



INTERNATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATION UNION TELECOMMUNICATION DEVELOPMENT BUREAU

WORLD TELECOMMUNICATION DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE (WTDC-98)

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PLENARY MEETING

MINUTES

OF THE

ELEVENTH PLENARY MEETING

Wednesday, 1 April 1998, at 0945 hours

Acting Chairman: Mr. E. BORG (Malta)

Subjects discussed

Documents

1	Minutes of the third, fourth and fifth Plenary Meetings	173, 188, 193
2	Seventh series of texts submitted by the Editorial Committee (continued)	238(Rev.1)
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10	Draft Recommendation on the application of information and communication technologies for development	107(Rev.1)

11	Operational planning in the Telecommunication Development Sector (continued)	115(Rev.1)
12	Draft Recommendation on GMPCS (continued)	224(Rev.1)
13	Draft Resolution on the establishment of TDAB subgroup on human resources development	230(Rev.1)

1 Minutes of the third, fourth and fifth Plenary Meetings (Documents 173, 188, 193)

1.1 The **Acting Chairman** invited participants to submit to the Secretariat any amendments they might wish to make to the minutes of the third, fourth and fifth Plenary Meetings.

1.2 On that understanding, the minutes of the third, fourth and fifth Plenary Meetings (Documents 173, 188 and 193), were **approved**.

**2 Seventh series of texts submitted by the Editorial Committee (continued)
(Document 238(Rev.1))**

2.1 The seventh series of texts submitted by the Editorial Committee (Document 238(Rev.1)) was **approved**.

**3 Report of the Working Group of the Plenary on the Valletta Action Plan
(Document 245)**

3.1 The **Chairmen of the Working Group of the Plenary on the Valletta Action Plan** introduced Document 245 setting out the main results of the Group's work.

3.2 The report of the Working Group of the Plenary on the Valletta Action Plan (Document 245) was **approved**.

**4 Tenth series of texts submitted by the Editorial Committee (Valletta Declaration)
(Document 246)**

4.1 The **Chairman of the Working Group of the Plenary on the Valletta Action Plan**, introducing the Valletta Declaration, said that he had been asked to insert a reference to the TEMIC Declaration after the last sentence of point 1 f) of the Valletta Declaration, and that that amendment had been approved by the Working Group and by the Plenary in the context of Document 155. Furthermore, the square brackets around point 1 j) could be removed and the second and third paragraphs of point 3 c) should become the last two paragraphs of point 3 g). Lastly, the words "youth... such as..." in the second paragraph of point 3 c) should be amended to read "... such as the Youth Network...".

4.2 The **representative of Canada** said that he was in favour of incorporating a reference to the TEMIC Declaration, and suggested the following wording: "In his address, Sir Donald Maitland referred to the "TEMIC Declaration" which highlighted the need to modify the operating style or management culture of executives and managers from both the public and private sectors, who must acquire the skills to manage in an entrepreneurial and liberalized environment". The **representatives of Germany** and **Barbados** supported that proposal.

4.3 It was **agreed** that that wording should be inserted at the end of point 1 f).

4.4 The **Director of BDT** pointed out that a reference to the finance colloquia held should be added to the end of point 2 b). The **representative of Venezuela** said that under point 2 b), "Santa Margarita" should read "Isla Margarita". The **representative of Spain** suggested inserting the words "stimulated by the WTO trade agreements" after "new trading environment" in point 3 d).

4.5 It was so **agreed**.

4.6 The **representative of Niger**, referring to point 3 a), said that there was no need to dissociate sound and television broadcasting from telecommunications. The **Secretary** said that the French version of point 3 a) should read as the English text, that is "Telecommunications, including sound and television broadcasting".

4.7 The **representative of Switzerland**, endorsing Niger's observations, added that, for Europeans, broadcasting and telecommunications were not the same thing. He proposed that the phrase should read "Telecommunications and sound and television broadcasting are...". The **Acting Chairman** having pointed out that under the terms of the Convention broadcasting was a part of telecommunications, he proposed: "telecommunications, including sound and television broadcasting techniques". The **representative of France** supported that proposal and stressed that content and medium were not to be confused.

