



Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT)

**Fourth Meeting of the Telecommunication
Development Advisory Group (TDAG)
Geneva, 12-13 October 2000**

**Document TDAG-4/16
13 October 2000
Original: English**

FOURTH MEETING
OF THE
TELECOMMUNICATION DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY GROUP
(Geneva, 12-13 October 2000)

MAIN DECISION ELEMENTS

**1 Approval of the summary of conclusions of the third TDAG meeting
(Document TDAG-3/22)**

1.1 *The summary of conclusions of the third TDAG meeting was approved.*

1.2 With reference to § 4, the 1/16 unit class had been abolished only for Sector Members from developed countries and the text referring to trust funds should be clarified.

1.3 With regard to § 15, the third TDAG meeting had endorsed collaboration between R&D institutions in ITU Member States.

1.4 Regarding preparation for WTDC-02, an evaluation should be made, comparing regional development conferences (RTDCs) and regional preparatory meetings (RPMs), with a view to putting forward a clear idea at WTDC-02.

1.5 *The above comments were noted.*

2 Rotation of TDAG chairman and vice-chairmen positions (Document TDAG-4/5)

2.1 Introducing Document TDAG-4/5, the Secretary of the meeting drew attention to the proposal that rotation be implemented in TDAG, on the basis of criteria of competence, equitable geographical distribution and the need to promote more efficient participation by the developing countries. A further consideration was availability to serve on TDAG management, in the light of representatives' important responsibilities in their own countries.

2.2 It was recalled that the Chairman of the TDAG Subgroup on private-sector issues had stepped down. The subgroup, with a view to promoting its principles on gender issues, had recommended that his replacement be a woman.

- 2.3 With reference to the "five administrative regions" mentioned in § 9 of document TDAG 4/5, it was agreed that the paragraph should read "Balanced geographical distribution is a key factor in implementing the principle of rotation".
- 2.4 In order to improve the functioning of TDAG, it was suggested that every time a decision was mentioned, a specific documentary reference should be given in order to avoid any risk of confusion. In response, the Director of BDT that insertion of references every single time would lengthen documents and place an unwarranted workload on the secretariat.
- 2.5 At the request of the Director of BDT, *TDAG approved the appointment of its chairman Mr Lee as honorary chairman.*
- 2.6 It was agreed that any further discussion on the matter would take place under "Other business".

3 Study group matters - Final report of ITU-D Focus Group 7 (Document TDAG-4/7 and Addenda 1-3)

- 3.1 The Rapporteur for Focus Group 7 introduced the report in detail, laying particular emphasis on the findings in the applications area. The report had been endorsed by Study Group 2 at its meeting on 21 September 2000. The final report to TDAG was contained in Document TDAG-4/7 Addendum 2. The conclusions and recommendations reflected in Document TDAG-4/7 Addendum 1 were extracted from Addendum 2, and were addressed to the Director of BDT. The addenda were not available in Spanish and French.
- 3.2 Responding to the concern of the meeting regarding translation and publication of the report, the Secretary of the meeting confirmed that despite the existing backlog, it ought to be possible to have the remaining translation done and the report published within the suggested time-frame.
- 3.3 *TDAG endorsed the document and approved its early publication.*
- 3.4 *It was decided that a meeting to make editorial revisions would be held within one month and that members would be given an opportunity to revisit the report thereafter. The recommendations would be passed on to the Director for inclusion in the programme.*
- 3.5 *TDAG also endorsed the proposal to establish a voluntary group, led by Mr Kawasumi, to help BDT in implementing the recommendations.*
- 3.6 The Director of BDT drew the attention of the meeting to the fact that the necessary resources were not available for implementing the recommendations, and appealed to all ITU-D members to help in taking up the challenge.

4 Summary status of the ITU-D study group activities (Document TDAG-4/12)

- 4.1 Following the introduction of Document TDAG-4/12, attention was drawn to the working procedures which tended to lead to loss of time in approving recommendations. It was pointed out that while any proposed new procedures could be considered in due course, existing procedures must be followed to the letter. The Director of BDT said that a legal opinion had been requested on the matter and hoped to provide a reply soon.
- 4.2 *Document TDAG-4/12 was noted.*

5 Strategic approach to Internet for development (Document TDAG-4/3)

5.1 Introducing Document TDAG-4/3, the **Secretary of the meeting** emphasized the strategic nature of the topics involved.

5.2 Several points were raised during the discussion. The subject of Internet telephony should be treated with caution, ensuring that use of the Internet as a tool for development was not done at the expense of lost income for administrations. Two issues which constituted a problem for developing countries remained unanswered: first, whether it was possible to calculate the volume of Internet traffic on a circuit and, second, whether it was possible to identify the origin of an Internet message. Many countries had no access to Internet, and ITU and other United Nations agencies had a key role to play in achieving universal access by making decision-makers aware of its benefits.

