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| African Telecommunication Union Administrations | |
| AFRICAN COMMON PROPOSALS FOR THE WORK OF THE CONFERENCE | |
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AFRICAN PROPOSALS TO IMPROVE THE WORK OF THE ITU

# A CONTRIBUTION ON IMPROVEMENTS FOR THE WORK OF PLENIPOTENTIARY CONFERENCES: ELECTION PROCESSES

# 1 Abstract/Summary

This paper outlines the work that has been undertaken by the ITU Council pursuant to Recommendation 8 (Busan) and requests PP-18 to note that there has been no consensus on the issue of "interviewing candidates" for elected positions. The African Countries adopt an AfCP for PP-18 that the ITU Secretariat continue to effect improvements to the PP elections online portal to allow for posting and electronic access to campaign material produced by candidates and creation and improvement of the forum where questions can be posted to the candidates and answers accessed by the public.

# 2 Background

The Plenipotentiary Conference (Busan, 2014) approved Recommendation 8 on "Election Procedures" as follows:

*“It is desirable to improve the electoral process of the elected officials in the Union. In this regard, Council should study the issue and recommend to Member States options for implementing new procedures to improve the electoral process of Secretary-General, Deputy Secretary-General and Directors of the Bureaux. Due consideration should be given to several options such as presentations, interactive sessions, live sessions, interviews, submission of questions, through webcasting and remote participation, as well as further enhancing the election portal in the ITU website. Council is invited to initiate these studies in its 2015 session in order to implement these possible improvements.”*

The matter was discussed at the 2016, 2017 and the 2018 regular sessions of Council. In particular, the 2017 Council session instructed the Secretary-General to study the issue of "conducting of hearings of candidates running for elected positions at the 2018 PP" taking into account contributions from Member States and any discussions at the 2016 session.

At the 2018 session of the Council, the Secretary-General submitted a report of the study, taking into account comments by Member States and the Council Working Group on Finance and Human Resources which requested that i) Council adopt the proposed Guidelines on Ethical Aspects of certain campaign activities prior to PP-18; and, ii) examine and forward the Report on conducting a candidates hearing to the PP-18 for consideration.

The Proposal notes that Council has not reached a consensus on the matter and recommends that the Secretary-General should administratively continue effecting improvements to the PP elections online portal to allow for posting and electronic access to campaign material produced by candidates and a forum where questions can be posted to the candidates and answers accessed by the public.

# 3 General views

PP-14 commended the initiatives by various Member States in circulating their candidates' biographies and views on various activities of the Union. In addition, PP-14 formulated several proposals for availing platforms for ventilation of ideas from candidates for various elective positions such as live presentations and interviews by the Council, submission of and response to questions through webcasting and remote participation which would enhance the vibrancy of the elections portal on the ITU website.

The option of candidates presenting their vision and responding to questions during a Council session immediately preceding the PP was discussed in the Council sessions as one possibility for such interaction. This option presents some challenges in an ITU context:

i) it is not all inclusive to the Membership of the Union (The JIU which recommended the adoption of these process all across the UN indicated that it should “… be inclusive of all Member States .…”;

ii) it is not provided for in the General Rules Conferences, Assemblies and Meetings of the Union with regard to elections process;

iii) the formal announcement of staff candidatures is normally delayed until the close of the deadline - 28 days prior to a PP - and hence they would not be eligible to participate in Council debates without the obvious possibilities of conflict of interest;

iv) it would prolong the duration of Council meetings thereby stretching the already constrained finances of the Union;

v) the issue of use of the six official languages of the Union on equal footing would not be ensured, unless there is simultaneous interpretation with attendant additional costs.

In the ICT-age, interaction with candidates seeking various ITU seats need not necessarily be physical or face-to-face for them to be efficacious. ICT-enabled interactive platforms can very well facilitate open, constructive and thorough dialogue with candidates about their vision, experiences and qualifications. They can promote inclusivity and aid Member States in selecting candidates for the various elective offices at much cheaper costs.

# 4 Proposal

AFCP/55A5/1

To adopt an AfCP that: The ITU Secretary-General should administratively continue to effect improvements to the PP elections online portal to allow for posting and electronic access to campaign material produced by candidates and creation and improving the forum where questions can be posted to the candidates and answers accessed by the public.

To suggest the following:

• Participation in hearing session should be optional.

• Hearing sessions to be experimental during PP-22 and on a voluntary basis.

• The session should be conducted in one working language and interpretation costs to be covered by the candidate.

• Hearing sessions should be open to the Membership to attend, and only for ITU Member States with voting rights to participate in the Q&A.

• Questions can be sent to the candidate in advance or asked directly during the session.

• The sessions would be live and webcast and include remote participation.

Such hearing sessions would not be effective if they are held during the Plenipotentiary Conference or within one month prior to PP, since voting decisions will already have been made. Therefore, we agree that they should be conducted during the Council session in the same year of PP, around six to seven months prior to PP.

With regards to the idea that the hearings should be fair, inclusive and open to all candidates, including “unofficial or potential” candidates from the ITU staff, we are not sure how legal this is. Therefore, **we need to assess from a legal point of view the applicability of unofficial candidates joining the official hearing sessions.**

In addition to the hearing sessions, we agree with the proposal by Member States on the possibility to create a dedicated online space for campaign material (PDF, video, etc.) of the candidates, so that stakeholders could access information about the candidates electronically. *Each candidate could have an online forum in which questions from the general public, moderated by the candidate, are asked and responded.*

# B PROPOSAL ON STREAMLINING ITU SECTOR AND PP RESOLUTIONS

# 1 Introduction

At its 2018 session held from 17 to 26 April 2018 in Geneva, the Council examined a contribution from the Russian Federation on the streamlining of ITU Sector and PP resolutions. The Russian Federation points out that the content of some of the resolutions of the three ITU Sectors repeats the PP resolutions, leading to duplications and overlap in the resolutions. In order to avoid the repetitions, therefore, the Russian Federation proposes to simplify the ITU Sector resolutions that repeat the content of PP resolutions by deleting, where possible, such content and adding a simple reference to the corresponding PP resolution. This will make it possible to retain only the relevant provisions specific to the ITU Sectors in the resolutions.

# 2 Proposal

AFCP/55A5/2

To support the principle of streamlining the PP resolutions in order to avoid repetitions while nevertheless making the following recommendations:

• Take into consideration the subject of the resolution and the Sectors addressed.

• Identify the PP resolutions the subject of which is common to all the Sectors as well as the content repeated in the Sector resolutions. The resolutions thus identified will thenceforth be the subject of a unique PP resolution and the Sector resolutions dealing with the same subject will be simplified by simply including the PP reference, without reproducing the content.

• Resolutions dealing with subjects that are specific to a single Sector will be exist as resolutions for the Sector concerned;

To assess the impact of this streamlining on all the texts concerned and the functioning of the Sectors.

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