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| **Purpose:** | | | Information, Discussion | | |
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| **Keywords:** | Resolutions; streamlining; guidelines; |
| **Abstract:** | This document reproduces partly (with some minor amendments) TSAG-TD532 (SP 2013-2016) that summarized the findings of a TSB study on the evolution of WTSA Resolutions since 1993. This TD also reproduces Guidelines for drafting WTSA resolutions (as reviewed at TSAG, Geneva, 18-22 July 2016). |
| **Action** | TSAG RG-ResReview to discuss and to take note of. |

**Background**

This document reproduces partly (with some minor amendments) [TSAG-TD532](https://www.itu.int/md/meetingdoc.asp?lang=en&parent=T13-TSAG-160718-TD-GEN-0532) (SP 2013-2016) “Analysis of the evolution of WTSA Resolutions since 1993 and a proposal for guidelines for drafting WTSA Resolutions” that summarized the findings of a TSB study on the evolution of WTSA Resolutions since 1993.

This TD also reproduces in Annex A twelve principle guidelines for drafting WTSA resolutions (as agreed at TSAG, Geneva, 18-22 July 2016) and as contained in outgoing liaison statement [sp15-tsag-oLS-00024r1](https://www.itu.int/ifa/t/2013/ls/tsag/sp15-tsag-oLS-00024r1.docx) “LS on preparations for WTSA-16 [to regional preparatory group meetings]”. Those guidelines were to help the ITU membership draft proposals for WTSA so that WTSA Resolutions are concise and ITU-T focused, implementable and effective.

TSAG noted that these principles would not have a formal status but would be seen as draft guidelines to assist the membership in drafting or revising Resolutions for WTSA-16.

# Introduction

Since ITU-T’s inception in 1992, WTSA Resolutions/Opinion have continuously and significantly increased both in number and volume, along with the proliferation of Resolutions in four major conference/assemblies of ITU (World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly (WTSA), World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC), Radiocommunication Assembly (RA) and Plenipotentiary Conference (PP)). The WTSA-16 Proceedings contain 60 Resolutions and one Opinion in force, amounting to 225 A4-pages. The Resolutions make many, many references to other ITU Resolutions, many references to the ITU Constitution (CS) and to the ITU Convention (CV).

The ITU membership has been increasingly concerned about the workload to maintain ITU Resolutions. In the ITU-T Sector, WTSA-16 Resolution 1 instructs that,

***5.3*** *The Director shall suggest editorial updates to WTSA resolutions and provide a recommendation as to whether the modifications are significant enough to warrant the production of a revised version.*

# Discussion

## Definition

WTSA Resolutions and Opinions are texts adopted by ITU Member States at the quadrennial World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly. WTSA-16 Resolution 1 includes in clause A.2.1 a definition of WTSA Resolution as follows:

**Resolution**: A text of the World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly containing provisions on the organization, working methods and programmes of the ITU Telecommunication Standardization Sector.

Although this definition attempts to outline the possible scope a WTSA Resolution might span, it does not provide further specifics on how a WTSA Resolution could serve its intended purpose.

WTSA Res.1 clause 1.3 states that *WTSA shall establish resolutions which define working methods and identify priority issues*.

## Cross-Referencing Resolution

Cross-referencing among all ITU Resolutions is widespread and the issue of obsolete cross-references is becoming increasingly difficult to manage because Resolutions of one particular conference are revised only every four years whereas each year in between that particular conference, references to Resolutions of another ITU conference become obsolete after the conference updated them.

### Lack of drafting guideline principles

Because there have been no guidelines to assist ITU members in drafting their proposals and guide their focus and expectation during the discussion to generate final text from contribution(s) received, often much time and effort is spent on the wording of the "preamble" (*noting*, *considering*, …) but not enough time to discuss the "operational" part (*resolves*, *instructs* …).

Also, there are diverse approaches in the "preamble" to justify the necessity and importance of a particular Resolution: some intend to keep a detailed and complete chronicle of events, some intend to list all relevant literature, some present a list of historical activities/achievements to prove ITU‑T’s relevance and competence.

In the "operational" part – the part of a Resolution which is substantive –, except for *instructions to the TSB Director* which are mostly implementable, many instructions are given either in passive tense without specifying the executive entity, or to "ITU-T" in general, making it difficult to follow up the implementation.

### ITU-T working methods scattered with obsoletes and inconsistencies

Those WTSA Resolutions which fall into the "ITU-T rules and procedures" category reflect the evolvement of ITU-T working method over the years. Although they are pretty well implemented, up-to-date ITU-T working methods are **scattered** in various places, mostly in WTSA Resolution 1 but also in Recommendation ITU-T A.1 (working method of study groups), Resolution 31 (associates), Resolution 71 (academia), etc. As there has never been a holistic view of them together, taking into consideration the evolvement of ITU’s basic text (CS/CV/PP Resolutions), **obsolete passages, duplications and inconsistencies** exist.

