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ITU COUNCIL

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MORNING

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>> CHAIR: Good morning. Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, Ministers, Vice Minister, Ambassador, councilors: Madam Secretary‑General, Madam Doreen Bogdan‑Martin, Tomas Lamanauskas, Deputy Secretary‑General, Mario Maniewicz, BR Director, Cosmas Zavazava, Development Director and Seizo Onoe, the TSB Director, Vice‑Chair of the Council, dear Councilors, Chair of the ADM Committee, it is an honor to welcome you once again to the additional session of the Council.

Here we're going to address really important matters which will mark a milestone in our path towards the future of ITCs. Therefore, I will be brief in the opening remarks as we have important matters to address this morning.

Thus, let us dive straight into the items under discussion for today. Now I would like to give the floor to Madam Secretary‑General, Doreen Bogdan‑Martin.

You have the floor. Thank you.

>> DOREEN BOGDAN-MARTIN: Thank you. Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. It is good to have you all back with us since we last met in July. I hope you are geared up and ready to advance the important work of this Council.

Excellencies, Councilors, Ladies and Gentlemen:

We meet at a difficult time for peace.

These are times that shake us to our core

Dark hours where our humanity

And our will to work together

Are put to the test.

I echo the United Nations Secretary‑General's call for protecting and respecting civilians and civilian infrastructure in the Middle East at all times.

Conflicts are threatening human lives

young and old

Everywhere.

Life is sacred.

It's in those times that we need to stay strong

And remember what it is that we're trying to build together.

Mindful of the need to protect telecom infrastructure and the right to communicate.

Because ultimately, promoting the use of technology to facilitate peaceful relations and international cooperation is our purpose

And our responsibility.

That's what's inscribed in the ITU Constitution.

This is our guide.

It's the light that must guide us.

Where there is light, there's hope.

And when there's hope, a peaceful future is possible.

I would like us to pause in a moment of silence And please rise,

For all the innocent civilian lives lost in conflict across the world. Please join me and rise.

(Moment of silence)

Thank you.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to walk you through

What you've asked us to do before this additional session of Council today;

What positive changes we're already seeing; and

What next steps lie ahead of us.

Let's start with the work of the Council Working Groups and Expert Groups that wrapped up just yesterday

And brought together some 350 participants in a span of two weeks.

From the Oversight Charter

To efficiency measures to achieve the 2023 budget

To the transformation team agenda

To the new building options, the Working Group on Financial and Human Resources went through 21 agenda items.

The Working Group on WSIS and the SDGs highlighted our good collaboration with other UN Agencies in implementing the WSIS Process and advancing the SDGs.

It supported ITU's key role in the WSIS+20 Review Process, offering guidance to ITU and our members.

The Working Group on Language welcomed the steps taken by the Secretariat to implement multilingualism

Which is a core value for us.

The Working Group on Child Online Protection had a record number of contributions

Which reaffirms the importance of this topic

And highlights initiatives that can make our internet safer for all.

The EG‑ITRs kicked off the review of the ITRs, and the CWG Internet debated a number of important topics for future consultation.

Councilors,

Your discussions have provided much food for thought and guidance for the Secretariat, including for next Council in 2024.

Rest assured that this Management Team is fully committed to strengthening transparency, accountability, good governance and operational excellence across ITU.

Progress is already in motion, from our resource mobilization strategy

To the criteria for establishing future area offices.

Also, you may have noticed the screens outside Popov.

Each one represents a change case led by our ITU ChangeMakers.

This "Hall of Change" invites you to participate over the next few days

In the ongoing ITU change process.

I encourage you to engage with our ChangeMakers over the next two days.

We've also seen a positive change in our senior management

Since we last met, with gender‑balance for the first time at the D2 level.

Please join me in congratulating:

Ms. Sulyna Abdullah on her appointment as Chief of the Strategic Planning and Membership Department;

As well as Dr. Bilel Jamoussi on his appointment as Deputy to the Director of TSB.

Ladies and gentlemen,

As we look to the future, I want to share with you what Dennis Francis, the President of the United Nations General Assembly

And a friend of ITU, he used to come to our meetings when posted here, something that struck me that he told the General Assembly a few weeks ago.

He said that despite the many and complex challenges we face

We do have the capacity to:

Effect change

Consequential change

That by putting aside our differences and bridging divides we can deliver peace, progress, prosperity, and sustainability to everyone, everywhere.

You will make important decisions in the coming days.

But what you do will affect consequential change within ITU and beyond the walls of our organization

At a time when digital is at the top of the global agenda.

It's never been higher than right now

And there's buy‑in at every level.

That was on display at the SDG Digital event that we convened just before the GA ‑ where we showed the world that digital technologies can accelerate progress on 70% of all the targets of the Sustainable Development Goals.

I also saw it just last week in Japan at the Internet Governance Forum… where bridging the digital divides and emerging technologies like AI were front and center.

We also just celebrated, at the ITU‑D RDF for Africa the 800th pledge of the Partner2Connect Digital Coalition… bringing us closer to 32 billion US dollars on our road to 100 billion by 2026.

And now, COP28 is coming up

And ITU will be taking an active role through our Green Digital Action track.

And of course, we will soon gather in Dubai for our World Radiocommunication Conference, I just returned from Kigali yesterday where the MWC is taking place and you will not be surprised that spectrum and WRC related items were at the core of the discussions. As the outcomes of WRC‑23 can pave the way for new, more innovative ways to connect not just the African continent, but the worlds.

With so much of our common digital future resting on the use of frequency spectrum and associated satellite orbits.

The WRC is a moment to show the world what multilateralism in action can do.

It's a unique opportunity to use digital to put the SDGs back on track… and leave no one behind.

It's an inflection point

Where we can bridge divides to help deliver peace, progress, prosperity, and sustainability to everyone, everywhere.

Let's rise to the occasion

And continue to build the fit‑for‑purpose

Fit‑for‑future ITU

We want

The one the world needs.

Thank you.

>> CHAIR: Thank you very much, Madam Secretary‑General, for your opening remarks.

We have received two requests to take the floor this morning, so I would like to give the floor to Israel and the State of Palestinian. Israel, you have the floor.

>> ISRAEL: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

On Saturday October 7th thousands of Hamas terrorists entered Israel and massacred men, women, children and babies. Entire families slaughtered, entire communities decimated. Over 200 people were abducted and taken captive, many from countries represented here today without any information on the whereabouts or conditions.

Among those captive are young persons, Persons with Disabilities and older persons. The past days have been devastating for the people of Israel. Each and every Israeli is effected by these acts of reckless hate perpetrated by the terrorist organization Hamas, a genocidal terrorist organization.

There is no other way to call it. Hamas violated every code of human morality, this was unspeakable and unimaginable attack against humanity.

Hamas operates like ISIS in tactics and in ideology. They live streamed their murderous spree on Facebook and filmed their brutality in high‑definition for the world to see. Hamas sent footage of slaughter directly to the family members of the victims. They have sent videos to the families of the hostages. They are using communication to spread fear and disinformation. They continue to spread fake news on social media.

This week Hamas falsely accused Israel of attacking Al‑Alhi Hospital, when in fact the hospital was hit by rockets launched by the Islamic Jihad, they use communication to spark condemnation of Israel to insight hatred and outrage to push the war far beyond our borders. They decided to launch a global media campaign to hide what's really transpired. They went as far as implementing the numbers of casualties. Let me be clear, the Hamas leadership holds all responsibility for the lives lost, Israelis and Palestinian. While Israel uses communication infrastructure to warn Palestinians or Palestinian civilians, Hamas sent messages instructing them to stay in their homes and die and ignore the request to move to safety.

Hamas intentionally targets basic civil infrastructure, like the lines to Gaza and they're in full responsibility for the destruction of its own infrastructure. Since the beginning of the war, 450 rockets aimed at Israel fell short and landed in Gaza instead. Israel does everything in its power to protect civilian infrastructure. Yesterday Israel enabled a local carrier to connect the cable which was disconnected by Hamas in order to provide communication to hospitals and other infrastructure in Gaza.

We call on international community sitting here today and outside of Israel to condemn the savage terrorist acts of Hamas to the immediate, unconditional release of all those held captive by Hamas and to stand in solidarity with Israel in the exercise of its right and duty to protect its population in this war against terrorism.

Thank you.

>> CHAIR: Thank you, Israel.

Now I would like to give the floor to the State of Palestinian, please, you have the floor.

>> STATE OF PALESTINE: Madam Secretary‑General of the ITU, distinguished members of the Council, ladies and gentlemen:

We would like to pray for our dead and pray for the wounded to recover. We have more than 3600, more than 600 of whom are children, whole families have been affected, hospitals bombed, Israel bombed Al‑Alhi Hospital, 500 children were killed as a result, drugs and food are being blocked and do not reach those in need. Fuel is not coming. We launch an appeal following the destruction of telecommunication infrastructure and of course all of the telecommunication towers have been disrupted, telecommunication networks have been destroyed and as a result of the bombing, the fuel crisis, of course, is a huge problem that many people have disappeared, people are under rubble and cannot contact ‑‑ cannot get help, there's only one of three fiberoptic lines working, zoo is isolated from the outside world. Ladies and gentlemen, this is the 21st century and the inhabitants of the world can contact each other very quickly. Of course we have only the second generation services in Gaza. The Union is the adequate body for ensuring telecommunication at all times everywhere. I turn to you to protect the Rights of Palestinian citizens to is have access to telecommunication and the Internet particularly in these circumstances which is the result of the Israeli occupation.

