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INTERNATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATION UNION

COUNCIL SESSIONS

GENEVA, SWITZERLAND

15 MAY 2017

1430 CET

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>> CHAIR: Distinguished colleagues, we can resume and we can open the plenary meeting of this afternoon. And as the first thing, I want to give the welcome to the Vice Chair the Vice Minister of Russian Federation, Mr. Rachid Ismailov. Please, you have the floor.

>> RUSSIAN FEDERATION: Thank you. I'm late. There is no excuse. I hope you can forgive me though. But I will try to make amends. Thank you very much for the trust you have shown in me in electing me. I hope Council will be speedy and efficient.

Thank you.

(Applause).

>> CHAIR: Thank you very much. And now I give the floor to Her Excellency Ursula Owusu‑Ekuful, the Minister of Ghana. Please, Madame, you have the floor.

>> URSULA OWUSU‑EKUFUL: Madame Chair, Your Excellencies, ministers and heads of missions, distinguished counselors, Secretary General of the ITU, Deputy Secretary‑General, Directors of ITU‑D, ITU‑R, and ITU‑T, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen. Thank You, Madame Chair for giving me the floor to make this statement.

We congratulate you on your election to Chair this session of Council. As this is my first opportunity as Minister for Communications, let me begin by conveying to this meeting the warm greetings of the new Government of Ghana led by President Nan Akufo‑Addo who passionately believes information technology is the foremost institution strategically positioned to facilitate global development and world peace.

The president was involved in the negotiations of the World Summit on the Information Society and shares in the commitment to utilize ICT for accelerated development. Indeed as the world community grapples with the challenge of meeting the SDG's within the time schedule set by the UN, he as Co‑Chair of the UNSDG advocates and sees the use of access and safe use of ICT as a key avenue for the empowerment to unleash entrepreneurial energies to create jobs and build a resilient economy.

As part of the delegation to the plenipotentiary Conference in Busan, Korea, I'm glad to see how far the ITU has come with implementation of the far reaching decisions taken in 2014. As a member of the Parliamentary Committee on Communications at the time, I am confident that with the support and encouragement of member countries of Council, the ITU will grow from strength to strength and lead the request for global peace and harmony and bring development to our countries. We often talk about the opportunities that ICTs use for socioeconomic development, but in many of our countries, it remains theoretical.

And the efforts placed on generating statistics and extrapolations remains distant for the majority of our people. It is time to address the realities on the ground and bring along onto the technology discourse the vulnerable and marginalized populations in our communities to feel the tangible benefits that technology brings to their lives.

We cannot do this if the currency for the future, the Internet, is constantly threatened with cyber-attacks. The recent global ransomware attacks sent shivers down the spines of those of us with weaker systems. Even the developed economies were not spared. Though checks in Ghana have not revealed any attacks yet, the government is deploying emergency measures and intense monitoring by the Computer Emergency Response Team, CERT, to protect critical ICT infrastructure. But Ghana will require the assistance of the ITU as this is a critical time when Government is employing technology to improve governance and deepen citizen to citizen engagement that will check corruption and devolve power and authority to communities. Broadband infrastructure has also been extended to the communities and to our homes. We are committed to the digital inclusion in Ghana and are determined to insure that no one will be left behind. In the work of the Council, Ghana will encourage the critical and objective consideration of the agenda items to enable conclusive decisions to be taken to facilitate the work of the ITU for it to play its expected role in bridging the digital divide between the developed and Developing Countries.

The meeting's agenda shows that there is much to do, and with urgency because this is the year for the hosting of the World Telecommunications Development Conference, WTDC to be followed by the plenipotentiary in the UAE. Madame Chair, I assure Council of the support of the Delegation of Ghana in the successful conduct of this meeting. The Delegation of Ghana is aware of the contentious issues to be discussed and it is comforted by your strong leadership that will facilitate consensus building. I salute the leadership of the ITU, the Secretary‑General and the elected Directors along with the hard working staff of the ITU for their untiring efforts. Ghana will continue to play its role to strengthen the position and influence of ITU in global ICT discourse. Madame Chair, we are proud of your leadership, and wish you the strength and God's blessings. Thank you once again for the opportunity.

(Applause).

>> CHAIR: Thank you, Madame. Now, I have the pleasure to welcome Her Excellency Ms. Clarisa Estol, Secretary for Investment Promotion, Republic of Argentina to take the floor, please.

>> ARGENTINA: Thank you very much, Madame Chair, and congratulations upon being elected to this role. I would like to greet all of the ministers, vice ministers and delegates from Member States and all of the authorities of the Council. We are proud to be the location of the next Conference and we have been working very hard on this to insure that it's very successful in order to insure that everyone can benefit from it.

I have a presentation to show to you in Power Point to touch on some points. We also have a video we will show at the end of the session. It's more to do with the tourism aspect and trying to convince everyone to go and show you how beautiful Argentina is and what impressive places we have to visit. So this Conference, the World Telecommunication Development Conference, we understand that it has strategic significance on a national and international level.

For Argentina, in addition to this, it is a milestone to be able to hold this Conference after having hosted it before. In 1994 we hosted the first WTDC, 24 years ago. We believe that it's going to be very important as a Conference after all of this time because there has been evolution in ICTs since that time, and also in the ITU there has been development. The United Nations General Assembly adopted the sustainable development agenda, and, therefore, the motto of the WTDC is ICTs for the SDGs.

United Nations recognizes that ICTs and interconnection at a global level has a great role to play in accelerating various developments in areas of education and energy and many other areas. So that is why the slogan for the Conference is ICTs for SDGs. The topics that we have on development as it relates to ICTs are crucially information and capacity building, information and knowledge, and continuous innovation and creation.

And, therefore, the Telecommunications Development Sector of the ITU has a preponderance and standard role in international cooperation and solidarity. We talk about developing and least Developed Countries however, as regards telecommunications given the exponential growth we have seen in this area, all countries are always running to catch up with developments, and, therefore, it's very important for us to all work together.

The potential of ICTs while we are all aware of what it is and how it has an impact on development and growth of her countries and improved people's quality of life because it contributes to education, the creation of new smart infrastructure, gender equality, productivity and first and foremost to the sustainable development access or pillars of economic development, social integration and environmental protection.

Argentina is going to be the next host and for us it's a very important issue, the issue of ICTs. And as I mentioned before, in the new administration that we have had in the country since 2015, we have created a ministry, Ministry of Telecommunications, which didn't exist before and that's how important ICTs are for us in development. I'm going to tell you a little bit about the situation with regard to ICTs in Argentina. The sector revenues are low and have been decreasing in real terms over the past years due to the economic situation in our country and investment as percentage of revenues has been low if you compare that to other countries, not only across the world as a whole, but in the region. As regards terms of basic service penetration business fixed and mobile, Argentina is doing better than some countries.

We do have to work hard and what we need to do is work on quality and speed. We also have real disparity between various regions of the country given the large space we have to cover and the population sensitivity. Therefore, the Government and our ministry have drawn up a programme which has five priorities. The first one of these is to build a modern high speed broadband infrastructure. The second is to improve member network quality. The third one is to develop a modern regulatory framework. The fourth is to stimulate demand for advanced services and to insure that all of this infrastructure can be used.

And the last one is to eliminate the digital poverty as we call it as the digital divide that exists. Why is WTDC such a major priority for Argentina? Well, it's because it provides a propitious framework for all of our national plans and projects that we are undertaking as this new ministry. It enables our country to get involved with the international communities as many years of somewhat far from it. We want to show that we are a country ready to coordinate and to undertake dialogue.

It also provides a high level meeting space to agree on concrete measures with other countries and it also contributes to the 2030 Agenda defining an Action Plan, focusing on people, the planet, peace, and joint work. The date of the Congress, of the Conference is from the 9th‑20th of October. The venue is the Hilton Hotel and talking to some delegates here who are already familiar with it, it's a very beautiful part of the City of Buenos Aires. There are panels and side events we are proposing, but we stand ready to hear proposals from other Member States. We are also coordinating with the ITU on some of the side events.

We had some planned on the same topics, in fact, one was on gender equality, another side event talks to innovation. In this regard, in Argentina, we have Very innovative resources in our country compared to the rest of the world. We have start-ups to start the day. We will have a talk with academia projects with universities in Argentina, the signing of a regional agreement on theft of mobile phones and an agreement with ISOC and Intercom.

So we hope that you can all come to Argentina. We are waiting for you. We think we have a lot to offer you and we look forward to hosting you. Thank you. Very much.

(Applause).

>> CHAIR: Thank you, and now to continue the discussion about the WTDC, I would like to invite Yoshi Torigoe to introduce C17/56(Rev 2.) Please.

>> DEPUTY SECRETARY-GENERAL: Thank you Madame Chairman, Distinguished Delegates, ladies and gentlemen, on behalf of the Secretary General it is my pleasure to introduce 17/56(Rev 2) report by the director of BDT on the preparation for World Telecommunication Development Conference 2017. Could you start the video by the secretariat?

The purpose of the Document is to inform the Council the status of preparation for WTDC17. Here is the video of regional preparatory meeting and recently held TDAG. Section 2 provides information on place, duration, date, theme, and draft agenda for WTDC 17. In January 2017 Government of Argentina informed ITU that Hilton Hotel Buenos Aires shall be the venue for WTDC 17 which will be held in Buenos Aires, Argentina from 9‑20th October, 2017. On 20th of April, 2017, the host country agreement between the Argentina and ITU was signed.

Section 3 describes the sixth regional preparatory meetings now on the video which was held in Kyrgyzstan for Commonwealth of Independent States CIS, in Rwanda for Africa region, in Sudan for Arab region, in Paraguay for the Americas region and Indonesia for Asia and Pacific and in Lithuania for Europe. A coordination of regional preparatory meetings was held in Geneva last Monday, 8 May to consolidate the outcome into a single development. Telecommunication Advisory Group, TDAG met from Tuesday last week 9‑12 May and compiled the outcomes of RPMs and proposals to TDAG on the preliminary draft of strategic plan, Action Plan, declaration, Rules of Procedure of ITU‑D and streamlining the WTDC resolutions.

