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| C:\Users\comas\AppData\Local\Temp\Rar$DRa0.735\jpg\ITU official logo_blue_RGB.jpg**TDAG Working Group on WTDC Preparations**  **7 September 2020, Virtual** | | |
|  | | **Document TDAG-WG-Prep/12** |
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**Summary**

The TDAG Working Group on WTDC Preparations (TDAG-WG-Prep), chaired by Mr Santiago Reyes-Borda (Canada), held its second meeting on 7 September 2020 attended by more than 100 participants. Contributions received from the Russian Federation, Lithuania, EMEA Satellite Operators Association (ESOA) and Zimbabwe were presented to the meeting by delegates from each of these members. The meeting also considered the contribution received from Indonesia, though this could not be presented orally due to connectivity challenges

The proposals put forward in these contributions are broadly aligned with the questions raised in Annex 4 of [Circular Letter BDT/DDR/TDAG/052](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-BDT-CIR-0052/en): “Guiding questions for the submission of contributions to the TDAG-WG-Prep by membership”. A consolidated summary of the proposals is attached as Annex 1 to this report.

This report presents a brief summary of the observations and comments made on those contributions during the meeting.

**Participants underlined the need to allocate more time for discussions on study group Questions and resolutions.** It was noted thatlessons learned from previous WTDCs indicate the need to reduce “side events” to better accommodate these discussions.

**Participants welcomed the idea to devise a new scheme for high-level policy statements** – a scheme that would also contribute to the outcome of WTDC, as outlined in the proposal from Zimbabwe. Notwithstanding the importance of high-level policy statements, ITU members have witnessed over the years how monotonous those statements tend to be, taking up the time of key conference work.

**A conceptual framework is needed which** defines the full range of stakeholders and the mechanism for their participation in the conference. Would that participation be limited only to side events? Will side events be held in parallel to the discussions of resolutions or study group Questions or other fundamental aspects of the conference?

**When defining stakeholder groups, it was noted that this should include donors who should be encouraged to participate in WTDC**, as they could contribute to funding development projects in ITU‑D. There was a call to start engaging with the stakeholders involved in funding various activities – the lending institutions, the private sector, the multistakeholder community. These different stakeholders have a particular role in implementing projects. In this regard, the project implementation function in ITU will be examined in greater detail in terms of collaborating and partnering with relevant expert organizations at the regional and international levels.

**The Chairman of TDAG noted that ITU should revisit the “separate track” terminology** to avoid the current interpretation that a separate-track approach could jeopardize the participation of smaller ITU Member States and Sector Members with small delegations. Meanwhile, it should be understood that there will be two tracks: one track for the traditional administrative functions the conference has to accomplish and a second track that would focus on development‑oriented activities.

The delegate from Brazil commented that **preparatory work for WTDC-21 is well under way in many regional telecommunication organizations.** The Inter‑American Telecommunication Commission (CITEL) has already designated three pairs of focal points for the three TDAG working groups: TDAG WTDC-Prep; TDAG Working Group on WTDC Resolutions, Declaration and Thematic Priorities (TDAG-WG-RDTP); and TDAG Working Group on Strategic and Operational Plans (TDAG-WG-SOP).

Given the interrelation of the issues in these groups, CITEL focal points are all working together to ensure that there is cohesion and consistency. Ms Andrea Grippa (Brazil) has been designated by CITEL as a focal point for TDAG WTDC-Prep. Mr Santiago Reyes-Borda is the Chairman of CITEL's Working Group on WTDC.

The delegate from Jordan recalled that the first Preparatory Meeting of the Arab States Working Group for WTDC was held online on 25-27 August 2020, where the three TDAG working groups were an item on the agenda and where agreement was reached to designate focal points. Mr Al-ansari Almashakbeh (Jordan) was designated focal point for TDAG WTDC-Prep.

The delegate from the Islamic Republic of Iran informed the meeting that the Asia-Pacific Telecommunity (APT) plans to hold three meetings before WTDC-21. APT has scheduled one extraordinary meeting for WTDC on 4 November 2020 to coordinate the views of its member administrations and report to the TDAG meeting of 23 November 2020. Dr Ahmad Reza Sharafat, the Chairman of TDAG-WG-RDTP, has been appointed Chairman of the APT Preparatory Group for WTDC-21.

The delegate from Saudi Arabia recommended that BDT should prepare, for the next meeting, an information document featuring:

* a concept or draft structure of the conference;
* candidate themes or possible themes for the conference;
* how the high-level segment would take place and how the different tracks would fit together and with the discussions of the administrative track;
* thoughts on the mechanisms and type of participants to be invited as experts or stakeholders.

All of this would provide a common understanding to members on how to develop and enhance the conference.

