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| Logo  Description automatically generated | **Telecommunication Development Advisory Group (TDAG)**  **28th Meeting, Virtual, 24-28 May 2021** | | A close up of a sign  Description automatically generated |
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|  | | **Document** **TDAG-2****1/21-E** | |
|  | | **29 April 2021** | |
|  | | **Original:** **English** | |
| Chairman, TDAG Working Group on WTDC Resolutions,  Declaration and Thematic Priorities | | | |
| Chairman’s report on the work of the TDAG Working Group on WTDC Resolutions, Declaration and Thematic Priorities | | | |
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| **Summary:**  This document contains a report on the activities of the TDAG Working Group on WTDC Resolutions, Declaration and Thematic Priorities, including proposals based on its terms of reference.  **Action required:**  TDAG is invited to note this report and provide guidance as deemed necessary.  **References:**  N/A | | | |

**Summary**

This document contains the final report of the TDAG Working Group on WTDC Resolutions, Declaration and Thematic Priorities (TDAG-WG-RDTP), including proposals based on its terms of reference. The report is submitted to the Telecommunication Development Advisory Group (TDAG) meeting on24-28 May 2021 for consideration and any further action.

TDAG-WG-RDTP was set up by TDAG at a meeting on 2-5 June 2020. Its [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 Dr Ahmad Reza Sharafat (Islamic Republic of Iran) as Chairman. TDAG-WG-RDTP was open to all ITU Member States and Sector Members of the ITU Telecommunication Development Sector (ITU-D).

TDAG-WG-RDTP has held five meetings over July and October 2020 and January, March and April 2021 and received 24 contributions from Member States, one regional telecommunication organization and the secretariat, 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-RDTP/5](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG26.RDTP-C-0005/) | 21 October 2020 – [TDAG-WG-RDTP/10](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG27.RDTP-C-0010/) |
| 21 January 2021 –[TDAG-WG-RDTP/21](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG27.RDTP-C-0021/) | 3 March 2021 – [TDAG-WG-RDTP/33](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG27.RDTP-C-0033/) |

**Introduction**

Throughout its meetings, TDAG-WG-RDTP was reminded that 3.7 billion people are not connected, and was encouraged by the Director of the ITU Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT), Ms Doreen Bogdan-Martin, to be bold in making proposals that would dramatically change the connectivity landscape in the parts of the world that need it most. Their mission was made ever more urgent with the COVID-19 pandemic having thrown into sharp relief the digital divides.

**Results and action required:**

Over the course of its five meetings, TDAG-WG-RDTP has worked hard to facilitate decision-making at the next World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC). The group has:

* developed concrete proposals on streamlining resolutions (documents [DT/8](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG27.RDTP-210409-TD-0008/), [DT/9](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG27.RDTP-210409-TD-0009/) and [DT/10](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG27.RDTP-210409-TD-0010/), [document 8](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG27.RDTP-C-0008/), [document 14](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG27.RDTP-C-0014/), [document 15](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG27.RDTP-C-0015/), [document 16](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG27.RDTP-C-0016/), [document 17](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG27.RDTP-C-0017/), [document 18](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG27.RDTP-C-0018/), [document 19](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG27.RDTP-C-0019/), [document 29](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG27.RDTP-C-0029/), [document 30](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG27.RDTP-C-0030/));
* prepared a draft WTDC Declaration ([Document 36(Rev.1)](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG27.RDTP-C-0036/));
* proposed Study Questions (Annex 2 of [Document 38](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG27.RDTP-C-0038/));
* streamlined the Sector’s thematic priorities from 10 to the following four: **Connectivity; Digital Transformation; Enabling Environment; Resource Mobilization and International Cooperation** ([Document 35](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG27.RDTP-C-0035/)). There is broad support for these four proposed thematic priorities. Some administrations have proposed to include cybersecurity as a fifth thematic priority. Further discussion is needed before any decision can be taken on this proposal.

