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| Preparations for WRC-19 |

# Introduction

The preparations for WRC-19 are now underway. The structure for these preparations was established by the first session of the Conference Preparatory Meeting (CPM) for WRC-19 in response to Resolution 809 (WRC-15). As the initial meetings of the Working Parties have begun to undertake their preparatory efforts on their allocated agenda items, some new procedural questions have been raised over the status and nature of these preparatory efforts which could potentially hinder the timely completion of the conference preparations in time for the second session of the Conference Preparatory Meeting.

# Background information

The Radiocommunication Study Groups are chartered to prepare Questions, Recommendations, Reports and Handbooks. No. 149A of the Convention provides that in addition to study questions and draft recommendations:

The radiocommunication study groups shall also study topics identified in resolutions and recommendations of world radiocommunication conferences. The results of such studies shall be included in recommendations or in the reports prepared in accordance with No. 156 below.

No. 156 provides:

The radiocommunication study groups shall also carry out preparatory studies of the technical, operational and procedural matters to be considered by world and regional radiocommunication conferences and elaborate reports thereon in accordance with a programme of work adopted in this respect by a radiocommunication assembly or following instructions by the Council.

At the first meeting of Working Party 4A (WP 4A) in April of this year, Member States and Sector Members submitted several contributions to launch preparations on the WRC-19 agenda items for which WP 4A is the responsible party. Following well-established ITU-R practice and working methods, many of these submissions are entitled “Working Document toward a Preliminary Draft New Report” or “Working Document towards a Preliminary Draft New Recommendation”. These documents are intended to mature over the course of the study cycle into new Reports and Recommendations that will, in addition to CPM text, serve to assist Member States to make informed decisions at WRC-19 on the outcome of each agenda item. In addition, these new Reports and Recommendations will likely help advance the ongoing work of the study groups on related issues; assist Member States in licensing new radiocommunication technologies and services; and assist ITU-R members in developing and implementing these new technologies and services.

At WP 4A, some administrations opposed the use of these well-established procedural mechanisms. These procedural mechanisms are developed by the Radiocommunication Assembly (RA) and are found in ITU-R Resolution 1-7 (Geneva). In opposing these mechanisms it was claimed that the documents could only be put forward as “Working Documents” without reference to Reports and Recommendations. One consequence of such a suggestion would be delay in advancing the preparatory work on the WRC-19 agenda items by effectively requiring an additional round of meetings to advance the work to the needed “Reports and Recommendations” stage. In addition, the United States is concerned that this limitation on document categorization could spread beyond
WP 4A to other Working Parties, causing similar delay on advancing work related to other WRC-19 agenda items. Allowing this unnecessary and unsupported “procedural” hurdle could jeopardize the ITU-R memberships’ ability to complete ITU-R studies in time for draft CPM Report deadlines, as well as lead to additional financial burdens on the ITU and its members, and ultimately undermine the relevancy of the ITU-R.

# Proposal

The United States proposes that the Radiocommunication Advisory Group discuss this issue and provide advice to the Director as to the working methods to prepare for WRC-19, including the treatment of contributions. The approval of recommendations and reports on these WRC related topics of technical, operational and procedural matters are of upmost importance to members of the Union who use this documentation as the basis for their contributions to the conference preparatory meeting (CPM) and world radiocommunication conference (WRC). If any changes to this process are needed, Member States may make proposals to RA-19. If these changes are acceptable to the Assembly, the changes can be made at that time. In the meantime, ITU-R Resolution 1-7 (Geneva 2015) should be followed.

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