Section 4 is about the high level segment at WTDC providing a unique platform for high ranking officials from member states to express views on emerging trends on and matters of strategic importance. Section 5 refers to side events, organized around the WTDC 17 under the theme of ICT for SDGs. Section 6 is about activities planned to celebrate 25th anniversary of ITU‑D. Section 7 outlines sponsorship opportunities it offers to membership. Section 8 invites Council to take note of the WTDC 17 preparations and to earn Doris following recommendation namely policy statement of WTDC 17 should be limited to ministers, vice ministers, T ministers a sis ant minors, cabinet secretaries and speaking time should be limited to three minutes maximum with the understanding that statements will be posted on the website of the Conference. TDAG supported to maintain this policy statement while limiting the speaking time to three minutes.

The Council is invited to note the action taken in preparation for WTDC 17 and to endorse the recommendation in the conclusion. Thank you, Madame Chairman.

>> CHAIR: Thank you, and now we can examine together at this time Document C17/101, please.

>> ARGENTINA: Thank you very much, Madame Chair. With regard to the WTDC 2017, Argentina is submitting this Document as a contribution to optimize the management plan for the event in order to insure that political statements and declarations are aimed at supporting and endorsing the motto of the Conference, ICTs for Sustainable Development Goals. To this end, it is requested that during the Conference emphasis be placed on the action aspect of policy statements so as to insure that they are focused on a successful policy or a project which can be shared in order to insure it can identify best practices.

Since it's a platform which allows us every four years to meet one another and be able to share what our public policy objectives are within our administrations. And in this regard, we might be able to link up with the 2020 objectives and make these related to Sustainable Development Goals. Argentina, therefore, believes it is crucial for these policy statements to be focused on specific results, projects, so as to insure the development of the goals which feedback.

The growth of sustainability, integration and innovation and partnership in order to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. We are also aware that there was a recommendation for PP‑14. So this proposal for policy statements was crucial for the development of the plenipotentiary Conference.

We are aware that many delegates come from all parts of the world, and that it is quite difficult vis‑a‑vis the results that they bring with them, that the resources bring with them for each minister to set forth everything that they have within the policy statements. And, therefore, bearing in mind the time management plan would suggest that these statements be two minutes in length. Therefore, it will be visible that everyone has their space and that nobody is left behind or left out of free policy statements. At the same time, we would request the Secretary‑General and the BDT to offer Member States and sector members a guideline Document in order to formulate their policy statements which can emphasize the view that we all have of ICTs on a global level so that we can quickly and effectively achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Thank you very much.

>> CHAIR: Thank you, Argentina. Now, the floor is open for comments.

 Germany, you have the floor.

>> GERMANY: Thank You, Madame Chair. We have two documents here, the Secretariat's Document, and thank you very much for the proposal in this Document 56, and this Document 101 from the Republic of Argentina. These documents are clearly aimed at optimizing the development of the Conference, however, we do think that we must somehow unify the views that these documents have because in 56 the idea is that ministers, vice ministers and secretaries of state talk whereas in Document 101 we talk about a limit, time limit, which is very short for each intervention. In fact, only two minutes.

We think that two minutes is very short. I do not believe that a minister will be able to express themselves well in only two minutes. However, we do agree that there is a need to optimize the functionality of the Conference, in particular this high level segment. So as not to lose so much time. Which might be dedicated to the normal work of the Conference to establish, for example, the work plan for the development sector. So thank you very much, Madame Chair.

>> CHAIR: Thank you, Germany. Now, Canada, you have the floor.

>> CANADA: Thank you, Madame Chair. After this eloquent intervention by our dear friend from Germany, we only follow their lead and speak Spanish. I would firstly like to thank Argentina for having offered to host this Conference and once again, we would like to reiterate how we as Canada are committed to working together on everything required to insure this Conference is a success. With regard to the proposal, we fully agree with the principle that interventions should be limited to the maximum extent possible in order to insure that first and foremost the Conference can focus on the main topic, which is the structure of the work for the next four years.

And, of course, without prejudice to the right that all ministers and vice ministers and so on have to make statements, however, we would also like to support Argentina's Document insofar as that in addition to policy statement, these statements should be focused on specific projects, best practices. They should be statements which in addition to the policy aspect should have a value for the fundamental objective of the Conference which is to discuss the role of ICTs for the implementation of the objectives we have or goals we have. I don't know whether two or three minutes will be sufficient. What we are certain of is that it's important for the Council help to instruct Member States so that those who are going to make statements can adjust themselves a little bit, not only just to the goal of the conference, but also to the fact that if it's three minutes, for 193 countries S. it would be around consecutive hours of statements. Perhaps it's good to follow along with what Argentina has suggested and, therefore, we support the contribution. Thank you very much.

>> CHAIR: Thank you Canada. U.S., you have the floor.

>> UNITED STATES: Thank you very much, Madame Chair. The United States looks forward to WTDC and thanks the administration of Argentina for hosting this important event. We appreciate the BDT's efforts to prepare for WTDC including the coordination of the regional preparatory meetings. These preparatory efforts facilitate important dialogue between ITU‑D members on topics of importance heading into WTDC 17.

We also support the recommendation that policy statements be focused and limited in duration. Although the United States supports this recommendation, we also recognize the large number of issues that will be under consideration during WTDC and the importance of allocating sufficient time to develop the necessary WTDC outcome documents. Therefore, we urge the BDT to schedule policy statements and any side events in a manner that minimize overlap with the WTDC plenary, committee and working group sessions.

Finally, we understand that the Director of the BDT convened a WTDC 17 preparatory retreat in March of this year. We don't see this reflected in Document 56 and we would kindly request through you that we be provided an update on this important meeting. Thank You, Madame Chair.

>> CHAIR: Thank you. Switzerland, you have the floor.

>> SWITZERLAND: Thank you, Madame Chair. Since it is the first time we are taking the floor, we would like to congratulate you upon being elected to Chair the Council, and we are very happy to be working with you. We would also like to congratulate Mr. Rachid Ismailov to the election to the Vice Chair post. We would like to wish the new management team every success and we would like to express our gratitude to the outgoing Chair, Ms. Zoller, for the excellent work that she did. The aim of this statement by Switzerland is to thank Argentina for the generous initiative to host the World Telecommunication Development Conference in 2017 in Buenos Aires.

Switzerland is certain of the importance of ICTs and telecommunications as a driver for sustainable development. States can benefit greatly from the support of ITU in their aim to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. WTDC 17 will be the occasion to incorporate the tasks rising from the ITU mission including the strategic goals of the sectors in their initiatives both regional and other. And it will enable the host, the various countries to focus on specific actions to be undertaken to achieve the STGs.

We also are going to celebrate 25 years since the BDT was founded and we would like to take this opportunity to thank the BDT and in particular its Director, Mr. Brahima Sanou, for the thoroughness and commitment for which he has undertaken the preparatory process for WTDC 17. We believe this way of proceeding should be reproduced during the following cycles for the 2018 to 2021 cycle. Thank you very much, Madame Chair.

>> CHAIR: Thank you, Switzerland. Spain, you have the floor.

>> SPAIN: Thank you very much, Madame Chair. Firstly, I would like to congratulate you upon your election. With regard to the presentation made by Argentina, we would like to thank the administration of Argentina on the celebration of this very important Conference. As was indicated by previous speakers, we are going to address issues of great importance. With regard to Argentina’s proposal, in our opinion it will be useful for the information in your contribution to be provided in complement to that which has already been provided to Member States through the circular of the BDT. Thank you.

>> CHAIR: Thank you. Now, Mexico, you have the floor.

>> MEXICO: Thank you, Madame Chair. I would also like to congratulate you upon being appointed our Chair. You can count on our support in your work during this Council session and we hope we will achieve positive results for everyone. With regard to the documents which were presented by Argentina and by the BDT, firstly, we would like to thank Argentina for having offered to host this important Conference. It is going home after so many years. We are also very happy to see it held in our region, the Americas, and we also hope that this is going to be a very successful Conference with excellent results and benefits for all of us.

We would also like to thank the BDT for the work that they have done in preparing for this important Conference. We are aware of how much work they have been doing, particularly Mr. Sanou, Ms. Yoshi Torigoe and the whole team that have worked behind them. They have provided us with the necessary information in order to prepare in our regions. We hope we will continue to benefit from your support in the final stage of information.

With regard to Argentina’s proposal, we would like to support the concept of reducing the time for policy statements. In order to focus on concrete issues, we think it's very important for high authorities to, well, it's very complicated for us to reduce our messages. However, we would suggest and encourage everyone to make an effort in order to insure that we can focus on concrete issues and send out a signal which might eventually be reinforced with the side events which are being proposed as part of the Conference.

So we can have a central idea to start with and then starting from that, we can work at the round tables and in side events which are being proposed with the aim of having a space to make the policy statement which will be a very important part of the Conference is still something which allows us to have enough time to look at substantive issues too. So we support the administration of Argentina with regard to their proposal and we would also like to align ourselves with the comments made by other administrations on the reduction in the time allocated for these policy statements. So thank you very much, Madame Chair.

>> CHAIR: Thank you. The floor is to Uganda.

>> UGANDA: Madam Chair, since this is the first time to take the floor we congratulate you for this important task that you are undertaking. We are sure like the previous Chair you are going to meet with a lot of success. We certainly should give you our efforts to that end. We want to appreciate the outgoing Chair for the work that was done that was very good. Madame Chair, I want to come to WTDC preparations and I want to thank and appreciate Argentina for the offer to host and their preparations made as we have seen in the presentation. We also want to thank the BDT for the preparations that are going on along with ITU, we thank them. On the issue of policy statement, Madame Chair, I want to state that we belong to the camp that believes that policy statements have a very important role to play in the work of guiding ITU.

We have discussed this issue and I think this is not the first time we are beginning to observe that less and less time is being given for this important activity, yet there is increasing amount of business to be discussed. We suggest that, Madame Chair, we give this more thought along the lines maybe of running a parallel policy statement time for the ministers so that if we feel we are pressed for time, the work of the committees can begin while the policies go on.

From developing countries, these ministers come to give their ideas and this is the only time they have to do so. And, therefore, giving them two or three minutes is being, is passing on a message they will not want to hear that probably this is not the space for them, and yet ITU world comes there. So Madame Chair, in conclusion, I think we need to rethink this and maybe allow for an arrangement where we have the work of the committees begin maybe on day two or day three of the plenary while the plenary meetings are going on. Thank you, Madame Chair.

>> CHAIR: Now, the floor is to Tunisia.

