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|  | **Document C24/112-E** |
| **29 August 2024** |
| **Original: English** |
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| **SUMMARY RECORD****OF THE****SECOND PLENARY MEETING** |
| Wednesday, 5 June 2024, from 1435 to 1730 hours**Chair**: Mr F. SAUVAGE (France) |

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|  | **Subjects discussed** | **Documents** |
| 1 | Preparations for the World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC-25) | [C24/30(Rev.1)](https://www.itu.int/md/S24-CL-C-0030/en) |
| 2 | Strengthening ITU’s regional presence (*continued*) | [C24/25](https://www.itu.int/md/S24-CL-C-0025/en), [C24/79](https://www.itu.int/md/S24-CL-C-0079/en), [C24/98](https://www.itu.int/md/S24-CL-C-0098/en), [C24/100](https://www.itu.int/md/S24-CL-C-0100/en) |
| 3 | Preparations for the World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly (WTSA-24) | [C24/24](https://www.itu.int/md/S24-CL-C-0024/en) |
| 4 | Preparations for the Plenipotentiary Conference (PP-26) | – |

# 1 Preparations for the World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC-25) (Document [C24/30(Rev.1)](https://www.itu.int/md/S24-CL-C-0030/en))

1.1The Director of BDT introduced Document C24/30(Rev.1), which informed the Council of the invitation received from Azerbaijan to host WTDC-25 in Baku from 17 to 28 November 2025. The document contained a draft decision on the place and dates of the conference in Annex 2 and a draft agenda in Annex 3. The latter had been approved by the Telecommunication Development Advisory Group (TDAG).

1.2H.E. Mr Samir Mammadov (Deputy Minister of Digital Development and Transport, Azerbaijan) delivered the following statement: <http://council.itu.int/2024/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2024/07/C24-Statement-Azerbaijan_PL2.docx>. His statement was accompanied by a video presentation showcasing Azerbaijan’s achievements in technological areas, including cybersecurity, and describing its proven international conference-hosting capabilities.

1.3Many councillors, one speaking on behalf of CEPT, and two observers took the floor to thank the Government of Azerbaijan for its willingness to host WTDC-25, especially at such short notice, and expressed support for the proposed dates and agenda.

1.4One councillor, recalling that it was not the first time the announced host country for an ITU conference had changed at a late stage, said it would be useful to consider introducing a more systematic process of call for invitations to host conferences that took into account relevant political, economic, social and technological factors and would therefore provide greater certainty regarding hosting arrangements. Another councillor endorsed that suggestion.

1.5 Responding to a question raised by a councillor, the Director of BDT said that the item entitled “Regional initiatives” had been added to the draft agenda at the suggestion of TDAG, but it was for the Council to make the final decision.

1.6 The Chair invited the Council to decide on the precise place and exact dates of WTDC‑25 and approve the agenda of WTDC-25, subject to the concurrence of the majority of the Member States of the Union pursuant to the relevant provisions of the ITU Convention, and to suggest that the secretariat consider establishing a transparent process for future conferences of the Union allowing for a call for interest to host a conference.

1.7 It was so **agreed**, and the Council **adopted** the draft decision contained in Annex 2 and **approved** the draft agenda contained in Annex 3 to Document C24/30(Rev.1).

1.8 The Secretary-General, acknowledging Azerbaijan’s deep commitment to ITU, expressed her sincere thanks to the Deputy Minister of Digital Development and Transport of Azerbaijan for his visit to the Council and her appreciation to Azerbaijan for hosting WTDC-25.

# 2 Strengthening ITU’s regional presence (*continued*) (Documents [C24/25](https://www.itu.int/md/S24-CL-C-0025/en), [C24/79](https://www.itu.int/md/S24-CL-C-0079/en), [C24/98](https://www.itu.int/md/S24-CL-C-0098/en) and [C24/100](https://www.itu.int/md/S24-CL-C-0100/en))

2.1 The Director of BDT, responding to points raised at the first plenary meeting, said he was pleased to inform the councillor from India that the rigorous selection process for the Head of the Area Office post had been completed and the recommendation was awaiting approval by the Secretary-General. He expressed appreciation for the role played in South Asia by ITU’s Area Office and Innovation Centre, and thanked the Government of India for providing staff in the interim.

2.2 Considerable progress had been made in regard to ITU’s regional presence, and was expected to continue. Detailed information on the implementation of activities on the ground related to BDT could be found in the TDAG document referenced in Document C24/25, § 3.2. Strengthening the regional presence was a priority, and measures to that end were being taken on an ongoing basis. They included, for example, the upgrading of general service staff to P2 level; the creation of “project implementation support expert” posts to support project managers in their work; stationing project managers in the regions concerned; reinstatement of a specific division to address the needs and challenges of least developed countries (LDCs), landlocked least developed countries, and small island developing States.

