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| A logo with a black background  AI-generated content may be incorrect. | **TDAG Working Group  on the Declaration (TDAG-WG-DEC)**  **5th Meeting, Geneva, Switzerland, 14 May 2025** | | A close up of a sign  Description automatically generated |
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|  | | **Document** **TDAG-WG-DEC/23-E** | |
|  | | **15 May 2025** | |
|  | | **English only** | |
| Chair, TDAG-WG-DEC | | | |
| Report of the fifth meeting of TDAG-WG-DEC | | | |
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| **Summary:**  The document contains a summary of the discussions during the fifth meeting of the group.  **Action required:**  For information  **References:**  Terms of Reference of TDAG-WG-DEC: [TDAG-24/DT/4](https://www.itu.int/md/D22-TDAG31-240520-TD-0004/) | | | |

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

The Chair of the TDAG Working Group on the World Telecommunication Development Conference (TDAG-WG-DEC), Dr. Abdulkarim Oloyede (Nigeria), opened the meeting by acknowledging the work undertaken by the group and the active contributions of ITU-D membership in shaping the draft Baku Declaration.

1. **Approval of the agenda**

The draft agenda contained in Document [TDAG-WG-DEC/17](https://www.itu.int/dms_pub/itu-d/md/22/tdag.wg.dec/c/D22-TDAG.WG.DEC-C-0017!!MSW-E.docx) was approved with the addition of an agenda item on the title of the Baku Declaration.

1. **Discussion on the title of the Baku Declaration and the WTDC-25 theme**

Following a brief discussion, the meeting agreed to retain the title of the Declaration without changes: ‘*Universal, meaningful and affordable connectivity for an inclusive and sustainable digital future’*. In line with past practice, this title will also serve as the theme of the World Telecommunication Development Conference 2025 (WTDC-25).

1. **Discussion on the Baku Declaration 2025**

The Chair presented his second revised proposal for the draft Baku Declaration, as outlined in Document [TDAG-WG-DEC/14](https://www.itu.int/md/D22-TDAG.WG.DEC-C-0014/en) for consideration and further discussion by the Working Group. He reminded participants of the process leading to its development:

* In its first meeting, TDAG-WG-DEC agreed to retain a structure similar to the Kigali Declaration comprising four main sections: Introduction, ‘We declare,’ ‘We commit’ and Call to Action.
* Ahead of the group’s second meeting, the Chair mapped topics from the Kigali Declaration alongside new and emerging issues from recent major international conferences to help define the scope of the Baku Declaration (Document [TDAG-WG-DEC/INF/](https://www.itu.int/md/D22-TDAG.WG.DEC-INF-0001/)1).
* Using this mapping and input from discussions in TDAG-WG-DEC and TDAG-WG-ITUDP, he developed a draft annotated outline (Document [TDAG-WG-DEC/4(Rev.1)](https://www.itu.int/md/D22-TDAG.WG.DEC-C-0004/)), which was further refined during the second meeting of the group.
* Building on these foundations as well as TDAG-WG-DEC discussions and informal consultations, the Chair elaborated the revised draft and annotated proposal (Document [TDAG-WG-DEC/12](https://www.itu.int/md/D22-TDAG.WG.DEC-C-0012/)).
* Following the additional input provided during the fourth meeting of the group, the Chair prepared his second revised proposal for the draft Baku Declaration (Document [TDAG-WG-DEC/14](https://www.itu.int/md/D22-TDAG.WG.DEC-C-0014/en)).

The group agreed in principle to the revisions contained in the draft proposal for the Baku Declaration, as presented in Document [TDAG-WG-DEC/14](https://www.itu.int/md/D22-TDAG.WG.DEC-C-0014/en), and considered it as a baseline for further amendments.

Four contributions were received from Member States to the fifth TDAG-WG-DEC meeting and were presented during the session:

* Document [TDAG-WG-DEC/18](https://www.itu.int/md/D22-TDAG.WG.DEC-C-0018/) from the League of Arab States,
* Document [TDAG-WG-DEC/19](https://www.itu.int/md/D22-TDAG.WG.DEC-C-0019/) from China,
* Document [TDAG-WG-DEC/20](https://www.itu.int/md/D22-TDAG.WG.DEC-C-0020/) from Canada and Paraguay, and
* Document [TDAG-WG-DEC/21](https://www.itu.int/md/D22-TDAG.WG.DEC-C-0021/) from the United States.