>> TUNISIA: Thank you, Madam Chair. Firstly, like other speakers, we would like to thank Argentina for organising WTDC2017. We would also like to thank all of the officials of the BDT for all of the efforts that they have been making, particularly during the regional preparatory meetings for this Conference. We would also like to recall how important the WTDC is particularly for Developing Countries.

We would also like to recall that regional initiatives should benefit from greater support. As regards the Arab region, very few initiatives have been implemented within our region. Therefore, we would like to recall how important it is to have Sustainable Development Goals between the United Nations and the WSIS initiatives. These goals which are defined by United Nations organisations, by Member States, should be implemented in a unique context in order to insure that we have palpable results on the ground. These objectives should not just be for show.

Now, as regards measures linked to the organisation of this Conference, we think that granting two minutes speaking time to ministers or those responsible for reading policy statements or other interventions, this approach would not encourage ministers to personally go to Argentina. So we would like to invite reconsideration of this approach as the previous speaker said. For example, we could have a high level round table or ministerial round table of these interventions to be made in parallel to the work of different committees. Thank you.

>> CHAIR: Thank you. Now, we have a list of countries, Burkina Faso, Senegal, Russia and Kuwait. I want to close the interventions. Now, the UAE has the floor. Also Paraguay.

>> UNITED ARAB EMIRATES: Thank you, Madame Chair. We share the view expressed by other delegations and we would like to thank the Argentine Republic for hosting the WTDC. We are fully aware of the various challenges which arise. The UAE hosted WTDC 14 and we do understand the challenges faced by the organising country. We wish Argentina every success for the next WTDC. Coming on now to the general policy statement, these are an essential part of our Conference. The time allocated is two minutes per statement. We believe this is not sufficiently long. What we need to three to five minutes per statement, but no more than five minutes.

Some delegations which are members of this Council have already made this point as for holding a ministerial round table, this is an issue which was already addressed in the Telecommunication Development Advisory Group and Director Sanou reminded us that the host country agreement is already signed and does not provide for the organisation of a ministerial round table or a round table for heads of delegations. This issue can be examined at forthcoming ITU conferences. Ministers and heads of delegations generally participate in the work of the first and maybe the second day. Programs in future, we should discuss organising a ministerial meeting so that ministers can exchange views and opinions. Moreover, let me congratulate Mr. Rachid Ismailov to vice chair for this Council session. I wish him all success in his work. Thank you.

>> CHAIR: Thank you. Now, the floor goes to Burkina Faso.

>> BURKINA FASO: Thank you very much, Madame Chair. Madame, like other delegations, Burkina Faso is very happy that WTDC is going to be held and we congratulate Argentina on all its work in preparation for this event. Our delegation, Madame Chair, would like there to be a time limit from three to five minutes for the general policy statements. We thank BDT for the organisation of the 25th anniversary of the sector celebrations.

We would like to have as much information as possible on the facilitation mechanisms for entry Visas for Argentina. Thank you.

>> CHAIR: Thank you. Now, the floor is to Russia.

>> RUSSIAN FEDERATION: Thank you, Madame Chair. I shall be brief. We would like to thank the administration of Argentina for their kind invitation and commend efforts made by the Director and all staff of BDT. We support the current practice for policy statements to be made at plenaries, especially if there are high level leadership figures present.

The time can be limited, but it should be no less than three minutes. The full version should be available online for these policy statements. Thank you.

>> CHAIR: Thank you. And the floor is to Senegal.

>> SENEGAL: Thank you, Madame Chair. We thank BDT for the report submitted to us and we specially congratulate Mr. Ramos Sanou, the Director and the entire team for the support to countries in preparation for this World Telecommunication Development Conference.

As to Argentina, we wish Argentina every success in this undertaking and we thank Argentina for hosting WTDC 17. As for general policy statements, we see these as an opportunity for high level officials, especially ministers to describe their telecommunication development policies. BDT's work will, I am sure, enable us to achieve the SDGs, and if we limit policy statements to less than three minutes, that will not be going in the same way. This is a solemn time when ministers can describe their policies. We think they should be allocated between three and five minutes to do this.

>> CHAIR: Thank you, Paraguay, you have the floor.

>> PARAGUAY: Thank you, Madame Chair. Like previous speakers, I would like to congratulate you upon your election. I would like to thank Argentina also for being the host of the next Conference. And I'm going to put into practice what Argentina is proposing. I'm going to be very brief. We support Argentina's proposal. Thank you, Madame Chair.

>> CHAIR: Thank you, Nigeria, you have the floor.

>> NIGERIA: Thank You, Madame Chair. Since this is our first time taking the floor, we would like to join our colleagues in congratulating you on your appointment as the Chair of this Council. And we would like to let you know that Nigeria will accord you all of the maximum support and cooperation needed in order for this particular Conference or meeting to succeed. Madame Chair, we also want to thank Argentina for accepting to host the WTDC and we believe that the preparation Argentina has put for this particular Conference will go a long way in making sure that we have a successful and fruitful deliberation at the Conference. With respect to the issue of policy statements by ministers, Madame Chair, we would like to let our colleagues know that this particular policy statement made at the WTDC, that this is the only platform that our ministers have to share ideas and to learn from each other in order to be able to advance the ICT development in the various administrations.

And so we will not like the time given to the ministers to be too short whereby they will not be able to bring forth some of their experiences for their colleagues to tap from their various knowledge and so Madame Chair, we would like to suggest that the time limit be fixed not to exceed five minutes, but it could be less than five minutes as the case may be. Any minister that is able to summarize his statement to less than five minutes, so be it, but it shouldn't be more than five minutes.

And so we will also like to join our colleagues to congratulate and to also thank the BDT for the preparatory processes that have gone in insuring that we are able to have a successful WTDC and we believe that this preparatory process is including the original preparations will go a long way in insuring that we have a fruitful deliberation at the WTDC. Once more, Madame Chair, I want to thank you and I want to wish you all of the best as you manage the affairs of this meeting. Thank you.

>> CHAIR: Thank you. Now, we have four other requests so I, please, be brief. Canada, you have the floor.

>> CANADA: I thank you very much and I apologize for taking the floor again. Just to reiterate, Madame Chair that notwithstanding the importance of having high policy statements, we always have to remember what the Conference is about, which it is about development. We, of course, believe that there is a necessary space for high level authorities to come to the Conference and make policy statements. But, again, an ideal Conference for this is the plenipotentiary Conference, but having said that, Madam Chair, at WTDC it would also be useful in thinking of policy statements not only coming from high level authorities because there is also the issue of leadership, which is not necessarily the same thing as authority.

It would be very useful to contemplate that part of those statements be made by grassroots organisations, by the people to which the Conference is at the end oriented to. Again, we welcome the opportunity to continue working with all, but we reiterate our support for the proposal made by our friends from Argentina. Thank you.

>> CHAIR: Thank you. Algeria, you have the floor.

>> ALGERIA: Thank you, Madame Chair. First of all, I would like to congratulate you for being elected to the Chairmanship for the Council of 2017. We would like to encourage you and wish you good luck. We would like to thank Argentina for hosting WTDC. I support everything that has been said by my colleagues before me. Let's be quite honest, two minutes is too short in order to deliver a speech. We propose that we should give at least five minutes to everybody, thank you.

>> CHAIR: Thank you. Mali, you have the floor.

>> MALI: Thank you, Madame Chair. We would like to thank you and congratulate you on your election to the Chair of Council. Congratulations go also to your Vice Chair, Mr. Rachid Ismailov. We support the contribution from Argentina and the strong registrations contained therein. In the last part of this contribution, Argentina requests general Secretariat and ITU development Bureau to provide Member States and sector members with a Document to guide them in drawing up their policy statements limiting them to highlighting policies with concrete results in regard to telecommunications ICT development taking as a beacon the vision, targets and purposes identified in the connect 2020 agenda.

Now, we would like the general Secretariat to address this last part of the contribution from Argentina and give us their view of it.

>> CHAIR: Thank you, Australia, you have the floor.

>> AUSTRALIA: Thank you, Chair. Australia would also like to join others in congratulating you for your election to your role and to Mr. Rachid Ismailov to his election as Vice Chair. We would also like to acknowledge the excellent work of the BDT and the leadership after Mr. Sanou in the preparations for this very important Conference at the end of the year and to thank Argentina for putting up their hand to host.

We note that in their contribution, Argentina had given quite a bit of thought to what would make a successful WTDC and we appreciate that. We note that they have said that WTDC 14 in fact there wasn't enough time for everybody who wanted to make a statement to do so. And we think that that would be unfortunate. So for that reason, we would like to support the proposal from Argentina in terms of the length of statements as well as the request for the template to guide these high level policy statements.

Thank you, Chair.

>> CHAIR: Thank you, Australia. Now, we have the last run one, Kuwait, please, be brief.

>> KUWAIT: Thank you, Madame Chair. At the outset I would like to congratulate you for being elected Chair lady for Council 2017. We would like to thank Mr. Sanou and the BDT because they have made lots of efforts in order to make a real success of WTDC to be held in Argentina. We would like to seize the opportunity to thank Argentina for hosting this forth coming Conference. We would like to join all of our predecessors. We think two minutes is too short in order to make a particular declaration.

We would like the topic to be sorted and discussed so that every country can make a statement and talk about their projects in front of this Conference. Thank you.

>> CHAIR: Thank you. Now, we’ll hear a different point of view about the time limit. So I can suggest that to choose three to five but no more than five minutes, and I invite the Secretary General to prepare the guideline about this. And now Mr. Sanou, there is a question from USA. You can give the answer, please.

>> RAMOS SANOU: Thank you, very much, Madame Chair. I know that the Secretary‑General will speak on behalf of the Secretariat to thank Argentina, but not easy for me to start without thanking Argentina for the great work we have been doing together to prepare the WTDC. Of course, thank you all for your kind words in the preparation process. Coming back to the question of the honorable delegate of U.S.A., let me put it this way. When you are in this kind of preparatory process, sometimes you use a lot of means to build consensus. And when I convey this retreat, it was a retreat where I invited people on their individual capacity.

