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|  | **Document C23/112-E** |
| **8 September 2023** |
| **Original: English** |
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| SUMMARY RECORD  OF THE  SEVENTH AND LAST PLENARY MEETING | |
| Friday, 21 July 2023, from 1440 to 2315 hours  **Chairman:**  Mr C. MARTINEZ (Paraguay) | |
| |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | |  | **Subjects discussed** | **Documents** | | 1 | ITU Internet activities: Resolutions 101, 102, 133, 180 and 206 of the Plenipotentiary Conference (continued) | [C23/33](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0033/en), [C23/89+Corr.1](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0089/en), [C23/DT/12(Rev.1)](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-230711-TD-0012/en) | | 2 | Obsolete Council resolutions and decisions (continued) | [C23/3(Rev.1)](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0003/en) | | 3 | Report of the Standing Committee on Administration and Management | [C23/104](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0104/en), [C23/DL/10](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-230711-DL-0010/en), [C23/DL/11](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-230711-DL-0011/en), [C23/DL/12](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-230711-DL-0012/en) | | 4 | Proposed dates and duration of the 2024, 2025, and 2026 sessions of the Council along with the proposed dates of clusters of Council working groups and expert groups for the same period | [C23/2](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0002/en), [C23/87+Corr.1, 2](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0087/en) | | 5 | Schedule of future conferences, assemblies and meetings of the Union: 2023-2026 | [C23/37(Rev.1)](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0037/en) | | 6 | List of candidatures for chairmen and vice-chairmen of the Council working groups and expert groups (continued) | [C23/21(Rev.3)](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0021/en) | | 7 | Improvement of the ITU Council | [C23/32](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0032/en), [C23/75](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0075/en), [C23/78](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0078/en), [C23/86+Corr.1+2](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0086/en), [C23/87+Corr.1+2](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0087/en) | | 8 | Closure of the session | - | | |

**1 ITU Internet activities: Resolutions 101, 102, 133, 180 and 206 of the Plenipotentiary Conference (continued) (Documents**[**C23/33**](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0033/en)**,** [**C23/89+Corr.1**](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0089/en) **and** [**C23/DT/12(Rev.1)**](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-230711-TD-0012/en)**)**

1.1 The Chairman said that, as had been agreed at the third plenary meeting, Document C23/DT/12(Rev.1) contained the package of documents concerning ITU Internet activities under Resolutions 101, 102, 133, 180 and 206 of the Plenipotentiary Conference to be transmitted to the United Nations Secretary-General.

1.2 The councillor from the United States, regretted that another Member State had decided to use a multilateral forum to raise bilateral issues in Annex 1 to Document C23/DT/12(Rev.1).

1.3 The councillor from Cuba said that her country’s written comments in Annex 1 to Document C23/DT/12(Rev.1) pertained to the issue of universal connectivity and access, including to the Internet. Whereas Resolution 64 (Rev. Bucharest, 2022) of the Plenipotentiary Conference invited Member States to refrain from taking any unilateral and/or discriminatory actions that could impede another Member State from having full access to the Internet, Cuba’s access to telecommunications, including key websites, was being impeded by unilateral and extraterritorial measures. While the high-level segment had underlined the importance of telecommunication congresses, Cuba, after being a member of GSMA since 2003, had been denied the right to participate since 2020, again owing to unilateral and extraterritorial measures. Internet access was crucial for digital transformation, but the effects of the blockade imposed on Cuba were restricting its use of the Internet. She called upon ITU to be aware of the issue and to ensure universal access to the Internet.

1.4 The Council **noted** Document C23/DT/12(Rev.1) for transmission of the package to the United Nations Secretary-General.

**2 Obsolete Council resolutions and decisions** **(continued) (Document**[**C23/3(Rev.1)**](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0003/en)**)**

2.1 Resuming the earlier discussion on Decision 500 (C-2000), the representative of the General Secretariatemphasized that the decision referred only to the English language and that its abrogation would not affect the practice of official ITU languages other than English. Confirmation had been obtained from the heads of the six ITU language sections. In French, Spanish and Arabic, when referring to the chair as the function (when the gender of the person doing the job was not known), the masculine form could be used. When referring to a named chair, the masculine or feminine form was used, as appropriate. The Russian and Chinese texts were gender neutral already: the same word was used for the role and the individual, whether male or female. Under Decision 500 (C-2000), the term “chairman” had been used in English at the time to refer to both the function and role (when there was no named holder) and to the individual holder of the role at a specific meeting or conference. The use of “chairman” was extremely outdated in English and not in line with United Nations system usage or with the use of the language in general.

2.2 The proposal was to abrogate Decision 500 (C-2000), so as to use the neutral term “chair” in English for the function and the role, and to apply that to ITU documents in future, with no retroactive effect. There would be no financial or legal implications to the abrogation. In conclusion, it was an overdue update to very outmoded terminology in the English language only and there was no implication for texts or translations in other languages.

2.3 Several councillors, noting that the clarification provided was clear and unambiguous, said that the word “chairman” was obsolete in English, no longer used in practice and even potentially offensive in the case of a meeting or body presided over by a woman. It was clear that abrogating Decision 500 (C-2000) would not affect any of the other five official languages of the Union. As other United Nations organizations already used the gender-neutral term “chair”, it was time for ITU to follow suit. Moreover, not doing so would reflect poorly on ITU’s ability to adapt in the digital age.

2.4 Some councillors said that rendering the word “chairman” obsolete would necessarily also render the ITU Constitution and the ITU Convention obsolete. There was a footnote in each that stated that the word “chairman” was to be considered gender neutral. As the ITU Constitution was the highest legal instrument of ITU, it had to be respected.