5.4 *The meeting noted all the comments and requested that the document be submitted to the forthcoming preparatory meetings for WTDC-02.*

6 Strategic approaches to financing telecommunication development (Documents TDAG-4/6 and TDAG-4/2)

6.1 Following the introduction of Document TDAG-4/6, TDAG stressed the importance of the subject and expressed its concern regarding the lack of BDT involvement in global forums such as the G8 Summit and the United Nations Economic and Social Council. ITU must work closely with other institutions in order to achieve appropriate solutions for development. It was suggested that the document should include more statistical information, and success stories.

6.2 The opinion was expressed that, as a long-term strategy, BDT should view Internet development as a means of ensuring that return on funding was achieved through payment for content, rather than for infrastructure.

6.3 The Director of BDT said that ITU had provided input for the G8 Summit and was back on track with ECOSOC. With respect to BDT's action concerning the digital divide, the Bureau had the requisite specialized knowledge, but was dealing with much larger institutions such as the World Bank and UNDP, which enjoyed a stronger financial and political position. One proposal was to dissociate the telecommunication sector from the others when structural adjustments were made, since telecommunications could make an important contribution to the economy. At the G8 Summit, Japan had stated that it would be investing USD 15 billion on the digital divide over the coming five years. The necessary steps had been taken to ensure that the Union would take advantage of the situation. ITU also maintained close contact with the European Union, Canada and the United States.

6.4 With respect to Document TDAG-4/2, attention was drawn to the lessons that could be learned from the case study, namely: the use of VSAT systems as a solution for rural communications, the provision of interest-free loans by the main operator over three years, and the introduction of rural communication by cooperating with the users. The meeting suggested that the useful experience described in the document should be transmitted to RASCOM.

6.5 The Director of BDT said that the case was being taken into account in the study of rural communications and also the study undertaken for INTELSAT on VSAT and local-loop systems. All African countries had been invited in writing to take part in a continent-wide project. It had also been decided with INTELSAT that the system could possibly be extended beyond Africa to Latin America and Asia.

6.6 *Documents TDAG-4/6 and TDAG-4/2 were noted, along with all the comments made during the discussion, and TDAG requested that they be transmitted to the study group dealing with Question 12/1 and to the regional preparatory meetings for WTDC-02.*

7 Strategic approach to resource mobilization for the telecommunication sector (Document TDAG-4/9)

7.1 The strategic approach to resource mobilization outlined in Document TDAG-4/9 was an attempt to enhance the mission of ITU and BDT.

7.2 The meeting stressed the importance of resource mobilization in view of the scarcity of multilateral funds. The meeting also pointed out that surplus funds should be separated from voluntary contributions or other resources mobilized.

7.3 *The meeting agreed that a work programme for mobilization of resources was needed and that the document would be transmitted to the Director.*

7.4

8 BDT's role in cooperation between ITU and WTO (Document TDAG-4/8)

8.1 The Secretary of the meeting recalled that the matter had been discussed briefly at the third TDAG meeting, which had requested that it be placed on the agenda of the current meeting. The purpose of the document was to provide an insight into BDT's role and a number of discussion points, especially in the light of the adoption of an agreement with WTO by Council-2000.

8.2 The meeting stressed the fact that the discussions at WTO had major impacts on the developing countries, particularly those that had not yet reformed their sectors, sometimes because they lacked the necessary expertise.

8.3 After discussion, there appeared to be general support for the document and that it warranted further discussion. *The meeting agreed that it would be transmitted to the Director and presented at the forthcoming regional preparatory meeting in Alexandria.*

9 Operational plan (Documents TDAG-4/10 and TDAG-4/11)

9.1 The Deputy Director of BDT introduced Document TDAG-4/11, and reviewed the operational plan in detail. The assessment related to the operational plan from 1 January to 30 September 2000. The plan, which consisted of a number of parts reflecting the Valletta Action Plan, combined strategic, financial and resource planning, seeking the best possible implementation of the decisions of the Plenipotentiary Conference and the World Telecommunication Development Conference.

9.2 Referring to the amount of 12 per cent for ad hoc assistance set aside for unforeseen situations during the year, the Director of BDT said that TDAG's advice on the subject was always welcome, since demand usually exceeded the budget and requests had to be prioritized. Ad hoc assistance was sometimes given to countries that lacked even the resources to carry out planning.

9.3 *The meeting supported the continuation of direct assistance.*

9.4 A view was expressed that the whole issue of how the budget was used should be re-visited before the next WTDC, in order to achieve a proper balance of expenditure between study groups, programmes and direct assistance.

