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|  | **TDAG Working Group on the future of Study Group Questions (TDAG-WG-futureSGQ)**  **5th Meeting, Virtual, 4 March 2025** | | A close up of a sign  Description automatically generated |
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|  | | **Document** **TDAG-WG-futureSGQ/34-E** | |
|  | | **14 March 2025** | |
|  | | **English only** | |
| Chair, TDAG-WG-futureSGQ | | | |
| Report of the fifth meeting of the TDAG working group on the future of Study Group Questions | | | |

**Opening of the meeting and welcome remarks**

Dr Ahmad Sharafat (Iran (Islamic Republic of)), Chair of the TDAG Working Group on the future of Study Group Questions (TDAG-WG-futureSGQ) welcomed all present (see [list of participants](https://www.itu.int/md/D22-TDAG.WG.SGQ-C-0033)) for the fifth meeting of this TDAG Working Group. The Chair acknowledged the presence of Ms Roxanne McElvane Webber (Unites States), Chair of TDAG, who expressed gratitude for the contributions submitted and wished the meeting well. He also acknowledged the presence of Ms Regina Fleur Assoumou-Bessou and Dr Fadel Digham, Vice-Chairs of TDAG-WG-futureSGQ and Chairs of ITU-D Study Group 1 (SG1) and Study Group 2 (SG2) respectively, who expressed thanks to all members for their participation and for the good progress made through the previous four meetings.[[1]](#footnote-2)

1. **Approval of the agenda**

The agenda was presented in Document [TDAG-WG-futureSGQ/26](https://www.itu.int/md/D22-TDAG.WG.SGQ-C-0026) (Rev.2). Six contributions were received and would be discussed in the meeting. The agenda was approved without comments.

1. **Review of the report of the fourth meeting held on 27 January 2025**

The Chair provided an overview of Document [TDAG-WG-futureSGQ/25](https://www.itu.int/md/D22-TDAG.WG.SGQ-C-0025/). Six contributions were received for review during the last meeting, including a first draft proposal from the Chair containing revised extracts of Resolution 2 and of current terms of reference (ToR) of the study Questions. The report was noted without comments.

1. **Contributions submitted to TDAG-WG-futureSGQ**

Document [TDAG-WG-futureSGQ/31](https://www.itu.int/md/D22-TDAG.WG.SGQ-C-0031) from the Industry Advisory Group on Development Issues and Private Sector Chief Regulatory Officers (IAGDI-CRO) was introduced by Ms Andrea Maia-Reboucas (BDT), on behalf of Mr Bocar Ba (SAMENA Telecommunications Council), Chair of IAGDI-CRO. The document includes two reports contained in its annexes, which detail the activities and outcomes of Tech Talk 1 and Tech Talk 2 respectively, organized by the IAGDI-CRO in February. It highlights the group's role in fostering collaboration and contributions within the ITU Development Sector, as well as the successful engagement of over 100 participants from various sectors in discussions on digital trends. The report underscores the importance of these tech talks in shaping the future work of ITU-D and formulating new study Questions. Dr Haim Mazar (Israel) and Dr Emma Otieno (Kenya) commented on the document, including support for the initiative. The document was noted with appreciation and for further consideration by members to use as needed in preparing contributions for WTDC-25.

Document [TDAG-WG-futureSGQ/27](https://www.itu.int/md/D22-TDAG.WG.SGQ-C-0027) (Rev.1) from the African Telecommunications Union (ATU) was introduced by Ms Caecilia Nyamutswa (Zimbabwe), focal point of ATU. The document contains: 1) the views of African countries on specific topics, which propose the new proposed topics on artificial intelligence and affordability & availability of devices to be integrated into existing study Questions and not kept as standalone Questions, and to maintain the number of study groups at two to manage workload and costs; and 2) inputs/contributions of the ATU members on the first draft revision of extracts from Resolution 2 and ToRs of study Questions, presented by the Chair at the previous meeting (see Document [TDAG-WG-futureSGQ/23](https://www.itu.int/md/D22-TDAG.WG.SGQ-C-0023/)). The TDAG Chair asked the rationale for some of the changes and positions, which was clarified during the meeting. Dr Wenhua Ma (China), Dr Fadel Digham (Egypt), Mr Linden Petzer (GSOA), Dr Haim Mazar (Israel) and Mr Arseny Plossky (Russian Federation) also commented on the document. The need for further discussion was recognized. The Chair appreciated the clear position and proposed approach provided by ATU and noted the document.

