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| **Telecommunication Development Advisory Group (TDAG)**  **27th Meeting, Virtual, 23 November 2020** | C:\Users\comas\AppData\Local\Temp\Rar$DRa0.735\jpg\ITU official logo_blue_RGB.jpg |
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| Chairman, TDAG Working Group on WTDC Resolutions, Declaration  and Thematic Priorities | |
| Report of the meeting of the TDAG Working Group on Resolutions, Declaration and Thematic Priorities, 21 October 2020 | |
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| **Summary:**  This document contains the progress report of the TDAG Working Group on WTDC Resolutions, Declaration and Thematic Priorities. The group will continue its work and submit the next report to TDAG-21.  **Action required:**  TDAG is invited to endorse the proposals therein.  **References:**  n/a | |

**Summary**

The TDAG Working Group on WTDC Resolutions, Declaration and Thematic Priorities (TDAG-WG-RDTP) held its second meeting on 21 October 2020, attended by 98 participants from 38 Member States and 7 Sector Members. The Working Group is open to all ITU Member States and ITU-D Sector Members and is chaired by Dr Ahmad Reza Sharafat (Islamic Republic of Iran).

**Introduction**

Opening the meeting, the Chairman recalled the terms of reference of TDAG-WG-RDTP:

* 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. The streamlining should take into account that some Sector resolutions are integrations of Plenipotentiary Conference resolutions and therefore these resolutions should not be considered as repetition.
* To align the ITU-D thematic priorities, proposed regional initiatives and proposed study group Questions, taking into account proposals of ITU-D study groups, outcomes of the regional preparatory meetings for World Telecommunication Development Conference 2021 (WTDC-21), relating to the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals and taking into consideration the WSIS Action Lines for which ITU has lead responsibility.
* To propose elements and make recommendations to ITU membership for the future draft Declaration.
* To report its outcomes to TDAG.

The Chairman highlighted the three temporary documents he had prepared in order to assist ITU membership in their preparations on WTDC-21 resolutions, WTDC-21 thematic priorities and WTDC-21 Declaration.

The following is a summary of presentations and discussions of the meeting.

**1. Adoption of the agenda**

The agenda in [Document 7 (Rev.1)](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG27.RDTP-C-0007/en) was adopted without change.

**2. Streamlining resolutions**

Of particular note on the preparatory work on WTDC-21 resolutions is [Document DT/2](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG27.RDTP-201021-TD-0002/en), which provides high-level guidance and reference material in three annexes to assist ITU membership in their preparations on streamlining resolutions. TDAG discussions had made clear that streamlining WTDC resolutions was an important task, and that it was highly desirable to reduce the number of resolutions to the extent possible. In the light of these discussions, the Chairman of TDAG-WG-RDTP had requested the Chairmen of ITU-D Study Groups 1 and 2 to assist by carrying out an analysis of all WTDC-17 resolutions and to recommend what could be done with each resolution. As instructed by TDAG, he had also requested that Resolutions 1 and 2 be treated separately from the other resolutions, given the nature of the two resolutions.

**Annex 1** contains the guiding principles for streamlining WTDC resolutions, adopted by TDAG-19.

**Annex 2** contains a detailed mapping of WTDC resolutions and recommendations to Plenipotentiary Conference resolutions as well as to resolutions of World Telecommunication Standardization Assemblies (WTSA), World Radiocommunication Conferences (WRC) and Radiocommunication Assemblies (RA), with a view to streamlining them in preparation for WTDC-21.

**Annex 3** provides a framework for clustering of existing WTDC resolutions and recommendations, highlighting common issues and themes.

The meeting noted the document and encouraged ITU membership to use the annexes as they deem appropriate in their own preparatory work on WTDC-21 resolutions.

