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| **Agenda item: PL 3** | **Document C23/84-E** |
| **27 June 2023** |
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| Contribution from Romania |
| Proposals for further improvements in prepARING A SUCCESSFUL Plenipotentiary Conference |
| **Purpose**The document provides directions and calls for reflection on further improvements in the preparatory process of the Plenipotentiary Conference and aims at putting forth suggestions in light of recent experience of Romania as host country of the ITU’s highest-level event.**Action required by the Council**The Council is invited to take note of the content of this contribution, to consider the proposal for further consideration and appropriate action and to provide guidance to the Secretariat on further steps to be taken. **References**[Resolution 77](https://www.itu.int/en/council/Documents/basic-texts-2023/RES-077-E.pdf) (Rev. Bucharest, 2022) of the Plenipotentiary ConferenceCouncil document [C21/13](https://www.itu.int/md/S21-CL-C-0013/en)*Circular Letter* [*CL-19/57*](https://www.itu.int/md/S19-SG-CIR-0057/en) |

**Background**

Resolution 77 (Rev. Bucharest 2022) instructs the Secretary-General to take appropriate measures to facilitate the most efficient use of time and resources during conferences and to report to the Council on the implementation of this resolution, proposing further improvements. As well, the Resolution instructs the ITU Council to take appropriate measures to facilitate the implementation of this resolution and report to future plenipotentiary conferences (PP) on possible improvements in the implementation of this resolution.

In addition, at 2016 and 2017 ITU Council sessions, the Secretariat presented reports on possible improvements for the roll-out of PP being guided by the priorities like improving effectiveness and efficiency of the organization and roll-out of PP proceedings, reducing expenditure, particularly by reducing the duration of the conference, ensuring high-level participation to strengthen the role of PP as supreme policy-making organ and improving communication with and between ITU membership to reinforce their involvement in and ownership of this unique ITU event.

Furthermore, during the 2019 session of the ITU Council, the United Arab Emirates, host of the 20th Plenipotentiary Conference, joined by Saudi Arabia, has submitted a contribution proposing means of improvement to the work for the Conference, with emphasis on three main priorities: strengthening the interregional preparatory process, preparation and training for delegates and “greening” the conference. Therefore, in Circular Letter [CL-19/57](https://www.itu.int/md/S19-SG-CIR-0057/en), ITU Secretariat conducted a consultation on further improvements of the PP based on these three areas. A comprehensive debate on the outcomes of this consultation along with presentation of other proposals were carried out during 2021 ITU Council session.

**Introduction**

The Plenipotentiary Conference is the highest policy-making body of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), where deliberations and decisions taken have a significant and long-term impact not only on the ITU’s future, but also on the growth and sustainable development of global telecommunications sector, on the entire international community.

Romania was very honoured to have the privilege to be the host of the 21st edition of the Plenipotentiary Conference and, with the support of the Member States and the ITU Secretariat, had endeavoured to support the consensus-based approach, built through negotiations and compromise, to ensure that this event achieves the optimum guidance.

At the PP-22, ITU Member States reached consensus on key decisions that included resolutions on Artificial Intelligence (AI), space sustainability, Internet governance, cybersecurity, environmental action, Internet of Things or digital transformation goals. The ITU's strategic and budget plans for 2024-2027, which charts the key priorities for radiocommunication, standardization and development work, was successfully adopted. As well, the Conference aimed to lay emphasis on a greener, gender-responsive and more inclusive approach.

Building on the most rewarding experience gained throughout the preparations of the Conference as the host country, Romania would like to put forward some proposals and recommendations for improving the smooth running of the Conference in terms of both content and meaningful participation and logistics, while having in mind that every host country has specific laws and regulations that have impact on the process of organizing the most important ITU event.

**Proposals**

1. **Improving content and enabling meaningful participation**

**Inter-regional meetings** are keystones of the PP’s preparatory process, providing the setting for coordinated activities and effective debates with a view to reaching consensus between member states on fundamental PP topics.