4.8 The **representative of South Africa** said that the Working Group had considered that emphasis should be placed on the role of broadcasting.

4.9 The **Chairman of the Working Group of the Plenary on the Valletta Action Plan** recalled that the text of the Declaration had been discussed at length and suggested that, as the representative of Switzerland had proposed, the text should read "radio and television broadcasting techniques".

4.10 It was so **agreed**.

4.11 The **representative of Colombia**, supported by the **representative of Mexico**, suggested that in point 3 b) the words "including developing countries" should be replaced by "..., and particularly developing countries".

4.12 That proposal was **approved**.

4.13 The **representative of South Africa** was of the view that the Valletta Declaration should refer more to private sector participation. To that end, he proposed incorporating the following sentence in point 3: "BDT should promote the enhanced participation of the private sector in the activities of ITU-D and should facilitate the creation of partnerships between governments and private enterprises and between the private enterprises in developed countries and those in developing countries." That proposal was supported by the **representatives of Jamaica, Lebanon, BT and Argentina** and by the **Chairman of the Working Group of the Plenary on the Private Sector**.

4.14 The **Chairman of the Working Group of the Plenary on the Valletta Action Plan** pointed out that the Strategic Plan already dealt with private sector participation. The **representative of Colombia** shared that opinion.

4.15 The **representative of Saudi Arabia**, while endorsing the view of the Chairman of the Working Group of the Plenary on the Valletta Action Plan, nonetheless emphasized the value of the South African proposal.

4.16 The **Acting Chairman**, noting that the majority of speakers was in favour of including the text proposed by the representative of South Africa, suggested inserting it in point 3, after "declares that:".

4.17 It was so **agreed**.

4.18 The Valletta Declaration (Document 246), as amended, was **approved**.

4.19 The tenth series of texts submitted by the Editorial Committee, as amended, was **approved**.

5 Twelfth series of texts submitted by the Editorial Committee (ITU-D Strategic Plan) (Document 248)

5.1 The **Chairman of the Working Group of the Plenary on the Valletta Action Plan**, introducing Document 248, said that, as indicated at the beginning of the document, certain sections of the Strategic Plan had not been reproduced, as they had been retained without change. He also pointed out that the second sentence of the second paragraph of point 43 should be amended to read: "other aspects of global society such as the Youth Network and ...". In response to an enquiry from the **representative of Saudi Arabia** as to whether the Working Group had studied only the ITU-D Strategic Plan or the strategy for ITU as a whole, he said that Document 75 contained the entire Strategic Plan but that the Group had confined its study to the Development Sector.

5.2 The **representative of Ethiopia** said that during the meeting of the LDCs it had been decided that TELECOM surplus funds should be used for the least developed countries. It should therefore be stated expressly, as had been the case in the Buenos Aires Action Plan, that TELECOM surplus funds were earmarked for the LDCs, failing which there would be no specific assistance for those countries. Such a statement might be inserted at the end of the first indent of section G.4.

5.3 The **Chairman of the Working Group of the Plenary on the Valletta Action Plan** said that, in his opinion, the Strategic Plan was not the appropriate place for such a statement, and that the Action Plan would be a more suitable context.

5.4 The **representative of Trinidad and Tobago** considered it sufficient to refer to developing countries.

5.5 The **representative of Germany**, while in favour of assistance for LDCs, considered that for practical purposes it was better not to state in the Strategic Plan that TELECOM surplus funds were to be used solely for the LDCs, otherwise BDT might no longer have the necessary flexibility to release funds in the event, for example, of *force majeure*. He therefore suggested stating that the greater part of TELECOM surplus funds should be used for the LDCs, to avoid any notion of exclusivity. That proposal was supported by the **representatives of Mali and Jamaica**.

5.6 The **representative of Comoros** pointed out that if there was to be a specific programme for the LDCs, there would also have to be a reference to TELECOM surplus funds, if only for the sake of consistency.

