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| **Council 2022Geneva, 21-31 March 2022** | A picture containing text, clipart  Description automatically generated |
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|  | **Document C22/86-E** |
| **28 March 2022** |
| **Original: English** |
| SUMMARY RECORDOF THESECOND PLENARY MEETING |
| Tuesday 22 March 2022, from 1430 to 1730 hours |
| **Chairman**: Mr S.BIN GHELAITA (United Arab Emirates) |

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|  | **Subjects discussed** | **Documents** |
| 1 | Preparations for the World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly (WTSA-24) | [C22/80](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-CL-C-0080/en) |
| 2 | Preparations for the World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC-21) | [C22/30(Rev.1)](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-CL-C-0030/en) |
| 3 | Preparations for the Plenipotentiary Conference (PP-22) | [C22/4](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-CL-C-0004/en) |
| 4 | Implementation of United Nations General Assembly Resolution from 2 March 2022 on "aggression against Ukraine" | [C22/81(Rev.1)](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-CL-C-0081/en) |
| 5 | Statements by ministers, councillors and observers | - |

**1 Preparations for the World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly (WTSA-24) (Document C22/80)**

1.1 The Director of TSB introduced Document [C22/80](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-CL-C-0080/en), which informed the Council of an invitation received from the Government of India to host the next world telecommunication standardization assembly (WTSA-24). The dates and place would be conveyed after consultation with ITU.

1.2 The councillor from India noted that WTSA-20 – originally due to have been held in Hyderabad – had finally taken place in Geneva in March 2022, after being postponed twice, owing to the COVID-19 pandemic. Acknowledging the vital role of the Union, and the hard work of Member States and ITU staff during a difficult period, he said that his administration would be honoured to host the next WTSA in India in 2024.

1.3 Councillors took the floor to thank India for its commitment to ITU and to welcome its offer to host WTSA-24. One councillor noted that his administration planned to send a ministerial-level delegation to WTSA‑24. The councillor from Pakistan said that he noted the invitation extended by India, but was not able to comment further at that time.

1.4 In response to several councillors who stressed the importance of reverting to the usual duration for WTSA-24, after the shorter WTSA-20, the councillor from India said that it was indeed the intention of the planners to hold a full-length assembly.

1.5 The Council **noted** the invitation of the Government of India to hold WTSA‑24 in India and **agreed** to transmit the invitation to the Plenipotentiary Conference for decision.

**2 Preparations for the World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC-21) (Document C22/30(Rev. 1))**

2.1 The Deputy Director of BDT introduced Document [C22/30(Rev.1)](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-CL-C-0030/en), which informed the Council of the status of preparations for the organization of WTDC-21, now scheduled to take place in Kigali, Rwanda, on 6-16 June 2022. The document also included a draft agenda for the conference for the Council’s approval. A small amendment was required to reflect the decision taken by the Council the previous day to the effect that the outcomes of WTPF-21 be taken into account by WTDC.

2.2 The preparations for the upcoming WTDC were on schedule; regional and interregional preparatory meetings had been held and regional telecommunication organizations were continuing their preparations. An ITU team had made a site visit to Kigali and had been impressed by the excellent venues and facilities for the different events.

2.3 The conference would be preceded by the Generation Connect Global Youth Summit, the first event of its kind, to be held in Kigali on 2-4 June 2022. The summit would help to foster sustainable innovation and digital inclusion, offering young delegates opportunities to develop digital skills, debate and network with global decision-makers. He encouraged all Member States and Sector Members to nominate young delegates, aged 18-29, to attend the summit, perhaps by sending one male and one female delegate to ensure a gender balance, and to include those delegates in Member States’ delegations to WTDC. He also encouraged Member States to assist in promoting and supporting the summit, and thanked those which had already stepped forward to do so.

2.4 He drew attention to the Partner2Connect initiative, specifically the digital roundtables to be held on 7-9 June, which would offer opportunities for high-level debate on digital development, and for tangible action through pledges and partnerships.

