**Council Working Group for
Strategic and Financial Plans 2024-2027**
First meeting – Virtual, 29-30 September 2021

Contribution by the Secretariat

REPORT ON THE IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON THE FUNCTIONING AND ACTIVITIES OF ITU

Summary

This document presents information on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the functioning and activities of ITU to be considered for the development of the ITU strategic and financial plans for 2024-2027.

Action required

The CWG-SFP is invited **to note** and **consider** this document for the development of the ITU strategic framework for 2024-2027.

References

Documents C21/74, CWG-FHR-14/5

ITU Council 2021 C21/74 / CWG-FHR-14/5

Report on the Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the functioning and activities of ITU

- **Virtual meetings and events:** Necessity to move meetings online or to a later point in time resulted in several lessons learned on challenges (i.e. limited bandwith, time zone differences, decision-making process in statutory meetings) and benefits (i.e. virtual events in many cases more inclusive and more audience than physical events, easier to organize, smaller environmental footprint)

  ➢ *Opportunity for considering alternative decision-making processes appropriate for different event formats, noting DT/6 on streamlining ITU events and taking into account that Council endorsed C21/68, highlighting that ITU intends to align its environmental sustainability efforts with the UN Sustainability Strategy 2020-2030, including on greener events and GHG emissions*

- **Working methods and working space:** Social distancing and increased teleworking led to substantial rethinking in many organizations anchoring remote working as a useful or desirable form of work. Teleworking has had an impact on the way ITU staff delivered their services, this will be a great benefit in the transition to the new building. Paper use has declined by 95%. Space mitigation measures need to be considered in the context of the new building project.

  ➢ *Opportunity to consider and align ITU working conditions with UN developments on flexible working arrangements including Gender and Accessibility perspectives (taking into account document C21/54 (for further discussion in CWG-FHR) and considering that Council endorsed the draft Accessibility Policy outlined in C21/72)*

  ➢ *Opportunity to consider the prioritization and adoption of an ITU digital transformation initiative and strategy (C21/70) to be included in, and aligned with, the ITU Strategic Plan (unfunded mandatory activities outlined in Table 1 of C21/49 will be presented to CWG-FHR)*

- **Financial position and Membership:** Quality and extensive support for the members secured the revenues of the Union, and the diversification of tools was key to communicate externally on ITU activities and with possible new members

  - ➢ *Opportunity to consider supporting projects and programmes that facilitate the communication with existing and potential members of the Union in different and innovative ways, such as My ITU, ITU website, a unified platform for meetings, and a dedicated platform for approval of decisions by correspondence (unfunded mandatory activities outlined in Table 1 of C21/49 will be presented to CWG-FHR)*

- **Strategic Role:** Covid-19 highlighted crucial role of ICTs for society but amplified digital inequalities, and contributed to increased competition in the international environment regarding the coordination of different projects on connectivity or financing connectivity, creating parallel tracks with ITU's mandate on connectivity and digital services delivery

  - ➢ *Need for a "One ITU" approach clearly articulating ITU's critical role towards enhancing ICTs for sustainable development*

  - ➢ *Need to clearly communicate the services, products, and initiatives that ITU can provide, their importance, and the added value that ITU brings with these services*

  - ➢ *Need to improve existing capabilities/skills in ITU and the acquisition of the skills and expertise needed to operate and face the challenges in the new normal, especially in the international coordination environment*