



INTERNATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATION UNION
TELECOMMUNICATION DEVELOPMENT BUREAU

**WORLD TELECOMMUNICATION DEVELOPMENT
CONFERENCE (WTDC-98)**

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PLENARY MEETING

MINUTES

OF THE

TWELFTH AND LAST PLENARY MEETING

Wednesday, 1 April 1998, at 1505 hours

Acting Chairman: Mr. E. BORG (Malta)

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1 Draft new Question 10 from Study Group 1 (Addendum 2 to Document 72)

1.1 The **Acting Chairman** noted that draft new Question 10 (Technology transfer and informatization) proposed by ITU-D Study Group 1 in Addendum 2 to Document 72 had been prepared in response to the particular interest that technology transfer had for developing countries.

1.2 The **representative of Barbados** indicated that she supported the document overall.

1.3 The **representative of the United States**, while agreeing that the issue of technology transfer was of particular interest for developing countries, pointed out that that was also true for developed countries. However, from a general perspective, the proposed text seemed to her to be excessive in scope and raised, *inter alia*, intellectual property issues which, in her view, fell within the purview of WIPO. Accordingly, BDT could do no more than provide liaison in that area.

1.4 The **representative of Germany** stated that he could not support the Question as drafted, and suggested that the text be sent back to Study Group 1, which should express its views on the mechanisms of transfer, particularly in the light of Document 228(Rev.1).

1.5 The **representative of Spain**, while supporting the document, was also of the opinion that intellectual property issues did not fall within the terms of reference of ITU/BDT, and accordingly proposed that § 3) under "Expected outputs" be deleted.

1.6 The **representative of Senegal** supported the document because technology transfer represented one of the means to enable developing countries to adapt to the continuing evolution of telecommunications and acquire the necessary knowledge. He noted that § 3) under "Expected outputs" referred only to proposals, and not to the handling of issues relating to intellectual property rights. Nevertheless, in view of the objection that had been expressed, he was willing to consider a compromise solution.

1.7 The **representative of Mali** supported the document, which he regarded as very important particularly for developing countries; but he was willing to delete any reference to intellectual property rights.

1.8 The **representative of Trinidad and Tobago** supported the document, noting that information technology was a high-priority concern for developing countries. In his view, the reference to intellectual property rights did not pose any problem of substance.

1.9 The **representative of BT** supported the aims of the document, but had a number of comments to make. Referring to § 1 under "Expected outputs", he considered that the nature of the challenges should be stated and that accordingly the beginning of the sentence should be redrafted to read "Identify all technology challenges which ..."; in § 3), the mention of intellectual property rights was potentially dangerous, bearing in mind the experience of ITU-T in that regard; and finally, in the table under the heading "Sources of input" the interest of the developed countries in technology transfer should be indicated as well.

1.10 The **representative of Ghana** supported the document and noted that, while he understood the objection raised with respect to intellectual property rights, it was impossible to speak of technology transfer without raising that related issue. Accordingly, he suggested that § 3) under "Expected outputs" be redrafted to read "Provide information relating to intellectual property rights issues".

1.11 The **representative of Canada**, concurring with the representative of BT, favoured a deeper examination of the issue of intellectual property rights, and reiterated the proposal that all mention thereof be eliminated until such time as there were a unanimous position.

1.12 The **representative of Cape Verde** supported the document, with the deletion of the reference to intellectual property rights. After all, no one could question the need of developing countries to have at their disposal the information necessary in order to plan their telecommunications well and derive all the ensuing benefits.

1.13 The **representative of China**, expressing support for the document, said that although he regarded technology transfer as essential, he did not favour including a reference to intellectual property rights.

1.14 The **representative of the Republic of Korea** supported the document, and indicated that she too considered that intellectual property issues were the domain of WIPO.

1.15 The **representative of CTU**, as co-author of the original text, pointed out that during the study period now beginning, a proper balance should be struck between the various aspects of the issue of technology transfer, adding that in that connection WIPO was only one element of the whole. He felt that, before deleting all reference to intellectual property rights, the various pros and cons of the issue should be checked with ITU-T.

1.16 The **representative of Brazil** supported the aims of the new Question. He too regretted the absence of any mention of the developed countries in the table and, following up on the intervention by the representative of Cape Verde, considered that the proposed text should not neglect to mention the indispensable transfer of information that must accompany any transfer of technology.

