|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **Document CWG-FHR-20/32** |
| **10 March 2025** |
| **English only** |
|  |  |

**Chair of the Council Working Group on
Financial and Human Resources**

**Summary report of the twentieth meeting**

The Council Working Group on financial and human resources is chaired by
Ms. Vernita D. Harris, (United States of America) assisted by six Vice-Chairs as follows:

AFR - Ms Seynabou Cisse Seck (Senegal)

AMS - Mr Ronaldo Moura (Brazil)

ARB - Ms Noha Gaafar (Egypt)

ASP – (the Delegate left – current vacant)

CIS - Mr Erzhan Meiramov (Kazakhstan) (absent)

EUR - Mr Szabolcs Szentléleky (Hungary)

**1 Opening remarks and approval of the revised Agenda
(Document** [**CWG-FHR-20/1 (Rev.3**](https://www.itu.int/md/S25-CWGFHR20-C-0001/en)**))**

 **Opening remarks by the Chair**

1.1 The Chair, Ms Vernita D. Harris (United States of America) joined remotely to inform delegates that she was unable to attend in person due to an urgent matter in Washington, informed delegates that she would be participating virtually throughout the three-day meeting.

1.2 She designated Mr Szabolcs Szentléleky (Hungary) to chair the meeting on her behalf, expressing confidence in his ability to lead effectively.

1.3 Comments by two delegates were noted, leading to a revision of the agenda to merge two topics into a single item and schedule a review of the time management plan. With no objections, the agenda was approved, and the Chair handed over the meeting to Mr Szabolcs Szentléleky.

**Welcome remarks by the Secretary-General**

1.4 The Secretary-General, Ms Bogdan-Martin welcomed delegates to the Council Working Group on financial and human resources, marking the start of two weeks of discussions. She highlighted key agenda items, including ITU’s draft budget for 2026–2027, contributions on the timing of the audited financial report, financial planning for 2028–2031, and the need to reassess ITU’s revenue structure. Emphasizing ITU’s commitment to its workforce, she announced the completion of the first staff engagement survey, aimed at improving workplace conditions, and outlined other efficiency measures, such as enhancements in travel cost management, recruitment, onboarding, and the integration of artificial intelligence to optimize operations. She also provided updates on ITU’s website, the selection of the first cohort of young professionals, and change-makers initiatives. Reaffirming ITU’s commitment to transparency and accountability, she noted efforts to strengthen oversight functions, staff mediation support, and internal regulations in alignment with ITU Council decisions. Concluding her remarks, she reflected on the increasing global focus on digital technologies, referencing ITU’s engagement in high-profile forums such as the World Economic Forum in Davos, the AI Action Summit in Paris, and the African Union Summit. She underscored ITU’s leadership in shaping the digital future and encouraged delegates to ensure ITU remains well-resourced and strategically positioned for sustainable and responsible digital development.

1.5 She concluded by thanking the Chair, Ms Vernita Harris, and handed the floor back to her.

**2** **Contribution by the Russian Federation - Comments on the draft agenda for the Council Working Group on financial and human resources – Document** [**CWG-FHR-20/21**](https://www.itu.int/md/S25-CWGFHR20-C-0021/en)

2.1 Delegates took note of the contribution by the Russian Federation.

**3 Statement by the Staff Council (oral presentation)**

3.1 The statement which is to be found in Document [CWG-FHR-20/INF-3](https://www.itu.int/md/S25-CWGFHR20-INF-0003/en) was made by the Chair of the Staff Council, Mr Onder Cetinkaya.

**4 Strengthening the regional presence: Report of the online correspondence group to develop terms of reference for the ITU to complete a review of regional presence under Resolution 25 – Documents** [**CWG-FHR-20/2**](https://www.itu.int/md/S25-CWGFHR20-C-0002/en) **and** [**CWG-FHR-20/DT/1**](https://www.itu.int/md/S25-CWGFHR20-250217-TD-0001/en)

4.1 The Council Working Group (CWG) reviewed the report submitted by the Online Correspondence Group (OCG), which included the revised Terms of Reference (ToR). During the discussion, several delegates sought clarifications and provided comments on key aspects of the revised ToR, including:

* + The scope of stakeholder consultations,
	+ The alignment of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), and
	+ The process for review and evaluation.

4.2 Following these discussions, it was agreed that the Chair of the Online Correspondence Group would engage with members who had raised comments and observations in an informal consultation. The outcome of these consultations would then inform the preparation of a revised report for further consideration by the Council Working Group.

4.3 Following the completion of the informal consultations, amendments were made to the Terms of Reference. The revised document was subsequently submitted to the Council Working Group for consideration. The revised Terms of Reference, subject to minor typographical adjustments were adopted, and are reflected in [Annex A](#AnnexA) to this document.

**5 Methodology for provision of estimates of the financial implications of proposed decisions and resolutions at ITU conferences and assemblies – Document**[**CWG-FHR-20/4**](https://www.itu.int/md/S25-CWGFHR20-C-0004/en)

5.1 The secretariat presented Document CWG-FHR 20/4.

5.2 After intense discussions on the subject, the Chair decided to set up an informal group to find a consensus on this topic.

5.3 CWG-FHR invited the secretariat to present to the 21st meeting of the CWG-FHR the approach(s) for estimating the possible financial implications of proposals prior to the conferences and assemblies.

5.4 Member States, Regional Telecommunication Organizations (RTOs) and Sector Members could voluntarily seek support from the secretariat to obtain information related to the possible financial implications on their proposals – whether individual, joint or common - as early as possible prior to the conferences and assemblies.

5.5 The secretariat of the conferences and assemblies is invited to provide transparent information on the possible financial implications of proposals submitted as early as possible to support discussion.

**6 Report from the CWG-FHR correspondence group on the Draft guidelines on the management of fully virtual and physical meetings with remote participation at ITU - Document**[**CWG-FHR-20/3**](https://www.itu.int/md/S25-CWGFHR20-C-0003/en) **(Rev.2)**

6.1 The document was presented by the Chair of the Correspondence Group set up at the 19th meeting of CWG-FHR in October 2024 to review the draft guidelines on the management of virtual meetings and physical meetings with remote participation in line with Annex 1 to Resolution 167 (Rev. Bucharest, 2022) 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.

6.2 The Chair presented an overview of the modifications to the draft document agreed upon and introduced by the Correspondence Group. Further modifications proposed by Bulgaria were presented in revision marks, as they were submitted after the closure of the Correspondence Group meetings in which Bulgaria could not participate due to technical difficulties in accessing the meeting platform.

6.3 Delegates discussed amending the language proposed by Bulgaria on ensuring equal access to meeting platforms for all participants. A delegate proposed new language on avoiding scheduling virtual meetings on Fridays when possible.

6.4 Delegates additionally queried whether captioning for remote meetings or physical meetings with remote participation was mandatory or optional; whether remote participants were considered active participants if they did not take the floor; how a chair should select the correct order of participants between those physically present and those online; and whether the secretariat could prepare a study of the existing rules of procedure for participation in meetings in line with *resolves 4* of Resolution 167. A delegate further suggested that the secretariat propose a limited list of meetings in which remote participants could have the right to participate in decision-making and voting, with a strict procedure for accreditation of remote participants. As this was not provided for in existing ITU permanent acts, the secretariat could explore amending the GR to adapt to the new global trend of expanding the practice of holding remote meetings and reducing logistical costs.

6.5 Following further offline discussions and amendments to the text on the specific points of ensuring equal access to meeting platforms and avoiding scheduling virtual meetings on Fridays, the proposed modifications were approved by CWG-FHR and it was agreed that the document would be submitted as such to Council in its June 2025 session for endorsement.

