|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Telecommunication DevelopmentAdvisory Group (TDAG)****25th Meeting, Geneva, 2-5 June 2020** | C:\Users\comas\AppData\Local\Temp\Rar$DRa0.735\jpg\ITU official logo_blue_RGB.jpg |
|  | **Revision 2 to** |
|  | **Document** **TDAG-20/****59-E** |
|  | **17 August 2020** |
|  | **English only** |
| Chairman, Telecommunication Development Advisory Group (TDAG) |
| REPORT OF THE 25TH TDAG MEETING |

**INTRODUCTION and HIGHLIGHTS**

The 25th meeting of the Telecommunication Development Advisory Group (TDAG) was conducted virtually from 2 to 5 June 2020, under the chairmanship of Ms Roxanne McElvane Webber. The meeting attracted 383 participants: 304 delegates representing 100 Member States, 66 ITU-D Sector Members, 2 from Academia; and several observer entities. TDAG Vice-Chairmen Mr Christopher Kemei (Kenya), Mr Abdulkarim Oloyede (Nigeria), Mr Al-ansari Almashakbeh (Jordan), Mr Tariq Alamri (Saudi Arabia), Mr Kishore Babu Yerraballa (India), Mr Nquyen Quyen (Viet Nam), Mr Arseny Plossky (Russian Federation), Ms Aichurok Maralbek Kyzy (Kyrgyz Republic), Mr Wim Rullens (Netherlands) and Ms Blanca Gonzalez (Spain) were present for the meeting,[[1]](#footnote-2) as were the chairmen of the ITU-D study groups: Ms Regina Fleur Assoumou Bessou (Cote d’Ivoire) Chairman of Study Group 1, and Mr Ahmad Reza Sharafat (Islamic Republic of Iran) Chairman of Study Group 2. TDAG participants considered 56 written contributions, of which 16 were submitted by membership.

1. **Address by the Secretary-General**

Mr Houlin Zhao, ITU Secretary-General, opened the 25th meeting of the Telecommunication Development Advisory Group on 2 June 2020, thanking participants for their support in accepting to hold a virtual meeting and for their early preparations through a series of TDAG Web Dialogues.

Highlighting the agenda, including the ITU-D four-year rolling Operational Plan; the ITU-D contribution to the implementation of the WSIS Plan of Action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; collaboration with the other Sectors; and the ITU-D Youth Strategy, the Secretary-General said: “You will review the outcomes of WRC-19 related to the work of ITU-D, a conference that has opened new opportunities for people in underserved communities and in rural and remote areas, where most of the unconnected live. You will also provide guidance on the preparatory process for WTDC-21, the first of such conferences to take place on African soil since the establishment of ITU-D.”

Mr Zhao informed participants of the important video message of the United Nations Secretary-General, delivered on the occasion of World Telecommunication and Information Society Day 2020, in which he said: “Information and communication technologies are powerful tools to tackle the world’s most pressing challenges. International cooperation on digital technology is essential to help defeat COVID-19 and achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.”

Mr Zhao reminded participants that with only 10 years left to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), ITU’s work on development is now more important than ever. “The world needs the SDGs, and the SDGs need ICTs. Today’s crisis reminds us how interconnected we all are − and how big the difficulties and challenges we face are, including closing the digital divide. We are seeing the power of digital transformation more than ever before. We at ITU must seize this opportunity to speed up the development of a digital society and promote ICT development capacities, including investment in digital infrastructure, so that we leave no one behind during and after COVID-19,” he said.

The Secretary-General commended BDT for its efforts to help address the COVID-19 crisis, from the launch of the Global Network Resiliency Platform and new guidelines to assist countries develop national emergency telecommunication plans to its work to ensure children’s online safety and remote learning opportunities.

1. **Address by the Director of the Telecommunication Development Bureau**

Ms Doreen Bogdan-Martin, Director of BDT, welcomed colleagues and members of TDAG to the first-ever virtual TDAG meeting. The Director restated her vision to create a BDT that listens to membership, identifies and leverages new opportunities, builds new alliances, engages with traditional, long-standing partners, and attracts and cultivates new partners, and ensures that they see real value in collaborating with BDT. TDAG plays a key role in providing expert and considered advice on how to move in this direction.

The COVID pandemic brought dramatic changes that have required innovative and effective solutions. BDT has embraced new tools and approaches to delivering services in partnership with a growing range of partner organizations and broader international cooperation.

Not so for the billions who still have “*no connectivity or struggle with access that is too slow, too costly, and too unreliable to have made a meaningful difference to their lives during this crisis”*. The post-COVID world must be based on inclusive connectivity for all, broadband access for all.

BDT is on the road to the World Telecommunication Development Conference in 2021 (WTDC-21) and TDAG is the forum to present the actions that have been undertaken, and the results that have been achieved on this journey. Strategic priorities will guide the BDT efforts, improving the efficiency of the Bureau; achieving regional relevance by working closer with the regional offices, as well as with the UN system; putting a greater focus on working in partnership; upgrading the capacity of staff by conducting internal capacity-building activities; and providing data-driven thought leadership based on strengthening statistics-gathering and data analysis capabilities.

In terms of partnerships the Director highlighted, among many others, the GIGA initiative, a partnership between ITU and UNICEF to connect every school in the world to the Internet; the EQUALS partnership for digital gender equality, and which brings together more than 90 partners worldwide, co-founded with UN Women, GSMA, ITC and the UN University; and the efforts to engage young people through a draft BDT Youth Strategy.

BDT is the advocate of meaningful connectivity with member governments, the private sector, civil society, the UN and other stakeholders. It is said that one must never waste a good crisis. The sector must seize this unique opportunity to harness an unprecedented tide of political will, “*we may never again benefit from the intense focus governments are now according digital networks and services*”.

WTDC represents a unique opportunity to make huge strides forward in connecting the unconnected, and building government and industry cooperation around a global “big dig”, to make an impact as fast as possible, and leverage the power of digital to achieve the SDGs.

A fit-for-purpose BDT, and a streamlined WTDC, “*can be the prime movers in driving real and rapid progress towards a world of universal connectivity, and universal opportunity*”.

1. **Opening remarks by the Chairman of TDAG**

Having recognized that TDAG-20 was the first virtual meeting in the 28-year history of ITU-D, in her opening remarks, the Chairman of TDAG, Ms Roxanne McElvane Webber (**United States**), on behalf of the membership and all participants, thanked BDT for the comprehensive and impressive on-going work to make the Bureau fit for purpose.

She noted that TDAG-20 discussions would cover past, present, and future activities, including BDT initiatives. In the context of 56 contributions to review and discuss, she identified goals for the meeting: review all contributions; endorse the operational plan; reach consensus on a mechanism to treat the Development Sector contribution to the ITU strategic plan, and establish a framework to prepare for WTDC-21. With regard to the latter, she noted that the 2018 TDAG – the first of the present cycle - decided to postpone initiation of the preparatory working groups until a time in closer proximity to the World Telecommunication Development Conference in 2021. The time had come to convene such groups, and creating them was a necessary milestone for the meeting.

In her view, both WTDC and TDAG must handle the member’s administrative work, and that work must translate into impact to help connect the unconnected. Consequently, at WTDC and at TDAG, her hope is for participants first to be informed; to leave knowing more about the world than before attending. She indicated her hope that WTDC-21 would feature developing countries, highlight leaders, and celebrate the strides and triumphs that have occurred since the last WTDC, particularly the progress in developing countries that has been made and is being made.

She affirmed her hope that through the WTDC preparatory process and at the conference itself, developing countries would have a platform to articulate their perspective as participants in global communications, to identify their challenges, and that our collective efforts would amplify those strides, perspectives, and challenges. And having crystalized those voices, those who are inclined and able can more easily address those challenges. To inform and to listen, with the highest purpose of WTDC being to take action on the challenges articulated, based on comprehension of facts and circumstances and the unique voices of developing countries. Undergirding this are the data provided to membership by BDT that help us understand better the circumstances of us all.

Finally she noted that ITU is a unique organization that has a global footprint and global membership both with nations and with industry, and there is so much more that the ITU-D membership can do together than can be done individually.

1. **Agenda, Time Management Plan and TDAG appointments**

The meeting agenda and time management plan are contained in [Documents 1](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG25.2-C-0001/) and [DT/1](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG25.2-200602-TD-0001/),respectively and were considered together. It was agreed to remove two items from the agenda: “Progress report on the ITU Index” and the “Status report on the Regional Presence Review”, as both items would be discussed at the Council and were within its purview for any decision.

[Document DT/3](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG25.2-200602-TD-0003/) provides guidance for participants on how the virtual meeting of TDAG would function. Conducting a fully virtual TDAG meeting with interpretation into all six languages of the Union is a new experience. While ITU has significant experience in organizing remote participation, virtual meetings of this scale and importance using the *Interprefy* platform are unprecedented. Feedback from participants is welcome to improve tools for subsequent virtual meetings.

[Document DT/4](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG25.2-200602-TD-0004/), submitted by the Chairman, provides an overview of TDAG and its scope of responsibilities, offers feedback related to the TDAG Web Dialogues on WTDC reform, and recommends points to consider for TDAG-21[[2]](#footnote-3).

All meeting documents cited in this report were introduced on behalf of the BDT Director, unless stated otherwise.

|  |
| --- |
| The agenda was adopted following modification. The time management plan was adopted without modification. The guidance on a virtual TDAG-20 was noted as an information document for reference, as was DT/4. |

* 1. **Appointment of a new TDAG Vice-chairman to a vacant position**

TDAG expressed gratitude to outgoing vice-chairman from the Americas region, Mr Hugo Dario Miguel (**Argentina**), who had been appointed at WTDC-17. TDAG then considered [Document 38](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG25.2-C-0038/) containing a letter from the administration of **Argentina** supporting their candidate for this vacant position.

|  |
| --- |
| TDAG appointed by acclamation **Mr Nicolás Karavaski** as a TDAG Vice‑Chairman, replacing Mr Hugo Dario Miguel. |

1. **Outcomes of WRC-19 related to the work of ITU-D**

The World Radiocommunication Conference 2019 (WRC-19) took place in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, from 28 October to 22 November, preceded by the Radiocommunication Assembly (RA-19) in the same venue and place from 21 to 25 October. These events were followed by the first session of the Conference Preparatory Meeting for the World Radiocommunication Conference 2023 (WRC-23).

