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| **Council 2021Virtual consultation of councillors, 8-18 June 2021** |  |
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|  | **Document C21/88-E** |
| **22 June 2021** |
| **Original: English** |

SUMMARY RECORD

OF THE

FOURTH MEETING

Friday, 11 June 2021, from 1200 to 1510 hours

**Chairman:** Mr S. BIN GHELAITA (United Arab Emirates)

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|  | **Subjects discussed** | **Documents** |
| 1 | Outcomes of discussions held on 10 June 2021 | [C21/DT/1(Rev.2)](https://www.itu.int/md/S21-CL-210608-TD-GEN-0001/en) |
| 2 | Unfunded mandatory activities (UMACs) (continued) | [C21/49](https://www.itu.int/md/S21-CL-C-0049/en), [C21/70](https://www.itu.int/md/S21-CL-C-0070/en),[C21/DT/4](https://www.itu.int/md/S21-CL-210608-TD-GEN-0004/en) |
| 3 | Report on progress on the Union’s headquarters premises project | [C21/7](https://www.itu.int/md/S21-CL-C-0007/en), [C21/77](https://www.itu.int/md/S21-CL-C-0077/en),[C21/81](https://www.itu.int/md/S21-CL-C-0081/en) |
| 4 | Staff Working Conditions Strategy and Implementation Plan | [C21/29](https://www.itu.int/md/S21-CL-C-0029/en) |
| 5 | Summary report on the work of the Member States Advisory Group on the Union's headquarters premises project (MSAG) | [C21/48](https://www.itu.int/md/S21-CL-C-0048/en) |
| 6 | Changes in the conditions of service under the United Nations common system | [C21/23](https://www.itu.int/md/S21-CL-C-0023/en) |
| 7 | Reports of Council working groups | [C21/8](https://www.itu.int/md/S21-CL-C-0008/en), [C21/12](https://www.itu.int/md/S21-CL-C-0012/en), [C21/26](https://www.itu.int/md/S21-CL-C-0026/en), [C21/51](https://www.itu.int/md/S21-CL-C-0051/en), [C21/57](https://www.itu.int/md/S21-CL-C-0057/en)  |
| 8 | Organization Resilience Management System | [C21/15](https://www.itu.int/md/S21-CL-C-0015/en) |
| 9 | Report on the implementation of the risk management action plan | [C21/61(Corr.1)](https://www.itu.int/md/S21-CL-C-0061/en) |
| 10 | Schedule of future conferences, assemblies and meetings of the Union: 2021-2024  | [C21/37](https://www.itu.int/md/S21-CL-C-0037/en) |

**1 Outcomes of discussions held on 10 June 2021 (Document** [**C21/DT/1(Rev.2)**](https://www.itu.int/md/S21-CL-210608-TD-GEN-0001/en)**)**

1.1 Document C21/DT/1(Rev.2) was **noted**.

**2 Unfunded mandatory activities (UMACs) (continued) (Documents** [**C21/49**](https://www.itu.int/md/S21-CL-C-0049/en)**,** [**C21/70**](https://www.itu.int/md/S21-CL-C-0070/en) **and** [**C21/DT/4**](https://www.itu.int/md/S21-CL-210608-TD-GEN-0004/en)**)**

2.1 The Chief of the Financial Resources Management Department (FRMD) presented Document C21/DT/4, which contained a list of the most urgent tasks identified by the secretariat from among the unfunded mandatory activities for 2021 listed in Document C21/49, as requested at the previous meeting. The total funding required in 2021 for urgent mandatory activities amounts to CHF 301 000 to cover the three posts (two P-2s and one P-1) for priority ITU-T study group activities and to provide IT tools and applications to help ITU-R implement the Radio Regulations. Authorization was sought to use funds available from the 2021 budget implementation surplus to cover the cost.

2.2 One councillor requested clarification as to the contractual basis on which the three temporary ITU-T positions would be filled and whether the Council would be consulted on subsequent arrangements, such as any potential extensions. Another observed that P-1 and P-2 posts required relatively low level of qualifications and asked what functions the staff in question would be performing. She also asked whether existing staff could be used instead, and sought confirmation that additional resources would not be needed beyond the end of 2021.

