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| **Council 2022 Geneva, 21-31 March 2022** |  |
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|  | **Document C22/90-E** |
| **4 April 2022** |
| **Original: English** |
| SUMMARY RECORD  OF THE  FIFTH PLENARY MEETING | |
| Monday, 28 March 2022, from 0935 to 1250 hours | |
| **Chairman**: Mr S. BIN GHELAITA (United Arab Emirates) | |

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|  | Subjects discussed | Documents |
| 1 | Report of the Council Working Group for strategic and financial plans 2024‑2027 (CWG‑SFP) | [C22/27(Rev.2)](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-CL-C-0027/en) |
| 2 | World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS)+20: WSIS beyond 2025 – WSIS+20 roadmap | [C22/59](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-CL-C-0059/en), [C22/74](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-CL-C-0074/en), [C22/76](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-CL-C-0076/en) |
| 3 | Draft Guidelines for the utilization of the Global Cybersecurity Agenda (GCA) by ITU (continued) | [C22/32(Rev.2)](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-CL-C-0032/en) |
| 4 | Report on ITU accessibility policy and framework implementation | [C22/13(Rev.1)](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-CL-C-0013/en) |
| 5 | ITU’s activities related to Resolution 70 (Rev. Dubai, 2018) | [C22/6](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-CL-C-0006/en) |
| 6 | Final report of the Expert Group on the International Telecommunication Regulations (EG-ITRs) to ITU Council 2022 | [C22/26](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-CL-C-0026/en), [C22/67](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-CL-C-0067/en), [C22/72](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-CL-C-0072/en), [C22/75](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-CL-C-0075/en) |
| 7 | Statements by ministers and councillors | - |

# 1 Report of the Council Working Group for strategic and financial plans 2024‑2027 (CWG-SFP) (Document C22/27(Rev.2))

1.1 The Chairman of CWG-SFP introduced Document [C22/27(Rev.2)](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-CL-C-0027/en), which summarized the group’s work, including the results of the four meetings held from September 2021 to March 2022. Actual meeting time had been limited, partly as a result of restrictions related to the COVID‑19 pandemic, and its work had largely been conducted online. The draft strategic plan for the Union for 2024-2027 and proposed amendments to Resolution 71 (Rev. Dubai, 2018) of the Plenipotentiary Conference were included as Annexes 1 to 4 to the report. The draft was considerably shorter than the ITU strategic plan for 2020-2023 had been, and focused on high-level elements and the impact of ITU’s work, rather than operational detail. The only substantive aspect of the draft plan still to be decided was whether to include cybersecurity as a standalone thematic priority.

1.2 Councillors welcomed the work of CWG-SFP in striving for a fit-for-purpose ITU, which, as the United Nations specialized agency on the advancement of ICTs for sustainable development and the SDGs, was uniquely placed to take the common agenda on connectivity and digital transformation forward. One councillor highlighted PP Resolutions 25 (Rev. Dubai, 2018), 140 (Rev. Dubai, 2018) and 151 (Rev. Dubai, 2018) as areas that would benefit from more detailed discussion. Another suggested that the draft strategic and financial plans be shared with IMAC and the external auditor to seek their views on the texts, as both had made several assessments in regard to governance and current strategic approaches. One councillor emphasized the importance of ITU’s regional presence and the “One ITU” approach for his administration. Two councillors expressed support for the inclusion of cybersecurity as a standalone thematic priority in the draft plan, in view of increasing vulnerabilities associated with the constant expansion and adoption of new ICTs. Another highlighted the importance of cross-cutting thematic priorities that would send a very strong message in terms of the Union’s mission. One councillor said that more clarity was needed on the objective criteria for establishing new area offices.

1.3 In response to questions from a councillor concerning the SWOT analysis contained in Appendix A to Document C22/27(Rev.2), the Chairman of CWG-SFP said that the SWOT analysis, originally intended for inclusion as part of the situational analysis in Annex 2 to the plan itself, had eventually been discussed too late in the process to achieve consensus, whence the square brackets. Nevertheless, since it provided very useful background for understanding the plan, it had been retained in the report for future reference.

1.4 The Director of BR said that the two clear strategic goals set out in the draft strategic plan would help to overcome the challenge experienced in recent years of informing the general public about the role of ITU. The square brackets in Document C22/27, and in particular Annex 1 thereto, indicated lack of consensus on whether specific items should be included in the draft strategic plan. The general agreement within CWG-SFP had been that those issues would need to be resolved by the Plenipotentiary Conference.