The digital gap has been growing following the destruction of infrastructure of the operators in region. The Palestinians can no longer repair the networks that have been destroyed, technology, of course, in Israel, is much more advanced and we all agree everyone has their own place and we must connect those who are not connected. We must move forward in order to implement this slogan tangibly on the ground. Is it possible that tens of thousands of Palestinian citizens did not have the minimum of telecommunication services because of the current situation ain't situation is deteriorating by the day. The constant, daily violations must stop and telecommunication and Internet services must be ensured so that Palestinian citizens can enjoy their rights fully and so that each student, each child, each teacher, worker, can have access to knowledge and access to various sectors. We are lacking access.

Dear colleagues, because of the situation in Palestinian, we stand ready to move forward, despite the lack of resources, nonetheless, we do have the high quality institutional resources and skills that can be compared to those of the west if only we have the means.

In conclusion, we ask the ITU Secretary‑General to ensure that this statement is included in the report of our meeting and that the sector generals are informed of the catastrophic situation in Palestinian. We ask the Council members and the ITU members to stay alongside us by our side, in order to reconstruct the networks and to ensure that equipment be delivered and to put pressure on Israel to stop bombing the telecommunication infrastructure because we believe that this is a violation of Human Rights to keep track of the ‑‑ you must ensure security so that this war stops and our children can enjoy their rights.

Thank you.

>> CHAIR: We will take note of both statements that will be included in the record of this session. Being mindful of the brevity of the situation, I would prefer not to open the floor for further comments and to move to the approval of the agenda.

Israel, please, you have the floor.

>> ISREAL: Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

We greet all those present.

At the outset, we would like to reaffirm the centrality of the Palestinian calls to the Islamic nation and to the Human Rights issue, on top of the right of self‑determination and return of refugee, self‑determination and the establishment of the independent Palestinian State within the borders of the 5th of June of 1967 with its capital East Jerusalem, and also the right to regain and to have control of their holy sites. Mr. Chairman, we also would like to condemn acts of the Israeli occupation which are leading to thousands of victims, women and children who are innocent and the wounding of further dozens of thousands, and under this condition, how can the categories of society be able to earn their rights in terms of connectivity and also under the military operations, there should be efforts by all concerned parties to calm down the situation and restore stability and to regain the path towards peace and guaranteeing the Rights of Palestinians to earn their inalienable rights and we would like to reiterate the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia upholds the halt of all hostilities against the Palestinian people and return to the process of peace under the auspices of the Arab peace initiative by which calls for the establishment of independent Palestinian State within the 1967 borders.

And also we condemn the destruction of infrastructure be and the call for preservation of those interested.

Thank you, Mr. President.

>> CHAIR: Thank you, Saudi Arabia.

Egypt, please, you have the floor.

>> EGYPT: Thank you, Mr. Chairperson, for giving my delegation the floor following on the statement of the representative of the State of Israel and a number of other statements by members of the Council.

With regard to the bloody situation escalating situation, in the Gaza Strip as well as the West Bank which is leading to thousands of civilian victims and destruction of vital infrastructure, at the outset the Delegation of Egypt realizes the technical nature of specialized agencies of the United States. We do respect this mandate and the increasingly important role of the agencies, including the ITU in developing the infrastructure of peoples in the field of ICT, including the Palestinian people who as affirmed by the Member States in the ITU were affirmed their support, a number of resolutions, including the 125 of the PP and special technical assistance resolution that was assured by the WTDC number 18 and in addition to the number of resolutions.

However, we cannot stand in silence faced with the worsening humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip under the inhumane blockade and collective punishment practices by Israel on the civilian inhabitants of the Strip, and having food, water, prevented that to the territory, and under the obligations of Israel as occupation force under the 4th Geneva Convention, it has to fulfill those obligations and facilitate that access.

Today, Mr. Chairperson, we're talking of the numbers of Palestinians that are documented according to the United Nations agencies over 3,000 civilian martyrs and many tens of thousands are left without a home and we are seeing the practices of the Israeli army when they are forcing them to flee from their homes.

Israel has been perpetrating the practices while other countries in the Middle East are trying to do everything possible to put the hostilities and the end to the targeting of the infrastructure and Palestinians under this and to expedite the access of humanitarian aid to the zoo strip in order to elevate the suffering of thousands of people fleeing Israeli bombardment. Egypt should always remain faithful to its commitments and responsibilities in upholding the Rights of the Palestinian people and legitimate right to establish their own state and capital according to international legitimacy, and Egypt has called for the peace conference to be held next Saturday in Cairo in order to coordinate international efforts and to put an end to the escalation as well as restoring the political process between the Palestinian and Israeli sites in an attempt to deal with the root causes of the crisis and achieve a solution to this.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

>> CHAIR: Thank you, Egypt.

China has asked for the floor.

>> CHINA: I thank you, Chairperson.

The current situation in Palestinian remains critical, the present round of conflict has led to a large number of civilian casualties and sharp deterioration in humanitarian situation. We condemn all acts harming civilians and oppose international law.

With the casualty we're saddened and express our condolences to the victims and to those injured. Immediate action should be to ceasefire and international community should play an effective role and work together to calm down the situation and provide timely humanitarian assistance to the Palestinian people.

The key to breaking the cycle of the conflict lies in returning to the basis of the state solution, resuming peace talks taken establishing an independent Palestinian State and achieving peaceful co‑existence, we call for efforts to restore ICT connectivity, elevate the humanitarian crisis and actively promote peaceful negotiations and play a constructive role with the countries of the region and international community in promoting a comprehensive, just, lasting solution in Palestinian.

I thank you.

>> CHAIR: Thank you very much, China.

Spain, you have the floor, please.

>> SPAIN: Thank you very much, Chair.

Spain is making the statement on behalf of the E.U. and Member States with the common position agreed on the fifth of October through the European Council. The E.U. condemns very firmly Hamas and all terrorist attacks in the nature that this organization has committed in different areas throughout Israel, profoundly deplores the loss of human life. There is no justification for terror.

We would like to underscore firmly that the right to Israel to defend itself, in harmony with international law and international humanitarian law. With these indiscriminate, violent attacks, we would like to reiterate the importance of the protection of all civilians is in alignment with international humanitarian law at all times. We would like to urge Hamas for the immediate release and unconditional release of all captives. We would like to underscore the importance to let urgent humanitarian assistance and we would like to express our readiness to continue to support civilians in Gaza in coordination with our members to guarantee that this assistance is not abused by terrorist organizations. To stem the escalation of this is absolutely critical.

We are committed to a just, lasting peace based on the two‑state solution through stepping up efforts through the peace process in the Middle East.

We underscore the need to collaborate with the Palestinian authorities that are legitimate. And with partners that can play a positive role in order stop further escalation.

>> CHAIR: Thank you, Spain.

United Arab Emirates, please.

>> UNITED ARAB EMIRATES: Thank you, Chairperson.

The United Arab Emirates reaffirms its position calling on the immediate cessation of escalation and the targeting of civilians and the destruction of ICT infrastructure. We reaffirm that the only way towards the stability in the region is through the just, comprehensive, lasting peace which fulfills the legitimate Rights of the Palestinian people, especially the right to establish their independent sovereign state on the borders of the fifth of June, 1967, and according to international resolutions and the different enter national processes in this regard.

Thank you.

>> CHAIR: Thank you very much.

United States, you have the floor.

>> UNITED STATES of AMERICA: Thank you, Chair.

In response to the statements we heard, the United States would like to reiterate the terrorism is never justified.

As President Biden has said, Hamas terrorist attacks on October 7th are an act of sheer evil, families were slain, people were massacred, thousands were killed and wounded, including dozens of Americans murdered and kidnapped.

It is an appalling human tragedy, evolve active of painful memories of antisemitism. Such deliberate targeting of civilians and the bloodshed that ensued demands condemnation of Hamas, all of us recognize the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people, and support equal measures of justice and freedom for Israelis and Palestinians alike. To address specific accusations, a collective punishment, inaccuracies on the explosion of the Al‑Alhi Hospital in Gaza the United States is outraged and saddened by the explosion at the hospital in Gaza, we mourn this terrible loss of life. Our current assessment based on analysis of overhead imagery, of intercepted communications and puck luckily available information is that Israel is not responsible for the explosion of the Al‑Alhi Hospital in Gaza. We mourn the patience, medical staff and other innocent civilians killed or wounded in this tragedy. President Biden convey that had our hearts are heavy and it is with the victim's loved one, I can't imagine the pain that they're going through. The President has also made clear that we stand unequivocally for the protection of civilian lives during conflict. On the question of collective punishment, Hamas bears responsibility for this war, by attacking Israeli civilians without warning, they brought this tragic war to the Gaza Strip.

As President Biden has told Prime Minister Netanyahu, if the United States experienced what Israel is experiencing, our response would be swift and decisive, like every nation in the world, Israel has the right to defend, indeed has the duty to defend itself from vicious attacks. We support Israel taking the measures to defend its country and protect people from the terrorists consistent with the rules of law and law of war. As we stand with the people and Government of Israel, we also stand with Palestinian civilians, our message to them in Gaza and the West Bank, around the world is this, we see you, we recognize that you are also grieving just as Israeli families are grieving. The United States condemns terrorism unequivocally and we condemn violence targeting civilians unequivocally. We're actively working with our Israeli partners to ensure they have everything they need to fight Hamas and rescue the hostages, and to be clear, Hamas does not represent the Palestinian people and we have reiterated to our Israeli partners the need to protect civilian life based on international law as is the expectation of all U.S. allies during conflict.

We're focused on ensuring that all American citizens in Gaza have safe passage out of Gaza and into Egypt and we're very focused on making sure that the broader civilian population of Gaza, the vast majority of whom have nothing to do with Hamas can get to safe areas, get access to food, water, medicine, shelter.

We are strongest when we're committed to the rule of law. That is something that President Biden and Prime Minister Netanyahu has discussed, not just in this context but in previous contexts as well.

