



Telecommunication
Development Bureau (BDT)



Ref.: Circular BDT/DDR/AFR/074

Geneva, 29 January 2021

To:

- ATU and ITU Member States in the African continent
- ITU-D Sector Members from Africa
- ITU Academia from Africa
- United Nations and its Funds and Programmes and Specialized agencies of the United Nations
- Regional Telecommunication Organizations from Africa
- Intergovernmental Organizations

Subject: The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and African Telecommunications Union (ATU)'s Joint Regional Preparatory Meeting for Africa for the World Telecommunication Development Conference 2021 (WTDC-21), 29-30 March 2021, Virtual

Dear Sir/Madam,

In preparation for the World Telecommunication Development Conference 2021 (WTDC-21), we are pleased to invite you to participate in the ITU-ATU Joint Regional Preparatory Meeting for Africa (RPM-AFR), which will take place virtually, from 29 to 30 March 2021, at the kind invitation of the Government of Burkina Faso.

As you may know, the WTDC takes place every four years in the period between two Plenipotentiary Conferences to consider topics, projects and programmes relevant to telecommunication development. WTDCs set the strategies and objectives for the development of the Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), providing future direction and guidance to the ITU Telecommunication Development Sector (ITU-D). WTDC-21 will be hosted by the Government of Ethiopia and take place in Addis Ababa, from 8 to 19 November 2021.

WTDC-21 comes at a defining moment for the world and our place in it. The COVID-19 global pandemic has brought home the stark reality that in today's world, connectivity is not just important; it is absolutely *critical*. At the same time, it is increasingly clear that the success of this final Decade of Action to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will largely rely on digital solutions. This makes your and our work and mandate more important than ever.

In this context, and in collaboration with membership through the Telecommunication Development Advisory Group (TDAG), the Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT) has undertaken a comprehensive preparatory process. The objective of this process is to ensure that WTDC is the landmark global ICT development conference, which will drive the global development agenda with an impactful mandate for ITU and an agile and fit for purpose BDT for the next planning period.

To keep pace with a fast-changing environment, and to be able to respond effectively to the shifting needs of our membership, both ITU and ATU have undertaken a demanding journey of change. Over the last two years, BDT has made substantial progress with the development of a comprehensive results-based management

(RBM) framework, and the supporting theory of change building blocks, which strengthens BDT's ability to plan and monitor impact and demonstrate results. We trust that these changes will help orient discussions on regional priorities, and benefit the preparation of the WTDC-21. Similarly, ATU held its 1st Regional Preparatory Meeting for WTDC-21, where ATU members adopted the list of priorities to be addressed and established two Working Groups to follow the WTDC-21 discussions and prepare the African common proposals to the conference.

In line with WTDC Resolution 31 (Rev. Hyderabad, 2010), the RPMs aim at engaging the membership in the WTDC process in order to encourage regional coordination before the conference. RPMs also seek to identify regional topics of interest and challenges that need to be addressed to foster the development of telecommunications/ICTs, and help Member States and Sector Members set common priorities.

To facilitate effective preparations by the ITU and ATU membership and partners, a draft RPM-AFR agenda is attached as **Annex 1**.

Detailed information about the submission of contributions, registration and other logistical information is available in **Annex 2**. We invite you to submit your contributions and proposals by 15 March 2021 at the latest.

Requests for any additional information may be addressed to:

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We look forward to your participation and contribution, which will allow WTDC-21 to become an effective and viable tool to guide our work in the coming years.

