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>> CHAIR: Good morning, Ladies and Gentlemen. We can start today. And at first I have to do an announcement. ITU is pilot testing a system to allow the remote participation of the Delegates. When making an intervention remotely please remember that your remarks are being interpreted in to six languages. Please closely follow the procedure that was submitted to you by mail. It is also important to keep the following points in mind, audio quality deemed satisfactory by a ‑‑ for the interpreter’s audio quality has to be near perfect. Audio quality may deteriorate without prior notice, hindering interpreters to provide a smooth rendering. Our interpreters may have to refrain from interpreting all together. A Delegate may on occasion be asked to repeat a statement and may have a statement paraphrased by an official in the room. Thank you very much for your cooperation and this concludes this announcement.

And now following the Steering Committee last night I would like to draw your attention to doc DT2 Rev 7. It was agreed that the document not discussed yesterday would be discussed on Friday morning. Today's schedule remains as planned. There will be a meeting of the INR drafting group at 12:45 in room G1 on the third floor of Varembe.

Now we can start with the first document of today that is C17/26 and it is the report of expert group ITRs. And the Chair of this group will present this report remotely. And I invite Mr. Borjon to present this report, please. Yes, good morning. You have the floor now.

>> LUIS FERNANDO BORJON: Thank you. Can you hear me?

>> CHAIR: Yes. Please.

>> LUIS FERNANDO BORJON: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I will be presenting the report for the first meeting of the expert on the International Telecommunications Regulation, the EG‑ITRs. The first meeting of the expert group on International Telecommunications Regulation was held on the 9th and 10th of February 2017 in line with PP‑14 Resolution 146 and Council 2016 Resolution 1379 open to all Member States and sector members as mandated by Council. The meeting was attended by representatives of 41 Member States, several sector members and other representatives, original and international organizations. The expert group received a total of 10 contributions, four contributions from Member States, one contribution of five Member States of Europe and one contribution from three Arab Member States, three contributions from the DRCC and one contribution from sector members. During the meeting the contributions were submitted in examining the approved agenda. The result of these activities is shown in items 4 and 5 of the report which I am presenting to your consideration.

Given different points of view on the subject I the Chairman suggested to identify the problems that we had, if any, from the point of view of the terms of reference of the group. This is commented on item 6 of the report. And we were supposed to be doing this under our review approach of the ITRs. In response various members noted that identifying, discussing the concerns in the 2012 ITRs is a way of proceeding with implementing the terms of reference. They noted the need for more contributions from Member States and sector members on the different issues as this would lead to a better evidence‑based analysis by the group.

There were discussions on the structure of the final report to Council 2018 as well. Some members expressed the view that it was premature to discuss the final report to Council 2018 while other members were of the view that the group should develop the structure of the final report at the first meeting itself. During the discussion the Secretariat clarified the schedule of the upcoming meetings. That is that will be held during the clusters of the Council Working Groups as mandated by Council and this will be on meetings from 11th to 22nd of September 2017 and January 2018 while the final meeting will be prior to Council 2018.

The date of this last meeting is expected to be determined as well by Council 2017 by this meeting as stated on item 6 of the report. Item 7 of the report lists the actions that the group agreed to take. On 7.1 I shall underscore, I'm quoting the report directly, "the group agreed on proceeding with a step‑by‑step approach. The next step will be to identify any challenges that may arise from the implementation of the 2012 ITRs in accordance with the terms of reference of the group. In this regard the group invites Member States and sector members to submit contributions as per the terms of reference of the group."

And item 7.2, the group further invites sector members to submit contributions sharing their experiences in accordance with the terms of reference of the group. This was something that was really underscored at the report and at our discussions on underlying the importance to have more contributions from sector members to learn from their experiences.

In conclusion, the Council is invited to note the report and provide guidance with respect to item 6 on the dates of the final meeting of EG‑ITRs prior to Council 2018. Thank you, Chair.

>> CHAIR: Thank you, Mr. Chair. And now I would like to draw your attention on two aspects. First I would like the Council to focus its comments on the report so it can be noted, and then they can discuss the dates prior to Council 18. Please, the floor is open for any comments.

Japan, you have the floor.

>> JAPAN: Thank you, Madam Chair. And good morning, everyone, colleagues. At the outset we would like to express our appreciation for this report and all group members, especially Chair Mr. Luis Fernando Borjon, his great chairmanship. As to the schedule of the final meeting of EG‑ITRs it will be held prior to Council 18 and we Japan believe this Council 18 means the one to be held in April 2018, not in October. Because in the case of Council in October all participants of the PP‑18 cannot have sufficient time to review the final report of EG‑ITRs which will be submitted with Council comments. So it is appropriate to set the final meeting of EG‑ITRs in April 2018. Thank you, Madam Chair.

>> CHAIR: Thank you Japan. China, you have the floor.

>> CHINA: Thank you, Madam Chair. We would like to appreciate the efforts and work done by the expert group on ITR and the report is very comprehensive. Ti contains rich information. Has also outlined the actions for the next steps. We highly commend your efforts as one of the basic instruments of ITU. The view and revision of ITRs is of critical importance to the development of ITU. At present the telecommunications environment and the ICTs are developing rapidly. Countries in terms of network, security, and regulations are also moving ahead. We believe that in the current circumstances the 2012 version of ITR is very important and it is necessary. It is also highly applicable for Member States. It can play a very important role to promote the connectivity and interoperability of the telecommunication network. It outlines general principles. So we support to study the challenges that may arise from the implementation of the 2012 ITRs so that we can keep abreast of the changing telecommunication technologies.

We'd also like to support the proposal to invite sector members and Member States to submit more contributions so that we can hear different views and different opinions from Member States so that we can actually find common ground from the differences so that we can further promote the work in this respect. Thank you.

>> CHAIR: USA you have the floor.

>> UNITED STATES: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. The United States would like to thank the Chairman Luis Fernando Borjon for the report and for his relationship in guiding the work of the experts group. We'd like to join with Japan in supporting the date of April 2018 for the final meeting of the experts groups.

We think it is very important to give members time to digest the results of the work. And we also find that general rule 45 requires that the Secretary‑General assemble the reports as inputs to the Plenipotentiary Conference at least four months prior to the opening of the conference. To delay beyond April would cause a great deal of difficulty in meeting general rule 45 and it would also create a situation where we were not able to cluster the final meeting of the experts group with other meetings of the Council. So we support the comments by Japan. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

>> GERMANY: Thank you, Madam Chair and good morning. We join other Delegations and we want the Council to know that we admire the Chairmanship of Luis Fernando Borjon from Mexico because it was a very tough task and as you can see the group achieved results in its first meeting. We support the content of the report. As far as the date of the last meeting of the group is concerned we fully associate ourselves with the arguments brought forward by Japan and supported by the United States. Thank you.

>> CHAIR: Thank you. And Dear Colleagues, I want to focus you on the report. It has been noted and then we can discuss the dates. Russia, you have the floor.

>> RUSSIAN FEDERATION: Thank you, Madam Chair. Firstly we would like to thank the Chair of the expert group for the magnificent work. On this agenda item we'd like to point out that two contributions have been submitted, ours and that from Brazil. We would like to request to be able to present the contribution before we consider discussing the issue as a whole. Thank you.

>> CHAIR: Thank you. If there aren't any comments I would invite Russia to present their contribution. Please.

>> RUSSIAN FEDERATION: Thank you, Madam Chair. Council 16 adopted Resolution 1379 creating the expert group on the International Telecommunication Regulations. The Russian Federation participated actively in the meeting, analyzed the report prepared following the first meeting as well as the text of Resolution 1379. And the Russian Federation has drawn up a number of proposals aimed at increasing the efficiency of the work of the group.

The Russian Federation invites Council 17 to clarify that the final report of the group must be submitted to Council 18 in such a manner as to allow for a holding of further three meetings of the expert group to be held before it completes its work. In addition the Russian Federation proposes to Council that it should recommend that Member States and sector members submit contributions to the next meeting of the expert group based on a structure with two sections. Section 1, future consideration of the 2012bITRs and section 2, applicability of the 2012 ITRs. We think this will help to structure the work of the group. Thank you.

>> CHAIR: Thank you, Russia. The floor is open for any comments. China, you have the floor.

>> CHINA: Thank you, Madam Chair. China supports the contribution submitted by Russian concerning raising the efficiency of the expert group. According to the 1379 Resolution at the Council the EG‑ITRs shall support to the 2018 Council a final report to be reviewed. And then submit these proposals to the Plenipotentiary Conference 2018. Now time is pressing. However, this expert group hasn't discussed on the structure or the framework of this group. Therefore we support the opinion of the Russian Federation to Secretariat or Council to further clarify whether this expert group will submit a final report to the 2018 Council meeting. With that we can invite Member States and sector members to submit their own proposals for better efficiency of the expert group discussions. So we could really push forward revisions and modifications to the regulations. That is all.

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

>> CUBA: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Thank you, Mr. Luis Fernando Borjon, for this document on the first meeting of EG‑ITRs. We have taken note of this very comprehensive report. We believe the revision of the ITRs is a very important element for us all here. We know that the telecommunications sector is developing very rapidly and countries therefore need to update their regulations. And therefore we need to examine the ITRs. Of course, we have many challenges before us but we have to address them. And we support the invitation to all members and sector members to make new contributions. We support the proposal of Russia, a draft structure for this report as proposed by Russia. Thank you.

>> CHAIR: Thank you. And to have a complete discussion about all the issues about this team, I will invite Brazil to present the review of the EG‑ITRs, please. The Councillor of Brazil has the floor.