1.17 The **representative of Syria** pointed out a discrepancy in the title of the new Question between the document currently before the meeting and Document 214(Rev.1). He then went on to say that, whilst he would not go so far as to support the proposal that § 3) under "Expected outputs" be deleted, he would prefer the wording to allow for greater flexibility, as the success of the activity would depend on the information gathered, given that not all proposals in that regard would necessarily lead to concrete measures.

1.18 The **representative of Viet Nam** noted that only technology transfer could enable developing countries to master essential skills by taking advantage of accumulated experience and established procedures. He supported the document and indicated that he too favoured the deletion of § 3) under "Expected outputs".

1.19 The **representative of the Gambia** supported the document, which reflected a concern expressed by his Administration in Document 116. He too favoured eliminating any reference to intellectual property rights.

1.20 The **representative of NTT**, considering that § 3) under "Expected outputs" might well give rise to patent and copyright issues, stated that he was in favour of its deletion, together with that of § 6), in which the reference to four phases was essentially descriptive rather than an expected output.

1.21 The **Acting Chairman** proposed that Addendum 2 to Document 72 be approved, on the understanding that § 3) under "Expected outputs" would be replaced with a new text to the effect that BDT was invited to work in close collaboration with WIPO on intellectual property issues.

1.22 The **representative of Barbados** said that she was disappointed by that proposal, which to her mind conjured up the image of an ostrich burying its head in the sand. Intellectual property and copyright issues would surely arise in developing countries in conjunction with any technology transfer.

1.23 The **Acting Chairman** stressed that elimination of the reference to intellectual property rights did not mean that the question would not be examined, and suggested that Study Group 1 draw up a proposal in that regard.

1.24 Addendum 2 to Document 72 was **approved**, taking into account the comments and proposals made.

2 Ninth series of texts submitted by the Editorial Committee (Document 243)

2.1 The **Acting Chairman** indicated that draft Recommendation PLEN-A (Role of world telecommunication development conferences) and draft Resolutions PLEN-2 (Procedures to be applied by study groups), PLEN-3 (Establishment of study groups), PLEN-4 (Mechanisms for monitoring, evaluation and progress review of conference resolutions) and PLEN-5 (Adoption of AF-RTDC-96 Resolutions and Recommendations), presented in Document 243, had already been considered by the Plenary in the context of Document 234, and that the Plenary had already approved Recommendation PLEN-A.

2.2 The **representative of Spain** supported draft Resolution PLEN-2, but noted that in the Appendix to the draft Resolution paragraph 4.1 was not in accordance with No. 247 of the Union's Convention, as No. 247 made no provision for Sector Members to be able to approve Recommendations. Adding that a proposal to remedy the situation was to be submitted to the Plenipotentiary Conference, he suggested that a note be added at the end of section 4 indicating that the capacity of Sector Members to approve Recommendations was subject to the decision of the Plenipotentiary Conference in that regard.

2.3 The **Secretary-General** concurred, and acknowledged that certain passages in section 4 were unconstitutional as to their form. He added that the proposed footnote would have to make mention of No. 247 of the Convention.

2.4 The **representative of Canada**, who had chaired the group responsible for drawing up the text in question, noted that the aim had been to draft a recommendation and not a provision having treaty force. He expressed his agreement with the Secretary-General's last remark.

2.5 Draft Resolution PLEN-2 was **approved**, taking into account the comments and proposals made.

2.6 Draft Resolutions PLEN-3 and PLEN-4 were **approved**.

2.7 With respect to draft Resolution PLEN-5, the **representative of Syria** wondered whether the Resolutions approved by the Abidjan and Beirut regional conferences would assume a worldwide or a regional scope once they were approved by the World Telecommunication Development Conference.

2.8 The **Acting Chairman** was of the opinion that resolutions approved by regional conferences were directed only to the countries in the regions concerned. The **Director of BDT** stated that Resolution PLEN-5, however, created a precedent for all regions in that it pointed to the need to establish a mechanism to monitor, evaluate and review the progress of implementation of resolutions and recommendations approved by regional and world telecommunication development conferences. In that sense, the Resolution had a worldwide dimension, although the actual application would be on a regional basis.

2.9 In response to a request for further information by the **representative of the United States**, the **Acting Chairman** indicated that the provision in question, although originally applicable only

to the African continent, would surely be replicated by other regions. In response to a question by the **representative of Saudi Arabia**, asking whether the Resolutions and Recommendations approved by the Abidjan Conference would be applicable to the Arab States Region, and those approved by the Beirut Conference to the African States, he confirmed that the Resolutions and Recommendations approved at AF-RTDC-96 were applicable only to the African continent.

