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| ITU logo | INTERNATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATION UNION  **TELECOMMUNICATION STANDARDIZATION SECTOR**  STUDY PERIOD 2017-2020 | | | **TSAG-TD1322** |
| **TSAG** |
| **Original: English** |
| **Question(s):** | | | N/A | E-Meeting, 10-17 January 2022 |
| **TD** | | | | |
| **Source:** | | | Secretary-General, ITU | |
| **Title:** | | | Opening address at the TSAG meeting, 10 January 2022 | |
| **Purpose:** | | | Information | |
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ITU Telecommunication Standardization Advisory Group

10-17 January 2022

*Welcome Remarks*

Houlin Zhao

Secretary-General   
International Telecommunication Union

TSAG Chairman

TSB Director, BDT Director, BR Director

Distinguished colleagues and friends,

It is my great pleasure to welcome you to this meeting of TSAG. I hope that you are all keeping well, and I wish you a happy New Year 2022.

We did hope to welcome you to Geneva this time, but unfortunately we cannot have the pleasure this time due to Covid-19 pandemic.

WTSA is fast approaching, and I am looking forward to seeing you all in Geneva from the 1st to the 9th of March

In close collaboration with ITU members, the ITU secretariat is working to ensure that arrangements for WTSA meet the needs of all delegations. I thank you all very much for your support, and I wish you all the best in your preparations.

WTSA 2020 has been postponed two times due to the bad situation of the Covid-19 pandemic. We are unfortunately still in a critical situation. However, with the global efforts, we hope the pandemic situation will improve so that we could meet in Geneva at the beginning of March 2022. We will keep close attention to the changing situation and keep you updated.

It has been just over two months since the last meeting of TSAG, but in this short timeframe we have seen yet more recognition of the importance of digital transformation to sustainable development – and yet more recognition of the importance of international standards in this regard.

I have no doubt that ITU will respond to this call with valuable contributions building on our strong body of work in support of climate action.

Indeed, prior to COP26, in October 2021, ITU, ISO and IEC issued a joint declaration calling on all countries to recognize, support and adopt international standards to contribute directly to the three pillars of the Italian G20 Presidency: People, Planet and Prosperity.

This declaration was part of the second International Standards Summit, and it follows a first declaration issued as part of the first International Standards Summit held under Saudi Arabia’s G20 Presidency in 2020.

The 2021 declaration highlighted that, by referencing standards in policy, governments could significantly support employment, health and education; contribute to sustainability; and enable economic resilience.

t also urged all countries to ensure that international standards and related publications accelerate the successful achievement of the Paris Agreement, the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the UN Call for Action on Adaptation and Resilience.

At the Global Standards Symposium to precede WTSA, we will bring all stakeholders together to discuss their expectations for standardization’s support to digital transformation and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

This focus could not be more relevant to our work at this moment. ITU-T continues to welcome new members and partners, many from vertical markets with rapidly increasing need for ICT standards. This trend has been highly evident for some years, but it has seen marked acceleration in this study period.

The ITU standardization platform must continue to grow in value, to a growing number of stakeholders, from a growing number of industries. This platform should be more attractive to the industry members, with its competency, openness, fairness, transparency and efficiency

We must continue engaging more SMEs and academia, and continue bridging development divides as well as gender divides.

I am pleased with the effective and powerful cooperation among the three ITU Sectors and their Bureaux. We would continue to strengthen our internal cooperation.

The long-waiting WTSA is a key opportunity to advance these goals yet further. This meeting of TSAG is the last one prior to the WTSA. There are many key issues to be addressed and agreed at this meeting of TSAG. I wish you every success.

Let me conclude by thanking our TSAG Chairman, Bruce Gracie, Vice-Chairs, and all TSAG participants for your hard work in preparation for this meeting.

I look forward to seeing you all in person, in Geneva, very soon.

Thank you.

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