WRC-19 addressed topics on frequency allocation, frequency sharing and the associated regulatory procedures for the efficient use of spectrum and orbital resources, and made a number of decisions that relate to the work of ITU-D. The Director of the Radiocommunication Bureau (BR), Mr Mario Maniewicz, presented [Document 4](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG25.2-C-0004/), which summarizes the results of these meetings and provides lists of both RA and WRC resolutions where cooperation of ITU-D is required. The Annex to Document 4 contains the WRC resolutions and Recommendations of special interest for developing countries.

In particular, WRC-19 decided on new and revised spectrum allocations and regulatory procedures for services such as IMT-2020 (commercially known as 5G), space research, Earth exploration-satellite services (EESS), large scale non-geostationary satellite constellations, high-altitude platform stations (HAPS) which promise to bring connectivity to rural areas, RLANs (Wi-Fi networks), railway radiocommunication systems between train and trackside (RSTT), intelligent transport systems (ITS) and the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS).

WRC-19 also adopted a declaration promoting gender equality, equity and parity in the work of the Radiocommunication Sector (ITU-R). The Director of BR informed TDAG that the virtual meeting of the Radiocommunication Advisory Group (RAG) on 25-27 May 2020 had created a correspondence group, in which ITU-D is invited to collaborate, to prepare an ITU-R resolution on gender equality and equity for the 2023 Assembly. Delegates attention was also drawn to the importance of Resolution 559, which allows developing countries to benefit from orbital slots.

Enhanced collaboration between the Telecommunication Development Bureau and the Radiocommunication Bureau was highlighted particularly on capacity building initiatives, spectrum and radiocommunication related aspects, and continued efforts to respond to the expectations of membership. BR has redoubled its support of ITU‑D capacity building efforts, such as the annual satellite communication training programmes, and will continue this fruitful collaboration with BDT.

Participants drew attention to the importance of the RA and WRC recommendations and how to inform developing countries of the issues that the BR meetings raised including the IMT arrangements and new radio frequencies being made available, the impact of the digital dividend, and the importance of considering electromagnetic fields in 5G frequencies. The work of ITU-D study groups carried out on these topics were also noted, including Resolution 9, and participants called for further collaboration among the two Sectors.

|  |
| --- |
| TDAG expressed appreciation for the document and noted the close cooperation between BDT and BR, especially for the continued capacity building efforts and support for developing countries on the implementation of WRC-19 and RA-19 decisions and preparation for WRC-23. TDAG noted that the work on spectrum-related issues continued to be of great interest for developing countries with many regions underlining its importance. In addition, participants noted that careful consideration should be given to EMF issues concerning IMT-2020 (5G). |

1. **ITU draft Operational Plan for 2021-2024**

The draft operational plan for the years 2021-2024, presented in [Document 6](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG25.2-C-0006/), is a first attempt at a consolidated “One-ITU” operational plan. The plan addresses implementation of the five strategic goals and 18 strategic objectives of the Union. It follows the structure of the 2020-2023 strategic and financial plans as approved by the Plenipotentiary Conference in 2018.

The 18 strategic objectives are comprised of six inter-Sectoral objectives, three Radiocommunication Sector objectives, five Telecommunication Standardization Sector objectives, and four Telecommunication Development Sector objectives. The draft operational plan also provides information on the resources allocated to the 17 sustainable development objectives.

The draft operational plan comprises three parts. Part 1 provides a synthesis. Part 2 provides the 2019 performance report and the 2021-2024 operational plan at the objectives level. For each objective, the following information is provided:

* Description of the objective and summary of costs allocation for 2019 and 2021 to 2024.
* 2019 performance report, including statement of the achievements, measurements and risk factors.
* 2021 statement of key expected results, measurement and key risk indicators.

Part 3 provides some additional information on outputs and SDGs.

Four ITU-D objectives are foreseen in 2021-2024, representing 35.15 per cent of the total planned resources of the Union for that period:

**Objective D.1 - Coordination:** To foster international cooperation and agreement on telecommunication/ICT development issues.

**Objective D.2 - Modern and secure telecommunication/ICT infrastructure:** To foster the development of infrastructure and services, including building confidence and security in the use of telecommunications/ICTs.

**Objective D.3 - Enabling environment:** To foster an enabling policy and regulatory environment conducive to sustainable telecommunication/ICT development.

**Objective D.4 - Inclusive information society:** To foster the development and use of telecommunications/ICTs and applications to empower people and societies for sustainable development.

|  |
| --- |
| TDAG noted the draft operational plan for 2021-2024 in its new format and endorsed its contents. BDT agreed to submit information on risk evaluation to be included in the 2021 plan. BDT took good note of the comments and agreed to include further references and more details in the 2021 plan. |

The **Republic of Guinea** in [Document 17](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG25.2-C-0017/) draws attention to assistance to developing countries.In implementing the ITU-D strategic and operational plans through the resolutions adopted by WTDC-17, Guinea calls for a special and concrete programme to benefit developing countries, particularly least developed countries (LDCs), landlocked developing countries (LLDCs) and small island developing states(SIDS).

Such a programme would include designing an implementation map for the resolutions related to these categories of countries, assisting the concerned Member States in building telecommunication/ICT infrastructure development roadmaps and policies, including analogue to digital migration, organizing appropriate workshops and seminars to strengthen capacity building for them, and facilitating access to funding institutions to ease implementation.

The contribution from the **United Kingdom** reflected in [Document 30](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG25.2-C-0030/) calls on BDT to increase the value of ITU statistical products by providing greater specificity about the challenges faced by landlocked developing countries and small island developing states, so that the Union will be able to better understand the issues facing these groups of countries and help to develop more effective and tailored approaches to promoting affordable connectivity. In making this proposal, the United Kingdom references Resolution 131 (Rev. Dubai, 2018) of the Plenipotentiary Conference on measuring information and communication technologies to build an integrating and inclusive information society; Resolution 23 (Rev. Buenos Aires, 2017) of WTDC on Internet access and availability for developing countries and charging principles for international Internet connection; and Resolution 16 (Rev. Buenos Aires, 2017) on special actions and measures for the least developed countries, small island developing states, landlocked developing countries and countries with economies in transition.

|  |
| --- |
| This proposal received support from TDAG participants. TDAG also recognized the need for easily accessible and accurate information from ITU and welcomed innovations by BDT to improve the use and access to that information and preserve its longstanding reputation in the field of telecommunication-related statistics. |

[Document 31](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG25.2-C-0031/): The contribution from the **United Kingdom** to improve access to ITU resources related to the digital divide proposes that TDAG request a set of actions from BDT to take the lead in developing resources to improve the compilation and presentation of the ITU data, making more accessible thematically-related best practices, regulatory policy capacity building programmes and their outputs, recommendations and research developed by ITU, and other resources ITU has with respect to bridging the digital divide.

It is suggested that the developed resources should benefit stakeholders, particularly in regard to regulatory policy choices to promote access to affordable telecommunication services. The unique and valuable collection of regulatory information can help produce more affordable broadband to narrow the digital divide and improve basic connectivity, and the COVID-19 pandemic has shown what access to digital services means to everyone except those who do not have it. The fact that this material is distributed across the ITU and Sector websites can make it less easy to access, which could be improved by contextualizing it with other information. The objective of this contribution is to make this world-class collection of material more accessible.

|  |
| --- |
| TDAG noted the document with interest and appreciation, acknowledging the need to highlight the importance of making information and best practice about bridging the digital divide more accessible, contextual and useful, and underlining the need to foster an enabling environment to bridge the digital divide, bringing together all relevant materials, including material from regional organizations and material on policy and regulation as well as on capacity building. |

[Document 32](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG25.2-C-0032/): The contribution from **Cuba** on best practices and access to ICTs explains how grassroots projects that foster the adoption of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in rural and hard-to-reach communities can turn challenges into opportunities. Cuba shared insights into its community project that started in 1987: the Youth Computing and Electronics Club (“Joven Club de Computación y Electrónica”) and how it is contributing to training and learning in ICTs by giving people an opportunity to develop basic to intermediate-level digital literacy skills.

It is proposed, among other things, to assess possible synergies with academic, financial and business organizations to establish training centres in rural and poorly accessible communities to promote learning and upgrading of knowledge in information and communication technologies, and to promote connectivity. The underlying objective is to contribute to the digital transformation.

|  |
| --- |
| TDAG thanked Cuba for bringing this longstanding work improving digital literacy to the attention of membership, an effort without which the promise of connectivity cannot be reached.  |

**Brazil** proposed in [Document 39](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG25.2-C-0039/) a campaign to disseminate relevant material published by ITU through ITU regional and area offices, as some members have not been made aware of the availability of this support material. Recent publications cited by Brazil include: ITU guidelines for national emergency telecommunication plans; ITU regional e-waste monitor for Arab States and Latin American countries; ICT infrastructure business planning toolkit; ITU broadband maps; ITU best practice guidelines on fast forwarding digital connectivity for all; the economic contribution of broadband, digitization and ICT regulation; and the ITU measuring digital development series.

|  |
| --- |
| TDAG underlined the importance of information sharing and welcomed the proposal to disseminate ITU-D publications through ITU regional and area offices, while also noting the importance of distributing material in the ITU languages used the regions. |

1. **Report on the implementation of the ITU-D Strategic Plan and Operational Plan 2019, including programmes, regional initiatives and major events**

[Document 2](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG25.2-C-0002/): This report features some of the key results of 2019 for each thematic priority as progress is made towards the implementation of the Buenos Aires Action Plan. In its introduction, the report highlights the journey of change started by BDT to create a Bureau that remains relevant and able to keep pace with the fast‑changing environment in the development space it serves. The report presents the goal for a BDT that responds effectively to the needs of the Member States and Sector Members, and one that can demonstrate impact and results; a fit-for-purpose BDT.

