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>> CHAIR: Good morning. We can start now. We can start with the Plenary meeting of today, 16th of May and good morning, Ladies and Gentlemen. I hope you had a pleasant evening and yesterday we made great progress. And I would like to thank all of you for your support and cooperation.

And there are two items from yesterday where we will await feedback from the ADM Committee. One was on the free online access proposal from Poland. And the other was on the operational plans and both of them issues will come back in to Plenary next week. An Ad Hoc Group has been created to discuss the point raised by the director of BR related to the Russian proposal on the creation of CCV. It will meet this evening at half passed 5 in room D at the top of the escalator on the outside of the Popov room. And the steering committee has updated the time management plan. And it has been published online. We can start with the first issue of the day, which is document C17/49 and I invite the Secretariat, Mr. Malcolm Johnson, to present this document.

>> MALCOLM JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Good morning, everyone. So on behalf of the Secretary‑General it is my pleasure to introduce document C17/49, the report on the implementation status and plan of the JIU recommendations for the ‑‑ from the review of management and administration in the ITU. And it is a great pleasure to welcome the JIU team and the inspectors, Mr. Gennady Tarasov and Mr. Gopinathan Achamkulangare. Very welcome and thank you for coming for this item this morning. On behalf of the ITU management I would like to express our great appreciation to the JIU for its collaboration with the ITU Secretariat and for its excellent and comprehensive review. The ITU Secretariat accepted all the formal and informal recommendations made by the JIU and considered that the recommendations will contribute to the continuous improvement and further strengthening of ITU administrative and management processes. The document reports to the session of the Council on the overall implementation status as well as on the specific progress related to each recommendation.

And now to the 11, formal recommendations addressed to the ITU Secretariat, 10 have now been implemented.

And the one remaining is on track for implementation by the end of this year as was explained to Council last year. It deals with the HR handbook which will need a lot of amendment due to the new compensation package for staff.

And the 12th and final formal recommendation from the JIU was addressed to the governing bodies. So that's for consideration by the Plenipotentiary Conference next year. There are a number of separate documents that will be presented to Council related to specific JIU recommendations and their implementation explaining how they have been implemented. I will summarize these as follows. On recommendation 1, on the framework of the management Committees, the framework has been reviewed and new terms of reference have been established and approved where needed. In particular in the case of the intersectoral coordination task force which we provide more information on in another document and in the information document you can see the terms of reference information 19. And then recommendation 2, efficiency and effectiveness, an in‑depth analysis has been carried out taking in to account the specificities and the needs of each sector and this is presented in more detail in document 45, and an update on the efficiency measures in document 10 and, of course, the draft budget.

Recommendation 3 on internal coordination, the report on the strategy for the coordination of efforts between the three sectors of the union is presented in document 38. Recommendation 4 on accountability framework, this is presented in document 64, the ITU accountability and transparency framework. And recommendation 5 on improving the stability and predictability of the financial base of the union that's presented in document 67.

Recommendation 6 on risk management is addressed in document 73 and 74 which present the ITU risk management policy and the risk appetite statement. Then we have recommendations 7, 8 and 9 and these are on geographical representation in staff and gender balance and nonstaff personnel. And these are all in document 53 which is the progress report on the implementation of the HR Strategic Plan and of Resolution 48.

And then recommendation 10 on human resources and policies implementation, this is the draft structure for the HR handbook ensuring that all human resources and processes such as recruitment and promotional and appointment are covered by formal procedures in the regulatory framework. This is presented in information document 14. As I mentioned this recommendation is on track for implementation according to the schedule, last year's Council agreed by the end of this year.

And then the last one addressed to the Secretariat recommendation 11 on information technology and information management strategy that's presented in document 20. As I said the final recommendation, recommendation 12 is for consideration by the Plenipotentiary Conference. Looking at the total, total 47 recommendations. Pleased to say that 60% of those have already been implemented. That's 28. And 16 are on track for implementation as explained in the annex to the document. And three recommendations are addressed to the governing bodies of ITU. So the ITU Secretariat remains at the disposal of the Council to provide any further information. Thank you, Madam Chair.

>> CHAIR: Thank you, Mr. Johnson. And now the floor is open for comments, please. USA, you have the floor.

>> UNITED STATES: Thank you, Madam Chair. And good morning, everyone. The United States appreciates the Secretariat's efforts to implement all the formal and informal recommendations from the JIU's report. And we are pleased that 28 recommendations have already been implemented and the rest are well underway. We would appreciate more information regarding recommendation 161 on how the mediation function was strengthened. We strongly agree with JIU recommendation 176 that the internal audit charter should be presented to and approved by Council. The Institute of Internal Auditors defines the board as the highest level of governing body charged with the responsibility to direct or oversee the activities and management of the organization which is the Council. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

>> MALCOLM JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you to the United States for appreciation for implementing many of these recommendations. With regard to recommendation 161 on strengthening the media function, we have taken measures to make appointments in that area of the staff welfare and ethics officer. And perhaps if more detailed is required, I could either discuss outside with the U.S. or pass the floor to the chief of the HR department to add further information. Thank you, Madam Chair.

>> CHAIR: Thank you, Mr. Johnson. Now we have not had a conference or call for the floor. I invite the Council to take note of the implementation status and plan from the JIU management and administration in the ITU. It is noted.

(Gavel).

>> CHAIR: And now we can go to document C17/75 and the elaboration of the strategic and financial plans for the union 2020‑2023 and I invite Ms. Bogdon to present this document, please.

>> DOREEN BOGDON: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Good morning, Ladies and Gentlemen. On behalf of the Secretary‑General it is my pleasure to introduce document 75 on the preparation of the ITU strategic and financial plan of the Union for the period 2020‑2023. According to the ITU Convention No. 62a the Council shall in the last but one ordinary session of the Council before the next Plenipotentiary Conference initiate the preparation of a draft new Strategic Plan for the Union. Drawing upon input from Member States, sector members and from the sector advisory groups and produce a coordinated draft new Strategic Plan at least four months before that Plenipotentiary Conference. The current session of Council is the last but one ordinary session before the Plenipotentiary 2018. This document reminds Council of the process that was followed during the previous planning cycle. For the 2016‑2019 strategic and financial plans the 2013 session of Council established by Resolution 1358 the Council Working Group for the elaboration of the draft strategic plan and the draft financial plan for 2016 to 2019.

The Council Working Group held four meetings from June 2013 to May 2014 under the Chairmanship of Mr. Mario Canazza from the Federative Republic of Brazil and the first meeting took place during that same session of the 2013 Council. During its meetings in 2013 and 2014 the Council Working Group elaborated the draft plans based on preliminary input by the Secretariat, Member States and the sector advisory groups. And also considering the results of public consultations that were conducted during the period.

The draft Strategic Plan was endorsed by the 2014 session of the Council and incorporated inputs from the WTDC‑14. And it was then forwarded to the Plenipotentiary 2014 for final adoption as a revision to Resolution 71 and the financial plan in decision 5.

Keeping in mind the process that was followed for the elaboration of the plan 2016‑2019 the Council may wish to consider relaunching the Council Working Group to prepare the draft strategic and financial plans that would be submitted to the 2018 session of Council and then forwarded for adoption to the 2018 Plenipotentiary Conference.

So to facilitate the Council decision the annex to this document contains a possible draft resolution for the establishment of the Council Working Group taking in to consideration the provisions of Council Resolution 1333 on the guiding principles for the creation, management and termination of Council Working Groups. We remain at the disposal of the Distinguished Delegates for any further information. Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

>> CHAIR: Thank you. Now we have the paragraph 4 of the document C17/111, the conclusion of the RAG and Mr. Francois Rancy has the floor. Please.