>> BRAZIL: Good morning, everyone. I have the pleasure of presenting document 95 which has Brazil's views. And in here we present the four main issues that we should consider when we are discussing ITRs and the WCIT. With the issue of applicability of the ITRs and we believe this criteria can be applied in the work of the expert group. But the thing is that there are two main viewpoints on the applicability of the ITRs. And they are polar opposites of each other. One view is of the countries that believe that the ITRs aren't necessary and they are very clear about it. And the other is that from countries that think that the ITRs are necessary and this includes us, Brazil. So establish common principles, we think that they are very important. We see advances in the provision of telecommunications. For example, the provisions on roaming, they are very useful to improve roaming. There are other examples as well but I'm not going to talk about them, all of them.

But regarding the applicability of the ITRs, if there is no convergence of the views from countries that think that the ITRs are not necessary to they are necessary, a new WCIT would achieve the same results as the previous ones. Total rift in terms of the opinions on the Treaty and half the country is signing and half the country is not signing, that's not good. So we should see a convergence of opinions towards view 2, that the ITRs aren't necessary and then we can hope to have a successful WCIT. Second is the scope of the issue of the scope of the ITRs. So we should review the ITRs thinking about issues that really are in the scope of ITRs. They are not important only to a limited number of countries. They are really global issues. So we should review the ITRs with this in mind. Then we should review the ITRs looking at the pace of innovation of telecommunications ICTs. The ITRs shouldn't govern issues that change with the pace of the telecommunications. They should govern issues that do not change and that are relevant through the long gap between WCITs. As we put here there was a 24‑year gap between WCIT‑12 and WTC‑88 and we saw during WCIT‑12 that the ITRs were really updated. So we should have this in mind. The ITRs should govern issues that do not change so much over time.

Regarding the need for periodic review of the ITRs, the ITRs are very important. And they should be reviewed frequently. But that doesn't mean that we should have formal Working Groups for that. We believe that at the ITU Council and ITU‑T Study Groups they can discuss the ITRs and their provisions. And in here we make a proposal that maybe we should maintain a living document in the ITU with proposals regarding the ITRs. And when this document achieves a mature level of Consensus and development and countries are in favor of what's in that document, perhaps then we could expect to have a formal revision of the ITRs and a formal conference to review the ITRs.

Now we should also consider the cost benefits of holding a new WCIT and in here we present the difficulties that were present in the preparation process. There was no Consensus in the preparatory group that was presided by Russia. And this lack of Consensus pertained to the end of WCIT. And then here represent the costs of WCIT, which are considerable but we also should bear in mind that there were significant opportunity costs. Brazil, for example, we held one year prior to WCIT weekly four hour meetings with all the stakeholders and their cost ‑‑ they are costly. And perhaps we ‑‑ it would be useful to use that time in other productive issues. And the final issue is the impacts on international cooperation and ITU's reputation. We saw there was no Consensus, no Developed Country signed the ITRs and many key stakeholders, particularly from the private sector and Civil Society lost their trust in ITU. And this was very harmful to us and we cannot risk attaining a similar result. We should have strong Consensus on the importance of the ITRs and on the importance of holding a new WCIT before we consider going through that process again.

To summarize, we believe that this criteria could be used by the group. We support the proposal from Russia on the chapters of the report of the expert group. And we are going to present these views also in the expert group for consideration. Thank you very much.

>> CHAIR: Thank you, Brazil. Now the floor is open and Venezuela, you have the floor.

>> VENEZUELA: Good morning, Madam Chair. Thank you very much for having given me the floor. We would like to thank the Chair for the work carried out and Russia for their contribution. Venezuela is considering these regulations and it believes that they are very important for our sector. And we welcome the call for contributions to feed in to the debate. Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

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

>> EGYPT: Thank you, Madam Chair. I would like to greet you and all of the Distinguished Delegates present here today. I would like to thank the Chair of the expert group on the International Telecommunication Regulations and the representative of Brazil for their presentations. During the consideration of the report of the expert group we would like to point out some important issues with regard to the revision or review of the ITRs. As regards operators in the private sector who provide their opinion with regard to the applicability of the ITRs we believe that it is important for the private sector or sector members to also be able to give their opinion on the applicability of the ITRs. This happened at the last meeting. Though there were many discussions which opened up numerous possibilities with regard to the use and applicability of the ITRs.

Secondly, it is clear that in the discussions there were often diverging views on this subject. And we see that this is stated in the contribution from Brazil. There is a need for there to be three meetings. So the results of the work of the expert group can be mature and be acceptable so that we can discuss all of these issues in an exhaustive and useful manner. We support Russia's proposal.

We would also like to thank the Delegation of Brazil for their document. It covers a number of important points. The situation is serious. And quite frankly when we participated in the meetings of the expert group to prepare for the 2012 conference, WCIT, we noted that all of the work was quite slow moving and all the preparation that we had done for the conference was not fully utilized. This leads us to think that we should rethink the mechanism of preparation for WCIT, especially as regards ITRs. This should be more useful to ensure success of the conference. It should contribute to that.

We hear various opinions as saying that there shouldn't be ITRs, there should be ITRs. How we believe that are a cornerstone of the ITU. We need to respect the founding text of the ITU. These ITRs are a very important tool in allowing the ITU to achieve its aims. We should not say they are useful or they should be derogated. Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

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

>> CANADA: Thank you madam, Chairman, and I would like to take the floor in my capacity as the Chairman of TSAG. As you may know the meeting of TSAG took place the week before last and the matter of the ITRs was discussed. We have heard this morning a reference to the role of the Study Groups in providing information with regard to the implementation of the ITRs and, of course, this takes in to account the various discussions that took place at the Standardization Assembly which as you know took place in Hammamet last November, October. So, Madam Chair, without belaboring the point I did have an opportunity to take in to account the report of the Chairman of the expert group. And I did engage in a consultation with the Chairman prior to TSAG in order to be absolutely clear on the scope of the work that's being undertaken.

In that respect, Madam Chairman, the meeting of TSAG concluded that I as Chairman should solicit the views of the relevant ITU‑T Study Groups with respect to the implementation of the existing 2012 ITRs on and the basis of the information that is made available that would be included in the report of the Chairman ‑‑ sorry, of the director of the TSB to the next meeting of the expert group.

So this process is underway. We will be asking the Chairs of the relevant Study Groups to provide any existing background information on the existing ITRs so that that can be included in his report. So I just thought I would clarify that point, Madam Chairman, so there is no confusion as to the role of the Study Groups with regard to this matter. Thank you very much.

>> CHAIR: Thank you, Mr. Chair. And now the Chair of the expert group may take the floor, please.

>> LUIS FERNANDO BORJON: Thank you, Chair. I believe that this discussion is very, very interesting and very enlightening in the way that we have been working on the matter. However I think that we can note the report. I have not heard any comment against it. I think that's very helpful and I really appreciate that and reflects the spirit of everyone who participated at the EG‑ITRs.

So maybe we can note the report and on the matter of the structure proposed by Russia as several mentioned, I think they were highly contributing to the group. And I believe that as well having the structure as proposed and having a way to present contributions following that structure could be helpful. I think that the structure is in line with the terms of reference and could be very useful actually to form the final report to have the contributions presented in the matter and in the way that Russia is proposing.

So I believe we may be able to move forward. And, of course, considering the terms of reference of the EG‑ITRs we need to have three more meetings. So I would only suggest that it could be useful to have the report for the consideration of the April 2018 meeting but, of course, I'll leave that on your hands and on the discussion of Council. I'm very open to work as Council instructs. But I believe that people may need some time to, if I may say, digest the report to ‑‑ and then be able to have a fruitful discussion at the PP. Thank you, Chair.

>> CHAIR: Now we have a list of countries who want to take the floor. They are USA, Azerbaijan, Germany, Kenya, China and Canada, but I want to ask you if we can note first this report and then we ‑‑ if you agree we can consider the proposal of Russia. And then the third point is about the date of the last meeting of this expert group just before the next Council meeting.

So if nobody has a position about this, we can clear the list and consider these three points I said now. We have again four countries. Do you want the floor? Three countries. And the countries of Azerbaijan, Philippines and Japan are against the note of the report? Philippines. Okay. Philippines, you are against? So Philippines, please you have the floor.

>> PHILIPPINES: Madam Chair, I would restrain from discussing the merits or otherwise of the ITR. I have no objection to the proposals made by the Chair. But this is just a point of legal clarification and I do not intend ‑‑ I do not expect to receive a legal answer to my questions now. Because I recall that in the Dubai conference on the 22 ITRs there was an issue as to the matter of the so‑called periodic review of the ITRs. It was raised because when we talk about review, people sometimes use review and revision interchangeably. My point in raising this issue is just what do we mean by review. And then the changing of the ITR and I'm addressing this to the legal counsel of the ITU.

The point in my answer here is a clarification on what we are going to do with the ITR, the ‑‑ all existing ITRs. Or the 22 ITRs would go a long way in to our understanding on whether the new ITR that we may be able to issue may have an effect on the existing ITR. If there is a new ITR does this, in fact, supplant the old ITR or is there, in fact, only a change or an amendment of existing provisions in the existing ITR as are affected by the new ITR. Thus my question here is when we think of a changing or a review of the existing ITR are we talking of a simple amendment or are we talking of a revision of the existing ITR? The point of clarification here is if we agreed that we are reviewing the existing ITR only by way of a simple amendment which is a form of amendment itself, then the simple amendment, the new ITR simply will compliment the existing ITR. It will not supplant the existing ITR.

On the other hand, if by review of the existing ITR we have a revision of the existing ITR as one Delegate says that we are reviewing or going to revise the existing ITR then the new ITR may or would supplant the existing ITR as two. Because even know I am quite confused with certain statements there that some countries are bound by the old ITR. Some countries are bound by the 2012 ITR of Dubai for as long as they participated or otherwise acceded to the 2012 ITR. We are seeking clarification on this. And we hope that by the next Council we will get a legal clarification on this. I have no objection to the proposal of the Chairwoman just made recently. Thank you.