Document [TDAG-WG-futureSGQ/28](https://www.itu.int/md/D22-TDAG.WG.SGQ-C-0028) was introduced by Ms Caecilia Nyamutswa (Zimbabwe), on behalf of Mr Roberto Hirayama (Brazil), Vice-Chair of ITU-D SG1 and Coordinator on the future of study Questions. This document updates the previous document on compilation of Terms of Reference (ToRs) for ITU-D Study Group 1 Questions (see Document [TDAG-WG-futureSGQ/21](https://www.itu.int/md/D22-TDAG.WG.SGQ-C-0021)) with the ToR of ITU-D Question 4/1. Mr Arseny Plossky (Russian Federation), Rapporteur for Q4/1, provided also additional clarifications on the changes proposed to the ToR. Dr Haim Mazar (Israel), Dr Hideo Imanaka (NICT, Japan), Ms Roxanne McElvane Webber (TDAG Chair), Mr Teddy Woodhouse (United Kingdom), Mr Joe Burton (United States) and Ms Caecilia Nyamutswa (Zimbabwe) commented on or related to the document. It was recognized that the proposals should be carefully identified and see if and how they can be incorporated in a revised version of Resolution 2 and ToRs of study Questions. The comments and suggestions received from the two study groups will be duly considered, bearing in mind the views received during the meetings. The document was noted with appreciation.

Document [TDAG-WG-futureSGQ/30](https://www.itu.int/md/D22-TDAG.WG.SGQ-C-0030) from China was introduced by Ms Bingyi Yang. This document updates the previous proposal (see Document [TDAG-WG-futureSGQ/20](https://www.itu.int/md/D22-TDAG.WG.SGQ-C-0020)), which proposes to study AI in an independent study Question under SG2, with some simplification of the ToR compared to the previous version. Dr Fadel Digham (Egypt), Dr Haim Mazar (Israel), Dr Emma Otieno (Kenya), Dr Hideo Imanaka (NICT, Japan), Mr Arseny Plossky (Russian Federation), Mr Baraka Soka (Tanzania) and Mr Teddy Woodhouse (United Kingdom) commented on the document. Diverging views were observed with some views supporting AI to be studied in a standalone Question, and other views supporting AI to be incorporated across all relevant Questions. To find a possible middle-ground between these views, the Chair proposed to include AI as a separate topic in an existing Question, such as the current Question 5/2 (“Adoption of telecommunications/ICTs and improving digital skills”), to which China agreed. Additional views were expressed, with no objection to proceed with this way forward as a base for further discussions, while keeping in mind Resolution 214 (Bucharest, 2022)[[2]](#footnote-3) of the Plenipotentiary Conference. The document was noted with appreciation.

Document [TDAG-WG-futureSGQ/32](https://www.itu.int/md/D22-TDAG.WG.SGQ-C-0032) from Egypt was introduced by Dr Fadel Digham. This document proposes: 1) the bases and guidelines for proposing future Questions, and 2) comments on the draft proposal of the deliverable of TDAG-WG-futureSGQ, presented at the previous meeting (see Document [TDAG-WG-futureSGQ/23](https://www.itu.int/md/D22-TDAG.WG.SGQ-C-0023/)). Ms Elisa Daigele Bizarria (Brazil), Ms Regina Fleur Assoumou-Bessou (Cote d’Ivoire), Dr Haim Mazar (Israel), Dr Mohammad Ahmad Almomani (Jordan), Dr Emma Otieno (Kenya), Dr Hideo Imanaka (NICT, Japan), Ms Anastasia Konukhova (Russian Federation), Ms Maitha Al Jamri (United Arab Emirates) and Ms Caecilia Nyamutswa (Zimbabwe) commented on the document. The need for further discussion was recognized. The document was noted with appreciation.