2.3 The Deputy Director of TSB explained that temporary staff may be recruited on short-term contracts or current special service agreements may be extended, as appropriate. These arrangements relate to 2021 only. Requests for 2022 will be made separately.

2.4 The Chief of FRMD confirmed that the intention was to fund the requested posts from the 2021 budget implementation surplus only until the end of 2021. If ITU-T will require extensions of assignment or additional temporary assistance beyond 2021, such request will be submitted to Council in 2022.

2.5 The Chairman, noting that recruitment to non-temporary posts would be addressed in the context of the overall budget of the Union for 2024-2027, said that he understood the request to refer exclusively to temporary recruitment for the remainder of 2021. Should authorization be granted, the secretariat would report on its implementation to the Council Working Group on financial and human resources (CWG-FHR) in September 2021, as well as submit to CWG-FHR any further requests to use the 2021 remaining budget implementation surplus to fund other priority UMACs in 2021. He suggested that decisions on the latter requests be delegated to CWG-FHR for timely action.

2.6 One councillor cautioned against pre-empting discussions in CWG-FHR. Another said that any such requests must also be subject to consultation by correspondence of Council Member States. A third stressed that the urgent requests referred to in Document C21/DT/4 should be acted upon immediately.

2.7 The Chairman took it that councillors wished to conclude, keeping in mind the fact that the item was urgent, that a consultation by correspondence of Council Member States would be undertaken to:

 - authorize the Secretary-General to use the 2021 budget implementation surplus to fund the priority urgent mandatory activities for 2021 contained in Document C21/DT/4;

 - instruct the secretariat to present the implementation of those requests as well as other unfunded mandatory activities outlined in Table 1 of Document C21/49 planned for the 2021‑2027 time-frame to the next CWG-FHR session in September 2021 and the next Council sessions;

 - delegate to CWG-FHR the decision to authorize the Secretary-General on the use of the 2021 budget implementation surplus to fund other mandatory activities planned for 2021 as contained in Document C21/49, subject to immediate consultation by correspondence of Council Member States.

2.8 It was so **concluded**.

**3 Report on progress on the Union’s headquarters premises project
(Documents** [**C21/7**](https://www.itu.int/md/S21-CL-C-0007/en)**,** [**C21/77**](https://www.itu.int/md/S21-CL-C-0077/en) **and** [**C21/81**](https://www.itu.int/md/S21-CL-C-0081/en)**)**

3.1 The Deputy Secretary-General, noting that the headquarters premises project remained on schedule and within budget, despite the difficulties presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, said that the contract for the second part of the host-country loan had been signed and had come into force the previous day, and thanked the host country for its support. He announced that the consulting company, Drees & Sommer, has been selected to support ITU on the Staff Working Conditions Strategy and Implementation Plan and would advise on the impact of COVID-19 on the design of the new building. The secretariat continues to work very closely and cooperatively with the Consortium CDTK on the design of the new building, and with the sponsors Saudi Arabia and UAE, and thanked MSAG for its support and advice. The presentation and the questions raised and answers given at the Information Session are to be found at the News Corner on the Council webpage.

3.2 The representative of the General Secretariat, introducing the progress report on the Union’s headquarters premises project contained in Document C21/7, drew particular attention to the need for the secretariat to receive instructions on how to approach the sale of the Tower. If the sale and lease-back option were to be pursued, a decision to that effect must be taken in the near future to ensure the option remained viable.

3.3 The councillor from Kuwait introduced Document C21/77, containing a proposal to modify Decision 619. No additional sponsorship or donations for the headquarters premises project had been received since the decision had been adopted, and the wording of *decides 4* provided little incentive in that regard. It was hoped that modifying it would encourage Member States to donate.

3.4 The councillor from the United States, introducing Document C21/81 on behalf of her Administration and those of Canada, Mexico and Argentina, expressed support for the thrust of the amendments to Decision 619 proposed by the Administration of Kuwait; however, in order to protect the limits of financial risk to Member States while increasing flexibility for additional sponsorships and donations for the headquarters premises project, Document C21/81 contained a further proposal for how to amend *decides 4* of that decision.

