

Meeting of Study Group 5

Virtual event

Opening Speech

16 December 2021

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Mr. Chairman,

Dear Delegates,

It is my pleasure to welcome you to this meeting of Study Group 5.

I would like to start by acknowledging our chairman, Mr. Martin Fenton, as well as all the vicechairs of this group.

I also consider important to thank the Chairmen of Working Parties 5A, 5B, 5C and 5D – Dr Jose Costa, Mr John Mettrop, Mr Pietro Nava and Mr Stephen Blust – for the work carried out under their leadership on the various subjects assigned to their respective Working Parties.

It was with sadness to hear at the beginning of November, that our distinguished Working Party 5C Chairman Pietro Nava had some health issues and could not chair the last meeting. But I'm happy to learn that Pietro has recovered quite well and may even join us today.

At the same time, I'd like to thank Dr. Brian Patten (and the US Administration), for being available to chair that Working Party 5C meeting – as I heard it was a successful meeting. Overall, the four Working Parties have produced several Recommendations and Reports for consideration by this meeting of Study Group 5.

I note that the work on the studies on the WRC-23 agenda items assigned to this Study Group is ongoing and an exchange of communications with other Study Groups, Working Parties but also External Organisations has been prepared and sent. I wish to take this opportunity to highlight the importance of the exchange of information among the ITU-R groups, which allows us to get the contribution of the entire ITU-R community for each specific topic, from a wider perspective.

But I have also been made aware of the fact that the work on some agenda items is highly controversial and hence the progress has not been as expected. When possible, upon your proposal, we have extended meeting days of Working Parties and considered additional, focused meetings on several agenda items. We have received several proposals from many of you relating to the duration of meetings, their time schedule, and the overlaps among meetings. I can assure you that what has been done up to now and what we will do in the future is the best possible to meet the needs of the ITU-R community at large.

We all know that some of the agenda items are very challenging and different views exist on those. The ITU-R approach is reaching consensus, but it's understood that due to the current circumstances this is not that easy to achieve – the essential personal interaction to solve controversial issues is missing.

Some Administrations have contacted the Radiocommunication Bureau and asked about our view on certain topics related to the interpretation of WRC Resolutions. Following these requests, the BR and the ITU Legal Affairs Unit have provided opinions based on their expertise, as the Bureau acts upon demand of its membership and at the same time maintains the highest level of neutrality when providing its assistance.

I trust that all of you know that, according to Resolution ITU-R 2-8, resolves 2f), *in cases where all efforts to reconcile differences have been exhausted, alternative approaches with their justification could be included in the draft CPM-Text*. Although this is not the preferred, it might be the only way out if different views cannot be aligned. But at this point, I am convinced that your constructive and cooperative spirit, the same that you have shown in the past, will be present again once we come back to physical meetings in 2022 to help overcome the above-mentioned obstacles.

Indeed, from 2022 onwards, ITU has planned to return to physical meetings. As of today, we expect WP5D in February 2022 to be the last virtual meeting, and TG6/1 to be the first physical meeting. It will be a relief for us all, that delegates would then be able to exchange views personally and hopefully find consensus as they used to do before the pandemic.

Looking at the coming years, with the planned re-construction of the Varembe building planned for the years 2023 to 2026, we have a logistical and organisational challenge ahead, but I'm confident that the dedicated project team will address all relevant issues accordingly – amongst other solutions, we have reserved access to the CICG. As an additional option, we are currently reviewing offers from some administrations to host various of the ITU-R meetings in their country – no decision has been taken yet.

Dear Chairman,

For more than 20 months we have been dealing with the Covid-19 pandemic, and just as the situation seemed to be improving towards the end of November, we have heard about the increasing incident rates across the World and the arrival of a new variant. As of today, we do not know what impact this will have, but despite all the difficulties, I have the utmost confidence in the leadership of this Study Group, in the Working Party Chairmen, as well as in the BR counsellors (Vadim and Uwe) that are assisting them, which reassures me that the group is in good hands.

In concluding, I cannot leave this meeting without recognizing the huge workload of each of the WPs and the achievements they have successfully attained – despite the Covid-19 pandemic - and that are reflected in your agenda today.

Thank you for your attention.

I wish you a very successful meeting.