**7 Annual budgetary implications of addressing the WTSA-24 decisions – Document**[**CWG-FHR-20/5**](https://www.itu.int/md/S25-CWGFHR20-C-0005/en)

7.1 The TSB Director made the following statement:
<https://www.itu.int/en/council/Documents/2025/Speech-TSB-Director-to-CWG-FHR.pdf>.

7.2 The TSB Deputy Director presented Document CWG-FHR-20/5 on behalf of the Secretary-General.

7.3 There were several questions on the method of computation of the financial impact, the priorities of the topics to implement, and the viability of the six options proposed.

7.4 The secretariat explained that although WTSA-24 approved eight new resolutions, updated 44 resolutions, and approved fifteen actions that instruct the TSB Director to implement them, the WTSA-24 Budget Control Committee (COM2) and WTSA-24 plenary approved an estimated budget impact of **MCHF 1.414** that only covers Resolution 101 on Artificial Intelligence (AI), Resolution 103 on Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI), and Resolution 106 on Sustainable Digital Transformation (SDT).

7.5 The secretariat informed CWG-FHR that discussions are underway with **India** to explore option 1 (savings from the funding provided by the host country to the organization of the Assembly, subject to the agreement of the host country). The exact amount of the savings is unclear at the time of presentation of this document as the WTSA-24 expenses have not been closed yet.

7.6 In addition, the secretariat highlighted Document CWG-FHR-20/14 to this CWG-FHR meeting that proposes that the one-time cost and first year implementation of WTSA-24, or **KCHF 556**, be funded from the 2024 budget savings.

7.7 The secretariat also explained that the **priorities** guided by WTSA-24 decisions and regular requests from membership includes AI, DPI, Sustainability, Quantum, and Disaster/Emergency Communications.

7.8 Several delegates supported option 3 (using savings from ITU budget) to fund the implementation of WTSA-24 outcomes. Others encouraged further resource mobilisation, invited voluntary contributions, and exploring other cost recovery mechanisms.

7.9 The secretariat expressed its gratitude to the CWG-FHR for its support and guidance.

**8 Preparation of the draft budget of the Union for 2026-2027 –
Document**[**CWG-FHR-20/15**](https://www.itu.int/md/S25-CWGFHR20-C-0015/en)

8.1 The secretariat presented Document CWG-FHR 20/15.

8.2 This document presents the status of the draft biennial Budget for the years 2026-2027, as of 20 January 2025. At this stage of the preparation of the draft budget for 2026-2027, expenses and revenue are not balanced and indicates a deficit of some CHF 18.1 million.

8.3 Table 1 in the document presents the level of planned expenses by sector included in the current draft budget. At this stage of the budget preparation process, the planned expenses for 2026-2027 are CHF 2.9 million above the limits set by the Plenipotentiary Conference.

8.4 Table 2 in the document provides the revenue forecast for 2026-2027. Anticipated revenues for the period 2026-2027 are CHF 15.2 million below the anticipated revenue foreseen by the Plenipotentiary Conference when the 2024-2027 Financial Plan was approved.

8.5 The secretariat will continue to work on the draft biennial budget and will present a balanced budget to Council 2025 in accordance with the mandated timelines.

8.6 The process for balancing the budget is considering the following elements:

i) Implementation of efficiency measures;

ii) Prioritization and efficiency efforts at Bureau/Departmental level;

iii) De-prioritization of non-essential activities;

iv) Delayed recruitment for vacant positions in non-essential activities;

v) Incorporate anticipated gains from ITU resource mobilization efforts.

8.7 It should be noted that there is a lack of revenues, particularly on cost recovery. Following discussions with delegates on this document, ITU management undertook to present a balanced draft budget for the period 2026-2027 in the coming weeks.

8.8 The CWG-FHR took note of this document, and the approaches taken by ITU to fund its activities within the agreed resources available through ITU’s regular budget.

**9 Full cost – Processing of space notices – Document**[**CWG-FHR-20/10**](https://www.itu.int/md/S25-CWGFHR20-C-0010/en)

9.1 The secretariat presented Document CWG-FHR 20/10.

9.2 The purpose of this document is to provide the breakdown of the 2024 budget full cost of the processing of space notices by category of filling. This full cost is calculated based on the cost allocation methodology described in Council Decision 535. Resolution 91 (Rev. Guadalajara, 2010) states, *inter alia,* that the Council should “continue developing appropriate charges based on full attribution of the costs of providing the service”. It is in this framework and to support the work undertaken by the Council Expert Group on Decision 482 that this document is prepared. Several delegations expressed their concerns about the full cost recovery.

9.3 The Council Working Group on financial and human resources took note of this document pending the report of the Expert Group on Decision 482 that will be communicated in April 2025 and provide guidance to Council 2025.

**10 Contribution by Asia Satellite Telecommunications Co. Ltd. (AsiaSat) - Processing of notices for satellite networks and systems – Document**[**CWG-FHR-20/23**](https://www.itu.int/md/S25-CWGFHR20-C-0023/en)

10.1 A representative of AsiaSat introduced Document CWG-FHR-20/23 which contains three main considerations:

 1) what should be recovered through satellite filing charges;

 2) what is to be recovered and what is a reasonable percentage to be attributed to indirect costs; and

 3) financing and requirements for free filings.

10.2 Following this introduction, several delegates took the floor to highlight the importance of maintaining the mechanism of allocating one free filing per country and per year. Moreover, it was highlighted that the extent of costs to be recovered through Council Decision 482 should be determined in accordance with PP Resolution 91 (Rev. Guadalajara, 2010). Finally, several delegates insisted on the need to wait for the final report of the Expert Group on Decision 482 before revisions to Decision 482 can be considered by Council.

**11** **Interim report from the Expert Group on Decision 482 – Document** [**CWG-FHR-20/6**](https://www.itu.int/md/S25-CWGFHR20-C-0006/en)

11.1 The secretariat presented the interim report from the Expert Group on Decision 482 on behalf of the Chair of the Expert Group. Three meetings had already taken place, including the third one during the week preceding the meeting of the CWG-FHR. Since the work of the group had not been completed yet, a fourth meeting is planned on 10 and 11 April 2025 in order to complete the report of the group to the 2025 session of Council. Several delegates stressed the importance for the group to complete its work in time for the Council.

 **Analysis of the outcome of the 3rd meeting of the Expert Group on Decision 482 – Document**[**CWG-FHR-20/29**](https://www.itu.int/md/S25-CWGFHR20-C-0029/en)

11.2 The CWG-FHR reviewed the analysis presented on the outcome of the third meeting of the Council Expert Group on Decision 482, as outlined in document CWG FHR 20/29.

11.3 Key outcomes of the discussion:

* Delegates took note of the presentation, and the financial implications highlighted.
* Some delegates rejected Option 1, which proposed a flat fee increase of 103 per cent across all satellite network filings.
* Recognizing the urgency of addressing the financial shortfall in cost recovery for satellite network filings (SNF), some delegates emphasized the need for the Expert Group to conclude its work.
* The final meeting of the Expert Group will take place in April 2025 to finalize outstanding issues, particularly on non-geostationary (non-GSO) systems, and provide comprehensive recommendations for full cost recovery.

11.4 Several delegates stressed the importance of ensuring a financially sustainable solution and expect the Expert Group’s final recommendations in April 2025 to resolve the outstanding issues and align fees with actual costs and report accordingly to Council 2025.

