



Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT)

Third Meeting of the Telecommunication  
Development Advisory Group (TDAG)  
Geneva, 2-3 March 2000

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## SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

### THIRD MEETING OF THE

### TELECOMMUNICATION DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY GROUP (TDAG)

Geneva, 2-3 March 2000

#### 1 Opening remarks by the Secretary-General

In his opening remarks, the Secretary-General drew attention to the importance of development activities for the developing countries, and stressed the obligation for ITU to meet their most pressing needs in the most efficient way possible. He also pointed out that, in the long term, development activities need to be redefined, and this is being done through the ITU reform process currently under way.

#### 2 Address by the Director of BDT

In his statement, the Director of BDT, referring to the opening remarks of the Secretary-General, emphasized the need for the Union to respond more effectively to the needs of its membership. He stressed the special responsibility of the Development Sector and drew attention to some important issues requiring action and contained in the agenda, such as the ITU reform process, the Operational Plan, the work of the Sub-group on private sector issues and the strengthening of regional presence.

After this brief statement, the third meeting of the TDAG was opened by the Chairperson, Mr J.S. Lee, who drew the attention of the participants to the heavy agenda before them and sought their assistance in completing the business on time.

#### 3 Approval of the agenda

**The agenda was approved** without change.

#### 4 Approval of the Summary of Conclusions of the second TDAG meeting

The meeting took note of a number of points that would be discussed during the meeting, including the rotation of the positions of chairperson and vice-chairpersons, the effect of the abolishment of the 1/16 unit class on non-profit organizations and the status of associates in development activities. It was also pointed out that whenever a decision is taken a text pertaining to it should be adopted in the meeting. **The Summary of Conclusions was thereafter approved.**

## **5 Human Resources Issues: Report of the meeting of the Special Group on Human Resources Development (Geneva, 18-19 January 2000)**

In his presentation of Document TDAG-3/6, the Chairperson of the Special Group on Human Resources Development, Mr. David Mellor, focused on the **Centres of Excellence** projects and on the **handbooks** prepared for developing countries. Concerning Centers of Excellence, the Group recommended that: 1) the Centres should focus on virtual activities, taking due note of the recommendations of the TDS Symposium during TELECOM 99 as well as during regional meetings; 2) Boards of Trustees established for Centers of Excellence should include a nominee from the ITU; and 3) the trust funds established to provide funding from partners involved in the Centers of Excellence should, ideally, not be used, and all activities should make use of the interest generated by the capital in these trust funds. With regard to handbooks, the Special Group recommended that: 1) handbooks should be posted on the Web and, where possible, made available in the three working languages of the Union, and 2) additional information and available training programmes should also be made available on the WEB, and 3) manuals should take the form of a binder covering new-technology topic areas.

TDAG participants stressed the importance of capacity development activities for regulators. In this respect, it was pointed out that an agreement had been signed between the Chairperson of the Special Group, in his capacity as Executive Director of the Cable and Wireless College, and the Director of BDT concerning the development of modules specific to the purposes and impact of regulation. The meeting was also informed that India had offered **CHF** 2.2 million for setting up infrastructure facilities for a Center of Excellence. **The meeting endorsed Document TDAG-3/6 and decided to forward it, along with all comments made, to the Director of BDT.**

## **6 Organizational framework for WTDC Regional Preparatory Meetings**

Document TDAG-3/4 presented a new approach in assisting the ITU-D membership prepare for World Development Conferences. Council had decided that Regional Development Conferences would, at least for this Plenipotentiary period, be replaced by Regional Preparatory Meetings. This agenda item gave rise to a number of comments regarding participation in these preparatory meetings, their agenda and work program, and the working methods of the regional preparatory meetings. In this respect, TDAG participants emphasized the role and importance of the ITU Regional Offices in the organization and functioning of these meetings. **TDAG participants supported the main thrusts of the document submitted by the Director of BDT**, who welcomed all the comments and said that they would be taken into account in further developing the Regional Preparatory Meeting concept.

## **7 Operational Plan 2000**

Document TDAG-3/2 provided participants with an opportunity to seek clarifications on the Operational Plan and to put forward suggestions on ways to improve it. In this respect, and in view of the four-year Plenipotentiary cycle, **TDAG suggested that the Operational Plan document be revised at each TDAG meeting.**

In order to facilitate reading of the Operational Plan, a list of acronyms should be given and specific references be made to partners who had contributed to the implementation of projects. Performance indicators needed to be improved. BDT needed to assign more importance to the management and commercial aspects of telecommunication networks and services, as well as to the crucial area of telecommunications policy and regulatory matters. The meeting drew attention to the very low budget for information sharing activities, and wondered how the objectives on gender issues could be accomplished with the small budget at its disposal. TDAG expressed the wish to discuss the relationship between the WTO and the ITU. **The topic would be placed on the agenda of the next meeting of TDAG, with particular reference to the agreement between WTO and ITU.**

TDAG also requested a report on the major results emerging from quarterly assessments and suggested that a comparison be made between the Development Sector and the other two ITU Sectors, highlighting some of the developmental impacts and any partnership arrangements made.

The Director of BDT was pleased to receive so many comments. He announced that, in order to improve the flow of information between the BDT and its constituents, a Communication Manager would be recruited. He also mentioned that a resource mobilization strategy and campaign would be developed and implemented, in order to enable implementation of projects which could not be accommodated in the very limited BDT budget. In response to statements from the representatives of EU and UNESCO, the Director of BDT expressed his satisfaction at the collaboration which already existed between the BDT and these organizations; he reiterated his objective of doing likewise with NGOs.