2.5 The Chairman proposed that the Council approvethe abrogation of Decision 500 (C-2000), while noting the formal reservations of Saudi Arabia, Algeria and Egypt.

2.6 It was so **agreed**, and the Council **approved** Document C23/3(Rev.1).

**3 Report of the Standing Committee on Administration and Management   
(Documents** [**C23/104**](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0104/en)**,** [**C23/DL/10**](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-230711-DL-0010/en)**,** [**C23/DL/11**](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-230711-DL-0011/en) **and** [**C23/DL/12**](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-230711-DL-0012/en)**)**

3.1 The Chairman of the Standing Committee on Administration and Management introduced the committee’s report contained in Document C23/104. While the committee had reached consensus on the vast majority of items assigned to it, he said that it had been unable to arrive at a consensus recommendation on certain items, namely the new headquarters premises project; the 12th report of the Independent Management Advisory Committee (IMAC); financial implications of the regional initiatives adopted by WTDC-22; transformation roadmap to achieve organizational excellence; and towards a “One ITU” resource mobilization strategy. While consensus had been reached on the amendments to the statute of the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) and the related draft resolution, he had subsequently received a letter from the President of the ITU Staff Council, published as Document C23/DL/10, describing the impact that those amendments would ultimately have on staff salaries and proposing actions that the Council might consider in order to mitigate that impact. The committee had discussed the matter at length, but the plenary meeting might wish to further consider the suggestions made by the Staff Council and how best to proceed with implementation of the resolution.

3.2 The Chairman introduced Documents C23/DL/11 and C23/DL/12, the former containing all the recommendations on which the standing committee had achieved consensus and the latter the items where further consideration by the Council was required. He proposed that the recommendations contained in Document C23/DL/11 be approved *en bloc*, in the interest of time, and that those contained in Document C23/DL/12 be considered separately.

3.3 While several councillors supported the proposed way forward, believing it unnecessary to consider any further the recommendations that had already been approved, several other councillors objected to the splitting of the report, saying that the report should be considered in the form that it had been approved by the committee but adding that there was no need to reconsider the recommendations on which consensus had been achieved. In the view of one councillor, the recommendation and resolution on the amendments to the ICSC statute should be further considered in view of the letter contained in C23/DL/10.

3.4 Some councillors said that it was not possible to agree on the outstanding issues separately from each other as they all related in part to organizational transformation, and assurances were required in certain areas before agreement could be reached in others.

3.5 The Chairman suggested holding informal interregional discussions, involving two representatives from each region, with a view to arriving at consensus recommendations on the outstanding items.

3.6 It was so **agreed**.

3.7 Following the informal discussions, the Chairman of the Standing Committee said that the regional representatives, having all displayed flexibility in the interest of consensus, had agreed on a package of amendments to the pending recommendations in the committee’s report and related annexes thereto, on which basis the plenary could proceed to approve it in the usual manner.

3.8 In the ensuing debate on the standing committee report, in addition to various minor editorial amendments reflected in the final texts of the recommendations as set out below, the following main comments and changes were made and the following actions taken.

3.9 The Chairman of the Standing Committee drew attention to the fact that, in accordance with Resolution 51 (Rev. Minneapolis, 1998) of the Plenipotentiary Conference, Mr Onder Cetinkaya, President of the ITU Staff Council, had made a statement to the standing committee, the text of which is available at: <https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-INF-0016/en>.

* ***Draft biennial budget of the Union for 2024-2025 (Documents***[***C23/60***](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0060/en) ***and*** [***C23/DT/7***](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-230711-TD-0007/en)***)***

3.10 The following recommendation was **approved**:

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| The committee recommends that the Council take note of Document C23/60 and adopt the draft resolution on the biennial budget of the Union for 2024-2025 contained in Annex A. |

* ***Choice of class of contribution for defraying the Union’s expenses (Document***[***C23/43***](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0043/en)***)***

3.11 The following recommendation was **approved**:

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| The committee recommends that the Council take note of Document C23/43. |

* ***Annual review of revenue and expenses for the implementation of the 2023 budget (Document*** [***C23/9***](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0009/en)***)***

3.12 The following recommendation was **approved**:

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| The committee recommends that the Council take note of Document C23/9. |

* ***Implementation of the voluntary separation programme (Document*** [***C23/51***](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0051/en)***)***

3.13 The following recommendation was **approved**:

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| The committee recommends that the Council take note of Document C23/51 and invite the Secretary-General to report to the next session of the Council on the implementation of the programme and savings made. |

* ***Cost recovery for the processing of satellite network filings (Document*** [***C23/16***](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0016/en)***)***

3.14 The following recommendation was **approved**:

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| The committee recommends that the Council take note of Document C23/16. |

* ***Union’s headquarters premises project (Documents*** [***C23/7(Rev.1)***](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0007/en)***,*** [***C23/48***](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0048/en)***,*** [***C23/95***](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0095/en) ***and*** [***C23/DL/9***](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-230711-DL-0009/en)***)***

3.15 The Chairman of the Standing Committee said that the package of changes agreed to in the informal interregional discussions included modifications to Annex B to the report, on the next steps for the new headquarters building project. With there currently being no budget for project rescoping activities and the present loan arrangement being restricted to construction and not including provisions for planning activities, Annex B, as amended, stated that the secretariat would liaise with the Swiss authorities on how to provide for costs arising from rescoping activities.

