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| **Agenda item: ADM 3** | **Document C23/54-E** |
| **16 May 2023** |
| **Original: English** |
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| Report by the Secretary-General |
| REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF RESOLUTION 167 (REV. BUCHAREST, 2022) OF THE PLENIPOTENTIARY CONFERENCE |
| **Purpose**Resolution 167 (Rev. Bucharest, 2022) of the Plenipotentiary Conference instructs the ITU Council:1. to study and develop high-level guidance for the management and governance of fully virtual meetings and physical meetings with remote participation, taking into account Annex 1 to this resolution;
2. to consider the financial requirements to implement this resolution and allocate the necessary financial resources, within the limits of the resources available and consistent with the financial and strategic plans;
3. to report and provide recommendations to the plenipotentiary conference in 2026.

This report outlines the activities and developments since the Plenipotentiary Conference (Bucharest, 2022), to assist the Council in developing high-level guidance for the management and governance of fully virtual meetings and physical meetings with remote participation.**Action required by the Council**The Council is invited **to note** this report and **to provide the Union with high-level guidance** for the management and governance of fully virtual meetings and physical meetings with remote participation and for possible funding mechanisms.**Relevant link(s) with the Strategic Plan**Excellence in human resources and organizational innovation; convening platforms**Financial implications**CHF 855 000/year and possible capital investment of CHF 1 million once every five years as reported in document [PP-22/64](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-PP-C-0064/en), to be financed within the limits of the resources available from the efficiency measures and other savings.\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**References**[Document PP-22/64](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-PP-C-0064/en); [Resolution 167 (Rev. Bucharest, 2022)](https://www.itu.int/en/council/Documents/basic-texts-2023/RES-167-E.pdf) of the Plenipotentiary Conference |

**1 Events since PP-22: physical, virtual and physical with remote participation**

1.1 The Union continues to organize conferences, events and meetings (collectively referred to as “**events***”*)that are categorized as either (1) fully physical, (2) fully virtual, or (3) physical with remote participation. Annex 1 presents the number of **events** and **sessions** (one event can have several sessions) in the three categories**,** and the number of **on-site and remote participants** since the Plenipotentiary Conference (Bucharest, 2022) (PP-22), for the period from 15 October 2022 to 24 March 2023.

1.2 Very few of those events were fully physical, as Table 1 of [Annex 1](#Annex1) shows, and the number of physical events with remote participation was almost twice that of fully virtual ones. Those events that were fully virtual were mostly ITU-T events. Likewise, the number of remote participants was more than twice that of on-site participants, as shown in Table 2.

1.3 Tables 3 and 4 of Annex 1 provide information on the number of sessions held after PP-22. The number of physical sessions with remote participation was significantly higher than that of the other two categories.

1.4 The decision on whether an event is going to be fully physical, fully virtual, or physical with remote participation is taken by the organizing Bureau or department, based on the experiences gained through previous events. The variety of tools used by event organizers results in different registration processes for participants and complicates the reporting of event statistics. The General Secretariat and the three Bureaux are working together to standardize the event organization procedures to the extent possible.

1.5 For events with a physical presence, sessions are generally held during working hours at the physical location, with a degree of flexibility as to timing: the first session typically begins at 0800 or 0900 hours local time, and finishes at 1700 or 1800 hours, while lunch breaks may be cut short to accommodate the different time zones of remote participants.

1.6 For fully virtual events, event organizers make a further effort to accommodate the different time zones. Decisions as to session start/end times take into account the implications for the supporting staff in both headquarters and field offices, staff overtime, and interpretation costs.

1.7 For physical sessions with remote participation, in addition to the cost of hiring a technical moderator, there may be additional support costs when the sessions are held outside ITU premises. For example, meetings at the International Conference Center Geneva (CICG) have a daily surcharge of CHF 450-650 for an audio technician for each meeting room where remote participation is to be supported.

1.8 Some ITU meeting rooms have been fitted out to support interpreters not only on site, using the simultaneous interpretation system in the interpretation booths, but also off site, using the remote simultaneous interpretation (RSI) systems of the web conference platforms (e.g., Zoom RSI, Interactio RSI). Another option is for on-site participants to be provided with interpretation through headsets, while the interpreters themselves work remotely using RSI. This may be an option for ITU events held outside headquarters, whether in another Geneva venue or abroad, if it is accepted by the interpreters.

**2 Developments made on adopting virtual meetings and physical meetings with remote participation**

2.1 In 2018 ITU was still using as many as eight web conference platforms. This has now been reduced to two platforms: Zoom and MyMeetings.

2.2 In addition to interactive web conferences, webcast continues to be a popular tool for the membership to follow the discussions. A new webcast system on Amazon Web Services (AWS) was piloted at the 2023 WSIS Forum. It received positive feedback from participants. New features will be added, so that it may become the production webcast system in the future.

2.3 For events open to ITU membership only, remote participants follow the same registration and accreditation procedure as those on site, and access to the physical room and virtual room is controlled through a similar authorization verification mechanism.

2.4 For public events such as the AI for Good Summit or WSIS Forum, remote participants do not need to go through the full accreditation process. In most cases, a valid e-mail address is all that is required to connect to the public event session remotely, while on-site participation still requires a complete accreditation process for security reasons. At the end of 2022 ITU rolled out a simplified CRM registration system designed to support registration for the above-mentioned public events. The system has been adopted by the General Secretariat and the three Bureaux.

