|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Plenipotentiary Conference (PP-22)Bucharest, 26 September – 14 October 2022** |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
| PLENARY MEETING | **Document 206-E** |
|  | **26 October 2022** |
|  | **Original: English** |
|  |
| MINUTESOF THESixteenth PLENARY MEETING |
| Thursday, 13 October 2022, at 0940 hours |
| **Chairman:** Mr Sabin Sărmaș (Romania) |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Subjects discussed** | **Documents** |
| 1 | Report by the Chairman of the Working Group of the Plenary | [188(Rev.1)](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-PP-C-0188/en) |
| 2 | Report by the Chairman of Committee 6 | [157](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-PP-C-0157/en) |
| 3 | Report by the Chairman of Committee 5 | [189](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-PP-C-0189/en) |
| 4 | Presentation to committee chairmen | – |
| 5 | Twenty-third series of texts submitted by the Editorial Committee for first reading (B23) | [193](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-PP-C-0193/en) |
| 6 | Twenty-third series of texts submitted by the Editorial Committee – second reading | 193 |
| 7 | Twenty-fourth series of texts submitted by the Editorial Committee for first reading (B24) | [194](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-PP-C-0194/en) |
| 8 | Twenty-fourth series of texts submitted by the Editorial Committee – second reading | 194 |
| 9 | Twenty-sixth series of texts submitted by the Editorial Committee for first reading (B26) | [196](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-PP-C-0196/en) |
| 10 | Twenty-sixth series of texts submitted by the Editorial Committee – second reading | 196 |
| 11 | Fifteenth series of texts submitted by the Editorial Committee for first reading (B15) | [166](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-PP-C-0166/en) |
| 12 | Fifteenth series of texts submitted by the Editorial Committee – second reading | 166 |
| 13 | Twenty-eighth series of texts submitted by the Editorial Committee for first reading (B28) | [198](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-PP-C-0198/en) |
| 14 | Twenty-eighth series of texts submitted by the Editorial Committee – second reading | 198 |
| 15 | Twenty-seventh series of texts submitted by the Editorial Committee for first reading (B27) | [197](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-PP-C-0197/en) |
| 16 | Twenty-seventh series of texts submitted by the Editorial Committee – second reading  | 197 |

# 1 Report by the Chairman of the Working Group of the Plenary (Document [188(Rev.1)](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-PP-C-0188/en))

1.1 The **Chairman of the Working Group of the Plenary**, introducing his report in Document 188(Rev.1), said that the working group had held 12 meetings and examined 89 proposals by Member States. Recalling the group's working methods, he said that eight ad hoc groups had been set up, while the revision of seven resolutions and proposals for two new resolutions had been addressed in informal consultations.

1.2 The working group had agreed on two new resolutions, updated 21 resolutions and agreed not to change two resolutions (see Annex 1 to the report). It had also agreed to make three recommendations for the Plenary to consider, concerning digital transformation; connecting refugee settlements to the Internet; and the Global Cybersecurity Agenda.

1.3 Annex 2 to his report contained a statement submitted for inclusion in the report by the delegation of Brazil in relation to the discussions on revision of Resolution 130 (Rev. Dubai, 2018).

1.4 He expressed appreciation to all those involved in the work of WG-PL for their cooperation, support and willingness to reach consensus.

1.5 The delegate of the **Islamic Republic of Iran** thanked the Chairman of the Working Group of the Plenary for his efforts and expressed particular support for recommendation 1.

1.6 Following a comment from the **delegate of Jordan** concerning the language used in recommendation 2, the **Chairman** urged the Plenary to retain the text agreed in the working group.

1.7 Responding to a question from the **delegate of Jordan**, the **Chairman of the Working Group of the Plenary** said that the proposals from Member States to which recommendation 3 referred concerned new contributions submitted to the Council.

1.8 The report by the Chairman of the Working Group of the Plenary (Document 188(Rev.1)) and the statement contained in Annex 2 to the report were **noted**. The three recommendations contained in the report were **approved**.

