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|  | **Document C23-ADD/10-E** |
| **23 October 2023** |
| **Original: English** |
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| SUMMARY RECORD  OF THE  INAUGURAL PLENARY MEETING | |
| Thursday, 19 October 2023, from 0940 to 1115 hours  **Chair:** Mr C. MARTINEZ (Paraguay) | |
| |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | |  | **Subjects discussed** | **Documents** | | 1 | Opening of the additional 2023 session of the Council | - | | 2 | Opening remarks by the Secretary-General | - | | 3 | Statements by Israel and the State of Palestine | - | | 4 | Approval of the draft agenda of the additional 2023 session of the Council | [C23-ADD/1(Rev.3)](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-C23ADD-C-0001/en) | | 5 | Draft time management plan | [C23-ADD/DT/1 (Rev.3)](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-C23ADD-231019-TD-0001/en) | | 6 | Organizational matters | - | | 7 | Precise place and exact dates of the 2026 Plenipotentiary Conference | [C23-ADD/4](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-C23ADD-C-0004/en) | | |

1. **Opening of the additional 2023 session of the Council**
   1. The Chair declared the additional 2023 session of the Council open and welcomed all delegates.
2. **Opening remarks by the Secretary-General**
   1. The Secretary-General said that the Council was meeting at a difficult time for peace when the will to work together was being put to the test. She echoed the call of the United Nations Secretary-General on protecting and respecting civilians and civilian infrastructure in the Middle East at all times. Recalling ITU’s purpose and responsibility to promote the use of technology to facilitate peaceful relations and international cooperation, as enshrined in the ITU Constitution, she said that it was important to be mindful of the need to protect telecommunication infrastructure and the right to communicate. She proposed a moment of silence in memory of the innocent civilian lives lost in conflict across the world.

**A moment of silence was observed.**

* 1. The Secretary-General continued by outlining the output of the recently concluded Council working and expert group meetings and assured councillors that the management team remained fully committed to strengthening transparency, accountability, good governance and operational excellence across ITU. Progress was being made in several areas, including with respect to the resource mobilization strategy and criteria for establishing future area offices, and gender balance had been achieved at the D2 level. The Council’s decisions over the next two days would effect consequential change within and outside ITU, at a time when digital technology had never been higher on the global agenda, as demonstrated at the recent SDG Digital event and Internet Governance Forum, where the role of ICTs in attaining the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and in bridging the digital divide was front and centre. In addition, the 800th pledge for the Partner2Connect Digital Coalition had been celebrated at the ITU Regional Development Forum for Africa, bringing the overall amount pledged to USD 32 billion. ITU would be taking an active role in the twenty-eighth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP28). Furthermore, WRC-23 would showcase what multilateralism in action could achieve and would provide a unique opportunity to use digital to put the SDGs back on track to help deliver peace, progress, prosperity and sustainability for everyone, everywhere. She looked forward to continuing to build the fit-for-purpose and fit-for-the future ITU that the membership wanted and the world needed.

