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| **Council 2019 Geneva, 10-20 June 2019** |  |
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|  | **Document C19/116-E** |
| **19 July 2019** |
| **Original: English** |
| SUMMARY RECORD  OF THE  FIFTH PLENARY MEETING | |
| Monday, 17 June 2019, from 0935 to 1245 hours | |
| **Acting Chairman:**  Mr F. BIGI (Italy) | |

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|  | Subjects discussed | Documents |
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| 1 | Presentation of the report of the United Nations High-level Panel on Digital Cooperation | - |
| 2 | ITU’s activities related to Resolution 70 (Rev. Dubai, 2018) | [C19/6](https://www.itu.int/md/S19-CL-C-0006/en) |
| 3 | Preparations for the 2020 World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly (continued) | [C19/68](https://www.itu.int/md/S19-CL-C-0068/en) |
| 4 | ITU Telecom World events | [C19/19](https://www.itu.int/md/S19-CL-C-0019/en) |
| 5 | Report of the Council Working Group on Languages (CWG-LANG) and detailed plan for pilot projects related to alternative translation, interpretation and captioning procedures | [C19/12](https://www.itu.int/md/S19-CL-C-0012/en) [C19/14 (Rev.1),](https://www.itu.int/md/S19-CL-C-0014/en) [C19/72](https://www.itu.int/md/S19-CL-C-0072/en) |
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1. **Presentation of the report of the United Nations High-level Panel on Digital Cooperation**

1.1 The United Nations Assistant Secretary-General for Strategic Coordination presented the report of the United Nations High-level Panel on Digital Cooperation, which would be formally launched at the United Nations Office at Geneva and United Nations headquarters in New York that afternoon. He noted the particularly diverse composition of the High-level Panel which had undertaken extensive, multi-stakeholder consultations, in which ITU had been a key partner. He drew attention to the four main themes addressed in the report, and the various recommendations it contained. Follow-up to the launch of the report would include consultations to gauge the views of Member States, other stakeholders and regional organizations. Convergences in views would then be identified and a roadmap on how to proceed produced. He hoped to work closely with ITU throughout that process.

1.2 In response to questions by a councillor, he said that multi-stakeholder alliances would be formed at the regional level, to strengthen Member States’ capacities to formulate policies and standards for governing digital technologies and to respond in emergency situations, such as high profile digital thefts and breaches. The global helpdesk would be on hand in such events. Partnership with ITU would be used to strengthen and boost efforts, not to duplicate or replace them. The modalities of such cooperation would be agreed jointly with ITU.

1.3 Councillors thanked the Assistant Secretary-General and welcomed the report of the High-level Panel.

**2 ITU’s activities related to Resolution 70 (Rev. Dubai, 2018) (Document** [**C19/6**](https://www.itu.int/md/S19-CL-C-0006/en)**)**

2.1 The Director of BDT, in her capacity as Chair of the Gender Task Force, introduced Document C19/6, which outlined ITU’s activities related to Resolution 70 (Rev. Dubai, 2018), and drew particular attention to events held in over a hundred countries around the world to mark Girls in ICT Day.

2.2 A short video was shown, giving highlights of the Girls in ICT Day event that had been held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

2.3 Councillors welcomed the report and commended ITU on its efforts to promote women and girls in ICT. Highlighting the importance of women’s participation and the need to bridge the digital gender gap, they gave examples of measures being taken at national level and described their activities to mark Girls in ICT Day. Questions were raised regarding gender equality and mainstreaming (GEM) planning, in particular how it would be incorporated into the operational and human resources strategic plans, how the baseline financial target for GEM would be established, and whether additional financial or human resources would be needed to ensure full implementation of the GEM policy. Councillors praised, in particular, the ITU Gender Dashboard and ITU’s involvement in implementing the Code of Conduct to Prevent Sexual Harassment During or In Relation to United Nations Events. Efforts to improve the gender balance among ITU staff and the recent appointment of women to managerial positions were also commended.