1.9 Echoing the appreciation expressed by the delegates of **Jordan**, **Brazil**, **South** **Sudan**, **South** **Africa**, the **Islamic Republic of Iran, Romania**, speaking on behalf of CEPT, **Kenya**, speaking also on behalf of the chairmen of the ad hoc groups, **Egypt**, **Trinidad and Tobago**, the **Czech Republic**, **Tunisia**, the **United Arab Emirates**, **Saudi Arabia**, **India**, **Papua New Guinea**, **Rwanda**, **Côte d'Ivoire**, **Algeria**, **Bahamas**, the **Russian Federation**, speaking also as CIS regional coordinator for the conference preparatory process, **China** and **Zimbabwe**, the **Chairman** thanked the members of the Working Group of the Plenary for their efforts and praised its chairman for his exceptional leadership and willingness to seek compromise, which had provided valuable output for the conference.

# 2 Report by the Chairman of Committee 6 (Document [157](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-PP-C-0157/en))

2.1 The **Chairman of Committee 6** introduced Document 157. Recalling the terms of reference of Committee 6, she noted that the committee had held 13 meetings and set up five ad hoc groups and two drafting groups. It had exhausted its agenda and had dealt with proposed modifications to 19 resolutions and two decisions and two proposed new resolutions.

2.2 The committee had reached consensuson the strategic plan for the Union for 2024-2027 and approved Decision 5 on revenue and expenses for the Union for the period 2024-2027.

2.3 It had decided to recommend that Resolution 11 (Rev. Dubai, 2018) on ITU Telecom events be abrogated and, as a consequence, that the Plenary instruct the Council, at its ordinary session, to transfer the remaining balance of the Exhibition Working Capital Fund to the ICT Development Fund and instruct the Secretary-General and the Directors of the Bureaux to continue to develop initiatives to encourage, grow and foster the participation of SMEs and all other stakeholders at major ITU events and forums.

2.4 With regard to the strategy for the coordination of efforts among the three Sectors of the Union (revision of Resolution 191 (Rev. Dubai, 2018)), it was agreed that the following recommendation be included in the minutes of the Plenary:

"Committee 6 recommended that the Plenary instruct the Secretary-General, working in coordination with the Directors of the Bureaux, to submit a report on implementation of the concept of "One ITU" to the 2024 session of the Council, and that the Council be instructed to evaluate the Secretary-General's report and report to the next plenipotentiary conference on the implementation of the "One ITU" concept, including, *inter alia*, the activities of regional and area offices."

2.5 The committee had not been able to reach consensus on a new resolution on organizing side events at major ITU conferences or assemblies. It recommended that the Plenary adopt the following carefully crafted text:

"The potential reference of a side event output document, if any, in the outputs of ITU conferences, assemblies or meetings shall be subject to the agreement or adoption by Member States attending these conferences, assemblies or meetings."

2.6 As the committee had been unable to reach agreement on revised wording for Resolutions 2 (Rev. Dubai, 2018) and 77 (Rev. Dubai, 2018), there being diverging views on the scheduling of WTPF, those texts would be submitted to the Plenary with square brackets.

2.7 She thanked the vice-chairmen and chairmen of the ad hoc and drafting groups and all those who had facilitated the committee's work.

2.8 The report by the Chairman of the Committee 6 (Document 157) was **noted**. The five recommendations contained in the report and the recommendations reflected in the minutes of the Plenary were **approved**.

2.9 The **delegate of the Russian Federation**, having thanked the Chairman of Committee 6 for her efforts, said that it would be useful if the input contributions considered by the committee were referenced in the report.

2.10 That request was **noted**.

2.11 Echoing the appreciation to the Chairman of Committee 6 for her outstanding leadership, commitment and guidance expressed by the delegates of **Papua New Guinea**, the **Islamic Republic of Iran**, the **United States, Saudi Arabia**, the **United Arab Emirates**, speaking on behalf of the Arab group, **Israel**, **Brazil**, the **Republic of Korea**, **South Africa**, the **Bahamas**, **Zimbabwe**, the **United Kingdom**, **Côte d'Ivoire**, **Burkina Faso**, **Tunisia**, **China** and **Algeria**, speaking on behalf of the African group, the **Chairman** thanked the members of Committee 6 and its chairman for their excellent work on important and challenging issues.

# 3 Report by the Chairman of Committee 5 (Document [189](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-PP-C-0189/en))

3.1 The **Chairman of Committee 5**, introducing the report contained in Document 189, said that Committee 5 had held nine meetings, guided by the terms of reference for its work described in Document DT/8. The committee had examined the proposals allocated by the Plenary and recommended the adoption of four new and 17 revised resolutions.

