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| **Ad Hoc Group of the CWG-FHR on the ITU Regional Presence Review**  **Second meeting - Virtual, 20 April 2021** |  |
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|  | **Document CWG-FHR-AH-RegPres-2/5-E** |
| **13 April 2021** |
| **English only** |

Contribution by Switzerland

REGIONAL PRESENCE AD HOC GROUP

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| Summary  Implementation of future delivery model: While the PWC report offers an important and valuable analysis of the ITU’s regional presence, Switzerland considers that the “options” for a future model as presented in the report do not predefine a set number of models which the Union would implement one-to-one. The implementation of any delivery model in the absence of a preceding strategic planning (incl. expected outcomes, focus of activities, etc.) could lead to an inefficient and ineffective resource allocation.  Strategic Planning: In its comment in *Annex 3* of Document *CWG-FHR-AH-RegPres-1/4, the Secretariat* lays out “*that these matters would require significant revision of Council working methods related to the ITU Strategic and Operational Plans”.* Switzerland would like to receive more information from the Secretariat on how the interplay of strategic and operational planning processes at all levels could be improved, with the aim of supporting a coherent programmatic focus in the Union’s mandate delivery through its regional presence.  Opportunities in context of UN processes: It is Switzerland’s view that collaboration within the multilateral system and the reform of the UN Development system (UNDS) offers opportunities for increased impact, effectiveness and efficiency. Switzerland would welcome the Secretariat’s views on potential avenues for collaboration as well as opportunities the Secretariat sees in the current UNDS reform for the ITU’s mandate delivery in the regions.  Coordination, Coherence and Oversight: While it does not seem advisable to redeploy TSB and BR staff to regional offices, Switzerland is of the view that it is important that field offices can benefit as much as possible from the specific technical expertise at headquarters. Direct contact and communication between staff at regional offices and headquarters should be supported best possibly. A small coordination team could support mandate delivery also in the long-term.  Action required  The group could invite the Secretariat to:   * provide more information on how the interplay of strategic and operational planning processes at all levels could be improved; * present its own analysis of how to best address the criteria highlighted in the PWC report; * provide its views on opportunities the UNDS reform offers for increased effectiveness and efficiency in the ITU’s mandate delivery in the regions, as well as an overview of potential avenues for collaboration with other institutions within the multilateral system.   \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  References  [C20/74](https://www.itu.int/md/S20-CL-C-0074/en); [CWG-FHR-12/9](https://www.itu.int/md/S21-CWGFHR12-C-0009/en); [CWG-FHR-AH-RegPres-1/4](https://www.itu.int/md/S21-AHGFHR1-C-0004/en) |

**General comments regarding implementing a future delivery model**

The organizational set-up, including the regional presence, is an important factor for the ITU to implement its mandate. Switzerland deems the report prepared by PWC (*document* [*C20/74*](https://www.itu.int/md/S20-CL-C-0074/en)) a valuable document, as it provides important insights from an external perspective on the functioning of the ITU’s regional presence. The analytical framework based on seven evaluation criteria[[1]](#footnote-2) offers an adequate lens for such an analysis.

While methodologies applied by PWC in order to complete the analysis appear sound to us, it is Switzerland’s view that the report primarily serves as an input for the ITU’s own reflections. Analysis, recommendations and “options” of future delivery models in the report offer valuable insights for the ongoing deliberations. At the same time, it is Switzerland’s view that the sketched out options do not predefine a set number of models for the ITU’s future regional presence from which the Union would have to choose and implement it one-to-one.

After all, while taking into account inputs from PWC’s analysis, the implementation of any future model should be based on the Union’s own reflection of how its regional presence can best support mandate delivery. Specifically, given limited overall resources of the Union, questions and decisions related to resource allocation (e.g. number and level of staffing) should be according – and hence subsequent – to specific needs of the ITU and its offices to effectively and efficiently deliver impact; rather than on any pre-defined, top-down model. Furthermore, it is Switzerland’s view that the implementation of any pre-defined delivery model in the absence of a preceding planning (incl. expected outcomes, focus of activities, etc.) could lead to an inefficient and ineffective resource allocation and thereby risk to weaken the ITU’s overall capacity to deliver.

