



Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT)

**First Meeting of the Telecommunication
Development Advisory Group (TDAG)
Geneva, 8-9 April 1999**

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**SUMMARY RECORD OF THE FIRST MEETING OF THE
TELECOMMUNICATION DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY GROUP (TDAG/GCDT)**

(Geneva, 8-9 April 1999)

1 Opening of the meeting and opening statements

The **Secretary-General** opened the meeting at 0940 hours on Thursday, 8 April 1999, and made the statement reproduced in Annex 1.

The **Director of BDT** made the statement reproduced in Annex 2.

2 Election of the Chairperson

The **Director of BDT** proposed that a Chairperson should be elected for a period of two years, which would cover four TDAG meetings, and would be long enough for practical results to be achieved without imposing too heavy a burden on the person chosen. The election of the Chairperson would have to abide by a number of principles: transparency of the procedure; competence of the person elected, who would have to be familiar with the telecommunication environment, have experience of ITU conferences and meetings and know the developing countries well; and equitable geographical distribution. In the light of those principles, he proposed that Mr Lee Jong-Soon, Executive Director, Asia-Pacific Telecommunity, should be chosen as Chairperson of TDAG. That proposal being **approved**, he invited the new Chairperson to take the Chair.

Mr Lee Jong-Soon said that it was an honour for him to be elected Chairperson of TDAG and that he would work to promote the development of telecommunications throughout the world. The telecommunication environment had changed very much under the combined impact of liberalization, competition and globalization, which had been greater than expected. There were two major forces at work in the telecommunication market, the pull of demand and the push of supply, and telecommunications had now become one of the key sectors in the world economy. ITU, which had invested a great deal of resources in telecommunication development, had to help developing countries gain access to the new telecommunication and information technologies. He hoped that he would be able to count on the unfailing support and active participation of all ITU Members in carrying out his difficult task and thanked his predecessor, Mr Al-Basheer, for the excellent work he had done.

The **representative of Djibouti**, referring to the election of the members of TDAG, pointed out that its structure did not include any representative of an Arab country. In his view, balance was an essential consideration, and the situation ought to be put right. The **representative of Lebanon** also noted that Arab administrations were unrepresented.

The **representative of Canada** congratulated the new Chairperson of TDAG. In accordance with Resolution COM5/1 adopted at the Minneapolis Conference, BDT was playing an important role in preparations for WRCs at the regional level. He hoped that attention would be given to the machinery for preparing for such conferences and that all countries would be able to take part in the process.

The **representative of Germany** having stated that his Government had not been consulted, at any level, about the election of the new Chairperson, although Germany's contribution to the ITU budget was far from negligible, the **Director of BDT** explained that the new team had just taken up its duties and that he hoped Members would overlook any omissions that might have occurred. The consultations had been as wide as possible and had been conducted in a spirit of complete transparency. He wished to assure the representative of Germany that there had been absolutely no intention of excluding his country from the decision-making process.

The **Chairperson** pointed out that the new team had undertaken to ensure transparency in all its activities.

The **representative of Investcom** asked for classification of the new TDAG's structure: unlike TDAB, which had been composed of national experts speaking in their personal capacity, TDAG was made up of administrations and Sector Members. Statements by members of TDAG were thus not made on a personal basis, but on behalf of administrations, Governments, etc.

The **representative of South Africa**, following up what had been said by the previous speaker, asked for information on the nature of contributions: were they made on a personal basis or not, given that the members of TDAG were Member States and Sector Members?

The **Secretary-General** replied that it was clearly stated in the new ITU Constitution and Convention that the members of TDAG represented administrations and the private sector. TDAG was an open group, and it was therefore necessary to comply with the provisions of the Constitution and Convention on the subject.

The **representative of Syria** also made the point that, since TDAG had become an open group, its members officially represented Governments, administrations and private sector bodies and that TDAB had already held two meetings on that basis.

3 Summary record of the tenth meeting of the Telecommunication Development Advisory Board (Document TDAB-10/7)

The summary record of the tenth meeting of TDAB (TDAB-10/7) was **approved**, subject to drafting changes that representatives might submit to the Secretariat later.

4 Results of the Plenipotentiary Conference (Document TDAG-1/7)

The **Secretary**, introducing Document TDAG-1/7, informed participants that the text of Resolution COM5/1 would be distributed later and drew attention to the different resolutions reproduced in the document under consideration.

The **representative of Switzerland** having expressed surprise that the French text of Resolution PLEN/1 referred to "**égalité des sexes**", given that the term "**égalité des chances entre hommes et femmes**" had been proposed at Minneapolis, the **representative of the United States** said that in future the most appropriate terms would be used.

The **representative of France** noted, with regard to Resolution PLEN/12, that it had raised many difficulties of interpretation and that proposals would be submitted to the Council concerning the internal invoicing of BDT activities. The Resolution raised questions of principle and emphasized the need to improve management accounting in the Union's different Sectors. As far as the coordination of operational and financial plans was concerned, TDAG would have to give the Director of BDT guidance, given that in the past there had been found to be a lack of consistency between the Union's Strategic Plan and the different activities of the three Sectors.

The **representative of Morocco** pointed out, with regard to Resolution PLEN/11, that the Council would be dealing with the question at its forthcoming session and would set up a working group for the purpose.

Stressing the considerable importance of the Resolution, which could lead to a radical change in the Union's structure, he suggested that the Director should prepare a contribution for consideration by TDAG at its next meeting. With regard to the strengthening of the regional presence (Resolution COM7/15), he pointed out that according to Document TDAG 1/2 no specific plans had been made for 1999; a report should therefore be submitted to TDAG at its next meeting on ways of strengthening the regional presence. As far as Resolution PLEN/12 was concerned, if representatives of the least developed countries were to be able to attend information meetings on the other two Sectors' activities for developing countries, they would have to have fellowships. But if Resolution PLEN/12 was to be interpreted literally, BDT would have to invoice the other Sectors for the fellowships it made available to those countries, which would interfere with the organization of those meetings. Finally, he pointed out that the resolutions contained in the document under consideration were those in which BDT was explicitly mentioned, but that several other resolutions of the Plenipotentiary Conference which were addressed to all three Sectors, including in particular the one on Palestine, should also be taken into consideration.

The **representative of Canada** said that he would like the Advisory Group to be able in future to consider the document on the preparation of the biennial budget to be submitted to the Council.

The **Director of BDT** said, with regard to the strengthening of the regional presence, that a document reflecting the views of regional representatives would be submitted to the Council on the subject. The activities it was proposed to undertake through the regional offices would have to be more precisely focused on specific objectives, in view of their limited budgets, and field staff would be strengthened through a reduction in headquarters staff. A document would be submitted to the Council, which could not be placed before TDAG because it had not yet been approved by the Coordination Committee; the document recommended that no regional conference should be held in 1999 or 2000 and that the amount earmarked for the RTDC (500 000 Swiss francs) should be distributed among the regional offices, which would then be able to embark on new initiatives. As far as the budget was concerned, the document to be submitted to the Council could not yet be presented, but the Operational Plan (Document TDAG-1/2) contained a summary of the Financial Plan. As to the different resolutions, including the one on Palestine, the Council would have a document on the subject before it. In reply to a question from the **representative of Malta** concerning the updating of the Strategic Plan in Resolution COM5/8, the **Director of BDT**

explained that it was not the Plan that would be updated, but its implementation, and in particular the implementation of the six Valletta programmes, which would be adjusted as they went along to take account of new elements.

The **representative of Syria** said that many Minneapolis and Kyoto resolutions not mentioned in Document TDAG-1/7 also concerned BDT and should also be considered at subsequent meetings of TDAG (Resolutions PLEN/4, PLEN/5, PLEN/13, PLEN/16, COM5/8, COM5/12, COM7/2 and COM7/11).

The **Director of BDT** explained that the document concerning Palestine to be submitted to the Council listed the activities undertaken under Resolution PLEN/3 (expert missions, technical study for a network in the Gaza Strip, interagency meeting, award of fellowships, contacts with a view to BR making arrangements to allocate country indicators). As far as fellowships for the other two Sectors' information meetings were concerned, a sum had been earmarked for the purpose in the budget. BDT would be responsible for handling the fellowships.

