**Summary:**

The present document has been prepared by the Secretariat in response to the request by Saudi Arabia during the TDAG-WG-Prep meeting on 7 September 2020.

It is intended as food for thought for the participants to the Working Group, based on proposals from the membership.

**Concept note**

**World Telecommunication Development Conference 2021 (WTDC-21),   
Addis Ababa, 8-19 November 2021**

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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**  **30 September 2020, Virtual** | | |
|  | | **Document TDAG-WG-Prep/DT/4-E** |
|  | | **21 September 2020** |
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| **Source:** | Director, Telecommunication Development Bureau | |
| **Title:** | Concept note for WTDC-21, the Youth Summit and the preparatory process | |

**Themes:**

The themes should be driven by “real” development needs in the field, and future outputs and actions from the conference should aim to assist in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals in a more innovative way.

Identification of such themes should be supported through the “thematic-events”, which should be designed with carefully selected themes in mind, so that their results can strengthen the capacity of ITU members to express their opinions and inputs to the conference, and consequently influence its outputs. The outputs will be organized by thematic priority, and will include the Action plan, the WTDC Resolutions, study group Questions and regional priorities. These different outputs should not be driven independently but should be closely linked with each other to address the same themes in a complementary manner.

BDT and the membership should come up with a list of critical topics that can have an impact on development. The themes chosen should be holistic enough to encompass the focus of telecommunication development issues arising from all regional levels. Some examples of these are:

* Creating a resilient global digital economy to withstand global pandemics/crises/disasters;
* Recovery of Global Digital Economy and Connectivity to Build Back Better;
* How can innovation assist the SDGs;
* Demand-stimulation initiatives;
* Investment frameworks to stimulate digital development;
* Empowerment of the future generation – outcomes of the Youth Summit.

**Format:**

In order to maximise benefit and impact for all attendees, including high-level participants, and avoid the issues of the past such as:

* Insufficient time for side-events;
* Poor attendance;
* Side-events of no value to high-level participants;
* Competition for time and resources between side-events and main event;
* Discussions in the statutory conference could not start until the high level segment was completed

It is proposed to repurpose the high-level segment of the conference and the side-events into a new format called “Partnership Segment” and to incorporate it to take place during normal conference times.

The purpose of this segment is to catalyse partnerships for digital development with the inclusion of all stakeholders. It would complement the discussions of the conference (hereafter called “Administrative Segment”) on Resolutions, study group Questions, etc. and would allow participating high-level policy-makers to express their positions in round-table or panel format, as well as to provide their statements in written form, which would then be posted in a dedicated page on the WTDC website. These round-tables or panels would allow for brokering discussions and co-creation between the various groups identified in the section Targeted audience.

The two segments should be designed jointly, so that they can complement each other in terms of content and timing during the conference.

Different accreditation schemes would be applied in order to allow non-member stakeholders to contribute in the Partnership Segment, without detriment to the statutory conference (Administrative Segment).

**Co-organized with other bureaux/entities:**

The Administrative Segment is a statutory ITU conference.

The Partnership Segment is open to collaboration with other ITU bureaux and departments and with external organizations, both in the public and private sectors.

**Various services:**

Both segments to the conference will be enhanced with interpretation, translation, webcast, captioning, twitter feeds, maybe a blog, etc. It is recommended to also use remote participation, but the extent of its use needs to be discussed by membership, especially for the Administrative Segment.

In addition to the above, the Partnership Segment could be live streamed on social media and incorporate production and live feedback.

**Expected outcomes:**

Theoutcome of the Administrative Segment is the Final Report in six languages, which includes the Declaration and the Action Plan (including Regional Priorities, Study Group Questions, Resolutions, Recommendations, links to SDGs and WSIS action lines), structured by thematic priority.

The outcome of the Partnership Segment could include pledges from partners for the implementation of ITU-D activities and projects, meaningful demand-driven partnerships for impact, and an insight document highlighting key discussions, put together in an instructional and inspiring way and avoiding monotonous verbatim reporting.