**Conclusion**

The contributions submitted to this second meeting of TDAG WTDC-Prep facilitated the discussion and allowed the group to move forward. In line with its terms of reference, the group will develop proposals and make recommendations that enhance the arrangements for the conference, including conference content; determination of conference theme(s); consideration of thematic tracks; and defining key stakeholders. As the Chairman of the group put it: “At the end of the day this whole concept of fit-for-purpose is the one we need and we are aiming to ensure we attain.”

ANNEX 1

**Compilation of proposals submitted to the 2nd meeting of the TDAG-WG-Prep, 7 September 2020**

| **Topic** | **Russian Federation (**[**TDAG-WG-Prep/7**](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG27.WP-C-0007/)**)** | **Indonesia (**[**TDAG-WG-Prep/8**](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG27.WP-C-0008/)**)** | **ESOA (**[**TDAG-WG-Prep/9**](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG27.WP-C-0009/)**)** | **Lithuania (**[**TDAG-WG-Prep/10**](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG27.WP-C-0010/)**)** | **Zimbabwe (**[**TDAG-WG-Prep/11**](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG27.WP-C-0011/)**)** |
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| **Before the Conference** |  |  |  |  |  |
| Inter-Regional Coordination Meetings (IRMs)   1. How many IRMs should be held and when? 2. What should be the format of IRMs? 3. What should the IRM Agenda include? 4. Should attendance at IRMs be limited, and if so, how many representatives from each region should attend IRMs? 5. How will chairmanship of IRMs be decided? 6. What steps should be taken to ensure proper planning and coordination between RPMs, IRMs and RTO preparatory meetings? | **1.** One two-day meeting not together with TDAG (in replacement of CM-RPM). Focus on small list of critical issues defined at RPMs, and on organizational and management issues of WTDC.  **2.** The IRMs could help reaching a preliminary agreement, but any changes to the preparatory process must keep the sovereign right of any Member State to submit contributions at WTDC by their own.  **3.**   * Discussion towards the list of WTDC documents (Resolutions, Declaration, etc.) reflecting the preliminary proposals of RTO; * List of RTO’s coordinators on the each of document discussed above; * Identification of possible problematic documents for WTDC.   **4.** IRM’s should be limited to the nominated coordinators from RTOs.  **5.** Chairman of WTDC-21 should chair the IRMs preferably.  **6.** LastRTO preparatory meeting should include one/two days of inter-regional coordination, with presence of other RTOs. This participation should be supported by:   * Translation/interpretation to English. * Invitations containing means to access online the documents, defined by the RTO for interregional consideration * Agenda containing items related to the input documents of other regional organizations on their preparatory activity. | **1.**   * One fully virtual/hybrid IRM prior to WTDC-21 to allow participation by all countries (including those still affected by COVID-19): aim to minimize deadlock and potential unresolved contentious issues during WTDC-21, and to leverage IRM as a “mini-WTDC” to fully discuss ideas prior to WTDC. * One IRM during 3Q of 2021 - allowing time for RTOs and MS to formulate (Preliminary) Regional Common Proposals for WTDC-21, and individual country proposals/amendments to existing texts. Also allows delegates of MS to attend WTSA-20 (23 Feb.-5 March 2021) (1Q 2021). * IRMs should not coincide with RPM and RTO Preparatory Meetings. Consultation BDT-RTOs necessary. Proposed schedule for ASP in Annex 1.   **2.** Attendance fully open to MS so IRM become a platform where RTOs and MS can discuss and debate their views regarding proposals for streamlining of WTDC texts, prior to WTDC (refer to CPM for WRC-19 and Interregional Meeting for WTSA-20.  **3.** The IRM Agenda should comprise of the following items, but not limited to:   * Suppression, modification, or streamlining of WTDC resolutions * Structure and agenda of WTDC-21 (ideas on how the high-level track and side events would be arranged to maximize their impact for future ITU-D projects) * Target invitations (ITU-D member countries, sector members, academia, funding entities, etc.)   **4.** Attendance fully open to MS so IRM become a platform where RTOs and MS can discuss and debate their views regarding proposals for streamlining of WTDC texts, prior to WTDC (refer to CPM for WRC-19 and Interregional Meeting for WTSA-20.  **5.** The chairmanship and office bearers of the IRM should be decided during TDAG-20/3, on 23 November 2020. | -- | **1.** IRMs to be held after every two RPMs (after 2, 4, 6 RPMs), *i.e.* three in 2021, with possibility to hold additional IRMs if needed. Need reasonable time after RPMs (*e. g.* a week) till successive IRM to share the outcomes of regional meetings with the representatives of other regions and give them sufficient time to prepare for IRM.  **2.** Agenda for IRMs may be organized mainly basing on the proposals from BDT, RPMs and RTOs and cover the topics that need coordination between different regions. IRMs shall also be used for sharing the relevant information (presenting the reports from regional activities).  **3.** RTOs shall decide who will represent a region at IRMs, up to 5 representatives max. per region. Representatives from other stakeholders involved in preparation of WTDC-21 may also attend.  **4.** The best practice of preparation for other ITU conferences shall be incorporated in planning and work of IRMs. | **1-2-3.