The **representative of CTU** said that Resolutions PLEN/13 and COM5/16, although not mentioned in the document under consideration, were also important, as were Resolutions COM5/3 and COM5/18 for the Caribbean Region. The programmes covered by Opinion C of the Second Policy Forum should be incorporated into the Operational Plan, given their importance for the Region.

The **representative of Germany** pointed out that Resolution PLEN/11, for example, requested the Advisory Group to give advice on improving organization and methods of work. Some thought should therefore be given to ways of giving the Director guidance in future, as TDAG could not confine itself to putting questions to him. To achieve that end, it would be necessary to change the "culture" of the meeting. As far as Resolution PLEN/12 was concerned, BDT had to provide the other sectors with assistance, and all due caution should therefore be displayed in the application of the resolution, which might militate against the cooperation that had been advocated for a number of years.

The **representative of Morocco** noted out that ITU-D now had a new Advisory Group which was no longer composed of experts, but of representatives of Member States and Sector Members.

Special attention should henceforth be paid to the nature of the documents submitted, which could be classed in two categories: information documents on decisions taken (Document TDAG-1/2, for example, might be the subject of an information document) and documents in which the Director asked for TDAG's advice. Documents of that type should: 1) clearly define the nature of the problem; 2) review the background to the problem; and 3) suggest any measures to be taken.

The **representative of South Africa** shared that view and considered that the Group ought also to be able to give its advice even when the Director had not explicitly asked for it.

5 Operational Plan of the ITU Development Sector 1999 (Document TDAG-1/2)

The **Director of BDT**, after introducing Document TDAG-1/2, said that the activities scheduled under the Plan would be readjusted in the course of the year and that Part 4 of the Plan contained a recapitulation of resources, the budget not yet having been approved by the Coordination Committee.

The **representative of Syria** wanted to know whether the Operational Plan was for the current year, which was already well advanced, or for future years. The **Secretary** having indicated that at present BDT only had budget estimates for future years, the **representative of Syria** expressed the

wish that at its next meeting TDAG should be presented with a plan for future years, since the Council would have decided, at its June session, on the budget for the years 2000 and 2001, so that the Group could play its proper role, i.e. to give advice.

The **Director of BDT** recognized that the Operational Plan ought to have been completed in November, but said that because of the transitional period, that had not been possible. It represented a first step, which ought to encourage all those involved in the Sector to collaborate in BDT's activities.

The **representative of France**, after congratulating BDT on the document, which for the first time gave precise information, also considered it necessary that the Advisory Group should consider the plans for the years 2000 and 2001 at its next meetings and that it should have a clearer view of the activities under way and those to be undertaken in the months ahead. To improve the transparency of the Valletta Programme and help private-sector members to determine what contribution they could make, it would be necessary to identify the foreign aid required for the execution of the activities planned (expert or consultant missions).

The **representative of Canada** also welcomed the establishment of an Operational Plan for ITU-D and suggested that in future, as far as preparations for WRCs were concerned, the collaboration between BDT and ITU-R should be reflected in the Plan. As far as strengthening of the regional presence was concerned, ITU-D's collaboration with regional and subregional organizations ought to be strengthened and the Plan should mention opportunities for joint execution or financing of projects.

The **representative of UNESCO** said that ITU and UNESCO had been cooperating for a number of years on joint projects in the field of telecentres or tele-education in particular. He noted that those projects were not mentioned in the Plan and would like that to be rectified in future. He added that the new version of the Cooperation Agreement with ITU would be submitted to the Council at its next session.

The **representative of Bulgaria** asked whether all the many obligations placed on the Director of BDT by the different Minneapolis resolutions had been taken into account in the Operational Plan.

The **representative of Viet Nam** considered that in view of the large number of activities planned and the limited resources available, it was necessary to establish priorities. Furthermore, given that some of the activities envisaged under the BDT Operational Plan also involved ITU-T and ITU-R, some thought should be given to the question of how to accommodate the contributions of those two Sectors. He stressed the importance of Programme 1 of the Valletta Action Plan for developing countries, a programme whose implementation would entail the preparation of guidelines and models, and the assignment of greater responsibility to Regional offices. As far as Programme 3 was concerned, additional activities ought to be planned in order to develop new services suitable for rural areas. Finally, BDT and the Union should establish guidelines to encourage participation by the private sector.

The **representative of Zambia** said he would like to know what activities might possibly be postponed until the following year.

The **Director of BDT** said that the schedule of activities was given in a document prepared for internal purposes. The dates could be communicated in due course.

The **representative of Morocco** considered that the members of TDAG ought not to examine the Operational Plan line by line, but to give the Director indications as to what they wanted to see done. The Director of BDT, for his part, should explain which activities he thought should have

priority. As far as regional development conferences were concerned, he noted that it was proposed to organize a preparatory meeting for RTDC-2000. The success of world telecommunication development conferences depended on the information collected in all the Union's regions. However, in view of the impossibility of organizing four regional conferences in one study period as had been done in the past, he proposed that the Director of BDT should find other more economical ways of collecting information on the regions' needs. With regard to preparatory meetings for WRCs, the effectiveness of previous regional coordination was beyond question. He therefore suggested that TDAG should invite the Director of BDT to provide assistance to the Africa Region, and, if necessary, to the Arab Region, in view of the fact that those regions had no WRC regional coordination structure. Many delegations at the Minneapolis Conference had declared themselves in favour of holding a world conference to revise the International Telecommunication Regulations; it would therefore be useful to arrange meetings in order to determine what changes needed to be made to the Regulations.

The **representative of Germany**, after noting that some of the activities described in the document under consideration would be spread over a number of years, stressed the need for careful coordination of the regional preparatory meetings of BR and BDT and said that he was ready to support the Moroccan representative's proposal. He drew participants' attention to the fact that the budget approved fell short of the needs assessed and that in order to carry out activities other than those planned while continuing to apply a policy of zero growth, it would be necessary to establish priorities and drop some of the tasks included in the Plan.

The **representative of Thunderbird** welcomed the fact that the estimates were based on the expected outputs. He suggested, with regard to TDAG's methods of work, that the meeting room should be arranged in such a way as to encourage dialogue among the participants, and that the floor should not be given to the same speaker on the same subject more than three times; a speaker could, if necessary, submit a succinct document, or develop his point of view during a break in the meeting or in a small working group. He regretted the fact that members of the Secretariat attending TDAG meetings did not give their views and proposed that for the second day of the meeting the Advisory Group should be given a brief interim report, to be supplemented later by a list of the persons responsible for carrying out this or that activity within this or that time.

The **representative of Liberia**, referring to Activity 2.4 of Programme 2, stressed that the services set up under pilot projects must be accessible for the final users if the projects were to be any use.

The **representative of Kenya**, while welcoming the fact that performance indicators had been set, regretted the fact that the resources allocated were inadequate. The allocation of resources should be kept permanently under review by the management. Concerning Activity 4.5, he commended the fact that BDT was trying to work with WorldTel, which should make it easier to bridge the telecommunication gap.

The **Director of BDT** said that WorldTel could count on BDT's support, as could any development organization willing to take practical action. BDT had to utilize all the resources available, including those of enterprises in the private sector, which ought to be able to contribute to telecommunication development and profit from it.

The **representative of BT** congratulated the Director of BDT and his team on the document, which for the first time was very clear and concise and would be useful not just for 1999, but also for future years. BDT's Operational Plan was different from those of the other two Sectors, in that BDT, in addition to the two study groups' activities, had to ensure that the Valletta Action Plan was put into effect.

He welcomed the support to be given to the work of ITU-T Study Group 3 (Activity 4.8). With regard to Activity 4.1, and more specifically cost estimation models, ITU-T Study Group 3's Rapporteurs Group, which dealt with those matters, was to meet shortly and it would be important to ensure proper liaison with that Group and take advantage of its expertise in the field.