3.5 The councillor from Kuwait welcomed the additional proposal, but sought clarification as to who would be responsible for the evaluation procedures it described and for deciding whether to accept potential sponsorship and donations.

3.6 The Deputy Secretary-General suggested that, as with previous offers, the Headquarters Project Steering Committee, which takes advice from the New Building Management Board, would be the appropriate body. Previous agreements had included that the design wishes of donors and sponsors would be taken into account but that the final decision would rest with the Union’s secretariat.

3.7 The councillor from Switzerland, welcoming the progress made on the project and the signing of the second host-country loan contract, emphasized the importance of business continuity during the demolition and construction phases. His government would continue to work with the Union to help find accommodation for meetings, to support the Union as much as possible to ensure the external security of the future building within the limits and urban constraints of the sector, and support Council decisions on the sale of the Tower, within the limits of its competence.

3.8 During the ensuing discussion, councillors expressed support for the principle of amending Decision 619, as put forward by Kuwait in Document C21/77, together with the specific wording set out in Document C21/81. One councillor asked whether any surplus monies from donations or sponsorship would be added to the risk register funds. With regard to the Tower, some councillors supported the sale and lease-back approach, in order to avoid further delays; one, however, expressed the view that the suggestion had been based on the pre-COVID situation and was no longer appropriate, especially as the issue of the future use of the Popov Room had yet to be resolved. She asked how business continuity could be guaranteed in the face of COVID-related restrictions on office occupancy and limits on space for meetings, especially during the construction phrase. Another councillor, echoing those concerns, sought confirmation that the new building would be able to accommodate all staff once the situation returned to normal and asked whether any new guidance on COVID measures in the workplace had been issued by the United Nations or local authorities. She also asked whether discussions on the sale of the Tower with the host-country authorities had been finalized.

3.9 The representative of the General Secretariat, responding to points raised, said that, although the host-country authorities had declined to exercise their right of pre-emption to purchase the Tower, discussions with the host country are continuing, in particular with regard to the guidelines for the future *droit de superficie* and the establishment of certain basic principles which would allow potential investors to plan more concretely for the future use of the site Whichever option was selected – sale or sale and lease-back – the issue of the use of the Popov Room in future remained. Under normal circumstances, the new building and Montbrillant building together would be able to accommodate all staff. As no specific United Nations guidelines on COVID-compliant occupancy had been received, the secretariat was applying local guidelines to the building design, while the consultancy company selected to support ITU on the Staff Working Conditions Strategy and Implementation Plan would be responsible for assessing the impact of the pandemic on how office space was used.

3.10 The Chief of the Conferences and Publications Department added that the secretariat would follow the host country’s COVID-19 response measures when planning meetings, in close consultation with other international organizations based in Geneva and elsewhere; it would also work with event organizers to reserve meeting rooms based on COVID-19 restrictions and numbers of registered participants.

3.11 The Chairman asked whether councillors wished to initiate a consultation by correspondence to approve the sale and lease-back of the Tower.

3.12 The councillor from the Russian Federation expressed an objection to taking such a decision by correspondence and proposed that it be postponed.

3.13 The Chairman, noting that the sale of the Tower would therefore need to take place once the new headquarters building was complete, took it that councillors wished to note with appreciation the contribution from Kuwait contained in Document C21/77, as the basis for Document C21/81; and to conclude, keeping in mind the fact that the item was urgent, that a consultation by correspondence of Council Member States would be undertaken to approve the revised decision as proposed in Document C21/81 and to note Document C21/7.

3.14 It was so **concluded**.

**4 Staff Working Conditions Strategy and Implementation Plan (Document**[**C21/29**](https://www.itu.int/md/S21-CL-C-0029/en)**)**

4.1 The representative of the General Secretariat, on behalf of the Chief of the Human Resources Management Department (HRMD), introduced the report on the Staff Working Conditions Strategy and Implementation Plan contained in Document C21/29. In September 2020, a process had been launched to select a consultancy firm to provide a strategy and implementation plan for ITU staff working conditions. Drees & Sommer Schweiz AG had been awarded the contract and would support ITU in creating a framework for formulating and implementing a staff working conditions strategy that was agile enough to keep up with the dynamic work environment, but focused enough to deliver contemporary working conditions. All ITU stakeholders would be involved, with all levels of management, staff members and staff representatives included in the working groups. A staff survey was being conducted, and every effort would be made to ensure a balance between the needs of the staff and the institutional needs of the Union, while taking account of the lessons learned from the COVID-19 situation. The VCC was invited to note the report.