1.5 Some councillors were concerned that, in view of the deadline of 26 May 2022 for submitting the draft strategic plan to PP-22 and the fact that WTDC was scheduled for June, it was unclear how ITU-D’s input could be incorporated. A mechanism of some form was needed to that end, and to avoid overloading PP with finalizing the draft.

1.6 The Chairman of CWG-SFP said that the group’s main task – finalizing the draft strategic plan before the present session of the Council – was complete and no further work was planned. While it was unfortunate that the postponed WTDC would take place after the Council’s session, input from ITU-D had been fully taken into account in preparing the draft.

1.7 The representative of the General Secretariat said that statutorily the draft strategic plan must be submitted to PP four months in advance. It was up to Member States to decide how contributions from conferences taking place in the interim could be submitted to PP. The secretariat would provide all the necessary support.

1.8 The Director of BR said that on previous occasions when WTDC had been held after the Council’s session in a plenipotentiary year, ITU-D’s input to the strategic plan had been reviewed and adopted at PP itself. It should also be stressed that, while WTDC might of course add or modify items, ITU-D inputs resulting from TDAG meetings had already been taken into account, so there should already be good alignment.

1.9 One councillor stressed that WTDC was the highest body in ITU-D and its comments on the draft strategic plan could be transmitted straight to PP and discussed there, as had been done in the past. Another said she could go along with that course of action, on the understanding that input to the draft strategic plan coming out of WTDC might be circulated by the secretariat to allow discussion by correspondence in preparation for PP.

1.10 The Secretary-General said that input from ITU-D was vital. Although that Sector’s views had already been taken into account in preparing the draft, he welcomed the idea of WTDC preparing specific input for PP. He also noted that, as the auditor and IMAC were present, the approved draft strategic plan could be transmitted to them immediately.

1.11 In the light of the discussion, the Chairman took it that the Council agreed to forward the draft strategic plan for 2024-2027 in Document C22/27(Rev.2) and its annexes, including the proposed draft text of the body of Resolution 71 (Rev. Bucharest, 2022), to the Plenipotentiary Conference; to invite the secretariat to share the draft strategic plan with IMAC and the external auditor for their comments; and that the outcomes of WTDC relating to the strategic plan would be transmitted direct to the Plenipotentiary Conference for consideration.

1.12 It was so **agreed**.

**2 World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS)+20: WSIS beyond 2025 – WSIS+20 roadmap (Documents C22/59, C22/74 and C22/76)**

2.1 The representative of the General Secretariat introduced Document [C22/59](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-CL-C-0059/en), which set out the Secretary-General’s roadmap on the role of ITU in the WSIS+20 review process and its preparation, including a timeline of relevant ITU and other meetings and conferences. A special session on WSIS+20 had been held on 24 March 2022, under the chairmanship of Mr Mansour Al-Qurashi (Saudi Arabia), Vice-Chairman of CWG-WSIS&SDG, to provide the Council with additional information on the process.

2.2 The councillor from the Russian Federation introduced Document [C22/74](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-CL-C-0074/en), which contained a contribution from her administration proposing future work for the implementation of WSIS outcomes and achievement of the SDGs; preparations for PP-22, which would be the only plenipotentiary conference before the United Nations General Assembly high-level meeting on the overall review of the implementation of WSIS outcomes, to be held in 2025; and preparations for the high-level meeting itself. It had been proposed to support the draft ITU WSIS+20 roadmap overall and to consider drawing on the successes of the WSIS+10 multistakeholder preparatory platform in the preparations for WSIS+20 in 2025. CWG-WSIS&SDG played an important role in the implementation of the WSIS outcomes, and the proposal had been made to continue its work. It had been suggested to revise Resolution 140 (Rev. Dubai, 2018) of the Plenipotentiary Conference, on ITU's role in implementing the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as well as in their follow-up and review processes, in order to include paragraphs common to all Sectors, which could help to shorten the relevant resolutions of the Sectors significantly. It had also been suggested to consider the issues raised at PP-22.”

2.3 The councillor from the United States introduced Document [C22/76](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-CL-C-0076/en), containing a contribution from his administration, which considered it premature for the Council to agree to ITU’s role in the WSIS+20 process and adopt the roadmap set out in Document C22/59. There had been insufficient time for discussion of the roadmap since its preparation had been requested by CWG-WSIS&SDG in January 2022; moreover, ITU’s role in the WSIS+20 process would require a decision by the Plenipotentiary Conference in consideration of its Resolution 140 (Rev. Dubai, 2018). The special session held on 24 March had allowed for useful discussion; in that regard, it would be helpful for the General Secretariat to update Document C22/59 based on the questions raised and information requested there. For the moment, the Council should note, rather than approve, the roadmap and request more information ahead of PP-22.

