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| **Council 2022 Geneva, 21-31 March 2022** |  |
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|  | **Document C22/85-E** |
| **25 March 2022** |
| **Original: English** |
| SUMMARY RECORD  OF THE  FIRST PLENARY MEETING | |
| Monday, 21 March 2022, from 1500 to 1800 hours | |
| **Chairman**: Mr S. BIN GHELAITA (United Arab Emirates) | |

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|  | Subjects discussed | Documents |
| 1 | Report on the implementation of the strategic plan and the activities of the Union, April 2018-February 2022 | [C22/35](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-CL-C-0035/en) |
| 2 | Draft operational plan for the Union for 2023 | [C22/28](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-CL-C-0028/en) |
| 3 | Report on the sixth World Telecommunication/ICT Policy Forum (WTPF-21) | [C22/5](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-CL-C-0005/en) |
| 4 | World Telecommunication and Information Society Day (WTISD) | [C22/17](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-CL-C-0017/en), [C22/78](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-CL-C-0078/en) |
| 5 | Report on the Global Standards Symposium (GSS-20) and the World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly (WTSA-20) | [C22/24](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-CL-C-0024/en) |
| 6 | Statements by ministers and councillors | - |

# 1 Report on the implementation of the strategic plan and the activities of the Union, April 2018-February 2022 (Document C22/35)

1.1 The Deputy Secretary-General introduced Document [C22/35](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-CL-C-0035/en), which outlined progress made towards the achievement of ITU-wide strategic goals and targets and the Sector and inter-sectoral objectives from April 2018 to February 2022. The document would form the basis for the Council’s report to PP-22 on the implementation of the strategic plan. The information was presented in a results-oriented, evidence-based and thematic manner, and analytical figures were used to show overall progress towards the Connect 2030 targets and the key performance indicators endorsed by the membership in the operational plans of the three Sectors and the General Secretariat. The report was complemented by an online interactive, media-rich and mobile-friendly content reporting tool, which presented the highlights of ITU’s work over the period: <https://www.itu.int/highlights-report-activities>.

1.2 Councillors commended the General Secretariat on the comprehensive and informative report. One councillor highlighted the focus on sustainability, the Union’s efforts to help achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the increase in its membership as especially positive. He suggested that a short video, showcasing implementation efforts over the previous four years, be added to the online tool as a useful means of acquainting policy-makers with the work of the Union. Another councillor, welcoming programmes implemented in her country with ITU support, expressed the hope that such efforts would continue and that developing countries, in particular, would benefit. The importance of collaboration to ensure effective implementation of the Union’s strategic plan and learning from past challenges were emphasized by several councillors.

1.3 One councillor suggested that the report should provide more information on how individual components of the ITU results framework, such as the accountability framework, the Director of BDT’s work on internal controls and implementation of the human resources strategic plan, contributed to the implementation of the strategic plan as a whole. Another asked how challenges arising from budgetary constraints and the CHF 31 million deficit announced could be identified so that corrective, if not preventative, measures could be taken.

1.4 The Chairman of CWG-WSIS&SDG recalled that extensive discussions within that group had resulted in an agreement to avoid the specific term “digital society” in the Strategic Plan and suggested that until the United Nations General Assembly take a decision on the term “information society”, this term is to be used.

1.5 The Deputy Secretary-General, expressing appreciation for the suggestions made, said that the report would be further refined, under the supervision of the Chairman and in accordance with past practice, to include the outcomes of WTSA-20 and WTDC and to reflect the Council’s deliberations.

1.6 On that understanding, Document C22/35 was **approved**.

# 2 Draft operational plan for the Union for 2023 (Document C22/28)

2.1 The Chief of the Financial Resources Management Department (FRMD) introduced Document [C22/28](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-CL-C-0028/en), which contained the draft operational plan for the Union for 2023 and, in Annex A, a draft resolution on the approval thereof. The consolidated plan was based on the structure of the 2020-2023 strategic plan for the Union adopted by PP-18. Once new strategic and financial plans were adopted by PP-22, a complete four-year rolling operational plan for 2024-2027 would be prepared.

