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| **Council 2018 Geneva, 17-27 April 2018** |  |
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|  | **Document C18/109-E** |
| **17 May 2018** |
| **Original: English** |
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| Summary record  of the  fifth Plenary meeting | |
| Tuesday, 24 April 2018, from 0935 to 1235 hours | |
| **Chairman**: Mr R. ISMAILOV (Russian Federation) | |

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|  | Subjects discussed | Documents |
| 1 | Follow-up report on possible improvements to the roll-out of the plenipotentiary conference: Candidates' hearing and ethics guidelines | [C18/5](https://www.itu.int/md/S18-CL-C-0005/en), [C18/95](https://www.itu.int/md/S18-CL-C-0095/en) |
| 2 | Activities related to gender equality | [C18/6](https://www.itu.int/md/S18-CL-C-0006/en), [C18/13](https://www.itu.int/md/S18-CL-C-0013/en), [C18/63](https://www.itu.int/md/S18-CL-C-0063/en) |
| 3 | Consolidation of ITU’s high-level events of a global nature | [C18/55](https://www.itu.int/md/S18-CL-C-0055/en) |
| 4 | Report of the Expert Group on the International Telecommunication Regulations (EG-ITRs) (continued) | [C18/26](https://www.itu.int/md/S18-CL-C-0026/en), [C18/79](https://www.itu.int/md/S18-CL-C-0079/en), [C18/91](https://www.itu.int/md/S18-CL-C-0091/en), [C18/92](https://www.itu.int/md/S18-CL-C-0092/en), [C18/DT/6](https://www.itu.int/md/S18-CL-180417-TD-GEN-0006/en) |
| 5 | Announcements by councillors | - |

**1 Follow-up report on possible improvements to the roll-out of the plenipotentiary conference: Candidates' hearing and ethics guidelines (Documents** [**C18/5**](https://www.itu.int/md/S18-CL-C-0005/en) **and** [**C18/95**](https://www.itu.int/md/S18-CL-C-0095/en)**)**

1.1 Representatives of the secretariat introduced the report by the Secretary-General in Document C18/5, which presented a comparative view of procedures for hearings of candidates running for elected positions at ITU and other international organizations. Further to a prior request from Council, a proposed set of guidelines on the ethical aspects of campaign activities by individuals with a current role in the Union (i.e., existing appointed and elected staff), annexed to the report, addressed three issues: the use of Union resources, campaign activities around Union events, and engagement with Member States.

1.2 The councillor from Brazil introduced Document C18/95, which proposed amendments to the General Rules of conferences, assemblies and meetings of the Union in order to accommodate hearings for candidates to elected official posts. Many other international organizations had implemented hearings very successfully, the most recent example being at the highest possible level, prior to the election of the Secretary-General of the United Nations. It would be useful for members to meet the candidates for election in order to understand fully their vision for ITU, and assess their public speaking skills, particularly in English. Hearings would enhance the transparency, legitimacy and inclusiveness of election processes, and must obviously be conducted in advance of the plenipotentiary conference. Account must also be taken of ITU Staff Regulation 12.2 in regard to appointed staff members standing for an elected official post.

1.3 In the ensuing discussion, broad support was expressed for the guidelines contained in Document C18/5. While many councillors welcomed Brazil’s proposals, which would enhance the transparency and accountability of the Union and bring its practices into line with other United Nations organizations, the modalities of the hearings needed more detailed consideration, in particular the timelines for submission of candidatures and the scheduling of hearings. The proposal to organize hearings six months prior to the opening of the plenipotentiary conference would need to be considered in light of rules for the formal submission of candidatures, the deadline for which was 28 days prior to the conference; staff would be put on special leave immediately on formal submission of their candidature. Revisions to the Staff Rules might therefore also need to be considered. The use of terms “unofficial or potential”candidates from the ITU staff gives impression that any staff member may announce him/herself as a such candidate without support from an ITU Member-State. Several councillors objected to the emphasis on candidates' ability to work in English; the status of the six languages of the Union had always been, and should continue to be, equal. Several councillors sought clarification regarding the financial implications of such hearings for ITU: would the ITU budget absorb any associated costs? Some considered that candidates themselves should bear the burden for lobbying and campaigning. Many councillors expressed a view that more work to be carried out in preparation of this matter for consideration by the Plenipotentiary conference.