>> CHAIR: Thank you, Philippines. Mr. Borjon wants the floor. Please, you have the floor.

>> LUIS FERNANDO BORJON: I'm sorry, Chair, you gave me the floor?

>> CHAIR: Yeah.

>> LUIS FERNANDO BORJON: Thank you. Thank you very much. Yes, I think from the Distinguished Delegate of the Philippines and that we have had this discussion at the EG‑ITRs and I think that we have all agreed that we are on review process. As the councilman stated clearly I believe on the terms of reference. So I think there is no discussion on revision but we have all agreed that this is a review process. I think that the document from Russia is clearly expressing that as well, that we are doing that. We are seeking for applicability. And as I mentioned I think we all agree that we were looking for experiences even from sector members to get more input for the work of the EG‑ITRs. So I think on that matter we are not really looking to amend the current document. But we are really looking on how is the current state of the 2012 ITRs on this regard of applicability and legal issues. As it could be noted from the report there was some contributions and I can say that we also have some input from legal points of view, that there is no real conflict on the matters of having these two documents because they don't seem to be opposing one to each other.

So the documents are clearly applicable from my personal point of view. Would really like to have one instrument and I think that would be very useful for the ITU. But there doesn't seem to be any conflict right now. And actually we are not looking at let's say solutions for this. But we are only trying to analyze the question and review the process. So once again it is an applicability on legal matters. And if possible just to help in this discussion, I believe that as the Distinguished Delegate of the Philippines seems to be agreeing we may be able to note the report and continue in the rest of the discussions. Chair, thank you.

>> CHAIR: Thank you. I think with this clarification we can note the report. And then we can ‑‑ I will ask you if you agree with the proposal of Russia about the structure. Germany, you have the floor.

>> GERMANY: Thank you, Madam Chair. Well, I think we should be a little bit more consequent in either trusting or not trusting the work of the expert group. Now as the Chairperson, the very able Chairperson of the group expressed that the proposal of the Russian Federation is appropriate, I will have, of course, great difficulties to challenge it but from my point of view to a certain extent it may contradict the content of the report with regard to chapter 7, the step‑by‑step approach agreed upon in the group. Apart from this I would prefer that the group, which is called the expert group, so I suppose experts are sitting in this group, that the group itself defines the structure of its final report.

That would at least be for us the appropriate strategy. But as I mentioned the chairperson has expressed that the proposal is appropriate. So we are not challenging the proposal. Thank you.

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

>> UNITED STATES: Thank you, Madam Chair. And I wish to thank the Chair Luis Fernando Borjon for his wise words with respect to the direction in which his work is proceeding. The terms of reference from Council Resolution 1379 and also Plenipotentiary Resolution 146 are very clear that this is a review of the 2012 ITRs. It is not a revision. And when one looks at what the review should consist of it is also quite clear that it is looking back at the 2012 ITRs and not looking forward to what revisions might take place at some time in the future. For us staying true to the terms of reference is the most efficient approach to the work. We find oftentimes ourselves in discussions of really once again the terms of reference of how we should approach the matter. And that's taking a lot of our time. The matter of revising the ITRs or having another WCIT is premature at this point in time. We need to finish the task of reviewing the ITRs first. And let me say thank you to the Russian Federation for their interesting proposal and like Germany it is hard when the Chair has said the proposed sections of the final report are okay with him but for me section 1 and future consideration of the 2012 ITRs is looking in a different direction than the terms of reference have guided us. Thank you, Chair.

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

>> CANADA: Thank you, Madam Chair. And good morning to you and to all colleagues. Let me start, Madam Chair, by thanking the Chairman Fernando for your guidance and at the EG‑ITRs and also like to thank the Russian Federation for their proposal and the proposal from Brazil. Madam Chair, I think that there are several issues first of which is to reiterate the clear distinction between the terms review and revision. Many before me have already clarified this but I think it is important to understand that in some of the other five official languages of the union the terms review and revision may not have the same clear distinction as there is in English.

Secondly, Madam Chair, we'd like to in acknowledging the contribution from the Russian Federation and following the remarks from our colleague from Germany I think it is very important to let the expert group based on the contributions of Member States, sector members and the directors of the Bureau if necessary as per the Resolution of Council to determine the structure of the report based on the input received from the stakeholders I have just mentioned.

It is very important that the structure of the expert group is not done in a way that indicates a conclusion other than the review of the ITRs. So we welcome further contributions from Member States and sector members. At the first meeting of the expert group we had some but very few and particularly from the sector members that we profit from this opportunity to invite them to provide contributions. Again, Madam Chair, when we get to the point of discussing the next dates I would like to anticipate that for Canada the final meeting of the expert group is prior to Council 2018 April. Thank you.

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

>> JAPAN: Thank you, Madam Chair. And thank you for this proposal for ‑‑ from the Russian Federation, Republic of Armenia and the Republic of Belarus and regarding that structure of the final report, Madam Chair, as described in the first report of EG‑ITRs we couldn't achieve the Consensus since there were two views in the room. And the one view including Japan was that it was premature to discuss the structure of the final report. That means we don't have any agreed structure or any agreed section of the final report. So we cannot support the section proposed in this proposal. And if needed we need to discuss further at the next EG‑ITR an action to be taken as a next step is to keep the discussion based on the contribution to be submitted from the member sectors and private sector members, Member States and the director of Bureau. This is what we need to do as a next step. Thank you.

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

>> AUSTRALIA: Thank you, Chair. Australia would also like to join with others in thanking Mr. Borjon for his expert chairing of this expert group. We'd also like to thank the Russian Federation and Brazil for their proposals. Like Germany, the U.S., Canada and Japan Australia is also of the view that the structure of the report of the expert group should be for that expert group to determine. And for that reason we would not support the proposal in the contribution of the Russian Federation. And like others Australia would like to encourage and welcome contributions to the next meeting for Member States and other stakeholders. Thank you, Chair.

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

>> CHINA: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just now the Delegates have all shared their views on the ITRs. We think that the contributions from Brazil have gave us a relatively comprehensive picture of the status. We know that it is a status code that we have splitted views among the Member States. The majority of countries have signed the ITRs and a small group of countries fail to sign the ITRs. So that's a difference. The difference still exists from 2012 to 2017. So currently we need to consider the following issues, whether ITU have the capabilities or has a need to find the common grounds to eliminate the differences to sit down to have serious discussions to find something acceptable to all of the different parties. We should not adjust, try to have some discussions on the wording whether we should use review or revision. I think that is not the substantial issues.

I think we should try to do this, to improve the reputation of ITU and enhance the influence of the ITU. And we should try not to fall in to such situations that we do a lot of studies but we have no results. I think we should try to find something common. Try to eliminate the differences between us. Based upon the discussions I think that there is still a difference and which is quite obvious and it seems that there is no indication that we can reach Consensus. So facing such differences we should really think how we can make efforts to enable ITU to have a guiding instrument of a general nature or a framework of general nature which can benefit all parties.

We should just now try to maintain the current status quo and we have been actually studying how to increase the revenue for ITU and there is no result. And I think we should really try to act. Thank you, Madam Chair.

>> CHAIR: Thank you. Now we have a list, three countries. Egypt, Azerbaijan and UAE. And I will give you the floor and then I will propose you a possible way forward. So Egypt, you have the floor.

>> EGYPT: Thank you, Madam Chair. I would like to thank you for giving me the floor for a second now. Very briefly and in short, I would like to clarify what has been said by Canada. In some languages review and revision have the same word. Even though we have two words, the review is exactly what's being done by the expert group nowadays. And we are trying to see if we can keep the regulations as they are now. So that we can implement them in the same way that we have done in the past. I think we should not only examine the regulations without thinking about what you can add for the future. We have to think about the future. What would we need to revise, what do we need to add. In fact, when you think about review and revision it is two different things, two different stages but they are linked to each other. In order to take a proper decision I need to revise things. When we talk about review, we have to start by deciding what are the items that we have to look in to for the future. For the time being the expert group, the minimum to be achieved is to define the topics revised, at least we need titles. Maybe it is not yet time to decide on the final text but at least we have to agree what we should look in to, what we should revise. Because this is very important for the world of telecommunications. This should be the way to act to know what we need for the future so that you can revise it. In my opinion the two stages are different. They are separate and they are linked. Thanks very much, Madam.

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

>> AZERBAIJAN: Thank you, Madam Chair, for giving me the floor. We, too, thank the Chair of the expert group on ITRs, Mr. Luis Fernando Borjon, for the work which the group has done. And we support the contribution from the Russian Federation.

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

>> UNITED ARAB EMIRATES: Thank you, Madam. Good morning, everyone. Madam Chair, I will be very quick. I would like to join my voice to the Delegates who thanked Mr. Borjon, the Chairman of the expert group. I would like to thank for the concrete efforts made in this expert group. I would like to thank also the Secretariat for helping this expert group. And I'd like also to thank Brazil and Russia for their proposals and contributions.

Madam Chair, it is very clear there are two opinions in this room. As far as the proposal presented by Russia, I have an idea which could be examined by this meeting. In the proposal presented by Russia there are two parts. One part talking about the need to look in to the regulations of 2012. The second part is to look in to the applicability of these regulations of 2012. I think the second part of the Russian proposal is an agreement with the terms of reference of the expert group. We have to look in to the second part of the Russian proposal. For the first part we should transfer it to the group and there again you have two divisions, two parts. We had to talk about the provisions of the regulations of 2012 which might need to be revised in the future. I think this should be included in the terms of reference of the expert group.