2.10 The **Director of BDT** added that the Abidjan Conference, unlike the Beirut Conference, had not provided for the establishment of a mechanism to monitor, evaluate and review the progress of implementation, and that that was why the African group was taking advantage of the World Conference in order to establish a similar mechanism in the interim before the next African regional conference was held.

2.11 The **representative of Syria** noted that, since there were 13 Arab States in Africa, there was a case of overlapping.

2.12 Draft Resolution PLEN-5 was **approved**.

2.13 The ninth series of texts submitted by the Editorial Committee was **approved**, taking into account the comments and proposals made.

3 Thirteenth series of texts submitted by the Editorial Committee (Document 249)

3.1 The **Acting Chairman** noted that draft Resolution WGVAP-1 (Establishment of a mechanism to prioritize the activities of the ITU Telecommunication Development Sector) had its origins in Document 215 submitted by the Working Group of the Plenary on the Valletta Action Plan.

3.2 The **representative of Mali** wondered about the purpose of the Annex to the document, and asked whether the example of a mechanism set forth therein was binding and would have to be applied by BDT. The **representative of Canada** added that the provision under *instructs the Director of BDT* seemed sufficient to him, and that the Annex should simply be drawn to the attention of TDAB.

3.3 The **representative of Japan** noted that although priorities were an easy thing to talk about, it was more difficult to set them. That was why an example of a mechanism for establishing priorities had been provided in the Annex to facilitate subsequent consideration. The **representative of BT** supported the implementation of a mechanism to set priorities for ITU-D activities, and was also of the opinion that the Annex should be referred to TDAB, adding that in paragraph 3 there was a need to indicate that the list should also be circulated to Sector Members.

3.4 The **Chairman of TDAB** noted that there was a contradiction between the increasing number of programmes and declining volume of resources allocated to carrying them out, and indicated that he intended to raise that issue at the next session of the Council.

3.5 The **Director of BDT**, recalling that the draft Resolution had been examined by TDAB at one of its earlier meetings, at which it had debated the question of setting out an operating plan for carrying out ITU-D activities, stated that he had no objection to establishing a priority ranking as long as that principle was not applied to ITU-D alone but was also applied to ITU's other two Sectors.

3.6 The **representative of BT** noted that the provisions being discussed should not be seen as criticism of ITU-D, but as an opportunity of which all three of ITU's Sectors should avail themselves in order better to carry out their activities.

3.7 The **representative of Guinea** supported the draft Resolution but, sharing the concerns expressed by the representative of Mali, indicated that he did not favour retaining the Annex.

3.8 The **representative of Senegal** recalled that the Convention provided clear provisions with respect to priorities, and that the costs of conferences and the decisions taken by them were to be established by the Budget Control Committee. He acknowledged that it was difficult to establish a methodology that would be satisfactory from all viewpoints, but said that the objective had to be to direct BDT to consider establishing a mechanism that would make it possible to set priorities amongst the decisions of the various conferences.

3.9 The **Chairman of TDAB** also considered that the principle being discussed should be applicable across all three Sectors of ITU, and stated that he personally had no objection to setting priorities amongst ITU-D activities. Concurring with the representative of Senegal, he suggested that the Director of BDT be asked to examine the issue in greater depth and make a report to the Plenipotentiary Conference in Minneapolis, which would be called upon to make a decision on fixing expenditure ceilings.

3.10 The **representative of Ghana** supported the draft Resolution in principle, but felt that the Annex could prove to be a double-edged sword if it were approved by the Plenipotentiary Conference, and so was in favour of deleting it.

3.11 The **Acting Chairman**, affirming that there was a broad consensus on the issue of establishing priorities, and noting the reservations and concerns expressed by the various speakers, proposed that the issue be placed before the next session of the Council, stressing the need for any mechanism of that type to be applied across all three Sectors of ITU.

3.12 It was so **agreed**.

4 Assistance to the Palestinian Authority (continued) (Document 251)

4.1 The **Acting Chairman** indicated that Document 251, containing draft Resolution [PLEN-7] concerning special technical assistance to the Palestinian Authority, had been prepared following the debate that had taken place at the tenth Plenary Meeting by a drafting group in which several countries' delegations had taken part. After long hours of discussion it had become clearly apparent, despite there being a number of points of agreement, that it would be extremely difficult to arrive at a text acceptable to all. At one point in the deliberations, Israel had withdrawn from the drafting group. The text, which had been drawn up on the basis of Documents 195 and 126, included the only points acceptable to the majority of delegates present who had contributed to the drafting.

