ITU INTERNATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATION UNION

Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT)

Fifth Meeting of the Telecommunication	**Document TDAG-5/18-E**
Development Advisory Group (TDAG)	**23 February 2001**
Geneva, 22-23 February 2001	**Original: French**

Director of BDT

FIFTH MEETING OF THE TELECOMMUNICATION
DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY GROUP (TDAG)

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Summary of conclusions

1   Preliminary remarks

1.1   The **Secretary-General**, highlighting both the role that information and communication technologies play in the economic, political and social development of countries and the new initiatives that had been launched to reduce the digital divide, emphasized that the Union must play a catalytic role in that regard and pointed out that ITU-D had all the necessary resources for helping to reduce that divide and thereby fulfil its mission. The members of TDAG should look more closely at the way in which funds were used in the interests of implementing more specific actions aimed at meeting the urgent needs of developing countries, and he invited them to be critical in their observations, particularly in the run-up to the next WTDC, where the development strategies to be adopted would be decisive for the Union's future in the development field.

1.2   The **Director of BDT**, welcoming the Chairman of TDAG, Mr Zeitoun, recalled that the outgoing Chairman, Mr Lee, would remain both as Honorary Chairman and as a member of the TDAG bureau. He then read out the list of members of the TDAG bureau.

1.3   With regard to the preparatory work for WTDC-02, he noted that, in parallel to the ongoing implementation of the Valletta Action Plan, the consultative process was well under way. Two regional preparatory meetings for WTDC-02 had already been held (in Cairo and Sofia), and three further meetings had been planned for 2001, the first in Indonesia (25-27 April) for the Asia-Pacific Region, the second in Cameroon (29-31 May) for the Africa Region, and the third in Trinidad-and-Tobago in mid-October for the Americas Region. The TDAG participants would be invited to bring forth their observations, not only on the draft agenda for WTDC, but also on four new components or initiatives for possible inclusion in the conference, the main theme of which would certainly be the digital divide. BDT was actively participating in various new initiatives in that field and was awaiting guidance from TDAG on the subject. The question of reforming ITU-D would also need to be discussed ahead of the next meeting of the Reform Group to be held in Brazil.

1.4   The **Chairman** pointed out that work should be facilitated by the new organization of the TDAG bureau. He reminded participants that they were invited to provide strategic guidance to the Director with regard to the major themes, namely the evolution of information and communication technologies, the digital divide and the ITU-D reform process.

2   Approval of the main decisions of the fourth meeting of the Telecommunication Development Advisory Group (Document TDAG-4/16)

2.1   The **Secretary of the meeting** introduced Document TDAG-4/16 containing a summary of the main decisions taken by the fourth meeting of TDAG. Following an exchange of views relating to § 2.3 of Document TDAG-4/16, it was decided to amend it to read "with regard to § 9 of Document TDAG-4/5, it was agreed that the paragraph should read "Balanced geographical distribution is a key factor in implementing the principle of rotation among the regions of the world."".

2.2   Regarding § 6.3, it was **agreed**, following an exchange of views regarding the appropriateness of dissociating the telecommunication sector from global negotiations relating to structural adjustments in order not to hinder the reform of that sector or to undersell it, to amend the first part of the third sentence to read "One proposal was to dissociate the telecommunication sector from the others as far as possible when structural adjustments were made ...".

2.3   With those amendments, Document TDAG-4/16 summarizing the main decisions of the fourth meeting of TDAG was **approved**.

3   Operational plan 2001 (Document TDAG-5/10)

3.1   The **Deputy Director**, introducing the operational plan for the Development Sector in 2001 (Document TDAG-5/10), recalled that the document was a simplified version of the actual plan. Countries had been consulted in order to determine their requirements. Owing to a lack of financial resources, it had been impossible to take all of the requirements into account, and some of them had been placed on a "waiting list", which was why the question of resource mobilization remained a matter of key importance. The matter had been discussed during the course of the meeting with the heads of the regional offices and with those responsible for the regional presence and for programmes under the operational plan (19-20 February 2001), at which meeting attention had been drawn to the need to mobilize resources in the amount of at least 10 per cent of the regular budget. Where human resources were concerned, the emphasis had been placed on personal responsibility through the appointment of a main person in charge for each activity (implementation, coordination of all associated activities, financial aspects, etc.), which would simplify the corresponding administrative procedures. Observing that guidelines would have to be drawn up to facilitate and expedite the preparation of the next operational plan, he invited participants to share their views on the methodology adopted by BDT for the preparation and implementation of the operational plan.