>> FRANCOIS RANCY: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, on this issue the RAG made a few proposals that would be discussed at the next meeting when we get in to discussing the operational plans. So I think I would save my comments for next year on this. Thank you.

>> CHAIR: Thank you, Mr. Rancy. So the floor is open for any comments, please. Algeria, you have the floor.

>> ALGERIA: Thank you, Madam Chair. We support the creation of this Council Working Group for the preparation of the ITU strategic and financial plans. And would draw your attention to paragraph C which refers to preparing Strategic Plans which could be posted on the PP‑2018 website. Is this part of the mandate of the Working Group which is to be established? Should it not rather be within the mandate of the Secretary‑General? This is subparagraph C on page 4.

>> CHAIR: Thank you. Ms. Bogdon, you have the floor.

>> DOREEN BOGDON: Thank you, Madam Chair. And thank you to the Delegate of Algeria. I believe that you are referring to page 4.c, at least in the English version of document 75 which refers to the posting on the Plenipotentiary website, the coordinated draft Strategic Plan. And your question if I understood was whether that should be the responsibility of the Secretary‑General. So as I mentioned the Council Working Group has to complete its work in the time prior to the session of Council next year in April. And after that time and after Council's review in April we would then be posting it on the Plenipotentiary website as that document needs to be posted four months prior to the Plenipotentiary Conference. I hope that has answered your question. Thank you.

>> CHAIR: Thank you. If there are any comments, I invite the Council to approve the creation of the Council Working Group for the elaboration of the draft Strategic Plan and financial plan. Approved. Oh, I'm sorry. There is Germany.

>> GERMANY: Good morning. And thank you, Madam Chair. Well, it is, of course, very difficult in ITU to change two editions. We have a concern with regard to the financial plan here. We don't have anything against creating a temporary additional Council Working Group although the number of those groups should be minimized. For the establishment of the Strategic Plan, but the document apart from a small paragraph in the draft Resolution does not really elaborate on the cooperation between this particular Council Working Group and the Council Working Group on financial and human resources. The later normally looking at matters related to the financial plan I think in order to avoid duplication of work in terms of scarce human and financial resources for the Union this document should be maybe not even refined but we should consider that we avoid in any case duplication of work by, for example, dividing the work between these two Council Working Groups I mentioned in an appropriate way. Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

>> CHAIR: Okay. We will be aware about the Germany observation. Are there any comments? Uganda, you have the floor.

>> UGANDA: Good morning, colleagues. And thank you, Madam Chair. I just want to appreciate the presentation. I agree with the principle of setting up this temporary Council Working Group. For the benefit of countries like ours, given the time, timelines we have left before the Plenipot I'm just requesting maybe the Secretariat give us a rundown of the events. Given that there is limited time left, and the invitation is to members to propose inputs towards this financial issue and the Strategic Plan and then there is a limitation of a four month report and I'm not seeing any timelines associated with this. How is this going to work really and, of course, I imagine like all the other Council Working Groups the regional groups, regional continents are going to be represented in the leadership and just to rundown of events will help us to have better clarity of this event, this very important event. Thanks.

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

>> KENYA: Thank you very much, Madam Chairperson. I am speaking for the first time. We would like to congratulate you and to also thank the Secretariat for this presentation. Trying to appreciate the concern that was raised by the first speaker, Distinguished Delegate I believe from Algeria, I think the issue is more of a drafting question that seems to give the Council Working Group a post document on the PP‑18 website and that could probably be a key word by just changing the language of numbers here on page 4, at least in the English text. I think that concern in my view has not been addressed and I think it is valid. It could be cured by simply rewarding that No. C of resolves.

>> CHAIR: Ms. Bogdon, you have the floor.

>> DOREEN BOGDON: Thank you. We take good note of your concerns and ensure there was no duplication between other groups. We will do as we did in the previous cycle and make sure that the plans are well aligned. In terms of the intervention from the Distinguished Delegate from Uganda, our plan was that the timelines would be discussed in the first meeting of this group. Should this Council decide to have the group as suggested, we would propose that this group meets for the first time during this Council, specifically we would propose that the group meets on Tuesday next week. And at that first meeting which we envision would be brief we would lay out the timeline for meetings and procedures for the Council Working Group. We would also envisage that the first full meeting of the group would take place during the block of Council Working Group meetings in September during that first week of the block.

Now coming to the question of Kenya, linked to the comment from the Distinguished Delegate from Algeria, my apologies that I was not clear and indeed you are correct, the Council Working Group itself should not be posting documents on the Plenipotentiary website. The Council Working Group would be submitting the final draft of the strategic and financial plan to as I mentioned the April session of Council. Once Council reviews it and vets it would then be posted by the Secretariat or specifically by the Secretary‑General as an input for the Plenipotentiary Conference. And we can tweak that language to make it more clear. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

>> NIGERIA: Thank you, Madam Chair. We want to join our colleagues in congratulating the Secretary‑General for this report on establishment of a Council Working Group. However, Nigeria is not against any Council Working Group. We know we have an existing Council Working Group on finance. It is not possible for this Council to mandate that particular group to carry out this exercise? However if it is not possible, as I earlier said we are not against the establishment of this particular Working Group. We quite endorse the establishment but if it is possible for us to maybe mandate the already existing Council Working Group in order for us not to create more Council Working Group then I think it would be better for the existing Council Working Group to be mandated to carry out this exercise. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

>> RUSSIAN FEDERATION: Thank you, Madam Chair. In this case I'm speaking as the Chair of TDAG. And I'd like to draw attention to the fact that in every advisory group we set up our own correspondence group on preparation of the Strategic Plan. And each specific sector and it seems to us that the experience of previous preparations was very useful. And if we take a decision to establish this group it would work very closely with similar groups from all the sectors who would then make their contribution from the part of our ‑‑ their sectors and the same could also go for regional groups as well. Thank you.

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

>> BRAZIL: Thank you, Madam Chair. Good morning, everyone. Yeah, we are in favor of the creation of this group independently from the FHR group. I guess it is a matter of examining the benefits of creating this group under FHR and creating this group as an independent group. If we were to decide that this would be a subgroup of FHR perhaps we would have to change the mandate of FHR to compliment its terms of reference. And we would have an intermediate between this group and Council, this group would have to report to FHR and FHR would have to report to Council on the work of this group. If it is independent as it was in the last time it would have direct access to Council and report to Council. And it would have its own terms of reference that would be defined in the resolution that creates the group. So it is a matter of making it easier to do the work. Creating this as a subgroup of FHR would not reduce the time that the group needs to elaborate the plan. So in fact, I don't see any ‑‑ we don't see any value in creating this under FHR. It wouldn't reduce the time. It would be another group, of course. It would add to the number of Council Working Groups that we have. But there is no actual practical benefit of creating this under FHR. So we would propose that this independent group. Thank you.

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

>> UNITED ARAB EMIRATES: Thank you, Madam Chair. We commend the proposals on document 75 and from the Secretary‑General with regard to the creation of a Council Working Group on the strategic and financial plans. For the period indicated we support this proposal. And as the Distinguished Delegate of Brazil has just said we do not want this group to be part of the Council Working Group of financial resources but to be independent. We participated in this group. We had some important results under the Chairmanship of Brazil. We support the idea of creating this group and for it not to be dependent upon CWG FHR. Another point is that based on the group that was created in the past there is a need for us to ensure translation to six languages. If this group is created we would like simultaneous interpretation to be provided in the six languages of the Union. Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

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

>> CANADA: Good morning to you and all colleagues. We would support the intervention from Brazil. We believe that this specific Working Group is essential and as in the past iteration it proved to be very successful under the Chairmanship of Mr. Canazza. In order, Madam Chair, if we look at the current workload that has been over the last clusters of the Council Working Group meetings to the Working Group on finance and human resources it has been given an incredible amount of work that in some cases does not necessarily conform to its terms of reference. We have seen how during the last sessions the CWG on finance and human resources has been dealing with memorandas of understanding and with all sorts of things they have increased the workload. So we will concur with the observation of Brazil followed by that of the United Arab Emirates that this should be a separate Council Working Group and we support its creation. Thank you.

