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|  | **Document** **RPM-AFR21/6-E** |
|  | **11 February 2021** |
|  | **Original:** **English** |
| Chairman, TDAG Working Group on WTDC Preparations |
| Final report of the TDAG Working Group on WTDC Preparations (TDAG-WG-Prep) |
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| **Agenda item:** Item 7.1**Summary:** This document contains a final report on the work of the TDAG Working Group on WTDC Preparations (TDAG-WG-Prep), including those items where the group had not reached a consensus and TDAG-20/3 took a decision.**Expected results:**RPM-AFR is invited to note the document.**References:**[TDAG-20/3/5](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG27-C-0005/) |

**Summary**

This document contains the final report of the TDAG Working Group on WTDC Preparations, including proposals based on its terms of reference. The report also contains the decisions taken by TDAG-20/3 on those items where the group had not reached consensus.

The TDAG Working Group on WTDC preparations was set up by TDAG at its meeting on 2-5 June 2020. The [terms of reference](https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Conferences/TDAG/Pages/TDAG_WG_WTDC_Prep.aspx) were approved at a subsequent extraordinary TDAG meeting on 16 June 2020, which also appointed Mr Santiago Reyes-Borda (Canada) as Chairman of the Working Group on WTDC Preparations.

The group has held four meetings over July, September and October 2020 and has received twelve contributions from Member States and Sector Members that were presented and discussed at those meetings. The reports of the individual meetings are available as follows:

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| 16 July 2020 – [TDAG-WG-Prep/4](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG27.WP-C-0004/en) | 30 September 2020 – [TDAG-WG-Prep/18](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG27.WP-C-0018/en) |
| 7 September 2020 – [TDAG-WG-Prep/12](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG27.WP-C-0012/en) | 20 October and 4 November 2020[TDAG-WG-Prep/26](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG27.WP-C-0026/) |

**Introduction**

Throughout its meetings the group has stressed that WTDC should be an action-oriented conference, with interactive dialogues between stakeholders, aimed at developing a shared understanding of existing barriers and advancing effective, sustainable and innovative solutions for the expansion of meaningful connectivity for everyone, everywhere.

As so many have said, the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the fundamental importance of telecommunications and information and communication technologies (ICTs) in all aspects of people's lives: health, education, work and entertainment. The economic impact of COVID-19 will affect the path to economic recovery for both developed and developing countries for years to come. Telecommunications and ICTs will play a critical part in this recovery. ITU, through its Telecommunication Development Sector (ITU-D), has the potential to play a pivotal role in bringing countries together to address the many challenges presented by the effects of the pandemic on the global economy.

Participants in the group believe that WTDC-21 offers an invaluable opportunity to put the critical work of ITU-D at the centre of the effort to ensure that all people in all countries have access to affordable, high-quality broadband. In this sense, the preparatory process, structure and content of WTDC must be designed to ensure that no one is left behind.

**Section I: Preparatory process**

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| * **To review WTDC preliminary proposals on WTDC-21 preparatory process including responses to the BDT survey on WTDC reform that was discussed during the two TDAG web dialogues, as well as any other related member contributions to TDAG-20 virtual meeting on WTDC;**
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| * **In consultation with ITU membership and the TDAG Bureau, make recommendations for arrangements with preparatory meetings and events prior to the conference;**
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| **How many interregional coordination meetings (IRMs) should be held and when?** The Working Group recommends a minimum of two and a maximum of three Inter-regional Meetings. The Working group also recommends that the IRMs be held back-to-back with RPMs, subject to further discussion among the RTOs, in consultation and coordination with the BDT.**What should be the format of IRMs?**The recommendation of the Group is that IRMs should, to the extent possible, facilitate in person and remote participation, on an equal footing, and should seek to come to a common position on key issues to be discussed at WTDC-21, while respecting the sovereign right of any Member State to submit its own contributions to WTDC-21.**What should the IRM agenda include?** The Group recommends that the agenda be built around the proposals from RPMs, and also include proposals from Member States, Sector Members, RTOs, BDT and other stakeholders, as appropriate, covering key topics that need coordination and consensus between the different regions.**Should attendance at IRMs be limited, and if so, how many representatives from each region should attend IRMs?**Based on the proposal by the Working Group, TDAG-20/3 decided that participation to IRMs will be open to all ITU-D membership and that each RTO should decide who speaks on behalf of their region. Speakers can, for example, include government representatives, regulators, policy makers, civil society, academia, Internet technical community, youth, gender equality organizations, and others.**How will the chairmanship of IRMs be decided?**The Group proposes that there be one chairman, preferably the chairman of WTDC-21, and six vice-chairs, preferably those that are responsible for the coordination of the preparatory process for WTDC in their respective RTO.**What steps should be taken to ensure proper planning and coordination between RPMs, IRMs and RTO preparatory meetings?**The recommendation of the Group is that best practice (in terms of preparations) from other ITU conferences be incorporated into the planning and work of IRMs.With regard to coordination between RPMs and IRMs and RTOs: each region would appoint its coordinators, while the secretariat of the RTOs would be allowed to play an overall coordinating role.The regional preparatory process should focus on defining regional priorities/initiatives, revising or drafting time-consuming resolutions, addressing study groups and study Questions related matters and developing guidelines and text for the Declaration.**How should WTDC-21 be promoted?**The Working Group encourages TDAG-20/3 to recommend appropriate mechanisms to promote the WTDC-21 among ITU membership, within the UN System, international financial institutions, and all relevant stakeholders.**Which other high-profile forums can be used to raise awareness and interest on WTDC, and how should ITU go about doing this?**Please refer to previous section. |

**Section II: Conference arrangements, including content, thematic tracks, themes and stakeholders**

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| * **To develop proposals and make recommendations that might enhance the arrangements for the conference, including:**
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| **- Conference content;****- Consider the Thematic Tracks****Should the High-Level Segment be changed, and if so, what form should it take?**The Working Group’s proposal is as follows:The High-Level Segment and high-level policy statements could make way for a Development Track that would incorporate senior level panels, roundtables and thematic discussions of development topics related to the implementation of the Action Plan and establishment of the new Action Plan.Any High-Level Segments should not take time from the work of WTDC Plenary and committees and their related groups.**Submit proposals for thematic tracks that can be incorporated into the conference**The Group recommends that thematic tracks reflect the ITU-D thematic priorities.**- Determination of conference theme(s);****What theme or themes (connected to development challenges and membership priorities) should be established for WTDC-21, and how should the theme(s) be connected to the content and structure of the conference?**Based on the proposal by the Working Group, TDAG-20/3 decided that the theme of WTDC-21 would be:Connecting the unconnected to achieve Sustainable Development.**- Key stakeholders;****What constituent groups should be targeted for WTDC-21?**The Group proposes that the constituents to be targeted include: International financial institutions, regional development banks, United Nations System, private sector, and other relevant stakeholders such as youth organizations, representatives from marginalized communities.**What high-level participants should be invited to chair and/or deliver keynote speeches on the theme(s) selected?**The proposal of the Working Group is that high-level participants from Member States, Sector Members, private sector, Academia, UN System, civil society and from international and regional financial organizations be invited to chair and/or deliver keynote speeches on the theme(s) selected.  |

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| * **To report to the next meeting of TDAG.**
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| TDAG is invited to consider this report and to endorse the recommendations set out therein.  |

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