**3. Liaison statement on the proposal on WTDC review of the strategic plan**

Participants welcomed the liaison statement in [Document 9](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG27.RDTP-C-0009/en) from the TDAG Working Group on Strategic and Operational Plans (TDAG-WG-SOP) in which support is expressed for a [multi-country proposal](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG27.SOP-C-0008/en) from the United States of America, Mexico and Canada to assign the task of developing the ITU-D component of the overall ITU strategic plan to TDAG, taking away that role from WTDC. When endorsing this proposal at its meeting on 1 October 2020, TDAG-WG-SOP had also agreed that in order to proceed, it would be necessary to revise Resolution 1 (Rev. Buenos Aires, 2017) and Resolution 24 (Rev. Dubai, 2014) of WTDC.

TDAG-WG-SOP Vice-Chairman, Mr Christopher Kemei, presented the liaison statement on behalf of the Chairman of TDAG-WG-SOP, Ms Blanca González (Spain), and underscored its importance.

The proposed change would allow members more time to prepare the ITU-D component of the overall ITU strategic plan; improve linkages with the action plan; bring the ITU-D strategic planning process in line with the other two Sectors of the Union: Radiocommunication (ITU-R) and Telecommunication Standardization (ITU-T); and free up time for WTDC to focus on other priorities.

The Chairman of TDAG-WG-RDTP welcomed the opportunity to work closely with TDAG-WG-SOP in order to have a unified position with respect to Resolution 1, stressing that streamlining resolutions is an important task of his working group.

The Chairman of the TDAG Working Group on WTDC Preparations (TDAG-WG-Prep), Mr Santiago Reyes-Borda (Canada), added that the meeting of his group on 20 October 2020 had expressed support for a similar liaison statement from TDAG-WG-SOP and its conclusion that in order to proceed with the multi-country proposal, membership should agree beforehand at the interregional meetings to not deal with the strategic plan at WTDC-21.

The meeting noted with appreciation the liaison statement. The group would take into account the content of the liaison statement in its revisions to Resolution 1 in coordination with TDAG-WG-SOP.

**4. Liaison statement from the Chairmen of ITU-D Study Groups 1 and 2 on discussions related to WTDC Resolution 1, future study group Questions, streamlining of WTDC Resolutions and WTDC Declaration**

The BDT secretariat and the Chairman of TDAG-WG-RDTP, who is also the Chairman of ITU-D Study Group 2, walked participants through the liaison statement in [Document 8](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG27.RDTP-C-0008/en) and its five annexes, a 33-page document.

In this document, ITU-D Study Group 1 and ITU-D Study Group 2 presenttheir preliminary views on WTDC Resolution 1, future study group Questions, streamlining of WTDC Resolutions and WTDC Declaration, gathered mainly by coordinators appointed by the respective study groups chairmen.

**WTDC Resolution 1 (Rev. Buenos Aires, 2017), “Rules of procedure of the ITU Telecommunication Development Sector”.**

The Chairman of TDAG-WG-RDTP highlighted four issues that have been surveyed under this topic, and on which views would be appreciated.

* **Inactive management team members**: In the present study cycle (2018-2021), a number of vice-chairmen appointed by WTDC -17 in Buenos Aires have not participated fully in the work of study groups, which has created problems in certain cases. Study groups are discussing how to deal with this situation.
* **Annual deliverables**: Should annual deliverables be defined in Resolution 1 as a new type of document, or be reflected in an existing type of document, such as guidelines? Annual deliverables have so far been published on the ITU-D study group website under the auspices of the Chairmen of Study Groups 1 and 2.
* **Work on output reports:** Views have been expressed that study group output reports could be continuously revised, as done in ITU-R and ITU-T, so that the reports of a new study period can focus on new topics only.
* **Fully virtual, hybrid and physical meetings**: Views have been expressed on how to best harmonize the use of fully virtual, hybrid and physical meetings, considering the current COVID-19 and other similar situations in the future.

**Annex 1: Preliminary views on WTDC Resolution 1 (Rev. Buenos Aires, 2017), “Rules of procedure of the ITU Telecommunication Development Sector”** provides more details from the Coordinators: Mr Arseny Plossky (Russian Federation), Rapporteur for Question 4/1 (ITU-D Study Group 1); and Ms Alina Modan (Romania), Vice-Chairman, ITU-D Study Group 2.