3.2   The **TDAG Vice-Chairman** in charge of Focus Group 7 pointed out that, as was indicated in Annex 4 to Document TDAG-5/16, the pilot projects relating to packet-based wireless access infrastructure should be implemented in five countries and therefore be reflected in the operational plan, with a budget of CHF 100 000.

3.3   The **Director of BDT** said that every effort would be made to mobilize the resources necessary for that project, as well as for the other projects on the "waiting list".

3.4   Regarding the activities of the study groups, bearing in mind that some of the actions (3957, 3959 and 3961) were common to the two study groups, it was requested that three separate points be created in Chapter 1, Section 5 "Study groups" relating to 1) actions pertaining to Study Group 1; 2) those pertaining to Study Group 2; and 3) actions common to both study groups.

3.5   That request was **noted**.

3.6   It was requested that the amount allocated by UNDP and other organizations for actual direct assistance be shown separately. The **Deputy Director of BDT** explained that the section entitled "Projects and direct assistance" showed the total amount of assistance, but that the amount provided by UNDP and other organizations would in future be shown separately.

3.7   In response to a question concerning the "Development of costs and tariffs calculation tools on the basis of existing ITU regional models" (action 3787, § 4.1, Chapter 2), it was explained that that referred not only to the development of tools but also to their dissemination.

3.8   On the matter of strengthening of the regional presence, particularly in the area of human resources, the **Director of BDT** informed the meeting that that subject was dealt with in greater detail in the document "Operational Plan", which was available on the Web. The document under consideration dealt solely with the activities budget, while staff costs were covered in a separate budget.

3.9   Regarding the "Seminar on pricing for frequency usage" (activity 3790, § 4.6, Chapter 2), it was recalled that the BDT secretariat would be collaborating with ITU-R Study Group 1 on the matter, which had been transferred to BR on account of its specialized nature.

3.10   In response to a question concerning the relationship between the operational plan, the strategic plan and the Valletta Action Plan (VAP), the **Deputy Director** recalled that all activities undertaken formed part of the implementation of the VAP and that the introductory part of the document under consideration explained the relationship between the different plans. Responding to a question on the inclusion of TELECOM surpluses in the operational plan, he added that those surpluses were included in the budget.

3.11   It was suggested that a section be included on activities undertaken jointly with other organizations of the United Nations family.

3.12   The **Director of BDT**, responding to a remark concerning the reduction in funds allocated to the Round Table on the least developed countries, said that there had in fact been an overall increase in the amount allocated to those activities as a whole. As to the usefulness of comparing the plans for 2000 and 2001 in order to better determine the results achieved and the new activities, he warned participants against such comparisons, since in implementing the VAP the order of priorities could vary. He emphasized the need for a global view and for taking into account the rebalancing of priorities, bearing in mind problems which could arise during the implementation of the recommendations or during the coming years. A process of gradual phase-by-phase elaboration would allow for the study of new questions. In conclusion, care would have to be taken to ensure that any proposals formulated in the run-up to WTDC and the action plan to which those proposals would ultimately give rise were in conformity with any decisions that might be taken by the next plenipotentiary conference.

3.13   The meeting **took note** of an observation concerning the need to improve in future the relationship between the percentage of the total of direct costs (one-third of all costs) and the total costs re-ascribed to BDT (two-thirds of the total amount); of a request for the inclusion in Chapter 2, §§ 1 and 2, of activities relating to implementation of the resolution on Bosnia and of Herzegovina; and the suggestion aimed at strengthening collaboration with regional organizations.

4   Work of the study groups

Document TDAG-5/8

4.1   The **officer responsible for the study groups** introduced Document TDAG-5/8, which reported on the regional meetings organized on the theme of the participation by countries, particularly developing countries, in the work of the ITU-D study groups. The results of those meetings had been very satisfying and the recommendations they had produced had been approved by the ITU-D study groups.