**12 Code of conduct at ITU events – Working together for a culture of respect – Document**[**CWG-FHR-20/17**](https://www.itu.int/md/S25-CWGFHR20-C-0017/en) **Contribution by RCC - Proposals related to the code of conduct at ITU events – Document**[**CWG-FHR-20/26**](https://www.itu.int/md/S25-CWGFHR20-C-0026/en)

12.1 The secretariat introduced Document CWG-FHR-20/17, recalling that the Council, at its 2024 session, endorsed the concept of a Code of Conduct for ITU events and instructed the secretariat to develop a preliminary draft Code of Conduct for ITU meetings and events. The objective is to foster a professional, inclusive, respectful, and safe environment for all delegates and participants. The draft is to be further developed by the CWG-FHR.

12.2 As a result, a revised ITU Code of Conduct aimed at preventing harassment, including sexual harassment, at ITU events, along with the findings of a benchmarking exercise on how the UN Code of Conduct is applied in other organizations, was submitted for discussion and consideration at the February 2025 CWG-FHR meeting, in response to a request made during the October 2024 CWG-FHR meeting.

12.3 It was noted that the secretariat based its work on the UN System Code of Conduct and revised the complaint process, including the addition of ITU contact details.

**13 Contribution by RCC - Proposals related to the code of conduct at ITU events – Document**[**CWG-FHR-20/26**](https://www.itu.int/md/S25-CWGFHR20-C-0026/en)

13.1 The Regional Commonwealth in the Field of Communications (RCC) representative introduced RCC’s contribution related to the Code of Conduct at ITU events (Document CWG-FHR-20/26), submitted for the CWG-FHR’s consideration.

13.2 During a meeting of the RCC working group on cooperation with ITU, RCC members discussed the feasibility of applying the UN Code of Conduct to ITU events. They concluded that the substantive part of the Code lacks sufficient balance.

13.3 It was noted that the Code does not explicitly define the right to file a complaint or the possibility of appealing an accusation. Moreover, it does not include provisions allowing a Member State or Sector Member to contest the adequacy or validity of a response to an alleged violation. This could potentially lead to the complete exclusion of an accused representative from participating in ITU meetings.

13.4 Document CWG-FHR-20/26 further stipulates that, in order to achieve consensus, CWG-FHR should recommend deviations or additions to the UN System Code of Conduct only when necessary to address ITU-specific considerations.

13.5 Several delegations expressed support for the draft ITU Code of Conduct outlined in Document CWG-FHR-20/17, emphasizing the need to ensure a safe environment for all participants attending ITU events. Some also highlighted the importance of providing a contact list for ITU events, including contact details for a focal point in the host country when an event is held outside Geneva.

13.6 However, some delegations pointed out that the UN Code of Conduct is an informational document with no legal status. Certain delegates stressed that it must remain non-binding and should not, under any circumstances, carry legal or prescriptive weight. It was also underlined that delegates fall under the sovereign authority of their respective Member States, with jurisdiction resting with the Administration that nominates them.

13.7 The Legal Advisor clarified that the UN Code of Conduct has been applied at ITU for several years. He confirmed that it is not a prescriptive document and that the ITU Secretary-General has no authority to impose sanctions on delegates. He also reiterated that ITU staff are subject to ITU policies, which do not apply to delegates. This is why ITU has implemented the UN System Code of Conduct, which is specifically aimed at event participants.

13.8 Some delegations noted that the main rationale for developing an ITU Code of Conduct is that ITU already applies the UN System Code of Conduct. The request was simply to determine how best to implement the UN Code within ITU. Several delegations warned that exceeding this scope could present significant challenges, including jurisdictional issues and the current mandate of the Oversight Charter, definitional complexities, ITU’s in-house expertise and capacity, and financial costs. The United States requested to include a reservation on the record as to the current UN Code of Conduct’s mention of "gender".

13.9 As no consensus was reached on the proposed ITU Events Code of Conduct text and the contribution by RCC, the Chair of the CWG-FHR requested the secretariat to submit, at the next CWG-FHR meeting, a detailed explanation of the implementation of the UN System Code of Conduct, which will remain in effect until further notice.

13.10 The meeting’s report will be submitted to the ITU Council and will serve as a basis for future work.

**14 Fee exemptions analysis – Document**[**CWG-FHR-19/9**](https://www.itu.int/md/S24-CWGFHR19-C-0009/en)

14.1 At its January 2024 session, following a discussion of the multi-country contribution CWG-FHR 17/15 regarding fee exemptions, the CWG-FHR chair asked the secretariat to assess the impact of changes proposed in this contribution. The secretariat provided this assessment in document CWG-FHR 19/9, which was presented to the October 2024 session and again to this February 2025 session. In summary, the multi-country contribution would bring Resolution 925 up to date and in alignment with current practice but the secretariat highlighted some areas requiring clarification for implementation. Following consultations with the authors of the multi-country contribution, the main proposed change for clarification is to remove reference to “taking into consideration the economic situation” of requesting entities in considering, ADD f, as the applying entity's revenues are not taken into consideration in the exemption criteria.

14.2 The issue of grandfathering of entities on the list prior to 2017 remains an open point. If the Council were to adopt the changes proposed to Resolution 925, without explicitly deciding to continue to grandfather the entities approved prior to 2017, about 50 entities (see Annexes 3 and 4 in Document [**C22/100**](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-CL-C-0100/en)) would in principle lose their exemption status.

14.3 Lastly, when examining the practices of other UN bodies, the secretariat highlighted the approach of UPU which charges reduced fees for non-governmental, not-for profit entities rather than offering fee exemption. This is an option that the CWG-FHR may also wish to consider.

14.4 One delegation asked if the secretariat had considered how national NGOs might be accommodated to increase multistakeholder engagement. The secretariat replied it receives some applications for exemptions from national NGOs, but they do not meet the criteria as revised in 2017. Council could choose to include national NGOs within the exemption criteria. Alternatively, ITU could potentially adopt the approach of UPU and offer reduced fees for NGOs rather than fee exemption, which could cover national and international NGOs. Another delegate added that Council should review the criteria.

14.5 With no further comments, the Chair concluded that this topic will be included in the proposed review of sector membership by the sector advisory groups and inter-sector coordination group, as outlined in the liaison statement.

 **Liaison statement on strengthening Sector Member engagement and revenues -** [**CWG-FHR-20/20 (Rev.1)**](https://www.itu.int/md/S25-CWGFHR20-C-0020/en)

14.6 The Resource Mobilization strategy adopted by Council 2024 calls for a review of Sector membership rights and benefits in consultation with the Sector advisory groups. This includes considering benefits that would encourage existing Sector Members to have memberships across multiple Sectors and Associates to upgrade to full Sector membership. It also includes reviewing and modernizing key member services like Study Groups.

14.7 Document CWG-FHR 20/20 presents a draft liaison statement from the CWG-FHR to the Sector Advisory Groups requesting that they add an agenda item to their upcoming meetings in 2025 to consult Member States and Sector Members (including Associates and Academia) on ways to strengthen Sector membership engagement and revenues. Document 20/20 also recommends sending this statement to the Inter-Sector Coordination Group (ISCG) to ensure full coordination.

14.8 Several delegations expressed support for the liaison statement and its proposed request for the Sector advisory groups and ISCG to consult and report on this topic. One delegation asked that it be made clear in the statement that the consultation include Associates, while another asked that the statement request inputs by the end of 2025.

14.9 The chair concluded that the liaison statement will be finalized and sent by the secretariat taking into account the editorial changes requested by delegates.

