



ITUPP
DOHA2026

Plenipotentiary Conference (PP-26)
9-27 November 2026 - Doha, Qatar

PLENARY MEETING

Document 37-E
31 August 2026
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Note by the Secretary-General

CANDIDACY FOR THE POST OF DEPUTY SECRETARY-GENERAL

Further to the information published in Document 3, I have the pleasure in transmitting to the Conference, in annex, the candidacy of:

Mr Adel DARWISH (Bahrain (Kingdom of))

for the post of Deputy Secretary-General of the International Telecommunication Union.

Doreen BOGDAN-MARTIN
Secretary-General

Annex: 1



FM/2/2/26/976

30 August 2026

Her Excellency Ms. Doreen Bogdan-Martin
Secretary-General, International Telecommunication Union (ITU)
Geneva

Your Excellency,

I have the pleasure to refer to your 10 November 2025 Circular ref. CL-25/48, requesting nominations for elected officials of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU). In this connection, I have the honor to inform you, Excellency, that the Government of the Kingdom of Bahrain hereby presents the candidature of Mr. Adel Mohamed Darwish, currently Director of the ITU Regional Office for the Arab States, for the position of Deputy Secretary-General of the International Telecommunication Union for the 2027–2030 term, at the elections taking place at the 2026 ITU Plenipotentiary Conference (PP-26).

The Government of the Kingdom of Bahrain is pleased to present Mr. Darwish's candidature in light of his extensive experience within the ITU, his distinguished leadership in the information and communication technology sector, and his strong record of advancing regional and international cooperation. Throughout his career, Mr. Darwish has demonstrated a deep understanding of the Union, its membership and its strategic priorities, while fostering partnerships and initiatives that support digital development, innovation and connectivity.

The Government of the Kingdom of Bahrain is confident that, if elected, Mr. Darwish will bring to the position of Deputy Secretary-General an inclusive, collaborative and results-oriented approach. Guided by his "One ITU" vision, he will work to strengthen coordination and synergy across the Union, support the effective implementation of its strategic objectives, and ensure that the ITU continues to respond effectively to the evolving needs and priorities of all its Membership.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Dr. Abdullatif bin Rashid Al Zayani
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Kingdom of Bahrain

ADEL DARWISH

Candidate for Deputy Secretary-General
International Telecommunication Union



KEY COMPETENCIES

- International Policy & Diplomacy – Extensive experience in global ICT governance, regulatory frameworks, and policy negotiation.
- Strategic Leadership – Driving telecommunication policies, digital transformation strategies, and regional ICT development.
- Capacity Building & Stakeholder Engagement – Leading training programs, regulatory collaborations, and industry partnerships.
- Project Management & Regulatory Affairs – Expertise in market competition, regulatory compliance, and international connectivity.
- Multilateral Engagement & Public Speaking – Regularly representing Arab States in high-level ICT forums and global policy dialogues.

EDUCATION

- Master of Business Administration (MBA) – Glamorgan University, UK (2005)
- Bachelor of Science in Computer Science – University of Bahrain (2000)

LANGUAGES

- Arabic (Native)
- English (Fluent)

ABOUT ADEL

Adel Darwish is an experienced ICT and telecommunications leader from the Kingdom of Bahrain with over 25 years of work advancing digital transformation across the Middle East, North Africa, and beyond.

Adel's professional journey spans government, private sector innovation, and multilateral diplomacy, giving him a uniquely balanced perspective as a telecom operator, regulator, and international strategist. Currently serving as Director of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) Regional Office for the Arab States, Adel oversees programs across 22 countries and has successfully led initiatives that strengthened regional collaboration and advanced digital development. His leadership has extended to key international forums including ICANN, GSMA, the League of Arab States, the GCC, and the SAMENA Council, where he has represented the region on global policy and regulatory issues. Adel's track record demonstrates a consistent ability to deliver tangible outcomes. He played a leading role in achieving a landmark reduction in regional roaming rates, a policy reform that directly benefited consumers and operators alike. He has championed national and regional digital skills initiatives, fostered public-private partnerships, and advanced inclusive policy frameworks to accelerate connectivity and innovation.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- **Regional Director, Arab States – International Telecommunication Union (ITU)**
June 2020 – Present
- **Head of International Relations – TRA, Bahrain**
September 2016 – May 2020
- **Manager of Market and Competition – TRA, Bahrain**
May 2008 – August 2016
- **Head of Corporate Business Unit and Wholesale Relations – Etisalatcom Bahrain**
February 2006 – April 2008
- **Project Manager, International NGN Network Development – Bahrain Telecommunications Company (Batelco)**
November 2004 – January 2006
- **Acting Manager, DataComms Section – Product Marketing Management, Batelco**
December 2004 – May 2005
- **Product Marketing Manager, Global Services with Cable & Wireless – Batelco, Batelco**
May 2000 – January 2006

