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| World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly (WTSA-20) Geneva, 1-9 March 2022 |  |
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| PLENARY MEETING | Document 46-E |
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| Proposals for the work of the Assembly | |
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| **Abstract:** | This is a multi-country contribution on the working procedures (including working hours and remote participation support) for WTSA-20, to be agreed at the WTSA opening plenary. The signatories believe exceptional measures should be taken at this WTSA due to the clear participation challenges - both physical and virtual – as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. It is proposed that no key meetings associated with the work of the assembly - such as Committees, drafting groups, as well as ad-hoc or informal meetings - shall be permitted outside of the nominated working hours of 0800-1900 during Monday to Friday. This does not include meeting of delegations or operational ITU staff meetings etc. It is further proposed that all these key meetings shall be supported by a remote participation tool to ensure members who cannot join physically are not excluded from participation. Finally, the signatories propose that where consensus on Resolutions and Recommendations cannot be achieved, then it is preferable for Member States to agree to ‘no change’ rather than voting. | |
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GENERAL MATTERS

We strongly support the significant efforts the ITU has made to hold WTSA-20 in 2022 despite the profound challenges posed by COVID-19. The pandemic has underlined the importance of our work, and the success of this conference will depend on the full participation of Member States and Sector Members. However, this participation will only be possible if we take carefully considered measures to ensure that barriers to physical and virtual participation are not created by our ways of working at the conference.

Those physically present will be operating in a higher risk environment and need to adhere to a range of rules including the wearing of masks and not being able to eat or drink during meetings – all of which will make long meetings especially arduous. Similarly, many delegates will be forced to participate over a remote participate tool either from their home country, due to the risks of attendance or travel restrictions, or from Geneva if they are unable to fit in a conference room with social distancing requirements or due to the need to self-isolate. The working hours will have a significant impact for those joining from around the world and working during very challenging hours of the day due to time zone differences with Geneva.

Finally, the signatories suggest that where consensus on Resolutions and Recommendations cannot be achieved, then it is preferable for Member States to agree to ‘no change’ rather than resorting to a vote, which would not be a fair reflection of the membership’s views, since some Member States will be unable to vote in person.

To summarise, it is proposed that:

• no key meetings associated with the work of the Assembly - such as Committees, drafting groups, as well as ad-hoc or informal meetings - shall be permitted outside of the nominated working hours of 0800-1900 during Monday to Friday. This does not include meeting of delegations or operational ITU staff meetings etc;

• all the afore-mentioned meetings shall have tools to support remote participation; and

• when consensus on Resolutions and Recommendations cannot be achieved, it is preferable to agree to ‘no change’ rather than voting.