That's something that the United States has always stood for and always will continue to stand for.

Thank you.

>> CHAIR: Thank you, United States.

United Kingdom.

>> UNITED KINGDOM: We condemn the appalling terrorist attacks by Hamas against Israeli and other citizens. Hamas alone is responsible for the conflict. We unequivocally support Israel's legitimate right to defend itself proportionately, taking action against terrorism. Hamas is a terrorist organization that does not speak for or act in the interests of the Palestinian people. The U.K. is working with international partners to prevent the situation spreading and causing wider instability. We continue to support the negotiated settlement, leading to a safe, secure Israel living alongside a sovereign Palestinian State. Humanitarian support and access must be maintained into Gaza and we have announced further 10 million pounds in U.K. aid. It is important that any action is in accordance with international law.

As the Secretary‑General rightly said, life is sacred and terrorism will not prevail.

>> CHAIR: Thank you, united Kingdom. Tunisia, you have the floor, please.

>> TUNISIA: Thank you, Mr. Chairperson. I greet everyone. Would like to join the statements that were made recently by the Palestinian, Saudi Arabia, Egypt. The brutal crimes that were committed by the Israeli occupational authorities against the Palestinian people in Gaza is a stigma of shame on all humanity and given all of these perpetrations under all of these are crimes, vision crimes, the amount to genocide and the murdering of hundreds and thousands of civilians as we have witnessed by the hospital in Gaza, that's enjoying impunity and this way of dealing with the Palestinian people is in complete disregard of international, humanitarian law and the set of values that were established by humanity for decades and this is dangerous for peace and stability in the world. Therefore, we and all countries around the world, especially those who are standing by the occupy should question their blind policies in supporting all the cover and political media and the military cover and support to the occupying entity that carries on destroying human values and the basis of international peace. Our duty today, as a country that is seeking love and peace and justice, we all need to strive to achieve stability on all levels and condemn those grave violations and to call upon the immediate cessation and aiding Palestinian people and providing international support to them.

Therefore, the ITU should carry on playing a role in developing the sector of communications in Palestinian, especially order to rehabilitate the destroyed infrastructure of Palestinian which was systematically destroyed by the Israeli authorities.

Thank you.

>> CHAIR: Thank you, Tunisia. Turkiye, you have the floor, please.

>> TURKIYE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

As we speak, there is a humanitarian calamity going on in Gaza, deliberate attacks on civilian, civilian objects and U.N. personnel are inaccessible in Tunisia, the humanitarian law should be respected in full. We are outraged by the recent targeting of a hospital in Gaza, we reiterate the importance of the two state solution and our support for a sovereign State of Palestinian based on the 1967 alliance.

We would express that these attacks are unacceptable, as they violate the general principle and resolutions of the U.N. and ITU and the principles of leaving no one behind and connecting unconnected.

To which we are all committed, also the crime of declining the Palestinian people of their rights and the opportunity to communicate. Thank you.

>> CHAIR: Thank you, Turkiye.

Algeria, please, you ever the floor.

>> ALGERIA: Thank you very much, Chair.

I would like to take this opportunity to send condolences to our brothers and sisters in Gaza and to reiterate our support to Palestine. I would like to recall the positions expressed by the authorities of my country. Algeria is seriously concerned by the humanitarian situation which is deplorable in Gaza and the genocide which is being committed by the Israeli occupying authorities.

My country firmly condones the operations against civilians that are unprotected and are convinced that the radical solution is not in genocide, nor in this, but rather in an edifying State of Palestinian, within the borders. We call on the international community to shoulder its responsibility and in particular within the Security Council given the protection of defenseless Palestinian civilians.

Thank you.

>> CHAIR: Thank you, Algeria.

Observers, you have the floor. So I would like to give the floor to Iran, please.

You have the floor.

>> ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

First of all, we condemn the attack to the people and in fact innocent people of Palestinian. We would like to state that they have the full right to defend their legitimate right to live on their land of 1967, Mr. Chairman, with the territory, with the capital in Jerusalem, we fully condemn the attack and violence to the innocent people of Palestine by the regime of Israel.

We would like to ask the immediate cessation of this genocide which will be recorded in history.

Thank you very much. We fully support the statement made by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Egypt, China, U.A.E., Tunisia, Turkiye other ‑‑ Algeria and other distinguished countries that are condemning the attack into Palestinian.

Thank you.

>> CHAIR: Thank you very much, Iran.

I now give the floor to another observer.

Guinea, you have the floor, please.

>> GUINEA: Chair, Distinguished Delegates, good morning.

I would like to thank the Secretary‑General for her opening remarks which were very edifying.

They need to implement what they need to do and we ask all decision makers to reestablish peace and security throughout the world for the wellbeing of all.

I would like to call upon the ITU and all international organizations to undertake the necessary efforts to put an end to armed conflicts throughout the world.

That you very much.

>> CHAIR: Thank you very much, Guinea.

I would like to recall, remind you that all statements will be included in the record.

Now let us move on to the approval of the agenda.

I would like to give the floor in this instance to the Secretary of The Plenary. You have the floor, please.

>> SECRETARY: Thank you very much, Chair.

It is my pleasure to introduce document C23‑ADD/1 Rev.3, a draft agenda of the additional session of the Council 2023. A preliminary version of this agenda was sent to Council Member States on 11 of August in a singular letter DM1009 and the proposed agenda was modified following September. Regarding the contribution of Member States, the Secretariat has received one from the Russian Federation, before the deadline of 5th of October and additionally there we just received another contribution from India on Tuesday and this document concerning this is added under other business and is available in English only.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

>> CHAIR: Thank you very much, Beatrice.

I don't see any further requests for the floor.

Given that in this contribution was received after the deadline, we have to consider whether this contribution should be included in the agenda or not.

I have to remind you that this additional session of Council has a very targeted agenda, being mindful of this, I would suggest that India's contribution is addressed at the next regular Council session.

Are you in agreement with this? Saudi Arabia, please, you have the floor.

>> SAUDI ARABIA: Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

We don't have any objection to adding the Indian contribution.

However, after the Development Bureau met, we discussed the Indian contribution and maybe we can be briefed with regard to the content of the Indian conclusion.

Thank you.

>> CHAIR: Thank you very much.

India, you have the floor, please.

>> INDIA: Thank you very much, Chair.

We would like to respond to your suggestion for taking up this issue at the next Council.

As you will see from the contribution, it is important to take this issue at this meeting because the methodology is under preparation and by next Council perhaps it will be irreversible what we're trying to propose here. We would request that it should be taken up in this meeting.

Thank you very much.

>> CHAIR: Thank you, Indiana, I can't.

Canada, please, you have the floor.

>> CANADA: Thank you, Chairman. Good morning to you, to all colleagues.

Chairman, as you have mentioned, we have a quite busy agenda with items that we have been preparing for subject matters such as the building, headquarters building, fully recognizing the concerns that India has, on this process, that's been going on, I believe now for more than a year and a half, it would be useful to allow Member States to take a closer look at the document itself, but at the same time ask the Secretariat to provide us an update on all of the efforts that have been done overall these months that have led to I believe some sort of a conclusion on the way Ford. Consequently, it would be useful to give us more time to take a look at this document and of course consult with the BDT that's spent considerable amount of time in producing a document and taking all of the necessary steps so that the ITU can finally abide by the relevant solution in terms of publishing the document. Again, Chairman, we have to encourage that we leave this for more further, detailed analysis later because we have very important issues to address at this meeting.

Thank you.

>> CHAIR: Thank you, Canada.

Given the ‑‑ I would like to consult with India, are you maintaining your position, please? That is to address this document in this session. Thank you, India, you have the floor.

>> INDIA: Thank you very much, Chair.

As mentioned earlier, we would like this document to be discussed if the distinguished members want some time, maybe we can have it in the second half of tomorrow so that there is time available for people to read it. Thank you.

>> CHAIR: Thank you.

We will include India's contribution in the agenda, available only in English. This will be addressed under any other business.

We are thereby approving the agenda.

Approved.

I would like to invite the Secretariat to present the time management plan that can be found in document DT/1(Rev.3).

>> I'm pleased to present DT/1(Rev.3) dated 18 October, 2023, continuing the time management plan for the additional session of the Council.

It proposes how the working time should be allocated between the Plenary and the standing Committee, it takes into account the availability of the people that are only able to join us at the beginning of the meeting after lunch this afternoon. It will also take into account the turnaround time in the preparation of translation of the report of the ADM Chair.

I would also like to invite you to consult the online version of the time management plan which is accessible on the Council page.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

>> CHAIR: Thank you very much.

If there are no further comments, I would like to ask you to approve the time management plan.

Approved.

We will continue now with some information that will be provided by the secretary of the Plenary regarding organizational matters.

You have the floor.

>> Secretary: From 9:30 to 12:30 and from 2:30 to 5:30 this afternoon. Tomorrow we start at 9:00 and will finish at 12:00 in the morning and will begin again at 2:30 and finish at 5:30 in the afternoon.

As usual, interpretation and documentation will be provided in six languages and the Council proceedings will be webcast. In addition, there will be captioning in English for both Plenary and the ADM meetings and the captioning file will be made available on the Council website.

Remote participation is being provided both for the Plenary and the SCAM. Regarding the requests from the floor, the Chair will first call on delegates in the Popov Room when requesting the floor, and then to those that are connected remotely.

Delegates are reminded as well that the decision making will take place by the Council Member States in the room.

If you have any IT trouble, the colleagues from the IT department are available here in the room on my right and if you have any trouble connecting remotely, please use the chat function to contact the moderator.

We also kindly remind that while we're coming from many different cultures and backgrounds, there is a standard of conduct, integrity, respect for diversity and professionalism that we can all reasonably expect in our discussion with each other and as part of our ITU working environment.

