|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Council 2022 Final meeting, Bucharest, 24 September 2022** |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  | **Document C22/107-E** |
| **30 September 2022** |
| **Original: English** |
| SUMMARY RECORD OF THE FINAL MEETING OF THE 2022 SESSION OF THE COUNCIL | |
| Saturday, 24 September 2022, from 0935 to 1630 hours | |
| Chairman: Mr S. BIN GHELAITA (United Arab Emirates) | |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Subjects discussed | Documents |
| 1 | Opening of the final meeting of the 2022 session of the Council | - |
| 2 | Audited financial operating report for 2021 and reports of the External Auditor | [C22/43](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-CL-C-0043/en), [C22/101](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-CL-C-0101/en), [C22/104](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-CL-C-0104/en) |
| 3 | Supplementary report of the Independent Management Advisory Committee | [C22/22(Add.1)](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-CL-C-0022/en) |
| 4 | Report on After-Service Health Insurance liability for the year 2021 | [C22/46](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-CL-C-0046/en) |
| 5 | Arrears and special accounts (Res. 41) | [C22/11(Rev.1)](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-CL-C-0011/en), [C22/INF/17(Rev.1)](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-CL-INF-0017/en) |
| 6 | Review of the list of exempted entities | [C22/100](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-CL-C-0100/en) |
| 7 | Financial situation and budget implementation 2022 | [C22/102(Rev.1)](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-CL-C-0102/en), [C22/103](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-CL-C-0103/en) |
| 8 | Report of the Budget Control Committee of WTDC-22 | [C22/INF/18](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-CL-INF-0018/en) |
| 9 | Statement by a councillor | - |
| 10 | Presentations to Council working group chairmen | - |
| 11 | Closure of the 2022 session of the Council | - |

# 1 Opening of the final meeting of the 2022 session of the Council

1.1 The Secretary-General, opening the meeting, welcomed participants to Bucharest and thanked the host country and city for the outstanding venue and facilities. He expressed appreciation for the remarkable spirit of cooperation shown by all councillors during the past four years of great challenge.

1.2 The Chairman welcomed participants to Bucharest and thanked the Romanian authorities for their hospitality. He looked forward to working with councillors in a spirit of cooperation and dialogue.

1.3 The councillor from Romania welcomed participants to Bucharest and wished the Council and the plenipotentiary conference every success.

1.4 The councillors subsequently taking the floor thanked the Government and Administration of Romania for their preparatory work and the magnificent facilities made available.

# 2 Audited financial operating report for 2021 and reports of the External Auditor (Documents C22/43, C22/101 and C22/104)

2.1 The representative of the General Secretariat introduced Document [C22/43](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-CL-C-0043/en), which contained the audited financial operating report for the financial year 2021. Implementation of the 2021 budget had resulted in an operating surplus of CHF 3.6 million, which, together with previously allocated savings totalling CHF 1.2 million, had been allocated in line with the relevant resolutions and decisions. Overall, the Union’s immediate financial situation was healthy, with the level of outstanding receivables remaining stable compared to 2020 at CHF 39.9 million and a significant decrease being recorded in the After-Service Health Insurance (ASHI) actuarial liability, from CHF 631.8 million in 2020 to CHF 545.63 million in 2021.

2.2 The External Auditor introduced Document [C22/101](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-CL-C-0101/en), on the audit of the financial statements for 2021 and the Union’s accounts for ITU Telecom World 2021. For the first time in four years, the audit had resulted in an unqualified audit opinion, reflecting the Secretary-General’s efforts to address weaknesses. Action was still required in many areas, however, as illustrated by the recommendations contained in the audit report. He also introduced Document C22/104, which contained a special report on the audit of the Regional Office for the Americas and made recommendations for the stricter application of procedures with a view to enhancing transparency, segregation of duties and monitoring in respect of asset management, human resources, relationship with the host country and procurement.

2.3 The councillor from Brazil, the seat of the Regional Office for the Americas, underscored the long-standing cooperation between his country and ITU. His government was eager to contribute to discussion of the concerns expressed in Document [C22/104](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-CL-C-0104/en), which in his view related not so much to structural problems as to needs for improvement and in some instances (governance and teleworking issues) fell outside the regional office’s sphere of competence. They might be more appropriately discussed by the Council Working Group on financial and human resources (CWG-FHR) in the light of the new managerial vision emerging in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic.