The **representative of South Africa** wondered whether certain performance indicators ought not to be made more precise (e.g. those for centres of excellence). It would then be easier to evaluate the progress that had been made and to establish a relationship between the indicators and the amount of financial or human resources allocated. Her country was ready to support the proposals made by the representative of Morocco. A more flexible mechanism should indeed be found for obtaining and collecting information from the different regions so that development conferences would genuinely be world events. As far as the preparations for WRCs were concerned, the Moroccan representative's proposals were particularly pertinent for Africa.

The **Chairperson** replied that the question of performance indicators could not be settled in a single year, but would take time. The establishment of centres of excellence was an enormous task and the sums involved were also very large. The Asia-Pacific Region was at present considering how to set about establishing such centres and was keen to succeed in that field.

The **representative of Syria** fully agreed with the South African representative concerning performance indicators. He noted that in Part 4, "Recapitulation of resources", the total budget required for the VAP was greater than the budget approved. In future, TDAG should indicate whether the different VAP programmes were being treated equally or whether preference was given to one or another. Furthermore, it was not a sound financial principle not to give a budget or to indicate a zero budget for this or that activity: the cost element should always be shown clearly for each activity. Turning to the preparations for regional conferences, he considered that the conference follow-up machinery that existed already could be a very useful tool for evaluating the results achieved and making any necessary corrections. He proposed that in future one of the TDAG vice-chairpersons should be made responsible for budgetary matters. TDAG had to give advice on the subject to the Director of BDT, and the Vice-chairperson in question would then be able to help BDT draft a highly complex document. The last proposal was supported by the representative of Canada.

The **Director of BDT** said that BDT had found itself facing a dilemma: it could either give, for the sake of transparency, just enough details to escape criticism, or it could give so much information, that it would be difficult to assimilate and liable to give rise to other questions. It had chosen to give as much information as possible. The Bureau had a document for the budget process which was three times the size of the one under consideration, but it was for internal use. BDT's main aim had been to collect as much in the way of observations and indications from its members as possible, so as to be able to fix certain priorities. It would try to carry out as many projects as possible within the budgetary limits set by the Council.

The **Secretary** explained that the budgetary amounts for each activity were different from those appearing in the column "Total BDT costs". The budget and the number of staff-months allocated were shown under each activity, but the staff-months were not budgeted, so that they were not taken into account in the budget, although they were included under "Total BDT costs".

The **representative of Mali** considered, with reference to TELECOM surpluses, and more specifically the establishment of a central fund for modernization of the Panaftel network, that BDT should go a little further, arranging the connection of national networks and then supervising the execution of the project. Since the Panaftel network was already twenty years old, it might be

necessary to review the sum of 4 million Swiss francs allocated to it. With regard to the organization of regional telecommunication development conferences and preparatory meetings, his delegation supported the Moroccan representative's proposal.

The **representative of the United Kingdom** endorsed the comment by the representative of South Africa concerning performance indicators and emphasized that it was necessary to have measurable indicators in order to evaluate the progress that had been made. With regard to regional coordination in preparation for WRCs, he reminded the Group that the United Kingdom had been one of the sponsors of WRC-97 Resolution 72, being conscious of the importance of coordination at the regional level if WRCs were to be able to deal with the difficult questions before them. He hoped that the Council would ensure that new resources were released, in accordance with Resolution 72, to help regions where coordination was more difficult, e.g. Africa or the Arab countries. Good cooperation in preparing for WRCs could serve as a model for preparations for world telecommunication development conferences. Regional conferences remained necessary to prepare for world conferences, but good regional coordination would make it possible to reduce their duration to a day or two, since the work could have been done in regional coordination groups.

The **representative of Morocco** explained that in requesting special assistance for preparations for WRCs, he had not had any thought of imposing new budgetary constraints. It should be one of BDT's priorities to provide such special assistance: some 3 million Swiss francs could be found under different activities in the Operational Plan which could be used for that purpose. An example was Activity 2.1 on easy access of developing countries to the new information technologies; to be able to play a useful part in WRCs, those countries would have to be fully informed about the implications of those new technologies and the advantages they could derive from them. With regard to regional telecommunication development conferences, the presence of decision-makers at the regional level could be helpful, but in view of the budgetary constraints and shortage of time, there would only be two regional conferences before the next world conference. Another element to be taken into consideration was that it was getting more and more difficult to handle the growing number of major ITU meetings. He would therefore suggest that the Director should request a two-day extension of WTDC for the purpose of holding regional meetings, which would reduce costs, since delegates would only have to go to one conference.

The **representative of the United States** proposed, with reference to Activity 4.5, "Collaboration with development banks and WorldTel", that the Director should clearly specify the conditions under which BDT would be ready to establish a partnership with WorldTel and the procedures for selecting telecommunication projects.

The **representative of FCC** congratulated the Director of BDT and his staff on the preparation of a well structured and very complete document, which augured well for BDT's future work. As far as performance indicators were concerned, most of the time, when satisfaction was one such indicator, it was the feedback from participants in training, workshops or other areas that enabled the results achieved to be measured effectively.

The **representative of WorldTel** said that WorldTel planned to maintain a relationship with BDT in which both parties would benefit: BDT had to identify projects and help countries create a regulatory environment favourable to their implementation while WorldTel was ready to repay the development costs of the projects, given sufficient incentive. WorldTel wished to maintain good relations with operators engaged in the telecommunication development process in order to establish a strategic partnership for the developing countries, in which WorldTel would provide

financial support and the operators their know-how. He also wished to inform the developing countries that the partnership machinery established by ITU had resulted in substantial financial resources being released for the different projects.

The **representative of UNESCO** said that performance indicators were important for everyone - executing agencies, donors and beneficiary countries - and that they were a good means of assessing whether a project had been carried out well or badly.

The **representative of France** supported the various statements made about performance indicators, which ought perhaps to be improved in due course. With regard to Activity 4.7 on the preparation of cost models, he also thought it was necessary to avoid duplication, adding that it was important that BDT should give priority to the organization of the different workshops. As far as the preparations for WRCs were concerned, it was obviously for BR to provide the necessary expertise, while BDT was responsible for the logistics, which raised the problem of strengthening the regional presence. For regional telecommunication development conferences, appropriate solutions should be found for the different regions. There were efficient regional organizations capable of organizing such conferences, but in the case of Africa, an ad hoc solution would have to be found. With regard to the suggestion that BDT should be involved in any revision of the International Telecommunication Regulations, he proposed that BDT should contribute to the wide-ranging discussions there would be on the subject by making available the information stored in the existing regulatory database, which should facilitate the work of the Group of Experts to be appointed by the Council.

The **representative of TIA** pointed out, with reference to the regulatory database, that the information contained in the "Regulatory library"(Activity 1.3) was very useful, for decision-makers in developing countries among others. TIA was naturally interested in Programme 5 as a whole.

The **representative of Japan** said that performance indicators were very important, because they were a means of encouraging people to do better work. He welcomed the fact that the Operational Planning process provided for quarterly evaluation reports and proposed that the Director of BDT should draw up a brief and concise report which would enable an evaluation to be made of the activities.

The **representative of the Russian Federation** said, with reference to Programme 4 of the Operational Plan, that in the new telecommunication environment, ITU should not lose its leading role in relation to commercial activities and that BDT could continue to play a catalytic role in the activities of private-sector companies. Nos. 2191 and 2390 should be reworded, since they gave the impression that the preparation of price models was different for developed and for developing countries.

The **representative of Canada** considered that, in view of the confusion about the different budget figures given in the Operational Plan, it would be helpful to have a precise ideal of the cost-sharing method applied at ITU and of its various components (direct costs, indirect costs, invoiced costs, etc).TDAG would then have a better grasp of the financial approach adopted by the Union in drawing up the budgets of the different Sectors and the biennial budget of the Union itself and in applying the principle of cost recovery to the Union's different products and services.

The **representative of the United States** having asked for an explanation of what was meant by assistance in setting up a mechanism for financing universal service (Activity 4.4), the **Secretary** explained that by direct assistance was meant sending an expert to the country to give direct

assistance in the form of advice and technical expertise. ITU could recruit an expert directly or employ the services of a firm of consultants, the aim being to give countries advice on the way they could finance their universal service obligations.

