

May 2007

## **Expert Contribution to the ITU-SG2 Correspondence Group on Child Helplines and Emergency Harmonisation, responding to proposed contribution TD CH**

### **Executive Summary**

A paper circulated to the ITU Child Helpline and Emergency Harmonisation Correspondence Group, written by the ITU-T SG2 Chair is a proposed input paper to the next SG2 meeting. This ETNO Expert Contribution paper proposes a response that should be submitted by the ETNO Office to the Correspondence Group, outlining certain issues and raising further questions over the source material.

### **Introduction**

A paper circulated to the Child Helpline and Emergency Harmonisation Correspondence Group, written by the ITU T SG2 Chair, is a proposed input paper to the next SG2 meeting and includes both a summary and proposals for number allocations for these services.

The purpose of the present Expert Contribution is to review the contents of the circulated paper and propose a submission to be made by ETNO to the relevant Correspondence Group mailing list.

In order to propose a submission to the Correspondence Group observations are made on the paper and in a final section text is proposed for submission by the ETNO Office.

### **Observations**

The circulated paper, which has previously been circulated to the ETNO NANI WG mailing list, combines both Child Helpline issues and Emergency Issues harmonisation. During the SG2 meeting, only the Child Helpline issue was

discussed in detail. The questions that ETNO had previously contributed to SG2, have been used in the proposed submission but it is unclear where the answers have originated from.

Applying the same approach to the emergency number issue as has been applied to the children helpline - in spelling out advantages and disadvantages of various numbering resources - makes little sense. Especially as the advantages and disadvantages are listed as the same, but as yet have not been discussed.

It is worth noting that the Irish Society for the Prevention of cruelty to Children (ISPCC) has also submitted a paper to the correspondence group reporting on its study. The study focussed on 116, and identified 116123 as a number readily recognised by children.

### **Proposed Text for Submission by ETNO to the ITU “Child Helpline and Emergency Harmonisation” Correspondence Group**

The proposed input paper that has been circulated combines both Children Helplines and Emergency Numbers. However the topics are different and for the purposes of responding to that document are treated as such in the following commentary.

#### **Children’s Helplines**

The Table that is included in the paper was produced at the SG2 meeting in February and no assessment has as yet occurred. ETNO, in a separate paper, are seeking to provide a further detailed assessment of the various resources listed in that table.

In responding to the questions listed in section 2, the source of the proposed answers is not explicitly listed. However two specific issues need to be noted in the short term (noting that there are many other issues that have been raised by ETNO). First, is the clear acknowledgement that this area is a national matter. Therefore the solution should likewise be a national matter. As expressed during the last SG2 meeting, the effort taken to find a solution in a region, such as the use of 116 in Europe for Harmonised Services of a social nature has proven very difficult, and is not yet achieved. Secondly, that the administration and management of the resources resides with various organisations other than the ITU. Therefore any recommendation as to a national resource will need to exist within the decision making process that have occurred previously. In that respect 123 is not similar to 00, as the use being planned is that of a number not a dialling prefix.

Other aspects that are of interest, and that require clarification, include

- a) Further detail to the answer provided to question 15. ETNO finds this of interest and would welcome further information on this aspect of 116.
- b) Demonstration of the benefit that exists to this exercise where a resource is in operation and providing service to the very people that any number is intended to support.

Noting the limited though valuable input from ISPC, it is important to remember the study was associated with the European 116 activity. Further work is required to see if the results of the study can be generalised to other cultures and countries is required.

ETNO believes that rather than adopt a global national number, which may prove difficult to achieve, and undermine existing helpline numbers and initiatives, it would be preferable to specify what characteristics such a national number should have that would enable an appropriate national selection to be made. In this manner easier and quick selection and introduction of numbers can be achieved.

### **Emergency Harmonised Number**

ETNO believes that the debate on a harmonised approach to emergency helpline numbers has yet to be carried out. A further review of the table in the paper is required. The questions asked in the paper refer to the Childrens Helplines, and do not apply to the Emergency helpline. A separate list of questions needs to be generated, and to that extent ETNO offers the following for consideration

Does the alternate global national emergency number need to be consistent?  
If there are multiple choices worldwide, such as in the proposed contribution, how will these be:

- i. Communicated to the user?
- ii. What benefit is there to the user?

## **Conclusion**

The ITU can only make recommendations over those resources that fall under its remit, and offer guidance to the selection of appropriate resources to meet national requirements. Noting that national numbering plans have developed to meet national requirements, its task is providing guidance by which an appropriate national resource can be selected.