4.2   Document TDAG-5/8 was **noted**.

Document TDAG-5/6

4.3   The **Vice-Chairman of the Group on the Structure and Working Methods of the ITU-D Study Groups** introduced Document TDAG-5/6, containing a draft new resolution on the admission of entities or organizations to participate as associates in the work of the ITU-D study groups, a draft revision of Resolution 5 (WTDC-98), and a draft new resolution on electronic document handling. It was to be noted that the draft new resolution on associates defined the rights of associates within the framework of the study groups, and that, aside from that definition, the remainder of the text was based on the Convention. Although an associate could serve as a co-rapporteur, he could not, under the terms of the Convention, engage in liaison activities. Regarding the draft new resolution on the use of electronic media, the members of TDAG were invited to put forward their comments to enable the group to draw up a final version of the text.

4.4   With regard to the draft revision of Resolution 5, it was noted that the text was of a general nature and that it would therefore be appropriate to make reference to the Sector assemblies in *instructs the Director of BDT*. On the basis of those remarks, it was **agreed** to amend "advisory bodies and conferences" to read "advisory bodies, assemblies and conferences" in *instructs the Director of BDT*.

4.5   Regarding the suggested deletion of the word "functioning" in *further instructs the Director of BDT*, *as far as possible* b), bearing in mind the financial implications of those regional groups of experts, the **Vice-Chairman of the Group** explained that the financial implications in question had been taken into account, hence the use of the words "*as far as possible*" to make clear the possibility that the budget for the regional groups of experts might not be available.

4.6   It was emphasized that the draft revision of the resolution applied not only to ITU-D but to all the ITU Sectors, and that it was not up to the study groups to take a position on such issues.

4.7   That observation was **noted**, as was the request that the abbreviation "AMNT" in *considering* c) of the English text be replaced by "WTSA".

4.8   On the matter of the draft new resolution on the admission of entities to participate as associates, it was pointed out that *resolves* 3 should be aligned on the decision taken by the Council at its previous session to the effect that the financial contribution of associates shall correspond to one-half of 1/8 of a unit for associates participating in the work of the ITU-D study groups and to one-half of 1/16 of a unit for associates from developing countries participating in the work of those study groups.

4.9   It was **agreed** to delete the word "membres" preceding the word "Associés" in *décide* 3) of the French text.

4.10   Regarding the draft new resolution on strengthening the use of electronic document handling for the work of ITU-D study groups, the meeting **noted** the request to the effect that the words "in all the official and working languages" be added to the last indent of the *resolves*.

Document TDAG-5/7

4.11   The **Vice-Chairman of the Group on the Structure and Working Methods of the ITU-D Study Groups**, introducing Document TDAG-5/7, which contained a proposal from the Syrian Arab Republic aimed at accelerating the approval procedure for new or revised ITU-D study group recommendations, said that it was the only document on which TDAG was required to take a decision. Under the procedure currently in force, as defined in § 4 of the Appendix to Resolution 4 (WTDC-98) on procedures to be applied by study groups, the Director of BDT sent out the invitations to the study group meeting in time for them to be received at least three months prior to the meeting, announcing in the invitation that it was intended to apply the approval procedure in respect of a given recommendation. The text of the draft new or revised recommendation must be distributed in the three working languages at least two months prior to the meeting. During the meeting, the decision to apply the approval procedure must be taken without opposition. Exceptionally, however, a delegation could request more time to consider its position. In the absence of any formal opposition on the part of a Member State or Sector Member within six weeks following the meeting, the Director then had a period of one month within which to consult the Member States and Sector Members, which themselves then had a period of three months within which to inform him whether they approved or objected to the draft text. If, at the end of that three-month period, 70% of the Member States or Sector Members had approved the text, the Director must indicate, by means of an administrative circular and within a period of four weeks, whether or not the text was approved. It was to be noted that, provided the corresponding deadlines were respected, it was not necessary to hold two meetings of the study group in order to complete the approval procedure.

4.12   The **representative of Syria** pointed out that WTDC-98 had authorized TDAG to modify the approval procedures and that only a rapporteur group, as the body responsible for a text, could initiate the approval procedure, which presupposed that the first meeting of the study group decided on the degree of elaboration of the text, while the second meeting actually approved it.

