ITU and MEF to cooperate on standards that advance on-demand connectivity services

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ITU and MEF concluded an agreement to advance the worldwide development and deployment of emerging connectivity services – designed to be agile, assured, and orchestrated – in addition to standardized CE 2.0 (Carrier Ethernet) services.

The Memorandum of Understanding was signed by the Director of the ITU Standardization Bureau Chaesub Lee and MEF President Nan Chen on the eve of the opening of ITU Telecom World 2015 in Budapest. The agreement focuses on opportunities for mutual standards referencing for CE 2.0 and LSO (Lifecycle Service Orchestration), standards compliance/certification and global education as well as alignment in emerging areas, such as trust in the information society, orchestration and virtualization, as well as 5G Cloud Access.

Areas of cooperation include:

- **Joint steering committee**. The ITU Standardization Sector (ITU-T) and MEF will establish a Joint Steering Committee composed of two representatives from each organization that will supervise the overall implementation of the collaboration.
- **Leadership workshops**. The two bodies intend to organize periodic leadership workshops to focus on specific aspects of proposed collaboration relating to the adoption of ITU-T and MEF standards in the areas of Carrier Ethernet and the next generation of agile, assured and orchestrated connectivity services.
- **Standards references and contributions**. The organizations intend to focus on enhancing contributions to the ongoing work of relevant ITU-T Study Groups and maximizing the MEF work that can be referenced by ITU-T documents. ITU-T Study Groups expected to play leading roles in ITU-MEF collaboration include:
  - Study Group 11 – protocols and test specifications
  - Study Group 13 – future networks, including cloud computing, mobile, and next-generation networks
  - Study Group 15 – networks, technologies, and infrastructures for transport, access, and home
- **Certification and Conformance Testing**. The MEF and ITU-T intend to investigate collaborative certification and conformance testing activities and promote the availability of training and certification to maximize the impact of the MEF Certified Professional programme. It is a globally recognized, vendor-neutral certification programme designed to ensure that organizations have a common baseline of technical Carrier Ethernet skills across many job functions. Both organizations see an opportunity to broaden the base of expertise to additional ITU Member States with the goal of promoting network-driven economic growth.

“This renewed commitment to cooperation between ITU and MEF is a very welcome development,” said ITU Secretary-General Houlin Zhao. “MEF offers valuable support to ITU's standardization of Carrier Ethernet, assuring the ICT industry that well-coordinated standards development will drive the evolution of Carrier Ethernet and the emergence of integrated fixed-mobile hybrid 5G networks.”

Nan Chen, President of the MEF, said, “MEF's concept of 'The Third Network' – an agile, assured and orchestrated service enabled by LSO (Lifecycle Service Orchestration) – describes a vision for the development and deployment of connectivity services necessary to build infrastructure which can be leveraged for economic opportunities that a hyper-connected world provides. Alongside ITU-T, the MEF is defining the technologies that effectively makes for a level playing field, bridges the standardization gaps, and fosters opportunities for everyone to participate in the digital economy.”

“We see standardized Carrier Ethernet and standardized connectivity as a strong basis on which ITU Member States can build a large part of their sustainable economic growth over the coming decades,” said Chaesub Lee, Director of ITU's Standardization Bureau. “Rapidly emerging requirements in the arenas of digital trust, Internet of Things, 5G and virtualization will be better met through rapid alignment between ITU-T and the MEF, and this in turn will translate into immediate benefits for the ITU-T membership along with more effective long-term standardization.”

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