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|  | **Document C24/113-E** |
| **29 August 2024** |
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| **SUMMARY RECORD****OF THE****THIRD PLENARY MEETING** |
| Thursday, 6 June 2024, from 1435 to 1750 hours**Chair**: Mr F. SAUVAGE (France) |

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|  | **Subjects discussed** | **Documents** |
| 1 | Green digital transformation: ITU activities on climate change and environmental sustainability  | [C24/72](https://www.itu.int/md/S24-CL-C-0072/en), [C24/88](https://www.itu.int/md/S24-CL-C-0088/en) |
| 2 | Preparation for the World Telecommunication/ICT Policy Forum (WTPF-26)  | [C24/5](https://www.itu.int/md/S24-CL-C-0005/en), [C24/75](https://www.itu.int/md/S24-CL-C-0075/en), [C24/76](https://www.itu.int/md/S24-CL-C-0076/en), [C24/93](https://www.itu.int/md/S24-CL-C-0093/en), [C24/95](https://www.itu.int/md/S24-CL-C-0095/en), [C24/96](https://www.itu.int/md/S24-CL-C-0096/en) |
| 3 | Outcome of consultations on proposed improvements to the Plenipotentiary Conference | [C24/4](https://www.itu.int/md/S24-CL-C-0004/en), [C24/86](https://www.itu.int/md/S24-CL-C-0086/en) |
| 4 | Status report on assistance and support to Palestine | [C24/69](https://www.itu.int/md/S24-CL-C-0069/en), [C24/103](https://www.itu.int/md/S24-CL-C-0103/en) |

# 1 Green digital transformation: ITU activities on climate change and environmental sustainability (Documents [C24/72](https://www.itu.int/md/S24-CL-C-0072/en) and [C24/88](https://www.itu.int/md/S24-CL-C-0088/en))

1.1 A representative of the General Secretariat introduced Document C24/72, which, complementing the information provided in several reports submitted to the Council in other documents, gave an overview of the status of green digital transformation at ITU and summarized climate change and environmental sustainability activities across the Union, highlighting in particular the Green Digital Action initiative.

1.2 The councillor from France introduced Document C24/88, which contained a draft new Council resolution proposed by five Member States. Recognizing that ITU was in a unique position to address the environmental impact of ICTs in response to several calls for action, notably by the United Nations, the resolution aimed at strengthening the Union’s facilitating role in relation to the contribution of ICTs to climate action and environmental sustainability. It defined a strong framework for action for ITU and its three Sectors in the context of the Strategy for Sustainability Management in the United Nations System (2020-2030) and the Green Digital Action initiative, and encouraged the Sectors and secretariat to reinforce relevant inter-Sectoral coordination and to further develop knowledge on the environmental footprint of ICTs and track the use of biotic and abiotic resources in the ICT industry so as to assess their environmental impact throughout their lifecycle.

1.3 Many councillors expressed appreciation for the documents and support for efforts to address the impact of digital transformation on the environment, which was a critical issue that required targeted interventions. ITU had indeed a unique role to play in boosting climate action and environmental sustainability in the ICT sector. Initiatives to improve interaction between United Nations specialized agencies to achieve common goals were to be welcomed, and green digital transformation was also highly important to achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

1.4 While several councillors expressed their support for the draft resolution in Document C24/88 in its current form, others were of the view that its content required further discussion. A number of councillors said that the draft resolution should take into account the large amount of work on environmental issues that was already being carried out within existing frameworks such as Resolution 182 (Rev. Bucharest, 2022). Some councillors voiced concern regarding the financial implications of the draft resolution and whether ITU was adequately resourced to undertake such work, and expressed doubt as to whether its proposals were within the scope of the Council's core mandate and expertise.