2.2 One councillor enquired about mitigation measures in respect of the risks identified in each area of the plan. Another suggested that information on possible future developments and expected results should be incorporated into the document. A third said that the indicators in the plan could be more objective and focused; they should adhere to the “SMART” criteria. Moreover, it would be useful to include information on past performance in the plan so that comparisons could be drawn. Other councillors sought clarification regarding the flexibility to be granted to the Secretary-General and Directors of the Bureaux under *resolves* 2 of the draft resolution.

2.3 The Chief of FRMD said that the secretariat maintained a risk register and would attempt to mitigate any risks before implementation began. With regard to future developments and expected results, more information would be provided in the four-year plan for 2024-2027 to be submitted in due course. Comparative information on past performance had not been included in the document because the Council’s session was being held very soon after the end of the most recent reporting period, but such information would be included in future. The flexibility referred to in *resolves* 2 of the draft resolution was in line with the Union’s usual practice, allowing the Secretary-General and the Directors of the Bureaux to deal with unforeseen expenses, some of which might be mandatory, arising in the period between plenipotentiary conferences. The practice was based on the Financial Regulations, the Constitution and Convention, and Council decisions relating to the approval of the budget.

2.4 The Council **approved** the draft operational plan for the Union for 2023 and **adopted** the resolution contained in Document C22/28.

# 3 Report on the sixth World Telecommunication/ICT Policy Forum (WTPF-21) (Document C22/5)

3.1 The representative of the General Secretariat introduced Document [C22/5](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-CL-C-0005/en), which summarized the preparatory process, roll-out and outcomes of the sixth World Telecommunication/ICT Policy Forum (WTPF-21), held virtually on 16-18 December 2021 following a two-year preparatory process overseen by an Informal Experts Group (IEG-WTPF-21) chaired by Mr Fabio Bigi. WTPF-21 had adopted five non-binding opinions, which the General Secretariat aimed to disseminate more widely, including at the forthcoming WSIS Forum, and which would inform the Union’s work. Some of the opinions had already proved helpful in reaching consensus on the text of resolutions at WTSA-20.

3.2 Ms Ama Pomaa Boateng (Deputy Minister of Communications and Digitalisation, Ghana) delivering a statement on behalf of Ms Ursula Owusu-Ekuful (Minister of Communications and Digitalisation, Ghana), who had chaired WTPF-21, said that the outcomes of the forum would help in the monumental task of aligning ICTs with global priorities for sustainable development. They had already fed into WTSA-20; efforts must now be made to ensure that its outcomes were taken into account by WTDC and PP and its recommendations put into practice.

3.3 The Chairman of IEG-WTPF-21, expressing appreciation to all those who had contributed to the success of WTPF-21 and the preparatory process, echoed the need to transmit the outcomes of the forum, in particular the five opinions adopted, to WTDC and PP-22.

3.4 Councillors applauded the success of WTPF-21, despite the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, and welcomed the opinions adopted, expressing gratitude to the chairmen of WTPF-21 and IEG-WTPF-21 and all others involved. They encouraged ITU to disseminate the outcomes of the forum to policy-makers and others and to continue the WTPF process, particularly in view of its potential contribution to sustainable economic growth and development and achieving the SDGs. One councillor drew particular attention to the relevance of Opinion 5, on the use of telecommunications/ICTs in COVID-19 and future pandemic and epidemic preparedness and response, given that WTPF-21 had eventually been held online; and the importance of Opinion 4, on new and emerging technologies and services to facilitate the use of telecommunications/ICTs for sustainable development. Another councillor, emphasizing the importance of emerging technologies for all Member States, especially developing countries, least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, highlighted Opinion 3, on digital literacy and skills for inclusive access, as being a particular priority and sought the support of Member States in pursuing that goal.

3.5 The Council **noted** the report contained in Document C22/5, and agreed to transmit the report containing the outcomes of WTPF-21 to WTDC and the Plenipotentiary Conference for consideration, as appropriate.

# 4 World Telecommunication and Information Society Day (WTISD) (Documents C22/17 and C22/78)

4.1 The representative of the General Secretariat introduced Document [C22/17](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-CL-C-0017/en), which contained a report by the Secretary-General on World Telecommunication and Information Society Day (WTISD), providing information on WTISD-22 and a proposed theme for WTISD-23.

