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| **Council 2022 Geneva, 21-31 March 2022** |  |
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|  | **Document C22/84-E** |
| **24 March 2022** |
| **Original: English** |
| SUMMARY RECORD  OF THE  INAUGURAL PLENARY MEETING  Monday, 21 March 2022, from 0940 to 1500 hours  **Chairman**: Dr E. Azzouz (Egypt)  **Later**: Mr S. BIN GHELAITA (United Arab Emirates) | |

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|  | Subjects discussed | Documents |
| 1 | Opening of the 2022 session of the Council | - |
| 2 | Address by the outgoing Chairman of the Council |  |
| 3 | Election of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Council | - |
| 4 | Address by the Chairman of the Council | - |
| 5 | Chairmanship and vice-chairmanship of the Standing Committee on Administration and Management | - |
| 6 | Address by the Secretary-General on the state of the Union | - |
| 7 | Statements on aggression against Ukraine | - |
| 8 | Adoption of the draft agenda of the 2022 session of the Council | [C22/1(Rev.2)](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-CL-C-0001/en) |
| 9 | Allocation of documents | [C22/DT/1](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-CL-220321-TD-0001/en) |
| 10 | Draft time management plan | [C22/DT/2(Rev.4)](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-CL-220321-TD-0002/en) |
| 11 | Organizational matters | - |
| 12 | Expressions of condolence to China | - |
| 13 | Statement by a minister | - |

**1 Opening of the 2022 session of the Council**

1.1 The Secretary-General declared the 2022 session of the Council open, welcomed all delegates and expressed his great satisfaction at being able once again to convene the Council in person.

# 2 Address by the outgoing Chairman of the Council

2.1 The outgoing Chairman delivered the address available at:  
<https://www.itu.int/en/council/2022/Documents/speeches/Statement-Azzouz-Egypt-ChairC19-en.docx>

# 3 Election of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Council

3.1 The Secretary-General proposed that Mr Saif Bin Ghelaita (United Arab Emirates), who had served as Vice-Chairman of the Council at its 2019 session, be elected Chairman of the Council for its 2022 session.

3.2 Mr Saif Bin Ghelaita (United Arab Emirates) was **elected** Chairman of the Council by acclamation.

3.3 The Secretary-General said that, in keeping with the principles of rotation and equitable geographical distribution, the Vice-Chairman of the Council would be from Region A and proposed that Mr César Martínez (Paraguay) be elected Vice-Chairman of the Council.

3.4 Mr César Martínez (Paraguay) was **elected** Vice-Chairman of the Council by acclamation.

3.5 The Secretary-General and many councillors congratulated the Chairman on his election and paid tribute to his work in ensuring the success of the virtual consultations of councillors during the COVID-19 pandemic. They were convinced that he would continue to guide the work of the Council successfully.

3.6 Councillors also congratulated the Vice-Chairman on his election.

# 4 Address by the Chairman of the Council

4.1 The Chairman expressed gratitude for the trust placed in him, thanked the outgoing Chairman of the Council and delivered the address available at:  
<https://www.itu.int/en/council/2022/Documents/speeches/Statement-BinGhelaita-UAE-ChairC22-en.docx>.

# 5 Chairmanship and vice-chairmanship of the Standing Committee on Administration and Management

5.1 The Secretary-General recalled that Ms Stella Erebor (Nigeria) had been elected Chairman of the Standing Committee on Administration and Management for its 2019 session and would therefore continue in 2022 to complete her two-year term. Mr Dirk-Olivier von der Emden (Switzerland) would continue to serve as Vice-Chairman.

5.2 Unfortunately, Ms Lindl Rowe (Australia) was no longer available to serve as vice-chairman. Having consulted with representatives of Region E, he proposed that Ms Aprajita Sharrma (India) be elected as the second Vice-Chairman.

5.3 Ms Aprajita Sharrma (India) was **elected** by acclamation.

# 6 Address by the Secretary-General on the state of the Union

6.1 The Secretary-General delivered the address on the state of the Union available at:  
<https://www.itu.int/en/council/2022/Documents/speeches/State-of-the-Union-SG-en.docx>.

6.2 Many councillors expressed their gratitude for the information contained in the address and for the efforts of the Secretary-General and all ITU staff in ensuring the continuity of the Union’s work during the COVID-19 pandemic.

6.3 Some councillors stressed the importance of ITU’s continuing its work to bridge the digital divide and pursuing the development of telecommunications for the benefit of all. Connecting the unconnected was imperative.

6.4 One councillor said that Africa, in particular, should be a clear priority of the Union in that regard, stressing that digital transformation had to be founded on digital inclusivity – no one should be left behind. He looked forward to steps being taken towards that end at the forthcoming world telecommunication development conference and plenipotentiary conference.