2.4 The councillor from Saudi Arabia, who had chaired the special session held on 24 March, reported on the outcome thereof. Some 25 councillors had attended in person, with others participating virtually. Broad support had been expressed for continuing to implement the WSIS outcomes and consolidate efforts to link WSIS implementation with work on achieving the SDGs. The General Secretariat had been provided with various comments from Council Member States. It had been proposed that the Council should note Document C22/59 and request the General Secretariat to refer it to PP, with the necessary updates.

2.5 Councillors expressed strong support for the continued implementation of WSIS outcomes and the overall review process and welcomed ITU’s contribution to date, highlighting the importance of harnessing ICTs to establish inclusive information and knowledge societies. The Union’s chairmanship of the United Nations Group on the Information Society would provide further opportunities in that regard. Some councillors emphasized the importance of a multistakeholder approach to the review process that avoided top-down decisions. Several highlighted the importance of implementation efforts at regional level and the opportunities for linkages with work on the SDGs and the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society. One called for greater cooperation with the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean and the Executive Secretariat for Integral Development of the Organization of American States.

2.6 Some councillors expressed support for the roadmap as set out in Document C22/59, though one noted that the document was silent on CWG-WSIS&SDG’s recommendation regarding ITU’s role in WSIS implementation and requested that it at least be mentioned. Others echoed the views and concerns expressed by the councillor from the United States. Several expressed support for the proposal that had emerged from the special session held on 24 March, as outlined by the councillor from Saudi Arabia. One drew attention to the fact that the WSIS Forum had been recommended as an efficient and effective multi-stakeholder platform for consideration of the action lines and the view that the roadmap should be viewed as a living document and approved on that basis, especially given the time constraints involved, so that it could be forwarded to the United Nations Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD) and the WSIS Forum for their comments. Strong and unanimous support was expressed for the work of CWG-WSIS&SDG continuing for a further term. Councillors acknowledged the contribution of Prof Minkin as the Chairman of CWG-WSIS&SDG and its Vice Chairs considering its importance and their contribution for the work of the CWG.

2.7 The Chairman took it that the Council agreed to note the roadmap developed by the Secretary-General; to request the secretariat to update Document C22/59 to take account of comments made and forward it to the Plenipotentiary Conference with the summary record of the meeting; and to invite the secretariat to share the document with CSTD and the WSIS Forum so as to include multistakeholder comments.

2.8 It was so **agreed**.

# 3 Draft Guidelines for the utilization of the Global Cybersecurity Agenda (GCA) by ITU (continued) (Document C22/32(Rev.2))

3.1 The representative of the General Secretariat introduced Document [C22/32(Rev.2)](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-CL-C-0032/en), containing the latest version of the draft guidelines for the utilization of the GCA. Agreement had been reached on all outstanding parts of the text during informal consultations held during the current session of the Council.

3.2 Councillors welcomed the document and commended the consensus reached.

3.3 The Council **approved** the draft Guidelines for the utilization of the GCA as contained in Document C22/32(Rev.2) and **agreed** to transmit them to the Plenipotentiary Conference for consideration.

# 4 Report on ITU accessibility policy and framework implementation (Document C22/13(Rev.1))

4.1 The representative of the Strategic Planning and Membership Department introduced Document [C22/13(Rev.1)](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-CL-C-0013/en), containing the first report on the implementation of the ITU accessibility policy and related activities. He noted that, since the report’s publication, mandatory training on accessibility for ITU staff had also been introduced.

4.2 Councillors expressed strong support for ITU’s work to improve accessibility. The councillor from Italy announced that the Inter-Sector Coordination Group had appointed a coordinator for accessibility at its most recent meeting. Another councillor noted that, for accessibility to be effective, all persons – both with and without disabilities – in all areas of the world must have equal access to ICTs.

4.3 The Council **noted** the report contained in Document C22/13(Rev.1).

# 5 ITU’s activities related to Resolution 70 (Rev. Dubai, 2018) (Document C22/6)

5.1 The representative of the General Secretariat introduced Document [C22/6](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-CL-C-0006/en), summarizing recent activities and developments in relation to Resolution 70 (Rev. Dubai, 2018) across ITU and presenting a revised version of the ITU Gender Equality and Mainstreaming (GEM) Policy. She invited Member States to nominate female delegates to PP-22 to receive training under an ITU/Australian initiative to support gender responsiveness.

5.2 Councillors expressed overwhelming support for ITU’s efforts to enhance gender equality and mainstreaming and described some of the activities undertaken by their countries at national, regional and international level to support those aims. One councillor expressed particular support for the inclusion of provisions on oversight and transparency in the revised GEM Policy.

