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| **Telecommunication Development Advisory 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 |
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| Director, Telecommunication Development Bureau | |
| TDAG BREAKOUT SESSION: WTDC reform | |
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| **Summary:**  This document provides some background on the discussions on WTDC reform that will take place in breakout sessions during this year’s TDAG meeting. There is general information on WTDC and a short section on each of the topics intended to elicit constructive debate.  **Action required:**  TDAG is invited to note this document and use it as a basis for the discussions during the breakout sessions.  **References:**  n/a |

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| **Breakout Sessions WTDC reform**  **Breakout topics**  1. Preparatory process  2. Content and structure  3. Stakeholder engagement  4. Side events | **Background**  The World Telecommunication Development Conference (“WTDC”) is held every four years and sets the development agenda of the Telecommunication Development Sector (“ITU-D”). WTDC further offers a unique opportunity for the international community to come together and discuss the future of the ICT sector and its contribution to social and economic development. WTDC is open to ITU Member States, ITU-D Sector Members and Academia as well certain observers (see Article 25 of the ITU Convention and Resolution 99 (Rev. Dubai, 2018)).  Outcomes of WTDC typically include:   * A declaration reinforcing the political support for the mission and strategic objectives of ITU-D; * A contribution to the next ITU Strategic Plan as it relates to its development activities; * An ITU-D Action Plan comprising regional initiatives, new and revised resolutions, and recommendations to support the fulfilment of the Sector’s objectives; * New and revised Questions to be studied by ITU-D study groups.   In line with Resolution 31 (Rev. Buenos Aires, 2017), Regional Preparatory Meetings (RPMs) aimed at engaging the membership in the preparations of WTDC are organized by the Telecommunication Development Bureau (“BDT”). More specifically, RPMs seek to foster regional coordination before the conference itself, and to identify issues at the regional level that need to be addressed to promote global ICT development.  The first WTDC, which took place in 1994, focused on a limited number of activities; it produced a 166-page report that contained 11 resolutions, 2 recommendations and no regional initiatives. By contrast, WTDC-17 produced an 800-page report that contained 66 resolutions, 5 recommendations and 30 regional initiatives. It was suggested during the last TDAG that WTDC-21, scheduled to take place in Addis Ababa from 8-19 November 2021, could be reformed and made more productive. Similarly, discussions on the role of the Regional Preparatory meetings (RPMs) focused on how these meetings could be made more efficient and effective.  Based on this, during TDAG-2020, participants will have the opportunity to discuss and provide their input on how to improve the effectiveness of WTDC-21. This session will take place on 4 June from 930-1230 and will begin with a plenary presentation recapping the purpose and objectives of WTDC, key facts and figures as it pertains to recent WTDCs, and the discussions at TDAG-19 on the opportunity to improve the effectiveness of WTDC-21. Following the plenary presentation, participants will be invited to join one of four breakout groups, each focusing on a different aspect of the WTDC process. A second round of breakouts will allow participants to move to a different breakout to discuss and provide their inputs on a second topic. The session will conclude with a report back on the outcomes of the breakout discussions, and in particular, on the discussion questions as outlined for each breakout topic as per below. These session outcomes will serve as a key input for the WTDC-21 preparation and planning process.  The breakout groups will each focus on one of the following four topics. Each topic represents an area for possible improvement.  **Topic 1 – Preparatory process**  The current preparatory process, reflected in Resolution 31, has been in place for several years. However, as per discussions in TDAG-2019, it has been highlighted that the current format may not be the most conducive to successful discussions and negotiations between members. Is our preparatory process still fit for purpose? How can it be better integrated with the preparatory process of the regional telecommunication organizations? Should informal inter-regional meetings be organized, and, if so, what format should they take? Should informal inter-regional meetings be used to foster agreement ahead of the conference (for instance on administrative issues) to free-up conference time to discuss critical ICT development issues?  **Topic 2 – Content and structure**  It has been noted that important development challenges are not sufficiently addressed at WTDC and that the conference agenda could be made more attractive to high-level decision makers and global leaders. How can the agenda be improved to make WTDC a more relevant and attractive event? How can the scope of the conference be refocused on critical ICT development challenges and donor commitments to finance ICT4D projects? How can we improve WTDC’s contribution to the ITU Strategic Plan? Is WTDC the most appropriate forum to discuss ITU-D’s contribution to the ITU strategic plan? How do we improve the linkage between the work of Study Groups and the thematic/programmatic work and how do we make Study Group outcomes more useful, relevant and timely? Should each region develop separate regional initiatives?  **Topic 3 – Stakeholder engagement**  Though over 1300 participants attended WTDC-17, only 69% of Member States and 21% of ITU-D Sector Members were represented. To ensure an effective and meaningful WTDC, the participation of the right participants that include major key decision makers and key influencers will be critical. Who are the current and new constituent groups that need to attend WTDC (e.g. governments including representatives from other Ministries, other UN organizations, multilateral/bilateral finance institutions, CEOs, academia, civil society, youth), and in what proportion? What can we do at WTDC to ensure these constituents and their top-level decision makers attend and participate actively? How do we engage these stakeholders in the WTDC preparatory process (e.g. in line consultations, Town Hall type meetings, preparatory meetings)?  **Topic 4 – Side events**  In recent years, thematic side-events focusing on areas of interest for the membership (e.g. youth, WSIS, cybersecurity, etc.) have taken place on the margins of the conference. Should these in-depth discussions remain side-events or should they become an integral part of the conference? What topics should be discussed during these side-events and the Youth Summit? How should these topics be structured (e.g. thematic tracks, high-level programme, exhibition, etc.)? What should the output of these events be? | |
| **More information on the TDAG-20 meeting is available at:** [www.itu.int/ITU-D/TDAG](http://www.itu.int/ITU-D/TDAG) | **This Background Brief is designed to facilitate discussion and should not be considered exhaustive** |  |