2.5 The councillor from Rwanda said that his government was honoured to host WDTC in Kigali. He was confident that the event would be a success, as the city had already hosted several other international events. His government was also proud to host the Generation Connect Global Youth Summit, which would offer young people opportunities to engage on policies to promote connectivity and sustainable development, with a view to developing an action plan for consideration by WTDC.

2.6 A short video presentation was given, showcasing the city of Kigali and Rwanda, known as the land of a thousand hills.

2.7 Ms Paula Ingabire (Minister of ICT and Innovation of Rwanda), thanking the ITU membership for their trust and support, said that the Government of Rwanda was delighted to be hosting what would be the first WTDC to be held on the African continent. In the two decades since the launch of its digital transformation process through a national ICT strategy, her government had established institutions that pioneered ICTs, expanded the infrastructure, and digitized government services. The private sector had followed suit. Rwanda’s ambition was to make Kigali a leading ICT hub in Africa, with a world-class infrastructure. The upcoming WTDC provided an opportunity to build on efforts to achieve a sustainable digital future for all, through an engaging conference leading to high-impact outcomes.

2.8 Councillors took to the floor thank the Government of Rwanda for its generous invitation, and for taking over hosting responsibilities at the last minute. Many underlined the importance of holding WTDC in Africa for the first time, and welcomed the fact that Rwanda was also hosting the Generation Connect Global Youth Summit, recognizing the key contribution of young people to digital development.

2.9 Echoing that point, the councillor from Canada stated that his government would be sponsoring 12 young people to attend the Generation Connect Global Youth Summit; discussions were being held with BDT with a view to expanding that offer. In the same vein, he proposed that efforts to promote the participation of young people from developing countries in the work of ITU should become part of an ongoing commitment. Several councillors supported that proposal.

2.10 Many councillors welcomed the Partner2Connect digital coalition to promote digital transformation. One councillor highlighted the importance of a multistakeholder approach to empower communities and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Several councillors expressed a wish to work closely with BDT in that regard.

2.11 The councillor from Germany, also welcoming the Partner2Connect coalition, drew attention to GovStack, a joint initiative by ITU, the Digital Impact Alliance, Estonia and Germany. His government particularly appreciated the fact that the above-mentioned initiative sought to take environmental criteria into account, helping to decrease the carbon footprint of government services.

2.12 The councillor from Ghana thanked BDT and the ITU membership for their resilience and innovation in preparing for WDTC-21. Bearing in mind the African continent’s young demographic, young people in Africa needed ICT skills; given also that his government championed girls in ICT, he hoped therefore that more than two young leaders from Ghana would be able to attend the Generation Connect Global Youth Summit. He said that Ghana had a universal access fund in place to connect the unconnected. However, as further action was needed, his government had pledged EUR 155 million to connect 6 000 villages with a total of 3 million inhabitants by the following year, and was pledging the same amount for a second phase under Partner2Connect, in addition to a policy pledge offering operators free spectrum access in rural areas to support national roaming services.

2.13 One councillor, welcoming the report and draft agenda, said that the pledging mechanism should be used as a means to rebuild the telecommunication infrastructure in Ukraine. The digital roundtables would provide an opportunity to seek support from Member States and other stakeholders to achieve measurable benefits.

2.14 Several councillors drew attention to the role of women in the ICT sector; one councillor praised the Network of Women initiative in particular.

2.15 Expressing her gratitude to everyone involved in the preparations for WTDC-21, the Director of BDT thanked the Government of Rwanda for its commitment to the work of ITU and for hosting WTDC-21 at short notice, as well as the Government of Ethiopia, the initial intended hosts. Despite a last-minute change of venue, it had nevertheless been possible to ensure that WTDC would be held in Africa.

2.16 Having travelled to Rwanda to meet with local counterparts and begin coordination work, she had been impressed by the excellent facilities and level of preparation, as well as the support provided by Rwandan colleagues, and she was confident that the Government of Rwanda would deliver a landmark digital conference with outcomes in the form of meaningful resolutions, actions and commitments to connect the world that would transform the digital landscape.