**15 Progress on the implementation of IT, cybersecurity, and data governance and IT roadmap implementation report - Document**[**CWG-FHR-20/12**](https://www.itu.int/md/S25-CWGFHR20-C-0012/en)

15.1 The secretariat introduced Document CWG-FHR-20/12 which provided an update on IT, cybersecurity, and data governance within ITU, along with progress on the IT transformation roadmap. ITU underwent a major transformation to enhance efficiency, foster innovation, and improve services for its members. To support this, ITU established a robust IT governance framework aligned with its business strategy and promoted collaboration between business units and IT.

15.2 A key initiative was the formation of the Information and Communication Technology Governance Committee (ICTGC) in 2024, which oversaw IT governance. The Committee, chaired by the Deputy Secretary-General, included appointed officials and bureau representatives to ensure ITU-wide coverage. Its Terms of Reference were set by Service Order 24/10 on 20 September 2024.

15.3 The report also highlighted significant progress in IT transformation, particularly in the following areas:

Cybersecurity

Information Governance (IG)

Enterprise Architecture (EA)

Cloud Adoption

Virtual Events and Remote Participation

ITU Website Improvements

AI Solutions

Corporate ERP and CRM Solutions

15.4 These advancements demonstrated ITU’s commitment to strengthening its IT infrastructure and enhancing services for its members.

15.5 Delegates welcomed the update, noting progress in security, governance, and IT achievements within ITU. Some delegates requested that future reports include timelines and details on pending activities in various areas of implementation.

15.6 Delegates appreciated the ITU’s significant efforts in enhancing Member States' experience through platforms, process, and tool updates, particularly the recent cloud migration project. They requested more detailed information on the upcoming cloud migration project, with a specific focus on the ERP/CRM transition.

15.7 Delegates emphasized the importance of understanding the IT strategy, action plans, and monitoring performance indicators for ICT implementation across the Union.

15.8 Some delegates noted that the report did not provide updates on challenges in implementing the IT roadmap, independent ITU audits, or system-level vulnerability assessments. They stressed the importance of regular updates on these matters, particularly regarding IT security mechanisms.

15.9 The secretariat acknowledged the request for timelines and progress tracking in future reports and informed delegates that the Information Services Department is currently undergoing a leadership transition, and the work on the IS strategy will be continued in the coming months.

15.10 The secretariat clarified that the ERP and CRM systems migration landscape is under evaluation, it has not been finalized yet and noted that ITU has taken all the steps necessary to compare software and implementation partners and evaluate all the financial impacts of this transition.

15.11 The secretariat informed that ITU conducts independent cybersecurity assessments and regularly reports to the auditors, in the same way as for other systems where external auditors’ checks are made.

15.12 The secretariat further clarified the role of the ICT Governance Committee which is led by the Secretary-General, currently chaired by the DSG, and composed of a representative from each Bureau as well as members from the Financial Resources Management and Human Resources Management departments. The ICTGC members assist the Secretary-General in decision-making regarding investments in IT projects. Member States created the ICT fund which was approved by the Council and the Council allocates funds for this ICT fund during each budget exercise, but in terms of management, it is the Deputy Secretary-General through the Steering Committee who proceeds with the allocations and investments in IT projects within the ITU.

**16 Update on the Transformation process – Document**[**CWG-FHR-20/11**](https://www.itu.int/md/S25-CWGFHR20-C-0011/en), **Contribution by the Russian Federation - Comments to the report of Secretary-General - Update on the transformation process – Document**[**CWG-FHR-20/22**](https://www.itu.int/md/S25-CWGFHR20-C-0022/en) **and Update on the new website project – Document**[**CWG-FHR-20/28**](https://www.itu.int/md/S25-CWGFHR20-C-0028/en)

16.1 An update on Transformation was provided to delegates with a focus on the progress made across the accelerated initiatives. Delegates were pleased with overall progress made. Additionally, the six accelerated initiatives are people-based initiatives that also benefit staff. Delegates also appreciated the efforts in moving forward with the Transformation process and in the improvements made to the ITU website and expressed supporting the pillars and initiatives identified in the roadmap as being critical to achieving organizational excellence and highlighted the need to ensure the required financial resources to advance with a meaningful healthy momentum.

16.2 In their interventions, key themes included the need for clear timelines and delivery dates for the six phases of the new website project, concerns about the harmonization and multilingualism of the website, and the importance of a robust information architecture to improve search functionality and user experience. Delegates requested the secretariat to include an update on the new website project in the agenda of all meetings in 2025, including the breakdown of costs for the new website and consideration for a similar project to upgrade the intranet.

16.3 Another significant theme was the transformation process, with comments highlighting the importance of resource optimization, alignment with future strategic and financial plans, and the involvement of an external and independent perspective to ensure transparency and trust. There was also feedback on the need for collaboration and dialogue between the Staff Council and the Transformation Team, as well as the importance of addressing challenges related to leadership culture, performance management, and the use of AI tools. Overall, the feedback underscored the necessity of a well-coordinated and transparent approach to both the website project and the broader transformation initiatives.

**17 Challenges faced in implementing Council Decision 601 on IIN registration – Document**[**CWG-FHR-20/13**](https://www.itu.int/md/S25-CWGFHR20-C-0013/en)

17.1 The secretariat introduced Document CWG-FHR-20/13 by:

 1) recalling the content of Council Decision 601;

 2) presenting the status of its implementation and the challenges encountered in collecting annual maintenance fees for IIN.

17.2 One delegate (SG2 Chair) reported that Recommendation ITU-T E.118 had been under revision and was determined at the ITU-T Study Group 2 (SG2) meeting (Geneva, 5-14 February 2025). The registrar function for IIN has been removed from the revised Recommendation. However, there was uncertainty about how to formally convey this information to the Council.

17.3 Delegates noted the document, and a summary of the discussions will be included in the report. It is expected that ITU-T SG2 will communicate with the Council via the TSB Director once revised Recommendation ITU-T E.118 on IIN is officially approved. Consequently, Decision 601 will likely be deleted.

**18 Liaison statement on the creation of the Council Working Group for strategic and financial plans – Document**[**CWG-FHR-20/30**](https://www.itu.int/md/S25-CWGFHR20-C-0030/en)

18.1 The secretariat introduced Document CWG-FHR-20/30, a liaison statement on the creation of the Council Working Group for strategic and financial plans (CWG-SFP). During the discussion, one delegate questioned whether the document’s title should refer to the "activity" rather than the "creation" of the working group. Another delegate expressed the view that the purpose of the statement was to inform the group about the creation of CWG-SFP. The secretariat clarified that the primary objective was indeed to inform the group about the establishment of CWG-SFP and to invite other groups to contribute to its work. With this clarification, the document was noted by CWG-FHR.

**19 Update on the Union's headquarters premises project - Document**[**CWG-FHR-20/7**](https://www.itu.int/md/S25-CWGFHR20-C-0007/en) **and MSAG Report – Oral presentation**

19.1 The Head of BPFMD introduced Document [CWG-FHR-20/7](https://www.itu.int/md/S25-CWGFHR20-C-0007/en) which provides an update on the implementation of Council Decision 640 (C24) on the Union Headquarters Premises Project.

19.2 The Technical Evaluation Panel, part of the international tender process initiated in September 2024, is successfully advancing with the selection of the Planning and Design firm (Architects & Engineers) and is expected to finalize all activities at the end of March 2025. The activities of the initial design phase have been officially closed and all financial commitments have been finalized. The process is on time and within the budget as defined by the Council.