4.2 One councillor cautioned that, as well as ensuring sufficient flexibility to account for the unpredictable COVID-19 situation, the consulting company must give due consideration to the specific nature of staffing and human resources in the United Nations system. She asked how long the consulting project would take, and when results and recommendations would be presented to the Council. The Council should be given sufficient time to consider the consulting firm’s report in detail, and the secretariat should provide guidance to Member States in good time, as had been the case with the report on regional presence.

4.3 The representative of the General Secretariat said that the secretariat was working closely with the consulting company to ensure that due account was taken of the particularities of work in the United Nations system and to consider the experiences of other United Nations agencies undergoing similar processes. Drees & Sommer had been contracted until the end of 2026 for the duration of the project, right through to a post-move analysis. The firm would also advise HRMD on change-management aspects. The roadmap was publicly available; first outputs were expected at the end of 2021, after which workshops would be held with management and consultations undertaken with stakeholders before the production of a series of reports and recommendations for presentation to senior management.

4.4 The Chairman said he took it that councillors wished to conclude that, keeping in mind the fact that the item was urgent, a consultation by correspondence of Council Member States would be undertaken to take note of the selection of Drees & Sommer to support ITU for the Staff Working Conditions Strategy and Implementation Plan.

4.5 It was so **concluded**.

**5** **Summary report on the work of the Member States Advisory Group on the Union's headquarters premises project (MSAG) (Document** [**C21/48**](https://www.itu.int/md/S21-CL-C-0048/en)**)**

5.1 The Chairman of the Member States Advisory Group on the Union’s headquarters premises project (MSAG) introduced Document C21/48, which contained a summary report of MSAG’s three meetings since the previous VCC. An informal information session had been held for councillors on Monday, 7 June 2021; the General Secretariat’s presentation from that session, which was available in the News Corner section of the Council webpage, contained an analysis of the current funding of the risk register relative to the risks identified.

5.2 One councillor thanked MSAG for its report and the excellent and detailed work undertaken.

5.3 The Chairman said he took it that councillors wished to conclude that, keeping in mind the fact that the item was urgent, a consultation by correspondence of Council Member States would be undertaken to take note of report C21/48.

5.4 It was so **concluded**.

**6 Changes in the conditions of service under the United Nations common system (Document** [**C21/23**](https://www.itu.int/md/S21-CL-C-0023/en)**)**

6.1 The Legal Adviser, on behalf of the Chief of HRMD, introduced Document C21/23 containing a report on the implications of decisions taken by the United Nations General Assembly at its 75th session relating to conditions of service in the United Nations common system. In accordance with those decisions, some changes had been made to the relevant provisions of the Staff Regulations for appointed staff, in particular a revision of the salary scale and pensionable remuneration. Accordingly, changes were also proposed to the salary scale and pensionable remuneration applicable to elected officials. The VCC was requested to note the changes to the Staff Regulations for appointed staff, approve the salary scale and the pensionable remuneration applicable to elected officials, and adoptthe draft resolution contained in the annex to the report.

6.2 The Chairman said he took it that councillors wished to conclude that, keeping in mind the fact that the item was urgent, a consultation by correspondence of Council Member States would be undertaken to: take note of changes to the relevant provisions of the Staff Regulations for appointed officials, including those implemented by the Secretary-General in conformity with Council Resolution 647 (amended); in accordance with Resolution 46 (Kyoto, 1994), approve the salary scale and the pensionable remuneration applicable to elected officials; and adopt the draft resolution contained in the annex to Document C21/23.