1.5 Several councillors said that the draft resolution should reflect the broader perspective that environmental sustainability could be achieved only if social and economic factors were also taken into account, while one councillor said that the feasibility of its proposals required further discussion in the light of the diversity of national legislative frameworks and that the proposals should follow the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. Another councillor said that it was imperative for the proposals to address the disproportionate impact of environmental issues on certain countries, notably least developed countries. One observer pointed out that, indeed, her country was responsible for only a tiny percentage of greenhouse gas emissions, yet was among those most affected by climate disruption. Several councillors called for work on environmental issues at ITU to be expanded to include such initiatives as the integration of digital technologies into early-warning systems for climate-related emergencies through the Early Warnings for All Initiative, and the establishment of a partnership fund for managing e-waste, as well as support to existing initiatives such as the use of carbon credits. One councillor stressed that the development of a comprehensive framework for measuring and reporting the carbon footprint of digital technologies and the establishment of a global platform for exchanging best practices and innovative solutions related to green digital technologies would benefit developing countries in particular, and encouraged the adoption of sustainable urban planning and smart-city initiatives incorporating digital technologies. One councillor expressed her government's support for actions to encourage young people to become stewards of their own future by addressing environmental issues.

1.6 Some councillors requested more information about the ITU database on greenhouse gas emissions and energy consumption referred to in Document C24/72. One requested more information about the scope and internal implementation of the Environmental Management System within the organization. A further councillor suggested that future reports on the work of ITU on environmental issues include detailed case studies of successful green digital initiatives implemented by Member States and deeper analysis of barriers to implementing the Green Digital Action initiative.

1.7 A number of councillors outlined activities undertaken by their governments in relation to ICT and environmental issues.

1.8 Responding to councillors' comments and questions, a councillor from France said that the proposed resolution was needed so that action could be taken on the environmental impact of ICTs before the next plenipotentiary conference that would take into account the latest understanding of such issues as well as the recent launch of the Green Digital Action initiative and related measures, to underpin the implementation of Resolution 182 (Rev. Bucharest, 2022). The resolution was also timely given the upcoming adoption of the Global Digital Compact. Given the multitude of parties involved and large number of climate-action initiatives being carried out across the Sectors of the Union, such a resolution was also needed to provide synergy and guidance. In regard to the necessary resources, it was hoped that the secretariat would be able to identify existing sources of funding for the collection of environmental data and for tracking and assessment of the use of biotic and abiotic resources, pending possible voluntary contributions.

1.9 The Chair invited the Council tonote the report in Document C24/72 and to invite Member States, Sector Members and Academia to actively support the activities.

1.10 It was so **agreed**.

1.11 In respect of Document C24/88, he further suggested that France lead an informal drafting group to amend the draft resolution and present a revised text to a future plenary.

1.12 It was so **agreed**.

# 2 Preparation for the World Telecommunication/ICT Policy Forum (WTPF‑26) (Documents [C24/5](https://www.itu.int/md/S24-CL-C-0005/en), [C24/75](https://www.itu.int/md/S24-CL-C-0075/en), [C24/76](https://www.itu.int/md/S24-CL-C-0076/en), [C24/93](https://www.itu.int/md/S24-CL-C-0093/en), [C24/95](https://www.itu.int/md/S24-CL-C-0095/en) and [C24/96](https://www.itu.int/md/S24-CL-C-0096/en))

2.1 A representative of the General Secretariat introduced Document C24/5, which provided background information on the upcoming WTPF-26, set out a proposed timeline for preparations for the forum, and highlighted the instructions to the Council contained in Resolution 2 (Rev. Bucharest, 2022) to decide on the duration, date, venue, agenda and themes of any future WTPF and to adopt a procedure for the preparation of the report by the Secretary-General to WTPF.

2.2 The councillor from the United Kingdom introduced Document C24/75, which contained a proposal presented by five Member States that the Council adopt the timeline proposed in Document C24/5 and decide on the theme "Policies for telecommunications/ICTs to achieve net zero and tackle environmental challenges" for WTPF-26.

2.3 The councillor from Australia introduced Document C24/76, which contained a proposal that the Council adopt the timeline proposed in Document C24/5 and decide on the theme "Policies to advance digital skills to increase diversity, promote gender equality and empower women in education, skills development and the ICT workforce, and promote diverse perspectives in the development of technology and its standards".

2.4 The councillor from the United States introduced Document C24/93, which contained a proposal that the Council decide on the theme "Gender equality and mainstreaming".