So the ITU Council is a professional environment, free of discrimination and harassment. For more information, you can find on the website the code of conduct.

With that, Mr. Chairman, I give you the floor.

>> CHAIR: Thank you very much.

I do not see any requests for the floor.

We have taken note of these organizational matters.

I would like to now give the floor to the Secretary of the Plenary to present documents ‑‑ document C23‑ADD/4.

>> SECRETARY: It is my pleasure to present to you document C23‑ADD/4 on the Plenipotentiary Conference 2026, Resolution 77, the Plenipotentiary Conference of 2022 decided that the next conference will be held in the last quarter of 2026 in Doha in Qatar. This document informs the Council of the invitation received from the Government of Qatar to hold the next Plenipotentiary Conference from Monday, November 9, 2026 to Friday, November 27, 2026. The Council is therefore invited to decide on the precise place and date of the holding of the next Plenipotentiary Conference with the understanding that the decision will be followed by the consultation of all Member States by adopting the draft decision contained in Annex B to this document.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

>> CHAIR: Thank you very much.

I will now like to give the floor to the representative of Qatar.

>> QATAR: I am honored to be here today to address the respected Council and deliver the national statement on behalf of the State of Qatar.

We are delighted to extend an official invitation to the Member States of the International Telecommunication Union to the Plenipotentiary Conference. ITU PP26 scheduled to take place in Doha, the significant Assembly will convene in the Doha Exhibition and Convention Centre from the 9th to the 27th of November of 2026.

Esteemed delegates, nearly a year ago Qatar hosted the 2022FIFA World Cup, an event that transcended sports, it served as a testament to our nation's technological advancements and unwavering commitment to global digital inclusivity.

As the world's first 5G enabled FIFA tournament, it showcased our prowess in AI, IoT, digital twins and technologies. These innovations designed to enhance mobility, public health, and cyberspace underscored our dedication to sustainable digital progress. Weeks ago, Qatar also hosted for the first time the ITU U.N. ECE future network symposium in Doha, this event further solidified our commitment to nurturing and integrate advanced technologies that drive global digital transformation. From the landmark solution of ITU PP‑22 Qatar is firmly resolved to collaborate with fellow member, states, to translate resolutions into action. From the responsible application of AI, for societal benefit, to ensuring gender equity through digital channels, our objectives align seamlessly with the broader goals of the ITU. Our mission remains unwavering, championing innovation and cultivating an enabling environment for start‑up, entrepreneurs and the wider digital community.

Ladies and gentlemen, the upcoming ITU PP‑26 is not just another routine gathering, it is symbolizing the final Plenipotentiary Conference preceding 2030 milestones for the Sustainable Development Goals. The path we chart at this conference will significantly influence the very fabric our shared digital future.

Guided by the wisdom and direction of this Council, Qatar stands ready and eager to host this momentous assembly. We earnestly look forward to welcoming you to Doha, confident that together we can craft a visionary roadmap for a more inclusive, sustainable, and interconnected digital era.

Thank you.

>> CHAIR: Thank you very much, Qatar, for that statement.

Now I would like a video to be shared.

Thank you very much, Qatar, for that excellent video.

Now I would like to invite the Council to decide upon the exact dates and location for the next Plenipotentiary, the Plenipotentiary according to the decision in Annex B of this document with the understanding that this decision will be followed by cooperation by all Member States.

I see a request from the floor from Ghana.

>> GHANA: Thank you very much, Chair.

Good morning, Excellencies, distinguished Councilor, ladies and gentlemen.

The ITU may have been in Qatar before and last year at Bucharest we had the hosting of the next Plenipotentiary Conference not knowing what to expect for three weeks in Qatar. However, later in the year, when Qatar hosted the World Cup which had as some of the countries in this Council in Doha, it was an exceptional experience. From gaining entry and the preparations into the country, it was very forward looking. From the time you arrive in Doha to picking your bag, it was less than 10 minutes one could move from the air site to pick a bag.

To the standard transportation, it was granted through a hired car across the city, given a comfortable, safe state making a similar time of amount saved in Doha.

Indeed, Ghana fully supports the adoption of this decision to grant the State of Qatar to host the next Plenipotentiary Conference and of course with a follow‑up consultation with Member States.

Thank you, Chair.

>> CHAIR: Thank you, Ghana.

I would like to give the floor to Bahrain, please.

You have the floor.

>> BAHRAIN: Thank you, Mr. Chair ‑‑ it is Brazil. Thank you.

>> CHAIR: My apologies. Brazil, please.

You have the floor, please.

>> BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'm sorry.

We throughout, Brazil supports the adoption of this document and we thank the State of Qatar for this position to host PPP‑26, as previously experienced, hosting a PP is a crucial element in keeping the delegations in an environment for work, leading to concrete outcomes. Qatar with traditional hospitality with high‑level accomplishments in hosting major events and a complete commitment to the ITU's agenda. Brazil thanks the Qatar Ministry of Information Technology for the readiness and express the wish to have a great PP in Doha. Therefore, we support the proposal and thank again the State of Qatar and to the Chair for giving us the floor.

Thank you again.

>> CHAIR: Thank you, Brazil.

Saudi Arabia, you have the floor, please.

>> SAUDI ARABIA: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We, of course, support the proposal of Qatar to host the Plenipotentiary Conference. We recall the World Cup and how we won against Argentina, we're very, very pleased to participate in a successful Plenipotentiary Conference in Qatar.

>> CHAIR: Thank you very much, Saudi Arabia.

Romania, you have the floor.

>> ROMANIA: Hello, earn, it is it's first time we take the floor today.

I want to also join my voice together with other colleagues from CEPT to thank the State of Qatar for inviting us to Doha for the PP‑26. I sure hope that we can all join and see a successful Plenipotentiary Conference, hopefully looking ahead at a more connected world and hopefully at the time more peaceful.

I also want to propose that if you will not be able to reach consensus in the meeting for some items we can move to the football stadium and as in Bucharest, we made you work a lot and it seems to have good results with consensus, we need to think about some sporting activities.

Once again, thank you very much. We will see you in Doha.

>> CHAIR: Thank you, Romania.

Kuwait, you have the floor.

>> KUWAIT: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Good morning, everyone.

At the outset, we would like to thank the State of Qatar, the country that's invited us and plans to host the next Plenipotentiary Conference. We support the proposal of Qatar and the holding of the conference in Doha.

We all saw the success of the World Cup organized in Qatar and we hope to see you all in the State of Qatar very soon.

Thank you.

>> CHAIR: Thank you, Kuwait.

Thailand, you have the floor.

>> THAILAND: Thank you, Chair.

Good morning to our colleagues. It is good to see everyone here.

Thailand certainly supports the proposal for Qatar. You know, time really flies, not too long ago we were still talking about the three good weeks we had in Romania, now we're talking about the next PP in Qatar and I'm sure that it will be a very good effort, for one.

Personally, as a football fan, I have been watching almost all matches happening in Qatar. Also the closer that I personally come to Qatar is the airport, I loved the airport there. So we're looking forward to visit Qatar and I support the Romania proposal of using the football stadium somehow and perhaps we could have the ITU football competition, some sort of an event like that. I can't play football any more, you know, at this age and everything, but I promise to be a loud cheering session if we do have in the Qatar stadium and I'm looking forward to that. We would support the meeting there and so looking forward to Doha and we agree with the proposal that Qatar has submitted.

Thank you very much, Chair.

>> CHAIR: Thank you very much, Thailand.

Canada, you have the floor, please.

>> CANADA: Thank you very much, Chairman.

Very briefly, to extend on behalf of Canada our sincere thanks to the State of Qatar for the generous offer to host the Plenipotentiary Conference in 2026. 17 years ago I had the pleasure and privilege of attending the World Telecommunication Development Conference in Doha. It was quite an experience, the generosity, kindness of the people, the beautiful City of Doha and we're sure that they'll continue with the tradition of being wonderful hosts.

Last but not least, Chairman, my distinguished colleague from Saudi Arabia has already taken the words out of my mouth, the World Cup was an incredible success, the facilities, the games, I proffer this opportunity on behalf of all of the Americas region to congratulate again one of our member, Argentina, who brought back the World Cup back to where it belongs in the Americas.

Thank you.

>> CHAIR: Thank you very much, Canada.

Now I would like to give the floor to Tunisia, please.

>> TUNISIA: Thank you very much, Chair.

At the outset, I would like to thank the brother from Qatar for the generous invitation to host the Plenipotentiary Conference.

We firmly support this proposal, we are fully convinced that this conference will be a success, and this event holds great importance and very successful with the existing infrastructure in place in Qatar.

Thank you.

>> CHAIR: Thank you very much, Tunisia.

Japan, you have the floor.

>> JAPAN: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Good morning Distinguished Delegates, and we would like to express sincere gratitude to the Government of Qatar for sending invitations to the Plenipotentiary 2026 and for hosting this important event.

We fully support the adoption of the place and date of the next Plenipotentiary Conference. We're confident of the success of the event by Qatar and looking forward to visiting Doha.

Thank you.

>> CHAIR: Thank you, Japan.

Egypt, you have the ‑‑ my apology, United Arab Emirates.

>> UNITED ARAB EMIRATES: Thank you, Chair. for a number of years Qatar has hosted large event, especially with ITU, it hosted the World Cup, and everyone bore witness to the excellent organization of this event.

We fully support this resolution and of course we'll be very happy to attend this Plenipotentiary Conference in 2026 in Qatar and would like to thank the delegation.

Thank you.

>> CHAIR: Thank you.

Now on my list I have Egypt, Indonesia, India, Bahrain, Philippines, Nigeria, Turkiye Argentina, I would like to close the list of speakers with Bulgaria.