**Strategic planning**

Accordingly, it is Switzerland’s view that a coherent strategic framework with a sharp programmatic focus should be the basis for the Union’s future regional presence model, as equally laid out in Recommendation 1.2 in the PWC report.

In its comment in *Annex 3* of Document [*CWG-FHR-AH-RegPres-1/4*](https://www.itu.int/md/S21-AHGFHR1-C-0004/en)regarding Recommendation 1.2.1, the Secretariat mentions “*that a review of the Strategic and Planning Framework would result in better alignment with the RBM approach already being implemented by BDT, and would make for more effective, focussed and achievable targets for the ROs*”. It furthermore lays out “*that these matters would require significant revision of Council working methods related to the ITU Strategic and Operational Plans”* and suggests *“that this matter could be a focus for the CWG-FHR*”.

Switzerland kindly requests the Secretariat to provide more information on how the interplay of strategic and operational planning processes at all levels could be improved. Such clarification would be deemed helpful for any deliberations within the CWG-FHR with the aim of supporting a coherent programmatic focus in the Union’s mandate delivery through its regional presence.

Furthermore, in addition to the Secretariat’s first reaction to PWC’s report (*document* [*CWG-FHR-12/9*](https://www.itu.int/md/S21-CWGFHR12-C-0009/en)), Switzerland would be interested in the Secretariat’s own views on how to best address the criteria highlighted in the report, as well as its own analysis of areas where the Union can be most supportive to Member states and their populations, through its regional presence.

**Opportunities in the context of UN-processes and synergies with other organizations**

Regarding programmatic focus and set-up, it is Switzerland’s view that current processes in the UN system such as the reform of the UN Development system (UNDS), in which member states have already invested, further offer opportunities for increased effectiveness and efficiency. Cross-sectoral cooperation and synergies with other organizations can increase scope and impact of development projects and are essential for the achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals. It is Switzerland’s view that in order to increase impact through regional partnerships and common resource mobilization, ITU regional presence’s programmatic focus should align its activities as closely as possible with the UNDS and its stakeholder agencies. It should do so by taking into account not only the ITU’s own value proposition for member states and cross-agency projects, but also areas where the ITU itself can benefit from partner organizations’ expertise.

Strengthened cooperation and coordination within UN country teams furthermore offer the potential for increased effectiveness and efficiency through common use of resources on the ground, for example by common logistical and administrative functions among organizations; thereby potentially increasing the ratio of impact to resources.

Switzerland is therefore interested to receive more information regarding the Secretariat’s views on opportunities the UNDS reform offers for increased effectiveness and efficiency in the ITU’s mandate delivery in the regions; as well as potential avenues for collaboration with individual institutions in the multilateral system.

**Coordination, Coherence and Oversight**

In Switzerland’s view, coordination and coherence of the Union’s activities both in the regional offices as well as at headquarters are important elements of a future regional presence model and should ensure highest possible efficiency, effectiveness and relevance (according to the principle of “One ITU”). This requires a consistent strategic framework, but also a close exchange and communication channel between the different offices as well as the different sectors.

Regarding contributions from other ITU sectors to regional offices (Recommendation 1.1.2.), Switzerland understands the Secretariat’s concerns that TSB and BR are not staffed with generalists who would be broadly expert enough to independently address the variety of issues which arise in the regions. To Switzerland, it would therefore not seem advisable to redeploy TSB or BR staff to the regional offices; thereby creating voids in existing teams. Rather, it seems that TSB and BR can provide most value by offering respective technical expertise and capacity building through remote support as well as on a project basis in the offices. Such a co-working approach between headquarters and regional offices could furthermore increase intra-agency learning.

Furthermore, it is important that field offices can benefit as much as possible from the specific technical expertise at headquarters. Direct contact between staff at regional offices and headquarter should be supported as much as possible; communication channels for each office should be as direct as possible.

The establishment of a small, centralized coordination team could further improve coordination and hence effectiveness and efficiency. The team could furthermore support field offices in their reporting and communication, thereby helping monitoring and evaluation of regional impact. This would be important not only for general managerial oversight at the level of ITU-D directorate, but also provide a dynamic and constant review of the ITU’s regional activities and how its impact can further be increased.

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1. in alphabetic order: Coherence, Control, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Impact, Relevance, Sustainability [↑](#footnote-ref-2)