3.16 With the amendments to Annex B to the committee’s report having been **agreed**, the following recommendation was **approved**:

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| The committee recommends that the Council approve the next steps for the new building project, as contained in Annex B. |

* ***Study on the appropriateness of ITU Council Decision 482 (C01, last amended C20) to recover costs associated with the processing of satellite network filings (Documents***[***C23/19***](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0019/en)***,*** [***C23/82***](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0082/en) ***and*** [***C23/DT/6***](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-230711-TD-0006/en)***)***

3.17 The following recommendation was **approved**:

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| The committee recommends that the Council establish an expert group on Decision 482 with the terms of reference as contained in Document C23/DT/6, and adopt the draft decision in Annex C to this report. |

* ***Information and Communication Technologies Development Fund (ICT-DF) (Document*** [***C23/34***](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0034/en)***)***

3.18 The following recommendation was **approved**:

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| The committee recommends that the Council take note of the report in Document C23/34 and adopt the draft resolution in Annex D to this report. |

* ***External Auditor's interim report on ITU's 2022 financial statements (Document***[***C23/98***](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0098/en)***) and ITU management's response to the External Auditor's interim report (Document***[***C23/99***](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0099/en)***)***

3.19 The following recommendation was **approved**:

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| The committee recommends that the Council take note of Documents C23/98 and C23/99 and decide to:   * encourage the Secretary-General to accelerate the implementation of recommendations of the External Auditor outstanding from previous years; * hold an additional session in autumn 2023 to examine the final report of the External Auditor on the 2022 financial statements and approve the financial operating report on the audited accounts; * abrogate Article 10.4 of the ITU Financial Regulations. |

* ***Twelfth report of the Independent Management Advisory Committee (Document***[***C23/22***](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0022/en)***)***

3.20 Recalling that the committee had been unable to agree on the endorsement of either all or specific recommendations of the Independent Management Advisory Committee (IMAC), the Chairman of the Standing Committee proposed that reference to the IMAC recommendations be removed from the recommendation, as agreed in the informal interregional discussions, and that the committee simply recommend that the Council take note of the report.

3.21 It was so **agreed**, and the following recommendation, as amended, was **approved**:

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| The committee recommends that the Council take note of the IMAC report in Document C23/22. |

* ***Financial management transformation plan (Document [C23/50](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0050/en))***

3.22 The following recommendation was **approved**:

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| The committee recommends that the Council take note of the report in Document C23/50 and invite the secretariat to report on financial management transformation to the next meeting of CWG-FHR. |

* ***Proposal for the creation of an oversight unit (Documents*** [***C23/50***](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0050/en)***,*** [***C23/53***](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0053/en) ***and*** [***C23/DL/6(Rev.1)***](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-230711-DL-0006/en)***)***

3.23 The following recommendation was **approved**:

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| The committee proposes that the Council take note of the proposal to create an oversight unit and approve the creation of a Chief of Oversight position at the D.1 level.  Thus, the committee proposes that the Council:   * endorse the creation of an oversight unit, with the structure as defined in Document C23/DL/6(Rev.1); * approve the creation of a Chief of Oversight Unit position at the D.1 level, with the job description defined in Annex 1 to Document C23/53; * invite the Secretary-General to submit a draft oversight charter and ToR of the evaluation function to CWG-FHR for approval by the Council in 2024. |

* ***Strengthening of internal control systems and measures (Document*** [***C23/20***](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0020/en)***)***

3.24 The following recommendation was **approved**:

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| The committee recommends that the Council take note of Document C23/20 and invite the Secretary-General to enhance the reporting on internal controls, systems and measures in accordance with the COSO framework and to dedicate a permanent agenda item to risk management in the next Council sessions. |

* ***Appointment of members of the Independent Management Advisory Committee  
  (Document*** [***C23/23***](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0023/en)***)***

3.25 The following recommendation was **approved**:

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| The committee recommends that the Council take note of Document C23/23 and decide to:   * endorse the selected candidates for appointment to IMAC; * adopt the decision contained in Annex E to this report; * express appreciation to the outgoing members of IMAC for their work in service of the Union. |

* ***Financial implications of the regional initiatives adopted by WTDC-22  
  (Documents***[***C23/26+Add.1***](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0026/en)***,*** [***C23/70+Corr.1***](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0070/en)***,*** [***C23/80***](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0080/en) ***and*** [***C23/DT/8***](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-230711-TD-0008/en)***)***

3.26 The Chairman of the Standing Committee said that the package of amendments agreed in the informal interregional discussions had addressed the concerns of many councillors that using the ICT‑DF to finance the regional initiatives was merely a temporary solution and that budget allocations should be provided for beyond 2025. He proposed that the committee recommend that the Council adopt the amended recommendation on that basis.

3.27 It was so **agreed**, and the following recommendation, as amended, was **approved**:

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| The committee recommends that the Council adopt the draft resolution in Annex D as a temporary mechanism for mobilizing funds for regional initiatives, and encourage the secretariat to seek additional funding and foresee allocations in the next budgetary cycle to cover the period 2026-2027. |

* ***Transformation roadmap to achieve organizational excellence   
  (Documents*** [***C23/52***](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0052/en) ***and*** [***C23/DL/7***](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-230711-DL-0007/en)***)***

3.28 The Chairman of the Standing Committee proposed that the Council adopt the recommendation as amended as a result of the informal interregional discussions.