4.2 The **representative of Israel** expressed his sincere thanks to the Acting Chairman for his constructive approach, and recalled that Israel fully supported Resolution 32 (Kyoto, 1994), on the one hand because it had taken part in drafting that Resolution, and on the other in its capacity as an ITU Member State. However, the Interim Agreement that existed between Israel and the PLO constituted the only appropriate framework for responding to the needs of the Palestinians in the sphere of telecommunications. After stressing that Israel wanted to pursue the negotiations, he noted that Document 251 did not take into account a key point, namely the peace process under way, and that moreover the draft Resolution tended to create an external framework which would replace the existing framework and impose an artificial timetable. The draft Resolution, which in fact ran counter to the intended goal and interfered in the political process, could only be detrimental. Accordingly, Israel would be unable to accept it. Moreover, the draft Resolution made no mention of Israel, as if it were not a party, but on the contrary the term "Palestine" was used, and in a

different sense from the one accepted by the United Nations. In conclusion, he stated that his country was opposed to the approval by WTDC of Document 251, and that he would present a text setting forth his country's position in detail (Document 247).

4.3 The **representative of Saudi Arabia**, speaking on behalf of the Arab and Islamic group, recalled that the negotiations which had led to the preparation of the draft Resolution had been based on Documents 195 and 126, which had met with near-unanimity in so far as the technical requirements expressed were concerned. He recalled that the text proposed by the Acting Chairman was a compromise which included only the minimum that had been accepted and that the issues with which it dealt were not political but exclusively technical. Stressing that the Conference was in no way interfering in the talks between Israel and the Palestinians, he nevertheless observed that the peace process had been at a virtual standstill for some time, that nothing had been agreed with respect to telecommunications and that the requests made by the Islamic group were technical in nature, Israel having denied the Palestinians the right to take charge of their own telecommunications. In conclusion, given that the operative paragraphs of the draft Resolution were concerned only with technical matters, he urged the participants to approve the text contained in Document 251.

4.4 The **representative of South Africa** recalling that the group which had worked on the issue had endeavoured to reach a consensus but had been unable fully to achieve that aim, noted that the draft Resolution reflected all the points of agreement.

4.5 The **representative of Syria** thanking the Acting Chairman for his efforts, stressed that the result obtained had nothing to do with politics and recalled that the present Conference was concerned only with technical matters. The draft Resolution based on Documents 195 and 126 encouraged both parties to reach an agreement in order to assure the development of telecommunications, and represented an acceptable minimum.

4.6 The **representative of the United States** strongly regretted the introduction of political issues, as he had previously indicated when Documents 195 and 126 had been introduced. His delegation maintained that the questions dealt with in the context of Document 251 were political in nature. Recalling the peace process under way between the parties concerned, he considered it inappropriate, from the standpoint of both the Union's Constitution and its practice, to establish a time-frame for a bilateral process that did not concern ITU, just as it was inappropriate for the Secretary-General to present a report on a bilateral process external to the Union. It was important that the delegations present be aware of the fact that, if they approved the draft Resolution, they risked setting a precedent that would have serious implications for their countries' foreign policies. In conclusion, uneasy at the direction that the Union seemed to be taking, he presented a motion to suspend debate on the item, and invited the heads of delegation to seek instructions from their appropriate national authorities on the subject and, if appropriate, to obtain the necessary authorizations in order to deposit their plenipotentiary credentials with the Secretary-General.

4.7 That motion was supported by the **representative of Israel**.

4.8 The **representative of Saudi Arabia**, deploring the state of affairs that had arisen, opposed the motion to suspend debate made by the representative of the United States, and pointed out that heads of delegation did not need plenipotentiary powers for the present Conference.

4.9 The **representative of Comoros** was likewise opposed to the motion presented by the United States, and recalled that the draft Resolution reflected the minimum consensus in regard to assistance for the development of the telecommunications of the Palestinian Authority.

4.10 The **Secretary-General**, taking the floor at the request of the **representative of Saudi Arabia** on a point of order, noted that the representative of the United States had made no reference to any specific number of the Convention or Constitution, and recalled that delegations did not need to submit plenipotentiary credentials for a development conference. Moreover, it was not a question of taking a vote but of suspending the debate.

4.11 The **Acting Chairman** said that he believed the representative of the United States to be referring to No. 397 of the Convention relating to the rules of procedure of conferences and other meetings, and read out the paragraph in question.