### Effectiveness of thematic WTSA Resolutions

Those WTSA Resolutions which fall into the "thematic to one lead study group" category served to highlight the priorities for ITU-T to study. They often contain invitation for action by the ITU membership, or instructions to "ITU-T" or even to specific ITU-T study group(s). Even though WTSA Resolutions/Opinion are approved at the Assembly, they are not bindingfor the ITU membership, nor could they substitute ITU-T Recommendations. Furthermore, as work in ITU-T study groups is "contribution-driven", just having a new or revised WTSA Resolution will not serve its purpose without follow-up contributions to an ITU-T study group during the study period to drive the work in a particular Question(s).

## Emerging concerns of ITU Membership

At recent WTSAs, the ITU membership was concerned that a large portion of their time and effort in preparing and attending WTSA had been spent on WTSA Resolutions – to re-examine Resolutions of previous WTSA to see if there were any obsolete ones or parts thereof to be suppressed, merged or updated/revised, and to negotiate adding new Resolution(s).

To this end, WTSA-16 Resolution 1 includes the following guidelines:

***1.3*** *WTSA shall establish resolutions which define working methods and identify priority issues. Prior to and during the development process the following questions should be taken into consideration:*

1. *If an existing Plenipotentiary Conference resolution identifies a priority issue, the need for a similar WTSA resolution should be questioned.*
2. *If an existing resolution identifies a priority issue, the need to recycle this resolution at various conferences or assemblies should be questioned.*
3. *If only editorial updates are required to a WTSA resolution, the need to produce a revised version should be questioned.*
4. *If the actions proposed have been accomplished, the resolution should be viewed as fulfilled and the need for it should be questioned.*

and instructed:

***5.3*** *The Director shall suggest editorial updates to WTSA resolutions and provide a recommendation as to whether the modifications are significant enough to warrant the production of a revised version.*

Annex A  
Guidelines for drafting WTSA resolutions

**(as reviewed at TSAG, Geneva, 18-22 July 2016)**

The following principles are be followed to the extent possible to help the ITU membership to draft proposals, so that resolutions of the World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly are concise and ITU-T focused; implementable; effective; and stay abreast with the evolution of telecommunication and information technologies and the ICT standardization environment.

1. At WTSA, all in-force WTSA resolutions should be examined with the objective to suppress completed/obsolete ones and parts thereof.
2. If no change is to be made to the substance of the WTSA resolution, no editorial updates (such as date/venue of conference) will be made to the WTSA resolution, i.e. it should remain as is (unchanged).
3. All similar/related subjects should be addressed in one single WTSA resolution to the extent possible ("stand-alone principle"). Thus, in general, revising an existing WTSA resolution is preferable to adding a new WTSA resolution.
4. Normally a WTSA resolution should not exceed four A4-pages (except Resolutions 1 and 2).
5. The "preamble" part of a WTSA resolution should be as concise as possible, summarizing key rationales for justification. Normally it should not exceed one A4-page. While any additional explanation and justification such as a detailed chronicle of events, bibliography, historical activities and achievements could be submitted as background material in a contribution, their inclusion should be avoided in the adopted final WTSA resolution text. A separate publication could be produced and referenced by this WTSA resolution if necessary.
6. Cross-reference to other ITU resolutions should be kept to the minimum as necessary ("minimum cross-reference principle"), at the same time striking a balance not to insert material copied from other instruments.
7. Once an ITU resolution on the same/relevant subject is referenced, any duplicated justification/rational text should be avoided whereas additional ITU-T specific justification/rational could be added to this WTSA resolution ("no repetition principle").
8. Reference to the ITU Constitution, Convention and the General rules should prevail a reference to a resolution of a Plenipotentiary conference when applicable, and could exist together with a duplication of the referred text to make the WTSA resolution stand on its own (exception to "stand-alone principle").
9. When reference to the conclusion or output of an event is deemed necessary, the reference should be meaningful and in substance to specify its relevance, avoiding only listing the event per se ("no chronicle of events principle").
10. References to literature should be meaningful and in substance to specify its relevance ("no bibliography principle").
11. When drafting the "operational" part of a WTSA resolution, it should be borne in mind that:
    1. an instruction given to the ITU membership is non-binding;
    2. an instruction given to ITU-T SG will serve little purpose unless followed up by a contribution to the ITU-T study group to drive the work to progress.
12. The "operational" part of a WTSA resolution should:
    1. use an appropriate verb to specify an implementable action by a respective entity according to its proper mandate ("identified entity and specific action principle");
    2. specify an expected result(s) so that the achievement in implementing this action can be measurable as much as possible using objective measurement methodologies ("measurable result principle");
    3. plan or recommend a course of actions with milestones/check-points as appropriate ("planning principle"); and
    4. specify a reporting and expiration mechanism as appropriate ("report/expire principle").

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