Document [TDAG-WG-futureSGQ/29](https://www.itu.int/md/D22-TDAG.WG.SGQ-C-0029) was introduced by the Chair. It is an update of Document [TDAG-WG-futureSGQ/23](https://www.itu.int/md/D22-TDAG.WG.SGQ-C-0023/en) and provides the second draft revision of extracts from Resolution 2 annexes including the terms of reference of study Questions. It aims to capture the contributions and comments received so far as much as possible, bearing in the mind that not all proposals could be captured in some cases due to diverging views. The Chair started by outlining the big picture, and comments were received from Ms Regina Fleur Assoumou-Bessou (Cote d’Ivoire), Dr Fadel Digham (Egypt), Mr Linden Petzer (GSOA), Dr Haim Mazar (Israel), Dr Emma Otieno (Kenya), Dr Hideo Imanaka (NICT, Japan), Mr Arseny Plossky (Russian Federation), Mr Teddy Woodhouse (United Kingdom) and Mr Joseph Burton (United States) on the document.

After further discussions, and taking into consideration all contributions and comments received, the following consensus were achieved:

* uphold the current two study groups. Discussion of a possible third study group was recognized, but was considered outside the scope of the two study groups and would need to be discussed as a separate topic.
* have five study Questions in each of the two study groups
* merge the Questions 1/1 (broadband) and 5/1 (rural and remote areas) of the current study period
* agree on focus for Question 4/1 (economic aspects)
* include the new topic on AI (Document [TDAG-WG-futureSGQ/30](https://www.itu.int/md/D22-TDAG.WG.SGQ-C-0030)) into an existing study Question.

Further discussions were needed to achieve consensus on the following points:

* where to fit the new topic on device availability & affordability (Document [TDAG-WG-futureSGQ/19](https://www.itu.int/md/D22-TDAG.WG.SGQ-C-0019))
* whether some specific Questions (including Question 6/1 with Question 4/2 or Question 5/2, Question 7/1 with Question 5/2, Question 1/2 with Question 2/2, Question 4/2 C&I with Question 6/2 and Question 7/2)[[3]](#footnote-4) should be merged or not, and in which study group they should be studied (including Question 3/1 and Question 3/2)3.
* whether some standalone or merged Questions (including Question A/1, Question 2/13) should extend their scope to become more attractive.

The Chair proposed to further update this document based on contributions received and discussions held at the meeting, as well as offline consultations, in order to reach consensus on the remaining points before submitting the resulting document to TDAG in May 2025.

In order to achieve this, the Chair proposed two additional meetings:

* an additional virtual meeting before TDAG, to progress further on the remaining issues
* a face-to-face meeting during the next TDAG meeting in May, to finalize and submit the resulting output document to TDAG

These meetings will be further discussed and confirmed through announcements.

1. **Any other business**

Ms Regina Fleur Assoumou-Bessou (Chair of SG1) expressed her thanks and appreciation for the hard work and results achieved so far, providing a solid foundation for the upcoming WTDC. Dr Fadel Digham (Chair of SG2) also thanked everyone for the rich discussions and expressed optimism about reaching a consensus on remaining issues despite different opinions. The Chair acknowledged the good progress made and committed to spare no efforts in continuing discussions in order to reach consensus on the remaining points. He expressed his appreciation for everyone’s participation and positive contributions made. The meeting was adjourned with other thanks and positive remarks from the participants.

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1. The BDT Director was on mission abroad and not available during this meeting. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Resolution 214 (Bucharest, 2022) of the Plenipotentiary Conference on artificial intelligence technologies and telecommunications/information and communication technologies: [link](https://www.itu.int/dms_pub/itu-s/opb/conf/S-CONF-ACTF-2022-PDF-E.pdf#page=400) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. The Question numbers refer to the Questions of the 2022-2025 study period: [link](https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Study-Groups/2022-2025/Pages/reference/Questions-under-study.aspx) [↑](#footnote-ref-4)