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| **Council 2021 Virtual consultation of councillors, 8-18 June 2021** |  |
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| **Agenda item: PL 2.1** | **Document C21/19-E** |
| **23 March 2021** |
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| Report by the Secretary-General | |
| REPORT ON ITU TELECOM WORLD EVENTS | |

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| Summary  This report outlines highlights of ITU Telecom World 2019 and 2020, plans for 2021 and 2022 and the status of the strategic and financial assessment and review of ITU Telecom events as required by Resolution 11 (Rev. Dubai, 2018).  This document was originally prepared as [C20/19](https://www.itu.int/md/S20-CL-C-0019/en) for submission to the 2020 session of the Council but was not reviewed.  Action required  The Council is invited **to note** the report.  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  References  [*Resolution 11 (Rev. Dubai 2018)*](https://www.itu.int/en/council/Documents/basic-texts/RES-011-E.pdf)*; Documents* [*C19/19*](https://www.itu.int/md/S19-CL-C-0019/en)*;* [*C20/41*](https://www.itu.int/md/S20-CL-C-0041/en) |

ITU Telecom World 2019 Highlights

* 1. ITU Telecom World 2019 took place from 9-12 September in Budapest, Hungary, on the theme of **“Innovating together: connectivity that matters”**. It brought together governments, corporates and tech SMEs (small and medium enterprises) from emerging and developed markets around the world.
  2. The event was hosted by the Government of Hungary and ITU is extremely appreciative of their support and commitment in hosting the event, as well as ensuring its smooth running and providing dynamic setting and content for discussions.
  3. Major global players took an active part in the Exhibition as well as in the Forum. The Host Country organized the Hungary National Pavilion, which showcased established tech companies, start-ups, universities, and incubators from across the country and a packed programme of innovation-focussed discussions.
  4. ITU was honoured that the event was attended by the highest-level participants from the Host Country including Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, who opened the event and also visited and lauded the companies participating in the exhibition. As well as top level representatives from the Government of Hungary, participating leaders at the event spanned ministers and regulators, C‑level executives from major ICT players, heads of international organizations, ambassadors, academics, and SMEs.
  5. The event featured over 270 exhibitors, including more than 150 SMEs, and 20 sponsors and partners from over 40 countries.
  6. The **exhibition** showcased technologies from 5G, satellite, e-waste management, robotics, or blockchain to Smart ABC (Smart AI, Banking and Cities), smart agriculture, smart homes, climate change mitigation, fintech, and more. Exhibitors and sponsors spanned major corporate players to cutting-edge SMEs, from across the globe.
  7. The **Forum** opened with the Forum Summit, moderated by Euronews. Sessions covered areas from technological developments and impacts in 5G, IoT, Artificial Intelligence (AI) or smart cities to supporting tech SME growth, mitigating gender bias in AI, frontier technologies for climate change and more. Ministerial roundtables convened ministers from across the globe to debate issues such as data privacy, the role of government in 5G deployment or stimulating public private collaboration on connectivity and adoption. Partner sessions provided expert insights in areas such as digital transformation, micro-, small-, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) in Uganda, spectrum pricing, sustainable next-generation networks and 5G planning, strategy, cooperation.
  8. **SMEs and affordability:** Following requests from Member States, ITU Telecom World 2019 offered services and activities to support SMEs including new entry-level participation options, as well as lowering Forum entrance fees for LDCs, LLDCs, and SIDS.
  9. **SME Programme & ITU Telecom World Awards**: The SME programme provided valuable networking, business matchmaking, debate and pitching opportunities to SMEs. A key part of the programme was the ITU Telecom World Awards, which rewarded SMEs, governments and corporates making social impact. Awards included ‘Global SME’, ‘Industry’, ‘Government’ and ‘Host Country’. Winners and finalists were presented with trophies and certificates in a high-profile ceremony at the close of the event. Switzerland’s Immersion4 was the winner of the Global SME Excellence Award.
  10. **A showcase for ITU:** Telecommunication Standardization Bureau (TSB), Radiocommunication Bureau (BR), and Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT), took active part in ITU Telecom World 2019. For example, TSB's “Smart ABC Programme” hosted discussions sharing insight into advances in artificial intelligence, banking and cities, as well as the Smart ABC Pavilion with a packed programme of activities. BDT highlighted - for the first time ever at an ITU Telecom World event - the [EQUALS](http://www.equals.org/#_blank) fellowship winners, and the [ITU Innovation Challenge](https://cocreate.itu.int/#_blank) winners. BR main activities were Forum sessions centering around spectrum-related issues and the imminent deployment of 5G (one ministerial roundtable + three forum sessions).