Key achievements in 2019 were presented under each of the ten ITU-D thematic priorities: capacity development, cybersecurity, digital inclusion, digital innovation ecosystems, digital services and applications, emergency telecommunications, environment, networks and digital infrastructure, policy and regulation, and statistics. This was followed by a presentation on the regional initiatives and an announcement on the future establishment of an International Centre of Digital Innovation (I-CoDI).

* 1. **Perspective on the ten thematic priorities**

**Capacity development**

The main objective of this thematic priority is to develop skills for the digital economy through training, activities, knowledge resources and tools for policy-makers and other stakeholders. The ITU Academy eLearning platform is a gateway to training activities to over 10 000 users, with more than 100 training courses delivered to over 5 000 people every year through partners such as the centres of excellence network. The Digital Transformation Centre (DTC) Initiative launched in 2019 offers training at basic and intermediate levels to underserved communities and marginalized groups. In addition, the Digital Skills insight publication and the Digital Skills Assessment Guidebook will help policy-makers in their efforts to assess the skills levels at national level.

**Cybersecurity**

The cybersecurity priority area focuses on security capabilities for all countries. This ITU thematic priority aims to create national strategies and develop national cyber incident responses (37 countries in 2019) and mitigate cyberthreats through capacity development. The ITU Global Cybersecurity Index (GCI) underlines ITU commitment to cybersecurity worldwide with increased response to the updated GCI questionnaire for the next edition of the report, as well as continued work on child online protection to produce key guidelines for parents, industry, and policy-makers.

**Digital inclusion**

Digital inclusion aims to ensure inclusive, equal access and use of ICTs, by developing policies and strategies, raising awareness, sharing good practice, building capacity, processes and services. In addition to supporting local communities, this cluster supports persons with disabilities, women, children, and indigenous people through multi-stakeholder initiatives and groups to establish scalable roadmaps and actions. These include capacity building programmes for women and children, self‑paced online training on ICT accessibility, Africa and Americas girls can code projects, Girls in ICT global celebrations, the women in technology challenge, a new mascot for child online protection, the future young visionary summit, the Accessible Europe knowledge platform, and a toolkit and global standards for safe listening devices and systems.

**Digital innovation ecosystems**

Despite massive investment in the ICT ecosystem, many communities are not benefiting from the socio-economic impact of ICTs. ITU is adding the thematic priority of innovation to the digital divide agenda. TDAG received information that there is a knowledge gap in the innovation ecosystem that requires new approaches and thinking to use existing technology and to create policies that will sustain the ecosystem. A deep dive into issues of collaboration, engagement of stakeholders, and organic growth and digitization of sectors is also needed. BDT is undertaking several initiatives to close this gap: e.g., regional innovation forums in Egypt and Brazil, projects in South Africa, and in Saudi Arabia to support the Arab network of technology incubators, and global capacity building with online courses in all ITU official languages. In addition, country assessments are providing clear guidelines and recommendations on what needs to be addressed at the local and regional communities, and national level.

**Digital services and application**

This thematic priority aims to enable the transition to the digital society and to facilitate the digital transformation of specific sectors, including health, agriculture, education and government services. It has focused on supporting countries and developing digital sectoral strategies to develop national digital agriculture strategies in India, Mongolia, Vanuatu and the Maldives, as well as developing training for digital health capacity development workshops in 14 countries in Africa, with all material published online on the WHO and ITU platforms.

The ITU-WHO mobile health knowledge and innovation hub in collaboration with the European Union and other entities provides guidance, knowledge tools and country assistance to scale up digital health in Europe – a model that could be replicated in other regions. A smart villages pilot project using a whole-of-government approach for rural digital transformation, as well as continued mobile health projects through ITU-WHO collaboration, have highlighted best practices in digital health, agriculture, and smart village blueprints that are being shared through reports and publications.

**Emergency telecommunications**

The emergency telecommunications cluster is using ICTs to build resilience to participate, mitigate and prepare for response, so natural hazards, including pandemics do not lead to disasters. Key achievements include the launch of the [ITU guidelines for national emergency telecommunication plans](https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Emergency-Telecommunications/Pages/Publications/Guidelines-for-NETPs.aspx), which assist in developing a national framework to use ICTs in all phases of disaster management. A second achievement is the table-top guide, which contributes to simulated emergency scenarios that test the capabilities of people and technologies used for disaster response.

Online modules on how to work with the guidelines will be added to the ITU Academy. To expand ITU work in the area of emergency telecommunications and to support and improve coordination with the satellite and the humanitarian community, ITU became a principal member of the [Crisis Connectivity Charter (CCC)](https://news.itu.int/why-itu-is-joining-the-crisis-connectivity-charter-doreen-bogdan-martin/) to further assist Member States in providing satellite connectivity when disasters strike.

**Environment**

TDAG was informed that the ITU Sectors are together participating in the Circular Electronics Partnership to develop roadmaps to make the electrical and electronic equipment industry more “circular” from design-to-takeback and is supporting countries in terms of national policies. The Global E-waste Monitor 2020 will further increase awareness of the growing issue of e-waste by providing a comprehensive overview of global e-waste statistics, enhancing understanding and the interpretation of data. Regional e-waste monitors are currently under development.

**Networks and digital infrastructure**

It is important to provide reliable connectivity to everyone. Key achievements include the broadband maps which promote understanding and investment opportunities of network infrastructure to take stock of worldwide connectivity. The ITU maps provide information from more than 440 operators and 24 000 access points worldwide. In addition, the ITU [ICT infrastructure business planning toolkit](https://itu.int/go/businessplan_toolkit) offers regulators and policy-makers a clear and practical methodology to deliver accurate economic evaluation of proposed broadband infrastructure installation and deployment plans.

**Policy and regulation**

The 19th edition of the Global Symposium for Regulators (GSR-19), held in Port Vila, at the kind invitation of the Government of Vanuatu, welcomed 320 participants from over 64 countries. Training sessions covered collaboration, engagement, and awareness for policy-makers and regulators. The recently launched global network resilience platform enables membership to view, share, discuss policy and regulatory reactions and responses to the COVID-19 pandemic. The ICT toolkit continues to support regulatory frameworks in addition to data metrics and publications, such the series of reports quantifying the positive economic impact of broadband; the ITU ICT Regulatory Tracker; the Global ICT Regulatory Outlook Report; as well as the G5 Benchmark that was launched at GSR-19 as a new tool that models regulatory set-up and tools and proposes collaborative, cross-sector solutions to fast-track effective regulation for digital transformation; and the new digital handbook and platform to be launched in 2020.

**Statistics**

The main objective of the statistics thematic priority is to support policies for bridging the digital divide through research, data collection, simulation, capacity building, and partnerships. Some of the recent highlights of the statistics thematic priority include the release of several statistical processes and analytical reports providing insight into the state of the digital divide globally and within countries. Of particular note are the World Telecommunication/ICT Indicators Databases (June and December 2019 releases); and Measuring Digital Development series: Facts and figures, and ICT price trends. Manuals and online training for administrations will be launched to collect and analyse ICT data. These include the Manual for Measuring ICT Access and Use by Households and Individuals; and the Handbook for the collection of Administrative Data on Telecommunications/ICTs. In terms of cooperation, ITU contributes to several initiatives related to big data, data quality and standards, and data for development. ITU had also planned to co-host events at the WSIS and World Data Forum and to host the World Telecommunication/ICT Indicators Symposium.

* 1. **Perspective on regional initiatives**

**Africa**

TDAG received information that several ongoing activities are contributing to projects related to each of the regional initiatives for Africa especially in digital economies and fostering innovation and building trust and security in the use of telecommunications and ICTs, including strong collaboration with the ITU centres of excellence. Half of the projects are implemented in countries where the Member State is the majority stakeholder and the remainder have been implemented at the regional level with funds from partners. The Africa Digital Transformation Centre for example has been designed to be the seat of digital innovation and activities being implemented in South Africa, but lessons learned, and good practices will be extended to other countries wishing to do the same. ITU has adopted a strategy towards bigger and more relevant projects such as boosting jobs and enhancing skills for youth in Africa's digital economy in cooperation with ILO, the African Union, policy and regulation initiative for Digital Africa and the European Union. The regional office for Africa continues to explore synergies between the projects for even more impact.

**Americas**

TDAG received information that the Americas regional office provides information and continues to work and develop strong ties with Member States of the Americas region in respect to telecommunication development, especially developing countries. Projects and activities related to disaster risk reduction and management communications include national emergency telecommunication plans, preparation, and mitigation of the effects of natural disasters and other emergency response systems based on community radio. Projects and activities related to other regional activities include advice and support to administrations in using digital and community networks.

**Arab States**

TDAG received information that the Arab States regional initiatives included work with Member States on climate change, cybersecurity, digital comprehensiveness, Internet of Things, and innovation projects, which have all attracted funding partners. Four out of ten proposed projects have been financed, with the others still attracting funding for projects related to emergency telecommunications, policy, regulations and digital inclusion. In addition to these projects, other regional office activities related to the regional initiatives have provided quick results for Member States.