5.3 One councillor proposed that the revised GEM Policy should be amended to stipulate that financial limitations should be taken into account when implementing the policy and that the provisions of No. 154 of the ITU Constitution, on the need to secure for the Union the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity and to recruit staff on as wide a geographical basis as possible, should be applied when implementing a gender-sensitive approach to HR policies and practices. Another councillor opposed that proposal.

5.4 The Council **noted** the report in Document C22/6 and **endorsed** the revised Gender Equality and Mainstreaming Policy as presented in the Annex to the document.

# 6 Final report of the Expert Group on the International Telecommunication Regulations (EG-ITRs) to ITU Council 2022 (Documents C22/26, C22/67, C22/72 and C22/75)

6.1 The Chairman of EG-ITRs presented Document [C22/26](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-CL-C-0026/en), containing the final report of the group. He noted that the Group had carried out a provision by provision review of the ITRs as per the Terms of Reference of the Group, and highlighted that no consensus had been achieved on the way forward with respect to the ITRs.

6.2 The councillor from Egypt introduced a proposal by Egypt and Kuwait, contained in Document [C22/67](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-CL-C-0067/en), to establish a new expert group on the ITRs with the aim of achieving consensus. The ITRs were a vital tool for governing relations between Member States regarding telecommunications/ICTs and for helping to attain the SDGs. The scope of the ITRs should be limited to Member States, which could then adopt policies and regulations to ensure that operating agencies implemented the ITRs. Furthermore, the existence of two versions of the ITRs was harmful to ITU’s image, and the World Conference on International Telecommunications (WCIT) should not be convened again until a single version of the ITRs had been agreed upon. The problem of how to proceed with the ITRs would be best resolved within the expert group.

6.3 The councillor from China presented Document [C22/72](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-CL-C-0072/en), recommending that the expert group should continue its review of the ITRs and related work. The ITRs remained the only global treaty that established general principles to facilitate the provision and operation of international telecommunications, and they helped enhance the efficiency, practicability and availability of global international telecommunication networks, infrastructure and services, especially for developing countries. A legal and regulatory environment that could keep up with the rapidly changing ICT ecosystem also needed to be cultivated.

6.4 The councillor from the United States introduced Document [C22/75](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-CL-C-0075/en), which contained a contribution from the United States and Canada. The report set out in Document C22/26 accurately reflected all views expressed during the meetings of EG-ITRs, including the lack of consensus on the future of both the ITRs and the expert group. The only recourse for the Council was therefore to note the report and transmit it to PP-22.

6.5 The councillor from Canada, co-sponsor of Document C22/75, recalled that neither of the past two expert groups had managed to achieve consensus and that the expert group members had received a legal opinion that there was no conflict between the two versions of the ITRs. There was also no empirical evidence that Member States were experiencing problems in that regard. One councillor expressed support for that position, arguing that the expert group’s work was resource-intensive and that the ITRs were no longer necessary as they had been largely replaced by commercial-based arrangements.

6.6 Several councillors expressed strong support for the continuation of the expert group’s work, as they deemed the ITRs vital to global telecommunications, and many of them called for a single version of the ITRs to be established which took into account new developments in that field. New approaches were required to overcome the divergent positions on the topic. One councillor argued that the expert group had yet to its complete mandate under Resolution 146 (Rev. Dubai, 2018) and Council Resolution 1379 (Modified 2019), while other councillors argued the opposite. Some councillors proposed that the terms of reference for the expert group should be updated.

6.7 One councillor proposed that the report should include a recognition of the difficult circumstances in which the discussions had been held, owing to COVID-19, which his administration believed had had an impact on the outcome. Another councillor regretted that, owing to the lack of consensus, the expert group had not had the opportunity to discuss matters of substance in respect of the real problems that the ITRs helped countries address. A further councillor encouraged the expert group to study the real-world applications of the ITRs to identify whether they were still required.

6.8 Councillors agreed that, as no consensus had been reached within the expert group, any decision on the future of the group should be taken at PP-22.

6.9 The Council **noted** the report contained in Document C22/26 and **agreed** to transmit it to the Plenipotentiary Conference, together with the summary record of the meeting.

# 7 Statements by ministers and councillors

7.1 Statements were delivered by Mr Ebrima Sillah (Minister of Information and Communication Infrastructure, the Gambia), who announced that his administration would be submitting the candidature of Professor Muhammadou M. O. Kah for the position of Director of the BDT at PP-22, and the councillor for Senegal, who said that his country intended to stand for re-election as a member of the Council for the Africa region.

The Secretary-General: The Chairman:

H. ZHAO S. BIN GHELAITA

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