2.4 Despite the progress made, challenges persist; councillors noted ITU has only achieved 40 per cent compliance with the United Nations System-Wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-SWAP). A shift in culture would be essential to enhance compliance. Resolution 70 had been heavily revised by PP-18 and future reports on its implementation should focus more on the new provisions, in particular on gender mainstreaming and the attainment of gender-related targets. Information on regional implementation as well as more activities to promote women’s involvement in artificial intelligence would be welcome.

2.5 The Director of BDT commended all efforts being undertaken at the national level and said that gender mainstreaming was not only a matter for the ITU secretariat, but for all stakeholders. Regarding internal gender mainstreaming, the GEM action plan was being taken into account in the new human resources strategic plan and in operational planning. Efforts were being made to achieve gender balance in internal committees, and to track and report success using the Gender Dashboard. A new policy on harassment and fraud had been developed, along with a policy on sexual harassment, and an internal policy on the protection of whistleblowers was forthcoming. Any experience that Member States could share with regard to how to make further progress on implementation of the UN-SWAP performance indicators would be welcome. Resources for GEM planning were limited; the secretariat was doing its best with the resources available.

2.6 The Council **noted** Document C19/6.

**3 Preparations for the 2020 World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly (continued) (Document** [**C19/68**](https://www.itu.int/md/S19-CL-C-0068/en)**)**

3.1 The councillor from Brazil introduced Document C19/68, containing a contribution submitted by Brazil and Canada seeking legal clarification from the secretariat on provisions and procedures pertaining to the creation of regional groups of ITU-T study groups; the modalities and rights of participation of Sector Members, Associates and Academia in such groups; and the role of TSAG in that regard.

3.2 The Director of TSB said that, at its meeting in December 2018, TSAG had established a rapporteur group to consider the matter; discussions in that group had already begun. 3.3 Several councillors emphasized the importance of addressing the questions raised and receiving legal clarification, but some said that the Council was not the appropriate forum in which to do so. Others said that the secretariat’s clarifications could be given in a Council meeting even though work was progressing elsewhere. One councillor suggested that there was no need for clarification on the first question raised in the contribution, which should be amended accordingly.

3.4 The Acting Chairman suggested that the Council agree to note the concerns raised in Document C19/68; to note that PP-18 had delegated the matter to WTSA and that discussion was already under way within the TSAG rapporteur group; and to request the secretariat to provide its legal opinion, together with the contribution from Brazil and Canada, to the next meeting of TSAG.

3.5 It was so **agreed**.

**4 ITU Telecom World events (Document** [**C19/19**](https://www.itu.int/md/S19-CL-C-0019/en)**)**

4.1 The Chief of the Conferences and Publications Department introduced Document C19/19, which outlined the highlights of ITU Telecom World 2018, held in South Africa, described plans for the 2019 event, and gave details of actions taken pursuant to the amendments made to Resolution 11 at PP‑18. He announced that, following a bidding process, Viet Nam had been selected to host ITU Telecom World 2020; a host country agreement was being finalized.

4.2 Several councillors expressed support for continuing to hold ITU Telecom World events, which provided an important platform for information exchange and cooperation in the field of new technologies and services. The inclusion of SMEs and innovators was particularly welcome. In the face of competing events in the global ICT industry and dwindling participation, particularly among developed countries, the secretariat was urged to encourage Member States to renew their commitment, ensure that the event remained relevant, and consider the value it added to the Union’s activities. Scheduling other high-level ITU events in parallel with ITU Telecom World might serve to increase participation.

4.3 The councillor from Hungary invited wide participation in the 2019 event; 4.4 The councillor from Nigeria sought assurances that visas would be issued for participants from his country to attend the event in Budapest.

4.5 The observer from Viet Nam said that the Ministry of Information and Communications planned to hold the 2020 event in September in Hanoi and looked forward to welcoming many participants.