2.17 Echoing earlier comments regarding the African region’s youthful population, she highlighted that the young people of Africa, with their energy and flair for innovation, constituted an incredible asset if provided with the necessary tools; she accordingly encouraged delegations to nominate more than two young people per country to attend the Generation Connect Global Youth Summit.

2.18 She thanked the delegation from Ghana, the first Member State to make a pledge within the framework of the Partner2Connect initiative.

2.19 Subject to the small amendment flagged by BDT, the Council **noted** the report on preparations for WTDC in Document C22/30(Rev.1) and **approved** the draft agenda for the conference.

**3 Preparations for the Plenipotentiary Conference (PP-22) (Document C22/4)**

3.1 The representative of the General Secretariat introduced Document [C22/4](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-CL-C-0004/en), which provided an update on the status of preparations for PP-22, and drew particular attention to efforts to ensure that the conference was as green as possible and inclusive and gender responsive.

3.2 Mr Bogdan Dumea (Secretary of State, Ministry of Research, Innovation and Digitalization, Romania) said that his country was looking forward to hosting PP-22 and was committed to ensuring its success, as decisions taken there would have a significant impact on the future of ITU and on the global development of the telecommunication/ICT sector.

3.3 The councillor from Romania gave a detailed presentation on preparations and logistical arrangements for PP-22, drawing attention to the national PP-22 website, which was already live and would be constantly updated with additional practical information in the build-up to the conference.

3.4 Her country was working with the secretariat to advance inclusiveness and gender equality in all aspects of the conference and appreciated Australia’s initiative in regard to training for women delegates in the work of the conference.

3.5 The conference would also promote youth and provide an opportunity to empower young people around the world, and she called on countries to include young people in their delegations.

3.6 In line with the United Nations-wide objective to reduce the carbon footprint of events, Romania was working with ITU to integrate such considerations into the planning for PP-22 and make the conference as green as possible.

3.7 Romania also attached great importance to ensuring a safe environment for participants, including in terms of COVID-19 prevention. The Ministry of Health was involved in the national preparations, and rules and measures would be applied based on the prevailing situation at national and global levels and in line with the recommendations of the World Health Organization.

3.8 Mr Sabin Sărmaș (President of the IT&C Committee, Chamber of Deputies, Romania), chairman designate of PP-22, said that he was looking forward to chairing PP-22 and that he would be participating in regional and interregional preparatory meetings to ensure that he was thoroughly prepared for the role.

3.9 Councillors thanked Romania and the secretariat for their great efforts in preparing for the conference, in particular against the backdrop of COVID-19, and looked forward to enjoying the hospitality of the host country.

3.10 Many councillors welcomed, in particular, the focus on ensuring that the conference was as green as possible as well as inclusive and gender responsive. Some councillors also highlighted the commitment to promoting youth involvement and empowerment, while several endorsed the choice of topic for policy statements.

3.11 The councillors from the Bahamas and Spain said that they anticipated that their countries would participate at ministerial level.

3.12 One councillor stressed the need to connect the unconnected as a means of reducing barriers and discrimination and bringing humankind together around a set of common values. ITU, through its activities, needed to promote peace among people. His delegation looked forward to PP‑22 setting the stage for the Union’s next four years in that regard.

3.13 Responding to a question, the councillor from Australia explained that the training for women delegates participating in PP-22 would be delivered in advance of the conference across two time zones. It would include modules on the working methods of ITU and the Plenipotentiary Conference, negotiation skills and bridging the gender digital divide, and would close with a high-level women’s leadership and networking event at the conference itself. It was hoped that the initiative would boost the number of women delegates to PP-22 and their ability to meaningfully influence its outcomes. She urged Member States to show their support by nominating delegates to attend the course, adding that a message had recently been circulated among Member States to that end.