4.12 The **representative of the United States** indicated that his delegation was indeed referring to No. 397 of the Convention pertaining to rules of procedure, and that it would request that its motion be put to the vote.

4.13 The **Acting Chairman** confirmed that according to No. 397 of the Convention, the motion would be put to the vote since it had been seconded and there had been two speakers opposing it.

4.14 The **representative of Saudi Arabia**, raising a motion of order, pointed out that the representative of the United States had asked that the debate be postponed and that there be a vote on a specific legal point, namely the presentation of plenipotentiary credentials at a conference. However, in reference to the legal point raised, the Secretary-General had noted that for conferences of the present type delegations did not present plenipotentiary credentials, contrary to the practice for radiocommunication conferences or Plenipotentiary Conferences, whose final acts had treaty force. Accordingly, the request for a vote was not valid. He invited the Secretary-General to comment further on the matter.

4.15 The **Secretary-General** said that he had understood the United States to be presenting a motion to suspend debate. It was not necessary to present plenipotentiary credentials in order to have the right to submit a motion of suspension. However, other delegations of course had the right to oppose such a motion. He noted that the motion presented by the United States had been both seconded and opposed. Moreover, the representative of the United States had indicated that he was requesting a vote pursuant to No. 397 of the Convention. In conclusion, the motion could be put to the vote.

4.16 The **representative of Syria** pointed out that no one had the right to interpret the words of the representative of the United States. In the case at hand, it was the Acting Chairman who had made reference to No. 397 of the Rules of Procedure, for the United States delegation had made no reference to No. 397 until after the Acting Chairman had mentioned it. Moreover, the representative of the United States had asked for a suspension of the debate, and had not spoken at the outset of a vote. Lastly, in his view, the motion put forward had not been seconded and proper procedures had not been followed.

4.17 The **Acting Chairman** recalled that the motion presented by the United States had been seconded and that there had been two speakers opposing it. In accordance with the provisions of the Convention, the motion therefore had to be put to the vote.

4.18 The **representative of Japan** proposed that the motion presented by the representative of the United States be put to the vote by a secret ballot, in accordance with Article 32 of the Convention.

4.19 That proposal was seconded by the **representatives of Syria, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Viet Nam, Lebanon and Russia**.

4.20 The **representative of the Legal Affairs Unit** announced that the representatives of Germany, South Africa, Indonesia, Brazil and Russia would serve as scrutineers. He then gave details on the vote that was to be taken.

4.21 The **representative of Saudi Arabia**, noting that the representative of the Legal Affairs Unit might have an interest in the matter before the meeting, requested the Acting Chairman to name the scrutineers himself.

4.22 The **Acting Chairman** having re-announced the names of the countries designated as scrutineers, the **representatives of Argentina** and **Spain** asked if the motion was one to suspend debate or to suspend the meeting. The **representative of Saudi Arabia** asked the Secretary-General to confirm that the vote would be on the suspension of the meeting.

4.23 The **Secretary-General** confirmed that No. 397 of the Convention referred to the suspension or adjournment of a meeting. In his initial intervention, the representative of the United States had requested a suspension of the debate, but had subsequently indicated that he was invoking No. 397 of the Convention. Accordingly, the question put to the vote would be on whether or not to suspend the meeting.

4.24 The **representative of Saint Lucia** asked whether, following suspension of the meeting, it would be necessary to resume the debate.

4.25 The **representative of Syria** recalled that the representative of the United States had indeed made due mention of No. 397 as the basis for his motion of order.

4.26 Following a question from the **representatives of Djibouti** and **Cape Verde** concerning the right to vote, the **representative of Saudi Arabia** asked the Secretary-General to name the countries that had lost their right to vote.

4.27 The **Secretary-General** recalled that countries which had not settled their arrears or had not ratified the basic instruments of the Union did not have the right to vote, and invited participants to rely on the accuracy of the Union's lists in that regard.

4.28 The **Secretary** called the roll of the delegations entitled to vote in the alphabetical order of their French names, and invited them to cast their vote.

4.29 The motion to suspend the meeting proposed by the United States was **rejected** by 38 votes to 22, with 12 abstentions and one invalid ballot.

4.30 The **representative of Saudi Arabia** proposed that the text prepared by the Acting Chairman (Document 251) be accepted as a compromise.

4.31 The **representative of Argentina** proposed a motion for closure of the debate pursuant to No. 399 of the Convention, following which the Chairman would invite all participants to decide whether to approve the draft Resolution.

