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| **Second virtual consultation of councillors  starting 16 November 2020** |  |
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| **Name of the submitting Member State(s):** | **Republic of Azerbaijan, Republic of Belarus, Russian Federation** |
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| **Document title:** | **Improving the organization of virtual meetings** |
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| **Ref. to draft agenda of the virtual consultation:** | **Item 2 of the second group of items on the draft agenda for the second virtual consultation of councillors (PL2.8) Documents** [**VC/13**](https://www.itu.int/md/S20-CLVC-C-0013/en)**,** [**VC/10**](https://www.itu.int/md/S20-CLVC-C-0010/en)**,** [**C20/14**](https://www.itu.int/md/S20-CL-C-0014/en)**,** [**С20/53**](https://www.itu.int/md/S20-CL-C-0053/en) |

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| Summary  A brief analysis is provided of the current situation regarding the organization and conduct of virtual meetings. Measures are proposed for optimizing the expenditure of financial and human resources in the organization and conduct of such events. 1 Introduction In § 3 of Document [**VC/13**](https://www.itu.int/md/S20-CLVC-C-0013/en) it is noted that, following the announcement of COVID-19 as a pandemic, all ITU meetings have gone virtual, with the exception of the Council. The ITU secretariat, together with all participants in the activities of ITU, took urgent measures to organize virtual meetings, including the introduction of appropriate software and technical resources and the training of ITU staff. Such measures made it possible to continue the activities of the Union under the challenging conditions of the pandemic.  Document [**VC/10**](https://www.itu.int/md/S20-CLVC-C-0010/en)highlights the need to strengthen activities in this area. Certain aspects of these activities are also discussed in Documents [**C20/14**](https://www.itu.int/md/S20-CL-C-0014/en) and [**С20/53**](https://www.itu.int/md/S20-CL-C-0053/en). |

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| 2 Current situation The secretariat has made considerable efforts to ensure that the virtual meetings and other ITU events can be held. However, while the objective has been achieved in principle, it cannot be denied that, given the extraordinary circumstances and urgency, activities in this area are currently somewhat uncoordinated.  This is illustrated by, among other things, the list provided below (it may be far from complete) of ITU webpages regarding the software resources that it is proposed to use at virtual meetings. These pages indicate the various software resources that are being proposed for use at virtual meetings and other virtual events.  <https://www.itu.int/en/general-secretariat/ICT-Services/remoteparticipation/Pages/default.aspx>  [Multilingual Interactive Remote Participation (INTERPREFY)](https://www.itu.int/en/general-secretariat/ICT-Services/remoteparticipation/Pages/interactiverp.aspx);  [Monolingual Interactive Remote Participation (ZOOM](https://www.itu.int/en/general-secretariat/ICT-Services/remoteparticipation/Pages/onlinemeetingroom.aspx)).  <https://www.itu.int/en/Pages/remote-participation.aspx>  Interprefy, Zoom, Skype for Business, Microsoft Teams.  <https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-T/Workshops-and-Seminars/ai4h/20190122/Pages/remote.aspx>  GoToMeeting.  <https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-T/ewm/Pages/e-meetings.aspx>  GoToMeeting, GoToWebinar, Adobe Connect.  <https://www.itu.int/myworkspace/#/my-workspace/dashboard>  TSB webpage. Configured for use of MyMeetings.  <https://www.itu.int/en/events/Pages/Virtual-Sessions.aspx>  General Secretariat webpage with a list of virtual events.  Thus, in ITU, at least eight different software resources/platforms are proposed for the purpose of conducting meetings , including:  1) INTERPREFY (with financial support from the United Arab Emirates);  2) Adobe Connect;  3) ZOOM;  4) Microsoft Teams;  5) GoToMeeting;  6) GoToWebinar;  7) Skype for Business;  8) MyMeetings.  At several virtual meetings it was noted that the use of such a broad range of software resources causes some inconvenience for meeting participants. Also, some software resources were not compatible with all types of Internet interface applications (e.g. some did not work with Microsoft EDGE, or did not allow cellular telephones and tablets to be used). During the virtual meetings, there were repeated comments about the inconvenience of utilizing a number of such applications. Furthermore, the situation remains unclear regarding the protection of personal data when using the various applications.  In particular it should be noted that currently two very similar platforms are being used for conducting meetings in several languages: INTERPREFY and MyMeetings. The General Secretariat, the Radiocommunication Bureau and the Telecommunication Development Bureau use INTERPREFY, while the Telecommunication Standardization Bureau (TSB) uses MyMeetings. 3 Conclusions The lack of common solutions and a common support service for applications/platforms is leading to the creation of “support teams” in the various organizational units of the Union (in particular in the General Secretariat and TSB). Evidently, this approach is leading to additional expenditure in terms of human and financial resources (including for the acquisition and utilization of software), and to a duplication of work in the different organizational units of the Union. This also gives rise to certain complications for other participants in the Union’s activities.  Perhaps it is also to some extent one of the reasons for the request for additional resources in Document [**C20/14**](https://www.itu.int/md/S20-CL-C-0014/en). 4 Proposed measures It seems expedient to recommend that the ITU secretariat, taking into account the experience acquired by its various units, should, without further delay, significantly reduce the number of applications/platforms used to conduct virtual meetings and other events, reduce, harmonize and streamline the webpages on the organization of such meetings; and, bearing in mind the requirements of Resolution 191 (Rev. Dubai, 2018) of the Plenipotentiary Conference, should, in the spirit of “One ITU”, eliminate duplication of work in this area in the various organizational units of the secretariat by centralizing it in one of the units.[[1]](#footnote-1) |

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1. In the current structure of the ITU secretariat this area of work is entrusted to the Information Services Department (see <https://www.itu.int/en/general-secretariat/ICT-Services/remoteparticipation/Pages/default.aspx>). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)