4.13   A number of participants having questioned the competence of TDAG to take a decision in that regard and having requested a legal opinion, the **Legal Adviser** pointed out that § 1.6 of Section 1 of the Appendix to Resolution 4 (WTDC-98) gave TDAG not only an advisory role but also decision-making powers, and that Article 17A, No. 215G, of the Convention provided that TDAG was responsible for drawing up guidelines. Those two provisions were therefore not contradictory. As to the initiative for the approval procedure, the texts, unlike those pertaining to the other Sectors, were not explicit in that regard which could lead one to assume that it was the study group which initiated the approval process.

4.14   The **representative of Syria** pointed out that the Sectors were supposed to have two approval procedures, whereas for the **representative of BR** it went without saying that the rapporteur group could initiate the procedure, provided it did so in consultation with the chairman of the study group. There was therefore no need for a meeting of the study group in order to launch the procedure.

4.15   Following an exchange of views, the following text was **approved**: "TDAG agrees that the procedure described in Section 4 "Approval of new or revised Recommendations and opinions" of Resolution 4 may be launched by any rapporteur group which considers that its draft new or revised recommendation(s) is/are sufficiently elaborated to be put forward for that procedure.

The rapporteur group shall ask the chairman of the study group to request the Director of BDT to act in accordance with the provisions of § 3.1 of the aforementioned procedure".

Document TDAG-5/9

4.16   The **Vice-Chairman of the Group on the Structure and Working Methods of the ITU-D Study Groups** said that the group had compared the working methods of the three Sectors and, following an in-depth examination of the approach thus far pursued, had agreed to modify a number of elements. TDAG was invited to provide guidance with respect to the principles that the group should follow in carrying out its task. The group had suggested, among other things, that the number of responsible persons be limited to a minimum and that their tasks be clarified. It had also foreseen the need for rapporteurs and co-rapporteurs. Regarding the project teams approach, it had been deemed preferable not to retain it since it corresponded more to programmes than to study groups; it had, on the other hand, been deemed appropriate to retain the focus groups approach while drawing up a better definition of those groups. In addition, the Group on the Structure and Working Methods had recommended that a clear distinction be drawn between adoption by the study group and approval by the Member States. Regarding the approval procedure, the group had proposed that the alternative approval procedure (AAP) should not be introduced for the time being, the existing approval procedure being satisfactory provided the deadlines were met, and had decided to delete the reference to Sector Members in the approval procedures. TDAG's views were also requested on other matters such as the presentation of documents or deletion of Questions.

4.17   The participants, congratulating the Vice-Chairman and his group on the work carried out, wished to know whether it would be necessary to await the next WTDC in order to take up the matter of the status of associates, or whether TDAG could take a decision in that regard. They noted, moreover, that the other Sectors had two approval procedures that were applicable to 90% of texts of a technical nature. Lastly, they noted that in the English version of Document TDAG-5/9, in Section 5, § 20 "Reservations", the words "At the WTDC" should be deleted.

4.18   Those observations were **noted** and it was **agreed** to continue studying the approval procedure.

5   Task Force on the application of new technologies in rural areas (Documents TDAG-5/16 and Corr.1)

5.1   The **TDAG Vice-Chairman** in charge of the Task Force set up to assist the Director of BDT in implementing the Recommendations formulated in the report of Focus Group 7, introducing Document TDAG-5/16 and its Corrigendum, repeated his wish to have included in the operational plan for 2001 the pilot projects that were foreseen within the framework of the Task Force activities; the CHF 100 000 offered by the Director of BDT would not suffice for all the projects, and other sources of financing would need to be found. It was to be noted that sustainability, in the commercial sense of the term, would form one of the project selection criteria, and he hoped that the final report of the Focus Group, which laid emphasis on the development of the Internet in remote areas, would be of use to all those concerned with the development of rural areas.

5.2   The participants warmly congratulated the TDAG Vice-Chairman in charge of the Task Force on the quality of the work carried out. TIA announced that it would be informing all its members of the opportunities for sponsoring pilot projects.

5.3   The **Director of BDT** reminded the meeting that the implementation of pilot projects would depend on the mobilization of both human and financial resources, and invited all participants to take part in the mobilization effort.