2.4 Councillors expressed appreciation to the External Auditor, Italy’s Corte dei Conti, for the extraordinary work accomplished over a 10-year period. Many also stressed the importance of ensuring a smooth transition between the outgoing and incoming external auditors, and one requested that after the handover a report be submitted to Council-23 on the follow-up of the recommendations in the audit report, with the added value of the new External Auditor’s perspective.

2.5 Referring to Document C22/104, two councillors expressed deep appreciation for the work of the Regional Office for the Americas and looked forward to working with the Brazilian Administration to address any issues identified. Other councillors, noting that some of the recommendations set out in the document were general in nature, suggested that it should be forwarded to all regional and area offices, with a view to improving due diligence and governance. One councillor observed that, while ITU had made much progress in terms of good governance in recent years, exceptions continued to be made to certain procedures, the Union’s rules and regulations being open to different interpretations. Care must be taken to ensure that such exceptions did not become the rule.

2.6 Referring to Document C22/101, councillors congratulated the secretariat on the positive audit outcome and expressed satisfaction at the decrease in the ASHI liability. Two councillors suggested that the External Auditor should indicate which recommendations were priorities and how each part of the document was linked to other items on the agenda. Indeed, the issues raised in the report – internal control, the ASHI liability, cash-flow management (including the suggestion that all expenditures in excess of CHF 5 000 should require two signatures), risk mitigation and elimination (in particular with regard to the estimated value of the Tower building) – could not be discussed in the time available; they should be referred to future Council meetings and considered under the relevant agenda items. One councillor, referring to the recommendations regarding ITU Telecom World, said that all reasonable proposals to make the event more attractive were welcome, so long as they did not exceed the budget limits to be established by the plenipotentiary conference. Another councillor pointed out that most of the External Auditor’s recommendations relating to internal audit were in line with the Joint Inspection Unit report on changes to the audit function in the United Nations system and had already been incorporated into the new terms of reference of the Independent Management Advisory Committee.

2.7 One councillor, referring to Document C22/43, asked why, if net assets and cash flows had both increased, the regular budget continued to show a deficit. Another councillor shared that concern and suggested that, in view of the financial difficulties experienced by ITU, consideration might be given to reducing the number of external consultants, who were expensive; in some cases the work in question could instead be accomplished by qualified staff members. A third councillor requested clarification of the discrepancy in the 2021 revenue figures indicated in §§ 15 and 18 of the document.

2.8 The External Auditor pointed out that Document C22/104 started with a disclaimer to the effect that the observations and recommendations made were intended to stimulate internal discussion on how a regional office, and the ITU regional presence in general, should function. They did not imply any criticism of the host country. The report had focused on the Regional Office for the Americas because it had been visited previously by the External Auditor and therefore afforded the opportunity to measure progress. Any expansion of the regional presence should be undertaken with an eye to the effectiveness of internal control, in order to address existing weaknesses. As an independent external auditor, the Corte dei Conti was not in a position to suggest an entity for the re-evaluation of the Tower building. The evaluation should be accurate, and selection of the entity to conduct it must be carried out in accordance with ITU procurement procedures. The selection of an entity from within the United Nations system able to address the issue independently would certainly be of added value in that respect.

2.9 The Chief of the Financial Resources Management Department (FRMD) said that work to ensure a smooth transition between the outgoing and incoming external auditors had started in 2021 and was ongoing. In response to councillors’ questions on Document C22/43, he said that the statement of cash flows related to the consolidated financial statement for the entire Union, which included extrabudgetary funding, donations towards the headquarters building project and the payments of arrears that tended to be made in the run-up to a plenipotentiary conference. Cash flows had therefore increased overall, but at the same time revenues for the regular budget had fallen short of expectations, resulting in a deficit and obliging the secretariat to reduce spending. The secretariat was working closely with the External Auditor to prevent deficits. Regarding the ASHI liability, he added that a portion of any end-of-year surplus was always allocated to replenishment of the relevant reserve, which remained stable.

2.10 In March 2022, the Council had approved the new ITU accountability framework, which would improve internal control and risk management. The Secretary-General had subsequently issued a service order laying the legal foundation for the framework’s implementation, which had been slowed by the lower-than-anticipated revenues for the regular budget. The secretariat would report to Council-23 on the framework’s implementation.