**3** **Development and progress made on organizing virtual events and physical events with remote participation with other United Nations organizations**

3.1 ITU is an active member of the UN Chief Executives Board for Coordination, in particular the Digital & Technology Network. In 2020 ITU took the lead with the publication of "[Virtual Events and Remote Participation - Guidelines and Best Practices](https://unsceb.org/virtual-events-interpretation)".

3.2 ITU made a joint request for proposals with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) aimed at implementing a Virtual Events Venue with an online platform to facilitate communication and information-sharing between on-site and remote participants throughout the year. The implementation is on hold, pending clarification of the funding source.

3.3 The IS Department has been working with the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) and the United Nations Office at Geneva (UNOG) to implement the infrastructure needed to support physical meetings with remote participation, including both on-site interpretation using the audio system in the booths and remote interpretation using the RSI interface of a web conference platform.

**4** **Contribution to the implementation of Resolution 30 (Rev. Bucharest, 2022)**

4.1 Resolution 30 (Rev. Bucharest, 2022) of the Plenipotentiary Conference commits ITU to implementing special measures for the least developed countries (LDCs), small island developing States (SIDS), landlocked developing countries (LLDCs) and countries with economies in transition. Those measures include enhancing engagement by academia and industry in ITU.

4.2 [Annex 2](#Annex2) presents statistics on the number of Member States participating in ITU events since 2018, and the number of participants from developed, developing, and least-developed countries in ITU events. The number of participants from all of those country groups has been increasing steadily, in large part thanks to remote participation.

**5 Implications for gender equality**

5.1 Under Sustainable Development Goal 5, target 5.5 is to ensure women’s full and effective participation in decision-making. Virtual events and remote participation can provide flexibility and facilitate greater participation of women. Remote participation has allowed more women to participate in recent events. Still, greater understanding of women's experiences can help make ITU meetings more gender responsive.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Event | physical participants, female | remote participants, female | total participants, female |
| Council-22 | 36% | 46% | 38% |
| PP-22 | 33% | 43% | 34% |
| CPM23 | 23% | 25% | 24% |

# 6 Financial implications

6.1 The yearly operational cost of supporting virtual events and physical events with remote participation is CHF 855 000, equivalent to CHF 3.42 million for the 2024-2027 budget period, as reported in Document [PP-22/64](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-PP-C-0064/en). In addition, it is estimated that a capital investment of CHF 1 million will be needed every five years for the modernization of the equipment used to support virtual events and physical events with remote participation.

# 7 Recommendations

7.1 The council is invited to **consider the report and provide high-level guidance for the management and governance** of fully virtual meetings and physical meetings with remote participation outlined above.

*Annexes:* ***2***

Annex 1

**Number of events, sessions and participants since PP-22**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Fully physical | Fully virtual | Physical with RP |
| GS | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| ITU-T | 6 | 23 | 38 |
| ITU-R | 1 | 1 | 9 |
| ITU-D | 4 | 8 | 9 |
| **Total** | **13** | **34** | **58** |

Table 1: Number of events, broken down into fully physical, fully virtual, and physical with remote participation, between 15 October 2022 and 29 March 2023 (data updated 4 April 2023 at 1600 hours)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | On-site participants | Genuine remote participants | On-site participants also logged on to web conference platform\* |
| GS | 1 172 | 1 723 | 101 |
| ITU-T | 1 199 | 4 623 | 356 |
| ITU-R | 2 473 | 2 319 | 1 503 |
| ITU-D | 277 | 954 | 97 |
| **Total** | **5 121** | **9 619** | **2 057** |

Table 2: Number of **PARTICIPANTS:** on-site participants, genuinely remote participants, and participants who were **on site (badge collected at ITU**) but connected to the web conference platform (hence also seen as remote participants by the web conference platform), in **EVENTS** that took place from 15 October 2022 to 29 March 2023. (Data updated 20 April 2023 at 1600 hours)
\*Column 3 is a subset of column 1.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Fully physical | Fully virtual | Physical with RP |
| GS | 92 | 2 | 108 |
| ITU-T | 8 | 65 | 816 |
| ITU-R | 248 | 7 | 513 |
| ITU-D | 2 | 23 | 29 |
| **Total** | **350** | **97** | **1 466** |

Table 3: Number of fully physical, fully virtual, physical with remote participation (RP) **SESSIONS** (including delegation meeting sessions) from 15 October 2022 to 29 March 2023 (data updated 20 April 2023 at 1600 hours). An **EVENT** can last for half a day or several weeks, with many sessions. A morning and an afternoon session on the same subject counts as two sessions.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Fully physical | Fully virtual | Physical with RP |
| Delegation meetings | 207 |  | 7 |
| Not specified | 17 | 7 | 16 |
| Official meetings | 100 | 85 | 1 443 |
| Regular meetings | 2 | 5 |  |
| Side events | 2 |  |  |
| Social events | 22 |  |  |
| **Total** | **350** | **97** | **1 466** |

Table 4: Number of fully physical, fully virtual, physical with remote participation (RP) **MEETING SESSIONS** from 15 October 2022 to 29 March 2023 (data updated 20 April 2023 at 1600 hours), further breakdown by **MEETING TYPE**.

Annex 2

**Number of Member States participating in ITU events
from 2018 to 2022**

(1) Number of Member States by development indicator



(2) Number of participants in the three country groups



\* Data from EDRS (2018, 2019) and CRM events (2018 to 2022). From 15 January 2018 to 31 December 2022

(3) Number of participants in the three country groups, further divided by genuine remote, on-site and on-site but logged on to the web conference platform







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