4.32 The **representative of Saudi Arabia** recalled that he had already proposed that the draft Resolution contained in Document 251 be approved. Accordingly, the first matter to be taken up was the approval of the draft Resolution. He invited the Secretary-General to state his views in that regard.

4.33 The **Secretary-General**, noting that there had been no objection to the motion of order proposed by Argentina, said that the debate could be considered closed.

4.34 The **Acting Chairman** declared the debate closed.

4.35 The **Secretary-General** then suggested that the Conference decide whether to approve the draft Resolution, as proposed by the representative of Saudi Arabia.

4.36 The **representative of Japan** suggested that participants vote by a show of hands on the closure of the debate. If closure of the debate was approved, there should then be a vote on the Resolution itself, by secret ballot.

4.37 The **Secretary-General** recalled that it had already been decided to close the debate.

4.38 At the request of the **representative of Saudi Arabia**, the **Acting Chairman** proposed that participants approve the draft Resolution as contained in Document 251.

4.39 The draft Resolution (Document 251) was **approved**.

4.40 The **representative of the United Kingdom** having indicated that he wished to propose changes to the draft Resolution, the **Acting Chairman** reiterated that debate on the text had closed.

4.41 The **representative of the United States** made the following statement:

"We regret the introduction of political issues into this important technical conference. As such, the United States has asked for a suspension of the meeting to seek further instructions and plenipotentiary powers to engage in discussions and conclusions that may arise or be reached by the Conference on matters which go beyond the purpose of the World Telecommunication Development Conference. This motion was not adopted by members of the Conference. The United States, therefore, understanding that any discussions or conclusions reached with respect to Documents of the Conference 195, 126 and 251 do not have standing, in fact or implications, with respect to any position the United States may take at any future meeting or conference of ITU."

4.42 The **representative of Mexico** stated that her delegation wished to remain completely neutral as far as the draft Resolution in Document 251 was concerned.

4.43 The **representative of Argentina** said that his delegation had abstained in the vote because the President of the Argentine Republic had offered his good offices in order to ensure the peace and development of the peoples involved. He could not and would not, therefore, compromise that presidential decision by taking a decision of substance in the debate.

4.44 The **representative of the United Kingdom**, speaking on behalf of a number of countries of the European Union, handed in a reservation in writing to the secretariat to the effect that the delegations of the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Spain, Portugal, Greece, Denmark, Sweden, Austria and Italy regretted that since Document 251 had been presented very late to the Conference and addressed an issue which was not on the official agenda of the Conference (Document WTDC98-1), there had been insufficient time to fully consult the relevant national authorities, and therefore declared that, due to the procedure followed, that document did not necessarily indicate the position of those delegations on that issue.

4.45 The **representative of Israel** said that his delegation's reservation was contained in its objection expressed earlier in the meeting.

4.46 The **representative of Venezuela** said that his delegation had abstained in connection with the approval of Documents 126, 195 and 251 as it had been unable to ascertain the official position of the Government of Venezuela concerning the matters under discussion submitted in those documents.

4.47 The **representative of Japan**, stressing that the matter in question was of great sensitivity and should be handled with the greatest care, submitted a reservation in writing confirming that his delegation had not expressed its position on that issue and expressing its regret that Document 251

had been adopted hastily by the Conference in such a way that delegations had had no time to consider the Acting Chairman's proposals and to state their opinions.

4.48 The **representative of Uganda** said that his delegation had abstained in the vote because it had been unable to consult with the competent national authorities.

4.49 The **representative of Brazil** said that his delegation had not taken part in the vote because it had had insufficient time to receive instructions from its Administration.

4.50 The **representative of the Czech Republic** said that her delegation reserved the right to maintain a neutral approach to Document 251 as it had not received the authorization from the Czech Government to take up any position with regard to that document.

4.51 The **representative of the Slovak Republic** expressed reservations with regard to the voting procedures in relation to Document 251; he had been unable to consult the Slovak Government and had no mandate on matters including, or connected with, the subject of Document 251.

4.52 The **representatives of Nigeria, Norway, Kenya, Colombia, Cameroon, Canada, Liberia, Singapore, Uruguay, India, Bulgaria, Guinea, Mauritius, Republic of Korea, Thailand, Bhutan, Hungary, Ethiopia, Poland, Nepal, Côte d'Ivoire, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Zimbabwe, New Zealand, Trinidad and Tobago, Madagascar, Ghana, Rwanda, Indonesia, Burundi, Barbados and Romania** said that their countries maintained a neutral position with regard to Document 251 as there had been insufficient time to consult the relevant national authorities.