2.11 The audited financial operating report for the financial year 2021 (Document C22/43) was **approved** and the resolution set out in Annex A thereto **adopted**. The audit of the financial statements for 2021 and the Union’s accounts for ITU Telecom World 2021, together with the special report on the audit of the Regional Office for the Americas (Documents C22/101 and C22/104), were **endorsed** and the Secretary-General was **requested** to act on the recommendations they contained and to report on such action to Council-23.

2.12 The Director of BDT expressed deep appreciation to the External Auditor for the guidance provided to ensure sound resource management at ITU, adding that the recommendations set out in Document C22/104 would be shared with all regional and area offices.

2.13 The Chairman thanked the External Auditor for their work.

2.14 The Secretary-General also expressed deep appreciation to the External Auditor for the 10 years of hard work to promote a good environment at ITU and presented him and his colleagues with an ITU certificate in recognition of their commitment to the Union.

**3 Supplementary report of the Independent Management Advisory Committee (Document C22/22(Add.1))**

3.1 The Chairman of Independent Management Advisory Committee (IMAC) introduced [Addendum 1 to Document C22/22](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-CL-C-0022/en), which supplemented the committee’s 11th annual report and contained IMAC’s detailed report on 2021-2022 activities. It also set out IMAC’s views on the External Auditor’s report on the 2021 financial statements. He highlighted a number of suggestions made in the addendum and drew particular attention to the series of recommendations for action by the secretariat. He thanked ITU management for its ongoing support.

3.2 The Chairman expressed appreciation for IMAC’s important work.

3.3 Councillors praised IMAC’s valuable work and welcomed the recommendations, which should be implemented within budgetary limits. The willingness of ITU management to support the work of IMAC demonstrated a strong commitment to governance accountability, and should continue. It was suggested that an annex to the IMAC report on risks associated with projects and a report outlining budgetary implications would be useful. One councillor, noting weaknesses identified by the External Auditor in the third line of defence, said that IMAC should be strengthened and reporting enhanced; further information on IMAC self-assessment would also be useful. Another councillor, referring to § 3.4 of Document C22/22(Add.1), asked whether any issues relating to asset tracking and management controls had been addressed and suggested that it might be preferable to use a term other than “prosperity” in § 3.5. Another councillor said that priority should be given to expediting the implementation of outstanding IMAC recommendations and called for a clear methodology to be developed for ethics-related training. One councillor expressed strong support for proposed amendments to IMAC’s terms of reference.

3.4 The Chairman of IMAC, responding to requests for clarification from councillors regarding recommendation 2(2002), said that the steering committee, which would deal with ITU HQ project implementation, had been strengthened in 2018. IMAC recommended, however, that an experienced technical resource be added to ensure effective governance and oversight, given the cost and scale of the headquarters building project and possible risks, including timely completion and cost overruns. The required qualifications and specifications would be shared with the Council following further discussion in IMAC. In reply to other comments, he agreed that the third line of defence should be strengthened. He nonetheless pointed out that the fact that the External Auditor had issued an unqualified opinion meant that there were no material misstatements affecting the financial statements. IMAC would seek to ensure that the External Auditor’s recommendations, including those outstanding, were implemented. IMAC periodically performed self-assessments, and consideration was currently being given in the United Nations system to the modalities for external evaluation and peer review of advisory and oversight committees. He thanked Council members for proposing changes to IMAC’s terms of reference.

3.5 The representative of the General Secretariat, in reply to a question, said that the six IMAC recommendations currently open were in progress and that the secretariat would be pleased to provide further information on the actions being taken to implement them.

3.6 The Secretary-General said that ITU management worked closely and cooperatively with IMAC, and thanked IMAC members and its chairman most sincerely for their professionalism and hard work. He informed the Council that he had presented members of IMAC with a certificate in recognition of their commitment to the Union at the committee’s last physical meeting in Geneva.

3.7 Document C22/22(Add.1) and its recommendations for action by the secretariat were **approved**.

**The meeting was suspended at 1230 hours and resumed at 1400 hours.**

**4 Report on After-Service Health Insurance liability for the year 2021 (Document C22/46)**

4.1 The representative of the General Secretariat introduced Document [C22/46](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-CL-C-0046/en), which presented the ASHI situation as at 31 December 2021. The decrease in the liability was due to a change in the financial assumptions used to calculate it. She drew attention to some of the actions taken to finance the ASHI obligation.

4.2 Councillors welcomed the report. One said that, although her country applauded the reported decrease, it also supported concerted efforts and regular budgetary contributions to reduce the ASHI liability, which remained significant.