>> CHAIR: Thank you. The floor is for Rwanda.

>> RWANDA: Thank you, Madam Chair. As was done during the elaboration of other Strategic Plan, we are also of the view that we create an independent Working Group. Thank you.

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

>> ARGENTINA: Thank you very much. We wished to support the importance of this group being independent and functioning in six languages so as to improve understanding. Thank you very much.

>> CHAIR: Thank you. Saudi Arabia, you have the floor.

>> SAUDI ARABIA: Thank you, Madam Chair. Good morning. We would like to thank the Secretary‑General for having presented us with this document. Evidently we support what is stated in this document. Resolution 71 emphasizes the importance of working, of what can be taken across the three sectors equally. However Madam, there are six meetings held in parallel with the meetings of the Council Working Group. We noted that there is a reduction in the time for those meetings. Therefore it is necessary to ensure there is more time for the expert group on the radio regulations to work. We also have seven Working Groups. We should not restrict the time allocated to other Working Groups. The Council Working Groups need to be able to complete their tasks and there is a need therefore for enough time to be allocated to them. We support the proposal with regard to the establishment of the group in the document. Thank you.

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

>> TUNISIA: Thank you, Madam Chair. Good morning, colleagues. Firstly I would like to thank the Secretary‑General for having presented this document to us. I will be very brief. I support what was proposed by our colleague from the UAE with regard to the establishment of a group on the condition that it be independent. And that simultaneous interpretation is provided in six languages given the importance of the work to be undertaken. Thank you.

>> CHAIR: Thank you. Burkina Faso you have the floor.

>> BURKINA FASO: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Like other Delegations Burkina Faso supports the proposal from the Secretary‑General. With regard to the establishment of a Council Working Group on the strategic and financial plans for 2020 to 2023 we also support the proposal that made by the UAE Delegation on the establishment of a group which is separate and in which interpretation is provided in six languages. Thank you.

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

>> SENEGAL: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, at the outset I would like to thank the Secretary‑General for this proposal to establish a Council Working Group. I would also like to support its proposals and those which were made by my colleague from Burkina Faso and Saudi Arabia with regards to the provision of six languages. Thank you.

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

>> RUSSIAN FEDERATION: Thank you, Madam Chair and good morning, colleagues. For our part we would like to support the establishment of an independent group. Thank you very much.

>> CHAIR: Thank you. Any comments? I believe that there is support for the creation, large support for the creation of this group. So you can approve this creation with the proposal by Algeria. And also we can move to the point C and under this ‑‑ instruct the Secretary‑General to post on the PP‑18 website the coordinated draft new Strategic Plan for the 28th session of Council before the Plenipotentiary Conference. Canada, you have the floor.

>> CANADA: Yes. Thank you, Madam Chair and apologies for taking the floor again. A decision will be taken at this Plenary for the creation of this Working Group. And if this Working Group is to be meeting either this week or next week, what procedures are in place to take in to consideration the appointment of Chairman of this Council's Working Group.

>> CHAIR: Ms. Bogdon, you have the floor.

>> DOREEN BOGDON: Thank you. If I can quickly comment on the intervention made by several Delegations with regards to languages. Indeed this has been planned in the budget to run this meeting in the six languages of the Union. So I just wanted to confirm that that would be the case. In regards to the Chair and the Vice‑Chair of the group, should this Resolution be approved as amended and as per the requirements of Council Resolution 1333 the Secretary‑General in consultation with Member States should prepare and publish the list of candidates for this group together with their profiles. So if the Resolution is approved now we will do a call for Chair and Vice‑Chairs together with their profiles. And we would request that all of those be received by this Friday so that on Monday the Secretary‑General would be in a position to announce the Chair and Vice‑Chairs and that the first informal meeting could take place on Tuesday. Thank you very much.

>> CHAIR: So with this clarification we can approve this Council Working Group.

(Gavel).

>> CHAIR: Approved. And now the floor is for the deputy.

>> Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Good morning, dear counselors and colleagues. I am very pleased to know that the Council agreed to establish this Working Group on developing strategic and financial plans for the next PP‑2018. And as we just discussed we needed to have candidates to be discussed among ourselves so that we can present to you our proposed candidate to Chair this important Council Working Group. And, of course, you know, if you would be able to submit this to the secretary by lunchtime, Friday, that we have sufficient time to get some agreement before we can announce the candidate to you. I would cordially consider, first of all, a candidate and perhaps even preliminarily mutual discussions or even at the regional discussions will help us, we will be very pleased to get those proposals from you by lunchtime Friday. Thank you very much.

>> CHAIR: Thank you, Mr. Zhao. And now the first meeting of this group will be the 23rd of May in room A at half passed 12.

Thank you. And now we can go to the document C17/8, the report of the Council Working Group on WSIS and I invite the Chair, Mr. Minkin to present this document. Please.

>> VLADIMIR MINKIN: Thank you, Madam Chair. The Council Working Group on WSIS held two meetings and considered 35 documents including two contributions, contributions from the administrations of Mexico and Russia. There were two main activities of ITU on the agenda on the implementation of the decisions of WSIS and activities connected with WSIS including that in accordance with the operational plan of the ITU. And also in connection with the sustainable Development Agenda for the period up to 2030. During the ‑‑ under the first topic we considered a number of documents and we agreed on recommendations on a number of issues. With your permission I'm not going to go in to them in great detail.

The first ‑‑ but the first topic was the WSIS Forum 2017. Recommendations are set forth in section 221. And the WSIS AD ‑‑ the WSIS SDGs matrix and action lines are covered in 222 and the ITU contribution to the implementation of WSIS outcomes report can be found in section 223. The Secretariat was provided with a recommendation including that to reflect the action lines taken to implement WSIS at the ITU including the roadmap on action lines, C2 and C5 and C6 and to reflect in the annual report specific figures for the assessment of the achievement of the goals and control indicators of the agenda, of Connect 2020. And to ‑‑ it was also a request that through the regional offices and with the support of the General‑Secretariat to strengthen in coordination with regional organizations its coordination on a regional level on activities undertaken with UN regional groups as well as with all UN agencies.

And on other sections we have WSIS stocktaking and section 224 WSIS prices, 225, WSIS roadmaps for action lines C2, C5 and 56. WSIS fund in trust is section 227. The group also considered information from the Secretariat on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Agenda up to 2030. And a draft report to the Council of ITU, high level political Forum 2017 on the updated roadmap for ITU's activities on providing assistance to implementation of this agenda and about the tools implementation of the SDGs and the ICT for SDG campaign. The recommendations of the group are set out in section 3.2. The secretary ‑‑ it was also proposed that the Secretariat include activities involving ECOSOC and HLPF in the updated roadmap of the ITU's activities. To assist in the Sustainable Development Agenda, the 2030 Agenda that is. There were recommendations about the composition of the document and a time frame for the preparation of the final version of the Council report for HLPF‑17. Taking in to account the remarks which were submitted by Member States the Secretariat submitted a final text of the ‑‑ of the draft to the HLPF‑17 with time frames and this ‑‑ the deadline for this is the 28th of April. And with that we invite the Council to consider and approve the report of the group.