We came together with the Secretariat of BDT to try to brain storm and since they will present either their country or their organisation, making a report in these countries may have created some confusion in the preparatory process. But what I did actually at the end of the brain storming retreat, I prepared what I called the take away of the Director. I sent it back to them to use as they deem appropriate in the preparatory process so this is why you do not see it in the report we prepared, the official report. We did the same last Saturday with Study Group 1 and 2 management team where we have brain storming, but it didn't go beyond that. If it goes beyond that we should have legitimacy for this or this kind of report and they are not just brain storming to create consensus. So this is what I can say. I hope this clarifies the issue. Thank you very much.

>> CHAIR: Thank you, Mr. Sanou. I would like to pass the floor to Argentina for the presentation of the video.

We are going to present the video that was provided to us by the Ministry of Tourism of Argentina and is specifically for the WTDC so to shows as you will see most of the geographic areas of Argentina and they are quite different, again, because of the size of our country, and, again, I'm inviting all of you to take advantage of this opportunity and not only to get to know Buenos Aires but the rest of the country.

Can you stop the video, please, without sound? It is on the sound now. Can you go from the start now with the sound? (Music).

(Applause).

>> CHAIR: Thank you Argentina for the video. And now the floor is for the SG, please.

>> HOULIN ZHAO: Thank you, Madame Chair, I think after this wonderful video, anyone excited to go to Argentina? We would love to come to Argentina to see this beautiful country. But I'm afraid we will not have much time to see all of those things we see from here. Dear colleagues, ladies and gentlemen, good afternoon, I would like to take this opportunity to express my personal thanks to Argentina, and in particular to Madame Clarissa Estol for her personal efforts to progress the preparation of our WTDC 2017. And I noted that in the beginning of is this year, or even earlier, second half of last year she has spared no effort to try to help us to get everything ready that we can have success for WTDC 17 held in Argentina. And, of course, we noted that this is 23 years after the first WTDC held in Argentina, but I also note that it is 23 years we never get a chance to come back to the region not only for Argentina but also for the region we have WTDC and after United Nations approve of SDG goals in 2015, this is, I think, one of the biggest gatherings of telecom families to look at the issues of next development of ICT in the world.

We need such kind of Conference to come together to discuss our strategic plan and Action Plans to help the world be more connected. And we talked about this time limit. I think that we will be brief not because Argentina doesn't want to give time to our minister to speak, but also that it will make our Conference mostly and be fair to everybody and they made such a proposal, but on the other hand it is not easy. I can tell you yesterday afternoon in Beijing, I joined a high level dialogue. I was invited towards the end of the panel to speak and I was pushed several times by the organizers to cut my speech from four minutes to two minutes.

Originally, I was offered four minutes. At the coffee break they reconfirmed I could have four minutes but then you see in the end it seems not to be possible. If everyone continue with four minutes, then we may not have a chance to speak. So finally, so we are pushed to have two minutes, and if you look at my speech, you will not recognize speech because I crossed the words. But anyhow, I think that it's also very important to keep in mind that this is a highest level Conference in the world to talk about telecom development for next four years, even longer time.

And we needed to get enough time for our Conference to make a progress. Therefore, the time is really precious. So I would very much appreciate that if our members could revise their maturations to keep in mind that we will publish the statement on line and offer many other opportunities to invite our ministers to express their opinions or even have some dialogue and try to have some limit in the mind suggesting useful guidelines. So I would urge you to follow the decision by our Chair of the Council, but on the other hand, but to keep the intervention as short as possible. And I think that we will finally enjoy the presence of our ministers at our WTDC.

Of course, take this opportunity also to appreciate the administrative team from Argentina and also our team from ITU for their good cooperation over the last few months to make the preparations ready for the host country agreement, ready for signature. Recently I have honour to sign that together with Argentina Ambassador on this important host country agreement.

So ladies and gentlemen, once more again, I would like to invite you to join us at WTDC 2017 at Argentina and I can tell you that it’s a beautiful time for Argentina. I think it is springtime. I was there last time 2013 in August. I ‑‑ actually it was winter. I took picture and sent this to Geneva, and that moment the quality was, quality of the network seems to be not that good. I also very much appreciated the work item presented by Madame Clarisa Estol that they were to improve the quality of network services. This time when you see some beautiful pictures, I'm pretty sure you will send the pictures to your home to share that with them, but that moment when I sent my photo I took from the street, it took me two hours for my office to receive my photo.

Thank you very much, Madame.

>> CHAIR: Thank you, Mr. Houlin Zhao. Now, as records Document 17/50C(Rev 2) I will invite the Council to note the action taken in preparation for WTDC 17 and endorse the recommendation of policy statement from three to five minutes maximum with the understanding that the full statement will be posted on the website of the Conference. And additionally, the Secretariat has requested to produce a Document that establishes the guidelines to produce policy statement. Okay. The actions are noted and the Document is endorsed.

And now we can go to the C17/84(Rev 1). I'm sorry. The floor is for Argentina. Please.

>> ARGENTINA: I wanted to stress that the proposal was not only with respect to timing, but also with respect to the focus on the theme. So both issues were important, and I think most people got caught up in discussing whether it's two minutes or three minutes or five minutes and the content is also important for us.

>> CHAIR: We can add this amendment from Argentina often the focus of the themes. Now, we can go to the Document 841 and today we have discussed about this theme and I understand that there was some discussion after the meeting of this morning and I would like to propose that in a doc group with the Secretariat and the interested parties to further consider the point raised by the Director. Then we can go to the telecom world event C17 and 19 and I invite the Secretariat, Mr. Liu to present the report. You have the floor.

 Russia.

>> RUSSIAN FEDERATION: Thank you, Madame Chair. We would be very happy to work on this group together with all colleagues interested. I would ask everyone who is interested in the work of this group to come up to me and give me their contact details. Thank you.

>> Thank You, Madame Chair, ladies and gentlemen, Distinguished Delegates it is my pleasure to produce Document C17/19. This Document summarizes ITU Telecom 2016 and outlines our plan for 2017 and the future events. We would like to express our sincere appreciation to the different entities and the individuals who helped us create a successful 2016 event. Let me begin by thanking ITU Secretary‑General and elected officials for their invaluable vision, support and guidance.

They act as global Ambassadors for the event, helping us to reach a high level audience. It is thanks to their support that the event provided such an influential international platform. Our sincere thanks goes to the royal Thai Government for being the wonderful host and being so closely involved in all aspects of the event especially the Ministry of Digital Economy and Society and BTC. We were deeply honored to welcome her royal highness the prince says and His Excellency, the Prime Minister, to formally open the event. We would also like to thank the Member States and sector members for their past and continued support.

Our special thanks go to members who participated with national Parliaments and or sponsorships as exhibitors, Forum delegates and exhibition visitors. ITU Bureaus and the departments of the general Secretariat provided strong support for the event. The Forum programme was developed and curated in close collaboration with ITUs SPM, and the Bureaus were actively engaged in the event.

We thank them wholeheartedly for their support in all aspects of planning, promotion, and execution of the event. My sincere thanks also go to ITU Telecom staff who worked hard to deliver a memorable 2016 event. They have continued to promote and support the event's reform and work to augment revenues. ITU Telecom staff are now busy working towards the 2017 event and are here during Council ready to greet delegates and promote the event to you. Without all of this outstanding support, the event would not have been such a success.

Selected world 2016 highlights, the event continued to roll and counted over 8800 participants from 128 countries. There were 337 leaders from public and private sectors, 173 speakers, 250 exhibitors including 107 exhibiting SMEs, 60 partners and Ponciers and 187 media from 12 countries. ITU Telecom World 16 continued with the reform instigated in 2015 moving forward becoming the international platform or services for ICT SMEs.

The exhibition includes leading ICT countries and SMEs from across the world including a number of first‑time participants. The Forum and leadership summit brought together key stakeholders including heads of states and Government, policy makers, regulators, C level executives, industrial experts, investors, SMEs and innovators. They explored key ICT topics under the collaborating in the digital theme. They even also benefited from major involvement from all ITU. This covered all expenses of the event including creating an agenda and organising a number of key side events spanning ITU's key work areas.

We were very pleased that the event provided opportunity for ITU to partner with other organisations to organize joint sessions. We were also very pleased that the event provided the networking opportunities to connect stakeholders together and enable a number of key agreements to be formally concluded. 2016 was the second successful year for the ITU Telecom World awards. This recognized excellence and innovation and ICT solutions with social impacts as well as leveraging ITU's creatability.

ITU 2017 and beyond. ITU Telecom World 17 takes place from 25th‑28th of September in Busan, Republic of Korea. It will build on successful elements of the 2016 event continuing the momentum and the focusing on digital transformation and the opportunities present. New elements for 2017 include a special ministerial programme, a comprehensive programme for SMEs, an enhanced ITU Telecom World awards programme, smart AI, smart banking and smart city, enhanced success of sponsorships and further benefits for the host country.

We will be working closely with the host country to set up a business match making activities and to incorporate host country events into ours. For subsequent events, a circular letter was issued at the end of 2016 inviting Member States to submit a proposal to host ITU Telecom World 2018 or 19. We are pleased to note that we have already received bids for this event and proposals have been evaluated. The Council is invited to note this report. Thank you very much, Madame Chair.

>> CHAIR: Thank you, Mr. Liu. And the floor is open for any comments, please. Thailand you have the floor.

>> THAILAND: Thank you, mad Daniel Chair, the Thai delegation would like to thank the ITU Secretariat for the informative report and would like to extend our sincere thanks to the ITU for working very hard with us to make this event successful. Let me take this opportunity to express our deep appreciation for the support and participation in the event from numerous Governments, businesses, international organisations and other stakeholders joining the UN in Bangkok last year.

We had the opportunity to work on the large number of participants. It is from the key stakeholder or ‑‑ and at the Forums we are also delighted by the national participation of 17 countries including some with the first time participation. Thailand is in full support of ITU to move toward becoming an international platform providing services for SME in the digital sector. In this connection, in this connection, the telecom world that we hosted last year was focused on fostering the close up SME in the digital ecosystem.

If was highlighted by the range of activity targeted SMEs. More than 100 exhibiting SMEs we also commend the ITU for extending the rich telecom award given at this event to recognize excellent innovation in ICT solution invented by SMEs. We would like to encourage ITU to continue the momentum and offering more services to SMEs in the upcoming telecom world events. To conclude my intervention, Thailand would like to express our appreciation to the Republic of Korea for inviting the telecom world 2017 to be held in Busan, we have no doubt that Argentina will make it a success and Thailand will do our best to support the event. Thank you.

>> CHAIR: Thank you, Philippines, you have the floor.