The **Director of BDT** thanked all members of TDAG for their kind remarks about him, which he would not fail to pass on/to the rest of the BDT staff, who had contributed a great deal to the preparation of the Operational Plan.

6 Study Groups

Questions 16/1 and 13/2 (Documents TDAG-1/3 and TDAG-3/1(Add.1))

The **Chairperson** of Study Group 2 reminded participants that at the last meeting of TDAB it had been decided to divide Question 13/2 into two parts, one on the regulatory aspects (Question 16/1, which was the responsibility of Study Group 1), and the other on the technical aspects, which had been included in Question 11/2. He pointed out, in addition, that on the first page of the English version of Document TDAG-1/3 the word "political" should be replaced by "policy".

The **representative of Switzerland** said he had no objection to dividing Question 13/2 into two. As far as Question 16/1 was concerned, the term "service" was ambiguous: did "service" mean the delivery of a content or the content itself? A careful reading of Document TDAG-1/3 showed that in a number of places there seemed to be some confusion between the two meanings of the term, and he wished to alert participants to the problem. He also thought there should be greater harmonization in the French terms used by ITU (**instance/organisme de réglementation/régulation**).

The **Chairperson of Study Group 2** explained that "service" meant the delivery of programmes, and never the content, so that there could not be any misunderstanding. As far as the harmonization of the terms "**instance/organisme de réglementation/régulation**" was concerned, that was a linguistic problem which arose solely in French. He was in favour of the idea of standardizing the terminology used in ITU documents.

The **representative of South Africa** proposed that broadcasting regulators should be included in the table in Section 7, "Target audience for the output", of Document TDAG-1/3.

The **representative of UNESCO** thought that the same table should also include an increasingly important group, namely, users.

The **representative of Switzerland**, referring to Question 16/1, and more specifically the definition of a model role and mandate for the PSB, said that there was already such a model in Europe, but that it was not applicable everywhere. It was in fact a starting point, which would have to be adapted, and it would be up to national authorities to decide how it was to be applied.

The **representative of Syria** said that Study Group 1 had established a number of regulatory models, and not just one, and that it was for each administration to choose which of those models would suit it best.

Question 10/2 (Document TDAG-1/4)

The **Chairperson of Study Group 2** said that the changes contained in Document TDAG-1/4 were essentially editorial (addition of the IDRC group).

The **representative of TIA** considered that the document under consideration, which was very interesting and full of substance, should lay greater stress on the commercial viability of multi-purpose community telecentres, which would encourage investors, whether service providers or manufacturers.

The **Chairperson of Study Group 3** observed that Question 10/2 on rural communications in fact comprised seven parts or sub-questions, the one dealt with in the document being part b), "Development of multi-purpose community telecentres". Sub-question b) could not be considered in isolation. He added that investment in rural telecommunications could and should be profitable.

The **representative of UNESCO** said he had no doubt about the commercial viability of multipurpose community telecentres, because they could cover a great many value-added products.

Report of the Chairperson of the Special Group on Human Resources Development (HRD) (Document TDAG-1/8)

The **Chairperson of Study Group 2** said that the proposal to set up a special group on HRD had been debated at length at the Valletta Conference and that Study Groups 1 and 2 supported the idea behind the document under consideration.

The **Chairperson of the Special Group on HRD** said he wished to draw participants' attention to a number of points. He would suggest that handbooks should no longer be produced on paper: with the rapid development of technology, there was now quicker access to the information needed with CD-ROM, Internet, etc. With regard to Question 15/2, an electronic conference system had been set up in cooperation with BDT, with which it had already been possible to obtain a great deal of information, although the Group needed more contributions. As far as centres of excellence were concerned, they need not be physical entities; they could be virtual entities, through which the developed world's knowledge could be transferred to the developing world. He proposed that pilot projects should be undertaken in that field: English-speaking and French-speaking African countries could combine to take advantage of the experience acquired in establishing a centre of excellence in a developed country in order to set up similar centres in turn in their own region. He recommended that the Group should continue its work in order to help BDT, together with the private sector and administrations, ensure that information was available in order to support such pilot projects.

The **representative of CTU**, supported by the **representative of South Africa** thought that centres of excellence should be more broadly defined in order to take account of the specific needs and conditions of developing countries.

The **Chairperson of Study Group 2** proposed that the Chairperson of the Special Group on HRD should in future be designated the coordinator of work on HRD.

The **representative of ITC** asked that the part of the document entitled "Progress report" should mention the fact that ITC was at present preparing a handbook on tele-traffic engineering.

The **Chairperson of Study Group 2** formally invited the representative of ITC to collaborate in the Study Group's work on the subject.

The **representative of the United States** having queried the viability of handbooks on paper, given the rapid development of technology, and having asked for further explanations on the recommendation made in that connection, the **Chairperson of the Special Group on HRD** said that the information available ought to be put on an electronic medium, because it was important that it should reach the countries that needed it as quickly as possible.

The **Chairman of Study Group 2** added that two handbooks already existed on paper, but that they would soon be posted on the Web. It was true that the technology and the subjects dealt with in the handbooks were undergoing rapid change. Without abandoning paper completely, he would advocate that in future information should be put on an electronic medium.

Guidelines for the work of the rapporteurs (Documents TDAG-1/9 and TDAG-1/9(Rev.1))

The **Chairperson of Study Group 1** introduced Document TDAG-1/9, which was the outcome of joint efforts by Study Groups 1 and 2 and gave particulars of the rapporteurs' responsibilities and methods of work.

The **representative of Lebanon** welcomed an excellent document on the role of the rapporteurs who might be said to be "brains" behind the preparation of different recommendations.

The **representative of France** supported the idea behind the document, which gave some guidelines and allowed rapporteurs' groups a degree of flexibility. However, he had some doubt about the idea of taking the decision to organize meetings of rapporteurs' groups outside plenary meetings of study groups. He considered it important that there should be a degree of coordination before any decision was taken on a meeting of a rapporteur's group. He therefore proposed that in paragraph 4.4 of the document, after "in consultation with BDT", the phrase "and in consultation with the members of the rapporteur's group" so that the latter could check with their administrations that they would be able to attend the meeting. The financial problem should not be disregarded, as in some cases, fellowships might be necessary.

The **Chairperson of Study Group 2** said that there were changes in the English version of the document which had not been reproduced in the French version. He proposed that in § 4.4 of the English version of Document TSAG-1/9, after "in consultation", the phrase "with the members of the Rapporteur's Group" should be added.

The **representative of Germany** supported that proposal, even though it seemed to him obvious that the rapporteur would consult the members of his group about organizing a meeting. He would like all the guidelines for the work of rapporteurs' groups to be combined in a resolution along the line of the other two Sectors' Resolution 1. While endorsing the Lebanese representative's remark about the importance of the Rapporteurs' role, he would add that the contributions of Member States and Sector Members were the most important elements, as without them the rapporteur would not be able to draw up a report.

The **representative of ITC** stressed the importance of direct contacts during the course of a meeting for the proper progress of the work.

The **Chairperson of Study Group 2** said that the two study groups had agreed that they should invite all their members, chairpersons, vice-chairpersons, rapporteurs, etc., and BDT, to submit contributions, which would enhance their work.

Establishment of an independent regulatory body (Document TDAG-1/11)

The **representative of Switzerland**, introducing Document TDAG-1/11, said that it was proposed to amend the title of Question 8/1, without calling into question its content. The French term used for "regulatory body", namely, "**organe de réglementation**", meant a body competent to establish rules, whereas an "**organe de régulation**" was responsible for enforcing those rules. The term "independent", moreover, could cover the granting of concessions independently of the political authorities, but it did not necessarily imply financial independence. It was therefore proposed that the idea of "autonomy" should be added in the title.

The **representative of Syria** supported the proposed amendments.

The **representative of Germany** said that he was ready in principle to accept the amendment, recognizing that the term "independent" was not very well defined. However, as Vice-Chairperson of Study Group 1, he wished to point out that what was at issue was the independence of the regulatory body's decision-making process vis-à-vis telecommunication operators, which was consistent with the WTO texts. Financial independence, which was not covered by the WTO texts, was the subject of guidelines approved at Valetta in a recommendation. He did not want ITU to recommend that the regulatory body should be wholly independent of the political authorities.