4.3 One councillor said that the Council should pay more attention to actuarial liabilities, the impact of which had been highlighted by the External Auditor. Accordingly, the ASHI liability should be discussed further at future Council sessions. Detailed consideration should be given by CWG-FHR or a dedicated expert group to the recommendations developed by the United Nations ASHI working group and to the benefits ITU could derive from implementing those recommendations and from its membership of the United Nations Staff Mutual Insurance Society (UNSMIS). More information on the cost-containment measures proposed by that working group would also be useful.

4.4 The Chief of FRMD, responding to councillors, said that the contribution proposed by the United Nations ASHI working group to help organizations finance their long-term liabilities would be an annual 5.35 per cent levy onthe salary mass of officials recruited from 1 January 2022, but noted that the General Assembly had not yet taken a final decision. Outlining the change in reporting requirements introduced by the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS), notably IPSAS 39, he pointed out that the ASHI liability would only be payable if ITU ceased its activity, which was highly improbable. ITU management was making every effort to reduce the liability and increase the ASHI fund, including through the allocation of budget surpluses. Recalling ITU’s obligations with respect to the medical insurance of current and retired staff members, he said that with the large retiree population and the cost of medical treatment, the liability was high. Although different organizations had different business models, the problem was not unique to ITU, and the decision to join UNSMIS in January 2020 put ITU in a stronger position to negotiate better prices. The secretariat would be pleased to report to CWG-FHR meetings and was open to further suggestions to reduce the liability.

4.5 Document C22/46 was **noted**.

**5 Arrears and special accounts (Res. 41) (Documents C22/11(Rev.1) and C22/INF/17(Rev.1))**

5.1 The Chief of FRMD, introducing Document [C22/11(Rev.1)](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-CL-C-0011/en), said that the amount of arrears had gradually decreased, from CHF 52.2 million at 31 December 2014 to CHF 39.9 million at 31 December 2021, thanks to the sanctions imposed pursuant to Resolutions 41 (Rev. Dubai, 2018) and 152 (Rev. Busan, 2014), the efforts deployed to recover the amounts owed and the decision to write off irrecoverable debts. Regarding satellite network filings, pursuant to Council Decision 545 (2007), 27 of 28 administrations/operators entitled to have their invoices revised had settled their debts.

5.2 In reply to a question from one councillor, he said that, in line with the guidelines approved by Council‑99, the Council was to approve write-offs of interest on arrears for debtors that had settled their arrears in compliance with a repayment schedule negotiated with the Secretary-General and were unable to pay all the interest, and irrecoverable debts owed by entities that were no longer active, for a total of CHF 4 264 948.35, against a corresponding withdrawal from the Reserve for debtors' accounts. The write-offs would have no impact on the regular budget.

5.3 In reply to the comments of another councillor, he explained that the write-offs were not unfair vis-à-vis the few members that had paid all the interest on their arrears, because they concerned only long-standing arrears dating back many years recovered on the basis of negotiated repayment schedules; that in order to take account of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, a six-month grace period for interest on arrears had been applied; and that former members wishing to rejoin the Union were not required to settle the arrears that had led to their exclusion.

5.4 Document C22/11(Rev.1) was **noted**, the Secretary-General was **authorized** to write off CHF 4 264 948.35 of interest on arrears and irrecoverable debts, and the draft decision set out in Annex B was **adopted.**

**6 Review of the list of exempted entities (Document C22/100)**

6.1 The Chief of FRMD said that Document [C22/100](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-CL-C-0100/en) set forth the outcomes of the secretariat’s review of the 132 organizations of an international character that had been exempted from membership fees, in the light of the criteria as revised by Council-17. The Secretary-General recommended that the Council approve the fee-exempt status of the 84 organizations listed in Annex 2 for the 2024-2027 period; refer the 19 organizations listed in Annex 3 to CWG-FHR at its 2023 session, for a recommendation to Council-23 for final approval; and not extend the fee-exempt status of the 29 organizations listed in Annex 4 as they had not submitted a formal request for extension.

6.2 One councillor asked whether the organizations listed in Annex 3, which had apparently previously met the criteria for fee exemption, no longer did so, and what constituted a “formal” request for exemption. Another councillor asked for clarification regarding revised criteria 1 (did entities have to work in telecommunications in general or in ICT in particular?) and 3 (how was the status of entities who contributed positively to the sector assessed?). Two councillors pointed out that for entities listed in Annex 3 whose members were already ITU Sector Members, the latter would effectively end up paying into ITU twice, and suggested that the secretariat should take account of such circumstances. One councillor considered that the criteria and the manner of their application lacked clarity, there being no indication of each organization’s level of activity or impact on the Union. If such information was available, it should be given to Member States. Another councillor observed that there were few entities from small countries; the criteria should be reviewed so as to take account of their economic situation.

