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## Report by the Secretary-General

### ITU'S ROLE IN IMPLEMENTING THE OUTCOMES OF THE 2012 UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (RIO+20)

#### Summary

This report presents an update on the progress made on the implementation of Resolution 1353 *"ITU's Role in implementing the outcomes of the 2012 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20)"*.

The report summarizes the efforts and activities made by ITU in mainstreaming the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development in its work, as mandated at Rio+20 and ITU Resolution 1353.

The report points to a range of initiatives in this regard, including the state of the analytical report on the implications of the Rio+20 outcomes for ITU and the identification of measures to be adopted by ITU to further integrate the three dimensions of sustainable development in the Union's work.

#### Action required

The Council is invited to **note** the report.

#### References

[Council Resolution 1353](#), [Document C12/INF/15](#)

## 1 Introduction

1.1 The 2012 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) reaffirmed the commitment of the international community to move the sustainable development agenda forward. In particular, the conference acknowledged the need to further mainstream sustainable

development at all levels, integrating economic, social and environmental aspects and recognizing their inter-linkages, so as to achieve sustainable development in all its dimensions<sup>1</sup>.

1.2 The importance of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in promoting sustainable development was explicitly recognized in *“The future we want”*, the outcome document of Rio+20. In fact, ICTs are directly mentioned in the text for facilitating the flow of information, therefore promoting stakeholder engagement, knowledge exchange and capacity building, empowerment of certain groups especially farmers, fishers and foresters, and enhancing learning outcomes. Document [C12/INF/15-E](#), presented for information to the 2012 session of the ITU Council (C12), provides a comprehensive analysis of the references related to ICTs included in *“The future we want”*.

1.3 The Rio+20 outcome document of the conference also included specific indications to be followed by the United Nations systems to further mainstream sustainable development in the programmatic activities of each relevant agency and programme. In particular, *“The future we want”*, called for *“the further mainstreaming of the three dimensions of sustainable development throughout the United Nations system”*<sup>2</sup>, within their respective *“mandates, programmes, strategies and decision-making processes, in support of the efforts of all countries, in particular developing countries, in the achievement of sustainable development”*<sup>3</sup>.

1.4 In view of these results, C12 adopted Resolution 1353, which resolved to take note of *“The future we want”* and to initiate a process in ITU to further integrate the main principles included in this document into ITU’s activities, advancing in the use of ICTs to promote the integration of the economic, social and environmental pillars of sustainable development. The following report presents an update on the activities conducted by ITU in the implementation of this resolution.

## **2. Sharing the outcomes of the Rio+20 Conference**

2.1 Following the provisions included in *“The future we want”*, the General Secretariat of ITU, in collaboration with the three Bureaux, have submitted the Rio+20 outcomes to the following official meetings of the Union:

- a) 2012 Radio Advisory Group (RAG), document [RAG12-1/INFO/3-E](#);
- b) 2012 Session of the ITU Council, document [C12/INF/15-E](#), which resulted in the adoption of Resolution 1353;
- c) 2012 World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly, which resulted in the revision of Resolution 73 (Dubai, 2012).

2.2 In addition, the General Secretariat also promoted the Rio+20 outcomes through the use of ITU’s communication channels, in particular through the dedicated website<sup>4</sup> set up during the conference, through the use of ITU’s [press releases](#), as well as through the use of ITU social media channels.

## **3. Mainstreaming the outcomes of the Rio+20 Conference**

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<sup>1</sup> *The Future We Want, Para 3.*

<sup>2</sup> *The Future We Want, Para 93.*

<sup>3</sup> *The Future We Want, Para 91.*

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.itu.int/themes/climate/events/rioplus20/>

3.1 The outcomes of Rio+20 are being mainstreamed into the main areas of work of ITU linked to sustainable development. In particular the 2013 Operational Plan of the Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT), as well as in the ongoing series of regional preparatory meetings, which are proposing new Priority Areas, Topics, Regional Initiatives and Study Group Questions that further integrate sustainable development into ITU's activities, as indicated in the outcomes of Rio +20.

3.2 The result of this work will converge into [the sixth World Telecommunication Development Conference \(WTDC-14\)](#), to be held in 2014 in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt from 31 March to 11 April, at the kind invitation of the Government of Egypt. WTDC-14 will consider mainstreaming outcomes of Rio +20 with the aim of supporting countries in fully implementing the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the post-2015 Agenda.