We will have to think at one point about the new orientations, the new tendencies to be forged in the future. This hasn't been dealt with in the past. Therefore, my proposal is to concentrate on the second part of the Russian proposal. The first part of the Russian proposal should be transferred to the expert group to be discussed so that we can present their idea. And the second part, 1.2, regulations and provisions of the international regulations should be looked in to, would have to look in to the regulations implemented now to see if we need to revise them for the future. Without talking about drafting now or revising the text now, if we need to revise anything, we have to decide that. As far as new topics are concerned, we should leave them to the expert group to be discussed and to take a decision about them. Thank you, Madam.

>> CHAIR: Now I can suggest you that all the members of the expert group including Russia obviously, can submit their proposal at the next meeting of this expert group so that the structure can be analyzed at the next meeting. It is acceptable for you? Mr. Chair, please you have the floor, the Chair of the expert group. Please.

>> LUIS FERNANDO BORJON: Thank you. I think that's a very wise proposal. I think that we have contributions on this matter on the structure. There are some other ideas and if all the people participating at the expert group could be submitting contributions understanding this ‑‑ this guidance that you are providing that we might be able to discuss the structure during the next meeting, then we might be able to finish the discussion at this moment and then follow up with a discussion of the structure during our next meeting. So I can support your proposal and hopefully we can advance. Thank you.

>> CHAIR: Thank you, Mr. Chair. And now Canada, you have the floor.

>> CANADA: Yes. Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Just to follow on the intervention of the Chair, it would be Canada's understanding that this contribution that has been submitted by the Russian Federation by Brazil will be two of many other contributions that we expect to receive in the expert group. And it would be at the expert group next meeting. Based on the contributions that we hope we have many that we will determine the structure of the report. Thank you.

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

>> RUSSIAN FEDERATION: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'd like to introduce some clarification. We are not proposing right now exactly to fix what will be the structure of the report. We are just making a recommendation to Member States as to how they should submit their contributions to this meeting. So that to make the work of the group itself more structured. Thank you.

>> CHAIR: Okay. We can note this recommendation. Russia, thank you. So now we have the third point that is the date of the final meeting of this group. And it is possible to have these three meetings, yes, but all the date of the three meetings. And they can be in September, January and April, that is a possibility. And having heard all the comments and also taking in to account the 45 Resolutions and having also the Secretariat and the proposals can be as follows: That is, the final meeting can be the 12th and 13th of April of the next year before the 2018 Council. And it is possible also that the Secretariat can plan interregional prep meeting about this on the 17th of April. It can be a new calendar of this meeting of the expert group if you agree. So I can repeat, September, January and April and the last one in the 12th and 13th of April of the next year and it is possible that the Secretariat can organize an interregional meeting before the Council. Russia, you have the floor.

>> RUSSIAN FEDERATION: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'd like if I may to clarify the outcomes of discussion of the structure at your proposal. We would like nevertheless to move directly to the work of this group. Not take up too much time on discussion of the structure of the report. So we'd like to propose to instruct the expert group to develop the structure of the report at the next meeting of the group. And, of course, speaking now about the date of the meeting we are not really very happy with the short time between the third and fourth meetings but as a compromise I think we could agree but not earlier than April. Thank you.

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

>> CANADA: Thank you, Madam Chair. And apologies for taking the floor again but could we have some clarification as to the suggestion of the Secretariat convening an interregional meeting? What would that be and what would be the difference between a meeting of the expert group which includes the six regions from an interregional meeting? Thank you.

>> CHAIR: Thank you. Ms. Bogdan, can you reply?

>> DOREEN BOGDAN: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Perhaps if the Distinguished Delegate of Canada could hold that question because it is a suggestion that will come up when we discuss the document on PP reform. But if I could just clarify as the Chair was saying in the proposal that we will also look at next week when we talk about the scheduling of ITU meetings and conferences and there are three proposed slots for the expert group, one being during the block of Council Working Group meetings in September, the second one being during the block of Council Working Group meetings in January, and to accommodate a third meeting we are proposing that that could take place just prior to the April session of Council. And perhaps we should not discuss the exact date until we sort out all of the other timing of other events that will be discussed later today as well as next week. Thank you.

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

>> UNITED STATES: Thank you, Madam Chair. We can support your proposal for the three dates for the three meetings for the expert groups on ITRs. And we had the same question about Canada about what was meant by this interregional meeting. That seemed to come from nowhere. And we are looking forward to finding out more about that. We do have some concerns. Thank you, Chair.

>> CHAIR: Please Mr. Zhao.

>> HOULIN ZHAO: Thank you, Madam Chair. Good morning, Dear Councillors, Colleagues. I think this last question from Canada, from the United States is somehow justified with the questions, to be clear at you as Secretary‑General I'm not proposing that one and we have not discussed that one yet. And this is just under the consideration for this and a need. I don't think that it is elected officials have not proposed that as a proposal to the Council. So that let's wait to see what the discussion on the possible meetings will be prior to the Council meeting next week and I think that we will get a very clear message by that moment. Thank you.

>> CHAIR: The floor is for Mr. Borjon, please.

>> LUIS FERNANDO BORJON: Thank you, Chair. Well, I believe that for the moment it will be very useful to focus on the three sessions that we shall be having. I understand the concern for the work on April. But truly believe that it will be very useful for Council members and all members to note and the report that we present to Council 2018 on a timely fashion and then be ready to prepare for the PP and make the best use of the report and on the analysis that Council will do. So I support the dates proposed for the three sessions and I suggest we might be able to agree on this concrete matter. Thank you.

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

>> RUSSIAN FEDERATION: Thank you, Madam Chair. We'd like to point out that we have made several proposals concerning the recommendation or the development of the structure of the report at the next meeting of the group and also recommendations to Member States to send their contributions to the expert group in accordance with the topics which have been identified and we would like for these proposals to be reflected in the record. Thank you.

>> CHAIR: Thank you. It will be done. I think that we can note formally this report of document C17/26.

(Gavel).

>> CHAIR: And then we consider all these aspects we discuss now. Okay. Oh, yeah. Now it is the hour of the coffee break. So we can do a suspension of the work. Mr. Borjon has the floor. Yes.

>> LUIS FERNANDO BORJON: Well, just to thank everyone and grateful to accept my remote participation. I'd like to thank all the technical people at the ITU that make this thing possible and here at the European Commission where Mexico is participating on discussions with Europe on matters of telecommunications. So thank you for your patience. Thank you all to be and keep on the great work that everyone is doing at the expert group. And I would like to encourage all the sector members to contribute to. Please tell your sector members to contribute and we might be enlightened by their experience and thank you to all the Delegates and for the proposals from Brazil and Russia. Thank you, Mr. Chair. And Mr. Zhao, it is a pleasure to see you and all the directors that I can see. Thanks to everyone and have a great Council.

>> CHAIR: Thank you, Mr. Chair. For your great intervention. And now Mr. Zhao, please.

>> HOULIN ZHAO: Thank you to give me the floor again. I would like to take the floor to express our high appreciation for Mr. Luis Fernando Borjon for his wonderful contribution to this Council discussions because he is in Paris. And I thought that he might come here to present the report but he will leave. But he will stay with us for the ‑‑ for the discussion until this moment. So really appreciate very much, Fernando, for your very kind contributing to this Council discussion. But, of course, the task of this special group is not that easy as you can see from the discussions this morning. But I think that with Fernando's very skillful management and very strong visions for helping ITU to achieve our goals and I think with good cooperation from our Member States pretty sure that prior to the next Council in April we will have a good report from this group. So I wish Fernando Borjon a good stay in Paris. And if you have any chance to join us during the weekend you will be most welcomed. Thank you.

>> CHAIR: Thank you, Mr. Zhao, and we can resume in 20 minutes. Thank you.

(Break).

>> CHAIR: Well, we can start, please. Now in this second part of this Plenary today we can examine now two documents. They are the C17/6, C17/71 and I will invite Ms. Bogdan to present these documents. Please you have the floor.

>> DOREEN BOGDAN: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Ladies and Gentlemen, Distinguished Delegates, it is my pleasure to introduce document 6 which summarizes ITU's activities in terms of the implementation of Resolution 70 during the period of 2016‑2017, which was adopted by Council in 2013. Resolution 70 provides a framework for ITU's policies and programmes to mainstream a gender perspective in ITU and to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women through ICTs. With the involvement of the gender task force members several initiatives have been advanced over the last year. This document commences with information on data tracking. The Secretariat now regularly collects and publicly disseminates gender disaggregated data for ICT indicators which is available online through ITU's new gender dashboard.

The dashboard also offers visual overviews of gender in ITU meetings, geographical gender participation at key events as well as gender representation within ITU in terms of staffing, recruitment and composition of statutory boards. In terms of initiatives to bridge the digital gender divide ITU continues efforts on various fronts. From its beginning in 2011 the Girls in ICT Day, an initiative which is spearheaded by the BDT continues to grow. In 2016 the day saw more than 1900 events in 138 countries in which more than 67,000 girls participated.

In regards to 2017 we know that there are at least six new countries that have joined the campaign this year. This means that since 2011 the Girls in ICT Day campaign has reached over 270,000 girls with more than 8,000 events in 166 countries.

And we do expect these numbers to rise. The updates will be communicated on ITU's Girls in ICT portal.

Madam Chair, in September 2016 the ITU and UNWOMEN launched the equality global partnership which is aiming to bridge the gender digital divide in fulfillment of the Sustainable Development Goal No. 5 on gender equality by focusing on access, skills and leadership. More than 50 organizations and countries have been engaged in discussions and momentum is growing. The annual ITU and UNWOMEN GEM tech awards was held in November and three winners were awarded. And we are pleased to announce that we will be launching the call for the 2017 nominees during the WSIS Forum.