The **representative of Syria** said that, in that case, it would be preferable to transmit the document officially to Study Group 1.

The **Chairperson of Study Group 1** said that the document would be useful to the Rapporteur for Question 8/1 since the concepts of regulation and independence would be covered in the report he would submit to the Study Group. He was in favour of keeping the question as it had been approved by the Valletta Conference. He was supported by the **representatives of Lebanon, the United States, Burkina Faso and Ghana**.

The **representative of Switzerland** pointed out that he had already raised the question previously in Study Group 1, which had declared that it was not competent to deal with it. It was not a matter of revising the content of the Question, but of amending the title and drawing TDAG's attention to the multiple meanings of certain terms.

The **representative of France** thought the Swiss contribution was very much to the point and stressed that it was TDAG's task to draw the study groups' attention to certain complex points. The Group should therefore give Study Group 1 guidance so that it could establish the title of the Question precisely in order to avoid any ambiguity in discussions. The Swiss contribution merely drew attention to the different possible interpretations of the present title, which were why it needed to be made more precise.

The **representative of Malaysia** said that by independence, he understood independence from operators and from the political authorities. The term "independent" could thus remain in the title of the question.

The **representative of Spain** thought it necessary to eliminate any ambiguity and was therefore in favour of adding the word "**regulación**" in Spanish. As far as the term "independent" was concerned, as the Vice-Chairperson of Study Group 1 had said, it would be preferable to keep it in view of the range of concepts it covered. The matter could be discussed at greater length by Study Group 1.

The **Chairperson of Study Group 1** reminded participants that in Malta it had been agreed that the telecommunication regulatory body should be independent of all interests and operators. Study Group 1 had no authority to amend the title of the Question, which had been approved by the Valletta WTDC. He therefore proposed that the matter should be placed in the hands of the Rapporteur and that the Swiss contribution should be submitted to Study Group 1.

The proposal was **approved**.

The **Chairperson of Study Group 1** informed participants that the developing countries were somewhat apprehensive about the treatment of Question 12/1 at the next meeting of Study Group 1, in particular because of the lack of any recommendations on the evaluation of spectrum frequencies.

Rapporteur's progress report of the Focus Group "Promotion of infrastructure and use of the Internet in developing countries" (Document TDAG-1/14)

The **Rapporteur of the Focus Group "Promotion of infrastructure and use of the Internet in developing countries"** reminded participants that at Valletta it had been decided to entrust Question 13/1 to a Focus Group rather than a Study Group for at least a year.

The Focus Group had decided to submit a preliminary report to TDAG and to propose that the Question should be referred back to the Study Group. As part of its mandate, the Group had prepared a questionnaire for the private sector, which would only be sent to some ITU Sector Members. Another questionnaire for administrations, already on the Web, would be finalized in the light of the comments received. It would also be sent to a limited number of administrations in both developed and developing countries. As to the Group's report, a first draft would be submitted to Study Group 1 at its September meeting. The Group's cooperation with international organizations would be strengthened, and he himself, as a member of the Working Party on Telecommunication and Information Services (TISP), would more specifically follow the work of OECD. Finally, he noted that telephony via the Internet would very probably develop and, while not wanting to expand the Group's field of activity, he nevertheless thought it necessary that it should serve as a point of contact for all the other Sectors' questions relating to telephony or Internet so that it could present the viewpoint of developing countries. In conclusion, he welcomed the fact that a meeting between ITU-D Study Group 1's Focus Group and ITU Study Groups 2 and 3 was scheduled for 29-30 April, although he would not be able to attend.

The **representative of the United States** thanked the Chairperson of the Focus Group for his devoted efforts, and the **representative of Lebanon** added that the hundred or so contributions received in connection with preparations for TELECOM 99 could be useful for the Group's work.

Summary report of the Management Team meeting of ITU-D Study Groups 1 and 2 (Document TDAG-1/16)

The **Chairperson of Study Group 1**, introducing Document TDAG-1/16, said that it was an administrative document giving the results of the Plenipotentiary Conference in so far as they concerned the work of the study groups, the draft schedule of meetings for 1999 and 2000, guidelines for rapporteurs and a proposal for the study group budget.

The **Chairperson** thanked the Chairpersons of Study Groups 1 and 2 and all their staff for the work they had done.

7 Regional telecommunication development conferences (Document TDAG-1/13)

The **Director of BDT**, introducing Document TDAG-1/13, said that the budget allocated for the 1999 RTDC could be used to strengthen the regional presence and the one for the 2000 RTDC to organize regional symposiums or preparatory meetings.

The **representative of France** observed that the situation was different in different regions. Just because the Europe Region did not need a regional conference, that did not necessarily mean that the same was true elsewhere. At Minneapolis, some speakers had given the impression that they wanted to debate the matter in the Council. The first thing to be done was to make sure that there was a consensus in all regions not to organize an RTDC in 1999. If, however, there was to be no regional conference during the present study period, BDT might set an unhappy precedent for the next one.

The **representative of South Africa** endorsed the principle of not necessarily organizing regional conferences, but arranging other types of meetings instead. However that might be, it was a matter for the Council to decide. She would like to know whether a series of preparatory meetings would be organized in each region and, as far as regional colloquiums were concerned, on what basis the regions would be chosen.

The **representative of Germany**, congratulating the Director on having had the courage to make such a radical proposal, said that preparatory meetings were more effective than regional conferences, although the latter generally aroused more interest in the media. He recognized the point that if BDT did not organize any regional conferences during the present study period, it was liable not to have any at all later on. While supporting the document submitted by the Director, he emphasized the extremely political nature of the decision that would ultimately have to be taken by the Council.

The **representative of Lebanon**, pointing out that in the past CCITT had concerned itself with regional conferences of the Plan, said that RTDCs had been the occasion for important decisions and had led to the preparation of different books for different regions. He therefore hoped, with a view to making the next world telecommunication development conference a success, that the regional conferences would be kept, in view of their importance for developing countries.

The **representative of Morocco** observed that WTDCs had a certain political impact, which was less evident in the case of RTDCs. If only two regions organized RTDCs and were then going to submit their requirements to WTDC, it would be preferable to choose another mechanism. The important thing was to collect information, whether in connection with an RTDC or a preparatory meeting. He suggested, if administrations saw fit to apply Minneapolis Resolution PLEN/9, that a period of two or three days before the next WTDC should be allocated for RTDCs.

The **representative of Bulgaria** supported the proposal by the Director of BDT, a proposal which should be submitted to the Council.

The **representative of Syria**, after pointing out that Resolution PLEN/9 called for two RTDCs to be held, recognized that there was room for a certain degree of flexibility and that it would be impossible to organize an RTDC in 1999. Since the question was a political one, it would be for the Council to take a decision on it. He suggested that each regional office should organize an RTDC follow-up meeting every year, to be attended by some headquarters staff, so as to keep bureaucracy to a minimum and establish guidelines for each region. At the Valletta Conference, the Syrian Administration had formally requested that arrangements should be made for the follow-up of all regional conferences.

The **representative of TIA**, saying he understood the budgetary constraints, while recognizing the importance of regional conferences, suggested that as in the past regional conferences or meetings should be organized at the same time as regional TELECOM exhibitions.

The **representative of Canada**, expressing support for the Director's proposal, said that RTDCs were intended to provide information on the regions, which could be achieved by having regional meetings organized by the Union's regional offices, perhaps in collaboration with regional organizations. He suggested that the Director should submit a more detailed proposal with more clearly defined strategic objectives to the Council.

The **representative of France**, recognizing the need to be pragmatic in the light of budgetary constraints, said that at its next session the Council would have to study different proposals, including the Secretary-General's report on the restructuring of the regional presence. It would be easier to assess the chances of success for preparatory meetings at that stage.