**Future study group Questions in relation with WTDC Resolution 2 (Rev. Buenos Aires, 2017) on “Establishment of study groups”**

All rapporteur group management teams under ITU-D Study Groups 1 and 2 had been consulted on their views on the future of their study Questions. The Chairman of TDAG-WG-RDTP stated that the feedback received so far indicates a continuation with the present Questions, albeit with adjustments in some cases. Inputs and comments from TDAG-WG-RDTP and from TDAG itself would be vital for the study groups to either continue on this basis, or take a different approach, if needed.

**Annex 2: Preliminary views on the future of ITU-D Study Group 1 Questions** providesmore details from theCoordinator: Mr Roberto Hirayama (Brazil), Vice-Chairman, ITU-D Study Group 1; and **Annex 3: Preliminary views on the future of ITU-D Study Group 2 Questions** alsoprovidesmore detailsfrom the Coordinator: Mr Abdelaziz Alzarooni (United Arab Emirates), Vice-Chairman, ITU-D Study Group 2.

**Streamlining of WTDC resolutions**

Moving on to the question of streamlining resolutions again, the Chairman of TDAG-WG-RDTP noted that a number of resolutions had already been identified. In the list given below, resolutions to serve as the base in the streamlining exercise have their numbers shown in **bold.**

* Rules and procedures (Resolutions **1**, 24, 61 and 81)
* Membership (Resolutions **71** and 27)
* Spectrum management (Resolutions **9** and 10). Caution was expressed not to lose the essence and objectives of Resolution 9, if it is used as a basis to streamline with Resolution 10.
* Access to technologies (Resolutions **15** and 47)
* Internet access (Resolutions **23** and 63)
* Security in the use of ICTs (Resolution **45** and 69)
* Broadband development (Resolution **77** and 43).

**Annex 4: Preliminary views on streamlining of WTDC Resolutions** providesmore detailsfrom the Coordinator: Mr Arseny Plossky (Russian Federation), Rapporteur for Question 4/1.

The Chairman invited participants to consider these resolutions and share their perspectives on what the next steps should be.

**Themes for WTDC Declaration**

The Chairman invited participants to consider carefully the points listed below that have been suggested for inclusion in the WTDC Declaration.

* Digital transformation technologies.
* Policies and regulatory aspects for enabling digital transformation at national, regional and international levels.
* Bridging the digital divide.
* Encouraging increased interest in the ICT sector to attract more investment and funding.
* Universally accessible, ubiquitous, secure and affordable telecommunications/ICTs.
* Inclusive digital economy at national, regional, and international levels.

**Annex 5: Preliminary views on WTDC Declaration** providesmore details from theCoordinators: Ms Sameera Belal (Kuwait), Vice-Chairman, ITU-D Study Group 1; and Ms Amel Khiar, Vice-Rapporteur for Question 4/2 (ITU-D Study Group 2), Algérie Télécom (Algeria).

This annex also indicates “**Digital transformation for SDGs”** or **“digital transformation for development”** as an initial proposal for the theme in the WTDC Declaration, underlining that this theme could foster a digital economy and provide digital information products and services to all people in emerging global situations such as the COVID-19 pandemic.Concluding the presentation, the Chairman expressed deep gratitude to the coordinators for their very active role in gathering the preliminary views. Discussions on the four topics highlighted in the presentation would continue in each study group, as well as between the two study groups through coordination. Decisions on the preliminary views would be made during the last annual meetings of these study groups for the 2018-2021 study period. ITU-D Study Group 2 is scheduled to meet from 15 to 19 March 2021 and ITU-D Study Group 1, from 22 to 26 March 2021. Meanwhile, TDAG-WG-RDTP is invited to consider the preliminary views as part of its ongoing work.

**5. Comments and questions**

Following this presentation, many participants commended the Chairman for excellent documents that would help members in their preparations for WTDC-21. The Chairman of TDAG, Ms Roxanne McElvane Webber (United States), commented that the documents from the Chairman of TDAG-WG-RDTP and the document from the study groups were valuable inputs for members for their overall deliberations on those issues, adding that TDAG-WG-RDTP was off to a great start with relevant, timely information.