9.5 On the issue of the Development Symposium for Regulators, the Director of BDT said that the activity was taking place in response to a decision of WTDC-98. The results of the symposium would be presented at WTDC-02.

9.6 The meeting requested that an item concerning progress on the forthcoming WTDC be included on the agenda of the TDAG meeting prior to the event, so that TDAG would have the opportunity to enrich the agenda.

9.7 *The meeting agreed that the document would be transmitted with all the comments to the Director for further consideration.*

9.8 The Deputy Director of BDT, introducing Document TDAG-4/10, said that the concept of performance indicators had been established in 1999 and that the subject had been raised at previous TDAG meetings.

9.9 *It was agreed that comments should be given to the secretariat later, after informal discussions.*

10 Task Force on Gender Issues (Document TDAG-4/1 and Addendum 1)

10.1 The Vice-Chairman of the Task Force on Gender Issues (TFGI) introduced Document TDAG-4/1, which must be read in close conjunction with Addendum 1. A specific proposal had been made for the creation of an ITU/BDT gender unit with full-time staff in order to implement recommendations from the TFGI working groups within BDT.

10.2 *The meeting endorsed the suggestion to establish a permanent unit on gender issues.*

10.3 It was also further suggested that a global development project be launched, focusing on the promotion of women's participation in telecommunications, with regional components and a focal point in BDT. The initiative could constitute a flagship project for BDT in regard to the World Summit on the Information Society and, meanwhile, might attract sponsors and extra budgetary resources to finance related activities.

10.4 The general enthusiasm for the TFGI's work was noted, along with all the comments made during the discussion.

11 Report of the fourth meeting of the TDAG Subgroup dealing with private-sector issues (Document TDAG-4/13)

11.1 The Chairman of the Subgroup dealing with private-sector issues briefly reviewed the group's report in Document TDAG-4/13, and suggested that, at future meetings, a period be set aside during which private companies could hold discussions with each other. *The Director of BDT confirmed that the suggestion had been noted.*

11.2 It had also been suggested that a questionnaire be sent to Sector Members in an attempt to elucidate the problem of private-sector participation in meetings of the subgroup. The Secretary of the meeting said that a questionnaire was under preparation; it could be sent to TDAG members for comment before distribution.

11.3 It was suggested that the questionnaire be reviewed by the private-sector members to ensure that the questions were appropriately framed. *This suggestion was endorsed*

12 TDAG bureau and rotation of officers (Document TDAG-4/15)

12.1 **The Director of BDT** read out the nominations contained in Document TDAG-4/15. Ms Roseman would be the new chairman of the private-sector subgroup. A representative of the

World Bank would remain in the bureau, alongside the EC. The names of some vice-chairmen, who were still to be identified, would be notified later. It was proposed that the Director should be given flexibility in completing the list and appointing the officers, with the proviso that he try to achieve better gender balance.

12.2 *TDAG endorsed the document, and requested the Director to conclude the necessary consultations and make the appointments.*

13 Participation of Sector Members in ITU-D (Document TDAG-4/4)

13.1 Document TDAG-4/4, was introduced and attention was drawn to § 1.3 on the participation of non-governmental organizations and to the second part dealing with the issue of Associates.

13.2 In response to a suggestion that information would also be useful on which Sector Members, in addition to paying their annual contributions, were also contributing to the activities of the Sector, financially or in some other form, the Director of BDT said that the question of quality rather than quantity of Sector Members would be a very difficult parameter for BDT to measure and could only be estimated on the basis of their participation in various groups.

13.3 With respect to the question of Associates, it was suggested that the Director of BDT should begin applying acceptance of Associates to the study groups on the basis of one half of the 1/16 unit, representing CHF 1 800 a year, a very encouraging amount as compared with that paid by other Sector Members.

13.4 *All the comments were noted with the understanding that the document would be forwarded to the Director.*

14 Reports from the Radiocommunication Sector (ITU-R) and the Telecommunication Standardization Sector (ITU-T)

14.1 The representative of BR gave an oral report on the recent Radiocommunication Assembly (RA-2000) and World Radiocommunication Conference (WRC-2000) held in Istanbul, emphasizing those results of the Assembly which were perhaps more relevant to ITU-D.

14.2 *The report was noted with thanks.*

14.3 The representative of TSB introduced Document TDAG-4/14, drawing attention to the main highlights of WTSA-2000 related to the activities of ITU-D.

14.4 *The report was noted with thanks.*

15 Date of the next meetings of TDAG

15.1 The Secretary of the meeting announced *tentative dates for TDAG meetings in 2001, namely 22-23 February and 4-5 October.*

15.2 A request was made to the Director to consider the possibility of increasing the length of the meeting to three days, since TDAG would have to discuss the procedures for study groups and preparations for the next WTDC.

The meeting rose at 1735 hours on Friday, 13 October 2000.