3.29 It was so **agreed**, and the following recommendation, as amended, was **approved**:

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| The committee recommends that the Council:   * endorse in principle the creation of a Transformation Team within the Executive Office of the Secretary-General; * instruct CWG-FHR to elaborate the Transformation Team terms of reference; * approve the creation of a Chief of Transformation Team position at the D.1 level; * the Transformation Team should report on its activities to the Council through CWG-FHR for assessment and review; * instruct CWG-FHR to provide proposals and recommendations on the operational transformation based on PP Resolution 71 and Decision 5 with a view to developing a Transformation Roadmap with related KPIs, taking into account the proposals contained in Documents C23/52 and C23/DL/7; * authorize the Secretary-General to use the remaining amount allocated through Council Resolution 1412 (C23-EXT) to absorb the deficit arising from 2022 budget implementation. |

* ***Special report by the External Auditor on the Regional Office for the Americas – Status update (Document*** [***C23/42***](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0042/en)***)***

3.30 The following recommendation was **approved**:

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| The committee recommends that the Council take note of Document C23/42. |

* ***Report from the Investigation Unit (Document*** [***C23/15***](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0015/en)***)***

3.31 The following recommendation was **approved**:

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| The committee recommends that the Council take note of Document C23/15. |

* ***Report of the Internal Auditor on internal audit activities   
  (Document*** [***C23/44***](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0044/en) ***and*** [***C23/INF/5***](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-INF-0005/en)***)***

3.32 The following recommendation was **approved**:

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| The committee recommends that the Council take note of Documents C23/44 and C23/INF/5. |

* **Towards an ITU-wide resource mobilization strategy   
  (Documents**[**C23/62(Rev.1)**](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0062/en)**,** [**C23/72(Rev.1)+Corr.1**](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0072/en)**,** [**C23/94**](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0094/en) **and** [**C23/90**](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0090/en)**)**

3.33 The Chairman of the Standing Committee said that, as part of the informal interregional discussions, it had been agreed that the matter was distinct from the concept of One ITU and changes had been made to the title of the item and the recommendation on that basis, including by replacing “One ITU” with “ITU-wide” in both places.

3.34 One councillor pointed out that references to “One ITU” should also be replaced in the summary of the committee’s discussion in report, where appropriate.

3.35 It was so **agreed**, and the following recommendation, as amended, was **approved**:

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| The committee recommends that the Council:   * take note of the report contained in Document C23/62(Rev.1); * invite the Secretary-General to report to CWG-FHR and to the Council on:   - refinement of the draft ITU-wide resource mobilization strategy presented in Document C23/62(Rev.1); and  - implementation of the ITU-wide resource mobilization strategy;   * invite the Secretary-General to leverage the outcomes of the ITU World Café on revenue generation (Document C22/INF/13), study new measures to generate supplementary revenue for ITU and review these matters at the next meetings of CWG-FHR and the next session of the Council; * consistent with PP-22 decisions, instruct the Secretary-General to coordinate with the Directors of the Bureaux to submit to the 2024 session of the Council through CWG-FHR a report on the implementation of the concept of One ITU. |

* ***Report from the Ethics Office (Document*** [***C23/14***](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0014/en)***)***

3.36 The following recommendation was **approved**:

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| The committee recommends that the Council take note of the report from the Ethics Office (Document C23/14). |

* ***JIU reports and notes on United Nations system-wide issues for 2021-2022 and recommendations to executive heads and legislative bodies (Document*** [***C23/57***](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0057/en)***)***

3.37 The following recommendation was **approved**:

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| The committee recommends that the Council take note of the overall status of acceptance and implementation of recommendations of JIU system-wide reports addressed to the ITU Executive Head and approve the acceptance of the two recommendations addressed to the Legislative Bodies (Recommendation 6 of JIU/REP/2021/6, on business continuity management in United Nations system organizations, and Recommendation 2 of JIU/REP/2021/5, on review of the ethics function in the United Nations system). |

* ***Arrears and special arrears accounts (Document*** [***C23/11***](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0011/en)***)***

3.38 The following recommendation was **approved**:

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| The committee recommends that the Council take note of the report in Document C23/11 and decide to approve the writing-off of interest on arrears and irrecoverable debts totalling CHF 2 969 139.02 and to adopt the draft decision set out in Annex F to this report. |

* ***After-Service Health Insurance (ASHI) (Document*** [***C23/46***](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0046/en)***)***

3.39 The following recommendation was **approved**:

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| The committee recommends that the Council take note of the report in Document C23/46. |

* ***Report on the use of the six languages of the Union on an equal footing (Document***[***C23/47***](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0047/en)***)***

3.40 The following recommendation was **approved**:

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| The committee recommends that the Council take note of the report in Document C23/47. |

* ***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 (Document*** [***C23/54***](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0054/en)***)***

3.41 The following recommendation was **approved**:

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| The committee recommends that the Council take note of this report and invite the Secretary-General to prepare a roadmap for the harmonization and the development of facilities and capabilities to organize and conduct fully virtual meetings and physical meetings with remote participation by electronic means for the meetings of the Union, for submission to the 2024 session of the Council. |

* ***Provisional participation of entities dealing with telecommunication matters in the activities of ITU (Document*** [***C23/10***](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0010/en)***)***

3.42 The following recommendation was **approved**:

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| The committee recommends that the Council confirm the action taken by the Secretary-General regarding the admission of the entities dealing with telecommunication matters listed in the annex to Document C23/10. |

* ***New requests for exemption from fees for organizations of an international character (Document*** [***C23/39***](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0039/en)***)***

3.43 The following recommendation was **approved**:

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| The committee recommends that the Council approve the recommendations from the Secretary-General on requests for exemption from Sector Member fees as set out in Document C23/39. |

* ***Progress report on the implementation of the human resources strategic plan and of Resolution 48 (Rev. Bucharest, 2022) (Document*** [***C23/55***](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0055/en)***)***

3.44 The following recommendation was **approved**:

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| The committee recommends that the Council take note of the progress report on the implementation of the human resources strategic plan and of PP Resolution 48 (Rev. Bucharest, 2022) contained in Document C23/55. |

* ***Changes in the conditions of service under the United Nations common system (Document*** [***C23/18***](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0018/en)***)***