4.53 The **representative of Saudi Arabia** expressed satisfaction that the Conference had approved draft Resolution [PLEN-7] (Document 251) on the subject of assistance to the Palestinian Authority in the field of technical cooperation.

4.54 The **representative of the United States**, raising a point of order, said that after he had called for a vote, more than half the delegations voting had either abstained or maintained a neutral position. He therefore considered that the draft Resolution could not be regarded as having been approved.

4.55 The **representative of Saudi Arabia** pointed out that no vote had been taken on the draft Resolution itself. The vote which had been taken at the request of the delegation of the United States had concerned the suspension of the meeting. The document itself had been approved along with a number of reservations, and it was understandable that there should be reservations on such a sensitive issue. He stressed that the draft Resolution concerned measures for technical cooperation which came within the mandate of the Conference.

4.56 The **representative of the United States** said that in view of the substantial number of reservations which had been expressed, the conclusion that the draft Resolution had been approved by the Conference could hardly be accepted. He considered that the substance of the document should be put to a vote by secret ballot.

4.57 The **representative of Syria**, seeking to clarify the matter of abstentions vis-à-vis reservations, cited No. 414 of the Convention concerning non-participation in voting and affirmed that the draft Resolution had been approved in proper and due form.

4.58 The **Secretary-General**, providing guidance at the request of the **Acting Chairman**, said that although the situation was complicated on account of the number of reservations and other statements that had been made, his opinion, based on the Rules of Procedure, was that, as the Acting Chairman had asked whether the draft Resolution could be approved and no opposition had been

expressed at that point, the draft Resolution had indeed been approved. He would seek further legal advice if so requested.

4.59 The **Acting Chairman** said that in the light of the proceedings and of the Secretary-General's statement, draft Resolution [PLEN-7] (Document 251) should be considered as approved.

5 Draft Recommendation TDAB-2 (revised) on the future membership and functions of TDAB and draft Resolution [PLEN-6] on enhanced participation by developing countries (continued) (Document 227(Rev.1))

5.1 Draft Recommendation TDAB-2 (revised) and draft Resolution [PLEN-6] (Document 227(Rev.1)) were **approved**.

6 Election of Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of the ITU-D Study Groups (Document DL/10)

6.1 The **Director of BDT** read out a list of proposals for the election of Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of ITU-D Study Groups 1 and 2. The list of nominations had been drawn up on the basis of discussions at a meeting of the Heads of delegation followed by consultations and negotiations relating to geographical distribution. The list was as follows:

Study Group 1

Chairman: Mr. A. GABRIELLI (Argentina)

Vice-Chairman: Mr. D. TOURE (Mali)

Vice-Chairman: Mr. E. BEHDAD (Islam Republic of Iran)

Vice-Chairman: Candidate from the Caribbean (name to be indicated later)

Vice-Chairman: Mr. A.K. SALEEM (Kuwait)

Vice-Chairman: Mr. D. PLESSE (Germany)

Study Group 2

Chairman: Mr. N. KISRAWI (Syria)

Vice-Chairman: Mr. G. ZITA (Mozambique)

Vice-Chairman: Mr. M.A. YUSOFF (Malaysia)

Vice-Chairman: Mr. D. BARR (Canada)

Vice-Chairman: Mr. V. NOZDRIN (Russia)

Vice-Chairman: Mr. E. BORG (Malta)

6.2 The above nominations were **approved** by acclamation.

7 Information documents (continued) (Documents 225 and 210)

7.1 The **Director of BDT** introduced Document 225 which was of particular interest in that it dealt with employment in relation to restructuring and reform. In reply to a query by the **representative of Nigeria**, he said that the document would be available in English, French and Spanish in due course. The second document (Document 210) to be noted contained a contribution from the Thuraya Satellite Telecommunication System. He suggested that both documents should be forwarded to Study Groups 1 and 2, a proposal supported by the **representative of Syria**.

7.2 It was so **agreed**.

8 Post-Conference meeting of the Editorial Committee

8.1 The **Vice-Chairman of the Editorial Committee** said that, as for lack of time it had not been possible to issue the documents containing the most recent amendments approved in the Plenary, the Editorial Committee had been unable to complete its work. He requested, therefore, that the Conference authorize the Editorial Committee to hold a meeting after the Conference, open to all countries wishing to participate, with support from the Secretariat. Texts in all three languages would be issued as soon as possible.