In conclusion I would like to express my gratitude to all members of the group who participated in it and made contributions to the group and also participated in the WSIS process. Thank you very much to Mr. Zhao, the Deputy Secretary‑General and the Secretary‑General and the Chair of the ITU group on WSIS and the directors of the Bureau. And also Ms. Bogdon who led SPM. And I would like to thank the Secretariat for the assistance they have provided, their support and in particular Mr. Jaroslaw Ponder and Ms. Eta Angelos. And I am submitting this report to you for your consideration. And I hope for your approval. Thank you.

>> CHAIR: Thank you, Mr. Minkin. The floor is open for any comments. Philippines, you have the floor.

>> PHILIPPINES: Thank you, Madam Chair. We commend the effort of the Secretariat on the WSIS Forums, in particular encouraging the stakeholders to contribute to the WSIS Forum. The Philippines asked the Secretariat to identify the stakeholders and thereby such stakeholder will be able to contribute on WSIS Forum efforts. And it should be taken in to account in approving the WSIS Forum outcome document, for bringing inclusive activities that WSIS organizations will carry on. The Philippines Delegation encourages to link the WSIS action lines and the SDG matrix with the regional and intentional initiatives so that ALs and DGs can be easily implemented and monitored and thereby be helpful in recalibrating such matrix. The success of the WSIS price for e‑employment, help the Philippines to showcase its success and provide applicable ideas to other countries to empowering and digitizing their opportunities at local levels, to gather up their telecommunications and ICT initiatives towards achieving the WSIS AS and SDGs. Thank you, Madam Chair.

>> CHAIR: Algeria, you have the floor.

>> ALGERIA: Thank you, Madam Chair. At the outset I would like to thank the Delegation of Kenya. I'm speaking quite fast but I will try and slow down. As regards the document C17/8, on WSIS I think that there is one important point here. With regard to the Summit and links to the Sustainable Development Goals there is a need for us to clearly understand on an international level what these various links are. There is also a need to have broader understanding of this Summit. All of these questions will allow us to successfully achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Thank you.

>> CHAIR: Thank you. Saudi Arabia, you have the floor.

>> SAUDI ARABIA: Thank you, Madam Chair. At the outset I would like to thank Professor Minkin for having presented this comprehensive report and work in the group on WSIS. Saudi Arabia fully participates in everything with regard to events implementing the results of this Summit. We also support the group which was created by Professor Minkin. We also agree with what was said under 332. We need to step up our work so as to ensure that WSIS, the aims of WSIS, in fact, dovetail with the SDGs. Thank you.

>> CHAIR: Thank you. If there are any comments, Mr. Minkin, you have the floor.

>> VLADIMIR MINKIN: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. We tried to put everything in the report. I tried to report just very briefly in my presentation. You can see the recommendations in the report. In the volume you can see how carefully the group looked at the issues and prepared the document. I would like to thank all who participated in the group, the management of the ITU. And I would like to invite you to consider and approve the report. Thank you.

>> CHAIR: Poland, you have the floor.

>> POLAND: Hello. Good morning, Madam Chair. And good morning, Honorable Delegates. Poland would like to congratulate the Secretariat in organizing the WSIS Forum which is a stakeholders platform which facilitates the implementation of the WSIS action lines. We also appreciate the effort in the fundraising to make sure that the costs related to the WSIS Forum are covered by sponsorship. This is a very good approach. This year like in the past six years Poland is supporting ITU in hosting the donors dinner on Monday evening. And we appreciate the efforts of organizing the first Hack‑a‑thon in WSIS. And we look forward to this and we are setting up a team. Thank you again. And we will see you all in June.

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

>> CUBA: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. On this document C17/8 Cuba recognizes that ITU‑Ts are important drivers of achieving aims and goals. And it is important for their use to be expanded in order to achieve the 2030 Agenda. Therefore we support a resolution, relevant resolution of the United Nations General Assembly which calls for close harmonization between WSIS processes and the 2030 Agenda. Therefore we support the aim to focus on the links between WSIS and the Sustainable Development Agenda goals. In particular the publication of the action lines of the WSIS together with a matrix for the SDGs. Would it be important information for the future? KIPO reaffirms its commitment to work together to create a people centered Information Society which is inclusive and development oriented and the Geneva action plan and action lines and the Tunis commitment and agenda and Information Society.

We would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the ITU on taking actions to follow up on the WSIS. In order to achieve a world to ICTs for all, there is a need to condition to work and fight to tackle the obstacles facing Developing Countries. These include a lack of resources and infrastructure and capacity and investment and connectivity, in addition to those related to financing Intellectual Property and technology transfer. Despite certain steps forward in progress we still are not looking at participative and democratic Internet Governance as regards content management. Each one of the international stakeholders to have clear definitions of its responsibilities. Finally we would like to welcome the contribution made by Russia on this agenda item and also like to welcome the work of the Chairman of the CWG WSIS. Thank you very much.

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

>> UNITED ARAB EMIRATES: Thank you very much. I'm speaking in English. Thank you, Madam Chair. I would like to thank Professor Minkin for all the efforts he said and that he continues to make right now in the Council in charge of WSIS. The Emirates is participating very actively in this activity and we encourage this Working Group to continue because it is a very important Working Group.

Madam Chair, there is another topic I would like to raise and we will certainly discuss the future. Concerning the dates of the seminar in the future in the coming years, this Forum coincides with Ramadan. I think this year, next year it is going to happen in the same way. It is going to be held during Ramadan. For Islamic countries it might be difficult for many Islamic countries to attend during Ramadan. And as this Forum is very important I would like to ask the Secretariat if possible to change the dates next year so that it doesn't coincide with Ramadan so that Islamic countries can participate with you, and we can send high level Delegations to this Forum. Thanks very much, Madam.

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

>> TUNISIA: Thank you, Madam Chair. After thanking Professor Minkin for his report and stressing the importance that Tunisia gives to this Forum, I would like to make the same comment that my colleague from UAE made towards the dates. Many Islamic countries holding this Forum during Ramadan would reduce the number of participants. For this year the problem has been solved, but for next year I hope that the Secretariat will take in to account the dates of the seminar so it is not held during Ramadan. Thanks very much, Madam.

>> CHAIR: Thank you. Any comments? India, you have the floor.

>> INDIA: Thank you. And good morning. And WTSA is an important area of our collective work. To enable and empower use of ICTs. The Indian administration acknowledges the contributions of Professor Minkin in CWG and also as the outgoing Chairman of the TDAG which has been effective in contributing work for the last four years. And this program which we are driving as a flagship program in India in ICTs has not many areas hacking in to WTSA subject areas and empowering the common man. We thank WTSA's report and Secretariat and Professor Minkin. Thank you.

>> CHAIR: Burkina Faso, you have the floor.

>> BURKINA FASO: Thank you, Madam Chair. Our Delegation associates itself with the previous speakers in thanking Professor Minkin for the high quality of the report he has gave. This shows the main outcomes of the WSIS Working Group and starts work on a new roadmap. The importance of ITU in implementation of WSIS outcomes is today undeniable. ITU has to continue to play this role. The WSIS Working Group has made a great contribution to this mission of the ITU entrusted to it by the UN. And this work should help to achieve the SDGs by 2030. This is why our Delegation would like us to approve this report in Council. Thank you.

>> CHAIR: Yeah, other counselors who want the floor? Saudi Arabia, you have the floor.

>> SAUDI ARABIA: Thank you, Madam Chair. Sorry to take the floor a second time. And I would like to support what has been said by the UAE. I would like to remind you of Resolution 111. Resolution 111 says that you have to take in to account the events. It is a resolution that was adopted by the Plenipotentiary Conference. And it says you have to take in to account religious events in countries when you start programming dates for any event. This is a simple reminder. It is a mere reminder so that we can reorganize things to take in to account Ramadan. Thanks very much.

>> CHAIR: Thank you. Any other counselor? No? United Kingdom, you have the floor.