6.3 It was so **concluded**.

**7 Reports of Council working groups (Documents** [**C21/8**](https://www.itu.int/md/S21-CL-C-0008/en), [**C21/12**](https://www.itu.int/md/S21-CL-C-0012/en), [**C21/26**](https://www.itu.int/md/S21-CL-C-0026/en), [**C21/51**](https://www.itu.int/md/S21-CL-C-0051/en) **and** [**C21/57**](https://www.itu.int/md/S21-CL-C-0057/en)

7.1 The Chairman drew attention to Documents C21/8, C21/57, C21/12, C21/26 and C21/51, containing the reports of the five Council working groups. In line with what had been agreed at the first meeting when adopting the time-management plan, he said the took it that councillors wished to conclude that, keeping in mind that the Council working groups should meet in September 2021, a consultation by correspondence would be undertaken to note and endorse Documents C21/8, C21/57, C21/12, C21/26, and C21/51.

7.2 It was so **concluded**.

**8 Organization Resilience Management System** **(Document** [**C21/15**](https://www.itu.int/md/S21-CL-C-0015/en)**)**

8.1 The representative of the General Secretariat introduced Document C21/15 on the Organization Resilience Management System (ORMS). The document had been postponed from consideration by the VCC in 2020 and had subsequently been updated. The ORMS project, which had begun in November 2017, had been completed in the planned two-year time-frame. The project consultants had provided all deliverables on time and the project had finished on budget. The ORMS crisis management and business continuity outputs would be disseminated to staff after the conclusion of the current VCC session.

8.2 Councillors welcomed the report and commended the work on the ORMS project. One councillor asked whether the centralized activities under the ORMS project were fully financed in the draft budget for the 2022-2023 biennium. Another councillor wished to know whether the proposed post of Business Risk Manager would be a permanent position.

8.3 The Chief of FRMD said that the Business Risk Manager post was fully funded under the draft budget for 2022-2023 and would be included in the next financial plan (2024-2027).

8.4 The Chairman said he took it that councillors wished to conclude that, keeping in mind the fact that the item was urgent, a consultation by correspondence of Council Member States would be undertaken to:

 - note the report in Document C21/15;

 - approve the recommendation to adopt a single risk management mechanism within the Union to embrace both security and business risk management analysis, judgements, and decision-making;

 - approve the recommendation to create an organizational Business Risk Manager post, within available budget, to work closely with the ORMS coordinator, the IT BC/DR manager, and the Head of SDD, who has responsibility for security risk management within the Union;

 - note the request for the creation of a project to define an ITU data classification system as contained in the report of CWG-FHR in Document C21/50+Add1.

8.5 It was so **concluded**.

**9 Report on the implementation of the risk management action plan
(Document** [**C21/61 (Corr.1)**](https://www.itu.int/md/S21-CL-C-0061/en)**)**

9.1 The representative of the General Secretariat introduced Document C21/61(Corr.1), which contained the final report on and results of implementation of the action plan to strengthen the ITU Risk Management Framework, in follow-up to the progress report and recommendations submitted to the VCC in November 2020. All 10 action items had been implemented. ITU was thereby improving arrangements for assessing and overseeing internal control mechanisms for more effective supervision; implementing the related recommendations from oversight bodies on risk management; and implementing the nine benchmarks from the 2020 Joint Inspection Unit Report on enterprise risk management in the United Nations system ([JIU/REP/2020/5](https://undocs.org/en/JIU/REP/2020/5)). The annex to Document C21/61(Corr.1) presented an overview of the new risk management tools developed using a business intelligence platform: the risk management dashboard, with a snapshot of the latest information included in the ITU-wide risk register.

9.2 The Chairman said he took it that councillors wished to conclude that, keeping in mind the fact that the item was urgent, a consultation by correspondence of Council Member States would be undertaken to note the report contained in Document C21/61(Corr.1).

9.3 It was so **concluded**.

**10** **Schedule of future conferences, assemblies and meetings of the Union: 2021‑2024 (Document** [**C21/37**](https://www.itu.int/md/S21-CL-C-0037/en)**)**

10.1 The Chairman, recalling the discussion on the scheduling of ITU events in 2022 that had taken place at the first meeting in response to Document C21/83 (§12 of the summary record of the first meeting), culminating in a request for inputs from the regional groups, invited the views of councillors on the holding of the three major conferences 2022. He suggested identifying alternative scenarios in case the ongoing pandemic did not allow one or more of those events to be held as planned. Ultimately, the priority should not merely be to hold an event, but to ensure its success. It was important to recognize that 2022 would be a challenging year and that a phased return to physical meetings, along with contingency plans, would inevitably be required. It was, however, ultimately incumbent on Member States to propose and approve the schedule for 2022.