3.45 The following recommendation was **approved**:

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| The committee recommends that the Council:   * take note of the implementation of the UNGA decisions in accordance with the ITU Staff Regulations and Staff Rules applicable to appointed staff, including those implemented by the Secretary-General in conformity with Council Resolution 647 (C‑1969, last amended C03); * approve the salary scale and the pensionable remuneration applicable to elected officials, as contained in the draft resolution in Annex G to this report; * instruct the secretariat to have the ITU Staff Rules and Staff Regulations re-translated into English from the original French. |

* ***Amendments to the statute of the International Civil Service Commission (Documents*** [***C23/56***](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0056/en) ***and*** [***C23/DL/10***](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-230711-DL-0010/en)***)***

3.46 The Chairman of the Standing Committee proposed that the committee’s recommendation and the related resolution be amended in view of the changes made during the informal interregional discussions, where it had been agreed to amend the resolution in Annex H to the report, removing the instruction to the Secretary-General to implement the official ICSC post adjustment multipliers provided after the date of the acceptance of those amendments, and to amend the committee’s recommendation by requesting the Secretary-General to explore any permissible flexibility in implementing the resolution and the ICSC post adjustment multiplier and inviting her to take into account the concerns of the Staff Council.

3.47 It was so **agreed** and the following recommendation, as amended, was **approved**:

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| The committee recommends that the Council take note of Document C23/56 and adopt the draft resolution on the acceptance of the amendments to the statute of ICSC, as amended, contained in Annex H to this report and request the Secretary-General to explore any permissible flexibility in implementing this decision and report to the next Council session on the implementation of the resolution, including the ICSC post-adjustment multiplier.  The Council invites the Secretary-General to take into account the concerns of the Staff Council when implementing the resolution. |

* ***Participation of ITU in memoranda of understanding with financial and/or strategic implications (Documents*** [***C23/45***](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0045/en) ***and*** [***C23/69***](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0069/en)***)***

3.48 The following recommendation was **approved**:

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| The committee recommends that the Council:  • take note of the report contained in Document C23/45;  • invite the Secretary-General to communicate to CWG-FHR and to the Council the criteria used by the secretariat to identify MoUs with strategic and/or financial implications for consideration;  • invite the Secretary-General to make improvements to the MoU dashboard based on the recommendations contained in Document 23/69. |

* ***Proposed modifications to Council Decision 563 (C11, last amended C19) (Document***[***C23/97***](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0097/en)***)***

3.49 The following recommendation was **approved**:

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| The committee recommends that the Council adopt the draft revision of Decision 563 (C11, last amended C19), on the Council Working Group on financial and human resources, in Annex I to this report. |

3.50 By approving the recommendations set out above, the Council also **adopted** the following texts contained in Document C23/104:

Annex A: Resolution on the biennial budget of the Union for 2024-2025

Annex B: Next steps for the new building project

Annex C: Decision on the Expert Group on Decision 482

Annex D : Resolution on the Information and Communication Technologies Development Fund

Annex E: Decision on appointment of members of the Independent Management Advisory Committee

Annex F: Decision on cancellation of interest on arrears and irrecoverable debts

Annex G: Decision on conditions of service of ITU elected officials

Annex H: Resolution on amendments to the statute of the International Civil Service Commission

Annex I: Revision of Decision 563 (C11, last amended C19), on CWG-FHR.

3.51 The report by the Chairman of the Standing Committee on Administration and Management, as a whole, as amended, was **approved**, for publication as Document C23/104(Rev.1).

**4 Proposed** **dates and duration of the 2024, 2025, and 2026 sessions of the Council along with the proposed dates of clusters of Council working groups and expert groups for the same period (Documents** [**C23/2**](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0002/en) **and** [**C23/87+Corr.1 and 2**](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0087/en)**)**

4.1 The Secretary of the Plenary introduced Document C23/2. In 2022, the Council had adopted Decision 626 (C22), which set the dates of regular sessions of the Council from 2023 until 2026, along with the dates of the clusters of Council working groups (CWGs) and expert groups (EGs). There had been several developments since the adoption of that decision. Firstly, owing to changes in the schedule for the new ITU headquarters building project, it had become possible to hold the 2024 and 2025 sessions of the Council at ITU. Secondly, the Geneva International Motor Show had been scheduled at the same time as the CWG and EG cluster in February 2024. Thus, it was proposed to hold that cluster on 2 January - 2 February 2024. Diverging from the proposals contained in the document, it was suggested to maintain the nine-day duration of Council sessions and hold the next three sessions of the Council on 4-14 June 2024, 10-20 June 2025 and 28 April - 8 May 2026, respectively. In addition, it was proposed to hold the 2023 CWG and EG cluster on 9-20 October 2023 and an additional session of the Council on 19-20 October to facilitate participation of delegates in both.

4.2 The Secretary-General explained that the additional session had been scheduled for those dates in order to allow sufficient time for the External Auditor to complete the final report and for Councillors to review it.

4.3 The observer for the Russian Federation introduced the relevant part of multicountry contribution contained in Document C23/87+Corr.1 and 2 on behalf of five countries, submitted partly in response to the proposed dates and duration of the Council session and CWG and EG clusters in 2024, 2025 and 2026, as contained in Document C23/2. Reducing the duration of Council sessions would only make sense if efforts were also made to optimize the time allocated for, and ensure the smooth running of, discussions during Council sessions. As seen at the present session, even nine days had not been enough. Holding fully virtual CWG and EG sessions posed problems in terms of technology, available working hours and accommodating different time zones, while rendering impossible the holding of valuable discussions on the margins or during breaks of meetings. It was important to recall Council Resolution 1333 (C11, last amended C16), which resolved that CWGs should address issues important to Union strategy, and to recall that CWGs and EGs were open to all Member States. Thus, while remote participation should be expanded, sessions should not be fully virtual.