>> UNITED KINGDOM: Thank you, Chair. Good morning, and thank you for giving us the floor. We wanted very briefly to thank Professor Minkin for this report around the work that he does and thank the Secretariat also. The work the ITU does on WSIS is critically important. And we strongly support the work that's done to align the WSIS action lines with the SDGs. In particular we wanted to thank the Secretariat for the work done on reporting to HLPF. It is very important for us that in this work we reach out to the wider development community because all of us in this room appreciates the value of ICTs for development, but what's important is we continue to make that case globally. And we have an outward facing agenda and see the contributions that ICTs make to sustainable developments. We support this work. And we wanted to thank in particular Professor Minkin for the important contribution he makes. Thank you.

>> CHAIR: Thank you. Professor Minkin, do you want to conclude?

>> VLADIMIR MINKIN: Thank you, Madam Chair. I would like to thank all colleagues for their comments, proposals and appreciation of our joint work. I'd like to reiterate that deadlines for the Council report to the High‑Level Political Forum under the auspices of ECOSOC, these deadlines meant that before the Council meeting the group had to consider these matters. And we really would like to have a Council decision to authorize us if because of the deadlines it is necessary to submit the report to the Forum before the Council meeting so that we are authorized to carry out this consideration and submission. Thank you.

>> CHAIR: Thank you. As regards the problem of the date raised by some counselor, I will invite the Secretariat to consider this problem in the next week. And we have to discuss about the scheduling of the next meeting. And now I will invite the counselor to endorse the report of Professor Minkin and to approve the resolution continued inside. Okay. The report is endorsed.

(Gavel).

>> CHAIR: And resolution approved.

(Gavel).

>> CHAIR: Thank you. And now I have the pleasure to invite the Vice Minister of China here.

>> LIU LIHUA: Thank you, Madam Chair. Distinguished Chair and Vice‑Chair, elected officials of the ITU, dear counselors, Ladies and Gentlemen, good morning. ICTs are developing rapidly and exerting profound influence on the way we produce and live. They have become important engines driving the sustainable economic and social development. ITU has always been committed to advancing the cause in the world and has played a critical role in enhancing the cooperation between Member States and boosting the connectivity and application of ICTs. ICT ‑‑ ITU has helped Member States leverage and utilize the ICT and improve their ICT development levels through a series of initiatives including experience sharing, technical and policy cooperation. ITU has advanced the development of the digital economy across the board and contributed significantly to human civilization and social progress. However we should also be aware that the development of ICT infrastructure and application is not even across the world. The digital gap still exists between countries, regions and social groups. A considerable amount of people are facing the challenge of being marginalized in the digital country. ITU needs to do more in advancing coordinated development.

The ICT sector in China witnessed the fast development in recent years, especially the ICT infrastructure. The high speed broadband Networks are becoming increasing popular. The new forms of business such as e‑commerce and sharing economy are developing robustly. Different sectors are going through the ICT base and smart transformation. The development of ICT has helped to improve the efficiency and the utilization of social resources has improved the productivity and people's living standards. This accomplishment to some extent can be attributed to China ‑‑ including ITU. And as well as the strong cooperation and exchanges with other countries in the field of policies and technologies.

As a member of ITU and ITU Council China is ready to share our development experiences with other Member States and support the sustainable and coordinated development of the global ICT sector so that more people can benefit from ICT. China will always support the ITU to play a bigger role in the global cause of ICT development. We will do the best we can to support the ITU in terms of capital, technology and capacity building.

Here on behalf of the Chinese Government I am very honored to announce from 2018 that China will increase its contribution by an additional six contributory units, that is from the current 14 contributory units to 20 contributory units. This seems a good news. I'd like to repeat, from 2018 China will increase its contribution by an additional six contributory units. Thank you.

At PP‑14 the Chinese Government had recommended Mr. Houlin Zhao to run for the Secretary‑General of ITU. He won the election in 2014. We are happy to see that in the past several years under his strong leadership the efficiency. ITU has improved and cooperation is enhanced and influence of visibility. ITU was uplifted. Here on behalf of the Chinese government I wish to announce that China will continue to recommend Houlin Zhao for re‑election at PP‑18.

We will have to count on your strong support for his re‑election so he can contribute his wisdom and talent to this organization in this very important position and lead ITU to fulfill its positions and mandates. China is ready to work with other ITU members to contribute to the prosperity of ICT undertakings in the world and fulfillment of ICTs. Thank you for your attention.   
 (Applause.)

>> CHAIR: Thank you, Vice Minister. Mr. Zhao you, have the floor.

>> HOULIN ZHAO: Thank you. We are very excited with this excellent news announced by Chinese Minister Liu Lihua. And we have been working for good news for some time. We had some good news from somewhere to consider to increase their contributions to support ITU, but this is the first time, this period that we get this clear message from China and increased not by two as they did in the past. They did increase their contribution from 10 to 12 at the Plenipotentiary Conference 2010 and then from 12 to 14 at the Plenipotentiary Conference 2014. So I thought maybe this time they would increase by 2018 to 18 but now they increased it by six units, up to 20 units. This is wonderful news. Of course, it is my experiences that with my contact many members told me that it is not easy to get any single money, additional money from their financial ministry. And I think the same is true in China. It is not easy to get this kind of agreement from financial ministry.

But anyhow, the Chinese Government finally decided to increase six units. I remember at the beginning the Chinese President come to the United Nations Office in Geneva and he announced that he will strongly support to strengthen the UN. And this increase of six units to ITU I think is one of the concrete results.

I would like to take this opportunity to appreciate very much the Chinese contribution to support the ITU. And in particular I would like to appreciate very much the person, he is a good friend of ITU for many years. He was at the WRC several times. He was at previous Plenipotentiary Conferences several times. And I think he made tremendous force and he made such big jump from 14 to 20. So I would like to take this opportunity to express my personal appreciation to Mr. Liu for his wonderful and great efforts to help ITU.

Of course, as far as Canada is concerned I also preserve the Chinese Government to give me another opportunity. Since this is not the right place to talk too much about candidate. I don't want to explain too much time for this. But on behalf of ITU, on behalf of this Council we sincerely appreciate the generous contributions of China and appreciate this support from the Chinese Delegation. Thank you very much, Madam.

>> CHAIR: Thank you. This is good news for ITU. And now I will invite to break for a coffee. And we can resume in 20 minutes. And this coffee is offered by Italy. That is my country. And so I would like ‑‑   
 (Applause.)

>> CHAIR: I would like to thank my country for the support given during my election and together with the Western Europe. Thank you.

(Break).

>> CHAIR: We can resume, please. So we can start, please. Can you sit down, please? So we can resume the work of this Plenary meeting of today. And the first document we can examine is the C17/47, about the ICTs for SDGs. And I give the floor to Ms. Bogdon, please.

>> DOREEN BOGDON: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. On behalf of the Secretary‑General I am pleased to present document 47 which provides information on the activities actions and engagements that the Union is undertaking in the context of the WSIS implementation and the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development. For the WSIS related actions the report points to the ITU's contribution to the implementation of the WSIS outcomes, the WSIS SDG matrix and stocktaking and stories. And this report was presented last week to the CSTD meeting. Reporting on the SDG related activities the document builds on the roadmap for the ITU related to the SDGs and these actions include the development of the ITU SDG mapping tool, which provides a comprehensive view of how the ITU's work contributing to the SDGs. And it shows the linkages to the ITU strategic framework, the Connect 2020 Agenda as well as the WSIS action lines. The tool enables users to navigate through the SDGs, the WSIS action lines and the ITU strategic goals and objectives to get more information on how the three sectors as well as the General‑Secretariat are contributing to the specific Sustainable Development Goals and targets. This tool was introduced and demonstrated during the Council Working Group on WSIS. And it has recently been updated to reflect the contents of our annual report on our 2016 activities that was presented in document 35.