**Asia-Pacific**

TDAG received information that the regional office is working closely with UN agencies and regional organizations to achieve synergies and funding to implement regional initiatives that respond to emerging needs and requests from Member States. Specifically, it was reported that the Pacific satellite connectivity project was successfully implemented and established facilities in eight Asia-Pacific countries. In the area of policy and regulation, the regional office is implementing the financial inclusion global initiative in China funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. In the area of digital services, ITU is partnering on projects to support the development of e-Agriculture, and in order to address the emerging needs for digital government strategies across the region, the regional office has been implementing funded projects in the areas of digital services, regulation, policy, infrastructure, cybersecurity and child online protection.

**Commonwealth of Independent States**

TDAG received information that the CIS regional office is working on priorities and implementing regional initiatives and projects in the operational plan, specifically having developed recommendations on implementing technical decisions, eHealth systems, training, and educational courses. In addition, training courses are being developed for women. Large scale research on regulatory policies in the region is being carried out and an operational security and testing centre is being created. A dialogue with Member States has been initiated on monitoring the ecological status and the presence and rational use of natural resources, and a project to form partnerships on environmental protection has started, with a document on the second phase of the project involving an Academia and Sector member partnership.

**Europe**

TDAG received information that the Europe region has strengthened collaboration with all European institutions and the European Commission working hand-in-hand with other UN agencies. Regional activities reported included technical assistance, forums, seminars, workshops, training opportunities, provided by the ITU centres of excellence. Other activities reported include regional studies and assessments to identify opportunities for project development including some large‑scale projects for investment in health systems, a knowledge hub for Europe, Accessible Europe projects, and continued efforts are being made to coordinate fund‑raising to support Member States and donors to implement projects for cybersecurity, digital inclusion and innovation.

**International Centre of Digital Innovation**

TDAG was informed of the imminent signing of an agreement with the Telecommunication Regulatory Authority of the United Arab Emirates to establish an International Centre of Digital Innovation, known as I-CoDI.

I-CoDI is expected to contribute to the development of innovation strategies to accelerate digital transformation and the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. I-CoDI will be based in Geneva but will also have a significant virtual component to provide global impact.

|  |
| --- |
| TDAG noted with appreciation the wealth of information presented on thematic priorities and regional initiatives, as well as the high-quality products and publications available to members and called for more promotion and more translation into the six ITU official languages. TDAG welcomed I-CoDI as an important project that will help ITU membership integrate innovation into their national development agendas and activities.  |

1. **ITU-D contribution to the implementation of the WSIS Plan of Action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**

[Document 3](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG25.2-C-0003/): This document provides an update on the contribution of ITU-D to the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The [Plenipotentiary Conference 2018](https://www.itu.int/web/pp-18/en/) reconfirmed the mandate of ITU and its contribution to the implementation of the WSIS Action Lines and achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The [World Telecommunication Development Conference](https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Conferences/WTDC/WTDC17/Pages/default.aspx) (WTDC-17) established clear links between ITU-D objectives, outcomes and outputs, and relevant WSIS action lines and SDGs and targets (Document 3, Annex 1). The mapping of ITU-D study group Questions and WSIS action lines and SDGs provides additional guidance on the contribution of these groups to WSIS and SDG processes (Document 3, Annex 2). In this sense, all actions carried out by ITU-D are contributing to the achievement of SDGs and the WSIS implementation. They are reported to the ITU membership through TDAG, regional development forums (RDFs) and the Council Working Group on WSIS (CWG-WSIS) on a regular basis.

Flagship activities undertaken by BDT constitute a substantive part of the annual reporting through the *ITU Contribution to the Implementation of the WSIS outcomes*. The 2019 edition of this report is available at <https://www.itu.int/en/itu-wsis/Pages/Contribution.aspx>.

Document 3 also provides updates on the specific actions undertaken in the context of WSIS and SDGs, Partnership on Measuring Information Society, contribution of BDT to WSIS Forum 2020, WSIS Stocktaking, WSIS Prizes, ITU Regional Forums addressing the issue of alignment of WSIS and SDG processes, and the UN Forum on Sustainable Development.

|  |
| --- |
| TDAG expressed appreciation for the report and encouraged membership to engage actively in BDT activities that contribute to the implementation of the WSIS outcomes and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in line with WTDC-17. |

1. **ITU-D projects**

The report on the activities undertaken by the BDT to further strengthen the project execution function in accordance with WTDC-17 Resolutions 17 and 52, and PP-18 Resolution 157 can be found in [Document 10](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG25.2-C-0010/).

Sections 2 to 5 provide information on the total number of projects implemented since 2007, the number of ongoing projects and financial value, and a further analysis of these ongoing projects by region showing the number of projects, financial value and thematic priorities in charts *(as of 31 December 2019).* Section 6 provides a list of projects currently under development and expected to be signed by the second quarter of 2020. Section 7 provides an explanation on various project funding sources. Section 8 describes further initiative undertaken by BDT such as preparing and sharing project case studies, post-implementation assessments, videos, an updated Project Management Manual and capacity building in 2019 and early 2020.

|  |
| --- |
| TDAG noted the document with appreciation, with one delegation recommending that more information be provided on the criteria used for project partners and beneficiary countries. In this regard, BDT explained that efforts are under way to develop a projects dashboard and further benchmarking. |

1. **ITU-D Study Group-related matters**

Reports from the two ITU-D study groups may be found in Documents 12 and 13, which were considered together with Document 55.

* 1. **Study Group 1**

On behalf of Ms Regina Fleur Assoumou Bessou, Chairman of Study Group 1, Mr Roberto Mitsuake Hirayama (Brazil), a Vice-Chairman of this group, presented the status of ongoing work reported in [Document 12](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG25.2-C-0012/). This report provides highlights from the third meeting of Study Group 1 for the 2018-2021 study period (17 to 21 February 2020) the second block of Rapporteur Group meetings (23 September to 4 October 2019), and a review of the work plan.

The rapporteur groups for all seven Study Group 1 Questions are progressing well towards WTDC expected outputs, with significant progress made on the development of draft output reports. At the February 2020 meeting, all Questions reviewed updated draft texts for further elaboration and finalization at the next rapporteur group meetings.

* 1. **Study Group 2**

Dr Ahmad Reza Sharafat, Chairman of Study Group 2 presented the status of work in this group. His report may be found in [Document 13](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG25.2-C-0013/), and provides some highlights from the third meetings of Study Group 2 for the 2018-2021 study period, which were held from 24 to 28 February 2020, as well as the rapporteur group meetings, held from 7 to 18 October 2019, and a review of the work plan.

The rapporteur groups for all seven Study Group 2 Questions are progressing well towards WTDC expected outputs. The second annual Study Group 2 meeting received several draft texts for the development of output reports for the study period, and one annual deliverable submitted for consideration and release by the SG2 Plenary.

The following aspects were also brought to TDAG’s consideration:

* A proposal to harmonize mapping information received from TSAG (Document [TDAG-20/23](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG25-C-0023/)) with the mapping information currently maintained by the Inter-Sector Coordination Group (ISCG) on issues of mutual interest.
* A proposal to swap dates for the March 2021 Study Group 1 and 2 meetings (with Study Group 2 to meet from 15 to 19 March 2021 before Study Group 1, to be held from 22 to 26 March 2021).
	1. **Annual Reports**

A major highlight from the recent ITU-D study group meetings is the release (and planned release) of annual deliverables related to their work. Three annual deliverables have been published on four ITU-D Study Group 1 Questions:

* *Considerations about the cost structure of the digital transition, including new services and applications* produced under Question 2/1.
* A joint deliverable on *Economic impact of OTTs on national telecommunication/ ICT markets* produced by Questions 3/1 and 4/1, and
* *Broadband development and connectivity solutions for rural and remote areas* produced by Question 5/1.

One annual deliverable has been submitted for consideration and posting on the Study Group website on ongoing work by the Plenary of Study Group 2.

* 1. **Appointment of a new Co-Rapporteur in ITU-D Study Group 2**

A Co-Rapporteur for ITU-D Study Group 2 Question on “Securing information and communication networks: Best practices for developing a culture of cybersecurity” (Question 3/2) stepped down after the February 2020 meeting, as explained in [Document 55](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG25.2-C-0055/). This document contains a letter from the administration of the **United States of America,** submitting a nomination for this vacant position.

|  |
| --- |
| TDAG noted with interest and appreciation the detailed reports on study group activities, and observed that both study groups and all 14 Questions were making good progress towards the WTDC expected outputs under the leadership of the study group chairmen.For Study Group 1, there was a suggestion to add information on the status of development of the output reports being prepared by the rapporteur groups. There was also a supported proposal to use information from Annex 8 of the report, which includes initial proposals on future study Questions, as a background document for future-related discussions in TDAG.For Study Group 2, there was a suggestion to add information on the status of development of output reports, as well as more information on proposals for future study Questions during the next TDAG meeting.TDAG appointed Ms Aimee K. Meacham (United States) as a Co-Rapporteur for ITU-D Study Group 2 Question 3/2.TDAG agreed on the proposed dates for the ITU-D study group meetings in 2021. |

1. **Collaboration with the other Sectors**
	1. **Inter-Sector Coordination Group (ISCG) on issues of mutual interest**

[Document 5](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG25.2-C-0005/en) contains a progress report of the Inter-Sector Coordination Group (ISCG) on issues of mutual interest, highlighting activities from its meeting, held in Geneva on 25 September 2019, in conjunction with the meeting of TSAG (on 23-27 September) and its virtual meeting of 1 June 2020.

At its September 2019 meeting, the group decided on “climate change” as a pilot theme, where all Sectors could be involved and could collaborate. Since then, the secretariat has been working to identify common areas of interest within the scope of climate change, and prepared and submitted a mapping of all activities and events related to climate change as input to the virtual meeting of ISCG on 1 June 2020. At this meeting, ISCG agreed on accessibility as a potential pilot theme.

* 1. **Mapping between ITU-D, ITU-T, and ITU-R Study Group Activities**

Documents 18, **19**, 20, 21 23, 35, 36 and **56** are liaison statements on inter-Sector coordination.