The **Director of BDT**, thanking participants for their support, said that in his view it was not necessary to hold one conference per region during every study period, given that it was already practically impossible to apply all the recommendations by regional conferences. He proposed that regional conferences should be made more practical, with more specific objectives, and said that he would endeavour, as part of the process of strengthening the regional presence, to give greater responsibility to the regions while cutting out bureaucracy. He was all in favour of strengthening collaboration with regional organizations, which would enable both sides to make savings and put new vigour into some regional bodies. Although it would be preferable not to organize RTDCs in 1999 and 2000, in order to remain within the ceiling set, that would not necessarily be the case in the future. He stressed that donors had to know that funds were being used in a rational effective and transparent manner.

8 Proposed aims and work methods of the Focus Group on Topic 7: Study various mechanisms by which to promote the development of new telecommunication technologies for rural applications (Contribution by Japan) (Document TDAG-1/6)

The **representative of Japan** introduced Document TDAG-1/6 paragraph by paragraph, adding that Japan had allocated a sum of 60 000 Swiss francs to cover the cost of the Focus Group's work, particularly as regards the collection and publication of information. The key to the Group's success would be to collect a large number of reports from directors of projects and joint ventures. The resources should essentially be used for research work and distribution of the information thus accumulated.

After consulting the competent authorities, and at the proposal of Study Group 2, Japan was proposing to provide a Rapporteur for the Focus Group in the person of Mr Kawasumi, Director General of Japanese Telecommunications. Mr Kawasumi, a former member of the Maitland Commission in 1993, who had taken part in the Council's work in the 1990s, would be a highly competent Rapporteur.

The **Chairperson of Study Group 2** recommended that the Japanese proposal, which was perfectly transparent, should be supported, for several reasons: it would give effect to a decision by the Valletta Conference, and Japan had kindly made available the necessary funds for the establishment of the database while in addition proposing a highly qualified Rapporteur, at no expense to ITU. The **representative of Brazil** also supported the Japanese proposal, which represented an important contribution for rural telecommunications.

The **representative of Viet Nam** also fully supported the clear and detailed contribution by Japan. The virtual conference room would be very useful for developing and least advanced countries, giving them access to information on new telecommunication technologies for rural applications. Since standards of living were sometimes quite low in rural areas, it was important to take the specific conditions in particular countries into account when choosing the technology that would suit them best.

The **representative of Canada**, while fully sharing Japan's viewpoint, nevertheless wished to sound a warning: it should not be forgotten that technology, while important, was only a tool; the important thing was to offer appropriate services, and Canada wished to assure Japan that it could provide it with the names of some suppliers.

The **representative of South Africa** supported the Japanese proposal. She noted that the symposium referred to § 3.3 of the document under consideration, did not appear in the "Proposed work schedule of Focus Group (topic 7)" (§ 4) and wondered when the symposium might be held.

The **representative of the United States** supported the Japanese proposal. Rural telecommunications were an area where the needs were great. She wondered what exactly was meant by projects or systems that had economic importance but limited profitability. If a system or project was viable, that meant that it was at least to some degree profitable.

The **representative of Telegreenland** also supported the Japanese proposal. Financing was a very important element as far as new telecommunication technologies for rural applications were concerned. He endorsed the Canadian representative's point that the emphasis should be on services and their cost, technology being merely a means and not an end in itself.

The **representative of INTELSAT** said that his organization, more than half of whose members were developing countries, had long experience of telecommunication development in rural areas and had a record of considerable success. Like the previous speaker, he considered that it was not technology in itself that was most important. The main thing was to find the solution best suited to the particular conditions in those countries.

The **representatives of the United Kingdom, ICAO, Germany, TIA and Zambia** also supported the Japanese proposal.

The **representative of ITC** likewise supported the Japanese proposal, adding that another element should be taken into account in the choice of technology: the socio-economic status of the persons living in rural areas and the types of users to be found there.

The **representative of France**, while supporting the Japanese proposal, said that precautions needed to be taken with regard to the structure and content of the database: the information provided need to be as objective as possible. Like the representative of Canada, he considered that special importance should be attached to the economic aspects of the combined implementation of certain technologies and services.

The **representative of CTU** supported the Japanese contribution, which was very important for developing countries and fitted in very well with the work being done on Question 15/1, which raised the problem of the absorption of technology and the establishment of a policy for the socio-economic evaluation of the use of technologies. He therefore proposed that close liaison should be maintained between the work of the Focus Group and that being done on Question 15/1.

The **representative of UNESCO** supported the Japanese proposal and endorsed the comments by the ITC and CTU representatives.

The **representative of Thunderbird** thought that the reference in § 3.1 a) should be to "telehealth" rather than "telemedicine", a term which in his view was too restrictive.

The **representative of Japan**, referring to the comments about the profitability of rural telecommunication projects, said that the reference to "commercial profitability" should be deleted in § 3.2 a).

The **representative of the United States** explained that her delegation had just wanted some clarification on the subject, so as to ensure every chance of success for projects whose commercial viability had not yet been proved or was not, at first sight, obvious.

The **representative of Canada** thought that the idea of commercial profitability should not be dropped from the document, since it was a very important aspect of activities. It had been proved that rural telecommunication systems could, in certain conditions, be extremely profitable.

The **representative of Study Group 2** proposed that the original text should be kept and that the idea of commercial profitability should be made one of the parameters to be considered in the choice of projects. Like the representative of South Africa, he would like to know the dates of the symposium referred to in § 3.3 of the document.

The **Director of BDT**, thanking Japan for its contribution, said that BDT was a body in which administrations could invest and that the key word was transparency: BDT would show clearly where financial contributions were coming from and how the money had been spent. He hoped that many agencies in developing countries would as a result be encouraged to work closely with BDT in the future.

Mr Kawasumi, speaking as the candidate proposed by Japan for Rapporteur of the Focus Group, thanked the members of TDAG for their highly constructive comments and said that Japan intended to get the Focus Group going as soon as possible. To that end he proposed to draw up a distribution list and, later on, to establish a database or website to keep all the information received up to date.

9 **Report of the meeting of the TDAG Subgroup dealing with private sector issues (Document TDAG-1/17)**

The **Chairperson of the TDAG Subgroup dealing with private sector issues** introduced its report (Document TDAG-1/17) paragraph by paragraph. He added that the meeting, which had been very constructive and positive, had been an opportunity to consider many questions of especial interest for the private sector and that Germany, WorldTel and TIA had made specific offers of cooperation.

With regard to Programme 5 of the Operational Plan, concerning partnership with the private sector, he wondered whether the budget allocated for the programme would be enough for the implementation of all the activities planned.

The **representative of Syria** thought the terms used in some parts of the document should be less imperative, TDAG being merely an advisory body. On the IMT-2000 issue, the special needs of developing countries ought to be taken into account, and with that in mind, ITU-R Question 77/8 ought to be somewhat reworded.

The **representative of CTU** supported the activities of the TDAG Subgroup and hoped that BDT would review the budget figures given so as to be able to launch the different activities proposed and involve the developing countries' private sector more in the implementation of telecommunication projects.

The **representative of AT&T** congratulate the Chairperson of the Subgroup on his excellent work. She regarded the report as a very positive first step in making private-sector expertise available to meet the needs of developing countries.

The **representative of TIA** fully supported the Subgroup's efforts and activities, but wondered about the structural relationship between it and the new TDAG. He endorsed the CTU representative's comments about the budget figures.

The **representative of Germany** said that the third sentence of the section concerning Europe should be deleted.

The **representative of BT** pointed out that a considerable number of the recommendations made involved Member States and that many activities entailed joint efforts by Member States and Sector Members. If the aim was to increase private-sector participation in developing countries, it might be

advisable for the Subgroup to meet close to the time of the study groups' meetings. Since it was dealing with very important issues, it might be an idea to make it a working party of TDAG, and not just a subgroup.

The **representative of South Africa** endorsed the BT representative's proposal that the subgroup should in future meet at the same time as the study groups.

The **representative of France** considered that some way should be found of relating the subgroup's work more closely to that of Study Group 1, since there was an obvious interaction between the subjects they dealt with. It would also be necessary, for the sake of coordination, to relate the subgroup's work to the activities of the Vice-Chairperson who would be responsible for the programme relating to the private sector. He had some reservations about the proposal to make the subgroup a working party and thought it would be preferable to see how its work developed.