The document also provides information on internal coordination. We have an internal task force on SDGs and WSIS that is led by our Deputy Secretary‑General. The engagement with the various UN system coordination mechanisms on the SDGs, in particular the chief executive board for coordination and its subsidiary bodies the dedicated 2030 Agenda task teams such as the interagency task team on science, technology and innovation. And this is part of the technology facilitation mechanism. The participation in the 2016 High‑Level Political Forum for sustainable development as well as other ECOSOC meetings and Forums and events is also highlighted. The link to our contribution to the 2017 HLPF that Mr. Minkin mentioned previously is also noted.

And finally, Madam Chair, the document provides an update on the launch and implementation for the hashtag for THE SDG campaign and that campaign is rooted in SDG 9 which is all about universal and affordable connectivity for all. But it also highlights the catalytic role that ICTs play in achieving each and every SDG. And if I may, Madam Chair, I believe that the Delegate of Algeria under the previous document, document No. 8, was asking about specific references and I think the ICT for the SDG campaign clearly demonstrates that as well as the mapping tool.

So we would be happy to give you more information on that if you so wish. And also, Madam Chair, another point that was raised I believe by the Distinguished Delegate from the Philippines I think he suggested that perhaps we could also be linking to the regional initiatives and perhaps we could also think about doing that in the next version of the mapping tool. And with that I conclude my presentation. Thank you, Madam Chair.

>> CHAIR: Thank you for your presentation. Now the floor is open for any comments. Please. Indonesia, you have the floor.

>> INDONESIA: Thank you, Madam Chair, for giving me the floor. Since this is the first time for me to take the floor I would like to congratulate you for your position as the chairperson in this very important Council meeting. And also would like to thank the Secretariat for preparing this document, 17/47.

Madam Chair, in regards also document 17/47 Indonesia would like to support this document and implementation of the WSIS action lines. We would like to propose the ITU to continue to collaborate with other related international organizations, including but not related to UNESCO and since UNCTAD is promoting broadband activity for e‑commerce. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

>> CANADA: Thank you, Madam Chair. And we would like to start by thanking the Secretariat for the presentation of this very good and comprehensive document. Madam Chair, we just have a couple of questions for clarification. And it is in regards of the ‑‑ to the second paragraph of the third section of this document. Particularly on the WSIS task force, we understand that according to this document that the terms of reference of the WSIS task force have been updated. The question for clarification, Madam Chair, is we understand we may be wrong but we understand that the WSIS task force is now merged with the intersector coordination task force. And that there has been a service order 1613 which apparently has reviewed the ‑‑ its own terms of reference. So we would like to know which are the specific revisions to the WSIS task force which in turn would be subsumed with the ISC‑TF that reports to the coordination Committee. Thank you.

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

>> RUSSIAN FEDERATION: Thank you, Madam Chair. I would like to thank Ms. Bogdon for this report and for the work that was done. And, of course, the General‑Secretariat, Mr. Johnson, who is the Chair of the task force. As far as I understand it the task force was renewed through the inclusion of its mandate of the issues of the SDGs and not issues of intersectoral coordination. So if beforehand we had a task force on WSIS and separately it was proposed that a similar group be organized on the SDGs then the last Council it was recommended that this group become one. And I report on that as part of my report on WSIS in the WSIS group. We worked very closely with the Secretariats on this issue. The WSIS group as I reported made a proposal and we are going to thank the Secretariat for taking that in to account. And it was used in preparation of this report and most importantly in the preparation of the Council's report to the HLPF. Thank you very much.

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

>> UGANDA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I join those who express appreciations to the Secretariat for this wonderful tool. I happen to have used it a number of occasions. And I seen it evolve and certainly a wonderful piece of work. I want to join one member who requested that there should be linkage to the regional groups, activities and relation to SDGs. I want to take it a step further maybe to go to the member countries. There is a lot that is happening out there that we think it is to be important to bring to the forefront, especially at a stage of the ITU for members to learn from each other. Much as I propose this I will be quick to add that we probably should do this considering it does not create additional burdens of a financial nature to the Union. So I would request that the Secretariat maybe talks to us about the possibility of capturing and collecting SDG related activities in Member States and have a way or a corner where they can be reflected. Thank you.

>> CHAIR: Thank you. Are there any other comments? So Ms. Bogdon, you have the floor. One moment. Algeria, you have the floor.

>> ALGERIA: Thank you, Madam Chair. We thank the Secretariat for this very important work and for this report. We emphasize the important role of ITU in cooperating with all the agencies and the UNDP on the SDGs. We know Developing Countries, especially in Africa face many challenges with respect to the SDGs. On the work which the ITU is doing has to be tailored to these challenges. And it must be within the limits of funding available. There must be multilateral funding and international cooperation so that all states of the international community can pool their resources to achieve these goals.

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

>> TUNISIA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I thank Ms. Bogdon for presenting this very important document. As you know WSIS is very important. It is of prime importance within the ITU. I think more focus needs to be brought to bear on the work being done in all international fora and conferences when they study the outcomes of WSIS. We have to make sure they focus on those projects which are really feasible for implementation in the field. Within the WSIS context what is really important is to be able to implement the outcomes in practice. And we must base ourselves on the report and studies which have already been carried out in order to achieve our objectives. As my sister from Algeria said we have to think about financing for these projects and we need additional financing to be brought in to implement the WSIS outcomes. Thank you.

>> CHAIR: Thank you. Are there any comments? No? Ms. Bogdon, the floor is yours.

>> DOREEN BOGDAN: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. And thank you Distinguished Colleagues and Counselors for those comments. And if I may respond to some of the points that were raised. In regard to the comment I believe that was from Indonesia and working with other UN agencies I wanted to confirm that indeed ITU works very closely with UNESCO on a number of activities, in particular on our broadband commission for sustainable development. And we work closely with the UNDP as well as UNCTAD. And I believe you specifically referenced UNCTAD with their work on broadband e‑commerce. Where we do focus on broadband connectivity and that was a UNCTAD led work all about e‑commerce. So we take good note of your comments.

Referring to the question of the Distinguished Counselor from Canada, and I believe that Mr. Minkin actually clarified for me, we have two groups. We have the intersectoral coordination task force which is led by the Deputy Secretary‑General. And we do have a document that will report on the work of that group. It is document 38. And we have a separate group which was initially just focusing on the WSIS and during the Council last year where requested that we unite those groups. And it is the task force on WSIS and it is led by the Deputy Secretary‑General.

Now coming to the comments of Algeria and Tunisia, certainly we agree with you that there needs to be more focus on funding and multilateral cooperation. SDG 17 as you probably all know is all about partnerships. And the Secretary‑General is working very hard to strengthen partnerships with Member States but also with specific organizations. We recently united with UNIDO, one of our sister agencies in the UN system. And we will be doing a High‑Level Event with UNIDO focusing on SDG 9 during the WSIS Forum.

And then finally if I can come back to the comment from Uganda, we will look at how to link the mapping exercise and better include linkages to regional initiatives. We take good note of initiatives of Member States. We sent out a circular letter at the end of 2015 when the SDGs had been adopted and we invited Member States to tell us about what they were planning to do, case studies, specific activities, projects linked to the SDGs. And we would very much welcome if you can share that information with us and we can see how we can best feature that within the mapping tool. And with that I conclude. Thank you, Madam Chair.

>> CHAIR: Thank you. And now if there aren't any comments in light of the clarification given by the Secretariat I will invite the Council to note this report. The report is noted.

(Gavel).