‑‑ and Morocco. I will include Morocco, and then I would like to close the list. Please, if you can be brief with your comments as we have pressing agenda items to consider.

We also have an observer from Israel.

Egypt, please, you have the floor.

>> EGYPT: Thank you very much, Chair.

Very briefly I would like to thank Qatar for showing willingness to host the PP conference in Qatar, and we are fully confident that this conference will be a success and you have our full support.

Thank you.

>> CHAIR: Thank you, Egypt.

Indonesia, you have the floor.

>> INDONESIA: We're pleased that Qatar will be hosting the Plenipotentiary in 2026 and we wish and hope that the PP‑26 from the preparation phase until the conference itself is successfully held by Qatar.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

>> CHAIR: Thank you, Indonesia.

India, please, you have the floor.

>> INDIA: Thank you very much, Chair.

India would like to thank the State of Qatar for the generous offer to host PP‑26 and fully supports the proposal of Qatar to host the PP. We have seen wonderful infrastructure being developed during the World Cup and we look forward to a productive Plenipotentiary Conference.

Thank you very much.

>> CHAIR: Thank you, India.

Bahrain, please.

>> BAHRAIN: Thank you, Chair.

Good morning to all. Of course, we do support Qatar and we are sure and are confident it will be a full success.

Thank you.

>> CHAIR: Thank you, Bahrain.

Philippines, please.

>> PHILIPPINES: I hope everyone is well. We would like to convey our support to the offer of the State of Qatar to host and we express our thanks and we particularly support the dates mentioned in the resolution and will be anticipating the report of this coming 2024 Council session.

We believe that a football stadium would be an interesting venue as mentioned, just like the Romania parliament.

I think that when we're given much room for walking, then it would inspire us to think more.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

>> CHAIR: Thank you, Philippines. Nigeria, please.

>> NIGERIA: Thank you, Chairman.

Good morning to all delegates.

Nigeria adds its voice to all others expressing support to Qatar for hosting the PP‑26, with the capacity that was demonstrated in hosting the FIFA22 World Cup, welcoming the delegates to PP‑26, we will have a wonderful experience in Qatar.

Thank you.

>> CHAIR: Thank you very much.

Turkiye, please, you have the floor.

>> TURKIYE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Good morning to all colleagues.

Turkiye also fully supports the adoption of the relevant decision. We wish to reiterate our thanks to the State of Qatar for hosting this important event. We are sure that you will have a very successful PP in the beautiful City of Doha. Thank you.

>> CHAIR: Thank you, Turkiye.

Argentina.

>> ARGENTINA: At the outset, this is the first time taking the floor, we would welcome all delegates and to the ITU leadership team for having convened this Council session and we hope that the resolutions will be very productive.

Moreover, as the World Cup has been mentioned, of course, I'm obliged to intervene, if not, I wouldn't be able to return to my country! But firstly, I would like to thank Qatar for their proposal and would like to support this both the location and the dates suggested.

Argentina has born witness to the professionalism and the skills of this country to host large scale events and, of course, we're very grateful to them and for having proposed the PP conference for 2026.

Moreover, I would like to mention the previous meetings that were held in Qatar within the framework of ITU have always been very productive. We are fully confident in the skills organization and we convey our gratitude to them once again.

>> CHAIR: Thank you, Argentina.

Bulgaria, please.

>> BULGARIA: Thank you, Chair.

I will be very brief. We thank the State of Qatar for their generous offer of hosting the next PP and fully support this proposal.

Thank you.

>> CHAIR: Thank you, Bulgaria.

Morocco, please, you have the floor.

>> MOROCCO: Thank you very much, Chair. I will be very brief.

We support Qatar's proposal to host the Plenipotentiary Conference in 2026 and of course, we are fully aware of the experience of our brotherly nation when hosting the World Cup, we're fully confident that the PP conference will be a success.

Of course, Morocco has also made great strides during the World Cup as well, and we wish the conference full success.

Thank you.

>> CHAIR: Thank you very much, Morocco.

As I mentioned previously, I close the list, but I would like to give the floor to the observer State of Israel as mentioned previously.

Thank you.

>> ISRAEL: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would like to thank Qatar for the invitation as well as to relay good words and impressive video. I have been to Doha for the WTDC conference. I'm aware of what Qatar can offer to all of us.

We're in agreement with the dates.

Let me express all of our hope that Qatar, the hosting country, and the Union, will stand for these warm words and take the full commitment ‑‑ sorry.

To take the full commitment to enabling all Member States and delegations, preparations ahead of time and the smooth entrance to the country. Let me take this opportunity to thank so many of you for the messages of support and concern during the last ten days. I'm sorry I can't be there with you in the room.

Best of success in this meeting.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

>> CHAIR: Thank you, very much.

We will adopt the decision in Annex B.

The decision is it thereby adopted.

Moving on, the Secretary‑General would like to take the floor, please. You have the floor.

>> DOREEN BOGDAN-MARTIN: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, Qatar, for your inspiring intervention and inspiring video.

We are delighted with your offer, which has now been accepted by Council, your offer to host the next PP.

Thank you for confirming the dates and venue. Qatar has hosted a number of important events, including the World Cup, clearly we have many football fans in this Council. While I didn't see the World Cup in person, I did see LDC5 in person, it was quite a spectacular conference. Qatar has hosted many important ITU event, including the connect Africa Summit back in 2012, the ITU World Telecom in 2014, and, of course, as we have heard, the WTDC in 2006 during which we had the first women to Chair the WTDC, we may see the first women to Chair a PP. We'll see. We look forward to the upcoming site visits and, of course, to working with the host country to prepare for an exciting successful and perhaps a sporty PP in 2026. Tomas has just told me that he's going to volunteer to be on the ITU football team. So start training!

Of course, I take your words, but all we want to do is really translate the resolutions into action as this important Plenipot will help us to chart the last path before the 2030 Agenda.

Thank you again.

>> CHAIR: Thank you very much, Secretary‑General.

We have reached the end of the inaugural Plenary. We'll take a short break and then I'll give you ‑‑ I'll give the ‑‑ my apologies. Qatar is requesting the floor.

>> QATAR: Thank you very much, Chair.

I would like to thank each and every one of you for your support and the assistance offered and the experience offered and we, of course, commit as you rightly said to ensure that this is a success.

Thank you very much, Madam Secretary‑General, for your support.

Thank you, Chair.

>> CHAIR: Thank you very much, Qatar.

We will, of course, be getting ourselves ready in anticipation of 2026.

As I mentioned, we are now reaching the end of this Plenary. We'll hold a short coffee break. 10 minutes, please. Then I will leave you in the hands of the Chair of the administration to address the matters on the agenda for this additional Council session.

Thank you. I'll see you in 10 minutes.

(Break).

>> CHAIR: Ladies and gentlemen, please take your seats.

Thank you.

Good morning Chair of the Council. He's not there, I hope he wasn't ‑‑ the Chair of the Council, I hope he ‑‑ I don't see him. I hope he's still in the building with us. I hope he hasn't left to go to the airport.

Madam Secretary‑General, Mr. Deputy Secretary‑General, Mr. Director, Directors of the Bureau, my Vice‑Chair, I'm very honored to Chair the ADM Committee on Oat occasion of this additional Council session as well.

This morning we have before us the task of considering the issue of headquarters. We have several documents that will be presented to us. I will open the floor to get feedback from you on the information presented to us and the contributions as well.

We have document C23‑ADD/5(Rev.1), presented to us by the Deputy Secretary‑General. Am I correct? You have the floor, sir.

Thank you, good morning, dear colleague, great to address you here in this Council session today. Thank you for your engagement with the agenda and specifically in the ITU headquarter premises project. It is my pleasure to introduce C23‑ADD/5(Rev.1), which outlines the steps that Secretariat has taken relating to the new headquarter project and asked for guidance from the Council on the way forward.

Since July, as per the instructions of the Council, the Secretariat has been taking specific actions, including seeking donations and sponsorships from ITU membership, conducting innovative needs assessment analysis and engaging with the Swiss authorities on matters pertaining to permitting and additional loans.

In terms of donations, we have received two expressions of interest from Saudi Telecom company, a sector member, as well as another from Saudi Arabia and we have seen interest from another Member State but was not followed up by a detailed proposal.

However, none of those proposals are affirmed in concrete sponsorship proposals, including potential amounts of funds that could be allocated.

We, of course, are grateful for the sponsorships and donations received so far for the new headquarters and, of course, the additional expresses of interest as well. We're continuing engaging with them, with parties that expressed he interest, however, as mentioned before, no commitments have been finalized.

We also ‑‑ we have also as an implementing another Council request, conducted the detailed needs assessment with relevant internal stakeholders and I'm really grateful for our project team as well as the ITU staff, staff Council, as well as the Bureau Directors and the focal points, engaging in the very constructive, productive manner, even though most of the work had to be done in the months before, traditionally in Geneva, that's a holiday, vacation time, and we still were able to progress I believe very well. Most of that work has been presented to you in the Council information session as well and as we'll discuss later, we have discussed that in detail, the Council Working Group on financial, Human Resources as well.

Just a few days ago.

We also ‑‑ in the context of delivering the results, we have also conducted a survey of ITU staff members and we received quite a good number of responses, just shy of 350 responses to that survey. We also together with architects identified ten elements that could be considered for further scoping and we looked into details in all of them. In the request of some Member States, the additional info doc that provided detailed information of the assessment of every option. So for those Member States who would like to have more details of how that assessment was done and all elements there, feel free to refer to this additional document for this Council as well.