6.3 One councillor, pointing out that membership issues and revenue generation would be discussed at PP-22, suggested that the decision on Annex 2 be deferred to CWG-FHR for consideration and Council-23 for approval. Another councillor nonetheless pointed out that deferral of only one of the recommendations might result in various entities being assessed on the basis of different criteria. A third councillor said that if there were organizations listed in Annex 2 that met the criteria in full, the annex should be approved; she suggested that the document be approved as it stood, and the criteria revised by 2024.

6.4 One councillor said that, in view of the Union’s many ambitious projects, all exemptions needed to be rational and in line with the provisions of the Convention. He endorsed the document, but suggested that Council-23 might need to review the situation in the light of the Union’s financial circumstances.

6.5 One councillor having pointed to the absence on the list of an entity that had applied for exemption, the Chairman observed that the secretariat’s review concerned previously exempted entities, not new applicants. In addition, the review had been conducted based on the criteria approved by Council-17. Perhaps it was time to review the criteria.

6.6 Taking into account the comments and concerns raised by Member States, the representative of the Secretariat said that (as the new exemption period would be 2024-27) all decisions on this item could be deferred to CWG-FHR to review in greater detail.

6.7 The Chairman took it that the Council wished to defer a decision on Annexes 2 to 4 of Document C22/100 to Council-23, following a review by the next CWG-FHR.

6.8 It was so **agreed**.

**7 Financial situation and budget implementation 2022 (Documents C22/102(Rev.1) and C22/103))**

7.1 The Chief of FRMD introduced Document [C22/102(Rev.1)](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-CL-C-0102/en), which presented the budget situation as at 15 September 2022 and the budget implementation forecast until 31 December 2022. It highlighted challenges arising from higher-than-expected expenditure and lower-than-predicted cost-recovery revenue and outlined actions being undertaken to ensure that budget implementation remained within available resources. Since the document had been prepared, a group of senior officials had been meeting weekly under the chairmanship of the Deputy Secretary-General to identify ways of further reducing expenditure.

7.2 The councillor from India introduced Document [C22/103](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-CL-C-0103/en), which set out a number of observations and suggestions to ensure a healthy and balanced budget for the Union.

7.3 Councillors welcomed the valuable suggestions put forward in Document C22/103, which might be of relevance for the plenipotentiary conference. Attention was drawn to the proposals concerning a World Café and the increased role of regional offices, with some councillors calling for greater decentralization. Others said that careful consideration should be given to any review of the contributory unit, given possible implications for developing countries; one suggested that CWG-FHR should address that sensitive issue before PP-26, while another said that an increase should be considered as a last resort. It was suggested that the documents under consideration should be transferred to Council-23 for further discussion. However, another councillor considered that such urgent issues should not be deferred to Council-23, and suggested that CWG-FHR should be instructed by the Council at the present or the forthcoming extraordinary session to put forward efficiency measures on the basis of the proposals set out in both documents and to envisage further cost-saving actions. One councillor said that the Council might wish to follow a scenario-based approach for budget forecasting. Efforts should also be made to raise revenue, including by considering industry engagement, expanding memberships for more organizations and identifying new revenue streams. Another councillor, noting that publication revenue had been rising, said that ITU should play to its strengths. Council Decision 482 (modified 2018) might have to be revised to ensure that BR’s costs were covered, if necessary by reactivating the Council Expert Group on Decision 482. Another councillor welcomed ITU’s efforts to foster partnerships with other stakeholders.

7.4 The Chief of FRMD thanked India for its contribution, which would be useful for the plenipotentiary conference, including in developing the 2024-2025 biennial budget. Responding to comments, he said that, although the contributory unit had remained unchanged since 2006, any potential increase should be considered carefully given the strength of the Swiss franc and possible implications for the selection of class of contribution. Certain activities had already been decentralized to regional offices, and the recommendations made by KMPG in its review of the regional presence would be implemented. In order to increase revenue, the secretariat was proposing to increase the price of publications by some 15 per cent. Any conclusions from a World Café that would not entail a change to existing rules and procedures would be taken into consideration, as would further suggestions from the Council.