19.3 The ongoing excellent relations with Swiss Authorities enhance the progress to formalize the repurposing of the CHF 150M loan.

19.4 Sponsorship: three out of four initial sponsors confirmed their financial engagement at the original level of this project. The fourth sponsor is strongly committed and interested to see the development of the project before making the final decision.

19.5 The MSAG Chair reported verbally on MSAG’s progress, thanking the secretariat, project team and MSAG colleagues for their engagement. With the support of ITU Legal Adviser MSAG updated its terms of reference which now improve the confidentiality requirements especially related to the procurement processes.

**20 Initial draft of the campus strategic plan – Document**[**CWG-FHR-20/8**](https://www.itu.int/md/S25-CWGFHR20-C-0008/en) **and *Multi-country contribution:*  Proposals related to the implementation of an alternative project for the new ITU headquarters building – Document**[**CWG-FHR-20/27**](https://www.itu.int/md/S25-CWGFHR20-C-0027/en)

20.1 The secretariat also introduced Document [CWG-FHR-20/8](https://www.itu.int/md/S25-CWGFHR20-C-0008/en) presented the initial draft of the campus strategic plan, whose purpose is to align the organization’s physical environment with its mandate and strategic objectives and to ensure it is done through sustainable financial planning and well-considered development.

20.2 RCC representative introduced the multi-country contribution: Proposals related to the implementation of an alternative project for the new ITU headquarters building.

20.3 A number of questions from delegations were responded to by the secretariat:

20.4 One delegate expressed his appreciation, also taking into account the feedback received from the German technical expert supporting the MSAG, for the work done and encouraged ITU to continue in this good direction.

20.5 One delegate expressed appreciation for the consistent draft of the campus strategic plan and the multi-country contribution as these both documents show clear signal to explore other ways to deal with the Tower. The Tower may have value not only as a capital asset but also as the income generating one. Therefore, this delegate confirms the agreement to move on exploring more the various possibilities of retaining the Tower. Referring to the multi-country contributions, the delegate confirms that after having consulted some experts, an autonomous building might offer a resilient building.

20.6 Another delegate thanked the secretariat for the progress made and inquired about the reasons of the delay in the dates of the project management services new tender process. It is requested to indicate on which specific quarter the tender would be launched.

20.7 Another delegate also thanked the secretariat for the update indicating their appreciation that the next phase of this project is moving forward in accordance with the Council Decision. The reduction of the fees by the provider of the project management service is welcome. They support the cost savings from the funds already being expended being added to the contingency fund for the new project as well as welcoming any updates from the Swiss Administration regarding the repurposing of the loan.

20.8 One delegate congratulated ITU for all the efforts made so far and the secretariat for the initial draft of the campus strategic plan. This is a very good document since it has proposals, recommendations and the way forward. A clarification is required regarding the asset value of the Tower, is the Canton of Geneva still considering keeping the Tower as an iconic building? If yes, could this have any implications on the potential sale of the Tower?

20.9 One delegate thanked the secretariat for this very good document and the incredible amount of work and effort moving forward. The inquiry is about the provenience of the Tower evaluation amounts and the possibility of keeping/refurbishing it and renting/leasing floors.

20.10 Another delegate expressed their appreciation for the positive progress made by the secretariat and MSAG in advancing the headquarters building project and requested detailed information on the risk management strategy and mitigation measures of the project. An early deliberation on the matter of selling Tower or Montbrillant and its financial impact is necessary to ensure that the PP-26 gets the detailed information.

20.11 Another delegate also thanked the secretariat for the excellent document on the campus strategic plan and also highlighted the necessity to reflect the risk management in the campus strategic approach. The delegate referred to the 2021 Financial Audit Statement by the previous external auditors where the aspects of the Tower topic was reflected.

**21 Business continuity modalities for ITU meetings 2028-2029 – Document**[**CWG-FHR-20/9**](https://www.itu.int/md/S25-CWGFHR20-C-0009/en) **and update on organization of ITU meetings in the International Conference Center Geneva (CICG) – Document**[**CWG-FHR-20/INF/2**](https://www.itu.int/md/S25-CWGFHR20-INF-0002/en)

21.1 CWG-FHR-20/9 presented business continuity options for holding ITU meetings in 2028 and 2029 in accordance with the project milestones set out in the annex to Decision 640 on the new Varembé building project, which established 2028 as the initial year for execution of the project. The three principal modalities were to hold holding ITU meetings in the period 2028-2029 in Palexpo in Geneva, in one or more ITU Meetings Hub hosted by a Member State, or entirely virtually. It would also be possible, while logistically challenging, to combine these modalities. Document CWG-FHR-20/INF/2 on the organization of ITU meetings in the International Conference Center Geneva (CICG) was referenced in this context, given that CICG will not be available in 2028 due to planned renovation.

21.2 Delegates welcomed the timeliness of this document and discussed the relative advantages of the different modalities. Some delegates expressed a strong preference for maintaining all meetings in Geneva, requesting more details on the cost of Palexpo as well as exploration of the feasibility of using the conference facilities of other international organizations in Geneva. One delegate spoke in favour of the meetings hub proposal. Several delegates requested that the nature of individual meetings be taken into account when assessing the suitability of holding meetings fully virtually, noting in particular that virtual meetings should be limited in length. Delegates discussed the feasibility of combining modalities and requested a categorization or mapping of all ITU meetings in terms of features, requirements and length to establish the viability of each modality for each meeting including financial costs. A delegate queried whether meeting venues for 2030 – 2031 should also be discussed as the new Varembé building would only be completed in 2031 and noted the importance of considering staff wellbeing within the ITU Meetings Hub concept; another asked that the business continuity plan for meetings be included in the wider business continuity strategy for the new building project.

21.3 A delegate reaffirmed ITU’s host country commitment to provide support during the period of CICG renovation within the limits of resources and pending further discussion at federal level on support for international organizations.

21.4 The secretariat noted delegate concerns on holding fully virtual meetings and the request to provide more detailed meeting categorization. Other international organizations based in Geneva, including UNOG, were regularly contacted for meeting space inquiries but no organization could provide sufficient space for the full schedule of ITU meetings or offer any timely guarantee of space for specific meetings. Given the lack of predictability in planning meetings necessary for budgetary and ITU membership purposes, as well as the extremely limited availability of space in other organizations, Palexpo remained the only viable Geneva-based option. Discussions with UNOG would however continue. In 2030 and 2031, whilst the new Varembé building would not be completed, conference facilities in Montbrillant and Tower should be available for use in addition to limited space in CICG following its planned renovation.

21.5 The Deputy Secretary-General welcomed the suggestions provided by delegates and confirmed that more details would be provided as requested to ITU Council 2025, where the secretariat would seek clear guidance on the way forward for business continuity for meetings including acceptability of different modalities and any related allocation of budget, noting that the Palexpo option would require financial commitment by the end of 2025.

21.6 The Chair requested that the secretariat present a detailed report mapping meetings to modalities to Council in its June 2025 session.

**22 Contribution by Switzerland - Ensuring the return to the normal reporting cycle for the 2024 financial statements – Document**[**CWG-FHR-20/18**](https://www.itu.int/md/S25-CWGFHR20-C-0018/en)

22.1 Switzerland introduced Document [CWG-FHR-20/18](https://www.itu.int/md/S25-CWGFHR20-C-0018/en) -Ensuring the return to the normal reporting cycle for the 2024 financial statements.