ONE ITU FOR ALL

A Vision for the International Telecommunication Union

For more than twenty-five years, as an operator, as a regulator, and for the past decade as Director of the ITU's Regional Office for the Arab States, I have worked alongside governments, regulators and partners across every region of the world. Leading an office serving 22 Member States, including six least developed countries, I delivered more than 90% of our planned regional initiatives each year, even through global crises. That experience taught me one lesson above all: the greatest achievements are never accomplished alone. They are the result of trust, collaboration, and a shared commitment to serving our membership.

The International Telecommunication Union stands at a defining moment. Six billion people are now online, yet 2.2 billion remain unconnected. The adoption of the Global Digital Compact and the twenty-year review of the World Summit on the Information Society have placed our Union at the very centre of how the world will govern artificial intelligence, safeguard the sustainability of space, and connect the unconnected. The conversations held in Geneva this year, at the WSIS+20 review and the AI for Good Summit, confirmed that the world looks to the ITU for leadership. The ITU must evolve at the same pace.

In our Union, strategy belongs to the membership. Member States set the Union's direction not only through the Plenipotentiary Conference, but also through the world conferences and assemblies of our three Sectors: the World Radiocommunication Conference, the World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly, and the World Telecommunication Development Conference. It is for the Secretary-General, together with the Directors of the three Bureaux, to deliver on that shared mandate. The role of the Deputy Secretary-General is to power the internal engine that makes their delivery possible. Through a strong internal coordination mechanism, I will enable the Secretary-General and the three Bureaux to execute, through their work plans, the strategy the membership has set. My vision therefore rests on a simple principle: a stronger ITU begins with a stronger institution. An efficient organization is not an objective in itself; it is the foundation upon which every programme, every standard and every development project depends.

This is the foundation of my vision: One ITU for All. A Union where every Member State, regardless of geography, size or level of development, has an equal voice, equal opportunity, and equal confidence that the Union works for them. I will pursue it through three commitments.

First, Organisational Excellence. I will invest in our people and modernize our resources and our digital tools. I will help our finance function grow beyond processing to become a driver of strategic resource mobilization; strengthen how we develop, support and empower our people, with greater opportunity for talent and mobility; and advance our information technology from a support service to a genuine digital backbone. Guided by results-based management and audit-ready transparency, I will ensure that the offices closest to our Member States have the tools and the confidence to turn global decisions into local results, faster.

Second, Strategic Partnerships. No single administration or organization can meet today's digital challenges alone. I will build a Union of Trust, positioning the ITU as a strategic ally that partners actively seek out, rather than one more organization to add to a list. By deepening trust and mobilizing partnerships responsibly around the priorities the membership has set under Resolution 71, the Union can extend its reach and multiply its impact.

Third, The Global Mission. I will work to ensure that our Union has the operational strength to lead where the world now needs the ITU most: the technical governance of artificial intelligence, the sustainability of space and spectrum, and universal, meaningful connectivity for every community.

I am honoured to stand as the sole candidate from the Arab region for this office, endorsed by the League of Arab States, the Gulf Cooperation Council, and the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation. Mine is a region whose administrations contribute substantially to the work of our Union, both regionally and globally, yet one that has not held the office of Deputy Secretary-General since 1967. I bring the experience of building connectivity across some of the world's most diverse and demanding environments, and I will place it at the service of all.

Ultimately, every initiative undertaken by the ITU should be measured by one question: does it improve our ability to serve Member States? This principle has guided my career, and it will guide my leadership. If elected, I will serve with impartiality, integrity and dedication to all Member States, listening before acting, building consensus before deciding, and always placing the collective interest of the Union above all priorities. I will be a Deputy Secretary-General trusted by every Member State.

One ITU. One purpose. One future, for all.