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|  | **Document CWG-FHR-19/12** |
| **20 September 2024** |
| **English only** |
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| Contribution by Mexico and Paraguay (Republic of) |
| PROPOSED TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE CORRESPONDENCE WORKING GROUP TO REVIEW THE DRAFT GUIDELINES ON MANAGEMENT OF FULLY VIRTUAL MEETINGS AND PHYSICAL MEETINGS WITH REMOTE PARTICIPATION DEVELOPED BY THE GENERAL SECRETARIAT |
| **Purpose**The Administrations of Mexico and Paraguay invite the Working Group on financial and human resources (CWG-FHR) to consider its proposal for the definition of the Terms of Reference of the Correspondence Group in charge of reviewing the draft guidelines on the management of fully virtual meetings and physical meetings with remote participation prepared by the General Secretariat. **Action required**The Council Working Group on financial and human resources is invited to **consider** and **discuss** this document. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**References** Document [PP-22/64](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-PP-C-0064/es); Resolution [167 (Rev. Bucharest, 2022)](https://www.itu.int/en/council/Documents/basic-texts-2023/RES-167-E.pdf) of the Plenipotentiary Conference; Documents [CWG-FHR-16/26](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CWGFHR16-C-0026/en), [CWG-FHR-17/24](https://www.itu.int/md/S24-CWGFHR17-C-0024/en), [C24/61](https://www.itu.int/md/S24-CL-C-0061/en), [C24/INF/7](https://www.itu.int/md/S24-CL-INF-0007/en) and [C24/97](https://www.itu.int/md/S24-CL-C-0097/en) |

Introduction

Resolution 167 (Rev. Bucharest, 2022) of the Plenipotentiary Conference on 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 resolved, among other issues, “that the Union further study the impact of remote participation on existing rules of procedure, especially regarding decision-making in different types of meetings” and recognizes “the need to clarify the roles, rights and procedures for participation and decision-making in fully virtual meetings and physical meetings with remote participation”.

Additionally, in Annex 1 of that Resolution, it invites the formulation of high-level general guidelines for fully virtual meetings and physical meetings with remote participation, including, inter alia, the rights of the different categories of members participating remotely with regard to decision-making in the different types of meetings.

Background

In the 2023 Council meeting, it was concluded that remote participation is an invaluable tool for Member States. As a result, the General Secretariat was instructed with preparing a roadmap for the harmonization and development of facilities and capabilities that allow for the organization and conduct of fully virtual meetings, as well as in-person meetings with remote participation through electronic means, with a view to presenting it to the 2024 session of the Council.

During the sixteenth meeting of the CWG-FHR, held in October 2023, it was agreed to create a draft guideline for conducting fully virtual meetings and in-person meetings with remote participation (Document [CWG-FHR-16/26](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CWGFHR16-C-0026/en)). Subsequently, at the seventeenth meeting of the CWG-FHR, held in February 2024, delegates emphasized the need to clarify the rights of remote participants and to consider the associated costs for Member States attending ITU meetings (Document [CWG-FHR-17/24](https://www.itu.int/md/S24-CWGFHR17-C-0024/en)). In response to these concerns, the secretariat was asked to reach out to other United Nations organizations to investigate how they manage the rights of remote participants in decision-making or legally binding meetings.

At the 2024 Council, the Secretariat presented Document [C24/61](https://www.itu.int/md/S24-CL-C-0061/en), noting that there is currently no formal decision-making process for determining the modalities of a given meeting in the case of larger conferences, and that it may be advisable for the Council to take on this role and establish a formal decision-making process starting from the 2025 Council.

Additionally, the Secretariat presented Document [C24/INF/7](https://www.itu.int/md/S24-CL-INF-0007/es), containing the results of consultations and research conducted with the following United Nations organizations regarding their management of the rights of remote participants for decision-making or legally binding meetings: United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP); United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR); UN Women; International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO); World Tourism Organization (UNWTO); United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO); World Meteorological Organization (WMO); International Monetary Fund (IMF); European Space Agency (ESA); Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD); Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions (BRS); World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO); and the United Nations Office at Geneva (UNOG).

Furthermore, Mexico, El Salvador, Panama, and Paraguay presented Document [C24/97](https://www.itu.int/md/S24-CL-C-0097/en), which proposed the creation of a correspondence group tasked with developing high-level guidelines for the management and governance of virtual and in-person meetings with remote participation, as indicated in Annex 1 of Resolution 167. Furthermore, it was proposed to develop Terms of Reference to guide the work of this Group in preparing those guidelines.

As a result, the Council tasked the Secretariat with preparing a draft guideline, which will be submitted for consideration and discussion by the CWG-FHR. The CWG-FHR was also charged with creating a correspondence working group, whose Terms of Reference are yet to be defined. This group would be responsible for reviewing and evaluating the draft prepared by the Secretariat.

Proposal

The Administrations of Mexico and Paraguay propose the following Terms of Reference for the Correspondence Group to review the draft guidelines on the management of fully virtual meetings and in-person meetings with remote participation prepared by the ITU General Secretariat.

Proposal for the Terms of Reference of the Correspondence Group
instructed with reviewing the draft Guidelines on
the management of fully virtual meetings and in-person meetings
with remote participation prepared by the General Secretariat

Based on *resolves* 2 and the responsibility assigned to the ITU Council in Resolution 167 (Rev. Bucharest, 2022) of the Plenipotentiary Conference, the Councillors agree to establish a Correspondence Group composed of Member States interested in participating in the review of the Guidelines prepared by the ITU General Secretariat regarding the management of fully virtual meetings and in-person meetings with remote participation.

Objective

The Correspondence Group aims to review and evaluate the Guidelines prepared by the ITU General Secretariat for the organization, management, and decision-making of fully virtual meetings and in-person meetings with remote participation in the International Telecommunication Union, ensuring the effectiveness of such meetings.

Terms of Reference

The Correspondence Group will ensure that the following aspects are reflected in the Guidelines prepared by the General Secretariat:

– A clear definition of the rights of members participating remotely, especially concerning decision-making for all Conferences, Assemblies, and Council meetings from 2025 onwards, as well as other meetings of the three Sectors of the Union.

– Address the provision of interpretation services, ensure technological neutrality, adequate notification of meetings, and guarantee participation in offline discussions. Additionally, accessibility for persons with disabilities, proper management of the duration and scheduling of meetings, and training for both organizers and ITU staff should be included. Finally, it is recommended to review and analyze the inclusion of data collection on remote participation trends across the three Sectors for future decision-making and improvements.

– Consider best practices identified from other United Nations agencies regarding the management of remote participation in meetings, as analyzed by the ITU General Secretariat.

Composition of the Correspondence Group

– The Correspondence Group is open to all members of the Council Working Group on financial and human resources (CWG-FHR) of the ITU Council.

– The Correspondence Group will be chaired by a person designated by the members and will have a vice-chair to assist in its functions, as well as the collaboration of an official from the ITU General Secretariat.

– The calls for meetings of the Correspondence Group will be made by the chair \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, with the support of the vice-chair \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and an official from the ITU General Secretariat.

– The Correspondence Group will conduct its work through electronic means.

Timeline

– The Group will begin its work following the approval of its mandate by the CWG-FHR and will present to the Council in 2025 the review of the high-level Guidelines for discussion and, if applicable, approval by the members.

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