With regards to the UN agenda ITU continues to collaborate with entities such as the interagency network on women and gender equality as well as the UNWOMEN expert group. ITU monitors and tracks one of the gender related indicators for the Sustainable Development Goals which is the proportion of individuals who own a mobile phone by gender. The broadband commission Working Group on the digital gender divide which was co‑Chaired by GSMA and UNESCO launched its report at the March session and has laid out a set of recommendations to reduce the broadband and Internet access. And this report is contained in information document 8. Section 4 of this document outlines ITU's efforts in reinforcing the participation of women in ITU conferences. The ITU network of women for WRC, known as Now, was launched at the World Radiocommunications seminar last December and is working to build capacity for all Delegates in the runup to WRC‑19. Similarly the women in standardization expert group known as WISE was launched at TSAG last year with the first ever event in October at the WTSA.

Gender representation in Delegations is gaining increasing attention across the UN and other international fora. Along with the Permanent Mission of Australia ITU co‑chaired the impact group on the composition of Delegations which resulted in the publication shaping the international agenda, raising women's voices and Intergovernmental Forums. This report is contained in information document No. 5. The document also notes the document before you, document No. 6 also notes actions of women in aerospace European network as well as the ITU Secretary‑General's continued role as a gender champion. His role was reconfirmed last year when he made two new additional commitments; namely to improve gender balance in ITU statutory Committees and to encourage Member States to nominate women candidates for Chair and Vice Chair positions in Working Groups, Study Groups and conferences.

The final section of this document also addresses accountability mechanisms and includes ITU's gender equality and mainstreaming policy as well as the UN swap. The review of this policy, Madam Chair, is contained in document 71.

And now if I may I will turn to the second document which is document 71 where we are reviewing our gender equality and mainstreaming policy. This document also includes a proposed implementation plan for 2017. ITU's gender equality and mainstreaming policy was endorsed by Council in 2013. This document is a living document and calls for review every four years. In addition the 2016 session of Council instructed the Secretariat to launch a review of the gender mainstreaming policy. This was done through the Council Working Group on finance and HR when it met in January. Our review process was structured in three components. The first was to review the UN‑SWAP reporting. The second was to do an audit, and the third was to do internal staff consultations.

In terms of our UN‑SWAP reporting ITU reports annually to the UN‑SWAP and we have done so since 2012. The SWAP is the United Nations system wide accountability framework which is designed to measure and drive progress towards a common set of gender equality standards. There are 15 performance indicators and they are applicable to all entities, departments and offices of the United Nations system. ITU is currently meeting five of the 15 indicators. We are approaching requirements for six of those indicators. An information document No. 7 we have provided for the information of Council, the acknowledgements and the analysis by UNWOMEN of our 2015 submission. The second component of our review process involved an audit of gender equality and mainstreaming within the ITU. And I would note that this is a requirement of the UN‑SWAP. The Secretariat requested ITU's internal audit unit to complete a review in the first quarter of this year. The audit is currently being finalized and an initial finding shows the importance of aligning with UN‑SWAP and to reviewing the accountability mechanisms to ensure that implementation happens.

The third element of our review involved consulting with staff and in addition to face‑to‑face meetings all ITU staff in headquarters and in the region were invited to review and comment on the policy itself as well as on priority actions for the upcoming year. One of the key findings of the overall review was that our policy needs to be more detailed. It was also noted that our policy does not cover all of the UN‑SWAP indicators. And that better alignment was needed with the Strategic Plan as well as greater detail for implementation, particularly in regards to timelines as well as allocated financial and human resource requirements.

Considering the findings of the review process we have proposed in document 71 for your endorsement an implementation plan that has been structured to align with the UN‑SWAP. I mentioned before that there were 15 components and there are two new that are being added which is why this document is structured in 17 sections. It aims specifically to improve compliance with the UN‑SWAP. And each of the sections as I mentioned is aligned to their requirements. There is a brief introductory section as well as an indication of what is required for ITU to meet that indicator. We have also listed in that document how we reported in 2016. And as you will note there are a number of activities that we are planning to advance each of these indicators noting accountabilities ‑‑ noting accountability and timelines for each.

Before I conclude my presentation, Madam Chair, of document 6 and 71 I would like to extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to all of the men and women that are a part of the ITU gender task force. And with that, Madam Chair, the Council is invited to note both document 6 and 71 as well as to endorse the implementation plan contained in document 71. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

>> SPAIN: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I would like to congratulate the ITU Secretariat on the excellent work. For Spain the topic of gender equality is one of our priorities connected to the Sustainable Development Goals. And we would like to urge the ITU to continue with your activities. It is still highly required and you can see that less than 20% of the nominations for Chairmanship and Vice Chairmanship of Council Working Groups are women. We urge you to continue in this direction. Thank you.

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

>> FRANCE: Thank you, Madam Chair. We would like to congratulate ITU on its awareness and activities and gender equality and leadership of the Secretary‑General. We urge ITU to continue and increase the scope of this work to achieve true gender equality within its framework and especially through current or future recommendations from Secretary‑General Guterres which is applicable to the entire United Nations system.

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

>> CANADA: Thank you, Madam Chair. And first of all, we would like to thank the Secretariat for the submission of document 6 and 71. And particularly we would like to thank Ms. Bogdan for the leadership she has exercised during many years in the advancement of gender equality in the ITU and outside the ITU.

We just have a couple of questions, Madam Chair, in regards to the implementation plan, and it's particularly on the issue of first the audit that we understand it has been finalized. We would, of course, be keenly interested in seeing when it will be published. Secondly on sections 9 and 10 of the implementation plan. We see on No. 9 that there is a need to estimate the resource level used to promote gender equality and women's empowerment and at the same time on resource allocation there is a statement to the affect that there is no budget allocation for gender activities in the budget 2017‑2018. If it is gender equality, a priority in ITU what steps need to be taken to ensure that this gets the proper appropriate funding. And we believe that at this Council we should discuss specific measures that need to be taken in to consideration to ensure that this very good work continues. Thank you.

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

>> CUBA: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Cuba was the first country to sign the United Nations Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women. And it was the second in the world to ratify it. Cuba in addition to this also sheltered the commitments made at the level of heads of state at the fourth international women's conference which was celebrated in Benin in ‑‑ I beg your pardon, in Beijing in 1995 which gave rise to the Beijing platform of action. We also contributed to the creation of UNWOMEN. At the same time Cuba fully supports the agreements from the 2030 Agenda. And we are satisfied with the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 5 linked to empowerment of women and girls and ensuring a cross‑cutting consideration in the 2030 Agenda of the gender aspect.

Cuban women are active protagonists and this is one of the social phenomena that has been most successful in our country. Women are 48.5% of parliamentarians in our country. In the area of telecommunications we should like to highlight that 22 Universities involved in the Ministry of Higher Education have ‑‑ well, well, out of these 22 ten of them are directors. We celebrate the international Girls in ICT Day in Cuba. This year the celebrations we had were aimed at increasing the interests of girls and young women in careers in ICTs through education and recreational activities that would allow them to get to know technologies and to have contact with students and teachers in this area as to raise the profile of ICTs in the country.

Madam Chair, Cuba supports the activities which are supported by the ITU to push for the inclusion of a gender policy in the Union. These efforts are a part of the actions pursuant to gender equality and women's empowerment both at a global level and within the specialized agencies of the United Nations system. We believe that the application of Resolution 70 adopted at the Plenipotentiary Conference on the inclusion of a gender perspective in the ITU and gender equality should continue to be a priority for the Union in the future. We support the ITU's GEM policy adopted in the Council in 2013. And we believe this should be a dynamic policy and just future challenges.

We welcome the reports, C17/71 and C17/6, the former is on the review of the ITU's gender equality mainstreaming policy and proposed implementation of a plan for 2017. In the view of the work of the United Nations as a whole as gender mainstreaming and empowerment we believe it is important to develop its policy to include better indicators. Therefore we support the implementation plan proposed for 2017. And we hope to receive an annual report on the application of this plan to the 2018 Council. And we support the statement made by the representative of Canada. Thank you very much.

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

>> UNITED STATES: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I would like to congratulate the ITU as an organization, Mr. Zhao as its head and Ms. Doreen Bogdan‑Martin who has been the world leader on gender equality. The new gender empowerment initiative, the EQUALS programme, which I have been pleased to participate in, was recognized at Germany's G20 and that really speaks to its prominence and importance.

The United States supports the ITU for embracing the issue of more gender balance in the workforce and activities of the Union. We know that rebalancing the workforce can be a multi‑year effort. And we encourage continued focus on this area. The United States is a strong proponent of the work to promote key ICT indicators by gender. This data will be essential in helping policymakers to understand why women are lagging in adoption in use of ICTs.

Regarding the report on the UN‑SWAP programme we applaud you for taking this programme seriously and we note the rigor that you applied to the analysis and compliance efforts. As our colleague from Canada stated we need to consider the budget implications of making gender equality a priority. And note that it is in the parking lot of issues for which budget is needed but not included in the budget for 2018‑2019. Thank you.

>> CHAIR: Thank you.

>> THAILAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. Thailand would like to thank the Secretariat for the comprehensive document. I just would like to take this opportunity to share our activity, Girls in ICT Day. In Bangkok, Thailand, the Ministry of Digital Economy and Society and the ITU regional office for Asia and Pacific launched a capacity building programme on 2017. This programme impacting digital skills to more than 100 female University students. We support from Cisco Systems Thailand, Microsoft Thailand and Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. Land in parallel building the 1st July 2017. That are the ‑‑ using ICT. Cisco certified network and switching caught first website. So we plan next year we will continue this programme again. Thank you for taking ‑‑ thank you. Thank you.