22.2 The document emphasizes the importance of ensuring that the ITU returns to a regular reporting cycle for the 2024 financial statements. Switzerland expressed concerns that the Council had been unable to fulfil its role effectively in overseeing the Union's finances in 2022 and 2023 in a timely manner, mainly due to the unavailability of the necessary documents. The situation needs to be rectified to ensure a normal reporting cycle for the 2024 financial statements, which is critical for maintaining proper financial oversight.

22.3 Switzerland proposed that the Chair of CWG-FHR should formally request that the external auditor provides a complete and final report on the 2024 financial statements by fourteen days before the 2025 Council session. Additionally, the Secretary-General should collaborate with the external auditors to meet this deadline.

22.4 The Swiss contribution received a strong support by the delegates and the management reiterated the ITU’s commitment to improve and provide documents on time and also confirmed that the financial statements are on track to allow the audit report to be published as requested.

**23 2024 Budget implementation – Document**[**CWG-FHR-20/14**](https://www.itu.int/md/S25-CWGFHR20-C-0014/en)

23.1 The secretariat presented Document CWG-FHR 20/14.

23.2 This report provides the 2024 budget implementation forecast, as well as an outline of recommendations which the secretariat will make to Council 2025 for the allocation of the anticipated surplus.

23.3 On 14 February 2025, the provisional anticipated result for 2024 stands at +CHF 5.6 million, an anticipated surplus, corresponding to 3.43 per cent of the 2024 budget.

23.4 The expenses rate stands at 94.60 per cent, while the revenue rate is foreseen to be 98.02 per cent.

23.5 Balance sheet re-evaluation for cash and cash equivalent will be dealt with outside of the budget implementation and will not impact the budget implementation result.

23.6 The secretariat has previously advised membership of the challenging financial position experienced by ITU in relation to funding its activities and ensuring prudent resource management. The surplus for 2024 is not an indication of excess resources, but reflective of cuts in expenses and positive treasury management, with the intention to make additional funding available for key underfunded activities. The secretariat intends to propose at Council that ITU uses this result to fund key organizational priorities for the coming years. Detailed proposals, including justifications and further details of the specific expenditure will be presented to Council 2025, but at this stage, based on the existing constraints on the ITU Budget for 2025, the secretariat anticipates that it will request that Council authorize the Secretary-General to make the following allocations from the 2024 surplus:

**Summary of the proposal**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Planned allocation of resources** | **KCHF** |
| After Service Health Insurance (ASHI) – Decision 5, (Bucharest, 2022) | 500 |
| Allocation to WTSA-24 post conference work | 556 |
| Allocation to WRC-23 post conference work | 300 |
| ITU AI related Initiatives  | 500 |
| Allocation to the Transformation roadmap implementation and roadmap for website improvement | 250 |
| Allocation to the Young Professional Programme (YPP) | 250 |
| Allocation WTPF-26 preparation | 180 |
| Allocation to the Building Maintenance Fund | 1'000 |
| Allocation to the ICT Fund | 1'000 |
| Transfer to the Information and Communication Technologies Development Fund (ICT-DF) | 524 |
| XXX | 591 |
| **TOTAL** | **5'651** |

23.7 The CWG-FHR took note of this document and considered that this item will be discussed at the next Council session in June 2025.

**24 Contribution by South Africa (Republic of) - Submission and consideration of the 2024 financial statements - Document**[**CWG-FHR-20/25**](https://www.itu.int/md/S25-CWGFHR20-C-0025/en)

24.1 South Africa introduced Document [CWG-FHR-20/25](https://www.itu.int/md/S25-CWGFHR20-C-0025/en) - Submission and consideration of the 2024 financial statements.

24.2 The document stressed the need for the ITU to return to its standard financial reporting cycle for the 2024 financial statements, ensuring a thorough review and transparent governance process.

24.3 It is therefore requested that the financial statements for 2024 be evaluated by the Council Working Group on Financial and Human Resources before they are submitted for final approval at the 2025 ordinary session of the ITU Council. This review is vital for effective financial oversight, accountability, and transparency within the organization

24.4 Some delegates expressed their concern about the delay in the presentation of the final audit report which restricted the Council's ability to engage fully with the material, undermining effective financial oversight and governance.

24.5 The secretariat expressed its appreciation to the delegates for their comments and their willingness to consider any possibilities which could enhance the transparency for all the financial documents and stressed that the financial statements and the final audit report are also provided and discussed with the IMAC Members prior to the Council session. The secretariat proposed to reinstate during the Council an information session with the external auditors to allow a direct dialogue on audit findings.

24.6 As a way forward and considering the strong support received on this contribution the Chair urged the secretariat to organize a virtual meeting of the CWG-FHR after the publication of the final audit report and before the next Council session to discuss further the financial documents.

**25 Renewal of the mandate of the External Auditor - The United Kingdom's National Audit Office (NAO) - for a period of two years – Document**[**CWG-FHR-20/19**](https://www.itu.int/md/S25-CWGFHR20-C-0019/en)

25.1 The secretariat introduced Document CWG-FHR-20/19 - Renewal of the mandate of the External Auditor - The United Kingdom's National Audit Office (NAO) - for a period of two years.

25.2 The document proposed the renewal of the mandate of the United Kingdom's National Audit Office (NAO) as the External Auditor for the ITU for the auditing of the 2026 and 2027 financial statements. The current mandate for auditing the 2022-2025 financial statements will end on 30 June 2026. The renewal is recommended for a two-year period to cover the upcoming financial periods. This recommendation and the draft decision will be submitted for approval at the next Council session.

25.3 Several delegates thanked the United Kingdom's National Audit Office (NAO) for their work but mentioned the importance of going back to its standard financial reporting cycle for the 2024 financial statements.

25.4 Some delegates mentioned the need of stability concerning the audit of the financial statements and expressed their full support to the renewal of the mandate of the United Kingdom's National Audit Office (NAO) as external auditors.

25.5 The secretariat brought some explanations on the financial and human impacts of a non-renewal of the mandate and outlined the support brought by NAO to the management in their transformation process and the need of stability to continue and achieve this transformation.

25.6 The Chair, considering the support of the majority of delegates, would recommend to Council-25 the renewal of the mandate of the United Kingdom's National Audit Office (NAO).

25.7 One delegation requested that the below statement be included in the report to Council to reflect the views of several delegations:

“Some delegates pointed out that the 2023 External Auditor's Report on ITU's 2023 Financial Statements and 2023 Financial Operating Report did not provide sufficient information on the financial impact accrued by the relevant ILO Tribunal cases, and requested that such detailed information should be clearly incorporated in the 2024 audited financial operating report to be submitted for transparency of the Union “.

**26 Updated report on the use of consulting firms – Document**[**CWG-FHR-20/INF/1**](https://www.itu.int/md/S25-CWGFHR20-INF-0001/en)

26.1 Following a request by the CWG-FHR, the secretariat submitted Document CWG-FHR 19/INF/1 to the October 2024 session to provide information on the use of consulting firms. During this session, some delegates requested more information about the contracts listed in the document, including purpose and outcomes. Document 20/INF/1 provides additional details to respond to these requests.

26.2 ITU makes use of consulting firms in cases where the secretariat requires specific expertise or capacity, or where use of external providers is more cost effective than using ITU’s own resources. This report provides a table listing such consulting contracts since the last plenipotentiary conference.

26.3 Consulting firms are hired to advise management on key strategic issues, providing the secretariat with an external view, based on industry best practice. Management considers the consulting firm’s advice but is not bound by it. External strategic consulting is also sometimes used as a means of boosting capacity in new areas on a short-term basis. As part of our transformation road map, the secretariat is working to fill key skills gaps to internalize such capacity going forward.

