

Vice-Chairman, Study Group 6

CONDUCT OF BUSINESS OF THE STUDY GROUPS

1 Introduction

This paper is addressed to the RAG looking for its advice to solve a number of difficulties arising in the conduct of business of the Study Groups. These difficulties are perceived as a bad management of the resources spent by Sector Members participating in the meetings, particularly in the current critical economical period. It is hoped that the RAG could help in solving these problems inviting, as felt suitable, the Director to include conclusions in the Working Guidelines. This paper lists the above-mentioned difficulties, indicating where possible suggestions to overcome them.

2 Quoting official ITU texts

It is frequent that in a number of Working Parties and Study Group meetings, some delegates quote official ITU texts, such as, for instance, Resolutions of WRCs, the ITU-R, the ITU-T etc., giving an individual interpretation of them that may not be fully shared by participants for a number of reasons, among which the non immediate availability of the referred text, and/or doubts arising from a hastily reading of it. Such a situation is often opening a long time consuming debate, which in some cases, leaves participants completely unsatisfied by the management of the discussion. While it is fully recognized that the conduct of business of the meeting should fully take into account official ITU texts, it seems appropriate for their correct interpretation that some sort of guidance be offered to participants, in order to avoid the above-mentioned inconvenience.

2.1 Suggested action

A straightforward means to help participants would be to ask the Secretariat/Counsellor for an immediate interpretation. This should be considered as first instance intervention that could be useful to avoid long debates. However, if any participant is not satisfied by such interpretation, the matter should be brought to the attention of the Director. Further steps may include advice from the ITU Legal Affairs Unit and/or forwarding it to the RAG and/or the Radiocommunication Assembly.

3 Efficient use of time at Study Group meetings

At some Study Group meetings it is not infrequent that a considerable amount of time is dedicated to try to solve objections from few participants by re-drafting text already agreed at Working Party level. While it is certainly recognized that any effort should be spent to reach a suitable compromise satisfying all participants, it should also be taken into account that very often the required modification of the text takes the form of a mere editorial exercise. This practice may not be the

best means to efficiently make use of the available full Study Group meeting time and it often results in a Study Group meeting time extending beyond the normal timetable to complete the daily agenda.

3.1 Suggested action

A first attempt to avoid the above-mentioned situation would be to ascertain the nature of the objections. The Study Group Chairman should then promptly verify the possibility to set up a suitable group charged to solve the issue outside the meeting. This action would be facilitated if the Study Group meeting time respects the normal timetable, so that discussions can take place immediately after. On the other hand, it should also be recognized that if objections persist, the concerned document should be sent back to the relevant Working Party.

4 Non-technical objections to output documents

At least in the case of Study Group 6, when discussing the agreed output of drafting groups, at some Working Party meetings, it occurred that few participants opposed it for reasons openly declared as of political nature, without referring to any technical aspect of the matter. In most of the cases this opposition is sufficient to block the text preventing its further consideration. It is evident that the whole work of the drafting group and the related time and resources (as well as those spent by Sector Members to prepare the relevant input contributions) are consequently wasted for reasons that are outside the issues to be studied by the Study Group in the framework of a specific Question. Such a situation discourages preparation of technical contributions by Sector Members as well as their participation to meetings delaying the Study Group answer in the assigned time scale to Questions approved by administrations.

4.1 Suggested action

The Working Party and its Chairman should assess whether the objection is of political nature, i.e. whether there is sufficient evidence that the output document from the drafting group correctly addresses the technical aspects of the assigned issue. The document should then proceed to the Study Group with a specific mention of the objections in the executive Chairman's Report. The Study Group at its meeting will consider the matter and react according to § 10 of Resolution ITU-R 1-5.

5 Motivated opposition

At least as regards Study Group 6, as in the case mentioned in § 4 above, it is frequent that opposition to documents is expressed by few participants even without giving any motivation, so that the above-mentioned inconvenient is again encountered. It should be noted that the RAG has already addressed a similar problem at its last meeting. According to the RAG indications (see "Conclusions of the 16th meeting", annexed to Circular CA/180 of 9th April 2009), when Administrations oppose PDNRs or DNRs, they should be invited to give written reasons for their opposition "so that they can be addressed by further studies".

5.1 Suggested action

It would seem appropriate that the procedure indicated by the RAG be activated for any unmotivated opposition not only at Study Group level but also to Working Party level. This action would indeed be beneficial to a consistent response in the assigned time scale to Questions approved by Administrations.

6 Conclusions

The present document is not intended at all to criticize the attitude of any Sector Member whose prerogatives should be duly respected and preserved. It has the sole objective to attempt to make the conduct of business of the Study Group more efficient and cost effective. As mentioned in § 1, the attention of the RAG is drawn to the above-mentioned issues and it is respectfully invited to consider the possibility to endorse any of the suggested actions, maybe including them in the Working Guidelines.