4.2 The councillor from India introduced Document [C22/78](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-CL-C-0078/en), proposing that the theme for WTISD-23 should be "Empowering the least developed countries through information and communication technologies". Several councillors expressed support for the proposal.

4.3 Two councillors suggested that the theme proposed by India should also refer explicitly to developing countries, small island developing States, landlocked developing countries and countries with economies in transition. Another councillor cautioned against conflating the terms “developing countries” and “least developed countries”, the latter of which had been clearly defined as a distinct and specific group. The councillor from India confirmed that the aim of the proposal was to raise awareness specifically of the needs of LDCs. The secretariat pointed out that titles for WTISD themes needed to be concise.

4.4 The Council **noted** the celebration of WTISD-22 on the theme "Digital technologies for older persons and healthy ageing", and **approved** the choice of the theme "Empowering the least developed countries through information and communication technologies" for WTISD‑23.

**5 Report on the Global Standards Symposium (GSS-20) and the World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly (WTSA-20)** **(Document C22/24)**

5.1 The Director of TSB introduced Document [C22/24](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-CL-C-0024/en), which contained a report on GSS-20 and WTSA-20, both of which had been held in 2022 with in-person participation for the first time since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. He noted that the report would be amended to reflect the fact that WTSA-20 had agreed to include the text of a new draft resolution on the role of ICTs in mitigating global pandemics in its final report and to invite PP to consider the text and take any necessary actions.

5.2 The councillor from the Russian Federation, noting that the report in Document C22/24 omitted to reflect the discriminatory treatment of Russian and RCC candidates for leadership posts at WTSA and in ITU-T groups on the basis of nationality, made the following statement: <https://www.itu.int/en/council/2022/Documents/speeches/Statement-Russian-Federation-on-document-C22-24-en.docx>.

5.3 Another councillor said that the report accurately reflected the events of WTSA-20, including the nominations process, which had taken place in an agreed, fully accountable and transparent manner.

5.4 One councillor emphasized that the financial implications of WTSA-20 resolutions were in addition to the large outstanding deficit that already existed in the TSB budget. Another councillor proposed that Union-wide procedures for in-person and virtual meetings should be established, and that the important matter of industry engagement and participation in all parts of the Union raised at WTSA should be discussed by the Council. A councillor pointed out that the report did not reflect the proposal to change the dates of the next WTSA in order to spread the meetings over nine working days, excluding the weekend. A question was raised as to whether the memorandum of understanding signed between Australia and ITU on the occasion of the second Women in Standardization Expert Group (WISE) event had any financial or strategic implications, in which case these would normally be reported to the Council. Gratitude was expressed that the secretariat had continued to facilitate online participation in both GSS-20 and WTSA-20.

5.5 The Council **noted** document C22/24 and **agreed** to transmit it to the Standing Committee on Administration and Management for discussion of section 2.2 on budget impact.

**6 Statements by ministers and councillors**

6.1 Statements were delivered by Ms Paula Ingabire (Minister of ICT and Innovation, Rwanda), Mr Salim M. Al-Ozainah (Chairman and CEO, Communication and Information Technology Regulatory Authority of Kuwait), Mr Mohammed Altamaimi (Governor, Communications and Information Technology Commission, Saudi Arabia), Mr Umaru Garba Danbatta (Executive Vice-Chairman and CEO, Nigerian Communication Commission, Nigeria), speaking on behalf of the Minister of Communications and Digital Economy, and Mr Zhicheng Yu (Deputy Director General, Department of International Cooperation, Ministry of Industry and Information Technology, China) in which they reaffirmed their commitment to ITU and its work and announced that their respective countries would be standing for re-election to the Council at PP-22.

6.2 Mr Zhicheng Yu (Deputy Director General, Department of International Cooperation, Ministry of Industry and Information Technology, China) also announced that his country would be submitting the candidature of Mr Jianjun Cheng for election to the Radio Regulations Board at PP-22.

6.3 Mr Mohammed Altamaimi (Governor, Communications and Information Technology Commission, Saudi Arabia) also announced that his country would be putting forward Mr Majed Alkahtani for election to the Radio Regulations Board at PP-22.

The Secretary-General: The Chairman:

H. ZHAO S. BIN GHELAITA

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