26.4 Several delegates thanked the secretariat for the additional information provided. Some delegates noted that they support and understand the benefits of the use of consulting firms but emphasized that the secretariat should carefully consider when such work can be done by internal staff and only turn to consulting firms when internal capacity or skills are not sufficient. A number of delegates also expressed concern about increased use of SSAs (i.e., individual experts / consultants). Lastly, some delegates emphasized the need for training of staff as part of the transformation road map to build internal capacity and thus reduce external consulting requirements.

26.5 Several delegates expressed concern about the cost of consulting firms, and highlighted cases where ITU did not fully benefit or follow the advice of consulting firms. Others asked if ITU monitors outcomes and satisfaction of delivery, which the secretariat confirmed. Delegates asked for continued reporting on the use of consulting firms, including the use of long-term agreements and the procurement process.

26.6 The Deputy Secretary-General thanked delegates and emphasized that the secretariat had taken careful note of the feedback. He assured delegates that the secretariat carefully considers, in each case, whether or not using external consultants is the most effective option and added that the use of SSAs is significantly cheaper than hiring regular staff, thus allowing the secretariat to address growing demands at a lower cost given the budgetary constraints.

26.7 The chair concluded the discussion, noting that the secretariat will continue regular reporting on this subject.

**27 Report on Inter-Sector Coordination Group activities – Document**[**CWG-FHR-20/24**](https://www.itu.int/md/S25-CWGFHR20-C-0024/en)

27.1 The Chair of the ISCG presented a brief report on the activities of the group related to the tasks of the CWG-FHR. The report included a proposal related to the use of captioning services in all ITU meetings. The Chair also highlighted that the proposal had already been covered by the Correspondence Working Group created to draft the guidelines on the management of fully virtual meetings and physical meetings with remote participation. The ISCG Chair reiterated that financial implications of providing such services should also be considered. No comments were received from the floor.

**28 Any other business**

28.1 With no further business, the Secretary-General, Ms Bogdan-Martin closed the meeting. The Secretary-General extended her appreciation to the Chair, acknowledging the efficient handling of the agenda items and numerous documents. She also thanked all delegates, both in-person and online, for their active participation, as well as the Staff Council for their valuable contributions.

28.2 She emphasized the role of the Council Working Group in strengthening accountability, transparency, and efficiency while advancing ITU’s transformation journey. Recognizing the complexities of change, she highlighted the progress made, including efficiency gains, financial planning, and ITU’s ongoing digital transformation efforts. She reaffirmed ITU’s commitment to balancing business continuity with long-term investments in innovation, particularly in areas such as the Geneva campus project, IT systems, and financial management.

28.3 Looking ahead, she underscored the secretariat’s commitment to finalizing a balanced budget for 2026–2027, continuing preparations for the 2028–2031 financial plan, and ensuring timely audit reports. She also reiterated ITU’s dedication to regional presence reviews, financial impact assessments, and broader organizational reforms in alignment with Member States’ expectations.

28.4 In closing, she expressed gratitude to all delegates for their trust, emphasizing the importance of global collaboration in navigating technological advancements. With that, she returned the floor to the Chair who thanked Ms Vernita Harris and the delegates for having entrusted him with such a task. He also thanked the ITU staff and the interpreters for their work. The session was thereafter officially concluded.

***Annex: 1***

ANNEX A

Terms of Reference for the review of ITU Regional Presence

Purpose

This Terms of Reference (ToR) outlines the framework for the comprehensive review of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) regional presence, as mandated by Resolution 25 (Rev. Bucharest, 2022). The review aims to achieve the following key objectives:

1 **Evaluate** the effectiveness and efficiency of the regional presence in delivering value to the membership and reflecting the concept of ‘One ITU’.

2 **Assess** the implementation of relevant recommendations of the Internal Auditor, the External Auditor and the ITU Independent Management Advisory Committee (IMAC).

3 **Identify** opportunities for improvement and recommend actionable measures to optimize the ITU’s regional operations.

4 **Align** regional presence with ITU’s strategic vision and operational goals, ensuring sustainable and impactful service delivery.

The review shall:

1 Provide tools to establish, assess and improve the performance of its Regional and Area Offices, ensuring they deliver measurable and impactful results.

2 Enable the refinement of the role, structure, and objectives of its regional presence to maximize alignment with organizational goals.

3 Ensure that ITU’s regional presence plays a pivotal role in executing the ITU Strategic Plan and applicable Plans of Action effectively and efficiently.

4 Guarantee that ITU’s Regional and Area Offices are deeply integrated into the UN development system and the broader industry ecosystem at both national and regional levels, driving meaningful partnerships and synergies.

5 Identify measures to bolster internal controls within Regional and Area Offices, promoting sound management practices.

Methodology

To ensure a thorough and objective review, the following methodologies will be employed by the Secretariat:

*a)* **Document analysis**: Conduct a desk review of foundational documents, including Resolution 25, ITU’s strategic plans, and operational, performance and audit reports.

*b)* **Data analysis:** Analyse key data points, including staffing structures, budget allocations, and project outcomes, to uncover trends, gaps, and opportunities for enhancement.

*c)* **Stakeholder consultations**: Engage internally with key stakeholders and consult with ITU advisory groups to gain insights and strategic guidance on shaping the future direction of ITU’s regional presence.

 **Stakeholder surveys**: Administer and collect feedback on satisfaction levels from membership and Regional Telecommunication Organizations (RTOs) to gauge the impact of regional presence with the priority assessment of the overall satisfaction with the activities of the Regional and Area Offices by their Membership.

*d)* **Scope of work**

 The scope of the review is designed to address the following dimensions of ITU’s operations:

 1 Assess whether appropriate and sufficient financial, human and material resources are being allocated to Regional and Area Offices, considering each regions characteristics, to effectively meet their activities, planned objectives, to represent ITU as a whole and have impact.

 2 Review and assess the effectiveness of the resource mobilization function, as well as processes of consultants, special service agreement engagements and recruitments at regional offices and area offices taking into consideration the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) detailed in [Annex 1](#Annex_1).

 3 Review the effectiveness of the multiple funding mechanisms, including extrabudgetary funding (FIT, etc.), resource mobilization function and reporting and evaluation functions for projects execution in the regional presence.

 4 Assess the adequacy and effectiveness of internal approval processes.

 5 Assess the implementation of delegation of authority and the related internal service orders and policy documents in addition to assessing whether clear roles and responsibilities including of process owners and second-line type functions are in place.

 6 Analyse how regional presence is integrated into the Human Resources strategic plan, with a focus on training and career development including identifying and addressing gaps in organizational culture and skills, as well as specifying the number and types of staff training conducted at each regional or area office.

 7 Compare all the regional and area offices' capacity-building and development activities against the framework of ITU Academy training centres.

 8 Identify barriers, challenges faced by staff to participate at events, including associated costs, or expected outcomes as a way to improve participation in ITU events as appropriate, and additionally provide recommendations on how to improve Regional and Area Office participation.

 9 Assess whether the reporting to the ITU Council and Bureaux on regional presence provides adequate information regarding its activities to meet ITU's strategic plan, Kigali Action Plan, regional initiatives, annual four-year rolling operational plans of the General Secretariat and the three Sectors, and addressing Member States' requests for assistance considering the KPIs detailed in [Annex 1](#Annex_1).

 10 Evaluate the mechanisms, using set objectives, including communication mechanisms, and impact of coordination, planning, and implementation between the Regional Offices and Area Offices and General Secretariat, the three Bureaux, and regional organisations for ITU regional events, meetings, and conferences and identify improvements and actions that would enhance synergies in the coordination and communication of activities, projects and initiatives between regional offices/area offices and ITU headquarters.