## **8 Interim report on the Special Programme for LDCs**

Following the presentation of Document TDAG-3/13 and an overview of the objectives and action plan of this Special Programme, the Director of BDT added that an information campaign involving brochures, a website and a database would be launched in order to highlight the progress made and encourage investment from outside partners. TDAG participants recommended that the existing BDT practice of open tendering be maintained with regards to fielding consultants and procuring equipment within this Special Programme. **The meeting was very supportive of this new Programme and requested that regular updates be provided to the TDAG.**

## **9 Study Group matters**

### **a) Improving the participation of developing countries in the work of the Study Groups**

**TDAG supported the various measures proposed by the ITU-D Study Groups** ( Document TDAG 3/10) at their September 1999 meetings and which were aimed at improving the participation of developing countries in the work of the Study Groups.

### **b) Progress Report of the Group on the Structure and Working Methods of the Study Groups (Document TDAG 3/11)**

In Document TDAG 3/11, the Group focused on two items of an urgent nature, namely, the reduction of the cost and volume of documentation for ITU-D Study Group activities, and the working methods of the ITU-D Study Groups.

**TDAG endorsed the recommendations of the Group on the structure and working methods of the Study Groups**, and noted that the deadline for the Group to finalize its work is 31 January 2001.

**c) Reference document for ITU-D Study Groups**

The objective of the reference document is to gather in a single document all pertinent information relating to the functioning of the ITU-D Study Groups. Having considered Document TDAG 3/12, **TDAG recommended that the reference document should not be voluminous and should be distributed free of charge to members of Study Groups.**

**d) Reduction of the cost and volume of documentation for ITU-D Study Group activities**

**With regard to Document TDAG 3/8**, TDAG expressed its concern about electronic pollution and the possible transfer of costs from ITU to the users, which in many instances were developing countries. However, **the meeting endorsed the proposals made in the document and transmitted it to the Director of the BDT for appropriate follow-up.**

**10 Reduction of cost and volume of documentation (Document TDAG-3/14)**

Document TDAG 3/14 concerned the whole BDT, and not simply the Study Groups. **The meeting endorsed the proposals made in the document with the understanding that the proposals should be implemented in the BDT on a trial basis.**

**11 Review and improvement of the management, functioning and structure of the International Telecommunication Union - Resolution 74 (Minneapolis, 1998)**

In considering Documents TDAG-3/3 and TDAG-3/15, the meeting stressed the importance of Resolution 74 (Minneapolis, 1998). In order to avoid duplication and overlap, attention was drawn to the structure of the ITU Working Group on Reform and its functioning. As a point of clarification, the Director of BDT said that, in conformity with the resolution, and in light of the discussion of this item at this meeting, a report would be submitted to the Council, and that this report would obviously relate only to the functioning of the Development Sector.

This last point was extensively discussed by the meeting. Many suggestions and recommendations were made regarding, *inter alia*, the role of WTDCs, the strengthening of Regional Presence, the working methods of Study Groups and the need for mechanisms to ensure that the contributions paid by the private sector actually go towards development.

**TDAG noted, with satisfaction, the contribution by the Director of BDT on the review and improvement of the management, functioning and structure of ITU and the comments on the Working Group on ITU Reform (Documents TDAG-3/3 and TDAG-3/15).** The document would be posted on the ITU website and used as input for the Working Group on ITU Reform. If members wished to make further comments, they should do so before mid-April 2000. The debate on the subject would continue at the regional level, and within the Working Group.

## 12 Gender issues

Following the presentation of documents TDAG-3/9(Rev.1) and TDAG-3/18, the meeting commended BDT for its efforts on promoting gender equality in its various programmes. **The two documents were noted and transmitted to the Director of BDT for his further consideration.**

## 13- Report of the TDAG Subgroup dealing with Private-Sector issues

The Chairperson of the TDAG Subgroup dealing with Private-Sector issues, Mr. Ron Davidson, introduced Document TDAG-3/20. He welcomed the participation of four representatives from the ITU regional offices, and invited them to make presentations on their activities at future meetings of his Sub-group. **Document TDAG-3/20 was approved.** The Director of BDT thanked the subgroup, although he found it regrettable that a larger number of members had not attended the meetings. He invited proposals and ideas to remedy that situation.

## 14 Progress report on ITU-D Sector membership (Document TDAG-3/5)

The **Chairperson** drew attention to Information Document TDAG-3/5, containing a progress report on ITU-D Sector membership in 1999, and invited members to submit any comments they might have to the BDT secretariat.

## 15 Collaboration among the R&D institutions in ITU Member States

The meeting **noted** Document TDAG-3/17 and transmitted it to the Director of BDT for its further consideration.

## 16 Other business

The **Chairperson** drew attention to an information note from the Rapporteur for Focus Group 7 (Document TDAG-3/19) and said he hoped for even more active participation in the group. He also drew attention to a contribution for information submitted by AULM SA (Document TDAG-3-**Info**).

## 17 Closure of the meeting

In his closing of the meeting, the **Chairperson** mentioned that rotation of the Chair and Vice-chair positions would be placed on the agenda for the next meeting. The Director of BDT was asked to prepare a contribution on this matter. The Director of the BDT was also asked to consider extending the duration of the 3-day meeting of TDAG to 4 days, within the existing budgetary allocations, and to report back to the next meeting of TDAG.