These results constitute one of the foundations on which the success of WTDC will be built and are submitted to TDAG, along with the following summary from the final meeting of TDAG-WG-RDTP, held on 9 April 2021, for consideration and further action.

1. **Opening of the meeting and welcome remarks**

1.1 Welcoming participants to fifth and last meeting of the TDAG Working Group on Resolutions, Declaration and Thematic Priorities, the Director of BDT remarked: “You heard me say often, we are the fortunate ones to be connected and there are 3.7 billion that are not connected”. She shared with participants the story of a Syrian refugee at the April WSIS Forum sessions on ICT and sports, who spoke of her passion for football and what she was able to achieve in her camp and more importantly her message on the importance of connectivity. She had described connectivity, or technology, as her window. Her window of opportunity, freedom, empowerment, her window to learn, and connect with distant family members. Recounting this story, the Director said: “Her message underscores the importance of both our preparatory process and WTDC itself— unleashing the potential of ICTs for all the world’s people.”

1.2 Ms Roxanne McElvane Webber (**United States**), Chairman of the Telecommunication Development Advisory Group noted that TDAG-WG-RDTP had the lion's share of the preparatory work of WTDC. Her takeaway for participants was that there are two-tracks, but one conference, and one single goal: Connecting the unconnected, particularly in developing countries, and most especially in least developed countries (LDCs), small island developing states (SIDS) and landlocked developing countries (LLDCs); not forgetting youth, women, and persons with specific needs. She noted that the group, understanding its weighty mission from the outset, put together very important base documents for its first meeting in July 2020: [Document 3](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG26.RDTP-C-0003/en) on “Mapping of WTDC and Plenipotentiary Conference resolutions” and [Document 4](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG26.RDTP-C-0004/en) on “Mapping of projects and ITU-D thematic priorities”.

1. **Approval of the agenda**

2.1 The meeting approved the agenda in [Document 34.](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG27.RDTP-C-0034/en)

1. **Report of the previous meeting of TDAG-WG-RDTP**

3.1 The report of the fourth meeting, contained in [Document 33](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG27.RDTP-C-0033/en), was approved.

1. **ITU-D Thematic priorities**

4.1 A common thread that has run through the discussions on thematic priorities is the need —indeed the desire — to have **fewer**, **more focused** and **consolidated thematic priorities** for better management. The Chairman of TDAG-WG-RDTP first proposed streamlined thematic priorities to the January 2021 meeting: Connectivity; Digital Transformation; Enabling Environment; Resource Mobilization and International Cooperation.

4.2 Presenting an updated version ([Document 35](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG27.RDTP-C-0035/)) the Chairman explained that each thematic priority has a number of **supporting components currently known as** **programmes** in ITU-D. The supporting components within each thematic priority will be treated in much the same way as programmes.

4.3 Fundamentally, the proposed thematic priorities are in line with the theme of WTDC: **Connecting the unconnected to achieve sustainable development**. The thematic priorities and their supporting components will be contained in the **Addis Ababa Action Plan** under the section that had programmes in all previous WTDCs.

**Comments from the floor**

4.4There was general support for the proposed thematic priorities. Some regions and administrations would like to add cybersecurity as a fifth thematic priority. However, other administrations have other views.

4.5 Speaking on behalf of the **Inter-American Telecommunications Commission (CITEL)**,the delegate of the United States highlighted that CITEL had welcomed the discussion on thematic priorities and the grouping together of similar components in a high‑level grouping of four. This most recent version reflects the direction CITEL has been hoping for in terms of focusing on the results‑based management approach. As a delegation, the United States believes that linking cybersecurity with infrastructure, as is done in the current document, seemed more sensible than making cybersecurity a stand-alone priority.

