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|  | **Document C23/106-E** |
| **1 September 2023** |
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| SUMMARY RECORD  OF THE  FIRST PLENARY MEETING | |
| Wednesday, 12 July 2023, from 1430 to 1735 hours  **Chairman:**  Mr C. MARTINEZ (Paraguay) | |
| |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | |  | **Subjects discussed** | **Documents** | | 1 | Accelerating the implementation of the ITU strategic plan for 2024-2027, and the transformation roadmap to achieve organizational excellence (continued) | [C23/36](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0036/en), [C23/52](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0052/en), [C23/72(Rev.1)+Corr.1](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0072/en), [C23/90](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0090/en) | | 2 | Precise place and exact dates of the 2024 world telecommunication standardization assembly and update on preparations | [C23/24](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0024/en) | | 3 | Preparations for the 2023 radiocommunication assembly and the 2023 world radiocommunication conference | [C23/31](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0031/en) | | 4 | Transfer of the area office from Tegucigalpa to Panama City | [C23/64](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0064/en), [C23/65](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0065/en) | | |

**1 Accelerating the implementation of the ITU strategic plan for 2024-2027****, and   
the transformation roadmap to achieve organizational excellence (continued)  
(Documents**[**C23/36**](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0036/en)**,** [**C23/52**](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0052/en)**,** [**C23/72(Rev.1)+Corr.1**](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0072/en) **and** [**C23/90**](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0090/en)**)**

1.1 Several councillors expressed support for the transformation roadmap proposed in Document C23/52 as timely and important, with long-term benefits for all. Improved transparency, efficiency, accountability and management, including financial management, would better serve Member States and help them fulfil their goals. Organizations must adapt to remain relevant and survive; Member States must be included in crafting the necessary changes, through exchanges with management in Council working groups.

1.2 One councillor, referring to § 1 of the document, said that the ITU Culture and Skills Project had to be considered in the light of the interim external audit report. Concerning § 3, BDT was well positioned to discharge ITU’s dual responsibility to execute and monitor projects thanks to Resolution 157 (Rev. Dubai, 2018). On § 6, he questioned why ITU did not have recourse to United Nations bodies such as the International Computing Centre (ICC). An ICT governance committee should be established to oversee and report on the enterprise resource planning (ERP) system, and a permanent Council agenda item introduced on the ERP project and IT governance. Furthermore, the secretariat should report to the Council on ITU’s engagement in the Digital and Technology Network under the High-Level Committee on Management of the United Nations Chief Executives Board.

1.3 Several councillors expressed support for the creation of a transformation office to deliver the proposed changes and increase the Union’s impact. Other councillors raised questions concerning the financial implications of doing so, the availability of funding and the impact on ITU’s structure; they considered that more time and information were needed before the proposal could be approved.

1.4 Several councillors expressed concern at the potential for overlap with activities already under way and asked how any overlaps would be addressed once the project was on course. For an efficient transformation, the structures and mandates of existing ITU departments should first be reviewed and optimized.

1.5 One councillor observed, with reference to Document C23/36, that flagship initiatives and events addressing emerging themes, such as AI for Good, drew positive public attention to the Union, built broader support and garnered political engagement. More such activities would be welcome. Another councillor said that Member States should collaborate to ensure that the ITU strategic plan for 2024-2027 had a tangible global impact.

1.6 A third councillor noted the emphasis on internal transformation. Projects and programmes co-designed with countries and regional offices would ensure their relevance to countries, build a stronger sense of inclusion and co-ownership with stakeholders, yield resource-sharing benefits and bring the “One ITU” brand closer to the citizens of every region. More than a mere organization, ITU was a community that could catalyse, drive and lead digital transformation across the world.

1.7 Another councillor observed that the advent of artificial intelligence was revolutionary and would cause profound social upheaval; much was expected of ITU in terms of managing the risks and reaping the benefits of the new technology. A more agile, less bureaucratic ITU would better achieve its goals. The Union faced budget difficulties and was struggling to respond to Member States’ connectivity needs; the proposed transformation was urgently needed to equip it to face the challenges ahead.

1.8 One councillor, referring to pillar 1 of the new leadership team’s visioning process, expressed the hope that ITU, more than providing mere opinion leadership, would help Member States achieve development. He asked which entities would participate in the proposed observatory and noted that, as an intergovernmental organization, ITU should consult councillors before engaging external parties to mobilize resources.

1.9 Two councillors, emphasizing that the cost of the transformation must be controlled, asked for information on the financial cost of the initiative and how the results would be measured. The proposed creation of a D.1 and other positions would be expensive.

1.10 One councillor said that the principles embedded in the ITU Constitution and Convention should be highlighted in the document.

1.11 The Deputy Secretary-General, responding to the questions raised, said that the proposed changes and creation of a transformation office would not impinge upon or interfere with the structure established in the ITU Constitution and Convention. The Secretary-General would remain fully responsible for transformation initiatives and reform, but would need support to keep the transformation on track. In order to avoid duplication, the secretariat needed a single space overseeing all actions; under its purview, departments would be responsible for their respective specific functions. The financial costs of creating a transformation office were included in Document C23/52 for information. Sufficient savings were available from previous years to fund it; the proposed one-year budget would be discussed in the Standing Committee on Administration and Management (ADM) and, hopefully, approved in plenary.

1.12 Contributions from Member States on the role of the Council Working Group on financial and human resources (CWG-FHR) would be welcome. The working group could contribute to the development of key performance indicators for organizational excellence, based on which the secretariat could report to the Council on follow-up and implementation of the transformation process. Member States’ support for the document would enable the secretariat to launch the transformation initiatives and make available the resources required to implement the projects needed to ensure a programmatic and consolidated transformation while maintaining financial stability.