1. Financial Results

Please refer to [Document C20/41](https://www.itu.int/md/S20-CL-C-0041/en) for further information.

1. **ITU Virtual Digital World events during 2020** 
   1. As a result of the ongoing COVID-19 crisis, ITU and the Ministry of Information and Communications of Viet Nam postponed the physical edition of ITU Digital World 2020 until October 2021. Meanwhile, a series of virtual events took place in 2020, setting the framework for the physical 2021 event and continue providing a platform for all our stakeholders until they would be able to convene in person.
   2. **ITU Virtual Digital World 2020** took place from 20-22 October. It comprised Ministerial roundtables focusing on "The role of digital technologies during and after the COVID-19 pandemic" - and exploring the importance of digital connectivity in national strategies for economic recovery. Alongside these, Forum webinar sessions will explore the policies, technologies and trends driving the digital economy, and a virtual Exhibition enabling online showcasing.
   3. In total the virtual event comprised 3 Forum sessions and 3 Ministerial Roundtables, with 83 speakers including 27 ministers and 13 regulatory authority representatives. In the virtual exhibition were more than 150 exhibitors from Vietnam and global companies, and 10 national pavilions from around the world.
   4. Following the virtual event, the **ITU Digital World 2020 Virtual SME Awards and Masterclasses** took place online in November and December 2020. The Awards offered SMEs worldwide the opportunity to apply with their innovative solutions in range of different sectors and take part in programme of SME masterclasses and pitching sessions, culminating in a virtual Awards Ceremony in December 2020. SME masterclasses were open to all SMEs worldwide, whether participating in the Awards or not.
2. **ITU Digital World 2021**
   1. ITU Digital World 2021 will take place from 12-15 October 2021 in Ha Noi, Viet Nam. The Event will be hosted by the Government of Viet Nam, represented through the Ministry of Information and Communications (MIC). The event is being held under the title “ITU Digital World 2021” at the specific request of the Host Country, Viet Nam, and with the agreement of the Secretary-General. The new name was chosen, to reflect the importance and widening scope of the technologies supporting the ICT ecosystem.
   2. Under the theme **“Building the digital world. Together**” the Event will include the Exhibition, enabling member states, sector members, and other industry players- in addition to continuing to support SMEs- to showcase innovative services, applications and solutions and highlight growth and investment opportunities. The Forum discussions will focus on connectivity, innovation and digital principles.
   3. The ITU **Digital World Awards and SME Programme** will again support and recognize innovative ICT-based solutions with social impact, with categories for entrants selected through a mix of feedback from events, analysis of past SME exhibitors and research into global trends.
   4. The event will also be the 50th anniversary edition of ITU Telecom events and will mark half a century of technological advancements and collaboration, since the first event in 1971 and look to the technologies that will power the future.
3. **Strategic and Financial Assessment and Review of ITU Telecom Events**
   1. Resolution 11 (Rev. Dubai, 2018) instructed the Secretary-General to hire an independent external management consultancy to perform a comprehensive strategic and financial assessment and review of ITU Telecom events.
   2. Following an international bidding process, in full compliance with ITU procurement procedures, DGDA Switzerland (Dalberg) was duly appointed and began work on the project in August 2019.
   3. Dalberg’s final report has been presented to the second virtual consultation of councillors in November 2020 [Document C20/10](https://www.itu.int/md/S20-CL-C-0010/en). for its further action in accordance with Resolution 11 (Rev. Dubai, 2018). - The councillors agreed to further consider the report and make recommendations at the 2021 session of the Council
4. **Future Events**
   1. A call for bids for the hosting of ITU Telecom World 2022 was launched in January 2021, to submit proposals for hosting by end May 2021.

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