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| **Regional Preparatory Meeting for WTDC-17 for Arab States (RPM-ARB)** |  |
| **Khartoum, Sudan, 30 January – 1 February 2017** |
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|  | **Document RPM-ARB17/11-E** |
| **25 November 2016** |
| **Original: English** |
| Chairman, TDAG Correspondence Group on Streamlining WTDC Resolutions |
| REPORT OF THE SECOND MEETING OF THETDAG CORRESPONDENCE GROUP ON STREAMLINING WTDC RESOLUTIONS |
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## Opening remarks and approval of the agenda

The Correspondence Group on Streamlining WTDC Resolutions (CG-SR) held his second meeting on 28 September 2016 under the chairmanship of Dr Ahmad Reza Sharafat, Vice-Chairman of TDAG.

The Chair, Dr Sharafat, welcomed participants and thanked them for their active and meaningful involvement in the work of the Correspondence Group since its creation in March 2016.

The BDT Director, Mr Brahima Sanou, addressed the audience through the remote participation facilities. In his opening remarks, he stressed the importance of the work of this Correspondence Group towards streamlining WTDC Resolutions. He shared the general feeling ITU-D Membership had expressed to him regarding the large number of Resolutions. Mr Sanou explained that the goal is streamlining priorities and simplifying processes, not losing the essence of Resolutions by supressing issues identified by Members. Integrating similar issues would allow to focus on high impact wins and doing more with less. In the lead to the next World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC), it is appropriate to reflect where the various issues brought in by ITU-D Membership would be best addressed, be it in Resolutions, the Operational Plan or the Strategic plan, or the WTDC Declaration.

The BDT Director thanked Dr Sharafat for his effective leadership as well as all Members who have been willing to follow him in this important process. He invited participants in this meeting to concentrate on the guiding principles for the work of the Correspondence Group going forward. He reminded that the Regional Preparatory Meetings to WTDC (RPMs) will provide further opportunities to discuss concrete proposals for combining Resolutions. They will, in turn, also provide valuable input to the ongoing work of CG-SR.

The Agenda of the meeting (Document [TDAG/CG-SR/4](https://www.itu.int/md/D14-TDAG21.CG.SRES-C-0004/)) was adopted without modification.

## Review main conclusions of the first meeting of TDAG CG-SR

The Chair, Dr Sharafat, briefly recalled the mandate of the Correspondence Group and presented the report of the first meeting in March 2016 contained in Document [TDAG/CG-SR/3](https://www.itu.int/md/D14-TDAG21.CG.SRES-C-0003/en) (Chairman, CG-SR). No further comments were received from participants and the report was adopted.

## Presentation and discussion on contributions

The Chair, Dr Sharafat, presented the main findings of Document [TDAG/CG-SR/5](https://www.itu.int/md/D14-TDAG21.CG.SRES-C-0005/en). Mr Kemal Huseinovic presented the document in detail on behalf of the BDT Secretariat. The document provides background information about the definition of the term “resolution” and related practices across ITU and the United Nations system (UN). It seeks to provide useful references and draft guidelines for the work on streamlining Resolutions in the lead to WTDC-17. It was emphasized that those are voluntary guidelines for ITU-D Membership to consider in their work.

Multiple delegations expressed their general support for the work on streamlining Resolutions.

The Deputy-Director of BDT, Mr Yushi Torigoe, clarified the process going forward. There will be two main tracks of work. On one hand, concrete proposals for streamlined Resolutions will be prepared for and at RPMs, as part of the preparatory process for WTDC-17. On the other hand, in parallel, the work led by Dr Sharafat will continue through electronic exchange.

Consequently, the document informing about the work of CG-SR which have been submitted to RPM-CIS will be updated to reflect the progress made at the second meeting of the Group, as the basis for discussion. The work on Resolutions involving Membership from the CIS region is expected to evolve at the forthcoming RPM. The outcome of those discussions will be fed back into the ongoing work by all Members through electronic means as well as into the subsequent RPMs.

The BDT Director reminded that WTDC-17 is going to make final decision on all proposals drafted in the lead to WTDC-17. The TDAG Correspondence Groups are an opportunity to tackle important issues ahead of WTDC and improve its efficiency.

Regarding the draft guidelines for streamlining Resolutions and drafting new Resolutions, Dr Sharafat stressed that those will evolve and can be modified by Members as we go towards WTDC-17. He noted the general agreement of delegates in the room to use those as a framework in drafting proposals for consolidating Resolutions and putting forward new Resolutions.