>> CHAIR: Thank you. And now I will propose you to close the list because I have a long list of interventions. And we have Kuwait, Philippines, Australia, UAE, Korea, Azerbaijan, Switzerland and Bangladesh. There is no space enough in the video. Romania. Yes. So I think that all of us share the support for this team. But it is ‑‑ we can respect only these intervention requests. Thank you. And Kuwait, you have the floor.

>> KUWAIT: Thank you, Madam Chair. We commend the Secretariat on this document. I thank Ms. Bogdan. We are very proud of our achievements within ITU. ITU has made great efforts to empower women in conferences and enable them to hold high positions in ITU. We hope this will continue in the future and we support document 6 and 71. Thank you.

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

>> PHILIPPINES: Thank you, Madam Chair. And I would like to extend our appreciation for the Secretariat and Ms. Bogdan for this report on ITU's activities relating to document 17. Undertaken by ITU since Council 2016 the further gender equality and mainstreaming and women empowerment in accordance with Resolution 17. Noted among others is the launching in September of 2016 by the ITU and the ‑‑ ITU UNWOMEN of EQUALS initiative which aims to bridge the gender digital divide in fulfillment of the Sustainable Development Goals focusing on complimentary and cross‑cutting areas of action, namely access on skills and leadership. The Philippines further expresses its appreciation to ITU for the events and other activities which aim to reinforce women participation in ITU's main conferences such as the launching of the ITU network of women for WRC or #now. An initiative reinforcing women's participation in ITU's main conferences. That was launched in the regional seminar in December of 2016.

Another interesting initiative is the launching of the women in standardization expert group or WISE. Data communication standardization advisory group conference in February 2016. This is an effort to further expand the voices of women in the ICT sector.

The ITU through its gender task force should continue its efforts to promote goal 5 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals, which is about achievement of gender equality and empowerment of women and girls by helping promote women empowerment to ICTs.

Moreover gender equality is a fundamental right and it is a necessary foundation for a peaceful and prosperous world. And I think that everyone will agree with this. The Philippines along with other Member States is one with ITU in calling for gender equality and women empowerment. The Philippines constitution, our constitution provides and recognizes the role of women in nation building and shall ensure the fundamental equality before the law of women and men. The Philippines is a signatory to the Convention of the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women or CEDAW. Therefore, Madam Chair, the ITU can count on the Philippines to support measures that would make gender equality. I would like to express the support on gender plan contained in document 71. Thank you very much. Good day to all.

>> CHAIR: Dear Councillors, can I invite you to be brief?

>> AUSTRALIA: We would like to congratulate Secretary‑General Zhao, a proud international gender champion, Council secretary Ms. Bogdan and the gender task force on the activities reported in document 6. It has been an honor for the mission of Australia to collaborate with the ITU UNWOMEN and the international gender champions on the publication of this document. Shaping the international agenda and raising women's voices in international Forums. I would like to commend this publication to you. It is available at information document 5 and there are a hard copies with Ms. Pluchon in the Secretariat.

This publication was prepared by the impact group on the composition of Delegations and panels which was co‑chaired by the ITU and Permanent Mission of Australia. Particular congratulations must be directed to Ms. Beatrice Pluchon who provide a commendable leadership above and beyond her day job.

The document was released at the UN in Geneva on the 20th of March. It was launched in New York on the 2nd of May and was presided over by Ms. Lana Nusseibeh, permanent representative of the United Arab Emirates along with Mr. Peter Thompson. This brings in to sharp focus a phenomenon that is all too familiar and that women continue to be underrepresented in Intergovernmental fora.

Since 1990 the UN has sought to remedy this situation by setting targets that have been failed to have been met. Also on our own national Delegations. Its publication includes recommendations to take effective action based on clear evidence, recommendations for Member States, for Secretariats, for Ministers, Ambassadors and heads of organizations. These recommendations are relevant to all of us as we prepare for Plenipotentiary 18.

Chair, I commend this publication to you, to the Council and to ITU management to encourage its recommendations are integrated in to the implementation of the plan of the GEM policy for the ITU going forward. Thank you.

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

>> UNITED ARAB EMIRATES: Thank you, Madam Chair. We thank the Secretary‑General and ITU in general for the efforts made to promote gender equality. Also our thanks go to Ms. Bogdan‑Martin for her work in this area. She is showing us very clearly in the reports what ‑‑ how great her commitment is. We commend the role of the ITU in this area. And the United Arab Emirates are also very interested in promoting gender equality. We are asking ITU to carry on the good work in this area.

And now Chair, I would like to tell you that the youngest Minister we have in the UAE is a woman. She is the Minister for Youth. She was appointed last year at the age of 22. I just wanted to share that with you. Thank you.

>> CHAIR: Thank you. It is good news. Korea, you have the floor.

>> REPUBLIC OF KOREA: Thank you, Madam Chair. We pay our respect to the efforts done by the ITU in accelerating the gender mainstreaming process within ITU and in fostering the use of ICTs to advance gender equality and women's ‑‑ and women's empowerment. It is impressive to see that ITU makes such active efforts in achieving gender equality not only in events but also in the Chairmanship of meetings and in Delegations. In addition the SDGs emphasize the role of ICTs in promoting the empowerment of women. And the equal initiative jointly launched by ITU and UNWOMEN will greatly contribute to gender equality and women's empowerment. And these activities will lead to greater participation of women in the field of ICTs in the future. And we will have laid the ground for the true gender equality. Thank you.

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

>> VENEZUELA: Thank you very much, Madam Chair, for having given us the floor. We congratulate the ITU for the work that they have done to favor gender equality. And I'd also like to congratulate Ms. Bogdan for the efforts she has made. We welcome the report. And we welcome the efforts made by the Secretariat. Our administration is carrying out actions, particularly ICTs. In the area of training and increasing human capacity our Governments have provided equal opportunities in the Universities working on ICTs. It supports the national system for enrollment in Universities. We support the system for the creation of the national experimental University for research in telecommunications. This will be a new educational platform supported by technology developed by the Venezuelan Government. Important research laboratories there and development laboratories, too.

And we are also looking at conformance in interoperability, electromagnetic safety, climate conditions, and have laboratories available for fiber optic and electronic card microchip laboratories. We also are focusing on space activities and there are other platforms being covered in this important project. We are also noting that women have been playing a key role in ICTs as directors, managers of departments and in a crucial post within organizations. Our Government promotes women in crucial roles, particularly in the area of telecommunications and ICTs. In our country women who are in the area of ICTs are ‑‑ the figure stands at 50%. Our state continues to make efforts to empower the world's population through ICTs bearing in mind an equal perspective and, of course, taking in to account gender equality. We stand ready to share our experiences with you. Thank you very much, Madam Chair and Distinguished Delegates.

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

>> RWANDA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'd also like to add my voice to congratulate ITU on the work being done in the area of gender empowerment and mainstreaming. I would like to make a contribution, one from Rwanda but also in the context of Smart Africa. Rwanda has enshrined gender equality and empowerment with a requirement that 30% of gender making decisions have to be women. This is based on an understanding that you cannot develop a country while ignoring 52% of the population which in our case are women. I wanted to share very few statistics. We have the highest representation of women in Parliament at 64%, 50% in judiciary, and 40% cabinet. This is in decision making positions. 18% are men only land rights and 26% women only and 54% co‑owned by men and women. It is a very interesting statistic. I thought I should highlight.

I also wanted to talk briefly Smart Africa which has put empowerment of women as one of the mainstreams in which work is being done. They recently concluded the Trans‑Africa Summit. One of the main tracks was around bridging the digital divide. With a very interesting initiative we called Ms. Gig where we are trying to promote young girls and inspire them to solve some of the largest problems and most challenging in Africa through ICT and impress on young girls that they can continue to excel in ICT and continue to be a Miss.

I would also like to highlight that through Smart Africa efforts are being coordinated across the continent to make sure that we are all moving together in empowering women and working together to bridge the gender digital divide.

I would like to end by adding Rwanda's support to the ITU activities in this area and calling upon Member States to continue to prioritize women empowerment and gender mainstreaming. I think we can achieve much more even within the digital revolution by empowering women as I said earlier that consist of the 50% of the world's population. Thank you.

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

>> AZERBAIJAN: Thank you, Madam Chair, for giving me the floor. We thank the Secretariat for the report. On the issue of women it is difficult to be brief. But since you are a Chair and a lady and you are asking us to be brief, I'll just tell you that in Azerbaijan we also attach great importance to women in ICTs. And every year in accordance with the recommendations of ITU we can have Women in ICT day on the 27th of April this year we organized an event in Baku. There was a conference with the ITU regional office in Moscow. Thank you.

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

>> SWITZERLAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. I merely wish to also express Switzerland's support to the ITU, the Secretariat and Ms. Bogdan for their work on gender empowerment in ICTs. The gender imbalance and technical professions is something we are also experiencing on a national level. We are trying to work with schools on a local level in order to encourage young women to be interested in and start a career in technical professions which sometimes isn't easy. We are certain that improving this balance will not only benefit to women but it will be of benefit to all of our societies as well.

>> CHAIR: Thank you. Romania and then we have two other countries. Thank you.

>> ROMANIA: Thank you. Thank you, Madam Chairwomen. And I hope this word will catch up. Since it is the first time that we formally take the floor we would like to congratulate you for your appointment and I might say already for the great work until now and wish you a successful meeting.

As well you are as well gender balancing the ITU at this very moment and setting examples for all women in the room actually. Romania would like to congratulate the ITU on its activities on enhancing gender equality with special thanks to Mr. Zhao for his constant efforts and to Ms. Bogdan for her excellent work.

