

PCC.I/REC. 30 (XXXVII-20)¹

INITIATIVES TO EXPAND TELECOMMUNICATIONS/ICT IN RURAL AREAS AND IN UNSERVED OR UNDERSERVED AREAS

The 37 Meeting of Permanent Consultative Committee I: Telecommunications/Information and Communication Technologies (PCC.I),

CONSIDERING:

- a) That telecommunications/ICT are an essential tool for people to carry out their daily activities and exert a direct impact on the economic, social, and cultural environment of countries;
- b) That the global telecommunication/ICT infrastructure is essential and indispensable for world and national economies and for the well-being of all societies;
- c) That the participation of communities, NGOs, and local government is key to the success of a rural connectivity initiative;
- d) ITU Plenipotentiary Conference Resolution 200 (Rev. Dubai, 2018) on the “Connect 2030 Agenda for global telecommunication/information and communication technologies, including broadband, for sustainable development,” especially target 2, relative to “reducing the digital divide and achieving universal access to broadband”;
- e) That World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC) Recommendation ITU-D 19 (Rev. Buenos Aires, 2017) on “Telecommunication for rural and remote areas” establishes that telecommunication services and ICT applications contribute significantly to improving the quality of living of the population, optimizing social well-being, boosting productivity, saving resources, and contributing to safeguarding human rights;
- f) That Resolution 268 of PCC.I mentions ensuring the equitable implementation of telecommunications/ICT, as they foster the sustainable socioeconomic development and minimize the poverty and social inequalities of remote rural and indigenous communities;
- g) That Recommendation CCP.I/REC. 28 (XXXIII-18) recommended that member states must facilitate the development of regulatory models that promote the deployment of infrastructure in remote or underserved rural areas, identifying necessary changes in: a) regulatory policies and b) models to achieve universal access; and
- f) That new alternatives must be found to resolve, over the short term, the absence of connectivity and telecommunication/ICT services in areas that do not have them or for which they are not affordable,

RECOGNIZING:

¹ CCP.I-TIC/doc. 5002/20 rev. 4

- a) That the experiences shared in the document on “Best practices for bridging the digital divide by connecting the unconnected in unserved or underserved rural areas” presented at the 37 Meeting of PCC.I by the Working Group on Policies and Regulation (WGPR) are a key contribution to compiling and reviewing the status related to connectivity in rural areas in the region;
- b) That deploying more infrastructure can provide access to services, education, and jobs;
- c) That enhanced access to telecommunication and ICT services can provide economic and social inclusion and gender equality; and
- d) That the innovations being seen in the regulatory and technological field can accelerate the bridging of the digital divide,

RECOMMENDS:

1. Promoting the use of universal service funds or assistance funds for connectivity projects aimed at remote or underserved rural areas and ensuring they have the facilities that would make it possible for them to gain access to all kinds of operators.
2. Fostering and supporting the implementation of business models that motivate the entry of new economic agents and promote their financial sustainability.
3. Encouraging the discussion, in the region’s countries, of the analysis of fiscal measures to favor connectivity.
4. Rural connectivity policies must give priority to technologies and projects that show sustainability, efficiency, and rapid implementation in rural areas.
5. Boosting public and private investment, as well as public-private ventures, partnerships, and the sharing of infrastructure in rural areas.
6. Promoting local innovation ecosystems, as well as strategies for ownership of technology in rural areas.
7. Providing incentives for the participation of small and community operators in providing services to unserved areas, through specific licensing measures, access to key infrastructure, and social coverage promotion programs.
8. Promoting cooperation and dismantling barriers to the deployment of infrastructure between central and local government to resolve the issues of permits and rights of way.
9. Promoting the drafting of Guides on Best Practices for the deployment of infrastructure, as well as the standardization of local requirements and regulations.
10. Periodically examining the regulation applicable to rural connectivity in order to respond quickly to the specific demands and needs of connectivity in rural areas.
11. Adapting minimum standards of service quality, speed, and continuity in rural communities.
12. Promoting specific incentives for rural areas (investment, rates, contributions, etc.).

13. Permanently measuring the progress of projects in order to foster connectivity, publishing their reports systematically and continually, measuring their impact, and adopting necessary corrective measures, if any.
14. Fostering the development of a connectivity mapping system that identifies the places where there is installed infrastructure and connectivity.
15. Creating a regulatory environment that fosters innovation and investment for technological development, analyzing all the technological offers for connectivity in accordance with the needs of each country.
16. Analyzing the relevance of allowing operators to allocate partially or totally the due contribution amount to access and universal services funds for rural connectivity projects defined by connectivity policies in accordance with the needs of each country.
17. Considering the possibility, if the policies and laws of the country allow it, for enterprises that have deployed connectivity in rural areas to be exempted from the mandatory contribution to the universal access and service fund.