Documents 18, **19,** 20 and 21 are responses to TSAG liaison statement [[TSAG-LS13](http://handle.itu.int/11.1002/ls/sp16-tsag-oLS-00013.zip)](http://handle.itu.int/11.1002/ls/sp16-itu-dsg2-iLS-00038.docx) on ITU inter-Sector coordination, and were considered together.

At its meeting in Geneva in December 2018, TSAG issued liaison statement “TSAG-LS13” in which it provided updated mappings of common interest areas of work between ITU-D and ITU-T study groups and between ITU-R and ITU-T study groups for inter-Sector coordination. These mappings are contained in two attachments. Attachment 1 features a “matching of ITU-D Study Group 1 and Study Group 2 Questions of interest to ITU-T study groups”; and Attachment 2 is a “matching of ITU-R working parties of interest to ITU-T study groups”.

With regard to Attachment 1, TSAG had requested views on whether the inclusion of rapidly evolving work items was an appropriate way to support collaboration and cooperation across the Sectors. In other words, was it worthwhile maintaining work items in the mapping tables in Attachment 1, or was it sufficient to only feature study groups and Questions in these tables?

TSAG had explainedthat the mappings either showed ongoing ITU inter-Sector cooperation or indicated possibilities for new inter-Sector cooperation, and that they were expected to help the three Sectors avoid overlap. TSAG had encouraged the groups to “take the next steps” and engage in bilateral inter-Sector coordination. It had also invited any suggestions that would improve the collaboration and cooperation between the ITU Sectors; and had requested comments by 30 August 2019.

[Document 18](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG25.2-C-0018/) is a liaison statement from ITU-T Study Group 5 reporting that at its meeting in Geneva on 13-22 May 2019, it reviewed and provided comments on both Attachments 1 and 2 in response to TSAG-LS13.

[Document 19](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG25.2-C-0019/) is a liaison statement from ITU-T Study Group 11 reporting that at its meeting in Geneva on 6-15 March 2019, it decided that it is sufficient for the mapping tables in Attachment 1 to only contain study groups and Questions without the list of work items. The reason for this decision is that details of Questions and related work items are already listed on the websites of study groups.

[Document 20](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG25.2-C-0020/) is a liaison statement received from ITU-T Study Group 17 reporting that at its meeting in Geneva on 22-30 January 2019, it updated the mapping tables in Attachment 1 in response to TSAG-LS13.

[Document 21](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG25.2-C-0021/) is a liaison statement from ITU-T Study Group 20 reporting that at its meeting in Geneva on 9-18 April 2019, it had reviewed and provided comments on both Attachments 1 and 2 in response to TSAG-LS13.

Documents 35, 36 and 56 are all liaison statements on inter-Sector coordination.

At its meeting in Geneva on 23-27 September 2019, TSAG accepted all amendments received to Attachments 1 and 2, updated the mappings accordingly; and sought further comments through its liaison statement in [Document 23](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG25.2-C-0023/).

Following its meeting in Geneva on 10-14 February 2020, TSAG through its liaison statement in [Document 35](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG25.2-C-0035/) provided updated mappings of common interest areas of work between ITU-D and ITU-T study groups and between ITU-R and ITU-T study group contained in Attachments 1 and 2.

TSAG encourages the various groups to continue to take the next steps to engage in bilateral inter-Sector coordination and invites any suggestions that would improve the collaboration and cooperation between the ITU Sectors.

[Document 56](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG25.2-C-0056/) is a liaison statement from ITU-T Study Group 9 reporting that its e-meeting of 16 to 23 April 2020 approved the creation of a new Question 11/9 on “Accessibility to cable systems and services”. In the light of this approval, Study Group 9 is proposing to update the mapping tables of common interest areas of work between ITU-D and ITU-T study groups and between ITU-R and ITU-T study groups.

[Document 36](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG25.2-C-0036/) is a liaison statement received from ITU-R Study Group 6 and its working parties, which note the ITU inter-Sector coordination on mappings and are keen to maintain close contact in the activities of mutual interest to all Sectors. Study Group 6 further draws the attention of TSAG and TDAG to Resolution ITU-R [71](https://www.itu.int/pub/R-RES-R.71) on the role of the Radiocommunication Sector in the on-going development of television, sound and multimedia broadcasting and, in particular, the resolve to continue to enhance the current Inter-Sector activities and engage actively in topics of common interest.

|  |
| --- |
| TDAG noted with appreciation the progress report from the Chairman of the Inter-Sector Coordination Group on issues of mutual interest and welcomed the group’s decision to pursue “climate change” as a pilot theme, where all Sectors could be involved and could collaborate; and “accessibility” as the next suggested pilot theme. TDAG noted the liaison statements on inter-Sector coordination. TDAG further noted that the most up-to-date [mapping tables on inter-Sector coordination are](https://www.itu.int/en/general-secretariat/Pages/ISCG/default.aspx) maintained by the ISCG on its website. |

1. **Preparations for WTDC-21**

[Document 8](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG25.2-C-0008/) contains the status of the preparations to hold the World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC-21) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 8 to 19 November 2021, preceded by a Global Youth Summit; the decision by the ITU Council in 2019 on the venue and dates; as well as information on the subsequent consultation of all Member States through a circular letter and on the first site visit carried out by an ITU team to Addis Ababa.

* 1. **Proposals on improving WTDC**

Participants expressed unanimous support for improving WTDC, starting with an inspiring intervention from the Honourable Dr Abrham Belay, Minister of Innovation and Technology of Ethiopia. His vision to make **WTDC‑21** a truly landmark development conference for the whole world was unanimously applauded.

The following documents were considered together: Documents 40, 41 and 42 from **Brazil,** and Documents 52 and 53 from the **United States**, Document 37(Rev.2) from **Canada,** Documents 43, and 44 from the **Russian Federation,** and Document 51 from the BDT Director. The latter group contain proposals for WTDC preparations.

[Document 40](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG25.2-C-0040/) from **Brazil** observes that some Member States have expressed the desire for the launch of more relevant deliverables from the study groups/Questions. The contribution invites membership to reflect on the deliverables of ITU-D study groups/Questions in preparation for WTDC-21. It was suggested that further discussion would be required to make Resolution 1 (Rev. Buenos Aires, 2017) of WTDC, on the “Rules of procedure of the ITU Telecommunication Development”, more flexible in terms of the number and frequency of deliverables.

[Document 41](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG25.2-C-0041/) from **Brazil** supports the cluster-based approach launched by BDT and invites membership to reflect on possible contributions considering this model for next WTDC-21. It is suggested that the new cluster family could reflect the format of working parties in ITU-T and ITU-R, gathering synergistic issues under a same umbrella. While agreeing on the importance of synergy, some participants also recalled the complications that such an approach had encountered in previous efforts to introduce working parties in ITU-D.

[Document 42](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG25.2-C-0042/) from **Brazil** suggests thematic workshops with high-level experts both in the framework of regional preparatory meetings (RPMs), and during WTDC-21.

The importance of both the ITU-led regional preparatory meetings and meetings led by regional telecommunication organizations for WTDC-21 was one of the points underlined by participants, calling for collaboration, not competition.

[Document 37(Rev.2)](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG25.2-C-0037/) from **Canada** supports improving the planning and preparation processes for WTDC-21, as well as the conference structure. No review of organizational and operational efficiencies have been carried out since 1994. More specifically, if TDAG agrees that reform is necessary, it is proposed that a working group on WTDC reform and a working group on resolutions and ITU-D thematic priorities be established under TDAG with the respective terms of reference attached in Annexes 1 and 2 of the contribution. Participants suggested that the terms of reference should be clearly defined, with some noting the advisory role of TDAG and the function of WTDC to make changes to the conference format.

[Document 43](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG25.2-C-0043/) from the **Russian Federation** provides information that the Regional Commonwealth in the Field of Communication (RCC) has already started preparations for WTDC-21 and urges BDT to provide information to membership to be able to properly prepare. The contribution contains four proposals:

1. Update and complete the WTDC-21 website in all six languages of the Union;
2. Establish correspondence groups on working methods and streamlining resolutions;
3. Establish a correspondence group on a Development Strategy to consider proposals to improve the work of ITU-D activities in the interest of developing countries;
4. Request regional telecommunication organizations to inform BDT of their preparatory meetings and contact persons.

The need for immediate action on these points was underlined given the WTDC-21 timelines. Delegates also noted the need for clear terms of reference for the correspondence groups.

[Document 44](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG25.2-C-0044/) from the **Russian Federation** suggests ways of revising ITU-D study group Questions for the next study period, as well as the principles for working on them and makes the following proposals:

1. Establish a TDAG Correspondence Group on ITU-D Study group Questions.
2. Invite ITU members to prepare their proposals for study Questions as follows:
	* Follow the principle of avoiding duplication of study topics as much as possible in the mandates of Questions.
	* On the basis of a regularly updated table on intra-sectoral collaboration, identify leading Questions on topics of mutual interest.
	* Consider the possibility of introducing a mechanism for revising the Final Reports for previous study periods in case new material on cross-cutting topics appears.

[Document 51](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG25.2-C-0051/) from the BDT Director is a continuation of the TDAG-19 breakout sessions on WTDC reform, based on input from members. To further engage the membership on the proposed reform, two Web dialogues were conducted as the TDAG-20 physical meeting planned for March 2020 could not be held because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The document provides proposals by the Director based on the discussions during those dialogues. The document addresses specific reforms of the WTDC process and proposes how those reforms might be achieved. It sets out proposals for reform of the preparatory process, includes a proposal for TDAG to take responsibility for the ITU-D contribution to the ITU strategic plan, and contains recommendations for the formation of two working groups: one that would be focused on WTDC reform and the other on resolutions and the Declaration to be considered by WTDC.