>> PHILIPPINES: Thank you, Madame Chair. So since this is the Philippines speaking the Philippines joins with the rest of the ITU Member States as congratulating you as the new Chair of the Council and further congratulates the Kingdom of Thailand for the success and support and commitment to ITU Telecom 2016. The Thai Government was closely involved in all aspects of the event, in particular the Ministry of Digital Economy and Society, international broadcasting and telecommunications commission or in BTC in insuring the suction says of the event ‑‑

The Philippines further notes that the ITU Telecom World will take place in Busan, Republic of Korea, and the Philippines looks forward to putting up its national pavilion in that event. Thank you, Madame Chair.

>> CHAIR: We have no other comments to the Document C17/19 is noted. And now his excellence Mr. Kyong‑Lim Choi and Permanent Representative of the permanent of Republic of Korea is invited to the stage.

>> REPUBLIC OF KOREA: Counselors, colleagues, we have some opportunity to have this Document to be signed, now, we are going to sign this host country agreement for telecom 2017. So just to give us a few minutes to sign that one. And then we will invite our Excellency Ambassador to give us some words.

The Document was already signed by His Excellency Minister himself and also signed by the mayor of Busan. So I just add my own signature today. So now, let me invite Excellency Ambassador to give us some messages.

>> KYONG‑LIM CHOI: Thank you very much. Madame Chairperson, and Secretary‑General Houlin Zhao and the Distinguished Delegates, I would like to express our sincere gratitude to the ITU Secretariat and Secretary‑General for the high work and for the success of ITU Telecom World 2017 which Korea will host in Busan. ITU Telecom World has always served as an excellent opportunity to help people learn about promising ICT technologies and trends.

Its informative Forums have also contributed to the ICT development, and now this transforming to support business through working with participation, working for the participation of SMEs and startups with a strong potential. At this year's telecom world you will be able to have firsthand experience of emerging converging services along with next generation technologies such as 5G, IoT, and AI. Also we are preparing side events such as the ICT ministerial Forum between Korea and Latin American and Caribbean countries. The Korea science and ICT Conference and the K ICT week.

The Korean Government and Busan metropolitan city will put in the best collaborative efforts to insure the success of the telecom world 2017. I would like to invite all of the distinguished guests, Government officials, ICT experts and business leaders here today to take part in the telecom world 2017. I will look forward to seeing all of you again in September in Busan. Thank you very much.

(Applause).

>> Thank you very much, Madame Chair, allow me to say a few words. Honorable guests, ladies and gentlemen, on behalf of ITU I would like to express my most sincere gratitude to the Government of the Republic of Korea. His Excellency Mr. Choi Yanghee, Minister of Science at future planning, his team at MSIP and federal ministers. His Excellency Mr. Suh Byung‑soo, Mayor of Busan major city and your excellency Mr. Cho Tae‑yul, Ambassador to the Permanent Mission in Geneva for hosting ITU Telecom World 2017 and bringing successful conclusion to the memorandum of agreement of the event to be held in Busan.

Busan is a famous city for ITU, but it's not only a potential Conference city, but it's also pioneering smart city, world leading large scale test bed for Internet of Things, infrastructure and services designed to improve efficiency, quality of life and sustainability with urban environment. It's proven track record in successfully hosting major ITU events from ITU Telecom Asia 2004 to the plenipotentiary Conference in 2014 and its status as a world reference and smart cities make Busan the ideal venue for ITU Telecom World 2017 which we are focused on marriage digital transformation, global opportunity.

This will be reflected as well to ITU Telecom World 2017. In the national cooperative leader, SMEs entering the Forum. All three ITU sectors will also showcase the activities related to leadership of their members and this is the first time three sectors will all organize their own areas. ITU‑T is a smart ABC programme. We will highlight smart banking and cities. We are exhibiting 5G solutions, satellite and future broadcasting options as well as celebrating the 90th anniversary of its Study Groups.

And ITU‑T will explore the importance of ICTs in meeting the SDGs. To date 20 ICT industry leaders have confirmed their personal participation including eleven honorable ministers, 18 Member States have signed up to the event or confirmed their participation with national pavilions or sponsorships which is heard from Philippine delegation. Philippines will also come to participate in this event with their national pavilions.

I think that the number should be changed to 19 now. And major entities participating in the Forum will include World Maker Forum. ITD, as you just heard from our honorable Secretariat of Thailand, she considered that this event is very, very important and also quite successful so she would encourage us to continue. We heard from our Ambassador that ITU's effort to change the focus from telecom exhibition of services now to focus on supporting SMEs is absolutely important for us.

So it's our dream that in the future, anyone who thinks about ICT SMEs startup platform, international platform, they should naturally think about ITU's event like this telecom. And, of course, here, ITU Council will discuss further what we should do with ITU telecom and suggestions that we might need to change the name telecom because that may not reflect the real situation. But anyhow, that season quite important for us, so I would like to keep this platform, and I would like you to support us, and I think that with your support, we can make this event sustainable and develop it further and further.

So I would like to take this opportunity to encourage all ITU members present here today to participate in ITU Telecom World 2017 and take advantage of this unique opportunity to speak and network for new partnerships and explore smart technologies. So we look forward to working closely with the Government of Korea, MSIP, and, of course, yourself, the City of Busan, the design and delivery of all elements of this year's event including content in the Forum debates.

I wish ITU Telecom World 2017 every success and I look forward to seeing you in Busan. Having said this, I would like to take this opportunity to express sincere appreciation to the Thai administration for their wonderful support and organisation off our Telecom 2016. It's quite unique that there is not only the Government starting from a Prime Minister, but also the royal family and all of the teams that there are to support our Telecom 2016.

I think that that is the reason why we have such a wonderful result to be reported to you today. So once more again, I thank permanent Secretariat for her personal presentation of message from Thai Government, and I'm looking further to further cooperation from Thai Government for another event possibly. So ladies and gentlemen, this is my short message to deliver on World Telecom 2017 and Telecom 2016. Thank you very much. Now, I see that they have me hand over one copy to Excellency Korean Ambassador and they should have photo. So just allow me a few seconds.

 Thank you very much.

(Applause).

>> CHAIR: Thank you very much. And now I will propose to break for a coffee kindly offered by the Republic of Korea. We can resume in 15 minutes. Thank you.

(Coffee break).

>> CHAIR: Please, dear colleagues, we can resume. We can resume this session and I will give the floor to the Delegation of Korea, please. Could you close the doors, please? Thank you. So we can resume the plenary meeting, and I will give the floor to Korea for a short presentation. And I will want to thank Korea for the coffee break. Thank you.

>> REPUBLIC OF KOREA: Thank you, Madame Chair. Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen, Distinguished Delegates. I hope you enjoyed the coffee break from Korea Government. It is my pleasure to present ITU Telecom World 2017 on behalf of Busan metropolitan city, Government of Korea.

>> CHAIR: For the technician, can you go with the Power Point, please?

>> REPUBLIC OF KOREA: Thank you, Madame Chair. Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen, Distinguished Delegates. I hope you enjoyed the coffee break from Korean Government. It is my pleasure to present ITU Telecom World 2017 on behalf of Busan metropolitan city Government of Korea. As announced and notified by ITU the event is to take place from 25th September to 28th September in Busan Republic of Korea. Thanks to all ITU members, arrangement is finalized and all of the preparations are going well.

The theme for this year is Smart Digital Transformation, Global Opportunity, and Forum will be organized under the three pillars of Transforming the ICT Sector, Shaping Smart Industries and Visitor First. Also the Smart ABC programme by standardizations Bureau of ITU will take place in conjunction of Telecom World.

Especially for this year, we are preparing business match making programme which will be very beneficial opportunities for ICT companies and SMEs. For the venue, Busan is the second largest city in Korea, and famous for its Convention industry and have successfully hosted Telecom World Asia 2004 and PP‑14. So they expect to hold 2017 excellently due to wide experience. Also, host city Busan is a very attractive city. In Telecom World 2017 host country prepares not only for Forum and exhibition but also planning to offer special tour programs for participants, especially please enjoy smart city excursion in Busan which will be very unique experience.

This was the summary of the Telecom World 2017. Most of the detailed information you may require such as flight, accommodation, programme, will be published on telecom website at the end of May and June. We will look forward to greeting you all in Busan. Thank you.

>> CHAIR: Thank you, Korea. And now we can pass to the other issue that is the Union headquarters premises, and I invite the Deputy Secretary‑General Mr. Johnson to present C17/7. You have the floor.

>> DEPUTY SECRETARY‑GENERAL: Good afternoon, everyone. On behalf of the Secretary‑General, it is my pleasure to present C17/7 Report on the progress of the Union's headquarters premises Varembe 2 project: Status and the detailed specification. So the Document reports on the progress that's been made since Council 2016, and section one provides the background to the decision that Council took last year including on the financing. Section 2 reports on the first loan transfer 1 million Swiss francs applied for just after last year’s Council and approved by the Swiss Parliament December 2016 and is available to ITU.

Section 3 reports on the two rounds, international, architectural competition with anonymous proposals. The first round closed on the 5th of May, and we had 92 paid registrations received from architects from 15 different countries. So that's a very good result. The jury that will look at the proposals that will come from these registrants will meet on the 27th‑29th of June, so three days to look at all of the proposals.

Section 4 of the Document reports on the management and the governance for the project. And the Member States Advisory Group Chairman also has a report to present to Council that's in Document 99. The report on the detail specification for the building is provided in section 5. That's the overall vision, and section 6, more detailed description of the spaces in the new building. And this was developed by a Secretariat team which includes all of the three Bureaus and all of the general Secretariat departments, and also the staff counsel. So Council is invited to take note of this report. Thank you, Madame Chair.

>> CHAIR: Thank you, Mr. Johnson. And now I invite the representative of MSAG to present Document C17/99, please?

>> MEMBER STATES ADVISORY GROUP: Thank you, Madame Chair. On behalf of the Advisory Group it is my pleasure to present our summary report of the work so far done in the group. I remind that in the Council last year 2016 according to decision 588, among others, it was decided to establish Member States Advisory Group on the headquarters premises project, and the abbreviation is MSAG.

We should provide independent and impartial advice on the project to the Council and to the Secretary‑General. Madame Chair, the membership was determined through regional coordination. At present we have members from Asia, Eastern Europe and Northern Asia and from the Arab state and, of course, myself from Western Europe. Unfortunately for the time being, we do not have a representative of the Americas, and we do not have a representative of Africa.