1.4 The councillor from Brazil thanked all speakers for their support and interest, and agreed that further work was required to refine his country’s proposals, with due account taken of the Staff Rules. The intention was for the hearings to be held in addition to any individual lobbying and campaigning that candidates wished to undertake. Regarding the language issue, all six languages were indeed equal *de jure*, but *de facto* English was a dominant language in the work of ITU and by his opinion should therefore be a prerequisite in the competences of candidates to high-level official positions. A more detailed document, taking account of the concerns raised, would be prepared for consideration by PP-18.

1.5 Taking into account broad support that was expressed for the guidelines the Chairman proposed to adopt the guidelines on ethical aspects of certain campaign activities prior to PP-18 in Document C18/5, and to forward the document to PP-18. He also proposed to Brazil to consider the matter related to hearing further and submit the results of consideration to PP-18.

1.6 It was so **agreed**.

**2 Activities related to gender equality (Documents** [**C18/6**](https://www.itu.int/md/S18-CL-C-0006/en)**,** [**C18/13**](https://www.itu.int/md/S18-CL-C-0013/en) **and** [**C18/63**](https://www.itu.int/md/S18-CL-C-0063/en)**)**

2.1 The Chief of the Strategic Planning and Membership Department (SPM) introduced the report in Document C18/6 on ITU's activities related to Resolution 70 (Rev. Busan, 2014) and the report in Document C18/13 on ITU's gender equality and mainstreaming (GEM) proposed implementation plan for 2018. The implementation plan had been drafted, as previously, in line with the performance indicators of the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-SWAP).

2.2 Councillors welcomed the two reports, which addressed a particularly important topic. Gender equality and bridging the gender digital divide were crucial; the presence of women in the ICT sector remained low. ITU should continue its efforts to redress the gender balance, including in the appointment of high-level officials. Regarding GEM, ITU should ensure that appropriate budgetary resources were allocated to facilitate full implementation. To increase women's participation in the work of ITU, Member States needed to include more women on their delegations, and submit their candidatures for leadership positions and for election as officials. Several councillors provided examples of their activities, in particular to mark International Girls in ICT Day, and the progress being made to bridge the gender digital divide and promote women's participation in the ICT sector at national level. One councillor pointed out that the GEM proposed implementation plan for 2018 related to ITU's draft Gender Parity Strategy contained in Document C18/63; those two documents should therefore be considered together, especially in view of the timelines involved.

2.3 The Director of BDT said that, in line with Resolution 70 (Rev. Busan, 2014), International Girls in ICT Day would be celebrated on 26 April 2018. Efforts to promote and expand participation in the event were proving successful, and it was hoped that one of the current year’s participants would address the Council. The next challenge would be to ensure that the issue received attention throughout the year, rather than on a single day.

2.4 The Chairman said that the broad participation in the discussion was testament to the importance of gender equality and women's participation. He took it that the Council wished to note Document C18/6 and would pronounce itself on the GEM proposed implementation plan in Document C18/13 in the light of its consideration of the draft Gender Parity Strategy in Document C18/63.

2.5 It was so **agreed.**

2.6 The Chief of SPM, introducing Document C18/63 on ITU’s Gender Parity Strategy, also drew attention to Documents C18/INF/3, containing a note by the Secretary-General transmitting a letter from UN-SWAP, and C18/INF/5, on human resources reporting and statistics for the Union. Referring to §3 of Document C18/63, she explained that the potential dates for achieving gender parity among P and D staff had been calculated on the basis of the assumption that posts would be filled only when vacated through retirement. She also clarified that the Council was being invited to endorse the specific recommendations contained in §§4-6 of the document, rather than the gender parity strategy as a whole.