5.4   Attention was drawn to the fact that the report had made it possible to find concrete solutions with regard to the application of new technologies for Africa, and that it would be very useful, for regional organization such as ATU, to step up their collaboration with ITU and to have "open" standards making it possible to achieve heterogeneous solutions, among other things for the construction of telecentres operating on solar energy in rural areas.

6   ITU-D reform (Document TDAG-5/2)

6.1   The **representative of the United States**, introducing Document TDAG-5/2, pointed out that her country had put forward its proposals within the broader framework of the Working Group on ITU Reform, and that all of the improvements concerning ITU-D could be made by the Sector itself. The proposals for reform were based on the following principles: increased focus on enhancing the commercial viability of telecommunications in developing countries; enhanced interaction with the private sector; expansion of ITU-D's mission to make it an open and neutral forum wherein interested parties could meet, share experiences and learn from each other on regulatory practices; establishment of overarching objectives and priorities for ITU-D within the framework of WTDC, on the basis of which detailed action plans would subsequently be developed by BDT; and reexamination of the principle of study groups.

6.2   The participants congratulated the authors of the contribution, several of whose recommendations they considered to be of great interest.

6.3   On the question of ITU-D's mission, it was observed that the Union must play a catalytic and coordinating role, given that other organizations, including NGOs, were already engaged in the fight against poverty. It was also emphasized that the visibility of the results achieved by ITU-D would help to ensure the viability of telecommunication system development projects.

6.4   Regarding the functioning of ITU-D, and in particular the role of WTDC, it was noted that the conference was the only forum in which all proposals could be examined and where the developing countries were well represented - something which could not, for example, be said for the Council Working Group on Reform. Although there was unanimous agreement on the value of forums and colloquiums, it was nevertheless considered inappropriate to transform WTDC into forums. On the other hand, the addition of an educational/informational aspect on the application of technology was viewed as a positive approach. Furthermore, it was proposed that the implementation of the recommendations and resolutions adopted by the previous conference should be evaluated in order to ensure that the same texts were not carried over from one conference to the next. The participants were of the view that the role of TDAG could be strengthened by the conference, as had been done in the other Sectors, but that the document under consideration contained no specific recommendation in that regard.

6.5   On the question of operational plans, the participants recalled that the strategic plan already set forth objectives and that it would be useful to add quantitative indicators to give an idea of the degree to which the activities in question had been executed. It was also observed that TDAG's contributions should be taken into account sufficiently early when formulating operational plans.

6.6   The **Director of BDT**, noting that performance criteria already formed part of BDT's day-to-day management, said that, in his view, it was necessary to find a means of bringing new elements into the action plans to enable BDT to act before problems became acute.

6.7   Regarding the more accurate definition of country requirements, participants considered that to be a task for the regional offices, with some participants considering that strengthening of the regional presence should be reviewed if it failed to deliver the expected results.

6.8   On the question of working methods, participants observed that care was to be taken in all matters relating to the study groups, given that their role had thus far been a very positive one, as had that of the focus groups. With respect to procedures, a number of speakers noted that suggestions aimed at stepping up oral and informal exchanges had already been made in the past.

6.9   The participants, and in particular Sector Members, were in unanimous agreement on the value of enhanced interaction with the private sector. It was suggested that the representatives of small and medium-sized enterprises in developing countries could be encouraged to increase their participation by granting them fellowships. It was also proposed to reinstate the mechanisms (voluntary contributions) which had in the past, prior to the creation of BDT, allowed for the direct implementation of telecommunication projects, in which connection it was suggested that BDT should compile a list of the various sources of financing for rural telecommunication development projects.

6.10   On the matter of reform, which was under discussion in several forums and in all preparatory meetings, it was suggested that a one-day meeting be organized on the subject.

6.11   The participants having expressed their general regret at the fact that only a single contribution had been submitted on the subject of reform, despite the fact that several documents on the matter had been discussed within different forums, it was **agreed** to send out another circular letter inviting members to submit contributions in that regard. It was also **agreed** that BDT would draw up a full summary of the different proposals concerning ITU-D reform.