5.7 The **Director of BDT** noted that the proposal by the representative of Germany was in keeping with the spirit of Resolution 11 (Kyoto, 1994) which provided in its *resolves* 5 "that a significant part of any surplus income over expenditure derived from the activities of TELECOM should be used for specific telecommunication development projects, primarily in the least developed countries".

5.8 The **Acting Chairman** suggested that, as the representative of Ethiopia had proposed, a reference to TELECOM surplus funds be inserted in the first indent of section G.4, using the wording of Kyoto Resolution 11.

5.9 It was so **agreed**.

5.10 The **representative of Argentina** proposed including in Section G.2, § 44, a more specific text which he would submit to the Secretariat, concerning the WTO agreements.

5.11 It was so **agreed**.

5.12 The **representative of the United States** having noted that Document 75 contained five strategic objectives whereas the text under consideration now had only four, and following observations by the **representatives of Canada and Jamaica**, the **Chairman of the Working Group of the Plenary on the Valletta Action Plan** said that § 32.3 had been omitted inadvertently from the text between square brackets at the beginning of Document 248 "ITU-D Strategic Plan", and that that paragraph would remain as it appeared in Document 75.

5.13 The **representative of Mexico** proposed that the fifth indent of § 45 in Section G.3 should be re-worded to read as follows: "include subjects related to information technology and broadcasting in its activities...".

5.14 It was so **agreed**.

5.15 The ITU-D Strategic Plan (Document 248), as amended, was **approved**.

5.16 The twelfth series of texts submitted by the Editorial Committee, as amended, was **approved**.

6 Valletta Action Plan (Document 214(Rev.1))

6.1 The **Chairman of the Working Group of the Plenary on the Valletta Action Plan** introduced Document 214(Rev.1), containing the draft Valletta Action Plan, which consisted of three chapters and an annex. In order to expedite publication of the document, the text of Chapter III (Special programme for LDCs), which had been approved by the Plenary in its discussion on Document 244, had not been reproduced again in Document 214(Rev.1). As, for technical reasons, it had not been possible to incorporate all the proposals and amendments agreed to at the most recent Plenary Meetings, and as some decisions had not yet been taken, a number of adjustments to the text would have to be made subsequently. Annex 1 contained a list of study Questions approved by the Conference to be incorporated in the Operational Plan, and which did not fit easily into the list of Questions to be considered by Study Groups 1 and 2 listed in Chapter I of the document.

6.2 The **Acting Chairman** invited the meeting to consider the draft Action Plan chapter by chapter.

Chapter I - Programme of cooperation among the members of the Telecommunication Development Sector

6.3 The **Chairman of the Working Group of the Plenary on the Valletta Action Plan** said that in § I.4 "two meetings within the study period" should be replaced by "one meeting every year". Square brackets had been placed round § I.5 (Advisory committee on human resource development) pending discussion of a draft resolution on the subject. A new paragraph should be inserted before § I.5 relating to TDAB, based on the text of the Buenos Aires Action Plan but modified to reproduce the exact wording agreed to by the Conference in Plenary. In response to a proposal by the **representative of Switzerland**, he agreed that the title of Chapter I would be clearer if it read "Members in the Telecommunication Development Sector".

6.4 The **representative of Brazil** proposed that Question 1/1 on interconnection should be transferred from Study Group 1 to the list of Questions related to focus groups in Annex 1, in view of the urgency of solving problems of interconnection resulting from liberalization in many countries. The **representative of Germany** said that as the focus groups formed part of the study groups, the results would not be achieved any faster and the work of the study groups would only be increased.

6.5 The **representative of France**, who had chaired a sub-working group on the programmes of the Action Plan, proposed that the term "study questions" be replaced by "study topics" in Annex 1 and that to avoid confusion a term other than "focus group" might be used. Further consideration might be given to the way in which such groups would work. He also observed that the TDAB report (Document 8) spoke of entrusting BDT with certain matters such as interconnection. The **representatives of Colombia and Japan** supported those proposals.

6.6 The **representative of Mali** expressed concern that the preparation of handbooks, which was particularly important in helping developing countries to follow technological developments, appeared neither in the list of study group Questions nor in the list in Annex 1. The **Acting Chairman** said that the matter would be discussed by the Conference under the agenda item on the terms of reference of the advisory committee on human resource development.

