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| **Agenda item: PL 1** | **Document C23/90-E** |
| **27 June 2023** |
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| Contribution from the Russian Federation |
| COMMENTS ON THE SECRETARY-GENERAL'S REPORTS TO THE COUNCIL IN DOCUMENTS С23/36, С23/52, С23/53 AND С23/62 |
| PurposeThis contribution aims to:– increase the transparency of the proposals outlined in the Secretary-General's reports;– assess the advisability of the initiative to create the proposed transformation office and determine the concrete source of its financing;– determine the ultimate goal of the work of the transformation office and assess the conformity of the ultimate goal (concrete result) of its work with the ITU Constitution, the ITU Convention, and Resolution 71 (Rev. Bucharest, 2022) of the Plenipotentiary Conference.Action required by the CouncilThe Council is invited to assess the advisability of adopting the proposed new measures and determine the sources of financing for the elements of the initiative, taking into account the resources already expended to this end.\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ReferencesResolution 71 (Rev. Bucharest, 2022) and Decision 5 (Rev. Bucharest, 2022) of the Plenipotentiary ConferenceCouncil Documents [C23/36](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0036/en), [C23/50](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0050/en), [C23/52](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0052/en), [C23/53](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0053/en), [C23/62](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0062/en), [C23/INF/11](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-INF-0011/en) and [C23/INF/13](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-INF-0013/en) |

# 1 Introduction

1.1 The Plenipotentiary Conference (Bucharest, 2022) (PP-22) adopted Resolution 71 (Rev. Bucharest, 2022) and Decision 5 (Rev. Bucharest, 2022), setting out the strategic goals of the Union, its thematic priorities and enablers, the product and service offerings of the Union, and a detailed linkage between the strategic and financial plans of the Union, with a view to the effective achievement of the ITU goals.

1.2 The reports of the Secretary-General presented for examination in Council Documents [C23/36](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0036/en), [C23/50](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0050/en), [C23/52](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0052/en), [C23/53](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0053/en), [C23/62](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0062/en), [C23/INF/11](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-INF-0011/en) and [C23/INF/13](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-INF-0013/en), according to the links provided, are more concerned with the activities and approaches of the Union's new management team as regards the working methods of ITU to allow the Union's goals and priorities to be achieved in a more efficient and more effective manner, in particular:

– the enabler "Excellence in human resources and organizational innovation";

– the enabler "Resource mobilization".

1.3 The management team's work on the enabler "Excellence in human resources and organizational innovation" under Resolution 71 should aim to improve internal processes and accelerate internal decision-making by addressing operational inefficiencies, duplication and perceived bureaucracy, reflecting the values of transparency and accountability.

The main goal is to modernize ITU's human capacity, processes, procedures and tools, and to achieve integration and harmonization with the United Nations Common System and the values of the international civil service. To this end, the organization will be implementing a culture and skills transformation plan that will strengthen organizational openness, agility and efficiency.

The **culture and skills transformation plan** should be based on four main tracks:

– strategic planning;

– digital transformation;

– innovation;

– human resources management.

1.4 The management team's work on the enabler "Resource mobilization" under Resolution 71 should aim to accelerate resource-mobilization efforts and to increase financing, and to identify the most effective ways for ITU to mobilize extrabudgetary resources, build its resource-mobilization capacity and enhance its current fundraising strategy while leveraging partner inputs to complement these efforts.

**Long-term financial commitment frameworks** have to be developed in order to effectively plan, programme and deliver on projects and enhance predictability of resource flows.

# 2 Comments

The management team's approach as set out in the Secretary-General's reports in Documents [C23/52](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0052/en) (Transformation roadmap to achieve organizational excellence) and [C23/36](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0036/en) (Accelerating the implementation of the ITU strategic plan for 2024-2027) does not fully conform to the provisions of Resolution 71 and Decision 5, for the following reasons:

2.1 The report in Document [C23/52](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0052/en) cites the ITU strategic plan for 2024-2027 (Resolution 71) and Decision 5 of the Plenipotentiary Conference and uses the phrase "organizational excellence" in conjunction with "transformation". This is a **completely new addition that is not to be found** either in Resolution 71 or in Decision 5:

As regards "excellence", "transformation" and "organizational" aspects, **only the concepts "organizational effectiveness", "enhancing organizational effectiveness" and "digital transformation" are to be found** in Resolution 71 and Decision 5:

– The concept "organizational effectiveness" refers to the review of ITU's regional presence, the Culture and Skills project and informal consultations with the membership during the strategic planning process.

– The concept "digital transformation" refers to ITU's work to foster equitable and inclusive use of telecommunications/ICTs to empower people and societies for sustainable development, and to the implementation of the Union's digital transformation initiative (DT-I) (Resolution 48 (Rev. Bucharest, 2022) and 217 (Bucharest, 2022) of the Plenipotentiary Conference, Council Document [C21/70](https://www.itu.int/md/S21-CL-C-0070/en)), aimed at improving the key deliverables of ITU and the efficiency of the internal business processes, and ensuring that ITU becomes an employer of choice.