 11 Assess membership engagement mechanisms and their effectiveness as well as engagement with other international, regional and sub-regional organisations and UN organisations.

 12 Propose approaches for the Regional and Area Offices to strengthen the coordination of the work of countries who do not belong to a specific Regional Telecommunication Organisation (RTO), and the respective RTO in the regional preparatory processes for world assemblies and conferences of the Union.

Deliverables

The ITU Secretariat, through the review process, will produce the following deliverables:

– An inception report outlining the detailed work plan, methodology and financial implications, if any.

– An interim report with preliminary findings and recommendations.

– A final report with comprehensive analysis, conclusions, and actionable recommendations.

– The presentation of a final report and key findings to the ITU Council.

Timeline

– Inception Report: June 2025, Council

– Interim Reports: September/October 2025 and Jan/Feb 2026, CWG-FHR meetings

– Final Report: Presentation to the ITU Council, April 2026.

Annex 1

Key performance indicators and evaluation criteria to be considered in undertaking the review of the ITU’s Regional Presence

To ensure a comprehensive and impactful evaluation of the ITU’s Regional Presence, the review will be guided by the following KPIs and evaluation criteria:

1 The percentage of strategic and action plan objectives being met.

2 The percentage of staff work/performance plans explicitly aligned with the strategic plan and Kigali Action Plan.

3 The average time taken for Regional and Area Office staff to address/complete Member State requests for assistance.

4 Feedback scores on the overall satisfaction with the activities of the Regional and Area Offices by their Membership.

5 Feedback scores from Regional and Area Offices and Member States regarding resource adequacy.

6 The number of regional initiatives successfully implemented with allocated resources.

7 Recommendations on how to address any challenges in collecting data or demonstrating progress on KPIs with the reporting.

8 Evaluate if the information/KPIs to report the actions and effectiveness by the Regional and Area Offices to align their work, activities, and outcomes with the ITU Strategic Plan 2023-2026 and Kigali Action Plan, including its thematic priorities and outcomes, outputs and regional initiatives, in line with the Strategic Plan, is effective.

9 Assess staff engagement and specific steps taken in the development of the Telecommunication Development Advisory Group (TDAG) KPIs.

10 Document challenges staff faced to participate at events, such as logistical, barriers to engagement or associated costs for Regional and Area Office staff participation

11 Provide recommendations from Regional and Area Office staff on how to best maximise engagements with regional stakeholders during global events.

12 Based on recommendations, assess whether an action plan to enhance Regional and Area Office staff participation in events would increase the value-add of their participation.

13 The amount of human and financial resources at the Regional and Area offices including:

*a)* number of staff at each Regional and Area Office;

*b)* number of countries served by each Regional and Area Office;

*c)* number of projects/initiatives engaged, events organized (regional and ITU-wide) (per year in review);

*d)* resources allocated by the financial plan for each Regional and Area Office (per year in review detailing resources allocated for staff, operations of the Office, and implementation of projects/initiatives/events);

*e)* technological platforms used by Regional and Area Offices (for fully virtual/hybrid meetings, for electronic working methods, various existing electronic tools to disseminate relevant information to their respective Member States);

*f)* use of the ITU’s financial management tools by Regional and Area Offices;

*g)* the efforts/actions undertaken to increase human and financial resources in Regional and Area Offices for the implementation of regional initiatives;

*h)* the financial and administrative conditions provided by the host countries to the Regional and Area offices.

14 The recruitment strategy including:

*a)* number and type of vacant positions per Regional and Area Office (per year in review);

*b)* average time of recruitment of new staff in Regional and Area Office (from identification of vacant/needed position to the contract signature);

*c)* implementation of improvements to recruitment processes and tools in Regional and Area Office to enable the identification and recruitment of talent with relevant project management expertise;

*d)* implementation of staff mobility policy (per Regional and Area Office, per year in review).

15 Specific activities (projects, regional initiatives, events/meetings/conferences, regional preparatory meetings, sectoral activities, etc.), with additional criteria assessing the administrative, financial, technical and logistical support, as well as victuals and other special conditions provided for participants of the ITU events held by Regional and Area Offices in the regions.

16 Participation of members in regional activities, global ITU-D/ITU-T/ITU-R events and the working activities of the three Sectors (e.g. study groups, expert groups, sector advisory groups, etc.).

17 Outcomes of activities demonstrating linkages between outputs/outcomes and the achievement of strategic goals, objectives and progress on KPI targets by region/sub-regional area.

18 An evaluation of progress on relevant KPIs.

19 An indication of internal and external issues and challenges associated with implementation that impact the ability/feasibility of the regional presence achieving strategic objectives and KPI targets.

20 If relevant, recommendations on new KPIs that should be used to measure progress with achieving strategic goals and objectives.

21 Based on the special case of LDCs, recommendations on whether per-country assessments and action plans in terms of telecommunication/ICT development would strengthen the ability of regional offices to provide member support, and the budget requirements for such assessments.

22 Details on fellowships awarded that demonstrate the extent to which fellowships are awarded in a fair and transparent manner (equitable geographical distribution, gender balance and the inclusion of delegates with disabilities).

23 Analysis of the fellowship application process, based on feedback from Member States, that recommends possible process and format improvements to address gaps.

24 Representation of all three Sectors in Regional and Area Offices when implementing the One-ITU approach:

*a)* Availability/Number of Focal Points for T and R Sectors in all ROs/AOs.

*b)* Means of provision with technical staff with knowledge and experience of the three Sectors of the Union to the Ros/AOs, particularly dedicated staff from the Standardization and Radiocommunication Sectors, in order to strengthen and assist Member States.

*c)* Participation of Regional and Area Offices in the activities of all three Sectors (ITU‑T and ITU-R in particular).

25 Assess whether the regional presence provides adequate information in respect of the following, in annual/periodic reporting regarding the regional presence (each of the regional/area offices) to the Directors of the three Bureaus, Advisory Bodies and Council, as appropriate:

*a)* Staffing of regional and area offices, including number of staff members, their category of employment and other factors in accordance with Resolution 48 (Rev. Bucharest, 2022).

*b)* Financial information, including budget allocated to the regional and area offices and expenses per thematic priority and planned output.

*c)* The implementation of activities (including those related to the three Sectors and the General Secretariat).

26 Assess whether the regional presence, in its reports to the Directors of the three Bureaus, Advisory Bodies and Council, provides adequate information on:

*a)* Any challenges faced in collecting the above data/ data requested.

*b)* Any recommendations on how regular reporting may help strengthen the activities of the regional presence.

*c)* Any recommendations on how oversight by Advisory Bodies and Council may help strengthen the activities of the regional presence.

27 Indicate the extent to which:

*a)* The relevant internal audit, external audit, Independent Management Advisory Committee and Joint Inspection Unit recommendations have been implemented related to the regional presence.

*b)* The components of the ITU Accountability Framework have been implemented in the regional offices and area offices. This should include an indication of how RBM, results-based budgeting and the human resources strategic plan are implemented. It should also include an identification of any implementation gaps and progress on activities to address those gaps.

*c)* Accountability measures have been undertaken when providing regional/area offices greater autonomy in decision-making on the various activities, initiatives and projects they carry out.

*d)* The efficiency and effectiveness of the ethics, complaints and response mechanisms.

With additional criteria, assessing the administrative, financial, technical and logistical support, as well as victuals and other special conditions provided for participants of the ITU events held by Regional and Area Offices.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_