>> CHAIR: And now we can go to the document C17/10, presentation of the draft budget of the Union for 2018‑2019. I will invite the Secretariat, Mr. Ba, to present this document.

>> HOULIN ZHAO: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just to take ‑‑ I would like to say a few words about WSIS. WSIS is a very important platform for the global family to review the ICT development, to review the ICTs as enablers to facilitate our social economic development, in particular to implement SDGs. And we are very grateful with your strong support to our WSIS efforts. And we also preserve much ‑‑ many United Nations agencies give us support and as far as this particular issue we discussed that this year unfortunately the WSIS Forum is organized during that Ramadan period. When we take a good note and we will try our best to avoid it and this time particularly because the schedule of our activities and availability of big rooms in Geneva that we couldn't have a chance to organize this WSIS Forum this year during the period 12th to 16th of June. But definitely we will pay attention not only for WSIS but for any other big events that we expect to have participation of our membership.

So Madam, I would like to conclude by my sincere appreciation to Dr. Minkin for his strong leadership and also to appreciate my team. Normally it is not always to add this kind of presentation to the team, but the team worked hard and efficiently. And we see that our members appreciate very much the organization of WSIS. Thank you very much, Madam.

>> CHAIR: Thank you, Mr. Zhao. So Mr. Ba, you have the floor.

>> ALASSANE BA: Thank you, Madam Chair. Ladies and Gentlemen, Distinguished Counselors, on behalf of the Secretary‑General it is my pleasure to introduce document C17/10 which contains the draft budget of the Union for 2018 to 2019. There is also an Addendum 1 on the budget of the Telecom Secretariat for the same period 2018‑2019. The draft budget before you is balanced. The revenue is equal to the expenses without any withdrawal from the reserve accounts. The document is introduced by a forward by the Secretary‑General followed by an executive summary which presents the draft results based budget, the revenue and expenses overview, the revenue forecast and expenses requirements. The annexes contain the draft budget resolution as well as additional information on the draft budget.

The main aspects of the draft budget are the following, the draft budget has been prepared in accordance with the decision 5, Rev Busan 2014 and associated guidelines. The amount of the contributory unit by Member States is based on zero nominal growth and has been maintained at 318,000 Swiss francs as it was for previous budgets. 2018‑2019 biennium includes two major events, the Plenipotentiary 18 as well as the World Radiocommunication Conference 2019.

The draft budget for 2018 to 2019 amounts to 320.1 million against 321.3 million until 2016 to 2017 which is 1.2 million Swiss francs lower as you will see in the following table. This is made up of the four sectors, that is the three sectors plus the General‑Secretariat. The General‑Secretariat the amount of budget for '18 to '19 is 180 million. The ITU‑R 58.5 million, ITU‑T 25.4 million and ITU‑D 55.8 million Swiss francs.

The next table provides comparisons and variances between the budget of 2016 to 2017 and the estimates for 2018 to 2019. This includes the financial plan as approved at the Plenipotentiary Conference in Busan and it follows decision 5 which is also revised in Busan. Here in this table you can see in the first part we have revenue made up mainly of Member State contributions and contributions from sector members, associates and academia. We also have the section concerning cost recovery, revenue from interest, and also withdrawal from the reserve account where appropriate. In the second part of the table as I said earlier what we see are the lines for expenses, General‑Secretariat and the three sectors and as indicated between 2016‑2017. And 2018‑2019 we have a reduction of 1.2 million Swiss francs.

Revenue includes a deposit of 1.15 million Swiss francs. If you will remember Resolution 1375 authorized withdrawal of 2.5 million Swiss francs to fund the organization of WTDC which was planned to be held in the financial plan of 2018, but the financial plan of WTDC will happen in 2017 instead in Argentina.

Thanks to the savings from the voluntary separation fund program in 2016 and 2017 the withdrawal will only be 1.15 million Swiss francs instead of the 2.45 million Swiss francs as initially planned. Since the same amount which is being withdrawn will then be deposited in the course of 2018 to 2019 because of that there will be no impact on the reserve account during the period corresponding to the financial plan of 2016 to 2019.

The next table shows you the posts per sector and also for the General‑Secretariat. ITU management has made every effort to reduce costs related to staff. So we have applied a vacancy rate of 5% in the draft budget for staff cost calculations. It is possible through a combination of various factors. For instance, recruitment delays, the possibility for some staff to work part time and also leave without pay.

Implementation of the vacancy rate is challenging and it will need efficient management of vacant posts and recruitment processes. For 2018‑2019 we have had a freeze on 23 posts whereas for 2016 to 2017 we had 766 posts. Now for 2018‑2019 there will be only 743 posts. Three posts were not budgeted at all. And this was through the voluntary separation program. So now you see before you the breakdown of posts for the three sectors and the departments of the General‑Secretariat. Efficiency measures in annex 2 of decision 5 were taken in to account in the development of the draft budget 2018‑2019 and these are presented to Council in document C17/45. Some of these measures have already been implemented at various levels in budgets previous to 2012‑2013. Although it is getting increasingly difficult to identify further additional measures which would not impact on the Union's core functions, management will continue its efforts to find innovative solutions, particularly through the use of new technologies in its preparation for the draft financial plan 2020‑2023.

There is also a link between the Strategic Plan and the financial plan. The draft budget is presented in the form of results based budgeting. The linkage with the goals and objectives of the ITU Strategic Plan for 2016 to 2019 and the draft budget 2018‑2019 has been established based on the time survey as you can see in the following table.

Here on this table we have the ITU strategic objectives for the three sectors and the intersectoral objectives. We have the four goals, goals 1, 2, 3 and 4. And we have got a reallocation for these four goals.

Now for the reserve account status on the 31st of December 2016 we have 27 million which is over the 6% which was the minimum required pursuant to decision 5 revised in Busan. At the bottom of the table we have the ASHE fund. Since 2013 this has been improved, Council authorized payment of 4 million at its 2013 session but the General‑Secretary every time we close with a surplus there are one‑off payments to the ASHE fund. So I thought 31st December 2016 there is a positive balance of 8.5 million Swiss francs. In parallel to these two funds we also have the health insurance fund and as of the 31st of December had 12 million which is to compensate an increase in health insurance.

As you know as of 1st May 2014 we have left the common fund with the ILO and we now have a private insurance scheme instead. Addendum 1 to document 10 is provided for general information. This is the ITU Telecom Secretariat budget for 2018‑2019 which totals 11.1 million Swiss francs which is 4% higher than in 2016‑2017. The number of budgeted posts is 23, in 2018 to 2019 which is the same number as in 2016 to 2017. Council is invited to examine the draft budget for 2018‑2019 and to approve the draft resolution in Annex A to this document.

I hope, Madam Chair, that we will be having a detailed discussion of the draft budget in the work of the Standing Committee on administration and management which I believe is going to begin its work this afternoon. Thank you.

>> CHAIR: Thank you, Mr. Ba. Now the floor is open for general comments, please. France, you have the floor.

>> FRANCE: Thank you, Madam Chair. I should like to thank Mr. Ba for the high quality of his presentation and we commend ITU's efforts in presenting this balanced budget with the contributory unit at 318,000 Swiss francs as before. There is a difficult cost saving drive. So we think that Sterling work is being promised by ITU in this budget and the quality of the presentation is excellent. Thank you.

>> CHAIR: Thank you, France. Are there any comments? Saudi Arabia, you have the floor.

>> SAUDI ARABIA: Thank you, Madam Chair. We welcome the commendation of Mr. Ba and we endorse it. Yesterday we discussed the operational plan for the three sectors and deferred approval of the operational plan until we were sure about what we would decide about the ITU budget and any possible additional expenses, especially for WTSA. We said there was insufficient funding to implement all the decisions. So how are we going to deal with this problem? We have already approved the WTSA budget. It was approved within the ITU‑T sector.