4.6 Backing the view from CITEL the delegate of Canada, speaking on behalf of his administration, stressed that while cybersecurity is critically important, it should be borne in mind that myriad activities in ITU in this domain are built on several Plenipotentiary Conference resolutions, and related resolutions, for example, from WTDC and the World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly (WTSA). In the Telecommunication Standardization Sector (ITU-T), Study Group 17 is the lead study group on building confidence and security in the use of ICTs; ITU-D Study Groups 1 and 2 also have study Questions; work undertaken by BDT on cybersecurity and ICT applications is done through the Guide to develop a National Cybersecurity Strategy and also through the Global Cybersecurity Agenda (GCA). In view of this, the issue of cybersecurity should be considered very carefully before any decision is taken.

4.7 The delegate of the United Kingdom expressed support for the four thematic priorities, describing them as robust and comprehensive, adding that they provide sufficient scope to address issues as they evolve over the four‑year period. Agreeing with the view from CITEL, the United States and Canada, the delegation of the United Kingdom does not see the need to add a further priority. “We think that the existing priorities have scope to discuss issues like cybersecurity.” Moreover, the delegation is not convinced that the list of topics (i.e. supporting components) is necessary.

4.8 The delegate of Indonesia also expressed support, describing the thematic priorities as “comprehensive and precise.”

4.9 The delegate of the Russian Federation asked a range of questions. Are thematic priorities for BDT or are they for ITU‑D? He pointed out that documents from BDT tend to suggest that the term “thematic priorities” only applies to BDT activities. The usage of this term should be clarified to avoid any confusion and misunderstanding. The delegation further noted that the revised document covers alignment of thematic priorities and study group Questions. What about alignment with resolutions, especially Resolution 9 (Rev. Buenos Aires, 2017) on the participation of countries, particularly developing countries, in spectrum management; and Resolution 59 (Rev. Buenos Aires, 2017) on strengthening coordination and cooperation among the three ITU Sectors on matters of mutual interest: the ITU Radiocommunication Sector (ITU-R), ITU-T and ITU-D? The Chairman responded that his intention in developing the thematic priorities document was to provide a framework for membership to fill, and that Resolution 9 was certainly a very important topic and would be included.

4.10 The delegate of the Russian Federation further expressed concern over the concept of thematic priorities, saying that certain groupings, for example, putting cybersecurity under connectivity was questionable.

4.11 The delegate of Brazil emphasized that the effort to reduce thematic priorities to four was not to hide any specific component. Rather, it was to combine priorities for greater impact. The delegate of Lithuania backing Brazil reiterated the support the European Conference of Postal and Telecommunications Administrations (CEPT) had already expressed for the four proposed thematic priorities at an earlier meeting of TDAG-WG-RDTP and welcomed the idea of a framework.

4.12 The delegate of Algeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group, stated that the group had discussed thematic priorities over several meetings and had reached the agreement that cybersecurity should be made a stand-alone thematic priority. While agreeing that many activities already exist in ITU in the cybersecurity domain, especially in ITU-T and within the framework of GCA, cybersecurity is a dynamic subject and is becoming ever more important in the ongoing digital transformation. The delegate of Saudi Arabia mentioned that while the Arab group agrees with the rationale of grouping priorities, it still believes that topics such as privacy and user protection should be brought under one umbrella to be called cybersecurity or any other name that would convey the sense of belonging together.

4.13 The delegate of Nigeria underlined that while the Africa region agrees with the principle of thematic priorities, its major concern is that such an exercise may lead to oversimplification, and risk leaving out issues of crucial importance to developing countries. He said the view from the Africa region is that cybersecurity should be added to the list of thematic priorities and placed in square brackets, rather than just being noted in the report of the meeting.

4.14 The United States pointed out that because there was no drafting session, the document should be left in its current form and just note the different views in the meeting report. In addition, the meeting did not receive input that would have allowed it to edit the document. Meanwhile, CITEL is considering revisions to the document.

**4.15 Conclusion and way forward:** The meeting welcomed the positive statements and remarks for the work done so far with regard to thematic priorities and noted that in some regions work was under way and future meetings are planned to discuss this topic. There are different views on how to proceed on cybersecurity. Further discussion is needed within TDAG in order to decide whether or not to make cybersecurity a fifth thematic priority.