2.3 The way ITU delivered assistance to countries was governed by its 12-month operational plan, under which specific projects were implemented, thereby ensuring overall consistency. The process was underpinned by results-based management principles, with a focus on outcomes (desired impact on the ground) defined by Member States at WTDC and outputs (products and services to deliver the outcomes).

2.4 Turning to budgetary matters, he thanked the many donors for their financial contributions: close to CHF 30 million had been raised in 2023 and the first part of 2024 for the funding of projects. Some 63 new members had joined ITU-D. The strategy of converting members into partners, and partners into members, thus appeared to be working.

2.5 Allocation of the operational plan budget was based on a straight-line method, treating all regions the same. The allocation of funding to projects that were fully or partly funded by funds-in-trust or voluntary contributions was governed by donors, who sometimes specified priorities. While it was true that much funding was allocated to projects implemented globally, they benefited all the regions and every Member State.

2.6 Citing a number of concrete examples, he stressed that, as evidenced by the report in Document C24/25 and the referenced TDAG document, BDT and its regional offices worked in very close cooperation with BR, TSB and the General Secretariat. It should be noted that the Director of TSB was in the process of recruiting staff to be stationed in the regional offices to address standardization issues for bridging the standardization gap. Much of the Union’s inputs to United Nations bodies and activities was the result of concerted efforts with the involvement of all ITU, including the regional and area offices.

2.7 Reflecting the importance ITU attached to donor relations, relevant governance structures were in place and the BDT’s project-management manual included appropriate guidance; moreover, a rigorous process had been initiated for reporting to donors on progress, challenges and solutions adopted on the ground, thus helping to ensure transparency and accountability.

2.8 On the question raised by Poland and other countries relating to due diligence when dealing with third-party entities, he stressed that ITU was member-driven and guided by Member States, and assured councillors that the Secretary-General and elected officials, with the Coordination Committee, had put in place a mechanism for due diligence, which extended also to partners and to sponsorship. Any anomalies would be addressed by management, but it was not for lack of guidelines and enforcement mechanisms. A framework was also in place for effective and responsible communication with Member States. Greater attention would be paid to those considerations, to ensure Member States were satisfied with the way ITU conducted its business.

2.9 Councillors thanked the Director of BDT for his informative replies, which showed that ITU was making good progress in implementing the “One ITU” concept. However, improvement was always possible and due consideration should be given to urgent completion of the requested review of the regional presence, which should also cover the points that had been raised in the contributions and during the discussion, in particular ITU-R and ITU-T representation in regional and area offices, how the three Sectors participated in the regional presence and identification of the focal points referred to in Resolution 25 (Rev. Bucharest, 2022).

2.10 The Chair proposed that the Council note Document C24/25 and request the secretariat to examine the proposals set out in Documents C24/79 and C24/98 from Australia and Mexico, and those made by Member States in plenary, especially in relation to the requested review of ITU’s regional presence, and report on their implementation to the next meeting of the Council Working Group on financial and human resources. Poland’s statement would be reflected in the summary records of the plenary.

2.11 It was so **agreed**.

2.12 The councillor from Mexico, speaking also on behalf of co-signatories Panama and Paraguay, introduced Document C24/100. While commending the ITU fellowship system which helped LDCs to participate effectively in the activities of the Union, she stressed the need for fellowships to be granted in a balanced and transparent manner on the basis of equitable geographical distribution, gender parity and the inclusion of persons with disabilities, and to ensure a better budget distribution by region. Referring to Resolution 213 (Dubai, 2018) of the Plenipotentiary Conference, she requested that information be provided by the secretariat on the number of fellowship applications it received, accepted and declined by region and by country; the percentage of fellowships awarded to men and women and to persons with disabilities or persons with specific needs; how the budget allocated for fellowships was determined; and how fellowships were distributed by region and by country. The secretariat should also analyse the fellowship application process by consulting Member States on their experience, with a view to implementing possible improvements.

