

29th Meeting of the Arab Spectrum Management Group

Tunis

Opening Speech (video message)

27 June 2022

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Mr. Tariq Al Awadhi, Chairman of the ASMG,

Dear participants,

A very good morning to all of you.

I would like to start by thanking the Arab Spectrum Management Group, and in particular its Chairman, Mr. Tariq Al Awadi, for the kind invitation to me to address this ASMG-29 meeting.

I would have been delighted to join you in Tunis, but the Radio Regulations Board is meeting in Geneva this week, which prevents me from being with you today.

As you know, the WTDC has just taken place in Rwanda. It was a great opportunity to create partnerships and mobilize governments and the ICT sector to deploy networks and bring digital inclusion to all communities, making sure all people are connected and can benefit from digital technologies, which is the mission of the ITU.

The Radiocommunication Sector contributes directly to this mission. The work of the ITU-R enables new terrestrial and satellite technologies to operate and bring connectivity to all people, even in the most remote areas.

Dear colleagues,

After two years of virtual meetings, due to COVID-19 and all its variants, the ITU successfully held, physically in Geneva, both the World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly and the 2022 session of the Council during the past month of March. In April, the 2022 RAG meeting was also held in ITU Headquarters. Although remote participation facilities were provided for these events, many participants attended them in-person without any significant health-related consequence.

As many of you have repeatedly mentioned, informal discussions are necessary to help us find solutions to contentious topics. Therefore, for 2022, all remaining ITU-R meetings are planned to be held physically, with remote participation.

We note that virtual meetings also have benefits. They remove the travel cost barrier and are an effective way to overcome travel restrictions. To accommodate all, we will continue to offer remote participation for the upcoming meetings, even though they will be held in a physical format within the normal working hours for meetings held in the ITU headquarters.

Moreover, since the work of the Working Parties and the Study Groups can be considered as a preparatory work, we are making every effort to ensure, to the extent practicable, that delegates present in the room and those connected remotely are able to participate in the meeting discussions on an equal footing, thus supporting the needs of all delegates.

As you know, in 2023, the ITU will begin the construction of the new building and there will be a significant reduction of meeting rooms availability in the ITU Headquarters. The CICG will continue to be an option, whenever it is vacant, since the facility is shared by all the international organizations based in Geneva.

We are therefore encouraging Administrations to host Working Party and Study Group meetings during the period of construction of ITU's new building. I count on you to help us in this regard.

In case of unavailability of rooms in the ITU and in CICG, and without countries volunteering to host ITU-R meetings, we might need to revert to holding fully virtual meetings throughout the preparatory period for WRC-27. I am certain that you share my belief that that situation should be avoided and that the radiocommunication sector needs to come together to ensure that we are able to prepare properly for that WRC.

Mr. Chairman,

Regarding WRC-23 preparations, the work has been advancing and some important milestones have been achieved. ITU-R study groups are now finalizing ITU-R Recommendations, Reports, and other supporting documents for WRC-23.

Surely some agenda items are of great relevance to the Region, such as agenda items 1.2 and 1.5 on mobile services.

Other challenging items are for example, agenda items 1.15 and 1.16 on ESIMS, agenda item 1.17 on satellite-to-satellite links, and topics of agenda item 7 related to non-geostationary systems (as for example, topic A on orbital tolerances, topic B on milestone procedures, and topics related to Appendix 30/30A/30B).

The BR has been consulting with the management of concerned groups and with Administrations to identify an agreed way forward that would help the working parties to achieve the necessary progress and finalize their documents.

I encourage the delegates to remember and continue to abide by our common successful practice in preparation for past WRCs, where the CPM Report should present, to the extent practicable, the description and feasibility of the possible competing methods or solutions to satisfy an Agenda Item, and if necessary, accommodating the conflicting views that may exist on complex issues.

I am confident that physical meetings will enable delegates to better clarify their positions and to facilitate informal discussions towards finding compromise

solutions. Moreover, being face-to-face will bring back the friendly and respectful atmosphere we are used to.

Dear colleagues,

Concerning the dates and the venue of the Second Session of the Conference Preparatory Meeting, despite the efforts to identify an alternative host that would enable the meeting to be held later in the year, all potential hosting countries have finally declined due to various reasons. Therefore, the CPM23-2 will be held at the end of March 2023, in the CICG in Geneva.

This gives all responsible groups around 4 months to finalize their draft CPM texts, while allowing sufficient time for the required translation of hundreds of pages.

We have received requests to grant additional time for specific groups, and this is being considered, having in mind the constraint of Resolution ITU-R 2-8, which states that the consolidated draft CPM Report shall be translated into the 6 official languages of the Union and made available in electronic format a minimum of two months prior to the date scheduled for the second session of the CPM.

As you know, the dates of the WRC have been confirmed from the 20 November to 15 December 2023, in the United Arab Emirates.

I am personally very grateful to the UAE for their invitation. The Arab Region has been a strong supporter of the work of the ITU throughout the years, having held the last Plenipotentiary conference and of course the last WRC.

Please note that the ITU website for WRC-23 is now available and will provide direct and continually updated access to information on the preparations for the conference.

Finally, I encourage ASMG to continue its participation in the NOW4WRC23 initiative and to strive to achieve women's full participation in all aspects of the work of the ITU-R and at the WRC-23.

Dear friends,

The success of the WRC relies heavily on the preparatory work done by the Regional Groups.

I note the work in ASMG is advancing and being physically in Tunis will certainly help progress the preparations even further.

I wish you a very fruitful meeting and I thank you for your kind attention.