2.2 Furthermore, a careful examination of the Secretary-General's reports in Council Documents [C23/52](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0052/en) and [C23/36](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0036/en) gives the impression that the new direction of work of the ITU management team, "organizational excellence", with its accompanying "transformation roadmap", not only aim at fulfilling the tasks assigned by PP-22 – to improve internal processes for addressing operational inefficiencies, duplication and perceived bureaucracy – but **go beyond the activities mandated by the Conference**, and amount to an attempt to review and analyse the structure of the Union itself as laid down in Article 7 of the ITU Constitution.

Thus, Resolution 71 calls for the development of a **culture and skills transformation plan only** and does not mandate the creation of a transformation roadmap to achieve organizational excellence.

2.3 Document [C23/52](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0052/en), citing Document [C23/36](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0036/en), makes recommendations to the Council that emerged from a "visioning process" that the new management team chose as a working method immediately after PP-22, drawing on a **restricted group of experts and staff members** at all levels from the three Bureaux (65 persons), some 40 external stakeholders from around the world, including unspecified stakeholders from ITU Member States, the private sector, United Nations agencies and intergovernmental organizations, civil society, academia and unspecified distinguished personalities.

2.4 Document [C23/36](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0036/en) remarks that the new management team produced a plan aligned with the strategic plan for 2024-2027 and the guidance received from PP-22. However, the discussions in the visioning exercise mentioned in § 2.1.3 were focused on three "pillars" which apparently **have no direct linkage with the strategic plan of the Union and do not correspond to the strategic goals and thematic priorities of the Union approved by PP-22 or the associated enablers**.

2.5 The strategic goals of the Union set out in the strategic plan (Resolution 71) support ITU's performance of its mission and the enhancement of its role in fostering progress towards the implementation of the **World Summit on the Information Society** (WSIS) action lines and the **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**. The transformation plan proposed by the Secretary-General for achieving organizational excellence, on the other hand, **focuses on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and ITU's own Connect 2030 Agenda**, ignoring the WSIS process, whose close linkage to the achievement of the SDGs is reflected in the WSIS-SDG matrix, and the provisions of Resolution 140 (Rev. Bucharest, 2022) of the Plenipotentiary Conference, on ITU's role in implementing the WSIS outcomes and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as well as in their follow-up and review processes.

2.6 The concept of "One ITU" introduced in Document [C23/52](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0052/en) does not conform with Article 7 of the Constitution of the Union.

2.7 Document [C23/52](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0052/en) does not indicate the sources of the funding, some 900 000 Swiss francs annually, that will be required to set up and operate the transformation office, at a time when funding for the core mandate activities of the Union under Article 1 of the ITU Constitution are insufficient; the same holds for the implementation of the project to construct a new ITU headquarters building (Document [C23/7](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0007/en)).

# 3 Proposals

3.1 It is proposed that the Council not act on the document until full details have been provided and the ITU management team's approaches have been corrected to bring them into conformity with the ITU Constitution and ITU Convention and with the decisions of the Plenipotentiary Conference.

3.2 The management team's work on the enabler "Excellence in human resources and organizational innovation" under Resolution 71 should aim to improve internal processes and accelerate internal decision-making by addressing operational inefficiencies, duplication and perceived bureaucracy, reflecting the values of transparency and accountability, and not attempt to review the structure of ITU as laid down in Article 7 of the Constitution of the Union.

3.3 The transformation plan should focus on culture and skills transformation plan and should be based on four main tracks:

– strategic planning;

– digital transformation;

– innovation;

– human resources management.

It should be in full compliance with the provisions of the ITU Constitution and ITU Convention, especially Article 7 of the Constitution (Structure of the Union).

3.4 The report of the Secretary-General on accelerating the implementation of the ITU strategic plan for 2024-2027 (Document [C23/36](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0036/en)) should be reclassified from a contribution ("C") to an information document ("INF").

3.5 In preparing recommendations for the Council regarding corrections to the strategic plan and the financial plan in accordance with Resolution 71, the Secretary-General should carry out consultations not with a restricted number of Member States, as reported in Document [C23/36](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0036/en), but on a broad and transparent basis, involving the majority of the ITU Member States in accordance with No. 28 of Article 3 of the ITU Constitution.

3.6 To strengthen ITU's leading role and the financial sustainability of the Union, efforts should be focused on improving the efficiency of the Union's activities but also expanding the range and improving the quality of ITU's products and services that are deployed to support the Union's work under its thematic priorities (Resolution 71).

3.7 It should be recognized as inadvisable to increase expenditure for the purpose of creating new organizational units:

– a transformation unit headed by a director at D1 level, with an annual budget of 900 000 Swiss francs

– an oversight unit with a chief at D1 level, requiring some 280 000 Swiss francs in addition every year, at a time when funding for the core mandate activities of the Union under Article 1 of the ITU Constitution is insufficient, as is funding for the implementation of the project to construct a new ITU headquarters building (Document [C23/7](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0007/en)).

3.8 Given the current financial difficulties mentioned in § 3.7 above, the creation of an oversight unit, with a D1-level chief position, will require additional substantiation and should only be brought about using existing resources, within the limits of the budget of the General Secretariat.

3.9 In preparing documents (plans, roadmaps, recommendations to the Council and so on) on the achievement of the strategic goals of the Union in the framework of ITU's strategic plan for 2024-2027, the Secretary-General should be guided by the role of ITU in enhancing the contribution of the Union to progress in the implementation of the WSIS action lines and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

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