2.5 The councillor from Saudi Arabia introduced Documents C24/95 and C24/96, which contained proposals presented by 11 Member States that the Council consider and approve the themes "Space for connectivity and sustainable development" and "Building resilient digital systems to support the digital economy", respectively.

2.6 A number of councillors underlined the importance of WTPF and expressed their support for the timeline for WTPF-26 proposed by the secretariat. Holding the forum back-to-back with the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) Forum, which had been common practice prior to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, would permit high-level participants to attend both events. One councillor recommended that a virtual briefing be held for both forums, and that invitations for both forums be circulated well in advance.

2.7 Several councillors expressed support for the theme proposed in Document C24/75, which was timely, and broad enough to be compatible with a high-level opinion, and as such appropriate for the nature of WTPF. A number of councillors expressed support for the themes proposed in Documents C24/76 and C24/93, highlighting the importance of efforts to promote digital inclusivity. One councillor proposed that an overarching theme be formulated that merged the proposals presented in Documents C24/75, C24/76 and C24/93. Another councillor underlined the relevance of the themes of connectivity and resilience proposed in Documents C24/95 and C24/96 to those proposed in Documents C24/75, C24/76 and C24/93. A further councillor expressed concern that themes relating to the environment and gender, while very important, might be incompatible with the purpose of WTPF as laid down in Resolution 2 (Rev. Bucharest, 2022). Some councillors proposed that a broad theme be decided upon that would encompass all of the proposals and help all parties reach a consensus.

2.8 The representative of the General Secretariat, responding to questions from a councillor, said that in procedural terms the Council had to adopt a Council decision setting out the arrangements for WTPF-26 agreed upon by the Council. The Council was permitted under Resolution 2 (Rev. Bucharest, 2022) to decide on more than a single theme, and it had previously done so, for example for WTPF-09. An overarching theme would however help to make the forum discussions more cohesive.

2.9 The Chair proposed that informal consultations be conducted, under the leadership of the councillor from Brazil, to draft a Council decision for consideration at a subsequent plenary meeting.

2.10 It was so **agreed**.

# 3 Outcome of consultations on proposed improvements to the Plenipotentiary Conference (Documents [C24/4](https://www.itu.int/md/S24-CL-C-0004/en) and [C24/86](https://www.itu.int/md/S24-CL-C-0086/en))

3.1 The Secretary of the Plenary introduced Document C24/4. As requested at Council-23, the secretariat had examined proposals to improve conference roll-out and consulted Member States on possible improvements. The responses received, from a total of 29 Member States, were available in Document [C24/INF/13](https://www.itu.int/md/S24-CL-INF-0013/en). Member States were supportive of measures that had already been implemented, including informal, interregional meetings; hybrid preparatory meetings; training support for delegates; and not holding meetings in the evenings or at weekends. New proposals had also been received on topics such as digitization; ministerial participation; safety and security of delegates; and improving electoral proceedings. Some of the proposals could be implemented by the secretariat but others required more thorough review with the host country. The proposals were submitted to the Council for its consideration.

3.2 The councillor from China introduced a contribution from China, Armenia and Cuba in Document C24/86, which contained five proposals to further improve the preparatory process for the Plenipotentiary Conference. The proposals were to: strengthen regional representation in order to ensure equal participation of all delegations and to facilitate full discussion by Member States of ITU’s future development and strategic plan; reduce the number of side events in order to minimize distractions during formal proceedings; improve electronic voting and decision-making against the backdrop of increasing cybersecurity risks; encourage Member States to submit contributions focusing on the agenda, with no hard limit being placed on the length of contributions; and provide training for delegates.

3.3 The Chair suggested that the Council request the secretariat to continue implementing the measures adopted at PP-22 regarding time management, delegate training and improvement of processes and to work with the host country on implementing any possible improvements at PP‑26; invite the Council Working Group for strategic and financial plans to examine the proposals put forward by Member States in the consultation (Document C24/4) and in the multicountry contribution (Document C24/86), in particular on the streamlining of resolutions and decisions and their financial implications, and report back to Council-25; and invite Member States to consider sponsoring programmes that foster the participation of women and young people at the conference.