Maybe the regional organisations of this continent could take the chance during one of the preparatory meetings for WTDC or for plenypots to determine a candidate for these vacant posts in the group. So far, Madame Chair, we had two meetings, two physical meetings on the 13th December last year and 11 April this year. The physical meetings take place in Geneva. For those regions that do not have a representative yet, it may also be an option to choose somebody from a mission here in Geneva.

With regard to the meetings, the physical meetings I like to remark that these meetings cannot always be organized in line with the project schedule, so we work a lot among each other, the members of the group, and with the Secretariat online or by email. I forget to mention the members, by the way, Japan, Russian Federation and United Arab Emirates and myself.

We did by correspondence and in the physical meetings revise a number of documents. The project charter, risk management plan, the requirements which were, are also published in the Document just presented by the Deputy Secretary‑General, and the competition Document. And in addition the set of questions and answers which is always part of a tender of the competition.

The group gave several advices or recommendations to the Secretariat with regard to organisation of the work, to the organisation of the competition, and specific remarks with regard to the documents I mentioned previously. Almost all of these recommendations were taken into account by the Secretariat. The Deputy Secretary‑General already mentioned that the architectural competition is ongoing. The figures I have is that we have about more than 50 potential competitors from Switzerland and about 40 from foreign countries.

And as an issue that is of great concern is the project management. We discussed at our last physical meeting a proposal of IMAG. IMAG proposed to consider, to contract after a tender after competition professional project management with large, with experience in large construction projects. So for the time being, at that time we thought it's at this point in time unnecessary because we have already a very large structure in the project, large governance structure, and if we include another layer, it will become more complicated, but I must admit that meanwhile, after some informal consultations, we will review our opinion probably during our next meeting which is planned in parallel within the two weeks Council Working Group cluster in September.

We also in one of our meetings amended slightly our terms of reference in order to take on board the declaration that the members of the group are supposed to fill out a declaration for the absence of personal interests, and we also took into account that some members of the group want to be accompanied by advisers which is appropriate because we are talking about partly in the future, in fact technical, very specific technical issues where we need to be accompanied by an adviser.

This revised in terms of reference Annexed in Annex 1 to this Document 99. Madame Chair, the Council is invited to take note of this report and provide any further guidance as appropriate. Thank you very much.

>> CHAIR: Thank you. Now, I will invite the Secretariat, Mr. Maniewicz to present Paragraph 1 of C17/111, please.

>> DEPUTY SECRETARY‑GENERAL: Thank you, Madame Chair. Distinguished counselors, as I did this morning, I will report on the various recommendations from the RAG that deal with the Council agenda items. In this particular case of the new building, the RAG noted that in the ITU‑R Study Group activities report, the increasing logistical challenges related to room availability in view of the increasing number of participants to ITU‑R Study Group meetings.

So now the meetings are all of groups of over 100 participants which puts a challenge in the current configuration of meeting rooms in ITU. So just in case that in the new building it is considered to keep the current number and size of rooms as we currently have in the ITU to call the attention of the Council that this will cause the same type of problem. So the idea is to try to take advantage of the new building to have more adequate‑sized rooms for these meetings in order to insure availability of rooms who are core to statutory ITU activities. Thank you, Madame Chair.

>> CHAIR: Thank you. Now, the floor is open for any comments. Argentina, you have the floor.

>> ARGENTINA: Yes, it's not about this point. It was actually about something we discussed earlier because I guess that what we heard from the, our proposal of the declarations, the ministerial declarations being of two minutes, what we heard a lot was people saying that they would be more comfortable with three to five. So I think that a good compromise could be three minutes. And I guess most of the people said that, unless I didn't hear correctly, so I guess that the five minutes that was decided upon is not, is not a compromise. It's actually going to one of the extremes. So I'm willing, I'm making the proposal to reconsider that, make it three minutes, again, stress the focus on the theme, and also that it would be restricted to ministers and vice ministers.

>> CHAIR: Well, if you agreed now, we can conclude this item and then we can come back. Okay. So as regards to this item, France, you have the floor.

>> FRANCE: Thank you, Madame Chair. At the outset, I would like to warmly congratulate you on your election. We would also like to congratulate the Vice Chairs and the outgoing Chair for the excellent work they have done. I would like to briefly intervene with regard to the 2016 Council decision pertaining to this issue. We believe this allows the ITU to envisage its future in Geneva with clear budget frameworks. We also note the MSAG's decision of work which will allow to follow closely the functioning of this project. Thank you very much.

>> CHAIR: Thank you. Mexico. You have the floor.

>> MEXICO: Thank you, Madame Chair. With regard to the Paragraph that Mr. Maniewcz cited and the consideration of having enough space to be able to host the meetings which in some cases have become too popular, we welcome his recommendation. We think it's a good proposal, especially since at the moment the lack of such spaces or sufficient space in order to be able to hold these meetings means that we are obliged to seek other spaces which also has a direct impact on the budget. We have to rent spaces to be able to hold these meetings.

Therefore, we think that it's very important for this recommendation to be considered. We think that the MSAG and those responsible for this project need to take it into consideration. In this way, it will really be a big impact that this project could have on budgetary savings. Thank you.

>> CHAIR: Now, Mr. Johnson, you have the floor.

>> DEPUTY SECRETARY‑GENERAL: I would just like to refer to the concern from the RAG with regard to Conference rooms. You see in Document 7 the Conference rooms that we have identified as being necessary are listed there including a larger new pop off room, a room for 230 seats, 100 seats and then 440 seat rooms, one 20 seat room and six 16 seat rooms, board room styles, also that the new pop off room would be devisable into two, so that gives greater option.

But in addition to this, in the Document that was put out for the competition, we included an option for 1,000 square meters extra space which could be converted into Conference rooms, exhibition area or museum. So we are hoping that when we see the proposals from the architects they will be able to include this additional 1,000 square meters for Conference rooms. That equates to all of the Conference rooms currently in Mumbrio. So quite a lot extra Conference rooms we hope will be possible within the budget that's allocated.

And then, with regard to the Document from MSAG and the IMAG proposal to contract a company for overview of the project, we took to discussion of the MSAG and we consulted IMAG with it last week. And IMAG was quite happy to go along with the proposal from MSAG that we advertised for an expert to help with the oversight of this project. And so we will be advertising for a P5 level position, which would be paid for from the loan to help with this and then later in the year, we could come back to the question of whether or not we would need to contract a company to provide additional support. Thank you, Madame Chair.

>> CHAIR: Thank you. Canada, you have the floor.

>> CANADA: Thank you, Madame Chair. I would like to thank the Deputy Secretary‑General, Mr. Maniewicz, for the preparation of this Document as well. In regard to the MSAG, Madame Chair, we are looking forward to discussing with our colleagues from the Americas region because we believe it is essential to have a representative in the MSAG and to that effect, we are hoping that we can provide some information, if not during this week, no later than the conclusion of Council, so we, the region, can actively participate in the MSAG. Thank you.

>> CHAIR: Thank you. Switzerland, you have the floor.

>> SWITZERLAND: Thank you, Madame Chair. I just wanted to say a few words on behalf of my delegation. In our capacity as host country of this project, I wanted to say that following the decision of the Council in 2016 approving the project for new buildings, there was an establishment between the host country and the ITU, a coordination committee whose mandate was to implement this project. FEPOY also participated in this. This is an expert body from the Confederation of Switzerland at the Council of Geneva for everything pertaining to national organisations buildings in Geneva.

This committee has met frequently following the launching of the project, and it's with great satisfaction that following the launching of the international architecture competition, that a large number, almost 100 architecture offices participated in the competition. We are very pleased to hear this. Without doubt, by the end of the year, this will allow the jury to make a fully informed choice.

Finally, we would also like to welcome the ITU's intention to strengthen the steering committee of the project with an external expert being nominated who has solid experience in the management of large constructs projects. Thank you very much, Madame Chair.

>> CHAIR: Thank you. Uganda, you have the floor.

>> UGANDA: Madame Chair, thank you very much. Just to say that us, Africa, will work very hard to produce our representative before this meeting ends.

>> CHAIR: Thank you. Now, we have no other comments, so I can propose to note these three documents, C17/7, C17/99 and Paragraph one of the Document C17/111. These documents are noted. And we can endorse the current raised by the RAG and request the Secretariat to take into account assessing the competition projects. Endorsed.

Well, now, we come back to the proposal of Argentina. Argentina, we should rediscuss about the Document 56 about the time limit and she wants to propose the time maximum of three minutes. Is there any objection about this change? UAE, please, you have the floor.

>> UNITED ARAB EMIRATES: Thank you, Madame Chair. This request has been presented by the host country, Argentina, therefore, we cannot object to anything said by Argentina. We accept the three minutes and would like to thank them for this proposal, but Ms. Chair, for political statements made I would like to inform you that in the UAE we don't have any ministry in charge of telecommunications. Usually the head of delegation is the General Director of Telecommunications in the UAE. Please take in account that we don't have a minister.

Some other countries may not have ministers. The head of delegation should be entitled to deliver the political statements on behalf of the country. Thank you, Madame.

>> CHAIR: Thank you. USA, you have the floor.

>> UNITED STATES: Thank you very much, Madame Chair. To join my colleague from the UAE, we must support the request from Argentina. I find that her compromise is very good and in line with the results of the TDAG discussion which also concluded on three minutes. Thank you, Madame Chair.

>> CHAIR: Thank you. Cuba, you have the floor.

>> CUBA: Thank you, very much, Madame Chair. Firstly, the Delegation of Cuba would like to congratulate you upon being the Chair. It's a great responsibility. We are also very pleased to see the high level management here in the room which shows the confidence in the ITU and its functions. Now, turning to the WTDC, we agree with the proposal made by the administration of Argentina as a compromise solution, a three minute time period.

We do also agree with what the representative of the UAE said, namely that every administration decides on a sovereign basis what is the level of presentation when they make a statement. I believe that not all countries have designated ministers or vice ministers for this. So I think that each country and every administration needs to decide on what the level is going to be of the head of delegation, and who will, of course, have the right to speak. Thank you.

>> CHAIR: Thank you. Uganda, you have the floor.

