



India (Republic Of)

PROPOSED MODIFICATIONS TO WTSA RESOLUTION 88 ON INTERNATIONAL MOBILE ROAMING

Abstract:

When it comes to international travel and using your mobile phone, Global roaming rates are prohibitively high which impact not only global trade but also is against the current technology trends. Many telecom networks provide relatively cheap data services to customers in their own country, yet the roaming rates are so high.

Introduction:

International mobile roaming is a service that allows mobile users to continue to use their mobile phone or other mobile device to make and receive voice calls and text messages, browse the internet, and send and receive emails, while visiting another country. Roaming extends the coverage of the home operator's retail voice and SMS services, allowing the mobile user to continue using their home operator phone number and data services within another country. The seamless extension of coverage is enabled by a wholesale roaming agreement between a mobile user's home operator and the visited mobile operator network. The roaming agreement addresses the technical and commercial components required to enable the service. The most common international roaming services are:

1. Voice: Making and receiving calls to or from home country, visited country or a third country, while abroad
2. SMS: Sending and receiving text messages to or from home country, visited country or a third country, while abroad
3. Email: Reading and replying to emails while abroad
4. Mobile broadband: Using mobile devices or dongles to access the internet, including to download images, MP3s, films and software, while abroad
5. Applications: Using mobile applications while abroad that require mobile data, such as location-based services and language translators.

International mobile roaming is one of a wider range of communications services offered to mobile users while travelling abroad. Other services include hotel services, Wi-Fi, national global SIMs cards, multiple SIM card mobile handsets, and local pre-paid SIMs cards.

To explain roaming in more detail, the mobile user (Mobile User A) has an international roaming service with their home operator (Home Operator) and is automatically connected to a visited network (Visited Operator A) while roaming. Mobile User A is automatically granted access to Visited Operator A's network when arriving in the visited country by an exchange of a data between Home Operator and Visited Operator A, where Visited Operator A confirms Mobile User A is a roaming customer with Home Operator. As such, the wholesale roaming agreement between Visited Operator A and Home Operator specifies how

this data is to be provided to the visited operator. Home Operator usually has wholesale roaming agreements with more than one operator in the same visited country, which in this case is Visited Operator A and a second network, Visited Operator B. As a result, Mobile User A can call home using either visited operator networks, both of which use international transit services to carry the call back to Mobile User A's home country. Mobile User A pays a retail price to Home Operator for the roaming service and does not pay Visited Operator A. Provided Mobile User B is not also roaming, they will not incur any extra charges to receive a call from, or to make calls to Mobile User A. Visited Operator A sends transferred account procedure (TAP) files to a clearing house which forwards them to the Home Operator. TAP files are used for billing of calls while roaming. Home Operator can then pay Visited Operator A the wholesale charges as per their agreement.

Further, the emerging technologies and applications, particularly the internet telephony and related (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 driven compared to switched circuit and the concept of distance driven charging has been replaced by delivery of packets anywhere by any routing.

Proposal:

It is proposed to update the resolution by adding specific references to the emerging technologies and their likely impact on roaming rates. The proposal also calls upon ITU-T to review and revise Recommendations ITU T D.98 and ITU T D.97, taking into account current IP technologies, with a view to lowering the IMR rates among the Member States as well as promote capacity-building programs, workshops and guidelines for international agreements between operators.

RESOLUTION 88 (Hyderabad, 2020)

International mobile roaming

(Hyderabad, 2020)

The World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly (Hammamet, 2016, 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 telecom physical media as well as radio communications (including satellites and Wi-fi) have reduced the economic viability gap for provision of telecom services in large cities as compared to rural & remote areas, island communities and other difficult terrains;
- i) that telecommunication technologies and applications, particularly the internet telephony and related (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,
- 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.

noting

- a) that Recommendation ITU-T D.98 is an agreement concluded between Member States and Sector Members in 2012;
- 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 due to high IMR charges, global consumers resort to alternative means of communication in legitimate ways 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 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 Radio communication Bureau, to raise awareness of the benefits to the consumer of lowering IMR rates;

2 to review and revise Recommendations ITU-T D.98 and ITU-T D.97, taking into account current IP technologies,

3 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.