4.4 One councillor expressed reservations about a CWG and EG cluster each year being scheduled as fully virtual instead of as a physical meeting with remote participation and said that the forthcoming sessions of the Council and CWG and EG clusters should be held in compliance with Council Decision 626 (C22).

4.5 Another councillor said that it would be preferable for the 2023 CWG and EG cluster not to overlap with the additional 2023 session of the Council, given that the same delegates would be attending both events, at least for his delegation. It would also be preferable if all CWG and EG clusters were physical meetings with remote participation.

4.6 One councillor noted that the proposed dates for the CWG and EG cluster in October 2023 also overlapped with those of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF), which could cause a problem for councillors expected to attend both events.

4.7 The Deputy Secretary-General said it was regrettable that the CWG and EG cluster overlapped with the additional session but noted that only the Expert Group on Decision 482 did so. Despite best efforts, that overlap had proved unavoidable.

4.8 Responding to a question from a councillor, the Secretary of the Plenary said that the 2023 CWG and EG cluster and the additional 2023 session of the Council would be physical meetings with remote participation. Decision-making at the additional session would be in compliance with the Council’s Rules of Procedure. She added that the CWG and EG meetings would be arranged so as to minimize the impact of the overlap with IGF.

4.9 The Chairman proposed that the dates and duration of the 2023 CWG and EG cluster and of the additional session of the Council be approved and that further discussion of and decision on the dates and duration of the 2024, 2025, and 2026 sessions of the Council and CWG and EG clusters be deferred until the additional 2023 session of the Council.

4.10 It was so **agreed**.

**5 Schedule of future conferences, assemblies and meetings of the Union: 2023-2026 (Document** [**C23/37(Rev.1)**](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0037/en)**)**

5.1 A representative of the General Secretariat introduced Document C23/37(Rev.1), stating that the calendar took into account various resolutions of the Plenipotentiary Conference, including Resolution 77 (Rev. Bucharest, 2022) and the principles contained in Resolution 111 (Rev. Busan, 2014). It also took into account the proposed new dates regarding the CWG and EG cluster and the additional session of the Council in October 2023; all changes had been reflected in Document C23/37(Rev.1)). Any changes to proposed dates for 2024 and beyond would be reflected in a revised version of the document.

5.2 The Council **noted** Document C23/37(Rev. 1).

**6 List of candidatures for chairmen and vice-chairmen of the Council working groups and expert groups (continued) (Document** [**C23/21(Rev.3)**](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0021/en)**)**

6.1 The Chairman introduced Document C23/21(Rev.3)and thanked regional representatives for their tireless work in reaching a compromise solution on the proposed CWG and EG chairmen and vice-chairmen and, in particular, the Asia-Pacific Telecommunity (APT) for their understanding and spirit of collaboration, which had allowed the compromise to be reached. Decision 11 (Rev. Bucharest, 2022) of the Plenipotentiary Conference recognized that the Council had consistently appointed competent and qualified candidates for the leadership of CWGs, but that there remained a need to further promote and enhance equitable geographical distribution and gender balance. The regional groups had thus worked hard to further that goal.

6.2 He announced that the proposed candidates for CWG and EG chairmen were as follows:

* Council Working Group on child online protection (CWG-COP) — Mr Abdelaziz Al Zarooni (United Arab Emirates);
* Council Working Group on financial and human resources (CWG-FHR) — Ms Vernita Harris (United States);
* Council Working Group on international Internet-related public policy issues (CWG-Internet) — Mr Wojciech Berezowski (Poland);
* Council Working Group on the use of the six official languages (CWG-LANG) — Ms Sharon Bosire (Kenya);
* Council Working Group on WSIS and the Sustainable Development Goals (CWG-WSIS&SDGs) — Ms Cynthia Lesufi (South Africa);
* Expert Group on Decision 482 (EG-Decision 482) — Ms Fenhong Cheng (China); and
* Expert group on the International Telecommunication Regulations (EG-ITRs) — Ms Shahira Selim (Egypt).

6.3 A Council working group on the strategic and financial plans (CWG-SFP) and an informal expert group on the World Telecommunication Policy Forum (WTPF) would be created the following year. The proposed chairmen for those groups were, respectively, Mr Mansour AI-Qurashi (Saudi Arabia) and Mr David Bedard (Canada).

6.4 In the spirit of compromise, APT would be invited to nominate a candidate for chairman of any new CWG, EG or other group of councillors established between the 2023 session of the Council and the 2026 plenipotentiary conference.

6.5 The Council **approved** the proposed chairmen of the aforementioned CWGs.

6.6 The Chairman announced that the proposed candidates for CWG and EG vice-chairmen were as follows:

* CWG-COP — Ms Stella Chubiyo Erebor (Nigeria), Mr Kemie Jones (Bahamas), Ms May Ali Alghatam (Bahrain), Ms Jocelle Batapa-Sigue (Philippines), Ms Aysel Hadiyeva (Azerbaijan) and Mr Domenico Alfieri (Italy);
* CWG-FHR — Ms Seynabou Seck Cisse (Senegal), Mr Ronaldo Moura (Brazil), Ms Noha Gaafar (Egypt), Mr Daniel Caruso (Australia), Ms Daria Kaliuga (Russian Federation) and Mr Szabolcs Szentleleky (Hungary);
* CWG-Internet — Mr Ramy Ahmed Fathy (Egypt), Ms Emilce Maria Portillo Gonzalez (Paraguay), Mr Abdulrahman Al Marzouqi (United Arab Emirates), Ms Xiao Zhang (China), Mr Kamal Mammadov (Azerbaijan) and Mr Nigel Hickson (United Kingdom);
* CWG-LANG – Ms Rim Belhaj (Tunisia), Mr Jian Wang (China), Ms Yana Brugier (France), Ms Maria Bolshakova (Russian Federation) and Ms Blanca Gonzalez (Spain);
* CWG-WSIS&SDGs – Ms Janet Umutesi (Rwanda), Ms Renata Santoyo (Brazil), Mr Ahmed Saleem (Iraq), Ms Mina Seonmin Jun (Republic of Korea), Ms Khayala Pashazade (Azerbaijan) and Ms Susanna Mattsson (Sweden);
* EG-Decision 482 — Mr Mostafa Mousa (Egypt), Ms Anabel del Carmen Cisneros (Argentina), Mr Abdulrhaman AlNajdi (Saudi Arabia), Mr Meiditomo Sutyarjoko (Indonesia), Mr Nikolay Varlamov (Russian Federation) and Mr Cristian Ungureanu (Romania); and
* EG-ITRs — Mr Guy-Michel Kouakou (Côte d’Ivoire), Ms Ena Dekanic (United States), Mr Omar Ali Alnemer (United Arab Emirates), Mr Anand Singh (India), Mr Alexey Borodin (Russian Federation) and Mr Vilem Vesely (Czech Republic).