3.2 She called attention to recommendation 1 for adoption in connection with the revision of Resolution 119 (Rev. Antalya, 2006) and recommendation 2 for adoption in connection with the revision of Resolution 167 (Rev. Antalya, 2006); to the need to continue streamlining the text of the revision to Resolution 182 (Rev. Busan, 2014) at the 2026 plenipotentiary conference, in order to reduce redundancy; to the change in the title in the revised Resolution 188 (Rev. Dubai, 2018); and to the decision not to modify Resolution 100 (Minneapolis, 1998).

3.3 The four new resolutions adopted related to use of frequency assignments by military radio installations for National Defence Services; business continuity; the "Space2030" Agenda; and sustainability of spectrum and orbit resources. In relation to the latter text (Resolution COM5/4 (Bucharest, 2022)), the Member States of the Arab region had submitted the following statement for inclusion in the minutes of the Plenary:

 "While considering the new resolution on sustainability of radio spectrum and associated satellite orbit resources used by space services, the Director of the Radiocommunication Bureau is invited to take into consideration the sustainability of outer space in the implementation of practices of the Bureau."

3.4 The committee had not reached consensus on proposals relating to the revision of Resolution 146 (Rev. Dubai, 2018).

3.5 In addition, it had decided not to adopt the proposed resolution on ITU participation in MoUs, in which regard it submitted recommendation 3; the proposed resolution on terms of office for elected officials of the Union; the proposed decision on the conduct of election campaigns, in which regard it submitted recommendation 4; or the proposed resolution on industry participation, in which regard it submitted recommendation 5.

3.6 The proposed resolution on respect for the rights of Member States and Sector Members in ITU (Proposal RUS/88/1) had not been adopted, and the statement of the Russian Federation in that regard was included in § 2.6.5 the report.

3.7 The **delegate of the Czech Republic** made the following statement:

"We would like here to make an intervention on behalf of the 27 Member States of the European Union, Ukraine, Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States.

The intervention pertains to the Russian statement, which was included in the report of Committee 5 and which concerns the now withdrawn contribution in Document 88. We ask for this intervention to be included in the minutes of the Plenary.

Contribution No. 88, presented as safeguarding the rights of Member States, would in fact undermine Member States' rights and ability to decide, at Sector conferences and assemblies, on the chairmanships and vice-chairmanships of the Sectors' study groups and advisory groups. As such, Document 88 would not only be against the ITU Constitution, but it would also set a dangerous precedent for undermining of decisions made by Member States according to established rules and procedures.

In addition, Document 88 was based on the false premise that human rights of candidates for chairs and vice-chairs of the ITU study groups and advisory groups have been violated. This is not the case. Getting a nomination or being elected as chair or vice-chair is not a human right. It is a sovereign right of ITU Member States to decide which candidates are best placed to conduct the work of study groups efficiently and in a spirit of trust and consensus.

It is for these reasons, which put in question both its merit and its legal basis, that Document 88 was strongly rejected by the majority of delegations and did not go forward.

Finally, we would like to thank the Chair of Committee 5 for her excellent leadership, conducted in the spirit of transparency and inclusiveness."

3.8 The **delegate of the Russian Federation**, responding to the statement made by the Czech Republic, wished to dispel any doubt as to the legal basis of Russian Federation's proposal and recalled that the proposal had been supported by several Member States from the regions and that those now expressing reservations had rejected any consideration of it out of hand. The Russian Federation would be submitting a counterstatement for inclusion in the minutes, which is reproduced in **Annex A**.

3.9 The report by the Chairman of Committee 5 (Document 189) and the statements contained in the report and made at the Plenary meeting were **noted**.The five recommendations contained in the report and the recommendations reflected in the minutes of the Plenary were **approved.**

3.10 Echoing the appreciation to the Chairman of Committee 5 for her dedication, wise leadership, flexibility and patience in bringing a challenging agenda to a successful conclusion, with integrity, in an impartial spirit of compromise and inclusiveness, expressed by the **delegates of the Islamic Republic of Iran,** the **Republic of Korea, Brazil,** the **United States, Romania,** speaking also on behalf of CEPT, **Thailand, Nigeria, Papua New Guinea,** the **United Arab Emirates, Japan, Saudi Arabia, India,** the **Russian Federation** and **Tunisia**, the **Chairman** thanked the Chairman of Committee 5 and congratulated her on her work. The fact that two out of three substantive committees were led by women sent a strong message by the Union.

