



1 December 2010

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Subject: ITU's use of the term "4G" with respect to IMT-Advanced

Dear Mr. Timofeev,

This communication was developed by IEEE Project 802®, the Local and Metropolitan Area Network Standards Committee ("IEEE 802"), an international standards development committee organized under the IEEE and the IEEE Standards Association ("IEEE-SA"). The content herein was prepared by a group of technical experts in IEEE 802 and industry and was approved for submission by the IEEE 802 Executive Committee, in accordance with the IEEE 802 policies and procedures, and represents the view of IEEE 802. Note that IEEE is a Sector Member of ITU-R as a REGINTORG (Regional or International Organization).

We have taken note of ITU's press release of 21 October, entitled "ITU paves way for next-generation 4G mobile technologies: ITU-R IMT-Advanced 4G standards to usher new era of mobile broadband communications." We appreciate the acknowledgement within that announcement that the WirelessMAN-Advanced technology, proposed by IEEE, "met all of the criteria established by ITU-R for the first release of IMT-Advanced" and was "accorded the official designation of IMT-Advanced." After participating actively in the process for four years, we are gratified at the outcome.

We have observed that ITU's announcement has specifically identified IMT-Advanced as the "global 4G mobile wireless broadband technology" and indicated that only IMT-Advanced technologies are "true 4G." We are concerned that the ITU's introduction of the term "4G" has led to unforeseen consequences. It appears that much of the public response to ITU's announcement has a focus on technologies that were *not* accorded ITU recognition as "4G." In many cases, commercial and governmental entities have referred to existing products and services (some, but not all, of which are based on IEEE technology) as "4G." Given ITU's authoritative and intergovernmental status, this announcement significantly impacts those pre-existing users of the term, and narrowing the term so as to exclude those technologies can cause significant disruption to previously-understood documentation. For example, many technical activities supported within IEEE have been identified as "4G," and so users of IEEE technology, documentation, and technical publications could find the ITU's narrow definition in contradiction with their own.

We understand that ITU-R Working Party 5D has previously decided to recommend against the use of the term "4G" to avoid such difficulties.

We propose that ITU consider clarification of its previous announcement, preferably by providing a new statement explaining its view regarding the use and meaning of the term “4G” with respect to mobile wireless communications. We believe that industry, government, and technologists worldwide would benefit greatly from such clarification.

Regards,

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IEEE-SA Technical Liaison to ITU-R  
Chair, IEEE 802.18 Radio Regulatory Technical Advisory Group

cc: Terry deCourcelle, IEEE-SA Administrative Liaison to ITU-R  
Paul Nikolich, Chair, IEEE 802