
Agenda item: ADM 4

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Note by the Secretary-General

CONTRIBUTION FROM THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

ACCESS TO ITU DOCUMENTS

I have the honour to transmit to the Member States of the Council a contribution received from the **United States of the America**.

Dr. Hamadoun I. TOURE
Secretary-General

Contribution from the United States of America

ACCESS TO ITU DOCUMENTS

Introduction

This contribution addresses the working methods for the 2014 Plenipotentiary Conference, in particular, access to conference documents. The United States believes that making ITU documents publicly accessible will enhance transparency of ITU decisions, improve decision making, and help ensure accountability. Consistent with our priority of ensuring transparency and accountability in decision-making, the United States will propose that the Plenipotentiary Conference adopt a new document access policy. In the interim, we propose that the documents for the Plenipotentiary Conference be made publicly available.

Background

Council Decision 563 requested the Council Working Group on Financial and Human Resources (CWG-FHR) to review the ITU document access policy to determine the extent to which documents should be made publicly accessible. To facilitate this review, the Secretariat prepared Document CWG-FHR-3/15 for consideration by the CWG-FHR, comparing practices at the ITU with those in the U.N. and Specialized Agencies. CWG-FHR considered the ITU's document access policy at its February 2014 meeting and concluded that Council should further discuss the issue.

Document CWG-FHR-3/15 demonstrates that the ITU lags substantially behind other UN and Specialized Agencies in making documents publicly available. The comparisons in Document CWG-FHR-3/15 show that, with a few exceptions, the other UN Agencies have adopted a presumption of full disclosure of all information and documents generated by the organization, including for meetings at the working level and for governance bodies. By contrast, for example, the ITU presumes no public disclosure for meeting documents.

To bring the ITU in line with best practices of other U.N. Agencies, the United States will propose that the Plenipotentiary Conference adopt a new document access policy that will provide the widest possible public access to documents for meetings. The policy should include exceptions to protect the privacy of individuals and third parties, legal privilege, contractual, proprietary or commercial information, and certain internal governance matters. There could also be exceptions for working documents drafted by participants during meetings and posted to the meeting SharePoint site.

Pending development of a new document access policy for the ITU, the United States proposes that Council decide that all documents related to the Plenipotentiary Conference be made publicly available without password protection. This includes schedule of meetings, all input documents to the meeting, such as contributions to the meeting and reports from the ITU, as well as information documents, temporary documents, and limited distribution documents produced during the Plenipotentiary.

Proposal

The United States proposes that Council decide that all documents for the 2014 Plenipotentiary Conferences be made publicly available without password protection.