>> UGANDA: Thank you, Madame Chair. I express my confusion with the move from five minutes to three minutes. I might have missed the meeting that discussed the compromise. Maybe somebody can help me out here. What is the consideration for that? Five minutes seemed fair deal. Certainly three minutes, I still think it is very small. Maybe we could consider other options like asking those ministers or those heads of delegations that want to take three minutes or five minutes. I believe most of them will give three minutes and then those who want to give five minutes should be allowed five minutes.

We will get into a consideration, some of our delegations will get into real political situations if we start limiting our heads of delegation to speak for three minutes. I like the idea that came from Argentina to focus on a theme. I think one of the things that could help out is to generally restrict the policy statements to a theme. That could contour the time, but technically if I'm alone, then probably that's okay, but I still very hard pressed. I feel very hard pressed about the three minutes. Thank you.

>> CHAIR: Thank you. Canada, you have the floor.

>> CANADA: Thank you, Madame Chair. Very briefly, just to strongly support the intervention from Argentina. We believe that in addition the three minutes, the focus would be on the theme of the Conference, and not so much on political statements. In addition, if I may, Madame Chair, besides the high level statements, it is Canada's hope that the side events being organized also address the need to have grassroots and Civil Society organisations which are the recipients of the message that we have to convey in terms of ICTs and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Thank you.

>> CHAIR: Thank you. Greece, you have the floor.

>> GREECE: Thank you, Madame Chair. First of all, I would like to congratulate for your election as well as for Vice Chairman regarding the timeframe for general policy statements. Although we believe that these are very important and this kind of commitment for Government, we support the final proposal of Argentina. It is the host country and we must respect it as well. We thank Argentina for hosting this great event and congratulate it for the efforts. Thank you.

>> CHAIR: Thank you. And Australia, you have the floor.

>> AUSTRALIA: Thank you, Chair. We would also like to thank Argentina for its compromise proposal which we support. We note again as others have that they are the host country and that they have thought carefully about what would go into making the best use of the time of the Conference to have a successful outcome. So we would support the three minute compromise. Thank you, Chair.

>> CHAIR: Thank you. Uganda, it seems that there is a great support for the proposal of three minutes of Argentina. You can approve this?

>> UGANDA: Reluctantly, yes, we can approve that, but Madame Chair, maybe this is not out of disrespect to the Argentina host, but are there any discussions on what other measures can be taken to reduce on the time during the discussions, the minute in the meetings, like committee meetings? I have not heard anything like that, because I believe something could be done there, but if it's the wish of the meeting, I will not hold it much further. I think the majority have, are ready to go with the three minutes. We will try to do that for our head of delegation with the risk of losing our jobs.

Thank you.

>> CHAIR: Thank you, Uganda. So the Document C17/56 is amended as proposed by Argentina. And now we can go to the last item of today, that is ITU operational plans for the next four years, and now, yes, I give the floor to Mr. Johnson. Oh, no, Argentina first, please.

>> ARGENTINA: Thank you very much, Madame Chair. Thank you to everybody for your flexibility. I think this is a good compromise. It was not our initial idea, but I think we all gave a little way in what we thought, so I want to thank everybody, and I think that in this way we will also have more time to see the beautiful sights that I showed you on the video. Thank you very much.

>> CHAIR: Mr. Johnson, please.

>> DEPUTY SECRETARY‑GENERAL: On behalf of the Secretary‑General it's my pleasure to introduce C17/32 which is the draft resolution for approving the draft annual four‑year rolling operational plans for the ITU‑R, ITU‑T, ITU‑D, and the general Secretariat for 2018‑2021, which can be found in documents 28, 29, 30, 31.

The operational plans have been elaborated with a view to implement the ITU strategic plan adopted at PP‑14 by resolution 71 within the ITU results base management framework. The draft operational plans follow a streamlined and aligned approach amongst the three sectors and the general Secretariat presenting a format which is in alignment with the 2016‑2019 strategic plan. The draft operational plans for the three sectors have been reviewed by the corresponding Secretariat adviser group.

The operational plan for ITU‑R was reviewed by RAG 26th‑28th of April, the operational plan for ITU‑T during the TSAG meeting 1st to the 4th of May, and the operational plan for the ITU‑D during the TDAG meeting 9‑12 of May. The operational plan for the general secretariat was also reviewed by all three sector advisory groups at these meetings.

So we invite membership to find more information on the progress towards the objectives of the sectors in the Document 35 which I introduced this morning as well as the Web‑based tool that was also introduced this morning. So with your permission, Madame Chair, I will pass the floor to the deputies of the Directors of the three Bureaus, and to the chief of strategic planning and membership department of the general Secretariat to present the respective operational plans. Thank you, Madame Chair.

>> CHAIR: Please, Mr. Maniewicz, you have the floor.

>> SECRETARIAT: Thank you, Madame Chair, distinguished counselors, ladies and gentlemen, on behalf of the Secretary‑General. I am pleased to present Document 28 (Rev. 1) which concludes the four year operational plan for 2018‑2021. The draft four year rolling ITU operational plan focused on the three ITU‑R objectives, outcomes and outputs as endorsed by PP‑14. It presents the key priorities for the sector along with measurable results or outcomes that Member States have agreed to achieve through ITU‑R by 2020 as part of the ITU strategic plan 2016‑2019.

The ITU‑R operational plan introduces specific indicators for these outcomes that are called outcome indicators to represent and highlight the impact of the work of the sector. The plan outlines these products and services outputs to be delivered by ITU‑R contributing to these outcomes and presents all of the costs associated to the delivery of these products. As Mr. Malcolm Johnson already said, the Radio Communication Advisory Group met from 26‑28 April this year, and endorsed the draft ITU‑R four year operational plan and advised about possible improvements to be taken into account when preparing draft strategic plan of the Union for 2020‑2023. Thank You, Madame Chair.

>> Mr. Scholl you have the floor.

>> R Scholl: On behalf of Secretary‑General I will present Document 29, the ITU‑T four year operational plan. This plan focuses on the five objectives of the ITU‑T along with the outcomes and outputs that have been endorsed by the plenipotentiary Conference. The five objectives are developing standards, bridging the standardisation gap, allocating and managing numbers, sharing of knowledge, and cooperation with other bodies. Each of these five objectives has a number of outcomes associated with it for each of these outcomes we define KPI or outcome indicator that show whether the outcome has been achieved or not.

And for each objective, there are also a number of outputs for which the necessary financial resources are provided. The financial figure is provided for both the objectives and outputs include both resources from TSB and resources allocated by the general Secretariat and the other Bureaus. The operational plan was also presented at the TSAG meeting a couple of weeks ago. Thank you, Madame Chair.

>> CHAIR: Thank you. Now, we are we have Document C17/30 (Rev. 1). I give the floor to Mr. Torigoe, please.

>> YOSHI TORIGOE: Thank you, Madame Chair. Distinguished Delegates, on behalf of ITU Secretary‑General I am pleased to present C17/30 which presents summary and key elements of ITU‑D four year rolling operational plan for 2018‑2021. The plan is published pursuant to number 223A of Article 18 of ITU Convention, which provides that the operational plan of activities be undertaken by the Telecommunication Development Bureau shall be prepared annually on a four‑year rolling basis. The complete draft four‑year rolling operational plan over the Telecommunication Development Sector 2018‑2021 can be found on the ITU website.

The four‑year rolling operational plan for ITU development sector is aligned with the current strategic plan resolution 71, within the limits set in the financial plan for the concerned timeframe, decision 5. The structure follows the ITU‑D results based framework outlining ITU‑D objectives, the corresponding outcomes, the outcome indicators to measure their achievement level as well as the outputs, products and services produced by activities of the Secretariat.

The ITU‑D objectives, outcomes and outputs for 2020 and 2021 will be approved by the next plenipotentiary Conference in its revision of resolution 71 strategic plan for the Union 2020‑2023. The 2018‑2021 timeframe will be another challenging timeframe for the ITU‑D sector from 2018 after the World Telecommunication Development Conference 2017, the implementation of its outcomes, namely the new Action Plan and the regional initiatives will be the priority.

As from 2020 we will also see the initial implementation of the new 2020‑2023 strategic plan. This new strategic plan will inter alia set the strategic and financial frameworks from within which the ITU‑D will organize its work and implement its work programme for that period. In addition, the work of the sector will be complemented by ITU‑D Study Groups. The preparation of WTDC 21 will start in 2020 through the organisation of the regional preparatory meetings. I stop my presentation here and remain at your Council's disposal for any additional information or questions. Thank you, Madame Chair.

>> CHAIR: Thank you. Before I continue, I have a question for the interpreters. Can we continue for another ten minutes?

>> INTERPRETER: Yes, Madame Chair, 10 more minutes is fine.

>> CHAIR: Thank you. Now, for the Document C17/31 the floor is given to Ms. Bogdan‑Martin, please.

>> D. BOGDAN‑MARTIN: Thank you very much, Madame Chair, distinguished counselors, ladies and gentlemen. On behalf of the Secretary‑General I am pleased to present Document 31 which is a draft four‑year rolling operational plan for the general Secretariat, which has been prepared in full alignment with the ITU 2016‑2019 strategic plan. As the Deputy Secretary‑General has just mentioned this plan has already been presented to the three sector Advisory Group meetings that took place just before this session of Council.

The current plan follows the new aligned and common format for the operational plans and it describes the enablers and support services provided by the general Secretariat as well as the intersectoral objectives and the resources allocated to them, which are fully linked to the draft budget. The plan includes outcome indicators which measure progress towards the intersectoral objectives with 22 indicators in total as well as the indicators measuring the quality of support services provided by the general Secretariat with some 28 indicators in total.

The plan also includes the results of the revised risk management exercise presenting the key operational risks for the general Secretariat as well as measures to mitigate them. Regarding the work plan for this period, the key priorities for the general Secretariat derive from its role to support and enable the objectives of all three ITU sectors, but also to contribute to intersectoral activities. The general Secretariat will focus on providing the highest quality of services to membership, and supporting the upcoming key events and conferences of the organisation insuring the efficient preparations of the ITU plenipotentiary Conference in 2018.

The general Secretariat will continue to support key events and initiatives such as the World Telecommunication and Information Society Day, the WSIS Forum, ITU Telecom World, and also the Broadband Commission for Sustainable Development. Concerning ITU and UN relations, we will continue to play an advocacy role for ICTs in the global development agenda, strengthening relationships with different stakeholders and partnerships. Thank you very much, Madame Chair.