[Document 52](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG25.2-C-0052/) from the **United States** supports ongoing discussions through the WTDC Dialogues on ways to improve the planning and preparation processes for WTDC-21 as well as the conference structure. The United States believes it is necessary to continue the dialogue between TDAG-20 and TDAG-21 to identify concrete proposals and ideas that will support Member States and BDT in preparing for WTDC-21. It proposed that one or more ad hoc or correspondence groups would be the most effective way to gather concrete proposals from membership and work towards elaborating more specific recommendations for BDT and members to prepare for WTDC-21.

[Document 53](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG25.2-C-0053/) from the **United States** recommends that TDAG undertake a detailed examination of the work of ITU-D study groups, specifically how to make them more innovative and effective and in line with goals established through results-based management and in helping to achieve BDT strategic objectives and to advance regional priorities. This examination should lead to improved study group deliverables and lead to greater synergies between the study groups and other BDT activities. It is also suggested that a TDAG correspondence group would be an appropriate forum to allow for thorough discussions between TDAG-20 and TDAG-21 regarding innovation and the ITU-D study groups and to identify options or recommendations from the Member States to help prepare WTDC-21.

|  |
| --- |
| TDAG thanked all contributors for their constructive proposals, recognizing that all aim to make WTDC more efficient and impactful. TDAG agreed to set up a working group that would review the ITU-D contribution to the ITU strategic plan, to be led by Ms Blanca Gonzalez **(Spain)**, assisted by Mr Christopher Kemei **(Kenya)** and Mr Wim Rullens **(Netherlands)**. The terms of reference for this group, found in [DT/7](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG25.2-200602-TD-0007/en), were approved. TDAG also agreed to create two working groups to prepare for WTDC-21: a group to work on WTDC preparations and a group to work on administrative outputs such as resolutions and the Declaration. TDAG discussed using the proposals in the Director’s Document 51 as a basis for a way forward and agreed that an extraordinary session of TDAG would be held on June 16 or 17 to establish high-level terms of reference for both groups. TDAG agreed that the group on WTDC Preparations would be led by Santiago Reyes-Borda of **Canada**. The date for the meeting was subsequently fixed as 16 June 2020. |

* 1. **Streamlining resolutions**

[Document 22](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG25.2-C-0022/) and [Document 34](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG25.2-C-0034/) were presented together.

The liaison statement from TSAG provides a mapping of the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference and ITU Sector resolutions and offers several proposals on streamlined WTSA resolutions:

* Attachment 1 – Mapping of WTSA, WTDC resolutions, and RA resolutions onto PP Resolutions with the purpose of identifying candidate resolutions for streamlining (TSAG-TD587-R3).
* Attachment 2 – Analysis of WTSA Resolutions and their potential for streamlining-by-shortening (TSAG-TD601).

[Document 34](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG25.2-C-0034/): The liaison statement from TSAG outlines the ongoing work of the Rapporteur Group on “Review of WTSA Resolutions (RG-ResReview)”.

A number of WTSA Resolutions have been identified for streamlining and the work will continue in the lead up to WTSA-20.

Attachment 1 contains the Principles, Guidelines on streamlining Resolutions, and for drafting Resolutions (TSAG-TD751).

Attachment 2 contains an Analysis of the operational parts (resolves, instructs etc.) of WTSA/PP/WTDC/RA/Council resolutions in terms of giving specific mandates and tasks to ITU-T study groups and TSAG and their potential for streamlining (TSAG-TD706).

Attachments 3 to 6 contain the meeting reports of RG-ResReview.

[Document 45](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG25.2-C-0045/): This contribution from the Russian Federation is a proposed revision of Resolution 8 (Rev. Buenos Aires, 2017) of WTDC, on the “Collection and dissemination of information and statistics”. Importantly, a proposed new paragraph (§21) of *Resolves* states that all proposals for new indicators submitted to WTIS, EGH/EGTI and ITU-D study groups must be summarized and presented at TDAG and subsequently approved by Member States at WTDC. The World Telecommunication /ICT Indicators Symposium (WTIS) is recognized as playing an important role for international comparison.

[Document 46](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG25.2-C-0046/): This contribution from the Russian Federation proposes to update WTDC Resolution 31, to align it to Resolution 58 of the Plenipotentiary Conference. Specifically, it proposes to add an *invites* addressed to regional and sub-regional telecommunication organizations, to participate in coordinating and harmonizing the contributions of their respective Member States in order to generate common proposals where possible to be discussed at WTDC.

|  |
| --- |
| TDAG noted the documents and recognized the importance of early work on resolutions, which would help free up conference time to discuss ICT development issues. |

1. **Membership, Partnership and Private Sector-related matters**

[Document 7](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG25.2-C-0007/) reports on the activities and results of BDT work in the area of partnerships and resource mobilization. It also proposes a way forward in this regard.

The report recalls the partnership and resource mobilization strategic objective in the WTDC-17 Plan of Action and resolutions: to facilitate, develop and strengthen collaboration with the widest possible range of partners from both developed and developing countries to mobilize resources to implement the programmes and regional initiatives, and to leverage the impact of BDT work.

The report presents the results achieved in 2019, specifically the financial resources mobilized and the partners with whom BDT entered into formal agreements of both financial and non-financial nature. An analysis of the composition of the BDT funding partners and of its work with partners, with particular focus on UN agencies is also included.

Regarding the way forward, the report describes efforts to strengthen its resource mobilization and partnership building, for example. the recruitment under way of a consultancy firm to develop a robust, forward-looking resource mobilization strategy and plan, as well as the recruitment for the post of Senior Advisor, Resource Mobilization and Stakeholder Engagement. The report concludes by committing that BDT will continue to cultivate its relationship with existing partners, while engaging with new partners to support the implementation of WTDC-17 programmes and regional initiatives at global, regional and national levels.

|  |
| --- |
| TDAG noted the document with interest and appreciation, recognizing the importance of partnership and resource mobilization to implement WTDC-17 programmes and regional initiatives. TDAG supported the BDT Director’s plan to hire a consultancy firm and a senior advisor for this purpose, and to provide training and capacity building for BDT staff on resource mobilization). |

[Document 11](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG25.2-C-0011/) provides an overview of the evolution of ITU-D membership and its related objectives, strategies, and actions to strengthen the ITU-D membership in accordance with the outcomes of WTDC-17 and PP-18. The strategic objectives highlighted in the document include outreach efforts to bring new entities to join as Sector Members, Associates, small- and medium-sized enterprises and Academia; as well as efforts to enhance platforms and tools for engagement and retention of existing ITU-D Sector Members, Associates and Academia.

[Information Document 13](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG25.2-INF-0013/) was also presented by the Chairman of Private Sector Chief Regulatory Officers (CRO), who had taken the initiative to draft the terms of reference of the Industry Advisory Group on Development Issues and Private Sector Chief Regulatory Officers (IAGDI-CRO). These terms of reference are intended to guide the work of ITU-D members in the private sector, industry, associations, and Academia, and called for enhanced engagement of membership to the work of IAGDI-CRO.

Participants were impressed with the growth of Academia in ITU (from 25 in 2011 to 163 in 2020) and asked for an explanation for the change in the number of Sector Members (from 316 in 2009 to 307 in 2020).

|  |
| --- |
| TDAG noted both reports with appreciation and interest. In particular, TDAG noted the strategies that have been taken to increase membership outreach and engagement, such as cross-selling among ITU Sectors, diversification with new industries, digital marketing to reinforce acquisition, and retention of current members by engaging them in ITU-D activities and events. Additional information was provided by the BDT secretariat and the BDT Director on factors influencing the decrease of sector membership such as industry consolidation, economic situation, the inability of some members to pay the annual membership fees, delays in approval from Member States, and decisions by some Sector Members to switch to Associate and Academia membership categories.More developed countries were encouraged to participate in the Sector’s study group meetings, as earlier in 2020 there were too few participants from these countries.  |

1. **Report by the Chairman of the Group on Capacity Building Initiatives (GCBI)**

[Document 27](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG25.2-C-0027/): This document covers the work undertaken by the Group on Capacity Building Initiatives (GCBI) since the last TDAG meeting. The group was established pursuant to Resolution 40 which was adopted by the World Telecommunication Development Conference 2010 (WTDC-10), and revised at WTDC-17 to advise the Director of the Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT) on matters related to capacity building.

|  |
| --- |
| TDAG noted the report with appreciation and congratulated GCBI for the excellent work done. TDAG highlighted the importance of capacity development in the work of BDT as it is a priority for four of the five regions as reflected in their regional initiatives.  |

1. **ITU-D’s Youth Strategy**

[Document 16](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG25.2-C-0016/): TDAG received information that today, the world is home to around 1.8 billion young people, with close to 90 per cent of them living in developing countries. Youth (aged between 15 and 24 years) in many developed and developing countries, especially girls and young women, face disproportionate exposure to poverty and unemployment. ICTs are tools through which both young women and men can substantively contribute to, participate in and leverage their social and economic development. Connected to each other like never before, young people want to contribute to their communities, propose innovative solutions and drive social progress and change.

The BDT reported on its strategy, through which it intends to empower young people with digital technology skills, as they are the catalyst to achieve all 17 SDGs. The strategic objectives will focus on the closing the digital divide amongst young people around the world and ensuring participation in the work of ITU as key stakeholders in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. BDT proposes to implement a comprehensive strategy towards WTDC-21 and beyond, a strategy strongly aligned with the vision and objectives of UN Youth 2030 strategy and linked to ITU Plenipotentiary Conference Resolution 200. The goals of the strategy include mainstreaming youth engagement, encouraging youth participation, promoting ICT youth related policies, engaging in regular dialogue, and incorporating a youth perspective in the implementation of the broader ITU strategic plan.

