

Constitution of the International Telecommunication Union

22 December 1992

Preamble

While fully recognizing the sovereign right of each State to regulate its telecommunication and having regard to the growing importance of telecommunication for the preservation of peace and the economic and social development of all States, the States Parties to this Constitution, as the basic instrument of the International Telecommunication Union, and to the Convention of the International Telecommunication Union (hereinafter referred to as “the Convention”) which complements it, with the object of facilitating peaceful relations, international cooperation among peoples and economic and social development by means of efficient telecommunication services, have agreed as follows:

CHAPTER I — Basic Provisions

ARTICLE 1 Purposes of the Union

1 The purposes of the Union are:

- a) to maintain and extend international cooperation among all its Member States for the improvement and rational use of telecommunications of all kinds;
- abis) to promote and enhance participation of entities and organizations in the activities of the Union and foster fruitful cooperation and partnership between them and Member States for the fulfilment of the overall objectives as embodied in the purposes of the Union;
- b) to promote and to offer technical assistance to developing countries in the field of telecommunications, and also to promote the mobilization of the material, human and financial resources needed for its implementation, as well as access to information;
- c) to promote the development of technical facilities and their most efficient operation with a view to improving the efficiency of telecommunication services, increasing their usefulness and making them, so far as possible, generally available to the public;
- d) to promote the extension of the benefits of the new telecommunication technologies to all the world’s inhabitants;
- e) to promote the use of telecommunication services with the objective of facilitating peaceful relations;
- f) to harmonize the actions of Member States and promote fruitful and constructive cooperation and partnership between Member States and Sector Members in the attainment of those ends;
- g) to promote, at the international level, the adoption of a broader approach to the issues of telecommunications in the global information economy and society, by cooperating with other world and regional intergovernmental organizations and those non-governmental organizations concerned with telecommunications.

2 To this end, the Union shall in particular:

- a) effect allocation of bands of the radio-frequency spectrum, the allotment of radio frequencies and the registration of radio-frequency assignments and, for space services, of any associated orbital position in the geostationary-satellite orbit or of any associated characteristics of satellites in other orbits, in order to avoid harmful interference between radio stations of different countries;
- b) coordinate efforts to eliminate harmful interference between radio stations of different countries and to improve the use made of the radio-frequency spectrum for radiocommunication services and of the geostationary-satellite and other satellite orbits;
- c) facilitate the worldwide standardization of telecommunications, with a satisfactory quality of service;
- d) foster international cooperation and solidarity in the delivery of technical assistance to the developing countries and the creation, development and improvement of telecommunication equipment and networks in developing countries by every means at its disposal, including through its participation in the relevant programmes of the United Nations and the use of its own resources, as appropriate;
- e) coordinate efforts to harmonize the development of telecommunication facilities, notably those using space techniques, with a view to full advantage being taken of their possibilities;
- f) foster collaboration among Member States and Sector Members with a view to the establishment of rates at levels as low as possible consistent with an efficient service and taking into account the necessity for maintaining independent financial administration of telecommunications on a sound basis;
- g) promote the adoption of measures for ensuring the safety of life through the cooperation of telecommunication services;
- h) undertake studies, make regulations, adopt resolutions, formulate recommendations and opinions, and collect and publish information concerning telecommunication matters;
- i) promote, with international financial and development organizations, the establishment of preferential and favourable lines of credit to be used for the development of social projects aimed, inter alia, at extending telecommunication services to the most isolated areas in countries.
- j) promote participation of concerned entities in the activities of the Union and cooperation with regional and other organizations for the fulfilment of the purposes of the Union

ARTICLE 40 Priority of Telecommunications Concerning Safety of Life

International telecommunication services must give absolute priority to all telecommunications concerning safety of life at sea, on land, in the air or in outer space, as well as to epidemiological telecommunications of exceptional urgency of the World Health Organization.

ARTICLE 41 Priority of Government Telecommunications

Subject to the provisions of Articles 40 and 46 of this Constitution, government telecommunications (see Annex to this Constitution, No. 1014) shall enjoy priority over other telecommunications to the extent practicable upon specific request by the originator.

ARTICLE 42 Stoppage of Telecommunications

Member States reserve for themselves, for the operating agencies recognized by them and for other agencies duly authorized to do so, the right to make special arrangements on telecommunication matters which do not concern Member States in general. Such arrangements, however, shall not be in conflict with the terms of this Constitution, of the Convention or of the Administrative Regulations, so far as concerns the harmful interference which their operation might cause to the radio services of other Member States, and in general so far as concerns the technical harm which their operation might cause to the operation of other telecommunication services of other Member States.

ARTICLE 43 Regional Conferences, Arrangements and Organizations

Member States reserve the right to convene regional conferences, to make regional arrangements and to form regional organizations, for the purpose of settling telecommunication questions which are susceptible of being treated on a regional basis. Such arrangements shall not be in conflict with either this Constitution or the Convention.

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ARTICLE 46 Distress Calls and Messages

Radio stations shall be obliged to accept, with absolute priority, distress calls and messages regardless of their origin, to reply in the same manner to such messages, and immediately to take such action in regard thereto as may be required.