6.5 The councillor from India welcomed the reference made to the new ITU area office and innovation centre to be opened in New Delhi.

6.6 The councillor from the Russian Federation delivered the following statement:  
<https://www.itu.int/en/council/2022/Documents/speeches/Statement-Opening-Russian-Federation-en.docx>.

# 7 Statements on aggression against Ukraine

7.1 Mr Janusz Cieszyński (Secretary of State, Government Plenipotentiary for Cyber Security, Chancellery of the Prime Minister, Poland) delivered the following statement on the aggression perpetrated by the Russian Federation against Ukraine, its impact on the latter’s telecommunication infrastructure, assistance provided by his country in the field of telecommunications and the need for ITU to take action:   
<https://www.itu.int/en/council/2022/Documents/speeches/Statement-Cieszynnski-Poland-en.docx>.

7.2 He proposed a minute of silence for those who had perished in the war so far.

**A minute of silence was observed.**

7.3 The observer from Ukraine delivered the following statement condemning the aggression against his country and the bombardment of its telecommunication infrastructure and requested support from ITU:   
<https://www.itu.int/en/council/2022/Documents/speeches/Statement-Shchyhols-Ukraine-en.docx>.

7.4 The councillor from France delivered the following statement on behalf of the European Union and its 27 members and said that the candidate countries Albania and Montenegro, as well as Georgia, Ukraine and Moldova associated themselves with the statement:  
<https://www.itu.int/en/council/2022/Documents/speeches/Statement-France-European-countries-en.docx>

7.5 The councillor from the United States delivered the following statement on behalf of the United States, Australia, Canada, the Republic of Korea, Japan and the United Kingdom:  
<https://www.itu.int/en/council/2022/Documents/speeches/Statement-USA-Australia-Canada-KoreaRep-Japan-UK-en.docx>.

7.6 The councillor from the Russian Federation made the following statement:  
<https://www.itu.int/en/council/2022/Documents/speeches/Statement-Russian-Federation-accusation-en.docx>.

7.7 The councillor from China said that confrontation and conflict was not in the interests of anyone and that efforts should be made to achieve a peaceful resolution to the situation in Ukraine. His country opposed any action that would escalate tensions and did not consider the Council an appropriate forum to be discussing the ongoing situation in Ukraine.

7.8 Several councillors said that the statement delivered by the councillor from the Russian Federation amounted to disinformation and should be recognized and condemned as such.

7.9 The Chairman, expressing hope that a peaceful resolution could be found, said that no effort would be spared in trying to help those in need, within the remit of ITU, but asked councillors to avoid politicizing the meeting and work of the Council.

# 8 Adoption of the draft agenda of the 2022 session of the Council (Document C22/1(Rev.2))

8.1 The Secretary of the Plenary, introducing Document [C22/1 (Rev. 2)](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-CL-C-0001/en), said that the agenda was structured as in the past. A total of 15 contributions had been received from Member States.

8.2 The councillor from the Russian Federation said that Document [C22/81](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-CL-C-0081/en) could not be included in the agenda for discussion during the current Council session as a contribution, since its publication was clearly not in compliance with the General Rules of conferences, assemblies and meetings of the Union, Rule 20 of Rules of Procedure of the Council and Council Decision 556. All contributions had to be submitted no later than 14 calendar days prior to the opening of the Council session, in order to allow for timely translation and consideration. As Document C22/81 did not meet any of the deadline exemption criteria, it could not be taken up at the current Council session and should hence be removed from the agenda.

8.3 One councillor said that, like all activities in the Union, the submission of contributions should comply with its internal rules and regulations, in order to allow sufficient time for consultation and negotiation.

8.4 Several councillors who had co-sponsored Document C22/81 stated that the reference to submission deadlines in Resolution 556 constituted a general recommendation rather than an absolute rule, particularly in cases where the contribution had already been translated into the six official languages of the Union. The intention was clear in the wording: documents “should”, rather than “shall”, be submitted by the deadline. Moreover, the Council had on previous occasions considered late submissions, in order to tackle urgent matters affecting Member States. Scheduling discussion on the document for the following day would allow Member States sufficient time to examine the document. There was an urgent need for action, particularly in view of the recent call by the Secretary-General of the United Nations for all United Nations agencies to play their part.

