|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Plenipotentiary Conference (PP-22) Bucharest, 26 September – 14 October 2022** |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
| PLENARY MEETING | **Addendum 32 to Document 76-E** |
|  | **1 September 2022** |
|  | **Original: English** |
|  | |
| Member States of the Inter-American Telecommunication Commission (CITEL) | |
| IAP 32 - PROPOSAL TO MODIFY RESOLUTION 167 ON | |
| STRENGTHENING AND DEVELOPING ITU CAPABILITIES FOR ELECTRONIC MEETINGS AND MEANS TO ADVANCE THE WORK OF THE UNION | |
|  | |

**Abstract:**

This proposal aims to update Resolution 167 to make it more efficient and effective within the scope and purpose of the ITU and reflect the appropriate updates based on changes in the Telecommunications/ICT Sector.

MOD IAP/76A32/1

RESOLUTION 167 (Rev. bucharest, 2022)

Strengthening and developing ITU capabilities for fully virtual meetings and physical meetings with remote participation, and the electronic means to advance the work of the Union

The Plenipotentiary Conference of the International Telecommunication Union (Bucharest, 2022),

considering

*a)* the thematic priority of an enabling environment in the ITU Telecommunication Development Sector (ITU-D) in the ITU strategic plan for 2024-2027 which seeks a policy and regulatory environment that is conducive to sustainable telecommunication/ICT development that encourages innovation, investment in infrastructure and ICTs, and that increases adoption of telecommunications/ICTs to reduce the digital divide and promote a more inclusive and equal society;

*b)* the rapid technological change in the field of telecommunications and the associated policy, regulatory and infrastructure adaptations required at the national, regional and global levels;

*c)* the consequent need for the widest possible engagement of the ITU membership from around the world to address these matters in the work of the Union;

*d)* that developments in technologies and facilities for the holding of fully virtual meetings and physical meetings with remote participation and the further development of electronic working methods (EWM) will enable more open, faster and easier collaboration between participants in the activities of ITU;

*e)* that ITU has been gaining experience with the holding of fully virtual meetings and physical meetings with remote participation,

recalling

*a)* Resolution 64 (Rev. Dubai, 2018) of this conference on non-discriminatory access to modern telecommunication/ICT facilities, services and applications, including applied research, technology transfer and meetings by electronic means, under mutually agreed conditions;

*b)* Resolution 66 (Rev. Dubai, 2018) of this conference, on documents and publications of the Union, regarding the electronic availability of documents;

*c)* Resolution 123 (Rev. Dubai, 2018) of this conference on bridging the standardization gap between developed and developing countries;

*d)* Resolution 175 (Rev. Dubai, 2018) of this conference, on telecommunication/ICT accessibility for persons with disabilities and persons with specific needs;

*e)* Resolution 32 (Rev. Geneva, 2022) of WTSA, on strengthening electronic working methods in the work of the ITU Telecommunication Standardization Sector (ITU‑T) and the implementation of EWM capabilities and associated arrangements in the work of ITU‑T,

recognizing

*a)* that electronic participation has been producing significant benefits for the Union's membership, by reducing travel costs, and has facilitated wider participation, particularly from developing countries;

*b)* that the COVID-19 pandemic has led to the use of fully virtual meetings and physical meetings with remote participation through the use of existing technology platforms, which have shown encouraging results relative to the aims of the Union;

*c)* that numerous ITU meetings are already available as audio and video webcasts and that use of videoconferencing, audio conference calls, real-time captioning and web-based collaboration tools for electronic participation in certain types of meetings have been advanced in meetings of the Sectors and the General Secretariat;

*d)* the budgetary difficulty that delegates from many countries, and in particular developing countries, have in travelling to participate in face‑to-face ITU meetings;

*e)* that the regional offices are an extension of ITU as a whole and, therefore, EWM will serve to build up the effectiveness of the Union's activities, including project implementation;

*f)* that the expected role of the regional offices is essential in order to fully comply with the basic mandates of the Union and, to this end, it is necessary that these offices be able to rely on affordable means of communication (videoconferencing), such as those that can be accessed over the web, to hold electronic meetings with the Member States,

recognizing further

*a)* the annual reports by the Secretary-General to the ITU Council on the implementation of this resolution;

*b)* the report from the 2022 session of the Council to this conference;

*c)* the financial, legal, procedural and technical difficulties of providing remote participation to all, particularly with respect to:

– the difference in time zones among regions and in relation to Geneva, and particularly with the Americas and Asia-Pacific regions;

– the costs of infrastructure, broadband, equipment, software applications and staff, especially in developing countries;

– the rights and legal status of remote participants and chairmen;

– the differences between virtual participants with physical participants;

– the telecommunication infrastructure limitations in some countries due to unstable or inadequate connections;

– increased accessibility for people with disabilities and specific needs;

*d)* the need to define the permitted roles, rights and procedures for participation and decision making in physical meetings, fully virtual meetings, and physical meetings with remote participation, and the identification of when such alternative structures may be appropriate,

noting

*a)* that the existence of fully virtual meetings and physical meetings with remote participation, with well-documented rules and procedures, will help ITU in widening the involvement of potential stakeholders, both member and non-member experts, particularly from developing countries, who are unable to participate in face‑to-face meetings;

