New global telecoms treaty agreed in Dubai
World Conference on International Telecommunications forges solid
new framework for tomorrow’s hyper-connected world

Dubai, 14 December, 2012 – After two intensive weeks of negotiations, delegates from around the world have agreed a new global treaty that will help pave the way to a hyper-connected world that will bring the power of information and communication technologies (ICTs) to people everywhere.

Over 2,000 delegates were registered for the conference, which was held by ITU at the request of its 193 Member States to renegotiate the International Telecommunication Regulations (ITRs), the binding global treaty facilitating global interconnection and interoperability of information and communication services, their efficient operation and their widespread public availability.

The treaty sets out general principles for ensuring the free flow of information around the world. New provisions in the text place special emphasis on future efforts to assist developing countries, on promoting accessibility to persons with disabilities, and on asserting all people’s right to freedom of expression over ICT networks.

Other pioneering new provisions include a Resolution to create a single, globally harmonized number for access to emergency services, new text mandating greater transparency in the prices set for mobile roaming, and new provisions to improve the energy efficiency of ICT networks and help combat e-waste.

Tough issues that provoked considerable debate at the conference included network security, unsolicited bulk content such as spam email, the definition of entities providing services under the terms of the treaty, the principle of non-discriminatory access of countries to each other’s networks, and whether or not to include language on freedom of expression in the Preamble text of the treaty.

Chairman Mohamed Nasser Al Ghanim (UAE) succeeded in breaking a seeming deadlock on Thursday, after discussions late into the night on Wednesday 12th failed to make headway on the few remaining sticking points. Coming back to the meeting on Thursday evening after a tense start to negotiations earlier that day, Mr Al Ghanim presented a new ‘consolidated package’ containing all agreed compromise texts that had been negotiated painstakingly section by section over the past two weeks at Committee, Ad Hoc Group and informal group level.

ITU Secretary-General Dr Hamadoun Touré called the signing of the treaty this afternoon a “momentous occasion and historic opportunity to bring connectivity to the two thirds of the world’s people who are still offline.”

Speaking to assembled delegates at the closing ceremony this afternoon, he said: “As you look back today on your very intensive, very long days of work, you can hold our heads up high – proud that you have triumphed over adversity and delivered the goods.” He added that he regretted that some countries have so far declined to ratify
the treaty, and hoped ITU will continue to work constructively with those nations going forward.

Dr Touré paid tribute to the exceptional Chairmanship of Al Ghanim, commemorating his success in managing the often difficult discussions by awarding him ITU’s Gold Medal, the organization’s highest honour. “Mr Al Ghanim has played a vital role in the work of the conference. He has managed to keep his calm and nerve throughout the long days and nights we have spent together, and he has epitomized the key ITU value of global consensus,” said Dr Touré.

Mr Al Ghanim spoke of the huge challenge of reviewing the 24-year-old treaty to ensure it is relevant for future generations of ICT users and an increasingly globalized, competitive and highly innovative ICT environment. “We came to this conference with a wide divergence of views. Different countries contend with vastly different market environments, but all understand how critical ICTs will be to their ongoing social and economic development. While we did not manage to get universal consensus, I believe we nonetheless achieved a huge milestone in getting such broad agreement, and I am confident that these new ITRs will pave the way to a better, more connected world and a more equitable environment for all.”

WCIT-12 was one of the most open treaty-making conferences ever held, with live and archived webcasting and English-language captioning of all full meetings of the substantive working committee (Committee 5 – Review) and the conference Plenary sessions. The conference also had a strong social media profile, as well as daily media briefings accessible via the Adobe Connect platform.

**Conference statistics:**

- A total of 1,275 proposals to the conference from Member States
- Almost 1,600 delegates onsite from 151 Member States, including almost 70 Ministers, Deputy Ministers and Ambassadors
- A paperless working environment which saved literally millions of pages of paper
- 150 hours of official conference meetings onsite at the Dubai World Trade Centre – on top of many thousands of hours of informal delegation meetings
- 13 million page visits to ITU’s WCIT website over the past month
- Around twelve million twitter impressions a day resulting from the tweets posted during the conference using the #WCIT12 and #WCIT hashtags
- Over 30 professional quality videos produced onsite which have been watched over 10,000 times on YouTube, in addition to more than 30 Video News Releases which have been carried by major broadcast media around the world
- Over 360 journalists participating in remote daily media briefings, saving three million kilometres of travel to Dubai and 420 tonnes of carbon emissions
- Over 300 hours of live broadcast webcasts
- 600 hours of simultaneous interpretation and text translation of almost 700,000 words.
A statement by Dr Touré issued immediately after the close of the negotiations on Thursday evening can be found at: www.itu.int/en/wcit-12/Pages/statement-toure.aspx.

A full English transcript derived from the simultaneous captioning in the meeting rooms is available for all Plenary and full Committee 5 sessions at: www.itu.int/en/wcit-12/Pages/captioning.aspx.

The full text of the Final Acts of the new ITRs can be found at:

- French: http://wftp3.itu.int/pub/epub_shared/GS/WCIT-12/F/web/flipviewerxpress.html
- Arabic: http://wftp3.itu.int/pub/epub_shared/GS/WCIT-12/A/web/flipviewerxpress.html


Archived multilingual webcasts of the WCIT-12 opening and closing ceremonies, opening and closing press conferences and all meetings of the conference Plenary and Committee 5 are available at: www.itu.int/en/wcit-12/Pages/webcast.aspx.

View archives of the daily media briefing with the ITU Secretary-General and other key officials recapping each day’s discussions via the Adobe Connect platform at: http://itu.adobeconnect.com/wcit2012/

Speeches and other information can be found on the main WCIT-12 Newsroom at: www.itu.int/en/wcit-12/Pages/newsroom.aspx.

A FAQ, a comprehensive set of Background Briefs covering the main discussion topics and a WCIT Myth Buster presentation can be found at: www.itu.int/en/wcit-12/Pages/ITR-backgroundbriefs.aspx.

View videos from the meeting and download broadcast quality video footage at: www.itu.int/en/newsroom/Pages/videos.aspx.

Photos from the meeting can be downloaded at: www.flickr.com/photos/itupictures/sets/72157632073685626/

The main conference preparatory documents can be found at: www.itu.int/en/wcit-12/Pages/documents.aspx.

The 1988 version of the ITRs can be found at: www.itu.int/en/wcit-12/Pages/itrs.aspx.

Note to editors:

ITU is unique within the UN family in having some 700 Sector Members (mainly from the private sector) in addition to 193 Member States. All have been actively engaged in the WCIT-12 preparatory process, which has been underway for some years. In addition, ITU set up a public consultation website open to all stakeholders in six languages (total of 31 submissions received between 15 August-7 November, of
which 29 published [and 2 rejected because of unauthorized hyperlinks]). ITU has also held four global briefings (supporting remote participation from anywhere around the world) open to media, analysts and civil society: those held using Adobe Connect are archived at: http://www.itu.int/en/wcit-12/Pages/media-briefings.aspx.

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