** The ideal: one after every RPM. Practically and due to cost issues, it is proposed to hold four IRMs as follows:   * IRM after every two RPMs. For example, after the AFR and ARB Regions RPMs that adopt the proposals for each region, an IRM attended by representatives from all regions, is held. This would apply to rest of six regions. At the end of all RPMs, three IRMs, would have been held. * Agendas of IRMs would be to discuss any issues of common interest arising from the relevant two RPMs, issues which the regions whose meetings preceded the IRM require support, as well as issues relating formulation of SG questions, streamlining of resolutions and regional priorities. * Final IRM at least two months before WTDC to review consolidated outcomes of the three IRMs and work at reaching consensus on Regional priorities/initiatives, new and or revised resolutions, strategic plan and budget, draft SG questions, Declaration and discuss strategic partnerships.   **4-5.** Participation limited to a maximum of ten representatives per region (cut costs and keep meetings manageable).  Regions to use sub regions or geographical representation as a determining factor and have representatives that speak to underserved communities, when appointing representatives. For example for Africa: North Africa, Southern Africa, East Africa West Africa and central Africa. Other representatives could cover, investors including financial institutions, operators, the youth and donor organisations.  Given the link between the first three IRMs with specific regions, concerned regions to appoint the Chair of the IRM related to their regions, with vice chairs coming from all regions.  **6.** With regard to coordinators between RPMs and IRMs and RTOs: each region to appoint coordinators for the region, while the secretariat of the RTOs are allowed to play an overall coordinating role. |
| Promoting Wider Participation in WTDC   1. What constituent groups should be targeted for WTDC-21? 2. How should WTDC-21 be promoted? 3. Which other high-profile forums can be used to raise awareness and interest on WTDC, and how should ITU go about doing this? | **1.** Strengthen the participation of international finance institutions (World Bank, regional development banks, including recent newcomers) and OECD Development assistance committee, especially on relevant discussions of financing ICT development, statistics and ITU outreach. In this regard, participation of UNCTAD, and the contributors to 2018 Survey on Donor Support to the Digital Economy in Developing Countries might also be desirable.  **2.** Attractiveness of WTDC depends on importance, relevance and timeliness of the issues addressed. The high-level decision makers and global leaders could be interested if ITU proposes programs, initiatives and actions that answer the current situation challenges at the global level in conjunction with UNGA decisions, for example, on the 2030 Agenda, health, food, climate, cyber security etc.  It has been noted that important development challenges are not sufficiently addressed at WTDC and that the conference agenda could be made more attractive to high-level decision makers and global leaders.  **3.** Regional forums like Asian-Pacific economic cooperation – APEC (particularly WG on Telecommunications and Information, Steering Committee on Economic and Technical Cooperation) can be utilized to raise awareness about WTDC and the relevant work done on the actual lines of work, e.g. reports on Study questions. | **2.** ITU-D should promote WTDC-21 during high-profile forums held prior to WTDC-21, such as World Economic Forum 2021, Mobile World Congress 2021, and other Ministerial Level/Senior Official Level meetings. | **1.** ITU to be mindful to ensure that engagement with private sector stakeholders is balanced across major relevant industry sectors and not perceived as an endorsement of any one industry sector/D-member: any session or activity organised during a private sector event should be considered as a platform for the ICT sector as a whole in line with the overarching objective of promoting connectivity for all - ITU ensure multi-sector representation and involvement in any sessions/activities/communications arising from the initiative.  **3.** Promote WTDC at events organised by other institutions such as: OCHA, UNICEF, WEF, FAO, the Broadband Commission, European Commission, etc.  **2-3.** Consider this text instead: “The ITU should make best efforts to bring all relevant stakeholders together e.g. with a session dedicated to WTDC, at events organised by the most relevant private sector stakeholders (mobile, satellite, OTTs, etc.) to profile the event in front of high-level industry executives, call for greater cross-sector collaboration and drive greater engagement in WTDC.”  Encourage a multi-technology approach to achieve its objectives: BDT as the unique umbrella body actively fostering an inclusive approach amongst technologies and helping to break down silos between sectors in order to connect everyone and deliver on the SDGs. | **1.** Visibility and awareness promotion strategy shall be elaborated by ITU with proposals and implementation support from the membership.  **2.** The main objectives of WTDC-21, the value of participation in the conference and possible ways of contributing shall be clearly and loudly communicated to the public.  Specific measures shall be developed for promotion of WTDC-21 in every region to attract the best regional representation at this conference.  **3.** MS invited to put efforts in promoting the WTDC-21 on national level, especially addressing groups that may benefit the most from outcomes of WTDC-21 (*e. g.* the youth organizations, girls and women, organizations of people with disabilities, etc.) inviting them to contribute. | **1.