# 4 Presentation to committee chairmen

4.1 The **Secretary-General** presented the committee chairmen with certificates of appreciation for their efforts during the conference.

# 5 Twenty-third series of texts submitted by the Editorial Committee for first reading (B23) (Document [193](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-PP-C-0193/en))

Draft Decision 5 (Rev. Bucharest, 2022) – Revenue and expenses for the Union for the period 2024-2027

5.1 **Adopted**.

SUP Resolution 11 (Rev. Dubai, 2018) – ITU Telecom events

5.2 **Approved**.

5.3 The twenty-third series of texts submitted by the Editorial Committee for first reading (B23) (Document 193) was **approved**.

# 6 Twenty-third series of texts submitted by the Editorial Committee – second reading (Document [193](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-PP-C-0193/en))

6.1 The twenty-third series of texts submitted by the Editorial Committee (Document 193) was **approved** on second reading.

# 7 Twenty-fourth series of texts submitted by the Editorial Committee for first reading (B24) (Document [194](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-PP-C-0194/en))

Draft Resolution 102 (Rev. Bucharest, 2022) – ITU's role with regard to international public policy issues pertaining to the Internet and the management of Internet resources, including domain names and addresses

Draft Resolution 205 (Rev. Bucharest, 2022) – ITU's role in fostering telecommunication/information and communication technology-centric innovation to support the digital economy and society

7.1 **Adopted**.

7.2 The twenty-fourth series of texts submitted by the Editorial Committee for first reading (B24) (Document 194) was **approved**.

# 8 Twenty-fourth series of texts submitted by the Editorial Committee – second reading (Document [194](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-PP-C-0194/en))

8.1 The twenty-fourth series of texts submitted by the Editorial Committee (Document 194) was **approved** on second reading.

# 9 Twenty-sixth series of texts submitted by the Editorial Committee for first reading (B26) (Document [196](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-PP-C-0196/en))

Resolution 71 (Rev. Bucharest, 2022) – Strategic plan for the Union for 2024-2027

9.1 **Adopted**.

9.2 The twenty-sixth series of texts submitted by the Editorial Committee for first reading (B26) (Document 196) was **approved**.

# 10 Twenty-sixth series of texts submitted by the Editorial Committee – second reading (Document [196](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-PP-C-0196/en))

10.1 The twenty-sixth series of texts submitted by the Editorial Committee (Document 196) was **approved** on second reading.

# 11 Fifteenth series of texts submitted by the Editorial Committee for first reading (B15) (Document [166](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-PP-C-0166/en))

Draft Resolution 137 (Rev. Bucharest, 2022) – Deployment of future networks in developing countries

Draft Resolution 203 (Rev. Bucharest, 2022) – Connectivity to broadband networks

11.1 **Adopted**.

11.2 The fifteenth series of texts submitted by the Editorial Committee for first reading (B15) (Document 166) was **approved**.

# 12 Fifteenth series of texts submitted by the Editorial Committee – second reading (Document [166](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-PP-C-0166/en))

12.1 The fifteenth series of texts submitted by the Editorial Committee (Document 166) was **approved** on second reading.

# 13 Twenty-eighth series of texts submitted by the Editorial Committee for first reading (B28) (Document [198](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-PP-C-0198/en))

Draft Resolution 167 (Rev. Bucharest, 2022) – Strengthening and developing ITU capabilities for fully virtual meetings and physical meetings with remote participation, and the electronic means to advance the work of the Union

13.1 **Adopted**.

13.2 The twenty-eighth series of texts submitted by the Editorial Committee for first reading (B28) (Document 198) was **approved.**

# 14 Twenty-eighth series of texts submitted by the Editorial Committee – second reading (Document [198](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-PP-C-0198/en))

14.1 The twenty-eighth series of texts submitted by the Editorial Committee (Document 198) was **approved** on second reading.

# 15 Twenty-seventh series of texts submitted by the Editorial Committee for first reading (B27) (Document [197](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-PP-C-0197/en))

Draft Resolution 130 (Rev. Bucharest, 2022) – Strengthening the role of ITU in building confidence and security in the use of information and communication technologies

15.1 The **Chairman of the Editorial Committee** said that the square brackets in *recalling h)* had been included in error in the English version and would be deleted.