6.7 The councillor from Spain, speaking on behalf of the European Union and its Member States, said that a proper functioning ITU required the support of effective and efficient CWGs, which, in turn, were built on sincere cooperation, trust and a consensus-based approach. In the current context, any candidate belonging to a country acting in contradiction of the Constitution and mission of ITU was not in a position to build trust and consensus among participants, and the European Union and its Member States could not agree to the appointment of nationals of the Russian Federation, however well qualified, to lead or co-lead such an important part of the Union’s work. Consequently, he requested the removal of all candidates from the Russian Federation from the list of proposed CWG and EG vice-chairmen and proposed that all other candidates be approved by consensus. His statement was supported by the councillors from Canada, Romania, Japan, the United States, Czech Republic, Australia, Poland, France, the United Kingdom, Sweden, Bulgaria, Italy, Germany and the Republic of Korea.

6.8 The councillor from China said that it was normal practice for each region to be represented in CWGs and EGs by a vice-chairman, which was an expert-level position, and thus invited other councillors to consider the fairness of excluding the CIS region from certain groups. The councillors from Cuba, Brazil and South Africa expressed support for that statement.

6.9 The councillor from Saudi Arabia suggested having a break in the meeting to allow further consultations with a view to achieving consensus on the CWG and EG vice-chairmen. That proposal was supported by the councillors from Cuba, Brazil and South Africa.

6.10 The councillor from Egypt said that his country placed great emphasis on the technical mandate of ITU and cautioned against factoring any other aspects into its considerations that might compromise its technical nature.

6.11 The observer for Ukraine associated himself with the statement made by the councillor from Spain, and with the statements of councillors made in support thereof, and shared councillors’ concerns about the threat to the core principles and values of the Union if representatives of the Russian Federation occupied leadership positions in the working bodies of the Union. It was imperative that Member States uphold the principles of peace, stability and responsible leadership within ITU. For that reason, ITU must maintain its credibility as a body free from the influence of States that engage in aggressive actions against other nations. The Russian Federation's actions in recent times had demonstrated a pattern of aggression, including through illegal annexations and military interventions in sovereign territories. As far as Ukraine was concerned, everyone had witnessed the consensus adoption of the resolution on assistance and support to Ukraine for rebuilding its telecommunication sector, which unanimously condemned all wrongdoings committed by the Russian Federation in Ukraine related to the destruction of Ukraine’s telecommunication sector. The rejection of an aggressor State from leadership positions within ITU was not an act of hostility; rather, it was an assertion of the fundamental principles that Member States collectively stood for, and an expression of the commitment to uphold the rule of law and international norms. Therefore, he called on all Member States to take a principled stance against allowing any representatives of the Russian Federation to occupy leadership positions in ITU. Instead, Member States must encourage candidates who embody the spirit of collaboration, respect for sovereignty and adherence to international law.

6.12 The observer for the Russian Federation delivered the statement available at: <http://council.itu.int/2023/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2023/08/C23-RussianFederation-Statement-VC_en.pdf>.

6.13 Responding to a question from the observer for Sudan, the councillor from Algeria, speaking as representative of the Africa region, said that the African Telecommunications Union had initially had two candidates for vice-chairman of CWG-FHR, one from Senegal and one from Sudan, but could only put forward one candidate to represent the region for each vice-chairman, as per the rules. As the candidate from Senegal would be entering her second term as vice-chairman, it had been agreed to put her forward as vice-chairman again.

6.14 Following a break in the meeting for further consultations, the Chairman proposed that the CWG and EG vice-chairmen as read out be approved, except for those from the Russian Federation for the CIS region, and that the Regional Commonwealth in the field of Communications be invited to propose candidates for vice-chairman of CWG-FHR, CWG-LANG and EG-Decision 482 to the additional 2023 session of the Council.

6.15 It was so **agreed**.

**7 Improvement of the ITU Council (Documents** [**C23/32**](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0032/en)**,** [**C23/75**](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0075/en)**,** [**C23/78**](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0078/en)**,** [**C23/86+Corr.1 and 2**](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0086/en)**,** [**C23/87+Corr.1 and 2**](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CL-C-0087/en)**)**

7.1 The Secretary of the Plenary introduced Document C23/32, which summarized the steps already taken in preparing for the 2023 session of the Council and suggested further improvements for upcoming sessions, with the aim of improving the Council’s strategic role and efficiency.