One delegate sought to know whether TDAG-WG-RDTP would address the consistency between the theme of WTDC being discussed and suggested in the TDAG-WG-Prep and the theme for the Declaration. How is the work on the themes and Declaration organized at practical level? If a Member State administration wants to provide input on the Declaration, should it make contributions to the study groups, or directly to the coordinators?

Responding to these questions, the Chairman underlined that TDAG-WG-RDTP and TDAG-WG Prep would work together to make sure that their positions are fully aligned and that the WTDC Declaration addresses the overall theme of WTDC.

Regarding how work on the themes and Declaration is organized, the Chairman explained that each study group has appointed a coordinator. The coordinators are gathering and consolidating views from their study group colleagues, specifically the management teams of the different study Questions. Between now and the next study group meetings in March 2021, both Chairmen of the two study groups would work not only with the coordinators, but also with the management teams of their respective study group to produce a document for discussion and decision by the study group plenaries in March 2021. An output document from the March 2021 study group meetings would then be submitted to TDAG-WG-RDTP. A meeting of TDAG-WG-RDTP would be scheduled after these study group meetings and would prepare and submit its final report to TDAG in May 2021.

With regard to submission of documents, given that the substance of the proposals would need to be considered by the study groups, contributions (including views and comments) should be sent to both study groups and copied to the coordinators so that the latter are aware and can incorporate into their documents any views expressed.

A question was raised as to whether in the discussion of Resolutions 1 and 2, there had been any consideration on how to ensure that the products of the study groups are better utilized in ITU‑R and ITU‑T and vice versa. The BDT secretariat responded that liaison statements had been sent to ITU‑R and ITU‑T in that regard. The Chairman added that ITU-D study groups liaise with ITU‑R and ITU‑T on the work they do in a very constructive and cooperative manner. He has observed that cooperation between ITU-D study groups and study groups of ITU‑R and ITU‑T has increased significantly over time. ITU-D study groups are mainly focusing on developing guidelines, case studies and success stories, while in ITU-T the focus is on developing standards; and, similarly, ITU-R has other priorities.

One delegate, supported by others, requested the secretariat to provide the necessary tools on the WTDC-21 website to allow members to begin their preparations, especially now that they have excellent documents (the documents from the Chairman of TDAG-WG-RDTP and the liaison statement and its annexes from the two study groups). For example, if members want to propose changes to WTDC resolutions, they should be able to do so from the WTDC-21 website in track changes so that all can see and understand what those changes are. The Chairman asked the secretariat to comply with that request as quickly as possible.

The secretariat responded that because of the changes in the preparatory process, including those for TDAG working groups and the impact of COVID‑19 on working methods, the details of the full WTDC-21 website are still being finalized. The secretariat aims to relaunch the website for WTDC‑21 with all the required information by 8 November 2020, one year before WTDC‑21 and hopes this will include the full document system with all of the documents and other information.

The meeting noted the liaison statement with great appreciation. TDAG-WG-RDTP would welcome any views on the activities of study groups highlighted in the liaison statement. The Chairman would incorporate any views and comments in the future work of the study groups on those topics.

One delegation requested the Secretariat to provide an editable document with WTDC resolutions. This document has been provided through the Working Group’s mailing list. Further and beyond the work of the WG-RDTP, the Membership will in due course be provided with is editable versions of resolutions, recommendations and Study Group Questions in the application called Conference Proposal Interface (CPI). Additional information on when this application will be made available will be provided during the TDAG-20/3 meeting.

**6. WTDC Declaration**

Presenting [Document DT/4](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG27.RDTP-201021-TD-0004/en) on preparatory work on WTDC-21 Declaration, the Chairman recalled that based on discussions in TDAG, the aim is to develop a short, sharp, clear, and concise Declaration. In principle, the Declaration should identify key issues and propose solutions or membership commitment to solve those issues. Clarity is of utmost importance, particularly for the global audience who may not be familiar with ITU and its work. In fact, the WTDC Declaration is intended for the outside world and so must be written in a way that outsiders can understand clearly what it is all about and what the directions are. It was noted that there were also views from the study groups that the Declaration should be concise but needs to reflect the current state of the ICT sector and be forward-looking at the same time.