Draft Resolution 131 (Rev. Bucharest, 2022) – Measuring information and communication technologies to build an integrating and inclusive information society

Draft Resolution 139 (Rev. Bucharest, 2022) – Use of telecommunications/information and communication technologies to bridge the digital divide and build an inclusive information society

15.2 **Adopted**.

15.3 The twenty-seventh series of texts submitted by the Editorial Committee for first reading (B27) (Document 197) was **approved**.

# 16 Twenty-seventh series of texts submitted by the Editorial Committee – second reading (Document [197](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-PP-C-0197/en))

16.1 The twenty-seventh series of texts submitted by the Editorial Committee (Document 197) was **approved** on second reading.

16.2 The **delegate of the United States** made the following statement:

 "The United States expresses its strong consternation that this plenipotentiary conference has failed to include explicit instructions in Resolution 139 to continue to support and coordinate efforts to connect women and girls in all their diversity, youth and vulnerable groups, indigenous peoples, older persons, and persons with disabilities and specific needs, despite overwhelming support.

 We find this particularly shameful given the historic nature of this conference, at which we elected Doreen Bogdan-Martin as the first woman to serve as ITU Secretary-General in the 157 years of this organization.

 In the U.S. policy statement delivered at the start of this conference, we affirmed our commitment to working with the international community to close digital divides, including the gender digital divide, which has huge economic implications for all women and girls. According to UNICEF, 'As the digitization of economies expands, economic and social growth will increasingly depend upon people's ability to use technology.' However, women and girls trail significantly behind men and boys in digital adoption, access, usage and literacy.

 Many Member States from across all regions echoed similar sentiments in their own policy statements, rightfully highlighting national initiatives explicitly targeted towards women and girls, youth, and persons with disabilities and specific needs. Much to our dismay, some of these same Member States did not put their words into action when it came to the revision of Resolution 139, and argued for positions directly at odds with their stated priorities.

 Nonetheless, Mr. Chairman, the facts are indisputable:

* The ITU-D report *Measuring Digital Development: Facts & Figures 2021* concludes thatalthough gender parity has been achieved in some regions, the gender digital divide remains wide in many regions, including least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, Africa, and the Arab States.
* Regarding youth, joint research from the ITU and UNICEF shows that over two-thirds of the world's school-age children – over 1.3 billion – still lack Internet access at home.
* Meanwhile, according to data from the United Nations Development Programme, there are more than 476 million indigenous people around the world – these indigenous communities remain underserved and among those least likely to be connected to the Internet.
* The ITU-D report *Ageing in a Digital World* highlights that, by 2050, 1 in 6 people globally will be over the age of 65, emphasizing the increasing importance of connecting older populations to the benefits of digital opportunity.
* Last but certainly not least, according to the GSMA Mobile Disability Gap Report 2021, an estimated 15 per cent of the global population lives with some form of disability, yet persons with disabilities have disproportionately lower levels of mobile Internet use.

 We cannot negotiate away reality, Mr Chairman, and we find it unconscionable that this plenipotentiary conference has failed to include critically important language in Resolution 139 based solely on unfounded and unsubstantiated concerns from a small minority of Member States.

 Despite this disappointing outcome, the United States remains dedicated to advancing ITU efforts to connect the unconnected, with the much-needed emphasis on women and girls, youth and vulnerable groups, indigenous peoples, the elderly, and persons with disabilities and specific needs.

 We call upon all Member States to join us in ensuring 'no one is left behind', in line with the fundamental mission and moral principles of ITU."

16.3 The **delegate of Denmark** made the following statement on behalf of Argentina, Australia, Austria, the Bahamas, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, the Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Liechtenstein, the Netherlands, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Mexico, New Zealand, Norway, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, the Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Monaco, Finland, the Republic of Korea, Slovenia, Romania, Rwanda, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Ukraine, the United Kingdom, the United States, Uruguay and Vanuatu:

 "If we look around we see that across the globe, many are striving for progress towards achieving gender equality. In 2019 there was the first all-women space-walk at the International Space Station. In 2020, women's representation in parliament reached 25 per cent of parliamentary seats globally. This Plenipotentiary Conference was the first ever 'gender-responsive' ITU conference, and we elected the first woman ever to lead the ITU in the 157-year history of the organization. Yet there is more to be done.