2.7 While generally applauding the efforts of the Union and secretariat both to promote gender equality in ICT and to achieve gender parity in the Union’s staffing, councillors observed that further progress was still needed. Regardless of whether the imbalance towards women in the G staff categories and men in the P staff categories could be put down to external factors, the situation should be rectified. Achieving gender parity must be tackled as a priority. Many Member States were legally obliged to take action in that regard under the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and other international legal instruments. The recommendations set out in Document C18/63 were broadly supported, but several councillors felt that they should be further analysed and developed before being endorsed. One councillor requested clarification of some of the figures given in the document; others expressed concern at the revisions apparently suggested to Annex 2 to Resolution 48 (Rev. Busan, 2014) in Annex 3 to the document, as revising such resolutions was the preserve of the plenipotentiary conference. One councillor emphasized that competence and qualifications for the post must remain the overriding criteria for appointing staff, albeit with due consideration given to equitable geographic distribution and other factors. Another highlighted the need for flexible working arrangements and a workplace free of sexual harassment in order to encourage applications from qualified women.

2.8 The Chairman noted that both Documents C18/13 and C18/63 had been submitted to the Council for endorsement. However, whereas amendments had been proposed regarding certain timelines in the former, objections had been raised regarding the latter. He therefore proposed that C18/13 be adopted with revision to the timeline in 6.1 and 12, pending PP-18 decision, and that C18/63 be noted and that administrations bear in mind these documents and the comments made at the present meeting during discussions on Resolutions 70 and 48 at PP-18.

2.9 It was so **agreed**.

**3 Consolidation of ITU’s high-level events of a global nature (Document** [**C18/55**](https://www.itu.int/md/S18-CL-C-0055/en)**)**

3.1 The representative of the secretariat introduced Document C18/55, which set out two options for optimizing ITU high-level events of a global nature by 2020.

3.2 Although councillors saw much of merit in the two options proposed, the general view was that more deliberation was required to develop a workable approach that fully responded to all concerns. Some delegations emphasized the need for the Union’s mandated core events (in particular world conferences and assemblies) to remain the top priority, and that they should be scheduled independently of its other high-level events. Concern was expressed at the proliferation of such high-level events: their added value to the Union should be analysed and consideration given to streamlining similar events under a single banner.

3.3 The Council **noted** Document C18/55 and **requested** the secretariat to further study the legal implications, taking into account Resolution 77 (Rev. Busan, 2014), and to submit a report to PP-18 , along with the summary records of Council-18 on the matter.

**4 Report of the Expert Group on the International Telecommunication Regulations (EG-ITRs) (continued) (Documents** [**C18/26**](https://www.itu.int/md/S18-CL-C-0026/en)**,** [**C18/79**](https://www.itu.int/md/S18-CL-C-0079/en)**,** [**C18/91**](https://www.itu.int/md/S18-CL-C-0091/en)**,** [**C18/92**](https://www.itu.int/md/S18-CL-C-0092/en) **and** [**C18/DT/6**](https://www.itu.int/md/S18-CL-180417-TD-GEN-0006/en)**)**

4.1 The Chairman invited the Council to approve the transmission to PP-18 of a package of documents comprising the report of EG-ITRs to Council-18 (Document C18/26) and the official summary record of related comments, annexed to Document C18/DT/6.

4.2 It was so **agreed**.

**5** **Announcements by councillors**

5.1 Having underscored their countries’ commitment to the work of ITU and its activities, the councillors from Turkey and Tunisia announced that at PP-18 their countries would stand for re-election to the Council, and the councillor from Uruguay announced that his country intended to propose a candidate for the post of Director of BR.

The Secretary-General: The Chairman:

H. ZHAO R. ISMAILOV

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