1.13 One councillor said that the Council Member States were responsible for managing the Union’s financial resources and contributions from countries, and in view of the critical financial situation and other pressing funding requirements, including for the building project and the regional initiatives adopted by WTDC, and the needs of Member States, it would be reasonable and prudent before taking a decision entailing expenses of CHF 1 million per year to submit the document to ADM, and preferably to CWG-FHR.

1.14 Several councillors said that they were in favour of referring the matter to ADM for further consideration, clarification and a decision, while other councillors proposed that CWG-FHR conduct a proper analysis of the financial implications of the proposal and consider how to implement it in accordance with the Constitution and Convention.

1.15 The Chairman proposed that the Council note Document C23/36 and refer Document C23/52 to the Standing Committee on Administration and Management for further discussion.

1.16 It was so **agreed**.

**2 Precise place and exact dates** **of the 2024 world telecommunication standardization assembly and update on preparations (Document**[**C23/24**](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0024/en)**)**

2.1 The Chief of the Study Groups Department of TSB introduced Document C23/24, which informed the Council of the precise place and exact dates of the World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly (WTSA-24) and on the relevant preparations, adding that an onsite visit to the conference venue was planned for the first week of October 2023.

2.2 Mr Rajaraman, Secretary of Department of Telecommunications (DoT), Ministry of Communications (India) said that his country would be honoured to host WTSA-24, particularly since it had been unable to host WTSA-20 owing to the COVID-19 pandemic. It was proposed to hold the event at the International Exhibition cum Convention Centre in Pragati Maidan, New Delhi, from 15 to 24 October 2024. The Global Standards Symposium (GSS-24) would be held at the same venue on 14 October 2024. His statement was accompanied by two short video presentations, one unveiling the WTSA-24 logo, which had been conceptualized based on the wheel of time, and the other showcasing the proposed venue. It was also accompanied by a slide presentation on India’s preparations for WTSA-24 and related aspects.

2.3 Councillors thanked India for its proposal to host WTSA-24, with one councillor emphasizing the need for seamless visa procedures for such events.

2.4 The Council **noted** Document C23/24 and **adopted** the draft decision contained in Annex 2 thereto, instructing the Secretary-General to carry out a consultation with all Member States on the precise place and exact dates of WTSA-24.

2.5 The Secretary-General expressed gratitude to India for its proposal to host WTSA-24, which she was sure would be a huge success.

**3 Preparations for the** **2023 radiocommunication assembly and the** **2023 world radiocommunication conference (Document** [**C23/31**](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0031/en)**)**

3.1 The Deputy to the Director of BR introduced Document C23/31, which reported on the ongoing preparations for the Radiocommunication Assembly (RA-23), which would be held in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, from 13 to 17 November 2023, followed directly by the World Radiocommunication Conference (WRC-23) from 20 November­­ to 15 December 2023 and the first Conference Preparatory Meeting for WRC-27. Since the Plenipotentiary Conference (Bucharest, 2022), ITU had conducted two site visits to Dubai to coordinate planning.

3.2 Mr Majed Sultan Al Mesmar, Director General of the United Arab Emirates Telecommunications and Digital Government Regulatory Authority (TDRA),gave the statement available at: <http://council.itu.int/2023/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2023/08/Speech-Director-General-Majed-Sultan-Al-Mesmar-UAE.pdf>. His statement was accompanied by a video presentation showcasing the venue and preparations for WRC-23.

3.3 Several councillors took the floor to thank the Government of the United Arab Emirates for its preparations and to wish it every success in hosting WRC-23. One councillor said that he hoped that the chairmen and vice-chairmen of WRC-23 committees would be elected on the basis of balanced geographical distribution.

3.4 The Council **noted** Document C23/31 and the progress of preparations for RA-23 and WRC-23.

3.5 The Director of BR thanked the United Arab Emirates for its preparations and said that the excellent facilities would contribute to the success of WRC-23.

3.6 The Secretary-General also expressed appreciation to the United Arab Emirates. WRC-23 was a moment of major technological significance four years in the making and achieving the ITU’s strategic goals would depend on the radiocommunication services to be discussed there.

**4 Transfer of the area office from** **Tegucigalpa to Panama City (Documents**[**C23/64**](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0064/en) **and** [**C23/65**](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0065/en)**)**

4.1 Mr Hildeman Rangel, National Director of Telecommunications, ASEP (Panama) introduced Document C23/64, which explained in detail why it would be appropriate to transfer the ITU area office from Tegucigalpa, Honduras, to Panama City. He thanked all members of the Inter‑American Telecommunication Commission (CITEL),particularly Honduras, for supporting that initiative and said that the transfer would promote the development of the telecommunication sector in Panama and in countries across the region. He thanked Honduras for its work as the regional centre for telecommunications up to that point. His statement was accompanied by a video extolling the beauty of Panama.

4.2 Ms Claudia Reyes, Head of International and Interinstitutional Relations, CONATEL (Honduras) introduced Document C23/65, which requested the Council to take note of her country’s agreement to the transfer of the ITU area office from Tegucigalpa to Panama City.

4.3 Councillors took the floor to thank Honduras for having hosted the ITU area office for so long and to welcome its transfer to Panama City. Several councillors stated that the transfer would further strengthen ITU’s regional presence in the Americas and support the implementation of regional initiatives.

4.4 The Council **agreed** to instructthe ITU General Secretariat to transfer the area office from Tegucigalpa to Panama.

4.5 The Secretary-General thanked Honduras for hosting the area office and for its work over the years, and extended her support to Panama. The new area office would be a centre of new ideas for the region and would lead to further interaction with the entire United Nations system, owing to the number of United Nations agency headquarters in Panama.

The Secretary-General: The Chairman:  
D. BOGDAN-MARTIN C. MARTINEZ

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