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| **Source:** | | | Rapporteur, RG-WTSA | |
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| **Abstract:** | This TD is the outcome of TSAG RG-WTSA RGM of draft A.BN “Briefing note on how to chair WTSA Sub-committee/Ad Hoc Group meetings” (ref. TSAG RG-WTSA [DOC2R1 (240418)](https://extranet.itu.int/meetings/ITU-T/T22-TSAGRGM/RGWTSA-240418/DOCs/T22-TSAGRGM-RGWTSA-240418-DOC-0002.docx)). |
| **Action required**: | TSAG is requested to approve this TD by agreement following ITU-T A.13 procedure. |

**Briefing note on how to chair WTSA Sub-committee/Ad Hoc Group meeting**

**Introduction**

The ITU provides a platform for member states to engage in dialogue, negotiation, and decision-making processes, aiming to reach agreements and harmonize approaches on matters of common interest.

This document is based on the ITU [General Rules](https://www.itu.int/en/council/Documents/basic-texts/General-Rules-E.pdf) and aggregates information for guiding a chairman of a WTSA **sub-committee** ( e.g., a working group of a Committee of the Assembly, Ad hoc groups) discussion to consensual agreement and highlight current common practices. This is not intended for use by the WTSA chair or COM Chairmen.

In the case of inconsistency, the Constitution, the Convention, the ITRs and the General Rules of conferences, assemblies and meetings of the Union (in that order) shall prevail over this briefing note.

*Reference 1: General rules, chapter II, clause 12.*

If time permit, it is recommended to read [TSAG TD-120](https://www.itu.int/md/T22-TSAG-221212-TD-GEN-0120/en) “TSAG leadership team training” as well as the ITU Tutorial on[“the art of reaching consensus”](https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-T/tutorials/202203/Documents/Reinhard%20Scholl_v2_The%20art%20of%20reaching%20consensus.pdf)**;** however keep in mind that these documents are not tailored to WTSA sub-committees and some information are not pertinent to your situation.

**Consensus-building**

There is no definition of consensus in ITU texts and consensus is left to the chairman’s appreciation. Consensus-building is fostered by the chairman of a meeting accommodating the different views with a common understanding and approach, then concluding that there is general agreement for adopting a decision without formal or sustained opposition.

The chairman should:

* Start the session by providing a concise overview of the agenda and discussions of the WTSA Sub-committee/Ad Hoc Group meeting.
* Emphasize the significance of effective time management during the session.
* In case of a busy agenda, suggest establishing a time limit for interventions (for example: 3 minutes for the 1st intervention, 1 minute for subsequent ones).
* Listen carefully to ensure clear understanding of all concerns.
* Try to resolve all concerns with a neutral and respectful attitude and to the best of its ability.
* Ensure that discussion is limited to the point at issue, and may interrupt any speaker who departs therefrom and request such speakers to confine their remarks to the subject under discussion.
* Encourage the membership to negotiate and provide productive/constructive discussion to reach consensus.
* ‘Informal polling’ (such as show of hands) may be used, but with much caution (see Section 4 below), for the Chairman to sense the temperature of the mood in the room.
* After consuming all possible options to achieve consensus, report to COM or Plenary with remaining issues for discussion if any exist.

By order of preference, when a concern remains, the following can be offered:

* A session break (coffee break, or longer if time permit) can be a useful tool to solve a particular point.
* Text may be bracketed and revisited at the end of the session. Bracketed text should be the exception, and not widely used.
* Provide a chairman’s proposal which consists of a compromise, or a new approach based on the understanding of the discussion.
* Rephrase and summarise the proposed resolution, and ensure it is clear and accurate.
* After adequate deliberation, check consensus as a matter of fact (e.g. “I see no objection”) rather than continue with open ended questions (e.g., “is there any objection?) to avoid reopening an issue.
* Silence means agreement to the Chairman’s proposed consensus.
* Declare consensus.
* Record dissent/objection in the meeting report, allowing to proceed with a resolution.
* When there is no consensus, text may remain in bracket and be sent to COM/Plenary. This should happen in very limited instances.