Yours faithfully,



Doreen Bogdan-Martin
Director, Telecommunication Development Bureau
International Telecommunication Union



John Omo
Secretary General
African Telecommunications Union

Attachments:

Annex 1: Draft ITU-ATU Joint RPM-Africa Agenda

Annex 2: Information on submission of contributions, registration and other logistical information

ANNEX 1

Draft ITU-ATU Joint RPM-Africa Agenda

1. Opening ceremony
2. Election of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman
3. Adoption of the agenda and time management plan
4. Digital Trends in Africa
5. Reporting on the implementation of the WTDC-17 Buenos Aires Action Plan (including the Regional Initiatives), and contribution to the implementation of the WSIS Plan of Action and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
6. Report on the implementation of outcomes of other ITU Conferences, Assemblies and meetings related to ITU-D work: PP-18, WRC-19, RA-19, and WTSA-16
7. Preparations for WTDC-21
 - 7.1 Update on WTDC-21 preparatory process by the host country Ethiopia
 - 7.2 Report of the first ATU Regional Preparatory Meeting held on 9 October 2020
 - 7.3 Report of the TDAG Working Group on WTDC Preparations (TDAG-WG-Prep)
 - 7.4 Report of the TDAG Working Group on WTDC Resolutions, Declaration and Thematic Priorities (TDAG-WG-RDTP)
 - 7.5 TDAG Working Group on Strategic and Operational Plans (TDAG-WG-SOP)
8. Identification of regional priority areas
9. Launch of Network of Women (NoW) and Generation Connect – Africa Youth Group (GC-AFR)
10. Other business

ANNEX 2

Information on submission of contributions, registration and other logistical information**Registration, access and participation**

Each delegate interested in attending the meeting should complete and submit a [registration form that can be accessed here](#).

Delegates can register for the meeting using their ITU user account credentials (i.e. username and password). In case they do not have an ITU user account, they can create one by following the steps available [HERE](#). A User account with TIES access allows delegates to access ITU information resources including contributions and other working documents.

Note: For delegates who already created their user account when registering to previous events on this same system can still use the same account.

All registration requests for participation in RPM-AFR must be **validated by the Designated Focal Points (DFPs)** of administrations and entities entitled to participate. The list of Designated Focal Points is available [HERE](#). To modify the contact details of a Designated Focal Point or to change the Designated Focal Point, an official letter from an authorized official should be sent to the BDT Meetings Registration Service (by fax: +41 22 730 5545/+41 22 730 5484 or by e-mail to: bdtmeetingsregistration@itu.int), providing the new DFP's last name, first name and e-mail address.

Membership is encouraged to consider gender balance when deciding their delegations to RPM-AFR.

Interpretation

Participants to RPM-AFR are invited to select upon registration **by 12 February 2021**, the language they require interpretation in.

Access to the virtual meeting room and captioning

Information to access the virtual meeting room will be provided to duly registered participants through a separate email.

Only those participants duly registered for the meeting will be able to access the virtual meeting room.

The standard captioning service will be provided through the virtual meeting room. For those participants wishing to access the captioning script directly, the link will be available at the [RPM-AFR webpage](#).

Contributions to RPM-AFR

As per WTDC Resolution 1 (Rev. Buenos Aires, 2017), contributions should not exceed five pages and must be submitted using the online template available on the [RPM-AFR webpage](#).

Please attach the original "Word" version of your contribution to the online submission form to ensure that all hyperlinks, graphics and tables are correctly displayed.

In accordance with provision 13.2.2 of WTDC Resolution 1, contributions for RPMs must be received no later than 30 calendar days before the start of the event, that is by **27 February 2021 (2359 hours, Geneva time)**, in order to be translated for the meeting.

Contributions that do not meet this 30-day deadline but are received at least 14 calendar days before the opening of the meeting (i.e., by 15 March 2021) shall be published but not translated.

Contributions received less than 14 calendar days before the meeting shall not be included on the agenda.

Documentation

All documents will be posted on the [website of RPM-AFR](#).

Delegates are asked to ensure that they have TIES access rights to be able to access the documents for the RPM-AFR through the website. Information on how to request TIES access rights can be found at : <http://www.itu.int/TIES/>

Summary of deadlines

Date of RPM-AFR	Deadline to request interpretation (-45 days)	Deadline to submit contributions with guaranteed translation (-30 days)	Final deadline for submission of contributions without translation (-14 days)
29-30 March 2021	12 February 2021	27 February 2021	15 March 2021