The **representative of Zambia** asked for some clarification of the advice to be given to administrations concerning privatization.

The **Chairperson of the Subgroup** thanked all participants for their kind words about him and welcomed the fact that there had been such active and vigorous participation. For the benefit of the representative of Zambia, he explained that advice would be provided solely at administrations' request and would be adapted to the individual situation of the country concerned.

10 Contribution by Djibouti on the private sector (Document TDAG-1/12)

The **representative of Djibouti**, introducing the contribution, said that nowadays the rural telephone market too was profitable. To encourage partnership with the private sector, the Djibouti Government had adopted a framework law permitting equity participation by the private sector. In order to develop its rural network, Djibouti had asked for support from BDT.

11 Gender issues (Document TDAG-1/10)

The **Vice-Chairperson of the Task Force on Gender Issues**, introducing Document TDAG-1/10, said that it contained an update of the activities which had taken place since the last meeting of TDAB. Noting that members of the Task Force had been invited to study group meetings, that they had attended the fourth session of the ACC Interagency Committee on Women and Gender Equality, and participated in the forty-third session of the Commission on the Status of Women in New York, he listed the measures taken to integrate gender issues into BDT programmes and activities.

Ms Murray (Small World Connections Limited) described the main obstacles encountered by women today: high illiteracy rates, lack of financial resources, lack of education and training, lack of time and lack of affordable day nurseries. Their lack of confidence in themselves and fear of computers were also obstacles. Apart from that, they were not popular with employers, and they had inadequate access to information. Telecentres and telecommuting projects could help to overcome those obstacles by enabling women to obtain vocational training, earn a living wage, and get access to information, all at a cost they could afford. The telecentres could be mobile, which would enable women, wherever they might be, to take training courses, make better arrangements for having their children looked after and regain confidence in themselves. She cited examples of projects in the United Kingdom and Australia which had enabled women with low initial literacy to get training and work (data seizure, mailing lists, word processing or editing). In conclusion, she noted that telecentres were effectively targeted at women's needs, that they gave them professional experience,

found them employment generating a decent income and enabled women in rural areas to have access to information. However, Governments and NGOs would have to adopt positive policies, provide adequate resources, facilitate access to finance and develop telecommunication infrastructures, stressing the fact that telecentres enabled women to overcome the obstacles of poverty, lack of education and lack of information.

Ms Mittin-Sylla (ENDA-SYNFEV), describing telecentres from the developing countries' point of view, said that although problems were more or less identical all over the world, the rural scene deserved special attention. The purpose of telecentres was to give universal access to one and all, which implied positive discrimination policies. Telecentres also had to benefit women in rural areas by meeting their needs and helping to overcome the constraints imposed on them. Rural areas, like all backward areas, were poor in infrastructure (energy, access, equipment, maintenance) and social services, particularly education and training, and clung to certain social models which did not encourage women to make contact with the outside world. Apart from that, women in rural areas occupied very varied categories in terms of age, generation, status, role and occupation. They had, on the other hand, certain characteristics in common, such as their sex and social role, a high illiteracy rate (70%), their oral traditions, lack of time (housework) and of training, and their income was only enough to meet basic domestic needs. To deal with the limitations faced by women, telecentres should therefore tackle the problem of illiteracy, language (e.g. through translation software), time, training in science and technology, accessibility, content and services, which should be relevant to women and meet in particular health, social, economic and community needs. Through activities undertaken by telecentres, women could thus take economic initiatives, establish links with the formal economic sector, which was not yet the case in most rural regions in developing countries, and take part in public life and in the negotiation and taking of decisions.

The **representative of South Africa** thanked BDT and the Task Force for the efforts made and considered it vital that the in-service training scheduled for 1999 should be continued; she hoped that resources would be made available for that purpose. She also invited countries to include women in their delegations so that they could familiarize themselves with ITU meetings.

The **representative of ITC** said that projects for women in Viet Nam and Mali, for example, had yielded very satisfactory results and that various organizations such as UNIDO and UNESCO, were also working in that field.

The **representative of the United States** said that in her country 70% of active women had children under the age of five, that more than 50% of small- and medium-sized enterprises were run by women and that more than 50% of students were women. She also drew participants' attention to the advantages of genuine equality between the sexes for telecommunication enterprises and noted that Member States, Sector Members, United Nations bodies, regional and international organizations, NGOs and experts could contribute financially to the Task Force's various activities, as stated in the brochure "Promoting gender equality".

The **Chairperson of Study Group 2** reminded the Group that Question 10/2 dealt with rural telecommunications and telecentres and invited all those interested in the Question to contact the person designated as a contact in ITU-D.

The **representative of Togo** said that in many African countries there were women's associations which had projects along similar lines and suggested that they should be turned to good account in pursuing the telecentres' objectives.

The **representative of UNESCO** said that after the Beijing Conference, UNESCO had launched several major programmes, in which community radio played a prominent role, and that private initiatives had been launched through women's associations (e.g. publication of weeklies) so that women could participate in the democratic development of their countries.

The **Director of BDT** said that the Union's new team was very alert to gender issues and that the budget, which was a modest one, only represented an initial stage.

12 **Reduction in the volume of documentation (Document TDAG-1/5)**

The **Secretary**, introducing Document TDAG-1/5, pointed out that from the comparisons made ITU-D was not the Sector that was responsible for the most pages translated or reproduced, the year 1998 having been exceptional because of WTDC.

The **representative of the United Kingdom** suggested that each document should give a summary of its contents on the first page, that documents should be limited to four pages, documents approving proposals described in other documents being limited to one page, and that information documents should be presented in the form of brief summaries, on the understanding that anyone who wanted to get more information could do so by applying to the Secretariat. He also suggested that information documents should not be translated and that documents should be submitted in electronic form (CD-ROM at the beginning and end of conferences). He was supported by the **representative of UNESCO**, who wished to encourage the use of electronic facilities and advocated outside translation if it was cheaper.

The **representative of Canada** supported the proposal by the representative of the United Kingdom and pointed out that the Radiocommunication Advisory Group had come to conclusions which were similar to the United Kingdom representative's proposals. He suggested that when delegations registered, they should be asked to state which documents they wanted to have and which they did not.

The **representative of Lebanon** shared the view of the United Kingdom and Canadian representatives, but thought that BDT might need translation more than other Sectors. He suggested that the measures taken in the field of documentation should be standardized for the three Sectors.

The **representative of Guinea** stressed the importance of translation for developing countries and added that it was absolutely essential for working documents.

The **representative of Syria** said that it would be a great leap forward when developing or least advanced countries were able to gain access to the Web. It was therefore essential to let BDT have the resources so that the Director could make savings in the field of documentation.

The **representative of BT** said that his company had donated PCs, but that they had not been used by those who really needed them for their work. It was important that in future such facilities should be put to good use.

The **representative of South Africa**, while supporting the United Kingdom representative's proposals, pointed out that documents produced by the Secretariat were also information documents.

The **representative of the United States** thought that it might not be necessary to summarize information documents and suggested that the Secretariat should draw up a list of them which delegations could ask BDT if they were interested. Such information documents could be consulted

on a computer screen. Only information documents could not be accepted by delegations. As far as translation was concerned, if information documents were to play their proper role, they would also have to be translated.

The **representative of Malta** suggested that documents should be distributed on paper solely if that was requested by delegations, which should be required to come to meetings with their paper copies of documents put on the Web by ITU. He proposed in addition that BDT should draw up a list of delegations which only wanted to consult the Web.

The **representative of France**, returning to the Valletta WTDC, deplored the fact that it had devoted so much time to information documents. He thought that rules should be laid down for the translation and reproduction of information documents and suggested that the cost of reproduction on paper should be borne by the countries concerned. However, an information document that was of interest should be reproduced on paper and translated. The important thing was to treat information documents and working documents differently.