The scoping analysis confirmed that out of 10, the feasible ones were three elements and they would result in less than 1% of savings, around 1.8 million of savings. Other elements when considered as challenging, feasible, rather challenging conditions, we also looked at what could be the maximum savings, all of the different elements that would be included there, including in the savings in ITU direct work packages and that the total amount of savings was even with those could be very challenging and achieved, resulting in 10% from the current project budget.

Our conclusion is that this would not offer efficiencies and would not probably be a strong contribution to helping us move forward.

Also I would like to note, another instruction of the Council, close engagement with the Swiss authorities and we had a liaison meeting with the Swiss government that took place on the 19th of September, where all of the details of the scoping were discussed and also in the potential way forward.

Moving to conclusion, I think from the Secretariat's perspective, we don't believe the scoping of the current assigned would ensure fit for purpose premises and achieve savings that would allow to sufficiently bridge the financial gap. We also don't have additional sponsorship funds confirmed at this stage.

Therefore, we still have faced the 57 million Swiss francs financing gap if we were to decide to move with the current building project as it is designed now. Of course, then the Council would have to give us that guidance for the next steps in that regard. Of course, in that amount we would include the amount, the business continuity costs to ensure that the work can continue while the building project is in place. It will be around 11.4 million then.

Out of that amount, 57 million, you know, in the ‑‑ if that was a decision, around 40 million, it could be funded from the loan of the Swiss consideration, as long as they agree to increase the loan, that would have to be requested and 17 million would have to be funded from other sources, what that means, that we would have to be looking for sources to fund that.

Also in the process of the ‑‑ in the process of coming here, we also had great support from Member State advisory group with the new Chair and really congratulations again to you for stepping into this role in an effective way and from the first meetings providing us very strong advice in that regard, and of course we are appreciative of the guidance of Council Working Group on Financial and Human Resources and under the chairmanship of Ms. Harris and I believe she will also be briefing here today. We believe from the Secretariat's perspective, that's a solid basis for us to continue this discussion in the Council meeting and that for us as Secretariat to receive your guidance based on that on the next steps to take.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Back to you.

>> CHAIR: Thank you very much Mr. Deputy Secretary‑General.

I would like to take this opportunity to draw the attention of Delegates to this document which will provide additional information.

Very well. I would suggest that we will now listen to the report of the Council Working Group and financial Human Resources.

Apologies first of all, the Member State advisory group. Chair, are you here in the room, Brazil?

>> Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

First I would like to recall, it is the resolve from Resolution 212 that the Member States advisory group, continue to meet to review the future headquarter gross and to provide guidance and advice.

In the same line, there is Council decision 619. Since the last Council session, bet twice and had the honor to be appointed as its Chair by my colleagues, representatives of different region, in the 24th meeting held on September 14.

In that 24th meeting, we had the Chair appointment and the brief of the group on the updates from the project team, including the resignation of the head of facilities management project division. Then there was detailed work done on the latest instructions. At that point, MSAG demanded more clarification relating to the scoping exercise, for example, about other items that should integrate the exercise and that alternatives such as a new competition with more modest requirements should be explored.

In general, MSAG debated the presentation and pointed topics that should be more detailed in the following meetings as well as to the Council and CWG‑FHR.

In the meeting held on September 25th, the presentation from the Secretariat brought more details on the steps taken.

Recalling the resignation of the head of BPD and due to the importance of the project, the MSAG firmly asked the Secretariat to consider whether the high‑level seniority and experiencing in similar projects were reflected in the recruitment. How can ITU ensure the selection of a candidate with this kind of accomplishment. It was agreed that these items should be addressed to the CWG‑FHR and to the Council session.

In the end, the general purpose of MSAG in the reported meetings was that the CWG‑FHR and Council could have more data and elements to decide about the two remaining alternatives with perspective criteria of feasibility and range of various aid. At the same time, MSAG was attentive to the project management aspects as it is reflecting the demand about the new positions.

I would like to inform that the meeting summaries are in MSAG SharePoint and that the new building webpage for consultation. A report of the meetings was delivered to the last CWG‑FHR meeting where the project was an item of debate as it will be reported by the Chair of the group to the Council.

In the last days, I had informal conversation with delegates from different Member States and identified the following main concerns that could inspire our debate from now on.

One, Member States should have high quality detailed and timely information to make their decisions.

Two, the new headquarters should be constructed to meet the Union's requirements in the long‑term, by PP Resolution 212 through the current project or through a new one this goal should not be abandoned.

Member States should have full reports and the Secretariat should have clear marks and timetable for steps.

Three, to the greatest extent possible any solution, either a new project or the regional one could take advantage of the funds already spent and of the outcomes.

Four, exercises and budgetary allocations and in discussing new perspectives about sponsorship and donation have to be considered helpful.

Five, regarding any project, the current one, the new one, the headquarters should retain ITU's recognition of Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Czech Republic, Ghana, Algeria as approved in Resolution 212, as I said, these were elements that I gathered from informal conversations and I thank a lot the delegates for reaching and sharing their perspectives.

Finally, I expressed my gratitude to my colleagues in MSAG and to our good observers for the productive debates, as I have said, always, MSAG is a work team.

I thank the ITU Secretary‑General, Deputy Secretary‑General and Secretariat for the permanent dialogue and support to MSAG work.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

>> CHAIR: Thank you very much.

We too would like to thank you for taking on this function as the Chair. You have the predecessor's in this post who have pressured excellent work as well as I hope you will carry on this tradition.

I will now give the floor to the Chair of the Council Working Group on financial Human Resources.

Madam, you have the floor.

>> Thank you very much.

I will say that the Council Working Group on Human Resources met last week. We had a large agenda item, 21 to be exact. That's the largest number of agenda items that the Working Group has had. We met from October 11 to October 13 to discuss a number of different ‑‑ a number of topics that were referred to us by Council, Council trusted our Working Group to look at the issues and report back to them at the next section.

There was widespread support and participation and fruitful inputs from Member States. I for one, the Management Team, we were very appreciative of the discussion.

One of the most important topics that came to the floor was the report on the ITU headquarters premises project, provided by the Secretariat as well as the MSAG Chair. This project has been on the minds of many ITU Member States, and last year, Council referred this to MSAG and the Council Working Group. Based on what we believed was the action to look at and have a conversation, it was not an easy conversation, it was a difficult conversation, but sometimes difficult conversation leads to getting everyone's views on the record so that this body can make a decision. Our Council Working Group on FHR was never intended to make the decision, but intended to have a discussion so that you could make a decision.

Part of the discussion focused on the scoping of the original building project. The originally accepted design, assess ‑‑ and to assess whether it was fit for purpose.

The design, as DSD Tomas indicated, the original design, it accedes the original budget by 50 million, the Secretariat had a thorough analysis of the situation as well as MSAG Chairman and concluded that none of the options for the descoping the current design would result in significant savings or in a fit‑for‑purpose facility for the ITU.

In other words, the descoping desired to reach the existing budget would have to be too extensive and the facility would not be fit‑for‑purpose and the descoping required to meet ITU's needs would not result in any significant savings. The trade‑offs required simply did not work as presented.

As Chair of the Working Group, I became convinced as I ask more and more questions that the analysis options presented by the Secretariat was deliberate, thorough, realistic while some Member States continue to press for further exploration of options with regard to the current design, as the Chair, the report that you see here in C323 represents the discussions that we had regarding the building project, and its budget.

The results of the report are clearly, convincingly demonstrated ‑‑ the report presented by the Secretariat clearly indicated that the descoping of the current effort was not a viable or realistic option. The only other options that at this point would be either to increase funding for the project by 57 million Swiss francs and go with the original design, which while in many respects is admittedly maybe somewhat lavish, which results in a fit‑for‑purpose facility and meet the ITU's needs or do we cut the losses which are currently 22 million Swiss francs, which has already been spent and redesign the project developing a fit‑for‑purpose facility that falls within ITU's remaining budget, mainly living within our means.

I will tell you that I understand this, I wanted a car, a very expensive car and my husband was like no, you need to put ‑‑ you cannot put your wants before your needs. Your needs is this, you may want this luxury car, but you can't afford it.

So that was basically the discussion last week.

These options were discussed at length, while many views were expressed, overwhelmingly Member States agreed in principle to include these two options for Council to consider.

I would note that there were some he Member States that also indicated that there were other options, but from the Chair's perspective, while it was provocative, in order to make a decision regardless of whether it is yes, you want to spend 57 million on this project, or you want to not spend the 57 million and redesign the project, you need to get to an answer.

The question needed to be very clear, there are lots of options related to each of the questions. In order to really get to the point of do you agree or do you not agree, and from my perspective, it was that binary. We had been having the discussions for many years and we had this discussion at Plenipot and it wasn't clear to me until last week that we all were not operating from the same information. I'm sure that you all will know that your boss has said something to you what, are the options? Give me clear options, and then we'll have a discussion about the two options. That's essentially what we did last week. We had a discussion on two options that I put forward and those options are on Page 7.

Essentially, it was a flow chart. If no, then you move to the budget that's left, you redesign the project and you look at the next steps.

If yes, then you need to go ask Switzerland to ‑‑ if we can increase the loan by and find the remaining 17 million Swiss francs.

I would note, I would be making some edits to the slide that I was requested to add that 22 million had already been spent, that's correct.

22 million has already been spent on this project, and you have a remaining 150 million left.

If yes, then you have a list of next steps, that's in Page 7.

Either way, we couldn't kick this down the road any longer. We need to provide Council with a discussion and that is what you have in this document.

I know it is quite long. As some would say, it probably looks like a thesis, but I thought it was extremely important to present to you as councilors a look at what we discussed last week and at the end of the meeting, I had a request from the two administrations to make up dates and I will do that in Rev.(2) to this document.

Chair, I present this to you. Thank you.