4.6 One councillor asked whether the management consultants to be hired to perform a strategic and financial review of ITU Telecom World events had already been engaged and, if so, whether the fact that plans were already in place for the 2019 and 2020 ITU Telecom World events preempted the outcome of the consultants’ work. The Chief of the Conferences and Publications Department replied that consultants had been engaged subject to contract; it was to be hoped that all stakeholders would cooperate fully in their work so that a comprehensive report could be submitted to Council-20.

4.7 The Secretary-General, recalling efforts to reform ITU Telecom World events and acknowledging the need to enhance the events’ added value, expressed appreciation for the support shown and welcomed the offer made by Viet Nam, which had become a dynamic force in ICT development. The 2020 event would provide an opportunity to focus on emerging markets. The secretariat would work with the host government for the 2019 event to ensure that prospective participants received visas.

4.8 The Council **noted** the report in Document C19/19, while expressing its appreciation to South Africa for having hosted the event in 2018 with a focus on SMEs and looking forward to the event in Hungary from 9 to 12 September 2019. It **further** **noted** with appreciation the offer by Viet Nam to host the event in Hanoi in September 2020, keeping in mind that Council-20 would consider the results of the review of ITU Telecom World events.

**5 Report of the Council Working Group on Languages (CWG-LANG) and detailed plan for pilot projects related to alternative translation, interpretation and captioning procedures (Documents** [**C19/12**](https://www.itu.int/md/S19-CL-C-0012/en)**,** [**C19/14 (Rev.1)**](https://www.itu.int/md/S19-CL-C-0014/en) **and** [**C19/72**](https://www.itu.int/md/S19-CL-C-0072/en)**)**

5.1 The Chair of CWG-LANG introduced the annual report of the CWG to the Council in Document C19/12. Since publication of the report, a new agreement between the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) and the Association internationale des interprètes de conférence (AIIC) had come into force governing the short-term hiring of interpreters, which as yet had no major budgetary consequences.

5.2 The councillor from the Russian Federation introduced his country’s contribution in Document C19/72, proposing a further editorial amendment to the revised terms of reference of CWG-LANG in Appendix II to Document C19/12.

5.3 The representative of the secretariat introduced Document C19/14 (Rev.1), which outlined a draft four-year plan for research and development of alternative procedures to be used in translation, interpretation and captioning processes, pursuant to Decision 5 (Rev. Dubai, 2018) and Resolution 154 (Rev. Dubai, 2018).

5.4 Noting the importance of bridging the language gap to facilitate the work of the Union, councillors welcomed the technological developments reported in various areas, particularly neural machine translation, and the associated potential cost savings, though one councillor cautioned against seeking economies at the expense of effective multilingualism. Another councillor requested more specific information on investments that could prove necessary to harness the new technologies: if they could be offset by savings, consideration could be given to including them in budget plans. A third councillor queried the high typing costs the Union incurred, saying that he was not fully convinced by the explanations provided at the first plenary meeting, and he emphasized the importance of translating web pages relating to treaty-making conferences. Support was expressed for the plan outlined in Document C19/14 (Rev.1) and several councillors expressed willingness to provide assistance with the pilot projects described; one suggested that the reference to specific areas of collaboration with private sector entities in §3.5 be omitted. Support was also expressed for the draft revision of Resolution 1372 set out in Document C19/12, with the additional amendment proposed by the Russian Federation.

5.5 In conclusion, the Council, recalling the importance of fair treatment among the six languages of the Union as far as possible, **endorsed** the report of CWG-LANG in Document C19/12, and **adopted** the revision of Resolution 1372 and its Annex on the terms of reference of CWG‑LANG, with the additional change proposed by the Russian Federation in Document C19/72. Regarding Document C19/14 (Rev.1), the Council **noted** the detailed plan for pilot projects related to alternative translation, interpretation and captioning procedures for the next four years, taking into account the observations made during the meeting and within available resources.

The Secretary-General: The Acting Chairman:

H. ZHAO F. BIGI

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