Like our Distinguished Colleague from Spain said earlier we would like to stress the importance of the continuation of work and promotion of women for candidacies as Chairs and Vice Chairs within the ITU groups. We would firmly encourage more ladies to be confident and apply for this position. Many times women have the skills and knowledge but lack the confidence. Romania's ICT sector is one of the gender balanced ones due to education in this direction. Percentages in the University classes on computer science and telecommunications in the last 15 years have reached 50% for women. We believe that the gender balance policy should continue to be a priority for us all. Thank you, Madam Chairwoman.

>> CHAIR: Thank you. Thank you also for your appreciation. And then Bangladesh, you have the floor.

>> BANGLADESH: Thank you, Madam Chair. The presented report and information documents are very comprehensive. Gender equality, mainstreaming and women empowerment is very important for Bangladesh as well. The Government of Bangladesh has already formulated a national women's policy aiming to ensure empowerment of women. Due to the proper measures taken by the Government Bangladesh ranked 7th among the top ten countries of political empowerment of women.

Madam Chair, for your information the present head of the Government, the head of the opposition leader, the speaker of the National Assembly and more importantly the Telecom Minister are women in Bangladesh. Women have been appointed as vice chancellors as well in public University. A gender sensitive budget is being prepared in 40 ministries for ensuring women participation in public functions. The present Government has created facilities for educated women on getting training on computer information and communication technologies for expanding job opportunities to accelerate women empowerment. As a result we find more women are employed in various knowledge based industries. This changed scenario indicates a positive attitude towards women employment. ICT is not only creating employment for women but also creating a chance for them to emerge as entrepreneurs, especially in SME. Women are encouraged to take initiatives to invest in ICT. And they are also improving their competence using ICT as an entrepreneur in different sectors.

Finally we appreciate the efforts of the ITU for gender equality and mainstreaming. And hope that ITU will continue the activities in this arena. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

>> SENEGAL: Thank you, Madam Chair. We would like to thank the General‑Secretariat for the high quality of the report. And we'd also like to thank Ms. Bogdan for the actions that have been taken for gender empowerment and mainstreaming. In Senegal we have a number of initiatives with regard to Resolution 70 such as Women in ICT day which we have been organizing since 2012 and also on digital empowerment of women. Training in ICTs and ICT careers as we also have various prizes for female innovators and those who found companies.

We also have a female entrepreneurship programme which we carry out periodically. In the ‑‑ and we also are trying to ensure gender equality and parity in elected posts in Senegal. Thank you.

>> CHAIR: Now I pass the floor to the Secretary‑General and I invite him to respond to the two questions from Canada that was discussed in ADM, I think. Please.

>> HOULIN ZHAO: Thank you, Madam Chair. I see that this is a unanimous feeling that we consider women's issues quite important and unanimously appreciate ITU's work. I would say this work is possible, mainly because you unanimously support it and unanimously contribute to the work. I would like to take this opportunity to appreciate you our Member States, our members to support ITU to pick up this important job and then to support this job. Otherwise we cannot make progress. So I wish to encourage you to continue to support ITU to work on this issue. Of course, I'm very pleased and very honored to be invited by the Geneva based diplomat community to be a champion for gender issues. And I did that seriously in my daily operation. And I convey messages to encourage our work to heads of Governments to support our gender campaign. And I am very pleased that in the last meeting with President or President Benin and I invited him to join our celebration of 27th April for ICT for Girls and he immediately marked the date on his agenda. And also I was very pleased to share with you some information that our UN last ICB meeting had in Switzerland from 26th to 27th.

At lunchtime of 26th we had women's issues and I presented ITU's work which is appreciated by the ICB and in the afternoon we moved from Geneva to Montbrillant. I did not take any other topic but I spoke with the Chairman of young women for almost one hour to discuss how can we continue to make a force to empower our women and girls. And then next day, 27th we had our internal closed door meetings. And I invited half of the participants to serve with me to support ICT for Girls Day. Because the 27th of April is our special day. They were all pleased. And Christian Lagrant shared this thing that it is a very good initiative.

No matter how hard we worked 'til now and it is very painful to see the gap between women and men in the ICT field is still getting bigger. So that is a long way for us to go and we have to continue.

And now for these particular questions from Canada, I think that one question is for internal audit. I think that is almost done, and I think that internal audit already met effort. And that shall be, you know, available to you if you wish to have that one. And to my knowledge, my opinion is that this report is quite a factual report and give very, very good analysis of the situation and make some proposals.

So I would like to also share with you that I'm in favor of this report. But anyhow, if you wish to get a copy we would be pleased to offer you a copy.

As far as the budget or the post dates is concerned that's a real painful headache for me. Because as you know that during our preparation for the biennial budget for 2018‑2019 we based the assumptions that the members will be able to keep their contribution level. And we did not really have put our budget based on the increase of contributions from our Member States. And then, you know, that we have very demanding request from also assessing ITU. And then in the beginning the request is much higher than what we could accept. So that I ask my colleagues to work very, very hard to present the supported balanced budget to the Council for your endorsement. And with that budget we more or less, you know, try to keep as a post to the minimum. And we, in fact, already cut the post rather than to increase the new post.

So that explains that it is very hard for us to see available budget to support this work with a new post and also in ITU that we have several special teams to work on the gender issues. And from BDT we have the gender team. And we don't have any particular post there either. And SPM is a leader for this campaign and, of course, Madam Bogdan in this is very, very passionate for this but unfortunately she doesn't have any special post to assist her.

And, you know, this is a very, very difficult issue for us and also what kind of post we should create. If you were to create a senior post it is quite important. If you have junior ones whether that's ‑‑ it is enough or not, that is another question. But you put the one ‑‑ in one service or you have to care for that one on other services or you have one men or one lady's shop you have to have a team. That's not that easy. I am very pleased that Canada suggested that the Council should have some discussions and give us some guidelines, but I'd like to ask for some volunteer contributions from our members. If you can help us with the financial contributions or with, you know, human resources, you know, contributions that you make some secondary staff to help us, I think that could also be a possibility to help us to move quickly ahead. Anyhow I'm very pleased to see that discussion is going quite intuitive and almost no contribution at all. I hope this should be appreciated and continued. Let me just stop here. Thank you.

>> CHAIR: Thank you, Mr. Zhao. And now with all this support and comments I think we can formally note these two documents, No. 6 and No. 71 and also to endorse the implementation plan for this year.

(Gavel).

>> CHAIR: Done. And also to instruct the Secretariat to report back on the 2017 plan for Council for the next year and present a plan for 2018. Thank you.

Now we have the next document that is C17/5 about the preparation for the 2018 Plenipotentiary Conference. And I invite Ms. Beatrice Pluchon to present this document, please.

>> BEATRICE PLUCHON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Ladies and Gentlemen, Councillors, on behalf of the Secretary‑General I have the pleasure of introducing document C17/5. This document covers progress of the preparatory work for the Plenipotentiary Conference following the invitation of the Government of the United Arab Emirates to the Council in its 2016 session. It was confirmed that this Plenipotentiary Conference will take place Monday 29th of October to Friday 16th of the November at the Dubai World Trade Center. Exact date and place of the conference received, agreements of the majority of Member States required under No. 2 of the Convention. The ITU Secretariat then conducted a site visit to examine the conference center infrastructure and hotels and prepare the security and communication plans to address protocols, issues and commence the logistics. Discussions are currently ongoing between the ITU and the Government of The United Arab Emirates to make progress.

Finally it is ‑‑ an internal level the coordination Committee will soon establish the Dubai preparatory group with representatives from all sectors and the General‑Secretariat. The Councillors are invited to take note of the preparations for the 2018 Plenipotentiary Conference. Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

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

>> UNITED ARAB EMIRATES: Thank you, Madam Chair. I would like to thank the Secretariat for this report, C17/5. Madam Chair, we are very pleased to invite everyone and to host this conference, this Plenipotentiary Conference to be held in Dubai. We would like to thank all countries for their confidence, for the trust they have put in the Emirates in order to host this conference.

Ms. Chair, as it has been said by the Delegate of the Secretariat the Secretariat has organized a visit to Dubai in the UAE in order to see directly the various services, the various infrastructures and the hotels. As far as the agreement with the host country we work with the Secretariat of the ITU in order to sign this agreement very soon. It is going to be done before the end of this year so that we can start the logistic steps in order to make success of this conference.

Another remark, Madam, concerning the dates of the conference, there is a proposal to change this, Madam. So that we can ‑‑ this change is going to be very small, to start on Sunday instead of starting on Monday. We would like to start on 28th instead of starting on the 29th of October. The conference should finish Thursday 15th of November instead of finishing 16th of November. The reason is that Friday and Saturday are the weekend holiday in the Emirates. I wish that the Council could take in to account this slight change so that it can be accepted. And so that we can hold the Plenipotentiary according to the dates proposed.

Before the beginning of the Council this proposal has been presented by the UAE. Madam Chair, we would like this topic to be discussed with the Secretariat so we can change the dates very slightly. Thank you Madam.

>> CHAIR: One moment, please. Please Mr. Zhao.

>> HOULIN ZHAO: Yeah. Unfortunately we have not got this news earlier. But anyhow, my legal advisor is checking to see if we change the date, if we need another consultation or not. So let them to give us advice. The legal advice just told me that since we already have membership consultations with the dates we proposed and then to have this new date suggested we still need membership agreement. So that I don't know, can you come up with to see if there is any way that we can facilitate quickly this kind of consultation. Yes, please.

>> CHAIR: Mr. Guillot, please.

>> LEGAL ADVISOR: Thank you, Madam Chair. The situation is the following: The decision on the precise date and place of the Plenipotentiary Conference is subject to a reservation based on the decision of members of the Council. Any change in the date or place would involve a two‑step decision. Firstly a decision by the Council and then consultation with all Member States of the Union to confirm the choice made by the Council. We have some quite specific rules in this regard. And it seems to me that it would be difficult to depart from those. Thank you, Madam Chair.