1. **WTDC Resolutions**

**Revision to WTDC Resolution 1**

5.1 TDAG-WG-RDTP considered proposed partial revisions to Resolution 1 (Rev. Buenos Aires, 2017) on the rules of procedure of the ITU Telecommunication Development Sector and Resolution 2 (Rev. Buenos Aires, 2017) on the establishment of study groups. The proposals are set out in Annexes 1 and 2 of [Document 38](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG27.RDTP-C-0038/en), a liaison statement from the Chairmen of ITU-D Study Group 1 and ITU-D Study Group 2, and are based on a joint meeting of these two study groups, held virtually on 31 March and 1 April 2021.

5.2 The Chairman of ITU-D Study Group 1,Ms Regina Fleur Assoumou Bessou, presented Document 38 and highlighted the following points for TDAG-WG-RDTP to consider:

* Parts of proposals on which consensus was not reached are in square brackets.
* Regarding Resolution 1 (Rev. Buenos Aires, 2017), owing to the lack of time, the joint meeting had focused only on areas that are pertinent to the study groups. Thus, proposed changes had been made to paragraphs 2.7, 2.8, 2.9, 2.10 and 2.11, as well as to sub-sections 3, 4 and 5 (renumbered 3.1 to 3.3.9).
* Regarding future study topics, items from “*Building confidence and security in the use of ICTs*” onwards could not be reviewed owing to the lack of time. TDAG-WG-RDTP was also called upon to consider the following additional proposals:
* The use of telecommunications/ICTs in monitoring and mitigating the impact of climate change, and for disasters and pandemics preparedness and elimination of their negative consequences, particularly on developing countries.
* New telecommunications/ICTs for e-health, including efficient provision of healthcare services to underserved and remote areas to mitigate the impacts of future pandemics and disasters, and using 5G mobile services, robotic remote surgeries, and medical teleconsultation via broadband connections in developing countries.
* Aspects related to the implementation of Resolution 9 (Rev. Buenos Aires, 2017) of WTDC.

5.3 TDAG-WG-RDTP considered and approved the changes made to paragraphs 2.7 to 2.11, and replaced the word “deletion” with “suppression” in reference to ITU-D handbooks (see 2.10.3) and ITU-D guidelines (see 2.11.3).

5.4 Similarly, in Section 3, the joint study group meeting had made proposed changes either to simplify texts or to reflect changes from other meetings. Under 3.1 on classification of study groups and their relevant groups, there was no consensus on the notion of “working parties”, and so the texts are in square brackets [see 3.1.3, 3.1.4. 3.1.5 and 3.1.10]. Some delegations expressed concern that in the past, working parties were not successful at the study group level.

5.5 Under 3.2 on chairmen and vice-chairmen of ITU-D study groups, there are provisions on which consensus was not reached and are therefore in square brackets. Provision 3.2.7 is a new text based on the experience and activities in study groups.

# 5.6 Under 3.3 on rapporteurs and vice-rapporteurs on ITU-D Questions, there was no time to continue the discussion and so a number of provisions were placed in square brackets [3.3.3. 3.3.5, 3.3.6 and 3.3.8].

5.7 With regard to 3.3.3, some delegations underlined its importance, having observed that the work of rapporteur groups suffers when rapporteurs have to suddenly leave for other assignments, resulting in discontinuity. The language in 3.3.3 is intended to address this concern. However, there is another view that 3.3.9 is sufficient to cover the concern in 3.3.3 as well. TDAG-WG-RDTP noted that the joint study group meeting had stopped at 3.3.9 because of lack of time.

