



World Conference on International Telecommunications

Overview

The World Conference on International Telecommunications (WCIT) will convene from 3 to 14 December 2012 in Dubai, UAE. Here the 193 Member States of the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) will review the current International Telecommunication Regulations (ITRs), an international treaty that defines general principles for the provision of international telephony.

The ITRs were last updated in Melbourne, Australia in 1988.

During the WCIT meeting, the ITU Member States will vote on proposed additions and revisions to the current treaty text. These preparations took place at a global level by the ITU Council Working Group on WCIT (CWG-WCIT) and regionally by the Asia Pacific Telecommunity (APT) through Regional Preparatory Meetings. APNIC participated as an observer in all five Regional Preparatory Meetings leading up to the WCIT meeting in Dubai.

The expected outcome of this meeting is a new ITR treaty.

What is at stake

Direct participation at the WCIT meeting is restricted to ITU Member States, ITU Sector Members, and other invited international organizations. However, only the Member States can agree on suggested edits to the ITRs. Under the current ITU procedures, APNIC as a Sector Member (ITU-D) has had access to the discussions as observer, but does not have a formal say in the negotiations.

If some of the proposals that have been made public by ITU Member States during the preparatory process are accepted into the new regulations; i.e. revisions related to interconnection costs, security, spam, and issues relating to Internet number resources, they might adversely affect how IP networks are managed and how they may develop in the future. Increased belief that regulation by international treaty as a possible solution to current challenges facing the Internet is problematic and may carry unintended consequences. The ITRs will remain unchanged for many years after WCIT-12, while most of the issues of concern will change as technologies evolve.

APNIC's position

WCIT has presented APNIC with an opportunity to further engage with delegates representing ITU Member States, including policy makers and regulators in the Asia Pacific region. APNIC has shared its insights and expertise on behalf of the regional Internet technical community to help ITU delegates form positions that are well-informed.

Generally, APNIC's position facing WCIT is that the ITRs have worked well for telephony but are difficult to translate onto the Internet.

Compromise is achievable and APNIC has offered constructive ITR language to support governmental delegations in their attempts to update the treaty. APNIC encourages thorough and thoughtful analysis of the implications the new text could bring, primarily on two topics:

1. Interconnection models supported by the ITRs
2. Questions on number misuse in the ITRs

APNIC has contributed to this process on behalf of the Asia Pacific Internet community, in collaboration with other Internet organizations, to defend the current open and transparent model of Internet governance at WCIT.

References

- [NRO contribution to the WCIT public consultation process](#)
- [ISOC on WCIT](#)

APNIC's Chief Scientist, [Geoff Huston](#), has written a series of articles to provide his insight on these issues:

- [Internet peering and settlements](#)
- [Carriage vs content](#)
- [OECD/BEREC workshop](#)
- [Number misuse](#)
- [Less is better](#)
- [Calling Stumps at WCIT](#)