3.14 The councillor from the Russian Federation expressed the hope that the work of PP-22 would be conducted in a constructive and convivial manner and in compliance with the basic instruments of the Union. In relation to Annex 1 to Document C22/4, he suggested changing its title to reflect that it contained supporting information for the preparation of policy statements, rather than a set of guidelines. In addition, it referred to the strategic goals of the Union, which had yet to be approved for the next period. He suggested that the annex also cover relevant objectives referred to in the Constitution. His delegation’s proposed revision of the document would be submitted to the secretariat.

3.15 The Council **noted** the status of preparations for PP-22 and the comments made during the meeting.

**4 Implementation of United Nations General Assembly Resolution from 2 March 2022 on "aggression against Ukraine" (Document C22/81(Rev.1))**

4.1 The councillor from France presented Document [C22/81(Rev.1),](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-CL-C-0081/en) on the implementation of the United Nations General Assembly Resolution from 2 March 2022 on "aggression against Ukraine", on behalf of the 27 Member States of the European Union, as well as Australia, Canada, the United States, Georgia, Ghana, Iceland, Israel, Japan, Liechtenstein, Montenegro, Norway, the Republic of Korea, the United Kingdom, Switzerland, Ukraine and the Bahamas.

4.2 The document had been prepared to allow ITU to join the ranks of international organizations assisting Ukraine. The country’s critical infrastructure and entire telecommunication sector had been badly affected by the war, leaving millions unconnected. Ukraine could not ensure the effective operation of its telecommunication sector without bilateral and international assistance. As the specialized United Nations agency for telecommunications, ITU was best placed to provide expertise and assistance in the rebuilding of infrastructure and reinforcement of capacities. Moreover, it had experience in successfully providing technical assistance to countries suffering from war, internal conflict or disasters.

4.3 The situation in Ukraine was urgent and required immediate action. It could not wait until PP-22.

4.4 She indicated that the draft resolution was supported by 17 Member States of the Council and 26 observer Member States. Her delegation had already begun, and would continue, informal dialogue with other Member States on the content of the resolution and had been responsive to proposals, including to align the title of the resolution with that of PP Resolution 34 (Rev. Dubai, 2018). She invited Member States to approach her delegation with further proposals.

4.5 The councillor from the Russian Federation, reiterating the concern that Member States that had not been involved in the drafting of Document C22/81 would not have had sufficient time for due consideration of the document, invited those Member States to take the floor to express whether they were ready to pursue work on the draft resolution.

4.6 The councillor from Canada, supporting the clear path forward proposed by the councillor from France, wondered why so much time was needed to consider such a short document based on two incontrovertible facts, namely that Ukraine’s telecommunication infrastructure had been destroyed and that ITU needed to take urgent action to rebuild that infrastructure, and said that any delay ran counter to the spirit of ITU’s work and to its obligation to take effective, immediate action to rebuild infrastructure in Ukraine.

4.7 The Chairman, recalling the agreement in the inaugural plenary meeting that due time would be allowed for delegations to review and consult on the draft resolution, proposed that Member States continue to consult with the councillor from France on the document and that the Council resume consideration of the matter later in the week.

4.8 It was so **agreed**.

**5 Statements by ministers, councillors and observers**

5.1 Mr Yuji Sasaki (Vice-Minister, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, Japan) announced that his country would be supporting the candidature of Mr Seizo Onoe for the post of Director of TSB.

5.2 The councillors from Paraguay and the Bahamas announced that their countries would be standing for re-election to the Council at PP-22.

5.3 The councillor from the Russian Federation further announced that his country was standing for re-election to the Council and submitting the candidature of Mr Rashid Ismailov for election to the post of Secretary-General of ITU and the candidature of Mr Nikolay Varlamov for re-election as member of the Radio Regulations Board.

5.4 The observer for Bulgaria announced that his country would be standing for election to the Council at PP-22.

The Secretary-General: The Chairman:

H. ZHAO S. BIN GHELAITA

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