2.13 Councillors, expressing support for the multicountry contribution, echoed the call for greater transparency regarding fellowships, especially given the importance of fellowships in enabling LDCs to participate in ITU events; and the call for additional relevant information, which could take the form, *inter alia*, of indicators for a five-year period, to be made available to Member States online and in the official languages. One councillor emphasized that geographical distribution of fellowships benefited triangular cooperation and South-South cooperation, and suggested that the costs of some fellowships could perhaps be shared, with one party covering travel costs and the other daily subsistence allowances. Some councillors requested that the secretariat speed up the process of granting fellowships, especially in the field of radiocommunications, having regard to the decisions on fellowships taken at the Radiocommunication Assembly (Dubai, 2023). Another councillor emphasized that the aim must be to increase the total number of fellowships, not to shift them from one region to another. One councillor called for the application process to be streamlined through automation and digitization. A further councillor drew attention to the auditors' past recommendations that internal controls regarding fellowships be strengthened.

2.14 One councillor, while agreeing on the importance of reporting the number of requests for fellowships and the number of fellowships subsequently awarded, pointed out that information on the policy and criteria governing the granting and budgeting of fellowships was contained in Service Order 21/02 and that there would necessarily be inequality in the allocation of fellowships between the regions as the number of eligible countries in each region was not the same and regions would have different needs in terms of participation, for example in the study groups. One councillor from the Americas requested information on the criteria used to determine which countries in his region were considered as LDCs, and on how fellowships were subsequently granted on that basis.

2.15 The Chair suggested that the Council request the secretariat to provide the information councillors had asked for during the discussion and report to Council-25 on implementation of the actions proposed in Document C24/100.

2.16 It was so **agreed**.

# 3 Preparations for the World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly (WTSA-24) (Document [C24/24](https://www.itu.int/md/S24-CL-C-0024/en))

3.1 The Deputy to the Director of TSB introduced Document C24/24, which informed the Council of the status of preparations for the Global Standards Symposium (GSS) and WTSA-24, which would be held on 14 October 2024 and from 15 to 24 October 2024, respectively, in New Delhi, India.

3.2 The councillor from India presented a slideshow informing the Council about the venue and preparations for GSS-24, WTSA-24 and a whole range of side events. All the necessary arrangements had been made or were in hand. His presentation was followed by a video showcasing both the history of India’s collaboration with ITU and the venue and preparations for WTSA-24.

3.3 The Director of TSB congratulated India on hosting the first WTSA in Asia. He also thanked India for its fine hospitality and noted the quality of the venue, which he had visited in March 2024. He emphasized that it would be an extraordinary event, especially given the various side events planned.

3.4 Councillors thanked India for hosting WTSA-24 and TSB for the preparations and report and looked forward to the assembly, which would set the general policy and structure of ITU-T for the next cycle to help enhance ICT interoperability, connectivity and access, economic development and quality of service and thereby contribute to attainment of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. One councillor hoped that the reorganization of study groups, which was planned to take place at the event, would lead to greater efficiency in their work; and that TSB would establish a mechanism to support the participation of developing countries in GSS, WTSA and side events.

3.5 The Deputy to the Director of TSB, responding to a question from a councillor, confirmed that ITU had already been in contact with the focal points of the event-management company which had been chosen by India, to begin implementation of the host-country agreement.

3.6 The Council **noted** Document C24/24 and the progress of preparations for WTSA-24.

3.7 The Secretary-General expressed her gratitude to India for hosting the event and was delighted by the progress of the preparatory process. She highlighted the robustness of the planned programme which featured side events on a variety of topics. She welcomed India’s continued and strengthened engagement with the Union through the ITU Area Office and Innovation Centre in New Delhi, which had helped to expand the Union’s presence throughout South Asia.

# 4 Preparations for the Plenipotentiary Conference (PP-26)

4.1 Following the screening of a video showcasing Doha, Mr Hussain Salatt (Director of Communications and International Relations, Ministry of Communications and Information Technology, Qatar), formally announced the appointment of H.E. Mr Ahmad Al Muslemani, President of the Communications Regulation Authority of Qatar, as chair elect of PP-26. He then presented a slideshow on the venue for PP-26, accommodation options and relevant services.

4.2 H.E. Mr Ahmad Al Muslemani (President of the Communications Regulation Authority of Qatar), Chair elect of PP-26, delivered the following statement: <http://council.itu.int/2024/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2024/07/C24-Statement-Qatar-e_PL2.docx>.

4.3 Councillors and observers thanked Qatar for hosting the event and congratulated the chair elect on his nomination.

4.4 The Secretary-General congratulated the chair elect of PP-26 on his timely nomination well in advance of the event and assured him of the full support of the secretariat during the preparatory process and the conference itself. She looked forward to fruitful collaboration and helping make PP-26 a success.

The Secretary-General: The Chair:

D. BOGDAN-MARTIN F. SAUVAGE

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