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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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|  | **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 | |
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| **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[[1]](#footnote-1) 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.

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1. Substitutions are nominated by their Administrations and approved by membership at TDAG. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)