13 Council Resolutions 1116 and 1117 (Corrigendum 1 to Document 98/100)

The **officer in charge of the GMPCS-MoU project** noted that under Council Resolution 1117, the Secretary-General had to seek the advice of the three Sector advisory bodies and submit a report to the Council on ITU policy regarding the use of the ITU name, abbreviation, flag and emblem by third parties.

The **representative of ITC** wanted to know whether it would be possible to use the ITU logo on letters of invitation without the Union's authorization.

The **representative of the United States** asked, with regard to the operative part of Resolution 1116, which precisely were the measures that would be subject to cost recovery.

The **representative of TIA** said that his company had also had to formulate a policy for the use of its logo, not in order to make money, but in order to differentiate between requests from non-profit-making organizations and others.

The **officer responsible for the GMPCS-MoU project** said that the idea was to collect advice from the Sector advisory groups in order subsequently to formulate a policy, in the light of the relevant Resolutions of the Minneapolis Conference, and invited participants to submit contributions by 30 April.

14 Election of Vice-Chairpersons (Document TDAG-1/18)

The **representative of Syria** reminded the Advisory Group that the study groups had agreed, in the spirit of Valletta and Minneapolis, to the idea of electing five Vice-Chairpersons representing the ITU's administrative regions. He therefore proposed that more than one Vice-Chairperson should be elected for TDAG. He stressed the importance of expertise and the need to abide by the principle of geographical distribution. He was supported by the **representative of Burkina Faso**.

The **Director of BDT** said that due account would be taken of the Syrian proposal. BDT would go still further, since it proposed that six Vice-Chairpersons should be elected, corresponding to the six programmes in the Valletta Action Plan. The activities scheduled under the different BAAP programmes had been implemented, but it had to be admitted that life had not really changed in the developing countries. The new team therefore wanted to be practical and reinforce the regional presence in order to put into effect a real vision of the Valletta Action Plan.

The **Chairperson** said that after holding consultations, the Secretariat was in a position to present Document TDAG-1/18.

The **Secretary**, introducing Document TDAG-1/18, said that it contained the proposals so far received by the Secretariat. He suggested that over the next two weeks, participants should communicate their proposals to the Secretariat, so that it could draw up a consolidated proposal.

The **Chairperson** said that, since there was not time to debate the question, BDT would hold further consultations. The **Director of BDT** added that, with a view to transparency, he would wish to draw up a detailed document after holding further consultations.

It was so **agreed**.

15 Date of the next meeting of TDAG

The next meeting of TDAG will be held in the week of 13 September 1999.

16 Closure of the first meeting of TDAG

The **Director of BDT** welcomed the spirit of dialogue that had prevailed during the two days of the meeting and expressed the hope that in future such meetings would become real roundtables. He thanked the Chairperson, all participants and the staff for their support.

The **Chairperson** thanked all participants for their collaboration and declared the first meeting of the Telecommunication Development Advisory Group closed.

Annexes: 2

ANNEX 1

Statement by the Secretary-General

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Welcome to Geneva. It is a great pleasure for me to speak to you at the opening of this meeting.

Telecommunication technologies and their applications are advancing very rapidly and the telecommunication industry has shown a remarkable growth recently. However, **development gaps** in telecommunications between countries are still very much in evidence despite strong efforts by all of us. Some people even say that the rapid progress of telecommunication and information technologies is making the gaps wider than before.

For the development of telecommunications, or in other words, in order to reduce the gaps, ITU has carried out a number of programmes and projects. For the 1998 **ordinary budget**, the ITU Council has assigned to the work of BDT about 31 million CHF which is 19% of the total ITU ordinary budget. In addition, for the same year, some 72 million USD have been delivered for telecommunication development projects via **UNDP**, for which ITU is an executing agency. ITU is also providing technical assistance to a number of **Funds-in-Trust projects**. The total funds received for them in 1998 amounted to about 19 million USD. The ITU Council also decided to establish the **TELECOM surplus development programme** and a total of 17.5 million CHF has been transferred for this purpose. Furthermore, ITU received about 150 thousand USD of **voluntary cash contributions for the Special Fund for Technical Cooperation** from a number of administrations and Sector Members in 1998. Roughly speaking, in 1998, all this amounts to about 160 million CHF, that is the equivalent of the total ITU ordinary budget per year. I would add that there are about 140 **staff members in BDT** which is about 18% of the total ITU staff.

I cannot say that this amount of money is small, but it is definitely not enough. Therefore, we at the ITU Secretariat, including BDT, have been trying to make the **most effective use** of these precious monetary and human resources for the purpose of development of telecommunications of the world.

In order to fulfil our mission, this meeting is expected to provide the Director of BDT with very wise advice on how the ITU Secretariat should behave - in which fields or projects we should be more active, what kind of scheme we should use, by when, by whom, etc. We need to **optimize the use of resources** available to the BDT and so **the prioritization of programmes and projects** is inevitable.

Our target is to narrow down the telecommunication development gaps and this meeting is expected to **provide the best advice for us to achieve this target.**

I wish you a very successful meeting.

ANNEX 2

Statement by the Director of BDT

Mr Secretary-General, ladies and gentlemen, dear colleagues,

Welcome to the first meeting of TDAG. It is a real pleasure for me to meet you this morning and to benefit from your views and advice on matters of great mutual interest.

You will have noticed that we called this meeting the first meeting of the Telecommunication Development Advisory Group, anticipating the formal application of the plenipotentiary decisions which will legally enter into force only on 1 January 2000. We have also extended the invitation to all Member States and all Sector Members, and we have placed on the agenda of the meeting the operational plan of the Development Sector, also in anticipated application of the new Convention.

You will certainly wish to review the results of the Plenipotentiary Conference and particularly, those outcomes which are most significant to the Development Sector: the strategic plan for the Union including the Development Sector, the new role and responsibilities of TDAG, the inclusion of a gender perspective in our work, and some other issues that are also very significant.

For the first time, we will discuss the operational plan. Every detail of the concrete implementation of the Valletta Action Plan for 1999 is before you and has been published since mid-March. We have chosen a format that makes it easy to identify the relation between the Valletta Action Plan and the Financial Plan of the Union, and we have indicated how the resources of the BDT are used to attain the objectives stated. In this respect, I hope you will assist us by reflecting on the ways and means to reduce the volume of documentation in the Development Sector, even though the figures we have available do not mark us as particularly bad offenders in this area.

The Study Groups have come up with a number of proposals regarding their work plan and I expect that you will examine these proposals in the same positive spirit in which they have been prepared. Mr Gabrielli and Mr Kisrawi, the Chairpersons of Study Group 1 and Study Group 2 respectively, are here with us and will be very interested to hear your comments.

As you may have seen, Japan has come forward with a proposal that the Focus Group on Topic 7 be activated, that is to study mechanisms by which the development of new technologies for rural areas can be promoted. They have concrete proposals for expediting the work and we will listen with great interest, particularly because these new technologies aim at what is the central goal of all our work: universal access to information and telecommunication services. I invite all of you to take initiatives of this nature that will boost development in all parts of the world.

Yesterday the Subgroup on private sector issues met under the Chairmanship of Mr Davidson. As you are aware, these issues are very close to my heart and I believe that strong and increasing partnerships between the private and the public sector are the future of telecommunication development in our countries. We had very creative exchanges yesterday and I will invite Mr Davidson to provide you with a progress report on the promising proposals and solutions that are under consideration.

As I already mentioned, gender issues are getting increased attention. This new development started in Valletta and continued in Minneapolis. We are now actively pursuing a policy of including a gender perspective in all our programmes, and the Task Force that was set up in Valletta will report to you on its activities.

Speaking about things we do for the first time, I would finally like to draw your attention to the fact that we have posted the documents for this meeting of TDAG on the ITU Website in advance of the meeting.

Mr Secretary-General, ladies and gentlemen, dear colleagues, I would like to assure you that I will do everything possible to make your stay in Geneva as fruitful and pleasant as possible. I look forward to very open and frank exchanges, and I am convinced that with your advice and guidance the Development Sector will become more effective, for the benefit of the entire membership.

I promise this is the longest speech I will make during this meeting, as I intend to make this event an opportunity to listen to you all in your advisory capacity.

I wish you a very successful meeting.
