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| **Council 2019 Geneva, 10-20 June 2019** |  |
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| **Agenda item: ADM 20** | **Document C19/54-E** |
| **18 April 2019** |
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| **Report by the Secretary-General** | |
| UN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GROUP (unsDg) AND COORDINATION LEVY | |

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| **Summary**  In 2018, the UN General Assembly (UNGA) mandated the repositioning of the UN Development System and de-linking of the Resident Coordinator (RC) system from existing UN country level arrangements, with specific focus on delivering the SDG goals, and approved new cost sharing arrangements ([A/RES/72/279](https://undocs.org/a/res/72/279)).  Resolution 25 (Rev. Dubai, 2018) instructed, *inter alia,* the Secretary-General to continue to engage with the United Nations, other United Nations development system entities and Member States with a view to supporting full implementation of UNGA Resolutions [71/243](https://undocs.org/A/RES/71/243) and [72/279](https://undocs.org/a/res/72/279).  **Action required**  The Council is invited to take **note** of the report by the Secretary-General on the UNSDG and coordination levy and **endorse** the recommendations as per Section 12.  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  **References**  [C18/INF/4](https://www.itu.int/md/S18-CL-INF-0004/en) and [C19/INF/4](https://www.itu.int/md/S19-CL-INF-0004/en) |

**ITU’s continued participation in the UN Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG)**

**Background**

1 Following their adoption in 2000, one of the major mandates of the UN Development System, in cooperation with Member States, was the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). ITU joined the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) in August 2006, to reinforce the development mission of the Union and further reposition ITU in the UN system as more than a technical agency. To enhance ITU cooperation, and develop and implement partnerships within the United Nations system and with other international organizations and other institutions located in New York, the ITU liaison office to the United Nations was established in 2008.

2 The MDGs expired at the end of 2015 and were superseded by the 2030 Agenda, which took effect on 1 January 2016 with a deadline of 2030 to achieve the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The critical role of ICTs in attaining the SDG goals was recognized in the preamble of the 2030 Agenda as well as within Goals 4, 5, 9 and 17. Of particular importance for the ITU is Goal 9 – Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure, which, *inter alia*, calls for significantly increasing access to information and communications technology and striving to provide universal and affordable access to the Internet in least developed countries.

3 The ITU Council has been regularly informed of ITU’s direct participation in the attainment of the SDG goals through the Council Working Group on WSIS and SDGs; see also documents [C18/INF/4](https://www.itu.int/md/S18-CL-INF-0004/en) and [C19/INF/4](https://www.itu.int/md/S19-CL-INF-0004/en).

4 In 2016, the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review of Operational Activities for Development in the UN system called for, *inter alia*, improvements in coordination and efficiency as well as the need for restructuring at the country level to support the implementation of the SDGs ([A/RES/71/243](https://undocs.org/A/RES/71/243)).

5 In 2018, the UN General Assembly (UNGA) mandated the repositioning of the UN Development System and de-linking of the Resident Coordinator (RC) system from existing UN country level arrangements, with specific focus on delivering the SDG goals, and approved new cost sharing arrangements ([A/RES/72/279](https://undocs.org/a/res/72/279)). It is clear that Member States are taking this initiative very seriously. It was adopted by both the Group of 77 and the OECD DAC countries group.

6 The impact of these two UNGA Resolutions was discussed thoroughly at PP-18 as part of the ongoing initiative to strengthen the ITU regional presence. Resolution 25 (Rev. Dubai, 2018) instructed, *inter alia,* the Secretary-General to continue to engage the UN, the UNDS and Member States in full support of UNGA Resolutions 71/243 and 72/279 (item 6) (see document C19/INF/4).

**How do the Resolutions impact ITU?**

7 All UN agencies presently contribute to the funding of the RC system. In 2015, the ITU Council authorized the Secretary-General to exercise flexibility with regard to the ITU contribution in support of the RC system and authorized the use of year-end savings to pay the USD 100’000 annual contribution (see document [C15/105(Rev.1](https://www.itu.int/md/S15-CL-C-0105/en)), paragraph 45).

8 To fund the new RC structure in support of the SDGs, ITU’s portion of the total UN system-wide contribution would double to USD 200’000 for 2019. In addition, through the UNGA, Member States have agreed to a one per cent surcharge on tightly earmarked, non-core contributions to fund this new initiative (A/RES/72/279, paragraph 10a).

9 It is important to note that Member States approved wording that the one per cent will be paid by donors and is NOT to come out of available project/programme resources. For information, the one per cent as applied to ITU would represent only about USD 30’000-40’000 annually at present levels of funding.

10 **What are the expected results from participating in the UN Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG)?**

1. ICTs are a cross-cutting enabler for each and every SDG

ITU is the recognized expert in the areas of spectrum management, brokering standards and bridging the digital divide. By participating in the system, ITU will continue to bring its expertise to the table to ensure that the “Last Mile” connectivity is advanced affordably and efficiently.

1. Revitalizing ITU regional presence

Participation in the new system will strengthen the regional presence by ensuring ITU is consulted on ICT related activities. It will also assist BDT in identifying opportunities for partnerships and programme initiatives (and financial support) for activities targeted at the specific groups of interest to ITU Member States.

1. Support for increased funding

The finalized guidelines for funding the new system include specific reference to the need for increases in funding for the development system. If aligned with the UNDS, ITU will be in a stronger position to motivate stakeholders for increases in funding.

In the future, it is reasonable to assume that most UNDAFs will include an ICT component. This will give BDT an additional entry point for partnerships and resource mobilization.

**Minimizing the impact on ITU**

11 As noted above, the main focus of the new system is to strengthen and coordinate UN activities at the field level, and to support increased funding to coordinate UN activities to implement the SDGs. However, some of the requirements of the new system do not relate to ITU. To minimize impact on ITU, the following is proposed:

1. Because the process to develop the UNDAF is very resource intensive, ITU cannot participate fully in the design at the country level. However, BDT will continue to ensure that all ITU technical cooperation activities are aligned with a country’s National Plan.
2. BDT will monitor existing and draft UNDAF agreements to assess the need for further ITU action. ITU will only directly participate in the creation of a country level UNDAF when time and resources allow and where there is demonstrated need for ITU’s direct involvement.
3. ITU will report only on those indicators which are relevant to the Technical Cooperation activities.
4. Regional and area offices will coordinate ITU activities at the country level with the RC system, especially ITU meetings and visits to the country by ITU staff and consultants.
5. The ITU liaison office to the UN will monitor and coordinate ITU activities relating to the UNSDG and progress on the SDGs.

**Recommendations**

12 The Council is requested to:

1. authorize the Secretary-General to increase the current annual contribution to the cost-sharing of the RC system (from USD 100’000 to USD 200’000) as from 2019 until further notice;
2. authorize the Secretary-General to use the surplus of the 2018 accounts to finance the additional USD 100’000 for the 2019 annual contribution to the cost-sharing of the RC system and include this amount in the ITU Biennial Budget from 2020-2021 onward;
3. authorize the Secretary-General to inform Member States about the one per cent surcharge, (noted above) and to make the necessary administrative arrangements to implement this surcharge on existing and future partnership agreements, where the criteria of UNGA Resolution 72/279 are met.

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