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| **Second virtual consultation of councillors starting 16 November 2020** |  |
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| **Ref. to draft agenda of the virtual consultation:** | Items 13 and 14 of Section 1 Agenda of Second virtual consultation of Councillors Documents: [**C20/72**](https://www.itu.int/md/S20-CL-C-0072/en)**,** Modified Decision 608, Convening of the next World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly (WTSA-21); [**C20/37R1**](https://www.itu.int/md/S20-CL-C-0037/en), Schedule of future conferences, assemblies and meetings of the Union: 2020-2023 |
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| Comments relating to Document [C20/72](https://www.itu.int/md/S20-CL-C-0072/en), Decision 608 - WTSA-21 and [C20/37R1](https://www.itu.int/md/S20-CL-C-0037/en), Schedule of future meetings of the Union**Introduction**VCC-1 agreed to modify Decision 608 to update dates of the World Telecommunications Standardization Assembly (WTSA) to February 23-March 5, 2021 subject to the restoration of normal work and travel conditions in India and in other Member States. It is now clear that a fully in person WTSA-20 in early 2021 may be impossible and this VCC-2 must consider again the venue and dates for this Conference. We further thank the Indian Government for its generous offer to host WTSA in Spring of 2022 in order to allow the meeting to proceed in person. The United States has been considering the various options facing the Union as a result of COVID-19, not only regarding WTSA-20, but the impact on the overall ITU schedule of conferences and meetings envisioned in 2021, 2022 and beyond. In order to minimize burden on Member States due to Conference preparations, and to help ensure the continuity of operations of the ITU’s Telecommunication Standardization Sector, a virtual WTSA-20 option in 2021 also should be considered.DiscussionWe all want to see a successful and effective WTSA which is able to set a clear new work program for the Telecommunication Standardization Sector (T-Sector) over the next Study period. In order to avoid undue disruption of the 4-year, 2021-2024 study period cycle and leadership, and negative impact on the Union's other currently scheduled conferences and meetings, we believe it would be useful to consider ways to address urgent and essential issues prior to a possible physical meeting in 2022.Based on our experience during the June 2020 VCC that addressed limited items that were of utmost importance to the functioning of the Union, we propose that similarly, a virtual WTSA in February/March 2021 could focus only on the essential issues set out in Article 13 of the ITU Convention that are necessary for the T-Sector to achieve a program of work over the next Study period while leaving to a future physical meeting the broader scope including WTSA Resolutions and Decisions.**Proposed Way Forward:**We propose the virtual WTSA should work to develop consensus on:* Study Questions widely agreed at the Telecommunications Standardization Advisory Group (TSAG)
* Chairs and vice-chairs as agreed by regional coordination and consensus.

Further discussions will be necessary between Member States and the ITU Secretariat to identify the appropriate mechanisms for adopting the decisions proposed by the virtual WTSA, consistent with the ITU Constitution, Convention and General Rules.Subsequent to WTSA, TSAG will continue work on activities of the T-Sector in accordance with its role as specified in Article 14A of the ITU Convention. When considering the proposed physical WTSA-20 in Hyderabad in 2022, the United States further believes that the Council should consider holistically the calendar of events in 2021-22, with Member States having to potentially participate in WTDC, WTSA, Council, WTPF and PP-22, and associated preparatory meetings, in the space of 1 year. Holding an initial Virtual WTSA in 2021 could help alleviate some of the burden on the 2022 calendar, including by allowing for a shorter WTSA. But the Council may also wish to consider postponing or amending some of the other meetings planned for 2022, such as the WTPF. |

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