**Comments and objection in Reports and Minutes**

Sub-committee may prepare interim reports and may submit a final report recapitulating in concise terms the proposals and conclusions of its work. The chairman shall inquire whether there are any comments on the minutes of the previous meeting. In case of a substantive comment or objection (either made verbally or submitted in writing), the appropriate amendments shall be made in the minutes. Any interim or final report w must be approved by the sub-committee.

*Reference 2: General Rules Chapter II, clause 25.*

**Voting**

For sub-committee meetings, it is strongly advised to not conduct voting, according to ITU General Rules; instead, to focus on seeking consensus through thorough discussions, open communication, and understanding different perspectives.

‘Sensing the temperature of the mood in the room’ or ‘Informal polling’ (such as show of hands) may be used but may be difficult to interpret and depends heavily on how the question is phrased.

*Reference 3: General Rules Chapter II, clause 21 (clause 21.5), clause 22.*

**Editorial changes**

An editorial committee is available during WTSA to address all editorial changes. A chairman should indicate at the beginning of the session that editorial aspects will be deferred to the editorial committee in order for the group to spend time on substantial matters.

Terminology aspect can be dealt with by the editorial committee.

*Reference 4: General Rules, Chapter II* *clause 12.3*.

**Expectation from a chairman**

1. Be fair and impartial, and be seen to be so,
2. Act in the interest of WTSA, not as a representative of your company/country,
3. Listen with care, be sensitive to language and culture,
4. Give everyone the chance to express their views,
5. Be mindful of time,
6. Know when & how to close the debates and declare consensus,
7. Be familiar with the topics of discussions and the documents submitted for consideration,
8. Know and follow the rules for holding meetings,
9. Be ready to propose a compromise text,
10. Cooperate closely with the secretariat before, during and after a meeting, and
11. Encourage membership to negotiation and provide productive/constructive discussion to reach consensus.

**Where to find information**

**ITU Basic texts:**

* **Edition 2023** (from ITU PP-22)**:** <https://www.itu.int/hub/publication/s-conf-plen-2022/>, including ITU Constitution (CS), Convention (CV), General Rules (GR) et al.

**On WTSA:**

* ITU Constitution/Convention (CS/CV) on WTSA
* General Rules Chapter II
* Legal advisor’s briefing note for WTSA-20
* Rules of procedures of ITU-T: [WTSA Resolution 1](http://handle.itu.int/11.1002/pub/81c722f0-en)

**ITU-T Working methods:**

* Working methods for study groups of the ITU-T: ITU-T [**A.1**](https://www.itu.int/rec/T-REC-A/recommendation.asp?lang=en&parent=T-REC-A.1)
* Focus Group: Establishment and working procedures ITU-T [A.7](https://www.itu.int/rec/T-REC-A.7/en)

**Collaboration:**

* collaboration with ISO and IEC: ITU-T [**A.23**](https://www.itu.int/rec/T-REC-A/recommendation.asp?lang=en&parent=T-REC-A.23)[and WTSA Resolution 7](http://handle.itu.int/11.1002/pub/81c722f2-en)
* Normative Referencing of text from other organizations: ITU-T [**A.5**](https://www.itu.int/rec/T-REC-A/recommendation.asp?lang=en&parent=T-REC-A.5)
* Incorporation of text in part or in whole from other organizations: ITU-T [**A.25**](https://www.itu.int/rec/T-REC-A/recommendation.asp?lang=en&parent=T-REC-A.25)

**Approval process of ITU-T Recommendations:**

* TAP: The traditional approval process (TAP) is described in [WTSA Resolution 1](http://handle.itu.int/11.1002/pub/81c722f0-en), section 9. Section 8 of the same Resolution defines how selection is done between the traditional approval process and the alternative approval process (AAP).
* AAP: The Alternative Approval Process for new and revised ITU-T Recommendations is defined in ITU-T [A.8](https://www.itu.int/rec/T-REC-A.8/en).

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