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| **Agenda item: PL 2** | **Revision 1 to Document C24/99-E** |
| **4 June 2024** |
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| Contribution from Mexico, Dominican Republic, Panama (Republic of) and Paraguay (Republic of) | |
| YOUTH ENGAGEMENT AND INITIATIVES AT ITU | |
| **Purpose**  The Administrations of Mexico, Panama, Paraguay and the Dominican Republic invite the Council to consider their proposals for improving youth engagement across several initiatives and existing programmes at ITU.  **Action required by the Council**  The Council is invited to **consider** and **discuss** the proposals.  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  **References**  [*Resolution 198 (Rev. Bucharest, 2022)*](https://www.itu.int/en/council/Documents/basic-texts-2023/RES-198-e.pdf)*,* [*Resolution 154 (Rev. Bucharest, 2022)*](https://www.itu.int/en/council/Documents/basic-texts-2023/RES-154-e.pdf)*,* [*Resolution 184 (Rev. Bucharest, 2022)*](https://www.itu.int/en/council/Documents/basic-texts-2023/RES-184-e.pdf)*,* [*Resolution 175 (Rev. Bucharest, 2022)*](https://www.itu.int/en/council/Documents/basic-texts-2023/RES-175-e.pdf) *and* [*Resolution 25 (Rev. Bucharest, 2022)*](https://www.itu.int/en/council/Documents/basic-texts-2023/RES-025-e.pdf) *of the Plenipotentiary Conference; Council* [*Document C24/31*](https://www.itu.int/md/S24-CL-C-0031/en) | |

Introduction

In Resolution 198 (Rev. Bucharest, 2022) of the Plenipotentiary Conference, on the empowerment of youth through telecommunication/information and communication technology (ICT), the Secretary-General is instructed to continue to ensure that the youth perspective is incorporated in the work programmes, management approaches and human resources development activities of ITU, and to submit an annual written report to the ITU Council on progress made.

Background

To comply with Resolution 198 (Rev. Dubai, 2018) of the Plenipotentiary Conference, the ITU Youth Strategy was developed and adopted in 2020, with the aim of improving the lives of young people around the world and ensuring meaningful participation of youth in ITU as key stakeholders in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

At the 2023 session of the ITU Council, furthermore, it was concluded that young people should be empowered to share their experiences and deepen their understanding of telecommunications and ICTs, underlining that young people should be involved in the design, organization and choice of themes for the next youth summit and that young people from all regions should be encouraged and enabled to participate.

The proposing administrations acknowledge the initiatives and mechanisms that the Union has implemented with the aim of increasing young people’s participation and engagement in its activities with programmes such as the Young Professionals Programme (ITU-YPP), the Youth Task Force (ITU-YTF) and the *Generation Connect* initiative*.*

The proposing administrations particularly wish to commend the *Generation Connect* initiative, which is focused on amplifying the voices of youth in ICT-related matters through engagement in ITU initiatives online and offline, bringing unique youth perspectives and championing the voice of youth in the digital development dialogue.

Finally, Member States and Sector Members were requested to continue to support initiatives to promote youth participation with voluntary and in-kind contributions, especially the Youth Strategy and the *Generation Connect* initiative*.*

For the 2024 session of the Council, the General Secretariat has presented its report on youth engagement and initiatives at ITU ([C24/31](https://www.itu.int/md/S24-CL-C-0031/en)), describing progress made in the implementation of initiatives designed around youth participation, and in particular the creation by the Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT), in collaboration with the Member States, of a new cohort of Generation Connect youth envoys to enhance engagement with the ITU Member States in *Generation Connect*.

Proposal

The proposing administrations recognize the importance of empowering young people and making them a part of digital development around the world. However, to achieve the full involvement of all young people in the activities and initiatives developed by the Union, it will be necessary to enhance and implement initiatives and programmes at the regional level, executing them with a view to the equitable use of the six languages of the Union, and the initiatives will have to be inclusive and seek to include all sectors of the population including young people with disabilities and persons belonging to indigenous communities.

To this end, it will be important to take into consideration Resolution 154 (Rev. Bucharest, 2022) of the Plenipotentiary Conference, on the use of the six official languages of the Union on an equal footing, recognizing the great importance of multilingualism and the Union’s commitment to its achievement through the use of its six official languages (Arabic, Chinese, Spanish, French, English and Russian) on an equal footing throughout its activities, within the limits of available resources.

Multilingualism is a fundamental value and a foundational principle of the United Nations, which serves to achieve the objectives of the organization and guarantee that the Member States can participate on an equal footing.

Language can be one of the biggest barriers to participation by young people. The experience of the proposing administrations shows that young people who know only one language can encounter constraints to their participation in ITU initiatives or even find themselves locked out of them entirely. This is a sign that the equal footing is not yet a reality for active participation in international events and discussions.

Similarly, for the initiatives to be truly representative of all sectors of the population it is important to aim for inclusive participation by young people with disabilities and young people belonging to indigenous communities, with a view to facilitating their digital inclusion and benefiting from first-hand knowledge of their viewpoints, which can be included in final outputs of the initiatives, or making it possible for countries that are under-represented in ITU to participate, taking into account their experience and specialized knowledge, in line with Resolution 184 (Rev. Bucharest, 2022) and Resolution 175 (Rev. Bucharest, 2022) of the Plenipotentiary Conference. In view of the foregoing, the proposing administrations reiterate the importance of implementing Resolution 198 and propose the following:

1) The ITU secretariat should instruct the Director of BDT to maintain and strengthen youth engagement and participation, with a particular focus on regional participation so as to support the achievement of the main goals of the Union; and to foster youth participation in its programmes, events and activities, based on *resolves* 2 of Resolution 198.

2) Bearing in mind linguistic and budgetary constraints, the proposing administrations consider it a matter of necessity for the ITU secretariat to create incentives for more regional and local initiatives aimed at participation by young people, encouraging the inclusion of young people belonging to indigenous communities, with a view to supporting and strengthening *resolves* 1 of Resolution 154.

3) The ITU secretariat should examine the possibility of providing interpretation in the six official languages of the Union at regional events for youth initiatives, such as *Generation Connect*, to the extent possible and taking into account also the linguistic make-up of the regions so as to create incentives for participation and improve young people’s understanding of the activities surrounding those initiatives.

4) The ITU secretariat should continue to invite the Member States to put in place such measures as they consider necessary to encourage young people to participate in the activities of ITU - especially those young people who have disabilities or special needs - in order to increase inclusiveness and allow for a broader multitude of perspectives to be incorporated in the spaces and forums of the initiatives that focus on youth, so as to strengthen *resolves* 1 of Resolution 175.

5) The ITU secretariat should urge the different Member States and regional organizations to encourage mentoring programmes designed to optimize youth participation in regional and international events. These programmes should focus on providing young people with the skills and knowledge necessary to perform effectively in leadership and decision-making roles. In addition, it is recommended that these initiatives be developed in collaboration with educational entities and youth organizations to ensure a comprehensive and sustainable approach to youth training.

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