The meeting noted the document with appreciation.

**7. Preparatory work on WTDC-21 Thematic Priorities**

[Document DT/3](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG27.RDTP-201021-TD-0003/en) on the preparatory work on WTDC-21 Thematic Priorities highlights the status of work on this topic. Again, the Chairman of TDAG-WG-RDTP had requested the Chairmen of ITU-D Study Groups 1 and 2 to assist by providing views of from their study groups on topic of thematic priorities. The two Chairmen have shared the progress they have made so far and the roadmap for continuing this work.

Membership is also requested to submit contributions that seek to narrow down the number of thematic priorities that BDT should focus on in the next four year-cycle. Based on the Buenos Aires Action Plan and the results-based management approach, BDT clustered its work around 10 thematic priorities. These seem to be too many. Based on TDAG discussions, it is highly desirable to have fewer, more focused, and consolidated thematic priorities in order not to overstrain and spread the limited human and financial resources. The entire history of thematic priorities is given in Annex 1: Evolution of Thematic Priorities at each World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC). The document was prepared to assist members in their preparations and suggestions on WTDC thematic priorities.

The meeting noted the document as an important guidance.

**8. Regional telecommunication organizations**

**Inter-American Telecommunications Commission (CITEL):** A CITEL focal point for TDAG-WG-RDTP mentioned that CITEL had started the conversation on the Declaration and thematic priorities, and that the documents presented to this meeting would serve as a basis for their regional preparations.

**Regional Commonwealth in the field of Communications (RCC):** A representative from RCC mentioned that a meeting of the RCC in September 2020 had agreed on a preliminary proposal to streamline resolutions and on one regional initiative. RCC plans to translate its preliminary proposal into English and to share them with all regional organizations, as well as with TDAG-WG-RTDP.

**European Conference of Postal and Telecommunications Administrations (CEPT)**: A focal point from the CEPT Project Team on WTDC-21 preparations announced that the Project Team would meet on 27 November 2020 and extended an invitation to representatives from other regions to participate as observers. The Project Team would discuss the outcomes of the TDAG Working Group on WTDC preparations and would examine some of the documents presented to this TDAG-WG-RTDP meeting, stating that they are really important for the future preparatory work of CEPT.

**Asia-Pacific Telecommunity (APT):** The Chairman of the APT Preparatory Group for WTDC-21 announced that the extraordinary meeting on WTDC preparatory work that had been planned for 4 November 2020 would be postponed to the second week of November 2020 to allow TDAG-WG-Prep to conclude its work. Views and comments from APT members would be submitted to the TDAG meeting of 23 November 2020.

The Chairman of the CITEL Working Group on WTDC, speaking as Chairman of the TDAG Working Group on WTDC Preparations, thanked APT Preparatory Group for WTDC-21 for their cooperation in rescheduling the latter’s meeting, and extended an invitation to all to participate in the additional meeting of TDAG-WG-Prep on 4 November 2020.

**9. Conclusion**

The Chairman of TDAG commended the Chairman of TDAG-WG-RTDP and the BDT secretariat for the excellent preparation of the meeting and for the documents which, she said, would be an important foundation not only for the administrative work of the membership, but also for helping members contribute to the impact they want to get from WTDC -21 and beyond. She expressed great expectations that TDAG-WG-RTDP would help build consensus on the things that members are asking for, things that are important to members and that members want BDT to do to ensure that the all-important work of ITU to connect the unconnected touches the whole world.

The Chairman of TDAG-WG-RTDP underlined that his top priority is to build consensus and that he would do everything to achieve that goal. He looked forward to working with the Chairman of TDAG throughout the preparatory process and at WTDC‑21 itself. He expressed deep appreciation to all participants for their very positive attitude in the work, for their kind words and for their flexibility in adapting to difficult situations, stating “together we can move forward in a harmonious way, and with consensus.” He then thanked the BDT secretariat for helping him prepare for the meeting; the interpreters for their hard work in providing participants the means to remove the barriers of language; and the technical team for doing their best to keep participants connected, while expressing the hope that the technical difficulties faced at this meeting would be resolved for future meetings.

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