5.8 TDAG-WG-RDTP then considered [Document 9](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG27.RDTP-210409-TD-0009/en) from the Russian Federation containing proposed revisions to Resolution 1 (Rev. Buenos Aires, 2017). The proposed revisions include provisions based on the experience of ITU-D study groups over the period 2018-2021 and the experience of ITU-R and ITU-T. The proposals also reflect suggestions made at meetings of the Regional Commonwealth in the field of Communications (RCC), TDAG-WG-RDTP and COM-ITU CEPT. The draft revisions also contain salient provisions incorporated from Resolution 61 (Rev. Dubai, 2014), Resolution 81 (Rev. Buenos Aires, 2017) and Resolution 86 (Rev. Buenos Aires, 2017), which are proposed for suppression.

5.9 TDAG-WG-RDTP noted that some Member States were already developing their own proposals on Resolution 1 (Rev. Buenos Aires, 2017), with the aim of minimizing the time spent on administrative tasks at the conference. Participants further acknowledged the need to have more discussions in the regions about some of the proposals put forward in Documents [Document 38](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG27.RDTP-C-0038/en) and [Document 9](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG27.RDTP-210409-TD-0009/en).

**5.10 Conclusion and way forward:** TDAG-WG-RDTP noted Annex 1 to Document [Document 38](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG27.RDTP-C-0038/en) and Document [Document 9](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG27.RDTP-210409-TD-0009/en); acknowledged that both documents were in different stages of consensus; and agreed to transmit them to TDAG. The meeting further recommended that any further work on Resolution 1 (Rev. Buenos Aires, 2017) needs to take into account the changes proposed in these two documents.

**Revision to WTDC Resolution 2**

5.11 The Chairman of TDAG-WG-RDTP, who is also Chairman of ITU-D Study Group 2,presented Annex 2 to Document [Document 38](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG27.RDTP-C-0038/en) containing proposed changes to Resolution 2 (Rev. Buenos Aires, 2017). In particular, the joint study group meeting had proposed to change the titles of both study groups, but did not reach consensus because of lack of time. For Study Group 1, the proposal is to change the current title from “Enabling environment for the development of telecommunications/ ICTs” to [Enabling environment for meaningful connectivity for all] in order to align it on the theme of WTDC. For Study Group 2, the proposal is to change the current title from “ICT services and applications for the promotion of sustainable development” to [Digital Transformation].

5.12 The joint meeting also proposed to reduce the number of study Questions from seven to six for each study group. Points on which consensus could not be reached because of lack of time are indicated in square brackets in Annex 2 to Document [Document 38](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG27.RDTP-C-0038/en).

**5.13 Conclusion and way forward:** TDAG-WG-RDTP considered Annex 2 to Document [Document 38](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG27.RDTP-C-0038/en) and needed more time to conclude its discussions. TDAG-WG-RDTP remains at the disposal of TDAG to undertake any other activities that may be deemed necessary.

* 1. **Streamlining of WTDC Resolutions**

5.14 The Russian Federation presented [Document 8](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG27.RDTP-210409-TD-0008/en) containing proposed revisions to Resolution 17 (Rev. Buenos Aires, 2017) on the implementation of and cooperation on regionally approved regional initiatives at the national, regional, interregional and global levels. The delegation stressed the importance of this resolution in implementing regional initiatives. The proposed revisions include the addition of a reference to Resolution 52 (Rev. Dubai, 2014) on strengthening the role of ITU-D as the executing agency; an instruction to BDT to continue assisting developing countries in implementing regional initiatives, including preliminary estimates of financial contributions in kind and/or in cash for the implementation of projects. This is important because there are often reported difficulties in assessing the necessary financial contributions for projects properly.

5.15 Other proposed changes underline the appropriateness of making in kind and in cash contributions and the need to promote dissemination on the progress of implementation of initiatives and projects to other regions, including to ITU‑D study groups.

5.16 Many delegations welcomed these proposals, and in particular the proposed change relating to estimating financial contributions in kind or in cash for the implementation of projects. The delegate of Canada, backed by the delegate of Egypt, stressed how critically important this change is, especially as it relates to thematic priority number four on resource mobilization and international cooperation. The delegate of Canada wondered if the term “initiatives” could be replaced by the term “priorities”, considering that initiatives in the past have been relatively aspirational in nature.