During the discussion on the draft guidelines, several proposals for revision were brought forward by participants, namely:

1. The guidelines for new Resolutions contained in section 3b of Document 5 can be extended to existing Resolutions, too.
2. When a Plenipotentiary (PP) Resolution exists on a given topic, nothing should prevent Members from drafting a WTDC Resolution on that topic to elaborate on the roles and activities to be undertaken by the BDT Director.
3. Additional criteria were suggested, such as the actual implementation of existing Resolutions. Those Resolutions that have already been acted upon are no longer needed as they have served their purpose. The Chair, however, called for caution with this regard, noting that this should not be taken by Members as a signal that the issue is no longer of importance.
4. There was a general agreement that overlap or duplication should be one of the main criteria. To take account of that, issues dealt with in ITU-D Study Group questions or in the Operational Plan may not need to be elaborated in stand-alone Resolutions.
5. At the final stage of the preparatory process for WTDC-17, RPMs could also extend the discussion on streamlining Resolutions to Resolution 1, which is being re-engineered by the dedicated TDAG Correspondence Group.
6. It was noted that some Resolutions, like Resolution 9, have a dual function, both as a Resolution and an ITU-D Study Group question. Those may need to be treated differently and may not fit the draft guidelines.

Section 3 of Document 5 was revised to bring more clarity and avoid confusion as well as to harmonize the guidelines for existing and new Resolutions. The revised version, in track changes, is made available in Annex 1 here. This revised version is also submitted to RPMs, with the understanding that the guidelines are non-binding and reflect the collective wisdom of the Correspondence Group.

The delegate from Argentina presented Document [TDAG/CG-SR/7](https://www.itu.int/md/D14-TDAG21.CG.SRES-C-0007/en). She expressed her support to the work of the Correspondence Group and stressed the importance of Membership’s involvement in the process. She also insisted on focusing on issues pertaining to the core mandate of the sector as well as for unifying processes and methods for revising and adopting Resolutions across the three sectors of ITU. She further stressed the importance of putting the process of streamlining Resolutions into the broader context of the discussion on the goals and results of Resolutions. Multiple delegates expressed their support to the contribution from Argentina.

The Chair noted that the input of Argentina has been taken into account in the proposed draft guidelines for streamlining Resolutions contained in Document 5.

The delegate from Russian Federation presented remotely their three contributions. Document [TDAG/CG-SR/8](https://www.itu.int/md/D14-TDAG21.CG.SRES-C-0008/en) puts forward a proposal leveraging on the common issues addressed towards integrating Resolution 1 “Rules of procedure of the ITU Telecommunication Development Sector” and Resolution 31 “Regional preparations for world telecommunication development conferences”. The Chair, Dr Sharafat, noted the contribution and indicated that the proposal will be shared with the TDAG Correspondence Group on Resolution 1.

Document [TDAG/CG-SR/9(Rev.1)](https://www.itu.int/md/D14-TDAG21.CG.SRES-C-0009/en) is a proposal for combining Resolution 17 “Implementation of regionally approved initiatives at the national, regional, interregional and global levels” and Resolution 32 “International and regional cooperation on regional initiatives”. The text has also been updated to reflect current references to PP-14 Resolutions.

Document [TDAG/CG-SR/10](https://www.itu.int/md/D14-TDAG21.CG.SRES-C-0010/en) contains a proposal for integration of Resolution 37 “Bridging the digital divide” and Resolution 50 “Optimal integration of information and communication technologies”. Additional references have also been inserted, notably to Resolution 70 of the UN General Assembly. While welcoming the proposal, some delegates felt that issues addressed by those two Resolutions, the digital divide and the digital dividend, should be addressed separately.

Participating delegates expressed their general support to the proposals by the Russian Federation as well as, more broadly, to the approach used to streamline WTDC Resolutions. Some were of the opinion that more than two Resolutions could be combined, for as long as the issues addressed were the same or similar. Delegates, however, reserved their right to study the proposals in detail and provide further comments, either as part of the RPM process or through electronic exchange. The Chair, Dr Sharafat, emphasized that the intention of this meeting is not to endorse any specific aggregation, but to agree on a common approach and encourage Members to submit aligned proposals.

