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| **Council 2021 Virtual consultation of councillors, 8-18 June 2021** |  |
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| **Agenda item: PL 2.1** | **Document C21/79-E** |
| **25 May 2021** |
| **Original: English** |
| Contribution from Japan | |
| STRATEGIC AND FINANCIAL ASSESSMENT FOR ITU TELECOM EVENTS | |

I have the honour to transmit to the Member States of the Council a contribution submitted by **Japan**.

Houlin ZHAO  
 Secretary-General

**Contribution from Japan**

STRATEGIC AND FINANCIAL ASSESSMENT FOR ITU TELECOM EVENTS

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| Summary  Document C20/10 was presented at the second virtual consultation of councillors and it was agreed to further consider the report and make recommendations at the 2021 session of the Council.  This contribution recognizes that the reform of ITU Telecom events is an urgent issue and appreciates Dalberg's reform proposal. Atthe same time, it recommendssome approaches based on the fact that the global pandemic has changed the situation significantly since Dalberg conducted its review and assessment.  Action required  The Council is requested to consider the proposals in this document.  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  References  [*Resolution 11 (Rev. Dubai, 2018)*](https://www.itu.int/en/council/Documents/basic-texts/RES-011-E.pdf) *of the Plenipotentiary Conference,* [C20/10](https://www.itu.int/md/S20-CL-C-0010/en) |

1. **Introduction**

Resolution 11 (Rev. Dubai, 2018) of the Plenipotentiary Conference instructs the Secretary-General to perform a comprehensive strategic and financial assessment and review of ITU Telecom events, considering contributions from the ITU membership, and submit a report with recommendations and various strategies at the 2020 session of the Council for action”.

An independent external management consultant, Dalberg, has conducted a review and assessment of the status of ITU Telecom events and the current business model, and suggests alternatives for the way forward.

In the input document submitted by Secretary-General on ITU TELECOM World Event, following three options are proposed;

Option 1: 3 to 4 small scale “Regional Forum Sessions” on ICT development in emerging and developing markets per year, organized alongside Regional Development Forums in developing regions. These events would support developing countries strengthen their local ICT sectors by learning about the trends and innovations, about the ICT development journeys of peer countries, and communicating emerging needs/risks to drive coordinated action, incl. through regulation.

These events would require subsidization: each regional edition is expected to make ~2m CHF in losses annually•

Option 2: A yearly developing country focused “Digital for Development forum”, combined OR merged with WSIS (WSIS describing itself as the “world’s largest annual gathering of the ICT for development This event would drive innovation, adoption and use of ICT solutions in support of development objectives of developing countries. It would allow stakeholders to (i) learn about the latest trends in technology, policy, and regulation; (ii) display technological innovations, programs, initiatives, or policies; and (iii) network to build partnerships. It would take place in a fixed global location.

This event would require subsidization: each edition is expected to make ~4m CHF in losses annually.

Option 3: Develop and organize exhibition and forum sessions dedicated to “Digital for Good” as part of a yearly Global Union level event, also integrating WSIS and/or AI for Good Global Summit. This landmark event would drive innovation, adoption and use of ICT solutions for the common global good in support of the SDGs. The event would offer to

1. improve collective knowledge of digital innovations for the common good, and
2. enable exchanges among D4Good stakeholders to support adoption and scale and address potential risks. This would take place annually in a fixed global location.

Depending on the ability to attract corporates, this event could be profitable. On a base case, it could make ~1m CHF in profits. Smaller or larger number of exhibitors could lead to losses of ~1.5m CHF or profits of ~5.5.m CHF.

The first two options present the risk of reducing the scope of action of ITU Telecom events from global and relevant to all, to only relevant for developing countries. On the contrary, the global Digital for Good event could allow to maintain a global reach. It also presents the dual opportunity to fully redesign the event while keeping its distinctive Exhibition component, and to leverage ITU’s unique mixed membership to better address the ICT sector needs and eventually fulfil ITU’s mission of “broadening access to ICT to achieve sustainable development”.

Dalberg recommends to consider the opportunity of investigating further this 3rd option, through the Phase II already considered to design a global, major Digital for Good event. This phase should include, among other, two decisive workstreams: i) An internal alignment exercise involving the three Bureaux and the Secretariat, to agree on a strategic event portfolio and on its operating model (including event governance); ii) A co creation exercise with a subset of ITU’s Sector Members to clearly define their needs and what will make them participate and contribute to the future event.

1. **Proposal**

We recognize that reform of ITU Telecom events is imminent and leaving this issue unaddressed at the Council 2021 could result in a deficit, and could continue to bring a negative impact on the financial resources of the Union.

However, since there is a need to update the current status and profitability of such large exhibitions/events in light of the pandemic, we wish to suggest the following approaches:

1. Study the financial and operational impact of other events conducted by the private sector, such as CES and the Mobile World Congress, and their preparations for future events;
2. Evaluate the outcomes of WSIS Forum 2020, WSIS Forum 2021 and ITU Digital World 2020 and analyze the financial impact of ITU Digital World 2021;
3. Examine the virtual and physical hybrid exhibitions of ITU Telecom events, and estimate costs and effects;
4. Give due consideration to requests from sector members in designing ITU Telecom events;
5. Adopt cutting-edge technologies for virtual participants (ex. avatar) and encourage easy participation for persons with disabilities and people in remote/rural areas who have difficulty in attending physical events;
6. Flexibly consider the location of events, taking into account the reconstruction of the ITU headquarter premises.

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