7.5 The Director of BR said that cost recovery for satellite network filings and BR publications constituted an important source of revenue for ITU. The revenue generated did not, however, go directly to BR but to the general ITU budget, and BR must have a minimum of resources to continue meeting its regulatory obligations. The decrease in expected cost recovery was due to a downturn in the industry during the COVID-19 pandemic; a revision of Council Decision 482 would help to improve cost recovery for certain types of satellites.

7.6 The Chairman took it that the Council wished to propose that the secretariat take into account the proposals set out in Document 103 when drafting the next biennial budget and to instruct CWG-FHR to consider the savings measures outlined in Document 102(Rev.1) and other proposals, including those set out in Document 103, and report its findings to Council-23.

7.7 It was so **agreed**.

**8 Report of the Budget Control Committee of WTDC-22 (Document C22/INF/18)**

8.1 The Chief of FRMD introduced Document [C22/INF/18](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-CL-INF-0018/en). He noted that the financial implications of modified or new WTDC-22 resolutions totalled CHF 7.2 million and that WTDC outcomes had been included as unfunded mandatory activities (UMACs) in the draft financial plan for 2024-2027.

8.2 One councillor, noting the total level of UMACs, which implied a lack of funding for activities that were in fact mandatory, said that the important issue of the budget must not be continuously deferred to the next Council meeting and must be properly addressed by the plenipotentiary conference. Another councillor suggested that future budget forecasts might also give consideration to the climate action plan and the possibility of future pandemics. A third councillor thanked Rwanda for hosting WTDC and looked forward to further successful meetings in Africa.

8.3 Document C22/INF/18 was **noted**.

**9 Statement by a councillor**

9.1 The councillor from the United States said that her country intended to announce an increase in the level of its contribution to ITU, from 30 to 35 contributory units, at the plenipotentiary conference.

9.2 The Secretary-General thanked the United States for its generosity and encouraged other countries to follow its example.

**10 Presentations to Council working group chairmen**

10.1 The Secretary-General, recalling Decision 11 (Rev. Dubai, 2018), whereby the term of office of Council working group chairmen and vice-chairmen should not exceed the interval between consecutive plenipotentiary conferences, said that many were now completing their term. He wished to present the following chairmen with certificates in recognition of their commitment to the Union:

* Mr Majed Al Mazyed, Chairman of the Council Working Group on international Internet public policy issues since 2009;
* Mr Abdelaziz Al Zarooni, Chairman of the Council Working Group on child online protection since 2018;
* Mr Vladimir Minkin, Chairman of the Council Working Group on WSIS & SDGs since 2006;
* Ms Monia Jaber Khalfallah, Chairman of the Council Working Group on the use of the six official languages;
* Mr Frédéric Sauvage, Chairman of the Council Working Group for the elaboration of the draft strategic and financial plans since 2021;
* Ms Vernita Harris, Chairman of the Council Working Group on financial and human resources, who had been elected in 2020 and would be continuing her term.

10.2 He also wished to acknowledge the chairmen of two expert groups that had wound up their work:

* Mr Lwando Buku, Chairman of the Expert Group on the International Telecommunication Regulations;
* Mr Nikolay Varlamov, Chairman of the Expert Group on Decision 482.

**11 Closure of the 2022 session of the Council**

11.1 Numerous councillors, speaking on behalf of their own countries or regional groups, thanked the Chairman for his wisdom, patience and excellent leadership during his tenure, which had been longer than customary because of the COVID-19 pandemic. They thanked the Council working group chairmen and vice-chairmen and the entire secretariat for their valuable support, and wished the incoming chairman every success. They expressed gratitude to the Secretary-General and Deputy Secretary-General for their commitment to ITU during their terms of office.

11.2 The Secretary-General delivered his closing remarks (available at: <https://www.itu.int/en/council/2022/Documents/speeches/Closing-Remarks-SG-Bucharest-e.docx>) and thanked the Chairman for his exemplary and inspiring leadership and presented him with the ITU Gold Medal.

11.3 The Chairman delivered the address available at: <https://www.itu.int/en/council/2022/Documents/speeches/Closing-speech-Council-Chair-Bucharest-e.docx>

11.4 The Chairman thanked participants for their kind words and declared the 2022 session of the Council closed.

The Secretary-General: The Chairman:

H. ZHAO S. BIN GHELAITA

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_