Mr Kemal Huseinovic presented Document [TDAG/CG-SR/6](https://www.itu.int/md/D14-TDAG21.CG.SRES-C-0006/en) (Chairman, CG-SR) on behalf of the Secretariat. The document provides detailed mapping of current WTDC Resolutions and Recommendations to PP Resolutions, ITU-D objectives and ITU-D outcomes/outputs, with a view to streamlining them in preparation for WTDC-17.

The document also highlights common issues and themes in WTDC Resolutions and Recommendations and provides a broad framework for streamlining existing Resolutions and aligning new proposed Resolutions for WTDC-17.

The meeting considered the document. Delegates welcomed the mapping, which can serve as the basis for further discussion and a practical tool for Membership to work on their own proposals.

In response to a question from the meeting, Dr Sharafat encouraged all Members already working on proposed revisions to existing Resolutions or on new proposed Resolutions to take into account the draft guidelines of the Correspondence Group (see in Annex 1 here) in order to ensure consistency and prepare ahead of time.

## Discussion on the way forward

The Correspondence Group continues its work through electronic means. Contributions and concrete proposals are encouraged in order to advance the task of the Correspondence Group.

All interested ITU-D Administrations and Sector Members are invited to subscribe to the mailing list of CG-SR tdag-cg-sres@lists.itu.int through the [online portal](https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/EWM/Pages/ewm.aspx).

The revised guidelines contained in Annex 1 are submitted to RPMs for further discussion.

It was agreed that Document [TDAG/CG-SR/8](https://www.itu.int/md/D14-TDAG21.CG.SRES-C-0008/en) (Russian Federation) be sent to the TDAG Correspondence Group on Resolution 1.

The third physical meeting of CG-SR has been scheduled for 25 January 2017 at 3.30 p.m. and the fourth physical meeting of the group for 3 April 2017 at 1 p.m. at the ITU headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland.

The Chair, Dr Sharafat, reaffirmed his willingness to work towards substantial progress in streamlining WTDC Resolutions and invited Membership to continue to actively contribute in this process.

## Any other business

No further items have been discussed under this agenda item.

**ANNEX 1**

A. Guiding principles for streamlining existing WTDC Resolutions

The following guiding principles might prove useful in the work on streamlining Resolutions:

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| **Principle** | **Questions** |
| **Coherence & Consistency** | Is the Resolution consistent with the BDT mandate and the WTDC Action Plan? |
| **Overlap & duplication** | Is there an overlap or duplication with existing WTDC Resolutions or with the Action Plan? Are the goals of Resolutions already reflected in the ITU-D Strategic Plan objectives, programmes, regional initiatives (RIs), Study Group (SG) questions, or BDT working methods? |
| **Necessity** | Is the Resolution indispensable? Is there already another WTDC/Council/PP Resolution or Resolutions which address the same topic or action? Has the Resolution already been implemented? |
| **Action-orientation & accountability** | Does the Resolution call for a specific action or outcome? Is there a clear accountability line in the Resolution?  |

In general, streamlining existing Resolutions is preferable to adding a new Resolution.

When the actions or activities put forward in a Resolution have been implemented or accomplished, the Resolution can be viewed as fulfilled and removed.

Editorial revisions of adopted Resolutions should be kept to the minimum or to what is strictly necessary for its efficient implementation.

#### If only editorial updates are required to a WTDC Resolution, the need to produce a revised version should be questioned.

#### B. Guidelines for drafting new WTDC Resolutions

New Resolutions are intended to define working methodsoraddress issues which are demonstrably new and of highest importance for ITU-D, and which have not been considered in existing WTDC documents or internationally-agreed development agendas.

Concretely:

* New proposed Resolutions should be aligned and harmonized with existing ones;
* New proposed Resolutions should involve a distinct new subject within the scope of BDT or an issue that represents a significant new or unaddressed challenge related to ICT development or public policy;
* New proposed Resolutions should normally not involve a subject already covered in the WTDC Action Plan and the Operational Plan;
* If an existing Plenipotentiary Conference (PP) Resolution identifies a priority issue, the need for a similar WTDC Resolution should be carefully considered;
* The need for a new WTDC Resolution should be carefully examined if a new proposed Resolutions involves subjects already covered by internationally-agreed development goals, such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the goals of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), as those are also already established as reporting lines;
* New proposed Resolution should specify an expected result(s) or outcome(s) so that its implementation can be measured, in line with result-based management principles. It should likewise specify an appropriate reporting mechanism;
* New proposed Resolutions should be backed by more than one Member State Administrations.

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