 We believe that gender remains a cross-cutting, priority issue for ITU. We encourage reform of ITU's ways of working to improve gender equity, with a true focus on inclusion and diversity. We believe that in order for ITU's work to bridge digital divides and achieve the SDGs, a continued focus on understanding gender-disaggregated impacts and promoting gender equality is crucial. According to the ITU's own data, the proportion of women using the Internet globally is 48 per cent, compared to 58 per cent of men. Furthermore, only 27 per cent of the cybersecurity workforce are women, and these are just two examples of the very real gender digital divides.

 It is within this context that we wish to express our disappointment that this conference has been unable to reach consensus on important text on advancing gender equality in a number of resolutions. This is out of step with Sustainable Development Goal 5 and the UN system as a whole – we must do better.

 Connecting the unconnected has never been more important. But we can only do that if we work together to bridge the gender digital divide. We call on all countries to recognize the importance of achieving gender equality so as to leave no one behind."

16.4 The **delegate of Canada** made the following statement:

 "Let me start with a quote:

 'I raise my voice, not so I can shout, but so that those without a voice can be heard. We cannot succeed when half of us are held back.' – Malala Yousafzai, Nobel Prize winner 2014.

 On 9 October 2012, while on a bus after taking an exam, 15-year old Malala Yousafzai and two other girls were shot by a gunman in an assignation attempt in retaliation for her activism. She survived. She was shot because of her activism in the support and promotion of women and girls and their rights: the right to free speech, the right to education, the right to travel, the right to health care, the right to walk freely, peacefully and without fear, the right to dissent and the right to access and use the Internet. Fundamental human rights.

 If Malala had witnessed yesterday's discussions on Resolution 139 and listened to some of the patronizing and condescending interventions, she would probably be asking 'what is wrong with asking ITU to continue supporting inclusivity for all women and girls, what is wrong to support the vulnerable and marginalized groups, support for the elderly and people with disabilities, support for closing the gender digital divide?'.

 She would probably state and ask, 'Gentlemen… this is 2022, what are you afraid of? What is wrong with you?'"

16.5 The **delegate of the United Kingdom** made the following statement:

"On behalf of the UK, I wish to echo many other countries in expressing our extreme disappointment that this conference has not been able to recognize that women and girls, and other key groups, are particularly badly affected by the digital divide. We would also like this entered into the minutes of the Plenary.

We applaud the significant progress that has been made in this resolution - but, in this one area, we have, very regretfully, fallen short. However, where there is a will there is a way. I have confidence that with the united effort of the delegates in this room, by the time we reconvene at the next plenipotentiary conference, significant progress will have been made."

16.6 The **delegate of Romania**, speaking on behalf of the host country, said that improper comments against women had no place at ITU. The hard work of delegates of all genders was appreciated, and mutual respect was important. She reminded participants of ITU's Code of Conduct to Prevent Sexual Harassment During or in Relation to ITU Events. For the first time, more than 30 per cent of delegates at a plenipotentiary conference were women, and if that number was to continue to increase, ITU must walk the talk in becoming truly inclusive.

16.7 The **delegate of the Dominican Republic**, having endorsed previous comments, made the following statement:

"The Dominican Republic reiterates its full support for the statement made by the delegate of Denmark; I say this not only as representative of the Dominican State but also as a woman and mother of girl with a disability. It is extremely painful for us that this resolution being adopted by the International Telecommunication Union excludes people like my daughter, and for this reason we would like to put on record our disagreement and frustration with the resolution adopted."

16.8 The **delegate of Trinidad and Tobago** made the following statement:

"Trinidad and Tobago wishes to have this statement entered into the minutes of this Plenary. We align ourselves with the statement made by Denmark on behalf of a group of like-minded countries. We regret that, collectively, we were unable to find a consensus on issues as critical as those of gender, youth and disadvantaged groups with respect to Resolution 139.

For Trinidad and Tobago, representation and inclusion are important factors for bridging the digital divide and securing overall development, leaving no one behind. The inability of the Union to demonstrate to the global community a similar commitment to these issues as recognized within the Sustainable Development Goals is a sad day for us. To quote one of the Youth Ambassadors, let's dream it and be it."