For this purpose, the activities and efforts proposed in the youth strategy are grouped around three areas of action:

EMPOWER YOUTH: Supporting youth empowerment by creating a community of young leaders.

ENGAGE WITH YOUTH: Bringing young people together to engage with ITU and its members.

PARTICIPATE: Fostering youth dialogue and participation of youth in ITU activities and decision-making processes.

|  |
| --- |
| TDAG noted the document with appreciation and significant support by its members. Participants suggested that the strategy take into consideration the work with other ITU Sectors to possibly become an ITU wide initiative, and to mainstream the youth strategy in different resolutions of BDT. Participants also noted that the youth strategy should include the existing work of ITU related to girls and young women, as well as aboriginal youth, to include this effort at the national and regional levels, and to coordinate with the UN family in its implementation. The importance of affordable devices, access and connectivity for young people was noted, as well as, the necessary digital skills to use technology in a constructive way. TDAG encouraged BDT to work closely with regional offices to ensure coordination and proper implementation. |

1. **Contribution to the work of the Expert Group on the International Telecommunication Regulations (EG-ITR)**

[Document 9](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG25.2-C-0009/) presents the progress made by the EG-ITR, describing the main outputs from the two meetings organized on 16-17 September 2019 and 12-13 February 2020. It is important to highlight the Note from the EG-ITR Chairman addressed to the Directors of the Bureaux to seek advice from their respective Sector advisory groups to contribute to the work of the EG-ITR (in compliance with Resolution 146 (Rev. Dubai, 2018) of the Plenipotentiary Conference, on the periodic review and revision of the International Telecommunication Regulations; and Resolution 1379 of the ITU Council on the same topic.

The EG-ITR is now working on a provision by provision review, using an approved “Examination Table”. So far, the review of 44 provisions of the Preamble and Articles 1 to 4 was completed in February 2020. The Examination Table reflects the discussions of the group on the: (1) Applicability in fostering provision and development of networks and services. (2) Flexibility to accommodate new trends and emerging issues of the ITRs. (3) Summary outcome of the discussions, based on (1) and (2) above. (The updated Examination Table is available in document [EG-ITRs-2/DL/2](https://www.itu.int/md/S20-EGITR2-200212-DL-0002/en).) The document also presents the EG-ITR work plan, including its next meeting on 17-18 September 2020.

|  |
| --- |
| TDAG noted the report and will follow the progress of the Expert Group on ITRs. |

1. **Status of the feasibility study to establish an ITU training institute**

[Document 26](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG25.2-C-0026/) provides the status of a feasibility study to establish a capacity-building institute in ITU. The ITU Council, at its session in June 2019, instructed the Director of BDT “to undertake an in-depth analysis and review of current training and capacity-building activities undertaken by the Group on Capacity Building Initiatives, the ITU Academy and centres of excellence, and report to Council-20 on the results of the study and on the possible creation of a capacity-building institute in ITU”.

Based on the above instruction from the Council, ITU prepared the terms of reference of the feasibility study. The study will review ongoing capacity development activities provided by ITU across the three Bureaux, identify existing gaps and areas of improvement, assess demand for a new training institute, establish resource requirements, examine alternative options, and propose recommendations on the way forward.

The study will be carried out by an independent consultancy. A Request for Proposal was published by ITU at the beginning of 2020. Five proposals were received and a provider was selected. The work will start in June 2020 and continue over a period of four to five months.

|  |
| --- |
| TDAG noted with appreciation the actions taken by the Director to implement the Council instructions regarding a capacity-building institute in ITU. |

1. **Report on Results-Based Management (RBM)**

[Document 28](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG25.2-C-0028/): In 2019, BDT embarked on a comprehensive overhaul of its use of results-based management to equip the ITU-D for the challenges of a rapidly changing development landscape and make it Fit4Purpose.

Implementing results-based management across BDT ensures a robust, coherent and harmonized approach in a rapidly changing development landscape. A baseline analysis in 2019 revealed thatBDT work programmes were fragmented and were delivered in silos: regional initiatives were not benefiting from the potential scaling and resource mobilization opportunities; it was difficult to track impact and communicate achievements; BDT relevance in ICT development was not being sufficiently recognized by other key international organizations and Member States.

Key changes of results-based management implementation include:

* An approach based on thematic priorities, defined by the programmes of the Buenos Aires Action Plan.
* An holistic programmatic approach, combining all available resources from different sources, such as the operational plan budget, projects, regional initiatives and funds-in-trust.
* A new decision-making process to delegate authority in combination with the required resources to thematic priority facilitators and regional directors.
* Partnership identification, resource mobilization, and communication strategies with a focus on impact and outcomes based on thematic priority Theories of Change.
* Quarterly Review Meetings to follow progress and adjust all work programme elements, with a focus on SMART key performance indicators and an operational risk assessment for each thematic priority. The first Quarterly Review Meeting took place in the week of 4 May 2020.

|  |
| --- |
| TDAG noted the document with interest and appreciation, supports the progress made by BDT on the implementation of RBM, and looks forward to the next update. The BDT Director clarified during the Q&A that RBM implementation was being fully funded through the core BDT budget given that it is part of every BDT staff member’s responsibility, with any extra funds being covered by the BDT Director’s office. |

1. **Activities linked to COVID-19**

[Document 14](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG25.2-C-0014/) provides an overview of the activities undertaken by BDT to assist Member States in their response to COVID-19 and help in coping with the increasing pressure on telecommunication/ICT networks.

The COVID-19 pandemic underlined the critical importance of, and heavy reliance on, ICT and communication networks. BDT undertook initiatives to support membership such as the global network resiliency platform to ensure that networks and telecommunication services remained safe and available. Other initiatives include updated ITU guidelines for national emergency telecommunication plans, collaboration with other agencies and associations, including the Broadband Commission, and cooperation in the crisis of COVID-19 between ITU, the World Bank, GSMA and the World Economic Forum.

|  |
| --- |
| TDAG commended BDT for the fast reaction to the crisis and for the provision of relevant and useful information that supported efficient and safe use of network resources. TDAG also noted the continued efforts of ITU-D study groups to support the ongoing BDT work on COVID-19 issues and welcomed the announcements of future projects funded by Member States to help developing countries. Many members offered help and wished to support the BDT efforts by using the platform to disseminate their own initiatives. Despite the volume of input to the platform, membership requested the translation of some of the material into other languages of the Union, and underscored the need to collate the initiatives of all ITU Sectors for Council. |

1. **Calendar of ITU-D events**

[Document 15](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG25.2-C-0015/): This document presents a calendar of ITU-D events planned for the years 2020 and 2021.

In [Document 33](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG25.2-C-0033/), **Bhutan** notes that ITU organizes several high-level meetings and that it may be necessary to reduce the number of such events. In addition, ITU organizes events on an almost daily basis, most of which are held in Geneva or other European cities, which poses a huge burden on the limited financial resources of many countries, especially developing countries. Bhutan proposes that some of these events be held in the regions.

|  |
| --- |
| TDAG noted the contents of the documents with interest. With regard to the ITU-D calendar of events, TDAG noted the importance of trying to avoid holding two major ITU events in the same calendar year. |

1. **Any other business**

[Document 47](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG25.2-C-0047/) provides an update on the Girls in ICT Day 2020 celebration which, despite the COVID-19 pandemic, brought together an impressive number of governments, civil society organizations, private sector and public institutions across the globe as a demonstration of the power of technology to change lives. Girls in ICT Day is celebrated every year on the 4th Thursday of April. This year, BDT organized three events to mark the Day:

* An **Online Dialogue**, with a panel of experts from governments, NGOs, academia, and international organizations engaged in an inspiring conversation about the role of governments in empowering women through technology, alongside the importance of role models and mentors. The dialogue was very engaging and interactive, where 348 participants asked many questions related to the role of ICTs and young women empowerment.
* [**EQUALS Girls in ICT Day Twitter Chat**](https://twitter.com/search/?q=%28%23gendertechimpact&f=realtime), a social media conversation focused on “digital superheroes” around the world who serve as role models and build programmes to help girls follow their technology-related professional dreams. EQUALS is a global partnership of more than 90 organizations dedicated to closing the gender digital divide in access, skills and leadership opportunities, driven by evidence-based research results.
* **24-hour World Tour of Girls in ICT Day celebrations highlights**featured key virtual celebrations taking place on the day worldwide. It featured 36 events coordinated from 25 countries by stakeholders representing governments, industry, academia, and civil society. Key facts and figures:
* Event reach (Number of women/girls participants) 45 496 participants
* Impressions of the twitter live chat: 937 400
* The Girls in ICTs hashtag reached TikTok users worldwide and today the videos around the #GirlsinICT hashtag amounts to over 21 million views on the platform.

|  |
| --- |
| TDAG noted the contents of the report with interest and appreciation. TDAG expressed its support for this global initiative and thanked BDT for the assistance provided to all stakeholders in their efforts to celebrate Girls in ICT Day in a virtual manner, to inspire girls and young women to take up studies and careers in STEM, and to leverage the power of digital technology, despite the limitations imposed by the current global health crisis (COVID-19). TDAG recognized the importance of establishing broader partnerships and collaboration with governments, civil society, Academia and industry and stressed the importance of active participation and engagement of girls in the Youth Summit at WTDC-21. |

[Document 48](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG25.2-C-0048/) provides an update on the revision of the child online protection guidelines as instructed by the Plenipotentiary Conference in 2018.

A multi-stakeholder expert working group consisting of more than 50 organizations and individual experts has reviewed the [child online protection guidelines](https://www.itu.int/en/cop/Pages/guidelines.aspx) first issued in 2009. The main revisions reflected in the 2020 guidelines focus on the need to include a special emphasis on new and emerging technologies and the special situation of children with disabilities. The guidelines will be launched at the end of June 2020 and will be available on the new COP Guidelines [website](https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Cybersecurity/Pages/COP.aspx). A social media campaign to reach younger audiences is also currently planned.