6.7 The **representative of Canada** proposed inserting a new paragraph after § I.5 referring to the task force on gender issues, for which he would provide the secretariat with a text.

Chapter II - Valletta Action Programmes

6.8 The **Chairman of the Working Group of the Plenary on the Valletta Action Plan** stressed the importance of the Preamble which reflected many major issues and proposals discussed and approved by the Conference. The Chapter was subdivided into six technical programmes.

6.9 The **representative of Spain** proposed amending the title of Chapter II to read "The programmes of the Valletta Action Plan".

Programme 1: Reform, legislation and regulation of telecommunications

6.10 The **representative of Spain** made an editorial correction to the Spanish text and proposed adding the phrase "and the fulfilment of the multilateral commitments undertaken" to the end of the second indent in § 1.5.

Programme 2: Technologies and GII development and application, including GMPCS and Internet

6.11 The **Chairman of the Working Group of the Plenary on the Valletta Action Plan** said that the sentence "PLANITU assistance would continue to be provided on request" should be added at the end of subparagraph b) on network and infrastructure planning, to reflect the discussions in the Plenary.

Programme 3: Rural development and universal service access

6.12 There were no comments on that programme.

Programme 4: Finance and economics, including WTO issues, tariffs, accounting rates, etc.

6.13 The **representative of Saudi Arabia** proposed that the paragraph on tariffs, international accounting and settlement rate issue should end "... helping all countries to review their international settlement policy".

6.14 The **representative of Bulgaria**, supported by the **representatives of Germany and South Africa**, proposed that § 4.4 should read: "to assist countries in setting up a mechanism for financing universal service and access ...", in order to reflect previous discussions in Plenary.

6.15 The **representative of Spain** proposed deleting the phrase "taking into account the WTO reference paper" at the end of § 4.7.

6.16 The **representative of Senegal** requested that the text of § 4.8 be aligned with the wording of Document 200.

6.17 The **Chairman of the Working Group of the Plenary on the Valletta Action Plan** suggested that as two revised versions of Document 200 had been produced, the Editorial Committee should be authorized to align those texts, and indeed to align the whole text of the Valletta Action Plan with the exact wording of the decisions taken by the Conference, on the understanding that the adjustments would concern editorial amendments only. The **representative of France** supported that proposal.

6.18 It was so **agreed**.

Programme 5: Development partnership with the private sector

6.19 The **Chairman of the Working Group of the Plenary on the Valletta Action Plan**, in response to a request by the **representative of Brazil**, proposed that a third indent be inserted under § 5.1 to read as follows: "to assist in promoting transnational partnership for the creation of industrial and service telecommunication enterprises in developing countries, through the use of knowledge-based enterprise incubators", which was a wording based on Documents 98 and 11 already approved in Plenary.

6.20 The **representative of Jamaica**, supported by the **representative of Senegal**, requested that the wording of the first two indents under § 5.2 be aligned with the text already approved in Annex 1 of Document 238(Rev.1).

Programme 6: Capacity building through human resources development and management

6.21 There were no comments on that programme.

Chapter III - Special programme for LDCs

6.22 The **Chairman of the Working Group of the Plenary on the Valletta Action Plan** said that the text of Chapter III had already been approved in Plenary and would be incorporated in the final version.

Annex 1

6.23 It was **agreed** that the wording of Annex 1 should be modified in the light of the discussion of Chapter I.

6.24 The **Acting Chairman** said that all proposals, amendments and comments put forward during the discussion as well as modifications of an editorial nature handed in to the secretariat in writing would be incorporated or reflected in the final text of the Valletta Action Plan, which would also be aligned by the Editorial Committee and the secretariat with the wording of the decisions taken by the Conference.

6.25 On that understanding, the Valletta Action Plan (Document 214(Rev.1)) was **approved**.

7 Eleventh series of texts submitted by the Editorial Committee (Document 244)

7.1 The **Chairman of the Working Group of the Plenary on the least developed countries** introduced Document 244, the special programme for the least developed countries, and draft Resolution WGLDCs-1 on special actions for the least developed countries, which had been amended to take into account the relevant decisions and discussions in Plenary. He drew attention to the fact that in the French text the section *requests the Director-General* had been omitted inadvertently.