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

>> UNITED STATES: Thank you, Madam Chair. I, too, would like to commend Mr. Ba for his excellent presentation and the ITU on their continued improvements that have been incorporated in to the budget presentation and really reflect a commitment to results‑based budgeting and results‑based management. We will save our specific comments on the unfunded requirements in the budget and other elements until the ADM Committee meeting this afternoon. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

>> MOROCCO: Morocco is following the efforts by the bodies of the Union to implement the recommendations of the joint inspection unit, but there are still much remains to be done for the ASHE fund. And there should be sharing of certain events and we have to also try to cut further the permanent posts.

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

>> RUSSIAN FEDERATION: Thank you, Madam Chair. We, too, would like to thank Mr. Ba and the Secretariat for preparing a balanced budget which is a cornerstone of the meeting today. The Russian Federation has submitted several contributions, inter alia, on the budget for the Radiocommunications sector in preparation of tables used in the budget. And we also plan to have these discussed during the Standing Committee on administration and management. Thank you.

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

>> GERMANY: Thank you, Madam Chair. First, of course, we would like to thank the Secretariat for this document which is very detailed and which provides a draft budget which is balanced. Now we took note of the previous discussions in the Plenary where some documents have been presented, that potentially ask for more expenses or a different distribution of the expenses. All this will be discussed in detail this ‑‑ beginning this afternoon, of course as mentioned by the Distinguished Delegate from the United States. However, Madam Chair, in order to have a better basis for this discussion we would kindly propose the Secretariat provide a kind of temporary document, summarizing all the additional requirements for expenses. And also telling us where this was ‑‑ this requirement is coming from. For example, there is the requirements coming from the WTSA decisions. There are other requirements coming from contributions. So that we have a better overview for the expenses. And it may be also advisable in this context to summarize the proposals for increase of revenues. There are some proposals in front of the Council and have a similar document summarizing in a table form these proposals. This would give us a better background on the overall picture of this draft budget. Of course, we will discuss every bit of these contributions in detail. Our proposal is simply to help the ADM Committee to do its work. Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

>> CHAIR: Thank you, Germany. Now the UAE has the floor.

>> UNITED ARAB EMIRATES: Thank you, Madam Chair. In addition to what has been said by my colleagues, the various ITU members we think that discussing this topic in detail should be left to the ADM Committee. We have some remarks to make. And there is a proposal to be presented by the Emirates concerning the increase of the budget for the standardization sector by looking in to new resources to cover the new expenses on the basis of what has been adopted in WTSA. I think the best would be to postpone discussing this document in order to allow ADM to discuss in detail everything that's in the document. Thank you, Madam.

>> CHAIR: Thank you. Are there any comments? No. So, Mr. Ba, you have the floor.

>> ALASSANE BA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I think we'll have a lot to discuss in the ADM Committee this afternoon. From the Secretariat's point of view we take note of the first interventions that we heard, particularly the proposal of Germany to have a temporary document that summarizes the supplementary needs that we have not integrated in the 2018‑2019 draft budget due to the fact that they didn't feature in the 2016‑2019 financial plan which was approved during the Plenipotentiary Conference in Busan in 2014.

The Secretariat is available to the participants and we stand ready to continue the discussions this afternoon at the ADM Committee to prepare this temporary document which will reflect the discussions. That's what I can say at this stage, Madam Chair. Thank you very much.

>> CHAIR: Thank you, Mr. Ba. So I will propose to the Council to continue this discussion in ADM this afternoon according to the proposal raised by Germany and approved by the Secretariat. And now we conclude the item in the agenda for this morning. And so I will ‑‑ I have the pleasure to give the floor to the Minister of Media, Information and Broadcasting Service of the Republic of Zimbabwe.

>> C. MUSHOHWE: Madam Chair of ITU Council 2017, Dr. Eva Spina, Ministers and Deputy Ministers here present, Ambassadors here present, Distinguished ITU Council Members, ITU Observer Members, the ITU Secretary‑General, Mr. Houlin Zhao, the Deputy ITU Secretary‑General, Mr. Malcolm Johnson, ITU Director of the Development Bureau, Mr. Brahima Sanou, ITU Director of Telecommunication Standardization Bureau, Mr. Chaesub Lee, ITU Director of Radiocommunication Bureau, Mr. Francois Rancy, ITU senior staff, Ladies and Gentlemen, on behalf of my Delegation and the people of Zimbabwe it is my pleasure to address you at this year's session of the ITU Council. From the outset allow me, Madam Chair, to express my profound gratitude to you and to the entire Council for affording me this opportunity to address this August gathering.

We are particularly delighted at this rare opportunity afforded to us given that we are an observer state. In this regard let me underline that Zimbabwe values the great work that the Council is doing in pursuance of the strategic goals of the Union.

Madam Chair, I also take this opportunity to renew Zimbabwe's commitment to the work of the Union. My country holds in high esteem the role of ITU as the United Nations lead organization for the development of information and communication technologies, ICTs. It cannot be doubted that ICTs are the foundation of today's knowledge society which is underpinned by the digital global economy.

My country has benefitted tremendously from the work of ITU through several projects, especially during the ravages of Cyclone Eline in the year 2000. As a result of the ITU interventions the global community has confronted the challenges of the 21st Century including climate change, cybersecurity, extreme poverty and natural disasters.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Zimbabwe believes that ICTs will facilitate the timely realization of the Sustainable Development Goals, especially relating to health, education, agriculture, and environmental protection, among others.

Zimbabwe has made an effort to use its resources to compliment or fill the work of the ITU. Zimbabwe therefore over the years hosted a number of meetings and conferences which contribute to the work of ITU and recently hosted the ITU‑R Study Group 3 work meeting in February 2017.

In preparation for the World Telecommunication Conference, WTDC‑17, to be held in Argentina in October this year, the Plenipotentiary Conference, PP‑18 to be held in Dubai, United Arab Emirates in 2018 I am pleased to inform you that Zimbabwe will be hosting the African preparatory meeting scheduled from the 3 to 6 of July in the town of Victoria Falls. I invite you to a reception that Zimbabwe will host here at ITU this evening from 1800 hours.

I cordially invite you all to dine with us as this will be an opportunity to network in a relaxed evening environment. I look forward to your presence at the dinner.

In conclusion, Madam Chair, I want to congratulate the ITU Secretary‑General Mr. Zhao for hosting this Council session and wish all Council participants a very fruitful deliberation. I thank you.   
 (Applause.)

>> CHAIR: Thank you, Mr. Minister, and also for your kind invitation. And now for some announcements. Ms. Bogdon.

>> DOREEN BOGDAN: Thank you. Before we break for lunch just a couple of quick announcements. This afternoon prior to the start of the ADM committee at 2:10 in this room the Republic of Korea will give a presentation on Telecom World in Busan. And we would invite you to come back from lunch early to hear that presentation.

Also, Madam Chair, as you mentioned this morning we will have the Ad Hoc Group this evening on CCV and that will be at 5:30 in room D led by Professor Minkin.

And finally I am pleased to announce on the occasion of the World Telecommunication and Information Society Day, May 17th, tomorrow, for ITU's 152nd birthday all councillors are invited to attend a special expert panel at the ITU here tomorrow in room C at 12:30. The panel will be on our theme for this year, which is Big Data Big Impact. And we are delighted to have joining us tomorrow experts from CERN, Swisscom, GSMA and others. We will be looking at how we can transform Big Data in to actionable information that brings about sustainable solutions. And we will be offering lunch just after the panel. Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

>> CHAIR: Thank you, Ms. Bogdon. And now we can say that the Plenary meeting of today is closed.

(Gavel)

(Session concluded at 12:16 p.m. CET)

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