>> CHAIR: Thank you. And now we go to the Document C17/83, and the Russian Federation has the floor, please.

>> RUSSIAN FEDERATION: Thank you, Madame Chair. This contribution analyzes contributions from ITU Member States and the resolutions of the plenipotentiary Conference on which they are based. This analysis shows that in each Bureau we need to be able to analyze results of activities in a comparable format on the basis of resolutions implemented. It's necessary that the objectives and activities in the reports on activities to Council and plenipotentiary Conference be linked with the corresponding resolutions and decisions of the plenipotentiary Conference.

We believe such information will improve the quality of management decisions on use and allocation of financial and human resources of the ITU. We, therefore, propose in each section of the plan and reports on current activities of the Union and its sectors to indicate which PP resolutions and decisions are linked to the objectives and work which has been done.

>> CHAIR: Thank you. Now, we have the Paragraph 3 of Document C17/111 and the floor goes to Mr. Rancy, please.

>> F. RANCY: Thank you, Ms. Chair, the rank of this issue noting the Document of the operational plan, submitting to it, and endorse the Document as you have now in front of you which is revision 1 to Document C17/28. The changes by the RAG have been incorporated in this Document. Thank you, Madame Chair.

>> CHAIR: Thank you. Now, the floor is open for any comments, and UAE, you have the floor.

>> UNITED ARAB EMIRATES: Thank you very much. (No English translation).

>> INTERPRETER: Please resume. Thank you.

>> UNITED ARAB EMIRATES: Thank you very much, Madame Chair. I would like to thank the three sectors, and the secretariat for presenting the renewable project for the years 2018 to 2021. Madame Chair, we are happy to see in this Document and in chapter 4 about the elaboration of the strategic plan. It has been taken into consideration the participation of the regional centers, and we are emphasizing this point, Madame Chair, due to its importance and the importance of regional Bureaus and implementing these three plans of the three sectors and the Secretariat in helping implement these plans.

We have another proposal, Madame Chair, which is that the regional offices or Bureaus based on these plans, that there be an operational plan for each regional office that would be presented to the region and that should be annually done based on the operational plan so that the countries in the regions will be well informed about the activities of the regional offices and that be taken into consideration the operational plans presented by the three sectors and by the general Secretariat. Thank you, very much, Madame Chair.

>> CHAIR: Thank you. Now, I will propose you to close the list of speakers. Now, we have five countries and only five minutes. So, please, you have to be brief. Now, Brazil, you have the floor.

>> BRAZIL: Thank You, Madame Chair. Very quickly, the UAE proposal is good. Perhaps we could have more detail on what the regional offices would do during the exercise, but it's a question that for clarification on all of the plans. When we go to the section 3.3 which is two objectives, the percentages of each output in objectives, the sum is not 100% in any of the plans so could you clarify why is that? Thank you.

>> CHAIR: Thank you. Now, United Kingdom, you have the floor.

>> UNITED KINGDOM: Thank you, Chair. Congratulations first to you on your election as Chair and thank you for the opportunity to contribute to the discussion. We would like to thank the Directors and the Secretariat for all of the work that has been done in preparing operational plans for the Union. The ITU's role is critically important to the continued development of the telecoms and ICT sector and in particular to providing support for Developing Countries. So it is essential in our view that the ITU continues to benefit from strong and effective management.

In particular, we would like to thank Malcolm Johnson for the work that he does often behind the scenes to make sure that the ITU is in a strong position to play such an important role. A few years ago, there were concerns about the budgetary position of the Union. We now see that the position is on a much more secure footing, and we welcome the renewed corporate focus across the ITU on delivering real benefits for all Member States.

So my delegation would like to take this opportunity to confirm, again, as we did at Council last year, that the United Kingdom will be supporting Malcolm's candidacy for a second term as Deputy Secretary‑General. Malcolm, of course, is very well known, trusted and respected by ITU Member States in all regions.

He has a long track record of achievement in strengthening our Union, and in particular he has a long track record of reaching out to and supporting Developing Countries. Our Union faces key challenges and opportunities in the years ahead, including the opportunities to contribute to the sustainable development agenda, and the need to insure that the project for a new headquarters building, a major capital project is a success.

We believe that Malcolm will provide the experience, the professionalism and the continuity to insure that the ITU is able to make the most of these opportunities and build a strong future for our union in the years ahead. And he will continue to work to insure that the ITU delivers real benefits to all Member States. Thank you.

>> CHAIR: Thank you. Venezuela, you have the floor.

>> BOLIVARIAN REPUBLIC OF VENEZUELA: Good afternoon, and thank you very much, Madame Chair. We welcome the work done by the general Secretariat and the three sectors of the ITU, and we welcome the documents for consideration. My country attaches great importance to ICTs and also to policies in this area. They are aimed at developing our scientific technological capacity linked to improving the situation of the population.

Looking at the socioeconomic, we have a plan for the socioeconomic development of our country. It covers the use of telecommunications and information technologies through the development of the necessary infrastructure as well as the application or applications. The Government of Venezuela has made progress on ICTs and telecommunications involved in the development of infrastructure for ICT telecommunication infrastructure.

One example is our centre of research on ICT, which opened in April 2016, and then ITU staff visited it when we were developing the roadmap. It's an important part of our telecommunications infrastructure, and we have it available in the space. We also have a technical committee for the standardisation of telecommunications, which is working on the digital television infrastructure. There are various other important projects which for reasons of time I'm not going to mention now.

Finally, we would like to welcome all of the work done and we support the UAE in saying that strengthening the regional presence of the ITU is important for everything that we are promoting. Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela is attentive to work of ITU and stands ready to cooperate fully on the development thereof. Thank you very much.

>> CHAIR: Thank you. We finish the time. The interpreters can give us another five minutes?

>> INTERPRETER: Yes, Madame Chair, five more minutes is fine.

>> CHAIR: I hope the five minutes will be respected by the floor. Please, U.S.A., you have the floor.

>> UNITED STATES: Thank you very much, Madame Chair. I will be brief. The rolling operational plans have improved every year we see them. And we really appreciate the work of all of the sectors and the general Secretariat on this point. With respect to the operational plan for the radiocommunications sector, we think it would be very important to include in this plan an objective to establish 100% compliance with the regulatory deadliness in the outcomes and outputs.

We also suggest that there is a need to distinguish between the objectives of the ITU‑R as a sector and those of the Bureau. Thank you, Madame Chair.

>> CHAIR: Thank you. Russia, you are the last one, please.

>> RUSSIAN FEDERATION: Thank you. I don't want to delay you. I shall be brief. We would like to say thank you for the excellent documents and information. Please explain whether the operational plan for the standardisation sector provides resources for translation of recommendations under the alternative approval procedure. That was my first point. Secondly, what is the financial funding in the development sector of the implementation of decisions of WTDC?

>> CHAIR: Thank you. Now, the floor is to Mr. Johnson.

>> DEPUTY SECRETARY‑GENERAL: Thank You, Madame Chair. Just to respond to some of the proposals on how we can further improve these operational plans, we are very grateful to these proposals starting with the Russian Federation that we should indicate the decisions and resolutions which contribute to the activities of the organisation, and we have in fact started to do that and will continue to do that and implement this for the next revision of these plans. And, of course, also pick up the UAE proposal on including activities of the regional offices, and also the proposal from the U.S, and with regard to the question from Brazil, a certain percentage from each of these objectives is allocated to our preparation for Council and plenipotentiary Conference. That is why it doesn't appear to be exactly 100%. I hope that satisfies the question. Thank You, Madame Chair.

>> CHAIR: Thank you. Now, we have another request by Saudi Arabia.

>> SAUDI ARABIA: Thank you, Madame Chair. We thank the three sectors for presenting these comprehensive documents. We would like to ask the standardisation sector whether it is included in the operational plan for next year or the remaining part of this year the results of the WTDC of 2016 because there are new resolutions. We do not see them reflected in the Document that was presented by the standardisation Bureau. We will greatly appreciate any clarifications on this subject. Thank you.

>> CHAIR: Would you like to answer?

>> Thank you, Madame Chair, to the question of Saudi Arabia, the additional requirements from WTDC have not been included in the financial plan. And to the question from Russia, the budget for the translation is with the Conference and publication department and they poll the sector. So many documents are expected to be translated and we will have to insure that we actually make it explicit that there are a thousand pages per annum to be included. We have not done this explicitly, but we will have to do that. Thank you.

>> CHAIR: Russia, you have the floor, please.

>> RUSSIAN FEDERATION: We didn't ask for the floor.

>> CHAIR: Thank you. If there are any comments, we can invite the Council to approve the draft operational plan of the three sectors and the general Secretariat for the next four years, and to adopt the draft resolution presented in Document C17/32.

The UAE, please, you have the floor.

>> UNITED ARAB EMIRATES: Thank you very much, Madame Chair. With regards to the operational plan for the four years of the standardisation sector, we have heard the question that was asked by Saudi Arabia and the answer given by Mr. Scholl that the outputs of 2016 were not taken into consideration in this operational plan. We believe that this has to be postponed, this operational plan of the standardisation sector, until the proposals presented on increasing the special budget for the standardisation sector will be discussed and until the INRs, the International Numbering Resources will be discussed, and also other resources that might be used so that they can cover the costs with regards to these activities.

I do not believe that this is appropriate to adopt this plan while we are still discussing this topic with regards to the budget of the standardisation sector. Thank you, Madame Chair.

>> CHAIR: Okay. We can postpone this approval. And now we have finished the time. So we can conclude this, conclude this plenary meeting for today. Thank you. Please, the floor is for announcements. We want to postpone only these operational plan for sector T or also for ‑‑ Russia, please.

>> RUSSIAN FEDERATION: Thank you, Madame Chair. We propose to discuss all of the operational plans tomorrow, revisit all of them tomorrow.

>> CHAIR: Okay. Well, we can postpone all of these items for tomorrow morning. Thank you. Now, we can close this plenary meeting for today. Thank you.

>> I'm sorry, Madame Chair, before colleagues leave, we will have our first meeting of the steering committee just now in room A, so those of you that are concerned with the steering committee, room A. I'm also pleased to inform you that the Secretary‑General invites you all to join him this evening at his reception in the Mombrione cafeteria starting at 6:00, thank you.

(Adjourned at 17:51).

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