7.2 The special programme for the least developed countries was **noted**.

7.3 Draft Resolution WGLDCs-1 was **approved**.

7.4 The **Chairman of the Working Group of the Plenary on the least developed countries** introduced draft Resolution WGLDCs-2 on gender and telecommunication policy in developing countries, to which minor editorial modifications had been made.

7.5 Draft Resolution WGLDCs-2 was **approved**.

7.6 The eleventh series of texts submitted by the Editorial Committee was **approved**.

8 Draft Recommendation on the importance of partnerships in support of human resource initiatives (Document 241)

8.1 **Approved**.

9 Draft Resolution on the participation of countries, particularly developing countries, in frequency spectrum management (Document 242)

9.1 The **Chairman of Committee B**, introducing the draft resolution, indicated two editorial amendments to the *recognizing e)* and *resolves to instruct* sections.

9.2 The draft resolution in Document 242, as amended, was **approved**.

10 Draft Recommendation on the application of information and communication technologies for development (Document 107(Rev.1))

10.1 **Approved**.

11 Operational planning in the Telecommunication Development Sector (continued) (Document 115(Rev.1))

11.1 The **Chairman** said that the draft resolution in Document 115(Rev.1) had been revised editorially in the light of the discussions at the eighth Plenary Meeting.

11.2 The draft resolution in Document 115(Rev.1) was **approved**.

12 Draft Recommendation on GMPCS (continued) (Document 224(Rev.1))

12.1 The **Secretary**, introducing the draft Recommendation on the timely implementation of GMPCS, which had been revised in the light of discussions at the eighth Plenary Meeting, said that the last two words of the *recommends* section should read "GMPCS arrangements".

12.2 The **representative of Mali** proposed amending the text of *instructs the Director of BDT* to read "coordinating action with regional organizations".

12.3 The **representative of Tanzania** welcomed the text as the first recommendation relating to the work of the first World Telecommunication Policy Forum. He expressed formal appreciation for all those who had supported and worked on Opinion 4 of that Policy Forum, and commended the staff of the Strategic Planning Unit for their valuable assistance. As Chairman of the MoU Group on Opinion 5, he congratulated ITU on having developed a partnership between all those concerned and having achieved a global framework in which individual interests were respected. He thanked all those who had been involved in the work relating to Opinion 5.

12.4 The draft recommendation in Document 224(Rev.1), as amended, was **approved**.

13 Draft Resolution on the establishment of a TDAB subgroup on human resources development (Document 230(Rev.1))

13.1 The **Chairman of the ad hoc Group of Committee B** said that he was most satisfied with the revised draft Resolution prepared in consultation with the representatives of Jamaica, United States, Canada, France, Mali, Senegal and Switzerland. The purpose of the draft Resolution under consideration was to set up a TDAB subgroup on human resources development, the terms of reference of which would be to provide advice and make recommendations to a task force belonging either to a focus group or a committee. Introducing the draft Resolution, he drew attention to a number of editorial amendments, such as the replacement of "Advisory Committee" by "TDAB subgroup". To take account of observations made by the representatives of Jamaica, United States, Canada and Mali, he suggested maintaining the first sentence of the last paragraph of the *resolves*, and replacing the remainder of that paragraph with the wording: "The TDAB subgroup shall maintain a special and direct liaison with a special rapporteur group (preparation of handbooks for developing countries)". Thus, in keeping with new Question 2/2 of Study Group 2 (point 7 of Document 218(Rev.1)), an independent focus group would be established, situated between ITU-D Study Groups 1 and 2 and responsible for all related technical, financial, reform, regulatory, development and other issues that had a bearing on ITU activities in general, and in particular the preparation of technical handbooks in the other two Sectors. The provision as rewarded might also be used in paragraph 1.5 of Document 214(Rev.1), which had thus far been left in square brackets.