3.3 With regards to the ITU Telecommunication Standardization Sector (ITU-T), the outcomes of Rio+20 have been mainstreamed mainly into the areas of ICT and Climate Change, Smart Water Management, and Bridging the Standardization Gap, as reflected in the [outcomes of WTSA-12](#). Looking to the future, the Telecommunication Standardization Bureau (TSB), will continue to address these issues through the work conducted in ITU-T Study Group 5, as well as through future events such as the [8th ITU Symposium on ICTs, the Environment and Climate Change](#), and the [3rd Green Standards Week](#). These events aim at raising awareness on the outcomes of Rio+20 and highlight the role that ICTs can play to move the sustainable development agenda forward.

#### **4. Injecting the outcomes of the Rio+20 in the WSIS+10 Overall review**

4.1 In keeping with its mandate to promote policy coherence and programme coordination in the UN system, as well as to provide guidance on issues related to ICTs, in support of internationally agreed development goals, the 30 members of the UN Group on the Information Society (UNGIS)<sup>5</sup> submitted a joint statement to the UN Secretary-General and the UN Task Team, during the WSIS Forum 2013.

4.2 The statement underlined the fact that ICTs provide a platform to better integrate and deliver on all three pillars of sustainable development, and proposed that the potential of ICTs as key enablers of development and as critical components of innovative development solutions is fully recognized in the Post-2015 Development Agenda.

4.3 Members of the UNGIS also urged that interaction between the Post-2015 Development Agenda and the WSIS+10 Review processes be established to create synergies. Such interaction is important to ensure that efforts across the UN System are coherent, connected and coordinated to achieve maximum, sustainable impact, given that the WSIS framework captures the potential of ICTs in: enhancing access, especially of vulnerable populations, to education, health care and other public services, and to information, finance and knowledge; protecting the environment; mitigating natural disaster risks; ensuring sustainable use of natural resources and sustainable food production; and empowering women. This is in line with the internationally-agreed development goals in general and with environmental protection and the sustainable use of natural resources in particular, as mentioned in both the Rio Principles and Agenda 21.

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<sup>5</sup> Members of UNGIS: FAO, IAEA, ILO, ITU\*, OECD, UN Women, UNCTAD\*, UNDESA\*, UNDP\*, UNECA, UNECE, UNECLAC, UNESCAP, UNESCO\*\*, UNESCWA, UN-Habitat, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNIDO, UNITAR, UNODC, UNRWA, UNWTO, UPU, WB, WFP, WHO, WIPO, WMO, WTO

4.4 In this regard, UNGIS expressed that it stood ready to assist the implementation of the recommendations made above, offering consultative engagement with the bodies tasked to shepherd the post-2015 process, including by providing substantive expertise in support of the Open Working Group as it starts to frame proposals to the General Assembly.

4.5 The UNGIS Joint Statement on Post 2015 Development Agenda served as a basis for discussions at the WSIS Forum 2013. Several sessions, including Ministerial Roundtable, two Plenary Sessions, and thematic workshops concluded with concrete proposals for further action.

## **5. ITU participation in the follow-up activities of the Rio+20 Conference**

5.1 ITU continues follow-up on the Rio+20 process and participates as an observer in the Open Working Group (OPW) established on 22 January 2013 by decision 67/555 of the UNGA. The OWG has been meeting since April 2012, to decide on its methods of work, including developing modalities to ensure the full involvement of relevant stakeholders and expertise from civil society, the scientific community and the United Nations system. In this regard, ITU has been providing ICT-related inputs to through the Technical Support Team's (TST) issue briefs.

5.2 ITU has also provided inputs to the Secretary-General's report on integrating the three dimensions of sustainable development into the work of the UN System, to be presented to the General Assembly at the end of the year. Likewise, ITU has provided input to the Global Sustainability report.

5.3 The ITU Secretary-General has actively advocated for ICTs and broadband in Post-2015 UN Development Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) processes underway, by way of underlining that ICTs are an increasingly important catalytic infrastructure with the potential to better integrate, deliver and enable all three pillars of sustainable development-economic prosperity, social inclusion and environmental sustainability.

## **6. Next steps**

6.1 Looking to the future, and in accordance of Resolution 1353, a report will be presented to the 2014 Session of Council (C14) to review actions undertaken by ITU and additional measures that may need to be undertaken to further mainstream the outcomes of Rio+20 in ITU's mandate and work.

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