>> CHAIR: UAE, you want to insist as regard the change or after this explanation we can maintain the same? Please.

>> UNITED ARAB EMIRATES: Thank you, Madam Chair. As a host country we would like to ask from the ITU to take in to account the bank holidays and the weekend. As you know, Madam Chair, the UAE has hosted many conferences and we have organized many major conferences in the past. And the ITU has always taken in to consideration the weekend which is on Friday and Saturday in the Emirates. If among the members of the Council there is no objection, I hope that the Secretariat would clarify things. Would it be difficult if everyone is in agreement here? If there is a difficulty in changing the dates after Delegates in the Council would express their opinion, we can think about it. In case there is an objection in this Council we could revise revisit our proposal, but if it is only procedures, we can deal with the procedures easily in the future once the members of the Council are in agreement.

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

>> SAUDI ARABIA: Thank you, Madam Chair. We would like to thank the Secretary‑General for his explanation. We would like to thank the UAE for proposing to host this country. We are used to the generosity of the UAE. They have already hosted many conferences in the past, some of the major conferences in the ITU. Many Committees have met in the Emirates in the past. We think we should look in to this request. It is simple. It is only a day's difference. It will start on a Sunday instead of Monday to take in to account the weekend in the Emirates. We hope that the Council would agree to this change. And I hope that procedures will be taken in to account. Thank you, Madam Chair.

>> CHAIR: Cuba, you have the floor.

>> CUBA: Yes, thank you very much, Madam Chair. Like Saudi Arabia I think that as the host country of the event the UAE's proposal at this meeting should be considered. And the procedures, of course, will be complied with. We will keep to the rules as we should. But we should understand the interest and the concern expressed by the representative of the UAE since it is the host country of the event. The proposal of the Emirates as far as I understand it is that it would not be out of step with the rules and regulations nor with the ad hoc consultations as we have understood from a legal counsel. The country is proposing to the ITU that it has a concern and the question should be asked of all members of the Union as was correctly said by the legal counsel. But in any case it is important to take in to account this request which the representative of the UAE is making. We are certain that with the capacity, the knowledge, and the readiness of everyone present here today we can come up with a solution, taking in to account, of course, the procedures and the legal regulations and rules in place.

But, of course, what Saudi Arabia said as regards taking in to account what the UAE's representative also said. Thank you.

>> CHAIR: Thank you. And now I will propose you if we can know if there is any objection about this proposal. Because if there isn't any objection we can go with this new procedure. I have before on the list Tunisia and Germany, but if there is not any objection ‑‑ Tunisia and Germany insist for the floor. Tunisia, you have the floor.

>> TUNISIA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I will be very brief. I would like to thank the Secretary‑General for the report and its explanation. And I would like to thank the UAE for hosting this forthcoming conference. My colleagues have preceded me, they said that we would like to accept the request made by the UAE. We have to understand this request, especially that things are very simple. And the idea was presented in the development conference that was held in Dubai. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

>> GERMANY: Thank you, Madam Chair. It is probably better to work the list down before taking a conclusion. Madam Chair, first of all, if we understand the procedure correct and we don't have the rules at hand here, the Council will take a decision and then the membership will ask this is a written procedure. So No. 1, has this written procedure already started or not? And are there timelines when this written procedure shall start? If it has not yet started, of course, there wouldn't be from our point of view a major legal problem as the dates are changed. However if this procedure has already started it becomes a little bit confusing for the membership. So I didn't really get the translation maybe correctly from the intervention of the legal advisor insofar I repeat my question on the status of this exercise. Thank you.

>> CHAIR: Thank you Germany. Ms. Guillot ‑‑ Mr. Guillot, sorry.

>> LEGAL ADVISOR: Thank you, Madam Chair. It was probably because I wasn't very clear, not a problem of interpretation. The decision with regard to the question and the dates, the specific place and dates for the next Plenipotentiary Conference has already been taken through a first decision of the Council. This was confirmed upon consultation with the majority of Member States of the Union. So this is a decision that has already been taken. This decision can, of course, be reconsidered. That is provided for the Convention, particularly under Nos 5 and 6 of the Convention. That would mean that on the one hand the Council would have to take a new decision and then following that new decision of the Council we would consult with all Member States in order to obtain from them an agreement on the part of the majority of Member States of the Union. I hope the clarification has been useful. Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

>> CHAIR: Thank you, Mr. Guillot, and now I have a question for the interpreters, can we continue for another ten minutes, please?

>> Yes, Madam Chair, another ten minutes is fine.

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

>> UNITED STATES: Thank you, Madam Chair. We can certainly support the change in the date. But we understand in your decision that you are going to ask the Secretariat to conduct again the consultation process. And if there is a Resolution from the last Council that needs to be updated we'll also need to approve that at this Council. It will need to be revised. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

>> RWANDA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I hope I am not taking this backwards but I thought I should share my own confusion. One I understand we need to respect the wishes of the host country. We need to be sensitive to that and respect it. But since the dates that were already established meant to start the Plenipotentiary Conference on a Monday, I'm at a loss of understanding why the different weekend becomes a problem. Because it could even start on a Wednesday. It could start on any day of the week if it had been determined to be so. So I didn't fully understand what the problem is, if we kept the Plenipotentiary Conference to start on a Monday instead of starting on a Sunday since we have to go through a whole procedure. If the problem is that it affects maybe the ending day or proceedings in of the middle of the conference I do not know because that was not explained. So I said maybe I might be taking this backwards but I'm wondering what the problem would be if the conference started on a Monday, even if the week in UAE starts on a Sunday. But again it is not an objection to the request to start on a Sunday. I'm just wondering if there is any harm we maintain on a Monday. Conferences could even start in the middle of the week. Not necessarily the first day of the week. Thank you.

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

>> PHILIPPINES: We are not the hosts. And our friends from the UAE are the hosts and they have on their own made factor studies on why they are offering the dates as now proposed. We are in no position to judge why our hosts choose those dates. We must be more lenient in forgiving the hosts that they are still hosts us in the event. My understanding from the legal Council is that the matter of the dates was, in fact, agreed upon by the Council earlier upon consultation with the entire membership. That being so I feel that an agreement had already been reached and I do not feel that a motion for reconsideration of what was proposed by UAE as agreed upon by our Council much earlier is a further requirement for make ‑‑ to make that earlier agreement valid. We have already agreed. Why must there be a motion for reconsideration if that motion for reconsideration is not necessary to make a more valid agreement that is already valid unless there is compelling reasons to seek a reconsideration to let us stop from making further considerations.

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

>> CANADA: Thank you, Madam Chair. Very briefly, first and foremost to thank the United Arab Emirates who have graciously hosted so many ITU conferences. Secondly, we have no issue with a change of the date because we would understand that if it starts at earlier it will finish a day sooner. So there would be no additional expenses for the Union.

Last but not least and it would be some question for advice from Mr. Guillot is if we have a resolution from Council which established and ratified that the dates and location were such‑and‑such could we just modify that document and just change the dates? Thank you.

>> CHAIR: So thank you for your intervention and comments, but you said now that it is not only a legal problem and a legal procedure to change but we can consider also possible financial implications about this. And so I propose you to stop now this discussion and then we can have another information about the final implications later. Okay? Thank you.

Now we have a request by Venezuela. Please, you have the floor. Senegal, you have the floor, please.

>> SENEGAL: Thank you, Madam Chair. We'd like to thank the United Arab Emirates for hosting the Plenipotentiary Conference in 2018. I just have a question. When I look at the period there are two weekends in that period where we have a Friday and a Saturday. My question, that Friday or Saturday will there be no work in the Plenipotentiary Conference? I think that will help us to take our decision if we know the answer to that one.

>> CHAIR: Thank you. We will take note of all these questions and we can give the answer later. Now I have to ask to interpreters only five minutes again, please.

>> Certainly, Madam Chair.

>> CHAIR: Thank you. Only five. And now I have the pleasure to give the floor to His Excellency, Mr. Ricardo Gonzales Ambassador of Uruguay to take the floor.

>> RICARDO GONZALEZ: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Firstly allow me to thank you and all the members of this Council for giving me the opportunity to speak briefly on this agenda item on preparations for the Plenipotentiary Conference which is going to be held in Dubai. I would also like to congratulate the UAE for going to host this meeting and wish them every success in organizing it.

As you are aware under Article 8 of the ITU's constitution the conference will elect the Secretary‑General, the Deputy Secretary‑General and directors of the Bureau of the sectors. In this regard, Madam Chair, Uruguay would like to share with the members of this Council its decision to nominate during the elections that are going to be held as part of the Plenipotentiary Conference a candidate for the post of director of radiocommunications at the ‑‑ the International Telecommunications Union. It would be a great honor and very prestigious for our country to have a Uruguayan citizen to direct this important Bureau.

We are certain if this was the case the Uruguayan candidate would discharge their duties objectively and effectively honoring a long national tradition in our country between people and nations.

Finally, Madam Chair, I would like to add that this candidacy also is seeking an objective, namely that after many years the region of the Americas could return to occupying a post of such great responsibility in the framework of the ITU. Thank you very much.

>> CHAIR: Thank you. Now, Ms. Bogdan, you have an announcement to do. Please.

>> DOREEN BOGDAN: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I wanted to remind Delegates that at 12:45 the Ad Hoc Group on INRs, they will be meeting in room G1. Thank you very much.

>> CHAIR: Thank you very much. And another thanks to the interpreters. And you have a nice lunch, I hope.

(Session concluded at 12:42 p.m. CET).

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