10.2 The councillor from Romania said that in her government’s view the dates and location of PP‑22 were fixed, and preparations were ongoing on that basis.

10.3 The councillor from Ethiopia said that bringing WTDC to Africa for the first time and holding it in Addis Ababa, the continent’s diplomatic capital with a proud track record of hosting high-level events, was a momentous occasion that would also afford his country the opportunity to showcase its progress in terms of socio-economic development and the privatization of the telecommunication sector. He hoped that there would be no need for an alternative scenario: his government, including the President, was actively engaged in preparations and taking the necessary measures in terms of public health to ensure that the conference could go ahead successfully and safely.

10.4 The councillor from India similarly expressed the importance of bringing WTSA to Asia for the first time. While his government was looking forward to hosting WTSA-20 in Hyderabad and was making preparations to that end, it nevertheless recognized the travel burden placed on ITU staff and Member States, particularly if restrictions arising from the COVID-19 pandemic persisted and with three major events being held in the same year. As already agreed during the discussion on preparations for WTSA-20 at the first meeting, therefore, India was prepared to review the situation in due course and, if necessary, allow for WTSA-20 to be held in Geneva instead, on the understanding that India could then host WTSA-24.

10.5 The councillor for Argentina said that discussions had taken place within CITEL, whose proposals had been submitted to the secretariat as requested. Councillors representing other regional groups said that their proposals would be submitted very soon.

10.6 Some councillors said that it was important to hold the three major events physically, given the benefit of interacting in person, including in parallel to the main sessions of the conferences, as well as the value of engaging with the cultures and traditions of host countries.

10.7 One councillor, responding to proposals to consider shortening the major conferences, cautioned that time was already a precious commodity at the major events and reducing the duration would be detrimental to their outcomes.

10.8 Turning to meetings related to the work of the Council in 2022, the Chairman asked which could be postponed or held virtually in order to alleviate budgetary impact and workload.

10.9 One councillor stressed that, while virtual meetings might alleviate budgetary impact, they did not necessarily do the same for workload. He therefore urged councillors to give serious consideration to identifying meetings and events that could be cancelled or postponed.

10.10 Several councillors said that the Council must meet physically in 2022, in particular to finalize its report to PP-22. With regard to the Council working groups, it was suggested that they might continue their work virtually, though one councillor said that the final meetings before PP-22 should be held physically.

10.11 One councillor acknowledged that CWG-FHR, CWG-LANG and CWG-SFP would need to meet prior to Council-22, but she suggested that other Council working groups endeavour to complete their work in the final cluster of 2021 and thereby relieve some of the calendar pressure in 2022.

10.12 With respect to other meetings and events, the Secretary-General pointed out that it was important to bear other stakeholders in mind. While it was possible to take unilateral decisions on ITU events, it was more complicated when other UN agencies were involved in their organization, such as with the WSIS Forum. Nevertheless, holding the WSIS Forum virtually might have appeal, given the importance of ensuring a large ministerial presence. For ITU Telecom, the issue was one of timing, as it would be difficult to hold it physically in the lead-up to PP-22 or earlier in the year. Although holding it after PP-22 would represent a break with tradition, there was a past precedent and doing so might allow for it to be held physically. He also suggested that GSR-22 and the AI for Good Global Summit could be held virtually or postponed.

10.13 The Director of TSB said that given the tightly packed schedule it would be expedient to continue to hold the AI for Good Global Summit virtually, as had been done since March 2020.

10.14 The Chairman suggested that, before formulating any conclusions, VCC wait for regional coordinators to submit the proposals of their regional groups by the end of the day; that the proposals be posted on the ITU website and consolidated into a single document; and that councillors hold an informal meeting on Saturday, 12 June 2021 to discuss those proposals, in order to arrive at a general understanding and facilitate further discussion of the schedule of events for 2022 at the following VCC meeting on Monday, 14 June.

10.15 It was so **agreed**.

The Secretary-General: The Chairman:

H. ZHAO S. BIN GHELAITA

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