>> CHAIR: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. This is Page 7. This is the Annex. It is at the very end, if the secretary could scroll down, please.

Madam Chair of the Council Working Group, these are the issues you're referring to? Very well. I can reassure you that all of the feedback I received after the Working Group of the Council Working Group meeting meant that your efforts were very much appreciated, and discussions were focused on the central issues and we have made strides forward thanks to you.

Thank you very much.

I will now give you the authority to take the floor to express your opinion, if you have questions or any comments on what's been said.

Saudi Arabia, please.

>> SAUDI ARABIA: Thank you very much, Chair.

I would like to give a warm welcome. I wouldn't like to repeat the same statements that we already put forward during the last Council session.

We have a resolution which is based upon a need linked to the certainty, safety, conditions of Geneva. The building is not fit‑for‑purpose. We cannot use it. Thus, the Swiss government decided to fund the building project. The pandemic and also we were faced with inflation. Thus, certainly prices have gone up. We will go to the supermarket to buy what we need, vegetables, get what we need and we can see that costs have increased.

Are we going to give our children less to eat? Less milk, for example, less food? Of course we will not.

The same logic can be applied to the building project. We need more funding in order to finance this building. We would like to thank the Swiss government and it stands ready to provide this additional funding.

40 million Swiss francs, direct costs for the cost of the project. 17 million Swiss francs for indirect costs which can be found through ITU cost efficiencies.

Yet, refusing this new funding will mean that we lose 22 Swiss francs. I don't feel that's a wise, responsible decision to take on the part of Member States and an administration that's been elected. We have wasted a lot of time. I don't feel it would be a wise decision to take.

Therefore, I'm of the view that we need to move forward and we need to provide the Swiss parliament everything that they have requested so that we can move towards the building as in alignment with the Plenipotentiary resolution.

Our conclusion would like to thank Mr. Tomas and you for all of the efforts.

Thank you.

>> CHAIR: Thank you very much, Saudi Arabia.

I'm of the view that you are of the yes option.

United Arab Emirates, you have the floor, please.

>> UNITED ARAB EMIRATES: Thank you very much, Chair. I would like to support the proposal made by our colleague, Saudi Arabia.

This matter cannot be pushed back for a number of reasons.

Firstly, we have the resolution stemming from the PP conference and this is following the discussions from the last Council session. Moreover, during the meeting of CWG‑FHR, this building does not meet the conditions set out by the City of Geneva. As mentioned during the CWG‑FHR meeting, any delay costs us 100,000 Swiss francs a day, and this has been going on for a number of months. We have further costs to consider here, we're talking about a rescoping of an entire building. This is going to set us back two years.

This will lead to losing 22 million francs, half of what we need. I believe that the best option so to about it forward as our colleague from Saudi Arabia has just said and requesting an additional loan from Switzerland and the Swiss delegation has said this is possible and we can clarify this with other information. Perhaps this might be the first option. So to not go back into meetings next year and to come back to the same topic next year.

Thank you very much.

>> CHAIR: Thank you very much, United Arab Emirates. Your position is well noted.

I would like to give the floor to the United States of America, please.

>> UNITED STATES of AMERICA: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to the Secretariat and to the MSAG Chair for the updates and reports and to the Chair of the Council Working Group for presenting the choices and putting the difficulty of our situation in very clear terms.

In July the ITU Council has assessed that the option for expanding the financial is not supported given the financial situation facing the Union, we thank the ITU to SharePoint work secure sponsorships and to descope the building costs. It is clear that we're very far from bridging this financial gap.

Based on our discussions last week, we also do not believe that today we're able to agree to expand the costs of this project by 57 million Swiss francs, and the United States cannot support that option. Where does that leave us? For us, we recognize that under option B there are many paths, but the principle steps that we need to move forward with a plan that works within the existing budgets of the Union agreed by the Plenipotentiary and Council.

We believe that we need to instruct the Secretariat to present a plan for transition to the next phase of this project, that would mitigate the risk and cost to the Union to maximum extent, including leveraging the work done and the funds already committed.

This means making clear and specific asks to Switzerland, including a possible renegotiation of the terms of the loan. This may mean cutting specific expensive design elements of the projects address the permanents and the tenders and simplifying the overall design of the project. We need to know how we can better take account of the realities of increased teleworking and minimize the additional design elements such as a gym or club space or the pavilion. I believe we all recognize that none of these options are good ones, we're being put in this position and we believe that the interests of the Union are best served by a recognition that option A is unattainable, and that we now need focus on the path towards option B and a new design plan for the ITU headquarters that best meets the needs of the Union, including minimizing the overall financial risks.

Thank you.

>> CHAIR: Thank you, United States.

I give the floor to Switzerland, please.

You have the floor.

>> SWITZERLAND: Thank you very much, Chair.

I would like to thank the Secretariat of MSAG for their reports presented, and I would like to convey my gratitude to you, Madam Chair, the CWG‑FHR for the clarity that you brought to bear for the discussions. I would also like to add two clarifications so that the discussions can continue on an objective basis. Firstly pertaining the costs of 17 million Swiss francs, the exact cost of the project have increased from 35 to 40 million, if memory serves correctly, so the indirect cost of 57 million, they were not part of the initial discussions and did not ‑‑ only appeared recently.

The indirect cost also not disappear and if there is a change of projects, they're linked inter alia to the future use of the building and the future conferences.

So it has to be funded in case of a change in project, and the two options put forward on the increasing in the loan, another project, it would request a parliamentary process, not only an increase in the loan where the parliaments can then make a decision on a specific loan and description of the project is part of the method that's been sent to the parliament which the parliamentarians are able to take a decision. That's what I would like to bring to bear at the moment.

Thank you.

>> CHAIR: I thank Switzerland for the clarifications.

Bulgaria, please, you have the floor.

>> BULGARIA: Thank you, Chair.

First of all, I would like to thank the Chair of the Council Working Group, CWG‑FHR, for making her best efforts to have the two clear options we would like to discuss.

We would like to side with what Brazil Chair of MSAG said on the necessity of the timed and detailed information. It is part of the challenge, to decide on this issue. We have further noted some discrepancies in the information that we don't know how to address as a country. We would like some clarifications made and more clarifications on behalf of the Secretariat.

In the preliminary audit, external audit report, I would like to emphasize preliminary, they put the overall amount of the money we need at almost 230 million Swiss francs, but they said it is an increase with 80 million more. In the same report, they also state that the same costs, the costs that are irrecoverable for the time being of 25.4 million Swiss francs and we speak here only about 22 million and we would like to know how these calculations were made and how they correspond to the actual reality.

What we also see, and as I recall, discussed in July's session of the preliminary report of the external audit in paragraph 1.58 and 1.59, the fact that the auditors found out that the project governance is deficient due to the absence of independent and expert challenge of the project, and that to be independent an assurance to be independent, it should be funded independently.

So that seems like a possible increase of the costs of the project in the future, both for options for a loan or not to have a loan. We would like to know how that would be addressed and how these potential expenses would be covered by the budget of ITU and if they could possibly covered by the loan, that's another question as well.

Also for us, it is unclear where the money, whether that's 17 million or more for indirect costs that cannot be covered by the loan, extended loan by ITU, where would that come from the budget. We still have to pay for them in case we take this option.

It is not clear how they will be covered in the current budget deficit that we're seeing and for the foreseeable future, we don't have any reasons to believe that this deficit will be easily overcome.

With all of this, I'm looking forward to clarifications and discrepancies in the possible additional expenses due to the independent assurance of the operational process of the building, for this time, we don't believe there is enough grounds faints to support the possible decision for the extension of the loan.

We hope that more information that would be provided may clarify a bit the discussion here. Thank you.

>> CHAIR: Thank you very much.

Canada, please, you have the floor.

>> CANADA: Thank you, Chairman.

Good afternoon to you. I would like to thank our Chairwoman, as always, an extraordinary job. Chairman, there are several issues in addition to those raised by Bulgaria. I would like to point out a couple of questions that we asked one, what is the current amount sitting in the bank that we have in terms of the loan? I understand it is 150 million Swiss francs, and it begs the question if we accept the notion and following the analogy of going to buy a car, that was probably beyond her mean, and her wise husband encouraged her to go to an equally efficient vehicle at a lower cost, is there anything that we can do to apply the concept of living within our means taking into account what is the amount of money that we have available at this point, and ask the Swiss authorities what is it that we could do with the remaining amount in the loan without getting into a very complicated procedural process in terms of new permits, provided that the design fits Pennsylvania within the parameters of not requiring another lengthy negotiations.

The other question relates to an issue which has been raised by several of us by the mere fact of walking between the tower and looking at the amount of space that's not being occupied, if the original amount of the loan was targeted for a particular building to host X amount of staff, what number do we have right now that would allow us to say, well, we had a building for 100%, now we have a building that it is required only 75%. Of course, it triggers the question, what size of a building do we require? Last but not least, the ongoing monthly costs, the numbers are fluctuating between 70,000 to 100,000 Swiss francs monthly which we understand are the costs of the continued engagement with the consultant and we would like to have a little bit more clarity as to what specifically are the consultants doing, for example, today where we're discussing and they have taken no decision and if the costs will continue to incur, irrespective of any decision that we're supposed to take either today or tomorrow.

Thank you.

>> CHAIR: Thank you, Canada.

United Kingdom, you have the floor.

>> UNITED KINGDOM: Thank you. We thank the Secretariat for the hard work over the summer following the discussion last Council and in particular we would like it thank Switzerland for their continued patience as we all work on finding a way forward on this difficult topic.

It is clear to us, colleagues, that the descoping exercise was not sufficient to bring the project within the budget limit agreed to by this Council. This is perhaps attributable to the narrow parameters in which the exercise had to be conducted, including the building permit and current design.