Based on previous experience from PP-18 and WRC-19, the inter-regional preparatory process for PP22 has been structured around three informal inter-regional meetings (IRM), with physical and remote participation. Moreover, with the view to advancing the negotiation process ahead of the Conference, the designated chairman proposed to organize an informal dialogue on relevant issues that required the most efforts. In this regard, having the support of the relevant experts from the Secretariat, there were organized another three online sessions, attended by the regional coordinators and experts on the chosen topics.

Building from this experience, one key element, important for the success of the intern-regional preparatory process is to clearly define the delivery of the process, starting with more administrative documents of the Conference such as the time management plan, the structure of the Conference and continuing with deliverables that require more negotiations such as the list of chairs and vice-chairs and aspects related to contributions to be submitted.

While respecting the deadlines included in the Constitution and Convention, the Secretariat in cooperation with the designated chairman, before the 1st IRM should work on an action plan and a calendar of activities that can be conducted before the PP in order to facilitate the work of the Conference that should include, inter alia, documents that can be agreed upon before the start of the Conference, including updating and streamlining of the resolutions and decisions, which do not have political impact, possible topics for the informal dialogues and earlier deadlines for submitting initial or preliminary proposals/contributions, especially when it comes to topics that, traditionally require heavy negotiations. On this basis, the inter-regional preparatory process can further facilitate the work of the Conference, by providing tangible results and a higher level of predictability useful for the Member States, the RTOs conducting the negotiations and the designated chairman. In order to achieve time and cost efficiency, we propose further fostering inter-regional coordination before the conference, benefiting from the support of the ITU Secretariat, by organizing these meetings, as much as possible, during the year prior to the Plenipotentiary Conference, back-to-back with ITU Council sessions or any other major ITU events. Keeping in mind that the success of the Preparatory process largely depends on the Member States and their willingness to share their position and contributions in advance, having a set calendar for discussions can encourage them to prepare content that can be discussed during the IRMs.

**Strengthening women's presence**

Romania envisaged PP-22 as a model for a gender-responsive and more inclusive international meetings. At PP-22, a total of 33% of the delegates were women. Future conferences should further enhance the participation of women, as it is essential to enable them to have substantive voice and leadership in decision-making process of the Conference.

Given the work that is has been done for PP-22, with the support of the Australian Government and its initiative to increase the influence of women representation in decision-making at the Plenipotentiary Conference, the women that have facilitated from trainings should be taken into consideration as candidates for positions in the management team of the Conference (committee chairs and vices chairs or ad hoc group chairs).

Just as importantly, their experience both from the training and in practice, from PP22 should be passed on to future women delegates, During the period between Plenipotentiary Conferences, the Secretariat should organize training programs, to give the beneficiaries of 2022 trainings an opportunity to share their experience and expertise with other women delegates.

**Youth involvement**

It is important to recognize the value of youth perspective and create opportunities for meaningful participation. Future conferences should provide them with opportunities to gain more experience, to speak up with decision makers about their views, to involve them in the working groups and informal consultations and encourage/ support their initiatives. Here we would like to highlight the impact of the dedicated side event at PP-22 – *YOUTH AT PP-22 – MEANINGFUL YOUTH ENGAGEMENT WORKSHOP: SHAPING THE NEXT GENERATION OF ITU DELEGATES*, which explored actionable steps towards the empowerment of the next generation of ITU delegates and the implementation of meaningful youth engagement in their own communities.

While coordinated action at ITU level it is crucial, the efforts to prepare the next generation of ITU delegates should be heavily supported by the Member State which should be consistent in including young people in their delegations attending all ITU events, including study group meetings. As a result, they can become familiar with working procedures and ITU priorities, and they will be able to use the information and experience more effectively during the PP.

