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| **Telecommunication Development Advisory Group (TDAG)**  **25th Meeting, Geneva, 2-5 June 2020** | | C:\Users\comas\AppData\Local\Temp\Rar$DRa0.735\jpg\ITU official logo_blue_RGB.jpg | |
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| Director, Telecommunications Development Bureau | | |
| WEB DIALOGUES ON WTDC REFORM | | |
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| **Summary:**  This document provides a report on Web Dialogues conducted by BDT relating to reform of the World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC), including WTDC-21, and proposals by the Director based on the discussions during those dialogues.  **Action required:**  TDAG is invited to note the contents of the report, and advise and make recommendations to the Director on next steps in preparation for WTDC-21 and reform of WTDC generally.  **References:**  n/a | | |

**World Telecommunication Development Conferences**

**Director’s Report on Web Dialogues**

1. **Introduction**

1.1 The World Telecommunication Development Conference (“WTDC”) is held every four years and sets the development agenda of the Telecommunication Development Sector (“ITU-D”). WTDC further offers a unique opportunity for the international community to come together and discuss the future of the ICT sector and its contribution to social and economic development.

1.2 During TDAG-19, BDT held several Breakout Sessions focussed on possible reforms to WTDC, based on input from members regarding the need for change. It was proposed to continue this process with sessions on WTDC Reform at TDAG-20’s proposed physical meeting which was due to be held in March 2020, however due to the lockdowns caused as a result of Covid-19 those sessions could not be held.

1.3 It was decided to engage membership on WTDC reform through virtual sessions so on 24 March 2020, BDT organized the first [Web Dialogue on WTDC](https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Conferences/TDAG/Pages/TDAG25/default.aspx) where participants had the opportunity to discuss and provide their input on how to improve the effectiveness of WTDC-21. Although circumstances dictated that the membership was unable to gather in person, over 200 participants actively took part in the discussions. A Summary Report of the First Web Dialogue is available at [this link](https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Conferences/TDAG/Documents/2020%20TDAG/DRAFTSUMMARY-RECORD-WTDC-WEB-DIALOGUErev_clean_in%20template_final_v2.docx).

1.4 Building on the outcomes of the first event, the membership was again invited to come together on 30 April 2020 for the Second Web Dialogue on WTDC. The objective of the 2nd Web Dialogue was to further discuss and refine proposals for consideration of the TDAG-20 to ensure that the World Telecommunication Development Conference will be a solutions-based conference that addresses the real challenges in the development of telecommunications/ICTs. Over 200 members participated in the event, and the Summary Report for the dialogue is available at [this link](https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Conferences/TDAG/Documents/2020%20TDAG/SUMMARY-RECORD-WEB-DIALOGUE-FOUR-SESSIONS-12MAY.docx).

1.5 Participants were very engaged in the dialogues, and over the two events, the following clear themes emerged:

* There was virtually unanimous support for reform to WTDC to ensure that future WTDC conferences (starting with WTDC-21) are reframed as more solutions-based conferences dealing with development issues and less focussed on the administrative issues which have characterised past conferences;
* The reform of WTDC should start with the preparatory process, which participants felt was not effective in refining and framing the narrative for WTDC, thereby resulting in reduced focus at the conference;
* The current WTDC does not engage the key stakeholders that are needed to ensure that WTDC leads to a transformative development agenda for ITU-D and the BDT;
* The “Side Events” traditionally convened at WTDC should be integrated into the conference itself, and rebranded to engage key stakeholders, including civil society, funding partners, sector members, and industry.

1. **Proposals for WTDC Reform**

2.1 The Web Dialogues considered TDAG reform under the umbrella of four topics:

Topic 1: The Preparatory Process

Topic 2: Content and Structure

Topic 3: Stakeholder Engagement

Topic 4: Side Events

2.2 Based on the outcomes from the discussions, the Secretariat noted that the proposals presented would more concisely be grouped into two broad areas, namely, proposals related to the preparations for WTDC, and proposals for reform to the conference itself.

2.3 Therefore, the Director submits the following proposals for WTDC reform for consideration by, and the advice of, TDAG:

2.4 Before the Conference:

Consideration should be given to the following approaches:

* Implement a comprehensive preparatory process that introduces formal inter-regional coordination meetings (IRMs). These meetings should have a clearly defined format and clear agendas. Outcomes of IRMs would be non-binding as Member States have the sovereign right to submit proposals at the Conference.
* Define the number of representatives from each region to attend IRMs and decide on the chairmanship of IRMs.
* Define target lists by constituent group, and a focus on funding entities and beneficiaries of ITU-D activities (youth, women, representatives from LDCs, persons from indigenous communities, etc.).
* Ensure proper planning and coordination between RPMs, IRMs and RTO preparatory meetings to safeguard the efficiency of the Conference preparatory process.
* Establish, in collaboration with the Secretariat, a list of coordinators from each region for each topic on the Conference agenda.
* Leverage on a selected basis other high-profile fora to raise awareness and interest on WTDC.

2.5 During the Conference:

Consideration should be given to merging the high-level segment and the side-events into thematic events, a “Development Track” as follows:

* Carefully select themes to match the WTDC agenda, and establish a clear agenda and value proposition with the intention of addressing development challenges and membership priorities, and obtaining funding/pledges to complement the ITU budget.
* Invite high-level participants to chair and/or deliver key-note speeches on the theme(s) selected.
* Organize thematic tracks to be separate from the “administrative” part of the conference.

Following the practice of the other sectors, the ITU-D contribution to the ITU Strategic Plan should be the responsibility of the TDAG (revision of WTDC Resolutions 1 and 31 required).

1. **Recommended TDAG Groups**
   1. Based on the proposals set out in 2 above, it is recommended that TDAG establish two working groups, to advise the Director on the implementation of the proposals and preparation for WTDC-21, as set out below.
   2. TDAG Working Group on WTDC Reform

* To review WTDC preliminary proposals, which were discussed during the two TDAG web dialogues on WTDC held in March and April 2020.
* To advise and assist the Director with arrangements for preparatory meetings and promotional events prior to the conference;
* To advise and assist the Director with arrangements for the work of the conference, including:
  + Conference agenda;
  + Determination of conference theme(s);
  + Design of the Thematic tracks;
  + Key partners, including high level participants and potential funding partners.
  1. TDAG Working Group on Resolutions and Declaration:
* To review WTDC resolutions, examine their number and subject matter, and consider streamlining, to avoid repetitions and duplication with the Resolutions of the Plenipotentiary Conference.
* To align the BDT thematic priorities, proposed regional priorities and proposed study group questions having regard to the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals and taking into consideration the WSIS Action Lines (C2, C5 and C6) for which ITU has lead responsibility.
* To propose elements and make recommendations to membership for the future draft Declaration.
  1. The composition and terms of reference of the groups would be as determined by TDAG.

1. **Schedule of Preparations toward WTDC-21**

4.1 Based on the current state of preparations, and scheduling of various ITU events and important religious observances, a proposed timeline for the preparatory process leading up to WTDC-21 is attached as Annex 1.

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