bridging the Standardization gap (BSG) issues;
2. ATU to set up an exchange platform for sharing reports, information and for receiving contribution from member states and partners;
3. Capacity building between ATU and ITU to assist member states on how to contribute to relevant Study Groups (SGs) at international conferences/Assemblies;
4. ATU to continue supporting African SGs to collect data and share regional indicators with the collaboration of member states and regional operators;
5. ATU to write a reinforcement letter to all Member States on the need for them to support their experts participate in relevant meetings;
6. Member States to assist ATU by hosting all the standardization meetings and facilitate;
7. ATU to establish the concept of the African Advisory Committee on ICT Standardization (AFACIS). The aim of this African experts Committee is to facilitate organized and effective cooperation, coordination and collaboration between ATU Member States without much formalities and/or financial burden on Member States;
8. Request ATU and ITU to do capacity building on emerging regulatory issues and recommend to create an African standardization Center;
9. ATU to circulate a questionnaire to the member states on regulatory and standardization future needs and request member states to respond. It is also important to get the focal point on standardization matters.

### 3.2 ICT Development Sector

Even though the African region is showing significant dynamism in this sector, given the mobile and internet penetration rates recorded in recent years, it remains that only 25% of the continent's population is connected. Challenges remain to make ICT a real driver of sustainable development.

Following the just concluded World Telecommunications Development Conference (WTDC-17) held in Buenos Aires, Argentina, the region's priorities in the development sector have been clearly defined by the five regional initiatives under the WTDC-17 Action Plan and adopted for this purpose, in order of priority:

**AFR-1:** Building Digital Economies and Fostering Innovation in Africa

**AFR-2:** Promotion of Emerging Broadband Technologies

**AFR-3:** Building Trust and Security in the Use of Telecommunications / ICT

**AFR-4:** Strengthening Human and Institutional Capacity Building

**AFR-5:** Management and Monitoring of the Radio Frequency Spectrum and Transition to Digital Broadcasting.

Today, the main challenges of ICT development in Africa are:

- Enhancement of Capacity building and knowledge in technical fields and promote innovation;
- Spectrum management;
- ICT and climate change and e-waste management;
- Promoting digital Services/Applications: e-health, digital finance, e-learning,.. ;
- Cyber-security;
- Combating device counterfeit and mobile theft;

And

- How to finance the implementation of future ICT initiatives and projects and continue investing in developing infrastructure capacities and migration?

Indeed Africa's ambitious initiatives and challenges for the coming period require the mobilization of financial resources and the most favorable partnerships, especially in the current context where traditional operators are experiencing a definite decline in their revenues in the face of increasing inequitable competition from OTTs and in difficult economic times that many countries are going through.

In this perspective, the ATU planned to organize a regional meeting with all stakeholders and partners to discuss the main outcomes of WTDC-17 in order to establish a regional action plan defining the role of ATU in the implementation of African Regional Initiatives as well as the contribution of each stakeholder, prioritize projects to launch for the next period and adopt an evaluation process of the implementation.

#### **4. PREPARATIONS FOR ITU PLENIPOTENTIARY CONFERENCE (PP-18)**

The ITU Plenipotentiary Conference which is the supreme organ of the Union meets every four years to set the Unions general policies, to adopt four-year strategic and financial plans and elect the senior management team of the Union, Members of Council and Members of the Radio Regulations Board (RRB). The next ITU Plenipotentiary Conference (PP-18) is scheduled to be held in Dubai, United Arab Emirates (UAE) from 29<sup>th</sup> October to 16<sup>th</sup> November, 2018.

The conference will also discuss and take decisions on issues brought to its attention from the three sectors: the just concluded WTDC-17 held in Buenos Aires as well the WTSA-16 and WRC-15.

As a result, the regional preparations for PP-18 have been initiated towards active contribution and participation at the conference.

- 1<sup>st</sup> preparatory meeting for PP-18 was held at Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe in July, 2017 which basically mapped out areas of interest to the region and two preparatory meetings are planned for March and July 2018 respectively to deliberate in detail on the identified areas of interest for Africa and prepare common proposals for consideration at the conference.
- On candidatures, ATU has so far received letters from some Member States nominating their candidates for elective positions in ITU namely:
  - ✓ Burkina Faso for Deputy Secretary General
  - ✓ Nigeria for the Director of BDT
  - ✓ Zimbabwe for the director of BDT
  - ✓ Cameroon's intention to present a candidate for Director BR but no name has been proposed

Elections is of key interest and critical to Africa and unity lies in our strength. Therefore there is need to move strategically to ensure chances of attaining those positions.

#### **Proposal on way forward:**

- It is therefore important as a continent to adopt a system that would allow us speak with one voice;

- Need to be more vigilant and learn from the past experiences to avoid repeat of past mistakes;
- Agree on methodologies to be applied to gain the support of other regional groupings;
- Need to reach a consensus at regional level and to start the campaigns early so as to ensure victory;
- Agree on measures to adopt for successful campaign of African candidatures by developing a campaign strategy in good time.