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| **TDAG Working Group  on the future of Study Group Questions (TDAG-WG-futureSGQ)**  **3rd Meeting, Virtual, 3 December 2024** | | A close up of a sign  Description automatically generated |
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|  | **Document TDAG-WG-futureSGQ/14-E** | |
|  | **30 November 2024** | |
|  | **English only** | |
| African Telecommunication Union (ATU) | | |
| African Common Proposal: initial inputs | | |
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| **Summary:**  This document provides an initial input of the African Group. The African Group considered the issue of ITU-D Study Groups and the current study Questions. The African Group is still working on proposed amendments to terms of reference for each study Question and this will form part of the Group’s next contribution containing the region’s proposals.  **Action required:**  Participants are invited to use this document as an input for the discussions of the TDAG Working Group on the future of Study Group Questions (TDAG-WG-futureSGQ).  **References:**  WTDC Resolution 2 (Rev. Kigali, 2022) | | |

**AFRICAN COMMON PROPOSAL**

The African Group considered the issue of ITU-D Study Groups and the current study Questions. The initial inputs are outlined below:

1. **NUMBER OF STUDY GROUPS**

The proposal is for the number of study groups to remain at 2. Should further analysis at the time that the terms of reference for each question are reviewed reveal a need to change this position, a revised contribution will be submitted.

1. **FUTURE STUDY AREAS**

It is proposed that future areas of study, include Artificial Intelligence, Airborne platforms, the Metaverse and new regulatory approaches. These are however matters that can be subsumed in the current existing Questions and are unlikely to require stand-alone new Questions.

1. **MERGING/NOT MERGING QUESTIONS**

The overall proposal is not to merge any of the Questions and to continue to study each of the current study Questions. Some of the reasons are outlined below.

**Question 1/1**

This Question should continue to be studied as infrastructure is very important for the connection of the remaining unconnected billions of people across the world. While the Question has synergies with Question 5/1 on ICTs for rural and remote areas, the topic is very wide and involving and receives some of the highest number of contributions in the Study Groups. Combining the Question with Question 5/1, which is also one of the highest attractions for contributions, would make the topic even wider, which compromises the depth of study and quality of the output.

**Question 2/1**

The proposal should remain stand-alone, but the terms of reference need to be revised to include emerging technologies. It is important that many countries have not been able to migrate to digital technologies and given the ever-changing nature of technologies, evolving solutions still need to be taken on board.

**Question 3/1**

The proposal is to continue with this Question as it remains relevant. Disasters always come and go all the time, and one cannot say when a time will come when no disaster will happen. The Question will always be relevant as disasters also change in nature. The COVID pandemic which required major lock downs that had historically not been used to contain an epidemic is an example.

**Question 4/1**

With the changes that continue to take place globally, the Question should continue to be studied and the terms of reference should include elements of emerging technologies

**Question 5/1**

The Question should be retained. Merging it with another question would detract from the focus on the needs of rural and remote areas. Elements of artificial intelligence need to be added to the study so that rural inhabitants are not left behind.

**Question 6/1**

The Question should continue to be studied as Consumer needs continue to evolve and studies should be continuous. The need is even made stronger by emerging technologies.

**Question 7/1**

The Question should remain under study, as people with disabilities risk being left behind if the Question is discontinued

**Question 1/2**

The question remains relevant for study.

**Question 2/2**

We should not merge the Questions 1 and 2 because the range of issues would be too broad for a single Question. Moreover, artificial intelligence is already clearly highlighted in Question 1. We must segment things in order to have contributions on all important aspects.

**Question 3/2**

The Question should remain under study.

**Question 4/2**

The Question should continue with revised terms of reference to take into account emerging technologies.

**Question 5/2**

The proposal is to continue with the Question.

**Question 6/2**

The Question should continue to be under study.

**Question 7/2**

If we refer to the results of the questionnaire of the TDAG working group, Question 7 could be merged or deleted even though the countries do not treat the EMF problem equally. For African countries, EMFs are a subject of concern for populations who need explanations and confidence building. It is therefore necessary to continue studies on this issue.

1. **TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR STUDY QUESTIONS**

The African Group is still working on proposed amendments to terms of reference for each study Question and this will form part of the Group’s next contribution containing the region’s proposals.

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