8.2 It was so **agreed**.

9 Statements by delegations

9.1 The **representative of South Africa** said that WTDC-98 was a historic conference, not only because it was the first time that South Africa had participated as a free country in the work of a world telecommunication development conference, but also because the decisions taken represented a step forward in improving the status of women in telecommunications and in highlighting issues relating to youth - an aspect to which her delegation was sensitive. It was, however, with a sense of sadness that her delegation had followed the debate on the question of Palestine upon which it had strong feelings. She hoped that the debates would show how seriously delegations regarded that matter and that a solution to the problem would soon be found. South Africa was honoured to host Africa TELECOM from 4-9 May 1998, on the theme of African renaissance - a spectrum of opportunity. In conclusion she expressed warm thanks to the host country, Malta, and to all those who had helped to make the Conference a success.

9.2 The **representative of INTELSAT** said he was pleased to inform the Conference that the INTELSAT Assembly of Parties had unanimously approved the creation of an independent company temporarily named New Skies Satellites, which would structurally be separate from INTELSAT and subject to the regulations of every country in which it might operate. Five satellites out of the existing INTELSAT fleet and one under construction would be transferred to the new company. The Assembly had adopted a statement affirming its fundamental intent to ensure that New Skies would operate on the same level as its competitors. Parties were therefore firmly resolved to ensure that all satellite service providers consistent with national law and international obligations would receive fair and non-discriminatory treatment in their markets.

9.3 The **representative of CTU** expressed appreciation of the efforts which had been made by BDT in developing telecommunications and the major achievements of WTDC-98 in the field of gender issues and youth, world telecommunication links and new technologies, networks, human resource development and in particular the economics of telecommunications. The discussions on tariff issues and finance, the impact of accounting rates and the second World Telecommunication Policy Forum had been fruitful. He stressed the importance of BDT's activities as regards stimulating links with the private sector, economic issues arising from tariff and trade considerations, and resource mobilization.

9.4 The **representative of Kenya** expressed appreciation of the emphasis given by the Conference to issues relating to youth, particularly the possibility of a junior summit and a youth network. That area should be given greater weight in ITU's considerations in future.

9.5 The **representative of Tanzania**, associating herself with the views expressed by other African speakers, commended the Acting Chairman on his excellent leadership and thanked the Secretary-General and the Director of BDT for their guidance on the many issues discussed, in particular the question of the partnership between developed and developing countries and between the private and public sector, which she was convinced would become a tangible reality before the next world telecommunication development conference.

9.6 The **representative of Argentina** said that as the Secretary-General would be completing his term of office at the forthcoming Plenipotentiary Conference in Minneapolis he wished to take the opportunity to congratulate him on his most able leadership. The ITU Development Sector was dynamic but difficult to manage, particularly with the limited resources available for facing the challenge proved by telecommunications in the developing countries. He therefore also congratulated the Director of BDT, for accomplishing that arduous task and harmonizing the conflicting interests involved.

9.7 The **Chairman of the Working Group of the Plenary on the private sector** said that the Conference had taken a major step forward in the process of integrating the private sector more fully in the work of ITU-D, which brought BDT closer to the other Bureaux. He expressed appreciation for that initiative, especially as the sustaining of working relations between the private sector and an intergovernmental organization was by no means an easy task.

9.8 The **representative of Saudi Arabia**, speaking on behalf of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and of the Arab Group and the Islamic Group, expressed warm gratitude to the host country, Malta, and to the Secretary-General of ITU and to the Director of BDT for their efforts to further telecommunication development over the last few years. The Conference had taken some most important decisions in the field of multilateral cooperation, to which the participants would make every effort to adhere.

9.9 The **representative of Trinidad and Tobago**, speaking also on behalf of the Caribbean delegations, welcomed WTDC-98 as a major landmark in the development of telecommunications. Representing a developing country, his delegation had been particularly struck by the stark data analyses of the BDT studies, especially the restructuring trends and the development report for 1998 on universal access. The advice and the issues discussed encouraged his country to continue supporting BDT as a credible source of knowledge for action at national and international levels. He also welcomed the discussion of gender and youth issues. The current telecommunication environment required the Development Sector to face new challenges for regulation, networks and technology and private sector partnerships. Experience through CTU and CITEL, for example, had shown that the private sector was being stimulated to support fuller national telecommunication development, an area in which ITU could play a key role. He announced formally that the Government and people of Trinidad and Tobago wished to express their interest in hosting the third world telecommunication development conference.

The meeting rose at 1940 hours.

The Secretary:
H. PIETERSE

The Acting Chairman:
E. BORG