3.4 It was so **agreed**.

3.5 The observer for Qatar said that, as host country for PP-26, her country was grateful for the constructive feedback received, which she was sure would improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the conference.

# 4 Status report on assistance and support to Palestine (Documents [C24/69](https://www.itu.int/md/S24-CL-C-0069/en) and [C24/103](https://www.itu.int/md/S24-CL-C-0103/en))

4.1 The Regional Director for the Arab States introduced Document C24/69, reporting on the implementation of Resolution 125 (Rev. Bucharest, 2022) of the Plenipotentiary Conference, WTDC Resolution 18 (Rev. Kigali, 2022) and Resolution 12 (Rev.WRC-23), which aimed to provide assistance and support to Palestine for rebuilding its telecommunication network. He gave details of actions carried out over the previous year in the areas of, *inter alia*, support for Palestine’s telecommunication and digital infrastructure; connecting schools to the Internet under the Giga programme; provision of technical assistance, notably on IPv6; capacity-building programmes, including training in IPv6 and IoT technologies; support in the area of emergency telecommunications; and assistance in revising Palestine’s national table of frequency allocations, enabling access to frequencies essential for mobile services and promoting dialogue between Israel and Palestine to advance telecommunication access.

4.2 The councillor from Saudi Arabia introduced Document C24/103, containing a draft resolution on assistance and support to Palestine for rebuilding its telecommunication sector, co-sponsored by more than 30 countries. Since 7 October 2023, there had been widespread suffering, loss of life and destruction of critical infrastructure in the Gaza Strip. Telecommunication services, notably mobile, had been interrupted: 80 per cent of digital infrastructure and 70 per cent of all the towers supporting mobile networks had been destroyed. The growing financial loss was already estimated at over USD 1.5 billion. It was extremely difficult to maintain and provide services, including essential emergency services, because enterprises in the Gaza Strip were entirely inoperable. Recalling the purposes of the Union enshrined in Article 1 of the ITU Constitution, the draft resolution called for efforts to restore communications in the Gaza Strip; preserve the telecommunication infrastructure in Palestine in general, and the Gaza Strip in particular; provide the necessary support to build and activate 4G and 5G services in the Gaza Strip; and provide assistance to the Gaza Strip through the ITU regional office, as well as the necessary funding to rebuild telecommunication services in implementation of the resolution.

4.3 Councillors expressed wide appreciation for the work carried out by ITU and the report in Document C24/69.

4.4 Many councillors and observers welcomed the draft resolution in Document C24/103, believing that rebuilding ICT infrastructure would provide Palestinians with a lifeline to the modern world and restore dignity to their lives. The draft resolution emphasized the importance of fulfilling ITU’s technical mandate by providing connectivity to help the most vulnerable. Telecommunications were an important pillar of the economy, they helped to foster technical expertise and created employment, and they were therefore particularly relevant in Palestine where the interruption of development projects had made economic conditions even worse. Telecommunications were fundamental to the provision of humanitarian assistance and for communication with hospitals and the emergency services and between families and refugees in different parts of Palestine.

4.5 A number of councillors, one speaking on behalf of 25 European countries, while recalling their consistent support for ITU assistance in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, wished to see some changes in the wording of the draft resolution. They indicated their readiness to engage with the drafters and to reach consensus by agreeing on language drawing on and consistent with existing United Nations and ITU resolutions.

4.6 The observer for the Russian Federation delivered the following statement: <http://council.itu.int/2024/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2024/07/C24-Statement-Russian-Federation_PL3-e.docx>.

4.7 The observer from Israel recorded her country’s opposition to the draft resolution, which it considered was politically motivated, was based on a distortion of reality and lacked safeguards to ensure proper use of the proposed facilities and assistance.

4.8 In the light of the discussion, the Chair suggested that informal consultations be continued, under the leadership of the councillor from Saudi Arabia, with the aim of establishing a consensus text for consideration at a future plenary meeting.

4.9 It was so **agreed**.

4.10 The Council **noted** the report contained in Document C24/69.

The Secretary-General: The Chair:

D. BOGDAN-MARTIN F. SAUVAGE

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