8.5 Speaking at the request of the Chairman, the ITU Legal Adviser clarified that Decision 556 specified that that all contributions should be submitted no later than 14 calendar days before a Council session. The deadline was indicative, as reflected in the use of the verb “should”. Its purpose was to ensure time for translation into the six official languages of the Union prior to the Council session. In the case under discussion, the document had already been made available in all six languages. Moreover, he drew attention to the Council’s longstanding practice of accepting late contributions; there appeared to be no instance of the Council ever having rejected such a document.

8.6 The Chairman invited the Council to accept the inclusion of the document in the agenda and to discuss the substance of the contribution the following day.

8.7 The councillor from the Russian Federation said that owing to its very late submission, only two days before the session, insufficient time had been available to consider the document, which was unfair to a silent majority of Member States who had not yet been able to review the text or seek instructions from their capitals, while its authors had been able not only to draft the text but also to consult others and garner support. It was important to ensure an equal footing for all. Additional information was required, too, particularly on the financial implications of the document, before it could be validly discussed. Furthermore, the resolution contained in Document C22/81 had been drafted prior to the start of the current peace process and before an assessment could be made of needs or resources. There were also grounds for a broader review in the context of ITU action to rebuild the telecommunication infrastructure in other countries experiencing conflict, pursuant to Resolution 34 (Rev. Dubai, 2018) of the Plenipotentiary Conference.

8.8 The Chairman having pointed out that some of those concerns could be raised during substantive discussion of the document, several councillors proposed allowing delegates one or two days to review the document prior to a discussion of its contents.

8.9 The councillor from the Russian Federation said that as there was no consensus, consideration of the document should be deferred. Alternatively, the document could be added to the agenda as an information or temporary document, rather than as a contribution. However, it would be more constructive for the issue to be considered at PP-22, by the 193 Member States rather than just the 48 Member States of the Council.

8.10 Several councillors stated that, given the importance and urgency of the situation, it was imperative for Document C22/81 to remain a contribution and to be discussed during the current Council session.

**The meeting was suspended at 1250 hours and resumed at 1440 hours.**

8.11 The Chairman, noting the strong support expressed for the principles of neutrality, impartiality, humanity and independence that guided the work of the Union, in accordance with the Constitution and Convention, and recalling the legal advice given regarding Council Decision 556, invited the Council to adopt the draft agenda with the inclusion of Document C22/81 on the understanding that the steering committee would discuss a suitable time slot for consideration thereof.

8.12 The councillor from the Russian Federation said that, as a United Nations specialized agency, the Union could take guidance from the United Nations but was not bound by its decisions. His delegation stood ready to work with all councillors and Member States in a spirit of consensus. While it was the right of Member States to express their views, the Council’s work should not be politicized. Any debate on Document C22/81 should focus on providing assistance and support to countries in special need, in line with *instructs the ITU Council* 2 of Resolution 34 (Rev. Dubai, 2018).

8.13 The draft agenda of the 2022 session of the Council (Document C22/1(Rev.2)) was **adopted**.

**9 Allocation of documents (Document C22/DT/1)**

9.1 The Secretary of the Plenary introduced Document [C22/DT/1](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-CL-220321-TD-0001/en), which was **approved**.

**10 Draft time management plan (Document C22/DT/2(Rev.4))**

10.1 The Secretary of the Plenary introduced Document [C22/DT/2(Rev.4),](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-CL-220321-TD-0002/en) which was **approved**.

# 11 Organizational matters

11.1 The Secretary of the Plenary announced that the meeting hours of the Council would, as usual, be from 0930 to 1230 hours and from 1430 to 1730 hours every day, except for the Friday morning meetings, which would be held from 0900 to 1200 hours. As was customary, interpretation and documentation would be provided in the Union's six official languages and the proceedings would be webcast, in accordance with previous practice. Captioning in English of the plenary and standing committee discussions would be provided within the meeting room and on the web. All documents would be made available on the Council webpage and via the C22 Sync application. In view of the continuing COVID-19 pandemic, remote participation had been arranged for those unable to travel; however, decisions would be taken only by councillors physically present. All participants should continue to observe the relevant public health restrictions and take other necessary measures to reduce the risk of infection.

11.2 The information on the organization of work for the 2022 session was **noted**.

**12** **Expressions of condolence to China**

12.1 Councillors conveyed their condolences to the people and Administration of China following the crash, earlier that day, of a civilian aircraft with 132 people on board. The councillor from China expressed sincere appreciation for their words.

**13 Statement by a minister**

13.1 A statement was delivered by Mr Rovshan Rustamov (Deputy Minister of Digital Development and Transport, Azerbaijan), who announced that his country would be standing for re-election to the Council and that Ms Sahiba Hasanova would be standing for re-election to the Radio Regulations Board at PP-22.

The Secretary-General: The Chairman:

H. ZHAO S. BIN GHELAITA

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