** Groups to be targeted for participation in WTDC, in addition to Policy makers and Regulatory Authorities:   * Financial institutions (they play a big role in funding projects and implementation of financial inclusion. Care should be taken however to ensure that they do dominate and dictate what should be done. In this regard, they should be part of the delegation of the Member State from which they come from). * Development and Donor organisations (will assist with assessing the areas that require intervention with regard to connectivity and development issues) * Gender groups and youth (can highlight the challenges faced by their constituencies and propose innovations that can provide solutions for the development of ICTs). * Manufacturers of ICT equipment and gadgets (so they have a clear understanding of what products they need to produce to support ICT development. Need to ensure that creation of business for these entities does not hijack the development programme for WTDC: these entities to participate under the banner of their MS). * Academia (ICT skills education requirements are also catered for).   **2 & 3.** Promotion of WTDC to stakeholder groups:   * Nationally, regulators could dedicate of any speeches delivered during key ICT events to the role of WTDC and encouraging industry, academia and various stake holders to participate in the preparations and take up the responsibility to take awareness to their constituencies * Regionally, all regional meetings and conferences to incorporate a segment with discussion on the importance of participating in WTDC and its role in development. * Internationally, major UN relating conferences to promote WTDC: Global sustainable transport Summits, The Conference on Sustainable Development and Summits, The International Conference on financing for development, the world education forum and world Summits on social Development, etc. |
| **During the conference** |  |  |  |  |  |
| Should the High-Level Segment be changed, and if so, what form should it take? | Any High-Level Segments should not take time from the work of WTDC Plenary and Committees and their related groups. | Minimize side events or merge High-Level segment with side events, in order to make WTDC-21 more efficient, effective, and focused on development issues of telecommunications/ICTs. | -- | -- | During the TDAG web dialogues held earlier during the year, there were proposals to merge the high-level segment and the side events. A challenge was also posed on whether the format of policy statements should be changed.  In current WTDC set up, side events held during the tea breaks, lunch breaks and after conference hours, are not well attended (participants attending various ad-hoc and drafting groups). Time allocated may not be sufficient for speakers to articulate issues and take questions from the floor. For high-level invited participants there may appear to be no value to them in these ill-attended side events and are discouraged from participating in WTDC.  BDT and MS to come up with a list of critical topics that can have an impact on development, for which panel discussions can be held during normal conference times. Speakers to include industry experts, consumers, different community representatives, as well policy makers. Participation of policy makers will obviate the need for a monotonous delivery of policy Statements. MS and SM can still submit written policy statements, which are then posted on dedicated page on the WTDC website. |
| 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? | Minimize side-events and move those discussions to sessions discussing related Resolutions to save time.  Agenda of side events should have strong connection with the Study Group Questions, ITU index and BDT activities. Explain clearly how every event contributes to the Study Group Questions, ITU index and/or BDT activities, preferably with outputs which can be transposed to the concrete benefit or inputs to the WTDC Resolutions and mandates of Study Group Questions.  Additional side-event held with the aim to strengthen the capacity of ITU members to express their opinions and transform them into contributions to the next ITU-D Study period. | The themes for WTDC-21 should be holistic enough to encompass the focus of telecommunication development issues arising from all regional levels. Further, bearing in mind the current global health crisis, we propose the following themes for WTDC-21:  Alternative 1: Creating a resilient global digital economy to withstand global pandemics/crises/disasters.  Alternative 2: Recovery of Global Digital Economy and Connectivity to Build Back Better. | -- | -- | Proposed themes for WTDC, which can be utilised for thematic tracks, include innovation that assist in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, demand stimulation initiatives, ICT capacity building for disadvantaged communities, Implementation of ICT technical skill resource training and investment in ICT infrastructure. |
| What high-level participants should be invited to chair and/or deliver keynote speeches on the theme(s) selected? | -- | High-level participants to WTDC-21 are by invitation only, arising from MS, SM, academia, and international/regional financial/funding organizations. | -- | -- | -- |
| Submit proposals for thematic tracks that can be incorporated into the conference.” | Explanation on the linkages between thematic priorities, ITU-D Action plan, WTDC Resolutions, BDT programs and ITU-D study Questions. | -- | Avoid having separate parallel tracks as this could discriminate against smaller ITU Member States and Sector Members with small delegations. This recommendation is also in line with previous TDAG discussions around the desire to simplify engagement with the ITU and in its meetings and events. | -- | Proposed themes for WTDC, which can be utilised for thematic tracks, include innovation that assist in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, demand stimulation initiatives, ICT capacity building for disadvantaged communities, Implementation of ICT technical skill resource training and investment in ICT infrastructure. |

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