5.17 The Russian Federation observed that Decision 5 of the Plenipotentiary Conference and many other resolutions talk of initiatives in the context of the ITU financial plans, so it may not be wise to substitute one terminology for another, as this could lead to a misunderstanding in the future realization of the strategic plan and financial plans of ITU. It was suggested that the matter could be taken up by TDAG or by the Plenipotentiary Conference.

**5.18 Conclusion and way forward:** The meeting considered revisions to Resolution 17 (Rev. Buenos Aires, 2017. There was general support for the revisions. The only pending issue is whether to replace “initiatives” by “priorities”. In view of the implications that this could have on ITU financial plans and Plenipotentiary Conference resolutions, the matter is submitted to TDAG for further discussion and decision.

5.19 The Russian Federation presented [Document 10](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG27.RDTP-210409-TD-0010/en) containing proposals to suppress Resolution 86 (Rev. Buenos Aires, 2017) on the use in the ITU Telecommunication Development Sector of the languages of the Union on an equal footing. It was noted that the Plenipotentiary Conference in 2018 approved revisions to Resolution 154 (Rev. Dubai, 2018) on the use of the six official languages of the Union on an equal footing. It is proposed in Document 10 to incorporate into Resolution 1 (Rev. Buenos Aires, 2017) all the salient sections from Resolution 86 (Rev. Buenos Aires, 2017) and to suppress this resolution. The meeting noted that some administrations, for example the United States, and organizations were looking at ways of incorporating certain provisions into Resolution 1 while ensuring that it does not become too long.

**5.20 Conclusion and way forward:** The meeting noted, with appreciation, thecontribution from the Russian Federation. Considering that some administrations and organizations are having further discussions on the issue of suppressing Resolution 86 (Rev. Buenos Aires, 2017, the matter is submitted to TDAG for decision.

1. **Draft Addis Ababa Declaration**

6.1 The Chairman of TDAG WG-RDTP presented [Document 36(Rev.1)](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG27.RDTP-C-0036/en) containing the draft revised declaration. This version reflects the views expressed by the membership during the fourth meeting, held on 3 March 2021, and is in line with the proposed thematic priorities and the theme of WTDC: *Connecting the unconnected to achieve sustainable development*. It comes in two parts. The “We declare” part highlights six facts, and the “We commit” part features connectivity, digital transformation, enabling environment, and resource mobilization and international cooperation, mirroring the connection between thematic priorities and the declaration.

6.2 The delegate of Saudi Arabia, while recognizing the emphasis placed on connectivity, stressed the need to also include, in a balanced way with connectivity, important activities that ITU-D implements, for example, in the areas of building confidence in the use of ICTs, policy and regulation, and Internet-related issues in order to make all stakeholders aware of the Sector’s mandate.

6.3 A number of delegations also proposed additional input through the chat log. The delegate of the Russian Federation proposed to add new and emerging technologies (AI, IoT, OTT, big data), radio-frequency spectrum and satellite orbits; regulations, standardization; privacy; confidence and security in the use of ICTs; digital economy and other ITU activities important for developing countries.

6.4 The delegate of Kuwait indicated that among the topics highlighted in a delayed contribution from the Arab group for inclusion in the declaration are security, personal data protection, compatibility of ICT equipment and systems, capacity building, and transparent and collaborative collection and dissemination of quality indicators and statistics for measuring the information society.

6.5 The delegate of Algeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group, listed the following area as input to the declaration: broadband infrastructure; radio-frequency spectrum; satellite orbits; inequalities in terms of digital technology; bridging the standardization gap; an environment conducive to investment; digital inclusion; and innovation ecosystems for enhancing and accelerating digital transformation. The Africa region considers the WSIS outcomes as vitally important and their review as a key milestone for achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Finally, cybersecurity and data protection are also considered by the Africa region as important aspects to be included in the declaration.