7   WTDC-02 (Document TDAG-5/12(Rev.1))

7.1   The **Head of the Sector Strategies and Conferences Unit** introduced Document TDAG-5/12(Rev.1), which dealt with preparatory meetings and the structure of the conference and contained a draft agenda. Regarding the invitation for WTDC-02, he explained that consultations had just been launched in that regard and that the main lines of the conference agenda would be decided by the Council at its June session.

7.2   The participants suggested that more than one meeting should be devoted to the private sector to allow for discussion of, among other things, private sector participation in the work of ITU-D, subject to the requirement that any such meetings be well organized and that the topics for discussion be decided in advance.

7.3   The members of TDAG advocated the development of a method for evaluating the implementation of the VAP; that evaluation, which would show up those activities not initially foreseen, would be very useful when it came to drawing up the action plan at WTDC-02. The strategic plan should not rigidly establish the modalities for implementation, which were the province of BDT. Finally, the participants wished to know how the status of telecommunication development was to be analysed.

7.4   The **Director of BDT** explained that the VAP was due to come to an end only one year after the next WTDC and so its evaluation could only take the form of an interim report, and that the analysis of the situation would, as in the past, be carried out by external consultants.

7.5   At the general level, it was suggested that there be a declaration of the kind that had been drawn up at Valletta, with specific objectives, in order to give greater visibility to ITU at the international level. The Bureau's attention was likewise drawn to the need to ensure that the conference was well organized, particularly in terms of its structure and documentation, in the interests of making it a success.

7.6   Regarding the structure of the agenda, it was **agreed** to rework it in order to take account of the suggestions concerning, for example, inclusion of the report on the evaluation of the VAP, the Dot Force reports, the report of the Task Force on Gender Issues and that of the ministerial meeting, as well as of the various indents in § 19 of Document TDAG-5/12(Rev.1). So far as the digital divide was concerned, it was proposed that developing countries be consulted in order to take account of their priorities in that regard and that that issue be taken up before that of reform.

7.7   Regarding the action plan, it was suggested that the objectives to be achieved be indicated in the interests of facilitating a future evaluation. It was further proposed that countries should define their national development objectives within the framework of master plans, that an item on the private sector and rural telecommunications be added to the agenda, that a meeting be held on the future of telecommunication development and that a youth forum be organized.

7.8   Those observations were **noted**.

7.9   The **Director of BDT** said that the secretariat would draw up an interim report on the agenda for WTDC-02 for submission to the next meeting of TDAG. That agenda would take account of the proposals made and would include a youth forum, subject to the youth forum at Africa TELECOM proving successful. He called on participants to take care to ensure that the decisions taken by WTDC were in line with any decisions that the next plenipotentiary conference might take on reform of the Union, while allowing for BDT's tasks to evolve.

8   Digital divide initiatives (Document TDAG-5/13)

8.1   The **Chief of the Policies, Strategies and Financing Department** introduced Document TDAG-5/13, the purpose of which was to inform the members of TDAG of the various initiatives undertaken within the framework of the G8 group of experts known as "Dot Force" (Digital Opportunity Task Force), the United Nations ICT Advisory Group and UNDP's "Digital Opportunities Initiative". It was to be noted that ITU had always been active on that front, the digital divide having previously been known as the "missing link".

8.2   The participants were united in proposing that ITU should play an active role in that field and essentially assume the role of catalyser and coordinator, the objective being to work towards complementarity and collaboration rather than competition. They emphasized that the Union should insist on the concept of the right to information and of universal access in the interests of humankind, and that it should lay emphasis on the "country requirement" aspect, bearing in mind its global character. The Union could also attract and foster new partnerships by drawing attention to its successes, and in particular by drawing the attention of G8 to its programmes concerning enterprise incubators. The representatives of the Union's members could talk about the organization's achievements within other bodies. It was, moreover, proposed that ITU should seize every opportunity, including the French Language Summit to be held in Lebanon in September 2001, to draw attention to all that was at stake in the digital divide.

8.3   The participants stressed that TDAG must listen to the views of those situated on the other side of the divide and ensure that ITU forged ahead. At the same time, they expressed the need for the G8 to understand that it was high time to act in the interests of ensuring that information and communication technologies benefited the whole of humankind, and for the Union to indicate to the G8 and the expert group exactly where the problems lay in the interests of expediting matters. Attention was drawn to the lack of financing and to the need for a policy of technology transfer aimed at bridging the digital divide. Lastly, the Union was invited, within the framework of its initiatives, to lay emphasis on the practical means of building the necessary bridges.

