



Editor, Drafting Group

**DRAFT PRELIMINARY APT COMMON PROPOSAL**

**PROPOSED MODIFICATION TO WTSA-16 RESOLUTION 88  
“INTERNATIONAL MOBILE ROAMING”**

**Abstract**

Effective coordination and cooperation among governments, telecom service providers and all other stakeholders is crucial for continued proliferation of affordable telecommunication/ ICT services and its effective use by customers, while roaming in another country. Certain edits to the Resolution are proposed in this document in order to take into account the emergence and developments of substitutable alternative means of communication such as Over-The-Top (OTT) applications in place of traditional international mobile roaming (IMR) services.

**Introduction**

Traditionally, international mobile roaming (IMR) service has been used to extend the coverage of the home operator’s voice, SMS and data services, allowing the mobile user to continue using their home operator phone number and services with their existing mobile phone or other mobile device to make and receive voice calls, text messages, browse the internet, and send and receive emails, while visiting another country.

The emerging technologies and applications, particularly the internet telephony and related Over-The-Top (OTT) applications, have been evolving at a very fast pace, eliminating the difference between local, national and international usage of various telecom services by consumers and the traffic between and amongst countries has become more packetized, internet protocol (IP) driven compared to switched circuit and the concept of distance driven charging has been replaced by delivery of packets anywhere by any routing.

The emergence and increased development of OTT applications that can be used as IMR service substitutes are a powerful alternative way to lower the IMR tariffs because of the induced competition arising from substitution effect. Market mechanisms will take place and regulatory interventions to lower IMR tariffs will require less effort or become unnecessary. Therefore, relevant ITU recommendations to foster the lowering of IMR tariffs should take into account the OTT applications and their impact.

In view of above, modifications to Resolution 88 have been proposed in order to address the changed scenario and take in to account the global developments in substitutable OTT applications.

## **Proposal**

Certain revisions to sharpen the focus of this Resolution as well as highlighting the need to review the existing ITU Recommendations on the issue have been made. The edits suggest changes to current text to improve the context on account of the changed technology environment due to the emerging technologies, substitutable OTT applications and their likely impact on roaming rates and progress made since WTSA 2016. The proposal also streamlines existing references.

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## **Annex:**

Proposed modification of Resolution 88

MOD

RESOLUTION 88 ( Hyderabad, 2020)

**International mobile roaming**

( Hyderabad, 2020)

The World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly ( Hyderabad, 2020),

*considering*

- a) the results of the ITU High-Level Workshop on international mobile roaming (IMR), held in Geneva on 23-24 September 2013;
- b) the results of the ITU Global Dialogue on IMR, held in Geneva on 18 September 2015;
- c) that the tasks undertaken in the ITU Telecommunication Standardization Sector (ITU-T) cover Recommendations, conformity assessment and matters having policy or regulatory implications;
- d) that the economy is increasingly dependent on reliable, cost-effective, competitive and affordable mobile communications technology on a global scale;
- e) that wholesale IMR tariffs are decoupled from underlying costs, which may have an effect on retail rates, including inconsistent and arbitrary charges;
- f) that a competitive international telecommunication market may not exist if significant differences persist between national prices and IMR prices;
- g) that there are differences in costs between countries and regions;
- h) that developments in telecommunications/ICT infrastructure including radio communications have reduced the economic viability gap for provision of telecom services in rural and remote areas, island communities and other difficult terrains;
- i) that telecommunication technologies and applications, particularly the internet telephony and related Over-the-Top (OTT) applications, which can substitute traditional IMR services, namely, voice service, SMS, and MMS at low or free of charge leading to increased popularity and affordability have been evolving at a very fast pace, eliminating the difference between local, national and international usage of various telecom services by consumers;
- j) that the traffic between and amongst countries has become more packetized, internet protocol driven compared to switched circuit;
- k) that the concept of distance driven charging has been replaced by delivery of packets anywhere by any routing;
- l) that due to availability of alternative means of communications e.g. VoIP, OTT applications, etc., which compete with traditional IMR services, there is market-driven reduction in the IMR tariffs that may be either without regulatory intervention or with minimum necessary regulation,

*noting*

- a) that Recommendation ITU-T D.98 is an agreement concluded between Member States and Sector Members in 2012 to encourage the development of effectively competitive markets for IMR on a commercial basis by supporting the use of services enabling substitutes as well as take-up of new technologies in order to increase user choice;
- b) that Recommendation ITU-T D.97 contains possible approaches to the reduction of excessive roaming rates, highlighting the need to encourage competition in the roaming market, educate consumers and consider appropriate regulatory actions such as the introduction of caps on roaming rates;
- c) that Recommendation ITU-T D.262 addresses that OTT applications may be a direct technical or functional substitute for traditional international telecommunication services and highlighting the needs for Member States and Sector Members to participate and contribute to standardization efforts to ensure affordable services and applications for consumers;
- d) that due to high IMR charges, global consumers resort to alternative means of communication such as internet telephony and related OTT applications, buying bundled tariffs or temporarily acquiring local SIM,

*resolves*

that ITU-T Study Group 3 must continue to study the economic effects of IMR rates,

*instructs the Study Group 3*

to review Recommendations ITU-T D.98 and ITU-T D.97, taking into account current Internet telephony technologies,

*instructs the Director of the Telecommunication Standardization Bureau*

1 to organize initiatives, in collaboration with the Director of the Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT) and the Director of the Radiocommunication Bureau (BR), to raise awareness of the benefits to the consumer of lowering IMR rates;

2 to propose cooperative approaches to foster the implementation of Recommendations ITU-T D.98 and ITU-T D.97, and to lower IMR rates among the Member States, by promoting capacity-building programmes, workshops and guidelines for international cooperation agreements,

*invites Member States*

1 to take measures towards the implementation of Recommendations ITU-T D.98 and ITU-T D.97;

2 to collaborate in the efforts to lower IMR rates by taking regulatory measures when applicable;

3 to take measures towards the implementation of the use of substitutable IMR services and the take-up of new technologies including OTT applications in order to develop competitive IMR markets and increase user choice when applicable.