7.2 The Councillor from China introduced Document C23/78, which responded to the proposal from the secretariat on efforts to improve the efficiency of Council discussions. China considered that the core objective of improvement of the Council was to enable the Council to better fulfil its mandate as laid down in the ITU Constitution and Convention. In that regard, the Council would need to hear a wide range of perspectives from the Member States, and follow the applicable rules and procedures of the Union. In China’s opinion, reducing the duration of Council was simply not viable. Regarding high-level events, proper coordination was necessary and Member States must be consulted on the theme and agenda of proposed events, preferably on the basis of an annual plan. The Council should develop guidelines on the theme, organization and effectiveness of side events. The proposed appointment of regional focal points among the councillors would be difficult to implement, since in her region, for instance, there was no mechanism to coordinate Council matters. The Council was not a large group of all the Member States, and the councillors were already elected representatives of their regions. China proposed that the question of improvement of the Council be deferred to CWG‑FHR, with a view to reporting on the issue to Council-24.

7.3 The Councillor from Saudi Arabia said that Document C23/75 contained a multicountry contribution on behalf of eight Member States, which would be introduced in more detail at the additional Council session in October 2023. With regard to the duration of Council sessions, the countries concerned were in favour of adhering to Council Decision 626 (C22), and more time was required for deliberation on specific items rather than high-level discussion. The nomination of regional focal points was problematic given that the Council Member States were elected.

7.4 The observer for the Russian Federation introduced two multicountry contributions on behalf of four Member States, in Document C23/86+Corr.1 and 2, relating to the secretariat’s arrangements for Council-23 and proposals for future sessions, and the relevant part of Document C23/87+Corr.1+Corr.2, relating to agenda-setting and improvements to the preparation and decision-making process of Council sessions.

7.5 She observed that a number of rules of procedure had been violated in the organization of the 2023 session of the Council. Circular letters from the Secretary-General reminding – not informing – Member States of future sessions of the Council should be devoted exclusively to the convening and conduct of a session and not contain information on unrelated events, which must be sent separately. Any meeting or consultations of councillors should be carried out in strict accordance with the Rules of Procedure. Persons designated by their administration as councillors did not enjoy that status in any meetings or events which did not form part of the formal sessions of the Council. Furthermore, holding side events or carrying out activities that were not provided for in the Rules of Procedure at the expense of financial, human and time resources allocated to the Council was a cause for concern and set a dangerous precedent. The Chatham House Rule format could not be applied for any ITU event, since it was not provided for in the ITU Constitution or Convention, the General Rules of conferences, assemblies and meetings of the Union, or decisions of the Council or the Plenipotentiary Conference.

7.6 The upcoming sessions of the Council in 2024, 2025 and 2026 should be held as prescribed by the Council in Decision 626 (C22). Given the length and intensity of Council discussions, it would be judicious to prioritize draft agenda items well in advance of sessions. The Council might recommend that the Secretary-General solicit Member States’ views on the importance and relevance of annotated agenda items so as to draw up the final agenda on the basis of Member States’ assessments and optimize the time-management plan accordingly. With regard to nominating regional focal points, the Council was a body of limited representation. The existing effective mechanism of regional coordination for major ITU events, including the Plenipotentiary Conference, on whose behalf the Council acted, was through the regional telecommunication organizations.

7.7 The councillor from France said that the reforms presented by the secretariat to enhance the Council’s efficiency and strategic role were necessary. In particular, France supported the measures to strengthen dialogue with Member States and the improvements made to the drafting of Council documents, which had become more concise and readable, with an indication of the financial implications of proposals.

7.8 She said that France would be delighted to put the proposal to identify an annual Council theme linked to the implementation of the strategic plan into practice during its presidency of the Council in 2024. It proposed that the theme of ‘greening of ICTs’, an issue of growing concern to many countries, be given centre stage so as to advance implementation of the objective on sustainable digital transformation in the strategic plan for 2024-2027. Particular emphasis should be placed on reducing the environmental footprint of ICTs and leveraging them to combat climate change and support eco-responsibility initiatives in other sectors of the economy. ITU was the best-placed international organization to respond to such challenges on a global scale.

7.9 The councillor from Brazil appreciated the secretariat’s efforts to improve Council processes, in particular the preparatory process and facilitating decision-making. The virtual thematic briefings had proven very useful and should be retained, although more prior information about topics on the agenda could be provided through documents and data to allow councillors to explore the relevant issues in more depth. Like previous speakers, he believed there were strong arguments against reducing the duration of Council sessions.

7.10 The Chairman suggested that the documents on improvement of the ITU Councilbe discussed at the next meeting of CWG-FHR.

7.11 It was so **agreed**.

**8 Closure of the session**

8.1 The Secretary-General delivered the address available at:  
<http://council.itu.int/2023/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2023/08/C23-SG-Doreen-Bogdan-Martin-Closing-speech_en.pdf>.

8.2 A video was screened showcasing the highlights of the 2023 session of the Council.

8.3 The Chairman delivered the address available at:   
<http://council.itu.int/2023/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2023/08/C23-Closing-speech-Cesar-Martinez-Chair-Council_en-1.pdf>.

8.4 The Secretary-General awarded the Chairman the ITU Medal in recognition of his excellent leadership of the Council.

8.5 Several councillors, speaking on behalf of their regional groups, praised the Chairman for his patience and leadership during the 2023 session of the Council. They also thanked the Vice-Chairman of the Council, the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of ADM, the elected officials, the Secretary of the Plenary and the entire secretariat for their valuable support, as well as the technical teams such as the interpreters and technicians who had helped to ensure the smooth running of the session.

8.6 One councillor noted that approximately 2.7 billion people remained unconnected and it was the responsibility of those present to advocate for them, as the decisions made at sessions of the Council impacted billions of lives. Another councillor noted that the work accomplished during the 2023 session of the Council demonstrated that Member States wanted a modern, accountable and efficient Union.

8.7 The Chairman declared the 2023 session of the Council closed.

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

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