16.9 The **delegate of Argentina** made the following statement:

 "The Administration of Argentina expresses its deep commitment to the task of reducing all facets of the digital divide, in particular with those groups that, for various reasons, we have failed to include. The need to recognize that the digital divide touches all of us in different ways and to a greater extent affects women, children, the elderly, persons with disabilities and specific needs, indigenous peoples and vulnerable groups, particularly in developing countries, is clear to us.

 We are convinced that this conference has marked a historic milestone in having elected the first female Secretary-General of the Union in its more than 150 years of existence. However, the disappointment that we feel after the discussion of Resolution 139 leads us to reflect on the important fact that words alone are not enough and that we should let our actions speak for us. Indeed, given the conclusion of the debate we feel that the Union as a whole has failed to recognize that there are actions that must be taken to ensure meaningful connectivity, reducing and eliminating the digital divide but without leaving anyone behind. The values and statements that we have heard repeated many times during the conference have clashed with a reality that we were unable to change.

 The contradiction that we are facing simply reaffirms that we still have a long way to go, not only to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 5 on gender equality and empowering all women and girls, but also to meet Goal 2 of the strategic plan approved a few minutes ago.

 We must commit to achieving consensus and ensure that our differences do not become insurmountable obstacles that facilitate the imposition of ideas.

 There are times when leaders must emerge to take us from a place of doubt towards the strongest conviction that the steps we are taking are to achieve a higher objective, and that with each action taken to that end the fundamental values of the Union, of which we are a part, are being observed. No one expects this to be an easy task, but it is at such times that the people for whom we work hope that we will stand up to express their views and needs and promote their vision.

 The Argentine Republic remains committed to working together with ITU to achieve better connectivity, particularly for women, children, the elderly, persons with disabilities and specific needs, indigenous peoples and vulnerable groups, safe in the knowledge that the fruits of the actions to be taken by the Union will bring us closer to a more inclusive and equal information society."

16.10 The **Chairman** said that all the statements and interventions made would be reflected in the minutes, and discussion of the item would continue in the following plenary meeting.

**The meeting rose at 1255 hours.**

The Secretary-General: The Chairman:
H. ZHAO S. SĂRMAȘ

***Annex:*** *1*

Annex A

Original: Russian

Statement by the Russian Federation concerning the statement of the Czech Republic on Document 88 in connection with the consideration of the report of Committee 5

The Russian Federation states its categorical disagreement with the unfounded accusations contained in the statement of the Czech Republic on behalf of the 27 countries of the European Union, Ukraine, Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America concerning the statement of the Russian Federation, relating to Document 88 of the Plenipotentiary Conference, included in the report of Committee 5.

The Russian Federation once again draws attention to the fact that Article 3 of the ITU Constitution, Articles 13, 16 and 20 of the ITU Convention, Section 10 of the General Rules of conferences, assemblies and meetings of the Union and Resolution 208 of the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference were violated, at plenary meetings of WTSA-2020 and WTDC-2022, in the approval of experts as members of the study groups and advisory groups of the Telecommunication Standardization Sector and the Telecommunication Development Sector. Such decisions are contrary to the provisions of the basic texts of the Union, as well as Article 2 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The Russian Federation is convinced that the precedent of infringing the rights of ITU Member States on grounds that are not provided for under the ITU Constitution and Convention may lead to a series of analogous politically motivated decisions in the future.

Document 88 from the Russian Federation is intended to prevent future discriminatory actions of this kind against candidates nominated by Member States, Sector Members and other authorized organizations, and is fully in line with established ITU rules and procedures.

As to the statements regarding the validity of decisions adopted during WTSA and WTDC in 2022, we take a negative view of the actions of the ITU Legal Advisor, which have been a determining factor in the adoption of invalid, non-consensual decisions, including the holding of illegitimate elections.

The Russian Federation notes that the election of candidates must strictly comply with the professional criteria contained in the aforementioned basic texts of ITU.

The Russian Federation calls on the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference 2022, future conferences, assemblies and meetings of the Union to ignore statements that go beyond the mandate of the Union, not to allow politicized decisions to be adopted under such pressure, and to make every effort to prevent the recurrence of precedents involving infringement of the rights of an ITU Member State on any ground whatsoever, except as provided for under the ITU Constitution and Convention.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_