*b)* that EWM has made important contributions to facilitating the work of Sector groups, such as rapporteur groups, and of Council working groups, and that work, such as the development of texts, has been progressed in various parts of the Union through electronic communications;

*c)* that different modes of participation are suitable for different types of meetings;

*d)* that the work of the three Sectors is distinct, and that each of the Sectors have their own working methods and procedures;

*e)* that managing fully virtual meetings from the regional offices can facilitate regional coordination, in order to promote greater participation by Member States in the work of the study groups of the three Sectors;

*f)* that there needs to be a coordinated and harmonized approach to the technology used,

emphasizing

*a)* that there is a need for procedures to ensure fair and equitable participation by all;

*b)* that electronic meetings can contribute to bridging the digital divide;

*c)* that the implementation of fully virtual meetings and physical meetings with remote participation is beneficial to ITU's role in leading the coordination on ICTs and on accessibility,

resolves

1 that ITU should continue to develop its facilities and capabilities to organize fully virtual meetings and physical meetings with remote participation by electronic means in meetings of the Union, including working groups created by the Council;

2 that ITU should develop high-level guidance for the management and governance of fully virtual meetings and physical meetings with remote participation, supported by detailed procedures, rules, and guidelines;

3 that the Union continue to develop EWM, within budget availability, for the participation of persons with disabilities and persons with specific needs, which may include, *inter alia*, captioning for the hearing-impaired, audioconferencing for the visually impaired, and webconferencing for persons with restricted mobility, as well as solutions and facilities to address other similar challenges;

4 that the Union further study the impact of remote participation on existing rules of procedure, especially regarding decision making;

5 that ITU should provide facilities and capabilities for EWM at ITU meetings, workshops and training courses, particularly to assist developing countries that have bandwidth limitations and other constraints;

6 to encourage fully virtual or remote participation of developing countries in meetings, workshops and training by providing simplified facilities and guidelines, and by waiving, within the appropriations that the Council is empowered to authorize, any expenses for those participants, other than the local call or Internet connectivity charges,

instructs the Secretary-General, in consultation and collaboration with the Directors of the three Bureaux

1 to take into account the high-level guidance for the management and governance of fully virtual meetings and physical meetings with remote participation especially the legal, technical, security and financial implications;

2 to involve the advisory groups in the further evaluation of the use of fully virtual meetings and physical meetings with remote participation, including the legal aspects;

3 to report to the Council on an ongoing basis on the developments made with regard to fully virtual meetings and physical meetings with remote participation, in order to assess progress in their use within ITU;

4 to report to the Council on the feasibility of extending the use of languages in electronic meetings,

instructs the Secretary-General

to share information about developments and progress made with regard to electronic meetings with the United Nations and other specialized agencies, for their consideration,

instructs the Directors of the Bureaux

to establish, in consultation with the Sector advisory groups, detailed procedures, rules and guidelines for fully virtual meetings and for physical meetings with remote participation, taking into account the specific requirements based on their Sector’s working methods and rules and meeting types, as well to clearly define the rights of members participating remotely in terms of decision-making,

instructs the Council

1 to develop high-level guidance for the management and governance of fully virtual and physical meetings with remote participation, including appropriate management and governance measures that clearly define the rights of members participating remotely in terms of decision-making, in accordance with Annex 1;

2 to conclude the study/guidelines referred to in Annex 1, specifically on when fully virtual meetings and physical meetings with remote participation could be permitted allowing members participating remotely to be included in decision-making;

3 to consider the financial requirements to implement this resolution and allocate the necessary financial resources, within the limits of the resources available and consistent with the financial and strategic plans

4 to report on these activities to the next Plenipotentiary Conference.

ANNEX 1 TO RESOLUTION 167 (Rev. bucharest, 2022)

High-level guidance for the management and governance of fully virtual meetings and physical meetings with remote participation

– Implement technical solutions to extend ITU interpretation services to e‑participants and provide interpretation services where feasible

– Implement technical solutions to implement self-service provisioning and running of fully virtual meetings and physical meetings with remote participation

– Review current applicable policies and practices and establish general high-level guidelines for fully virtual meetings and physical meetings with remote participation, including but not limited to:

* Adequate notice of meetings with a clear statement as to the type of meeting, *e.g.*, physical meeting, fully virtual meeting, or physical meeting with remote participation
* Clarity on the rights of different categories of members who participate remotely in a particular meeting, in particular, if they are able to engage in decision-making
* Whether fully virtual and/or remote participants have the opportunity to engage in offline discussions (*e.g*., ad hoc sessions)
* Practical measures to support equitable opportunities for participation by all administrations, as well as by persons with disabilities and specific needs
* Flexibility in the length and timing of meetings bearing in mind the time zones of participants

– Provide training, as appropriate, to ITU meeting organizers, regional office staff, chairmen, rapporteurs, editors and delegates, with particular attention as to how best to support chairs in managing remote participation

– Implement the collection of statistics across all Sectors so as to track trends in e‑participation

– Discuss the improvement of ITU capabilities in terms of EWM and remote participation and propose the amendments needed to bridge the participation gap to the 2026 plenipotentiary conference.

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