8.4   The **Director of BDT** noted that both the private sector and the international community were aware of that key challenge facing ITU, that they were determined to meet it, and that the matter of financing was crucial. The Union's objective was to draw on its experience in guiding other bodies by indicating to them the things that needed to be done or not done, and by playing a catalytic role for all the partners. He invited all participants to submit contributions on the subject, for example to the TDAG vice-chairmen.

9   Report of the TDAG Subgroup on Private Sector Issues (Document TDAG-5/17)

9.1   The **Chairman of the TDAG Subgroup on Private Sector Issues**, introducing Document TDAG-5/17, lay particular emphasis on the new initiatives undertaken to reduce the digital divide and on the role that ITU could play in that regard, on the value of holding a specific private-sector session (which would need to be properly planned in order to be genuinely useful) during WTDC-02, and of a youth forum if the one held during Africa TELECOM was a success. The subgroup had invited its members to submit proposals relating to the content of the meeting to be held during the next development symposium organized for regulatory bodies with the private sector. The subgroup participants had also suggested that technology exhibitions be held during the conference.

9.2   In response to observations concerning § 5.3 of the document under consideration, it was explained that it was a matter of moving to packet-switched digital networks and that the words "global universal service fund" should be replaced by "fund intended to facilitate regulatory reform". That fund formed part of the strategic proposals put forward by regulators, which were set forth in a document which had not been widely distributed.

9.3   On the matter of the private-sector session during WTDC, it was **agreed** that that session would not be reserved exclusively for the private sector but would be open to all interested parties.

9.4   The members of TDAG made it clear that the database on telecommunication operators in developing countries would be extremely useful and suggested that the number of round tables for least developed countries be increased in order to further attract the private sector. Lastly, it was requested that private-sector sessions should not be used as a means of promoting systems that went against the interest of members of the Union.

10   Report of the Task Force on Gender Issues (Documents TDAG-5/4 and TDAG-5/5)

10.1   The **Secretary of the Task Force on Gender Issues** said that Document TDAG-5/5 reported on the activities undertaken by the task force since TDAG's October 2000 meeting, particularly in regard to inclusion of the principle of parity between men and women in telecommunication policies within the framework of the Development Symposium organized for regulatory bodies. The workshop organized in that connection had been highly successful, and BDT had been requested to organize a similar workshop covering a longer period.

10.2   Document TDAG-5/4, prepared by Working Group 6, focused on possibilities for bridging the digital divide through helping women to familiarize themselves with information and communication technologies. Further to Decision 500 taken by the Council the previous year, a study had been conducted in various international organizations on the use of the English word "chairperson", from which it had emerged that that word was used in 16 out of 21 organizations.

10.3   It was requested that a session devoted to the Task Force on Gender Issues be held during WTDC-02.

10.4   That request was **noted**.

11   Progress report on the ITU-D membership (Document TDAG-5/3)

11.1   The **representative of the Programming and ITU-D Members Unit,** introducing Document TDAG-5/3, said that the document, drawn up in response to a request by TDAG, showed the evolution in the number of Sector Members and in the choice of contributory units over several years. The 1/16 unit class was henceforth available only to developing countries.

11.2   The participants were requested to return as speedily as possible the questionnaire which had been sent to Sector Members, in accordance with the request made by TDAG at its previous meeting.

12   Date and duration of the next meeting

12.1   It was suggested that the next meeting of TDAG should be held over three days, namely **3, 4 and 5 October 2001**.

12.2   It was **agreed** that the meeting scheduled to be held in December in Geneva to bring together the countries involved in organizing preparatory meetings would be open to all interested parties. It was suggested that that meeting should also, as had been foreseen by the Council, discuss the future of regional conferences.

13   Closure of the meeting

13.1   The **Director of BDT** and the **Chairman** thanked all the participants, particularly the regional and interregional organizations, for their contributions and expressed their satisfaction at the quality of the discussions.

The meeting was declared closed on Friday, 23 February, at 1730 hours.

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