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| **Virtual consultation of councillors starting 9 June 2020** |  |
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|  | **Document VC\3-E****28 May 2020****Original English** |

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| **Name of the submitting Member State(s):** | **United Arab Emirates**  |
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| **Document title:** | **IDI contribution to ITU Council-2020** |
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| **Ref. to draft agenda of the virtual consultation:** | [**Document C20/62**](https://www.itu.int/md/S20-CL-C-0062/en) |
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| Comments relating to Document C20/62**Background*** The ICT Development Index (IDI) ranks countries’ performance with regard to ICT infrastructure, access and use since 2009.
* In March 2017, the ITU called all ITU members and experts in the field of ICT statistics for an Extraordinary Meeting to update the structure of the IDI.
* The main objective of the Extraordinary Meeting was to discuss and agree on a revised set of indicators in the IDI, based on two input documents prepared by the subgroup and the independent group of experts.
* The Extraordinary Meeting adopted a total of 14 indicators to be included in the IDI compared to the existing list of 11 indicators and revised IDI.
* The revised set of indicators was agreed to be included in the IDI in the WTIS 2017 to be published in 2018.
* In 2018, the IDI was not published in order to smoothen the transition for Member States in terms of data collection, and the ITU put off the new IDI until 2019.
* In 2019, the ITU made an announcement that it has decided to produce the ICT Development Index with its old structure. This announcement was made during the 10th meeting of ITU Expert Group (EGTI)) which took place at the ITU from 17th to 20th September 2019. The ITU referred to issues and challenges with data collection, data quality and the selection of the new indicators.
* The UAE, among other countries, stated that it has difficulty to accept this approach as many resources has been invested in the past years to arrive to the methodology and the structure of the new IDI. UAE also has referred to the ITU Resolution 131 (Rev. Dubai; PP-18) as to revert the issue back to the Expert group and has sent a letter to the ITU accordingly.
* The ITU has responded and decided to make a consultation by online voting.
* The UAE did not accept the online voting and requested ITU to bring this issue back to the Expert Group for discussion and approval in a formal context as per Res. 131.
* Accordingly, the ITU called for Expert Group meeting in 10th Feb 2020 in which ITU presented a proposal to ITU Member States for the development of a new composite index, linking digital technologies to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
* During the Expert Group Meeting at 10 Feb 2020, some countries, including UAE, were asking how a decision was made on the (dis-)continuation of the publication of the IDI or using the old IDI, and no clear answer was received. Then a new index for SDGs has been proposed.
* The New ITU Index framework was presented in TDAG Web Dialogue of 25 March 2020. However, this cannot be taken into consideration for the development process of an index, as TDAG, with all due respect, did not consist of experts.
* At 17th April meeting of Expert Group, the ITU presented a draft framework for the new ITU index (SDGs) for discussion by Expert Group.
* The ITU Res. 131 is mainly about the IDI and there is no resolution to govern the new ITU index.

Challenges with new indicators:* + The New ITU index involves many None-ICT indicators from many other sectors with high risk of mismanagement of information and timelines.
	+ The new index will be dependent on reports from other international organizations (WHO, WIPO, UNESCO, ILO, World Bank …etc of which there are private organisations).
	+ The new proposed index has not been studied by the Expert Group and its methodology for measuring it is not clear.
	+ As per ITU Background document presentation in 17th April 2020, only 50 countries have data of these indicators.
	+ The new index is not in accordance with the ITU Res. 131 which clearly states that “ITU should establish a four-year period of validity for the structure and methodology of the IDI and IPB in order to implement *resolves 2* above, in case these need to be reviewed and revised as appropriate through an expert group meeting in Geneva representing all countries, developed and developing, on an equal footing”.

Proposed way forwardBased on the above, the following are proposed:* To urgently request the Expert Group to review the updated IDI of 2018 and to find out and resolve the issues within the index in order that ITU can publish the IDI report at 2020 without further delay.
* To request Expert Group to review the new proposed index by ITU as appropriate, through an expert group meeting representing all administrations until it is finalized, then it may replace the IDI in the future if agreed upon by ITU member states.
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