BDT stated that ITU encourages its membership to join and support the implementation of the COP Guidelines, by taking actionable and results-focused measures to accelerate the development and adoption of sound child online protection strategies at the national level, create comprehensive action plans for governments, to improve online safety measures and tools for industry and to build capacity for digital learning to empower children and parents – locally and globally.

|  |
| --- |
| TDAG noted the document with appreciation and welcomed the involvement of Member States in the review process of the 2020 child online protection guidelines.TDAG encouraged all Member States to take note of the content of the guidelines. |

[Document 49](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG25.2-C-0049/) features the ITU-UNICEF School Connectivity project, also known as the “GIGA” initiative, launched at the United Nations General Assembly in September 2019. Recognizing that some 3.7 billion people do not have access to the Internet, and that 360 million of those are young people, GIGA aims to provide connectivity to every school in the world. GIGA aims to fast track young people’s access to educational resources and opportunities. It also serves as a platform to outline the infrastructure necessary to provide digital connectivity to an entire country, for every community, and for every citizen. Schools are used to identify demand for connectivity, as well as for learning and connecting.

GIGA is core to the ITU Connect 2030 Agenda, specifically goal 1 on growth and goal 2 on inclusiveness. GIGA is linked directly to WSIS targets, connecting universities, colleges, and schools to the Internet. GIGA also touches directly on many of the regional initiatives across Africa, Americas, Arab States, Asia‑Pacific, Commonwealth of Independent States and Europe regions.

|  |
| --- |
| TDAG noted the document with interest and appreciation, and supports the progress made in GIGA. Rwanda, Kazakhstan, and United States each made interventions in support of GIGA and their involvement as Lead Country for Africa, Lead Country for Central Asia, and as a provider of GIGA technical assistance, respectively. Some Member States have expressed interest in learning more about GIGA and BDT will follow up accordingly. |

**Annex 1**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Telecommunication DevelopmentAdvisory Group (TDAG)****25th Meeting, Geneva, 2-5 June 2020** | C:\Users\comas\AppData\Local\Temp\Rar$DRa0.735\jpg\ITU official logo_blue_RGB.jpg |
|  |  |
|  | **Document TDAG-20/DT/4-E** |
|  | **26 May 2020** |
|  | **English only** |
| Chairperson, Telecommunications Development Advisory Group |
| TDAG SCOPE AND RESPONSIBILITIES, TDAG WEB DIALOGUES AND WTDC REFORM |
|  |
| **Summary:**This document provides a brief overview of TDAG and its scope of responsibilities, offers feedback related to the TDAG Web dialogues on WTDC reform, and recommends points to consider for TDAG 2021. The aim is to encourage TDAG to:* Consider its treatment of the Development Sector contribution to the ITU strategic and operational plans,
* Identify some consensus views on regional preparations for WTDC, and
* Consider all ideas and views proposed and establish appropriate groups to chart a way forward on both the administrative and development-oriented facets of the upcoming WTDC.

**References:**Resolution 208 (Rev Dubai 2018); Resolution 24 (Rev Dubai 2014); Resolution 1 (Rev Buenos Aires 2017); [TDAG-18/7(Rev.1)](https://www.itu.int/md/D18-TDAG23-C-0007/) (*TDAG’s Scope and Working Methods*) |

**Introduction**

This assembly marks the third of four TDAG meetings in the 2018-2021 cycle, and is the first virtual advisory group meeting in the 28-year history of the ITU Development Sector. It is also the first TDAG meeting convened during a world-wide pandemic.

This document provides a brief overview of TDAG and its scope of responsibilities, offers feedback on the TDAG Web dialogues on World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC) reform for consideration at this meeting and related deliberations, and recommends points to consider for TDAG 2021.

Given the availability of a full four-year cycle, TDAG 2018 made the decision to constitute working groups to prepare for WTDC-21 at a time in closer proximity to the conference itself. As of June 2020, WTDC-21 is planned to take place in approximately 17 months in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from November 8 - 19, 2021. In addition to endorsing the draft operational plan, I would propose that TDAG 2020 establish its working group on the strategic plan, identify some consensus views on regional preparations for WTDC, and establish appropriate groups to chart a way forward on both the administrative and development-oriented facets of the upcoming WTDC.

**TDAG Scope and Responsibilities**

Acting through the Director, TDAG is charged with reviewing the relationship between the objectives in the ITU Strategic Plan and **budgetary appropriations available for activities,** especially the **programs and** **regional initiatives,** as well as the **current operational plan and the draft operational plan**that is presented to Council for approval. The rules also contemplate that TDAG will help **facilitate links** to the ITU Strategic Plan and the 4-year rolling operational plan, and offer advice on **work allocation**, **ITU-D working methods**, strategies and relations with **other related bodies** inside and outside of the ITU, the effectiveness of **study group questions** and **implementation of regional actions, initiatives and projects**.  Consistent with past practice, TDAG 2020 will be called upon to endorse the operational plan that will be presented to Council 2020.

The TDAG Bureau is appointed by the World Telecommunications Development Conference[[3]](#footnote-4) and is comprised of the Chairs of the ITU-D Study Groups, two Vice Chairs from each of the five regions, and the TDAG Chair. Each Bureau member has an area of interest, indicated here: <https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Conferences/TDAG/Pages/Role-of-TDAG-Chairman-and-Vice-Chairmen.aspx>. TDAG Vice Chairs can engage both with membership and the regional and area offices within their respective regions to follow progress of the regional initiatives. Resolution 208 (Rev. Dubai 2018) of the Plenipotentiary conference further encourages Vice Chairs to “assume a leadership role in activities in order to ensure equitable distribution of the tasks and achieve greater involvement of Vice Chairs in the management and work of advisory [and] study groups.” I am fortunate to serve with the following Bureau members:

Ms Regina Fleur Assoumou Bessou, **Cote d’Ivoire** (Chair, Study Group 1)

Mr Ahmad Reza Sharafat, **Iran (Islamic Repubic of)** (Chair, Study Group 2)

Mr Christopher Kipkoech Kemei, **Kenya**

Mr Abdulkarim Ayopo Oloyede, **Nigeria**

Ms Amparo Arango Echeverri, **Dominican Republic**

Mr Al-ansari Almashakbeh, **Jordan**

Mr Tariq H Alamri, **Saudi Arabia**

Mr Kishore Babu GSC Yerraballa, **India**

Mr Nguyen Quy Quyen, **Viet Nam**

Mr Arseny Plossky, **Russian Federation**

Ms Aichurok Maralbek Kyzy, **Krgyz Republic**

Ms Blanca Gonzalez, **Spain**

Mr Wim Rullens, **Netherlands**

**TDAG Web dialogues on WTDC reform**

The BDT Director and the entire team are to be commended for the extraordinary efforts underway to ensure that the BDT is fit for purpose and that WTDC will have an impact for and in developing countries, as they are the core constituency of this Sector. A WTDC measured by impact on these nations, particularly Least developed Countries (LDCs) and small island developing states (SIDS) is altogether necessary and appropriate. Without doubt, these efforts will prove to be successful, and will contribute to a better world for all countries.

While fully appreciating that TDAG will reach its decisions together and by consensus, I offer the following observations for consideration in these and related deliberations:

* Regional Preparatory Process. In addition to its chief responsibility to identify the specific circumstances and requests of all developing countries in the region, particularly LDCs and SIDs, this process gains even greater importance in addressing the time challenges associated with an evolving WTDC. Discussions have taken place suggesting that ITU-D should incorporate development-promoting events into a conference that, in its formal agenda, has historically been administrative and has consumed all the time allotted at the conference for those activities. If we approve this diligent work will be needed to produce and coordinate administrative outputs early.
* Since TDAG will review the ITU-D contribution of the ITU strategic plan, TDAG should consider whether to convene a working group for this purpose. TDAG-20 should arrive at a way forward for the following WTDC administrative outputs:
	+ goal(s) for streamlining resolutions, whether to undertake, and if so, the approach.
	+ guidance for membership on how to formulate regional initiatives (or priorities) for efficiency, execution and impact. *A targeted exercise could help membership frame regional priorities in ways that the BDT and other partners could better accommodate.*
	+ the purpose and anticipated impact of a Declaration; suggest time-efficient ways for its development.
* Given the contributions submitted and the web dialogues, TDAG-20 could also consider issues such as themes for WTDC-21, substantive, solutions-oriented discussions and events at the conference (e.g., workshops, youth, private sector members, new stakeholders) and securing of partnerships and donors for initiatives that increase affordable broadband connectivity in developing countries.

Based on the outcomes of these discussions, work could begin as agreed with appropriate timelines established by TDAG. A coordination framework could be established for any separate objectives and workstreams identified related to WTDC-21.

**Considerations for TDAG 2021**

TDAG 2021 will be the final meeting before the WTDC and historically the meeting has been scheduled for a longer period than those preceding. Regardless of length, and in addition to standing agenda items, it will be important to have sufficient time on the agenda:

* to review preparations for TDAG’s report to WTDC;
* to consider and endorse an expected submission from the Study Group Chairs on revisions, recommendations, or other dispositions of study questions and working methods;
* to consider and advise on any recommendations on the strategic plan, operational plans and WTDC-21 Declaration, and regional reports;
* to consider and endorse outcomes from TDAG innovation/working groups;
* for membership to collaborate with each other, formally and informally, bilaterally and inter-regionally;
* for membership, particularly Vice Chairs, to engage formally and informally with representatives from the regional and area offices in line with the Rules of Procedure.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. Once appointed Vice-Chairman for the Americas region, Mr Nicolás Karavaski expressed his commitment to work hard to foster ICT development for the benefit of all the people around the world, in Argentina and in the Americas region.
 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. *See* Annex 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. Substitutions are nominated by their Administrations and approved by membership at TDAG. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)