**Training of delegates**

Also, training on the overall process of the conference is an effective means of improving the Conference. Therefore, we propose that during the years between Plenipotentiary Conferences, the Secretariat could organize workshop trainings, coaching (especially for chairing meetings), info sessions and online learning. The topics can be structured and listed on specific themes, for instance “Elections”, “Resolutions”, “Conference management” and so on. In terms of cost-efficiency, recording most of the training sessions and make them available on the ITU website should be considered.

*As a concrete and tangible result of this efforts, we should build a pool of experts which should be used during the major ITU events (WTSA, WTDC, PP) to chair ad hoc groups and informal discussion, facilitating the work of committee chairs.*

In addition, the Secretariat should consider having on the ITU website a permanent section with information relevant for those who wish to have a chairing position, with documents prepared by the Secretariat and video from previous conferences with relevant situations that can provide a clear image of the responsibilities and tasks carried out by a chair.

**Better-time management plan including preparatory meetings**

**In terms of time management, as proceeded** during PP-22, we support starting the work of ad hoc groups and committees in the first week of the Conference and eliminate late night working sessions. *The working procedures should be agreed upon during the inter-regional preparatory process and the Secretariat should elaborate the draft management plan keeping in mind these aspects.*

Reducing the length of contributions as they are a time-consuming process during the PP is also recommended.

**Side events**

Romania was the host of a few side events which received a lot of attention and interest from the participants, therefore it is advisable to continue organizing such events. Nonetheless, the theme of these events should be decided in consultation with the Members States on what they consider useful to be discussed on the margins of PP.

We also suggest making use of some financial mechanisms which can involve ITU or Member States for encouraging participation of young students, sector members and Academia within national delegations which would lead to diversity in terms of representation and interests.

1. **Logistics related aspects**

**Host Country Agreement**

The Host Country Agreement provides the legal and financial framework for the preparatory process of the PP, serving as the basis for the definition and setting up of all legislative changes, public procurement processes and any other measures aimed at ensuring the good organization of the Conference. More flexibility, tailored to national particularities, especially related to economic and financial environment and legal landscape would be recommended. Also, final lists of equipment and other requirements should be submitted to the host country in due time.

**Making Conference more sustainable**

PP-22 put special committed itself to sustainability and the protection of the environment and further efforts should be made at a steady pace, through a zero or low waste policy. These include giving eco-friendly gifts instead of traditional gifting alternatives or organizing promotional events in a sustainable way in terms of location and transport.

Other measures are needed, one of them being to reduce the event’s carbon footprint by using electric transportation and encouraging public transport used by the delegates against the individual one.

We should consider mandatory selective collection of recyclable waste, water dispensers, disposal of plastic waste, single-use packaging, reusable tableware whenever possible.

The Conference should take into consideration optimization of the number of meeting rooms to improve energy-efficiency and reduce operating costs.

During the conference, but also after PP, we suggest using technology to run certain surveys, thus making meetings more dynamic with real-time comments from the entire audience.

The Conference should give particular attention to equitable geographical representation regarding the number of delegates, to ensure that every region is equally represented thus reducing the disparities between the states and promoting more active participation of the developing countries as well as optimizing the number of participants and reducing the impact over the environment.

Social events organized within each Plenipotentiary Conference should highlight the cultural traditions and the involvement of every hosting member state in ITU’s activities, while limiting other type of services in order to reduce the financial burden that arises from organizing such events on a foreign soil as well as minimizing the impact on waste and sustainability.

Furthermore, the procurement policies implied by such a complex and large magnitude event should favour environmentally friendly, ethically and locally produced equipment, products and services.

**Conclusion and proposed way forward**

In view of the above and given the valuable experience gained with the hosting of PP-22, Romania invites ITU Council to consider the suggestions on further improvement of the Plenipotentiary Conference and continue engaging with the ITU Secretariat to identify and implement viable methods for streamlining the organization of the Conference and offering the host country all the support needed in this respect.

As well, Romania proposes that Council requests the Secretariat to examine the proposals for improving the roll-out of the Plenipotentiary Conference, conduct a consultation on PP improvement with the Member States and present their findings to Council 2024 for further consideration and appropriate action.

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