Following the presentation of views reflected in the new contributions, the Chair invited comments on the draft Declaration, proceeding on a paragraph-by-paragraph basis. While the group reached general agreement on a number of elements, divergent views were expressed on certain issues.

To support the preparatory processes of the Regional Telecommunication Organizations (RTOs) in advance of WTDC-25, Member States requested that the following discussions be reflected in the present report:

* **Length of the Declaration**: Several Member States reiterated the view that the Declaration should remain concise, as is appropriate for a high-level statement.
* **Technology neutrality:** Some regions expressed a preference for maintaining general language, while others advocated for the inclusion of references to specific key technologies
* **Artificial Intelligence (AI)**: Delegates agreed to use the established language ‘new and emerging technologies’, as referred in relevant Resolutions of the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference (PP) and WTDC. In addition, some regions and Member States were of the view that AI should be specifically highlighted due to its potential to accelerate ICT development. It was further suggested that the language used in PP Resolution 2014 on Artificial Intelligence (such as ‘AI related to telecommunications’) may be acceptable for inclusion.
* **Space-based infrastructure**: While some members supported referring to ‘satellite communications’ as more closely aligned with ITU-D’s mandate, others emphasized the importance of new space technologies in advancing the objectives of the Sector.
* **Transfer of technology**: divergent views were also expressed on this topic.
* **Comprehensive view of challenges** – some ITU-D Sector Members would like to refine the language on addressing challenges related to ICT access and affordability, including issues concerning relevant applications and service continuity.
* **Commitment language**: Some Member States proposed the use of softer, non-binding language in the second part of the draft Declaration (e.g. replacing ‘we commit’); however, the group did not reach consensus on this proposal.

In addition, the following positions were expressed during the meeting:

* **The United States supports** a succinct, high-level WTDC-25 declaration focused on ITU-D's mandate in connecting the unconnected and promoting digital transformation. With reference to the draft Declaration, the United States proposes deletion of language affirming the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Sustainable Development Goals. The United States also opposes references to climate change throughout the document and addition of any text promoting diversity, equity and inclusion policies.
* **A number of Member States** opposed the modifications to the text of the draft Baku Declaration suggested by the United States, recalling relevant PP and WTDC Resolutions and affirming their support for ITU-D’s work in those areas.
* **African Telecommunication Union (ATU)** stressed orally the importance for the Deceleration to include a commitment to ensuring the affordability of both telecommunication/ICT devices and services.
* **The League of Arab States** and the **Regional Commonwealth in the Field of Communications (RCC)** emphasized the critical role of new and emerging technologies and AI in particular in the context of digital development and expressed their preference for specific language reflecting it.

When preparing proposals for WTDC-25, ITU-D membership is invited to consider the **general views of individual Member States** discussed during TDAG-25 and expressed in the following contributions:

* [Document TDAG-25/56](https://www.itu.int/md/D22-TDAG32-C-0056/en) ‘Initial U.S. Views in Advance of WTDC-25’ from the United States, and
* [Document TDAG-25/48](https://www.itu.int/md/D22-TDAG32-C-0048/en) ‘Reflections and Recommendations on the Active Participation of the ITU Telecommunication Development Sector (ITU-D) in Achieving the Digital Future’ from China.

Based on the discussion, the Chair prepared a third revised draft proposal (Document [TDAG-WG-DEC/DT/1](https://www.itu.int/md/D22-TDAG.WG.DEC-250514-TD-0001/en)), which will be annexed to the TDAG-WG-DEC Chair’s final report to TDAG-25.

There was a general agreement that the language of the Baku Declaration would be aligned with the Baku Action Plan, once the ITU-D Priorities have been defined.

1. **Closing and next steps**

The Chair of TDAG-WG-DEC thanked participants for their active engagement, valuable contributions, and flexibility throughout the process.

The final amended draft of the Baku Declaration, as agreed by TDAG-WG-DEC and contained in Document (Document [TDAG-WG-DEC/DT/1](https://www.itu.int/md/D22-TDAG.WG.DEC-250514-TD-0001/en)), will be submitted to TDAG-25 for further consideration as part of the final report of the Chair (Document [TDAG-25/18](https://www.itu.int/md/D22-TDAG32-C-0018/en)). The report will also include an indication of positions on specific issues where the group was unable to reach consensus, as outlined above in section 4, for the attention of Member State and RTOs in their preparations for WTDC-25.

The Chair will recommend that TDAG-25 submit the preliminary draft Baku Declaration developed by the group, as an input to WTDC-25, where the document will be finalized and the final Baku Declaration adopted.

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