



Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT)

Fifth Meeting of the Telecommunication
Development Advisory Group (TDAG)
Geneva, 22-23 February 2001

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Note by the Director

PREPARATION OF THE WORLD TELECOMMUNICATION DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE (WTDC-02)

Regional preparatory meetings for WTDC-02

1 At its 1999 session, the Council adopted an innovative approach consisting in replacing the Regional Telecommunication Development Conference (RTDC-01) with a series of regional preparatory meetings for WTDC-02.

2 The third meeting of the Telecommunication Development Advisory Group (TDAG), held on 2 and 3 March 2000, established the *modus operandi* for that approach.

The regional preparatory meetings should enable priorities to be identified for the development of telecommunications and of information technologies, taking into account the expression of pressing issues facing the Member States and Sector Members of the region. They will draw up recommendations to be considered by WTDC-02.

3 The following planned schedule of regional preparatory meetings for WTDC-02 has been adopted and is being implemented:

Arab States (Alexandria, 17-19 October 2000)

Central Europe and CIS (Sofia, 28-30 November 2000)

Asia and Pacific (Bali, 25-27 April 2001)

Africa (Yaoundé, 29-31 May 2001)

Americas (Port of Spain, October 2001)

(See: <http://www.itu.int/ITU-D-Events/events.html>)

4 Some initial lessons can be drawn from the first two regional meetings and based on the advanced stages of preparation of those planned for April and May respectively.

5 The involvement of the regional offices in the planning, organization and proceedings of the meetings is crucial and highly beneficial.

6 Participation is relatively high at around three hundred persons maximum, with fluctuations according to the region.

7 The administrative and logistical arrangements are more manageable and response time for preparation of the meetings is reduced accordingly.

8 The topics for discussion drawn up by the regional offices following consultations with Member States and Sector Members are strikingly similar despite the obvious specificity of each of the regions concerned. These generic themes are information infrastructure development, the introduction of new technologies, universal access, regulatory and financing issues and human resources development.

9 Rather than focusing on possible responses to the issues raised by Member States and Sector Members, the structure and proceedings of the regional meetings are more conducive to discussion of the priorities which they would like to submit for consideration by WTDC-02 as a basis for a future action plan.

10 In the final analysis, the regional preparatory meetings for WTDC-02 are providing a gradual progression towards the preparation of the agenda of WTDC-02.

World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC-02)

11 Under Resolution 77 of the Plenipotentiary Conference (Minneapolis, 1998), the World Telecommunication Development Conference is to be held during the first quarter of 2002.

On the basis of the contacts made to date, WTDC-02 could be held from 20 to 29 March in Istanbul, Turkey, at the kind invitation of the Turkish Administration.

Once this information has been confirmed, the Secretary-General of ITU will conduct a consultation of the Member States in accordance with the relevant provisions of the ITU Convention.

12 In view of the duration of a WTDC, its terms of reference (Article 16 of the ITU Convention) could be considered too vast to cover.

Rationalizing the debates around priorities and work programmes is therefore essential. Such rationalization could be achieved by means of the agenda, structure and working methods of the conference.

13 A preliminary draft agenda is hereby submitted for consideration by TDAG for its views and possible recommendations.

14 In respect of the WTDC structure, some suggestions were made at the third meeting of TDAG, *inter alia* that of organizing the forthcoming conference on the basis of thematic workshops.

A second option would be to use the experience of the regional preparatory meetings by adopting similar working methods.

TDAG will wish to formulate its recommendations for the structure and proceedings of WTDC-02.

15 At the dawn of the new millennium, the same questions and concerns prevail with regard to universal access. The development of information and communication technologies, growth in international trade and economic globalization have confronted the telecommunity and the world's governments with what has come to be known as the digital divide.

16 Several initiatives have already been launched, involving numerous institutions such as G8, the United Nations, specialized agencies, etc.

How can the ITU Telecommunication Development Sector position itself, respond to the huge expectations and not fall short of them?

17 The establishment of an action plan targeting clearly identified priorities would not be complete without some thought being given to ways of improving the mechanisms by which BDT delivers its products and services to all its members.

18 TDAG has already started discussion on this on the basis of a document on ITU-D reform. It will wish to continue its deliberations and develop recommendations with particular reference to WTDCs.

19 TDAG is also invited to express its views on the possibility of making a number of innovations in the functioning of WTDC:

- Setting of national development objectives by the developing countries (e.g. teledensity rates, establishment of regulatory bodies ...), on the basis of which BDT objectives may be established more easily for the period 2003-2006.
- Holding a short meeting reserved for Sector Members during WTDC, aimed at boosting their participation in ITU-D activities and enabling them to put their own views to the conference, *inter alia* on the measures to be taken to reduce the digital divide.
- Establishing a worldwide Action Plan, like that of Valletta, but also including an action plan for each of the regions targeting their specific needs.
- A short ministerial meeting on the digital divide and on the many initiatives launched in recent months (dot force, UN ICT Task Force, Digital Opportunity Initiative).

WTDC-02 (Istanbul)
Preliminary draft agenda

1 Report on activities

Implementation of WTDC-98 resolutions and recommendations

Report by the study groups

Report by TDAG

2 General policy and strategy matters

Analysis of the status of telecommunication development

Summary report of the regional preparatory meetings for WTDC-02

Report of the first Development Symposium for Regulators

Reports of the World Telecommunication Policy Forum (WTPF)

Strategic plan for the Development Sector

3 ITU-D reform: Structure and working methods

4 Reducing the digital divide

Development of information infrastructures

Telecommunication policies, regulatory frameworks and financing of telecommunication development

Human resources development and capacity building

5 WTDC-02 Action Plan

Operational programmes and their financial implications

Mobilization of resources and partnerships for development