I think we would endorse and welcome the MSAG principles articulated by my friend Brazil, in particular that the ITU should have an HQ fit‑for‑purpose and the need for detailed information and also that to the greatest extent possible, any project should take advantage of the funds already spent and outcomes.

The U.K. position remains that we can't increase the budget. This is not just because of the need to live within our means as of Chair puts it, but also because of the important work of the Union which will suffer if we have to find more money to pay a higher loan. It is also because there is no buffer under this option, it seems to us that any major construction project is extremely likely to go over budget as it develops.

It is also because they are continued questions around the ITU finances generally raised by the external auditor, still not resolved.

We are conscience of the monthly cost to the ITU if this discussion continues without certainty. So for the U.K., you need to draw a line under the current plan, see how to ensure the smooth path to a new plan that builds on the work done to the greatest extent possible and takes the more ambitious approach to rescoping without the constraints that we are moving with. Importantly, with learned lessons from how the project has been managed so far.

Thank you.

>> CHAIR: Thank you, United Kingdom.

Thailand, please.

>> THAILAND: Thank you very much, Chair.

First of all, we would like to thank the Secretariat and the Deputy Secretary‑General for the descoping exercise outcome, and detailed report from Chair of Council working group CWG‑FHR, if the report is a thesis, obviously you earn that distinction, and I also to thank you for the report from MSAG Chair as well.

This is a very difficult situation indeed. We tried to look at the information at hand and it appears that even with the descoping exercise undertaken by the Secretariat, could not produce a significant reduction many were expecting.

It is clear that we need to make a decision as we are pressed for time and no decision ‑‑ it is a decision with financial consequences and the longer we take the higher the price will be.

With the external auditor report to be published, we have the knowledge of the extent of the Union's current financial situation, what could be decided now is very limited, and even though we would like to see the best version and the full option of ITU building, Thailand is hesitant about agreeing to additional loan without the financial facts, given the current economic trend and the general financial situation of the Union and even if the meeting agrees with a yes option, the future scenario is still unclear. Thailand is concerned about adding additional financial burden to the Union, and in a sense, the Union membership for the next 50 years, Thailand is of the view that it is best to work within the scope of the budget and that the Union decides to build a new building without functional requirements without taking into account the policy of teleworking, if the people working remotely, if that number increases, it could be allocated to something more useful. Thailand understands that starting a new process will further delay the construction of the new building and nut building could be minimal, but at this critical time, we are of the will that it is best to find a consensus and move forward, therefore Thailand is of the view that this is the decision that produces the most efficient outcome as of now and under the available information we are being given at hand at this point in time.

Thank you very much, Chair.

>> CHAIR: Thank you, Thailand.

Australia, please, you have the floor.

>> AUSTRALIA: Thank you, Chair.

I would like to express my gratitude to the Chair and all of the participants for efforts op I will try to keep my remarks concise. We acknowledge and appreciate the diligent work carried out by the Secretariat, the CWG‑FHR and MSAG and we would like to thank Switzerland for the informative explanation of the loan process. Upon careful consideration of the options presented, it is evident that we have been provided ‑‑ that this has provided valuable information to aid in a very difficult decision making process.

Australia aligns itself with the statements made by the U.S., Canada, other, and concerns by Bulgaria, we emphasize the importance of a project and building that fills the intended purpose and an extension of the loan should not be considered given the additional burden it will have on the Union.

In addition, we agree with the comment made by the MSAG Chair on the principles. We believe it is crucial to have a sensible plan that does not impose significant financial risk or challenges on the Union in the future.

It is important that we make a decision soon and as such that we need to consider that option B is the prudent choice in these circumstances.

Thank you, Chair.

>> CHAIR: Thank you, Australia.

Bahrain, you have the floor.

>> BAHRAIN: I think that's Brazil, not Bahrain.

>> BRAZIL: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Good morning. This is my about first intervention here. I just arrived from Brazil a couple of hours ago.

First of all, I congratulate you for the report and I really think that this issue is very, very important and that it is subject of several discussions for some time now. We have different positions from different members, and different possibilities to move forward.

The point here, it is that the delay in making the final decision has cost a lot and generated even more agency for the whole Union.

In addition, we have an important fact that it is the responsibility of all of us to maintain the Union in an efficient, sustainable manner. We cannot forget this responsibility in this view, we had expressed the position about the option B, but we have been close following this debate and we understand that some form of definitive decision would be possible with some boundary conditions, giving room for accommodation of the various concerns, especially giving an opportunity for final sponsorships and at the end, we having made this decision.

In this sense, we would like to propose a formal presentation to have a text, that we are in discussion with some members and that we think that we can use this text as a base text for a possible final ‑‑ basically giving a trigger for final sponsorships and if we don't have the final sponsorships, we can also have a final agreement about the decision about option B.

I would like to propose this informal discussion in order to find an agreement and possibly accommodate the final views.

Thank you very much.

>> CHAIR: Thank you, Brazil.

I would like to ask the interpreters if they can give us 5 more minutes.

>> Of course, Chairman. 5 more minutes. No problem.

>> CHAIR: Thank you. I would like to thank Brazil for having shared reflections of this on a possible compromise way forward to encompass all of the views that's been expressed.

We're still going to hear from the countries that would like to take the floor, I think there are ten or so.

Turkiye, please, you have the floor.

>> TURKIYE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

We would like to thank the Secretariat for the detailed report. We also thank to the Chair of the Council Working Group CWG‑FHR for the hard work and effort for preparing the report on this agenda item.

Having carefully examined the report of the Secretariat and Annexes, we consider that the presented information about the results of the needs assessment and the descoping exercise requires more satisfactory analysis.

We believe that clarification and detailed explanation is needed on the methodology used. For example, it is important to have information on how mentioned elements, subject and descoping analysis have been identified. In addition, clarification is needed on how the figures for the magnitude cost savings and costs for implementing the descoping are reached and what are the costs of continued delays in the project. We understand that the understanding of the methodology will enable a better examination of whether cost savings and efficiencies are possible compared to the identified possible savings of 10%.

Regarding the recruitment process, for the position of head of facility management and building project division, FMBP, the importance of this project does not leave room for management failures. We would like to ask the Secretariat what are the expectations regarding the situation for replacement given the technical expertise required and the seniority of the post.

Regarding the discussion on additional sponsorships and donations, we support a balance that will not prejudice the impartiality and the reputation of the Union and the main purpose of the project and the will to ensure fairness among all stakeholders.

We appreciate that the Secretariat also had the similar point of view as reflected in the report, based on the previous discussions and project background and after careful examination of the available information about needs assessment and descoping exercise, we are in favor of keeping the project within the limits of the approved budget with substantially redesigning and proceeding with the development of further steps, such as a new loan agreement and tendering processes as appropriate.

Thank you very much.

>> CHAIR: Thank you, Turkiye.

Sweden, you have the floor.

>> SWEDEN: Thank you for giving me the floor.

Sweden appreciates the extensive, hard work by the Management Team or the building project and also that Council has been informed regularly about the process. We also would like to thank the MSAG Chair and the Chair of the Council Working Group FHR for the important contribution on this issue. Sweden does understand the need for a new building, while at the same time it seems that the current buildings, warned about the building, but it can be used for a number of years to come. On the principle level, we think that there are now two alternatives to consider as presented in the summary report of the Council Working Group on FHR, but unfortunately, it is difficult to make a decision on which option to choose.

As Sweden understands it, the option, the 70 million Swiss francs will be taken from the operational budget, what consequences would this have on other activities carried out by the ITU? We think that we should wait for the external audit report to make a decision on using funds from the operational budget. That being said, Sweden finds it difficult to make a decision in the ‑‑ despite the costs of the ITU at least 70,000 Swiss francs. We're, of course, concerned about this amount of money being and would echo Canada's question on how they are spent.

We are also concerned about the financial situation with going ahead with new loans. Sweden would like to encourage the Management Team to continue to keep Council updated as soon as new information is available about the building project, preferably in the form of the briefings and the documentation and all in good time.

Thank you.

>> CHAIR: Thank you. I will take one last country, and that will ‑‑ then we'll have a lunch break.

I think we'll have some homework during the break, namely to detail the costs if Council decides to postpone the decision until June of 2024 are we going to spend money? Nothing is happening, and how much will we spend and is it possible to make a decision to minimize the costs? A decision to minimize the costs. We don't want to spend more if not favorable. Maybe the Secretariat could offer figures to us after the lunch break.

Indonesia, you have the floor.

>> INDONESIA: Thank you, Chair.

First of all, I would like to extend our appreciation to CWG‑FHR and also the Secretariat team, for the report, and regarding the report, especially of the two options, and I would like to seek clarifications, on the first options, and we would like to echo other countries, and especially on what is the plan for bridging the 70 million gap from the loan of the Switzerland government, we would like to understand more about the post financing projections which means also the financial implications during the project.

The deficit, this requires the strategy to have the additional burden of the loan.

On the second opinion, Indonesia would like to understand whether it is possible to re‑‑ redesign the premises in such a way that it would be financial free of the Member States and satisfy the functional requirement, how much is the financing gap and how to resolve that without effecting the financial fee. In general, Indonesia position is that we would like to know whether this plan, even the option A and also option B, effecting the financial fee for the members of ITU.

Thank you.

>> CHAIR: Thank you, Indonesia.

Brazil mentioned that it had started to draft a compromised solution. I would ask interested countries indirectly to contact Brazil during the lunch break since for the time being we had not set up a formal group. This way you can make some progress and support your ideas.

Thank you to the interpreters for your patience. I wish you a lovely meal and we'll come back here at 2:30 and ADM meeting, please be punctual, I would like to start at 2:30. Thank you, have a nice meal.

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