1. **Statements by Israel and the State of Palestine**
   1. The observer from Israel delivered the following statement condemning recent acts of aggression perpetrated against her country by Hamas: <http://council.itu.int/2023-additional/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2023/11/Israel-Statement-e.pdf>
   2. The observer from the State of Palestine delivered the following statement on the telecommunication situation and appealed to ITU to ensure the rights of Palestinians to access telecommunications and the Internet: <http://council.itu.int/2023-additional/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2023/11/Palestine-statement-e.pdf>
   3. Those statements were **noted**.
   4. The councillors from Saudi Arabia, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, Tunisia and Algeria and the observer from the Islamic Republic of Iran reaffirmed the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to self-defence and self-determination, to establish an independent Palestinian State based on the June 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital, and to regain control of holy sites. They condemned the crimes perpetrated by the Israeli occupying authority against innocent Palestinians, the destruction of vital communication infrastructure and the loss of civilian life and expressed serious concern about the humanitarian situation. They called for compliance with international humanitarian law, the immediate cessation of hostilities, the lifting of the blockade of the Gaza Strip, efforts to deescalate and restore stability, and progress towards a just, comprehensive and lasting peace. ITU was requested to continue developing the Palestinian telecommunication sector.
   5. The councillor from China delivered the following statement:  
      <http://council.itu.int/2023-additional/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2023/10/China-Statement-e.docx>
   6. The councillor from Spain delivered the following statement on behalf of the European Union and its member States: <http://council.itu.int/2023-additional/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2023/10/Spain-on-behalf-of-EU-e.docx>
   7. The councillor from the United States delivered the following statement:  
      <http://council.itu.int/2023-additional/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2023/10/USA-Statement-e.docx>
   8. The councillor from the United Kingdom condemned the terrorist acts perpetrated by Hamas and unequivocally supported Israel’s sovereign right to defend itself proportionately in accordance with international law. Her country continued to support a negotiated settlement, leading to a safe and secure Israel living alongside a sovereign Palestinian State. Humanitarian support and access to Gaza must be maintained.
   9. The councillor from Türkiye delivered the following statement:  
      <http://council.itu.int/2023-additional/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2023/10/Turkiye-statement-e.docx>
   10. The observer from Guinea called on ITU and all international organizations to make every effort to end all conflicts around the world.
2. **Approval of the draft agenda of the additional 2023 session of the Council   
   (Document** [**C23-ADD/1(Rev.3)**](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-C23ADD-C-0001/en)**)**
   1. The Secretary of the Plenary introduced Document C23-ADD/1(Rev.3). She noted that the secretariat had received a contribution from India after the 5 October 2023 deadline.
   2. Following a short discussion, it was **agreed** to take up the contribution from India on the ICT Development Index methodology, which was available in English only in Document C23-ADD/8, under other business.
   3. On that understanding, Document C23-ADD/1(Rev.3) was **approved**.
3. **Draft time management plan (Document** [**C23-ADD/DT/1(Rev.3)**](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-C23ADD-231019-TD-0001/en)**)**
   1. The Secretary of the Plenary introduced Document C23-ADD/DT/1(Rev.3), which was **approved**.
4. **Organizational matters**
   1. The Secretary of the Plenary, after confirming the customary working hours, said that interpretation and documentation would be provided in the six official languages of the Union. Remote participation had been arranged and the Chair would call first on those physically present and then on those connected remotely. Decisions would be taken only by councillors physically present. Participants were reminded that there was a standard of conduct, integrity and respect for diversity and professionalism that all could reasonably expect in discussions, free of discrimination and harassment. The Code of Conduct to Prevent Harassment, including Sexual Harassment, at UN System Events, was applicable to all ITU meetings.
   2. The information on the organization of work for the additional 2023 session was **noted**.
5. **Precise place and exact dates of the 2026 Plenipotentiary Conference   
   (Document** [**C23-ADD/4**](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-C23ADD-C-0004/en)**)**
   1. The Secretary of the Plenary introduced Document C23-ADD/4, which informed councillors of the invitation from the Government of Qatar to hold the 2026 plenipotentiary conference (PP-26) from Monday 9 November to Friday 27 November 2026 at the Doha Exhibition and Convention Center. The Council was invited to decide on the precise place and exact dates by adopting the draft decision contained in Annex B. A consultation would then be launched to secure the concurrence of ITU Member States in accordance with No. 2 of the ITU Convention.
   2. The observer from Qatar said that his country would be honoured to host PP-26. The 2022 FIFA World Cup had showcased Qatar’s prowess in AI, the IoT and various innovations designed to enhance mobility, public health and cybersecurity, and had demonstrated his country’s commitment to global digital inclusivity and sustainable digital progress. The path charted at PP-26 would have a significant impact on the global shared digital future and he was confident that the conference would develop a roadmap for a more inclusive, sustainable and interconnected digital era in advance of 2030 – the milestone date for the achievement of the SDGs.
   3. A short video presentation was given, showcasing highlights of Qatar and Doha.
   4. Numerous councillors and one observer expressed appreciation for the generous invitation from the Government of Qatar, which they were pleased to accept, and drew attention to Qatar’s proven track record of success in hosting international events.
   5. The draft decision contained in Annex B to Document C23-ADD/4 was **adopted**.
   6. The Secretary-General said that she was delighted that Qatar’s offer had been accepted by the Council. Qatar had already hosted a number of important ITU events and she looked forward to an exciting and successful conference.
   7. The observer from Qatar thanked councillors for their support. His Government was committed to ensuring that PP-26 was a success.

The Secretary-General: The Chair:  
D. BOGDAN-MARTIN C. MARTINEZ

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