**Target audience:**

The Administrative Segment will be attended by Member States, ITU-D Sector Members and Academia. Any non-member can attend the Administrative Segment if part of a national/Sector Member delegation;

Several groups of entities are targeted for the Partnership Segment, ensuring that representation is balanced across all industry sectors:

* ITU membership (including Academia and international and regional organizations);
* Non-members:
  + Resource partners - including international finance institutions (e.g. World Bank, regional development banks), development organizations, other international organizations with an interest in development (e.g. UNCTAD, OECD), manufacturers of ICT equipment and gadgets, Academia;
  + Beneficiaries - including gender groups and youth (including ambassadors of the Youth Summit), city mayors, community leaders;
  + Solution owners – including entrepreneurs and innovators.
* High-level representatives of both membership and non-members in the above groups.

**Preparatory process:**

**Youth Summit Preparation**

The ITU, hosted by the Government of Ethiopia, will hold a Youth Summit during the two days before the WTDC-21. The theme of this summit is still being developed; however this presents an opportunity to enhance youth participation in ITU’s processes, and to obtain input on how ITU’s work can be made more relevant to youth stakeholders.

Involving young people is particularly important to the work of ITU, because youth are the natural adopters of technology. Young people are the ones who will inherit the world that technology is now shaping.

It is vital that ITU hears their voices, listens to what they want from technology and that they become part of the solution to the challenges the world is facing. Youth will look for creative, bold, ambitious solutions that look to harness technology, to overcome some of today’s biggest global challenges.

Young people from Member States, as well as youth related organizations and networks, should be invited to take part in the Inter-Regional Coordination Meetings (IRMs) and the Regional Preparatory Meetings (RPMs).

As part of the preparatory process towards WTDC-21, online consultations, crowd-sourcing platforms, face-to-face and virtual meetings during IRMs, RPMs and TDAG may be organized, to brainstorm and debate with youth on the content, outputs and outcomes of the WTDC-21 Youth Summit and how these will feed into WTDC-21.

**Regional preparatory meetings (RPMs) and Inter-regional meetings (IRMs)**

Number of IRMs/Format/Timing and Agenda

It is proposed to hold two IRM to allow for inputs from preparatory meetings in the region (RPM and RTO), and to give membership sufficient time to prepare and contribute actively to the IRMs.

* The first IRM could be held after the first two RPMs, and/or between Q1 and Q2 of 2021, to start gathering common views and identify potential convergence.
* The second one could be held at the end of the RPMs and RTOs, and/or at the end of Q3, 2021 to ensure consolidation of views and aggregation of proposals.

Depending on the situation in terms of availability to travel, RPMs and IRMs would be a combination of virtual/hybrid event with full interpretation.

The best practices of preparation from other ITU conferences shall be incorporated in the planning and work of IRMs.

The Agenda for IRMs should be linked to contributions received and cover topics that need coordination between different regions.

Some of the elements to be part of the Agendas of the IRMs would include Regional priorities/ initiatives, streamlining of WTDC resolutions, structure and agenda of WTDC-21.

Attendance and chairing

To reduce costs and have effective discussions, it would be envisaged to have up to 5/7 representatives per region, as decided by the RTOs. Representatives from other stakeholders involved in preparation of WTDC-21 may also attend.

In terms of Chairmanship, as IRMs would aim at aggregating views at the interregional level, the Chairman of WTDC-21 should preferably chair the IRMs. This would allow continuity and consistency.

**Promotion of WTDC-21**

Promotion of WTDC-21 should be done at national, regional and international level, using as much as possible existing, and already planned events.

In terms of leveraging existing events, it would be envisaged to make use of:

* Regional forums like Asian-Pacific Economic Cooperation – APEC (particularly WG on Telecommunications and Information, Steering Committee on Economic and Technical Cooperation)
* Events organised by other institutions such as: OCHA, UNICEF, WEF, FAO, the Broadband Commission, European Commission, etc., at events organised by the most relevant private sector stakeholders (mobile, satellite, OTTs, etc.);

Concerning promotion at various levels:

* Nationally, regulators could dedicate any speeches delivered during key ICT events to the role of WTDC and encourage industry, academia and various other stakeholders to participate in the preparations and take up the responsibility to take awareness to their constituencies. Raising awareness with groups that may benefit the most from outcomes of WTDC-21 would also be recommended (e. g. the youth organizations, girls and women, organizations of persons with disabilities, etc.)
* 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 related 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.

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