13.2 The **representative of Russia** said that in the absence of a written text he was unable to support that proposal, which was clearly more than just an editorial amendment.

13.3 The **representative of Mali** said that he supported the proposed new wording since, based as it was on a decision taken by the Buenos Aires Conference concerning the treatment of handbooks for developing countries, it allowed for such handbooks to be given the importance they deserved.

13.4 The **Acting Chairman** said that in the absence of a specific text it might indeed be difficult for the Plenary to take a decision on an amendment which was not purely editorial.

13.5 The **representative of Japan** supported the idea of setting up a subgroup on human resources development. The **representative of Syria** was in favour of the establishment of an advisory group to advise the Director of BDT on strategic issues linked to human resources development.

13.6 The **Chairman of TDAB** said that he had some difficulty in approving the document under consideration as the procedures in question were already defined in TDAB's terms of reference and, in his opinion, did not need to be spelt out further in a resolution of the Plenary. He suggested that a text should be submitted direct to TDAB for examination and that the question of the preparation of handbooks might be dealt with and satisfactorily resolved elsewhere.

13.7 The **representative of Switzerland** supported that position.

13.8 The **representative of Argentina**, who shared the same view, suggested that, given the importance of handbooks to developing countries, the matter should be submitted direct to TDAB.

13.9 The **representative of Germany** said that a clear distinction should be established between handbooks on the one hand and advice on strategic issues linked to human resources development on the other. He was not in favour of setting up a group situated between ITU-D Study Groups 1 and 2, as there was an obvious risk of confusion. Pointing out that TDAB would be an open body in the future, he said that he was in favour of HRD questions being submitted directly to the Advisory Committee, as the Chairman of TDAB had suggested.

13.10 The **representative of Colombia** expressed the view that handbooks should be the responsibility of BDT and that HRD matters should be referred direct to TDAB for in-depth consideration.

13.11 The **representative of Canada** supported the proposed editorial amendments to the document under consideration, but was not in favour of setting up a new group to be responsible for handbooks.

13.12 The **Chairman of the ad hoc Group of Committee B** regretted the position taken by the Chairman of TDAB, as it seemed to him that there had been a consensus on the question of setting up a subgroup on human resources development. However, if the Chairman of TDAB meant that the question should be dealt with direct by TDAB, he personally had no objection. Quite apart from the establishment of such a subgroup, what mattered was to relaunch the study of Question 2/2 concerning the preparation of handbooks for developing countries - a step which would also be in keeping with the decisions taken by the Kyoto and Geneva Plenipotentiary Conferences.

13.13 The **representative of Cameroon**, pointing out that ITU as a whole needed a body to be responsible for developing a genuine vision and establishing general guidelines with regard to human resources development, supported the creation of a subgroup provided that its terms of reference laid down specific lines for a general HRD policy.

13.14 The **representative of France** noted that there was a broad consensus on the need to set up a body for the purpose of consultations and proposals on human resource development issues and which, for the sake of efficiency, should be a part of TDAB. Wording apart, the draft Resolution was in his opinion a very clear message to TDAB that some such body was needed. What mattered was the objective and that TDAB should set up such a body at its next session, bearing in mind that operational matters would be handled by a body within Study Group 2.

13.15 The **representative of Senegal** considered that the concern voiced by the representative of Mali was a fundamental one that went far beyond HRD issues, and that, aside from the specific arrangements, what mattered was that there should be a reflection group.

13.16 The **Chairman of TDAB** said that in his opinion the representative of France had grasped the situation perfectly.

13.17 The **Acting Chairman** noted that there was a consensus on the need for the question of human resources development to be examined in greater depth within TDAB, but said that in his opinion the ways and means had not been clearly enough established for the Plenary to come to a decision. He further noted the need for handbooks to be given the importance they deserved in the context of the study of Question 2/2.

13.18 In response to a statement by the **representative of Greece**, who had pointed out a discrepancy between Documents 218(Rev.1) and 214(Rev.1) with regard to the wording of Question 2/2, he said that the secretariat would align the two texts.

The meeting rose at 1310 hours.

The Secretary:
H. PIETERSE

The Acting Chairman:
E. BORG