6.6 The Chairman reminded delegates that the Addis Ababa Action Plan would be the appropriate document for many of the topics they had cited, not the declaration. A number of delegations agreed with this reminder. The Chairman also cautioned that the mandates of other ITU Sectors should be avoided, noting in particular that satellite orbital matters are not within the purview of ITU‑D, but of ITU‑R.

6.7 The delegate of the Russian Federation noted that in their analysis, the declarations of 2006, 2010, 2014 and 2017 covered radio frequencies and spectrum management aspects; and that the 1994 and 1998 declarations highlighted the importance of collaboration with ITU-R and ITU-T. The delegation suggested that in order to be consistent with the WTDC declarations, these proposals should be considered in the drafting of the declaration so that it can reflect both the ITU‑D commitment to connecting the 3.7 billion people that are still unconnected and the ITU role as a specialized agency of the United Nations for ICTs.

6.8 The delegate of Indonesia suggested to add to Paragraph 3 of the "We declare" Part, the words highlighted in bold: “Inequalities remain and continue to widen in the use of data, and digital ICT-centric technologies**, and infrastructure**, and in the digitally skilled human resources between regions, **between and** within countries, and between women and men, **youth and people of vulnerable groups**…”

6.9 Many delegations considered the draft declaration a very good starting point. The delegate of Canada stressed that WTDC will provide a unique opportunity to craft a solutions-based outcome that will deliver inclusive, affordable and accessible connectivity. This, he said, should be the focus of the declaration, a view echoed by Brazil, ESOA (EMEA Satellite Operators Association) and United States. In this regard, the United States recalled the initial thinking behind the declaration: keep it brief, tie it to the theme of the conference and produce a document that is outward looking and that can attract the attention of a diverse group of people, who would wish to engage in the work of ITU-D, while at the same time providing funding.

6.10 The delegate of Zimbabwe presented [Document 37](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG27.RDTP-C-0037/en) containing a proposal to include in the declaration the commitment to resolve the problem of inadequate infrastructure in order to connect rural and remote areas, particularly in developing countries. The COVID 19 pandemic has laid bare the digital divide between rural and urban areas in these countries. Unconnected rural populations have little or no access to many services, including education and health care. One of the reasons why remote areas have remained unconnected is because of the inadequate energy and transport infrastructure.

6.11 Intel, Canada and ESOA expressed support for Zimbabwe’s proposal, with Intel stressing the need to also consider new energy efficient networks and smart technologies to reduce power consumption. Canada mentioned a document from CITEL on connectivity for rural and remote areas in the Americas – a result of thorough research and input from stakeholders and offered to share it with all RTOs. ESOA suggested to include in Paragraph 3 of the draft declaration a reference to inequalities between urban areas and rural areas and reference to inclusivity and sustainability in Paragraph c.

**6.12 Conclusion and way forward**: Regional groups or administrations that had already prepared their contributions on the declaration were encouraged to submit them to TDAG. The meeting agreed that elements from Zimbabwe’s contribution should be incorporated into next revised draft of the declaration. The version coming out of this fifth meeting of TDAG WG-RDTP will be submitted to TDAG for further consideration and possible submission as an input to WTDC-21, where it will be subsequently finalized and adopted.

**Closing**

6.13 The Chairman expressed his deep appreciation and gratitude to all participants for their cooperation, understanding, and flexibility; and to the secretariat for their help and efforts. He thanked TDAG for the confidence placed in him and the Chairman of TDAG for her support and guidance. The Director of BDT thanked the Chairman for his patience and wisdom, and for having steered this meeting to new heights. The Chairman of TDAG remarked that the group had laid a good foundation for WTDC. “You had a monstrous task. And you have really risen to the occasion. We are deeply grateful.” Participants thanked the Chairman for the excellent preparatory work for all the meetings.

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