

## Report of the 9th ITU-T TSAG (Telecommunication Standardization Advisory Group) Meeting

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### Abstract

The 9th meeting of the Telecommunication Standardization Advisory Group (TSAG) of the International Telecommunication Union - Telecommunication Standardization Sector (ITU-T), the final meeting of the study period (2017–2021) for the World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly (WTSA-20), was held in an online conference from January 10 to 17, 2022. The 4th Inter-regional Meeting, a preparatory meeting for WTSA-20, was also held on January 6 before the TSAG meeting. This article describes the main results of the 9th TSAG meeting.

*Keywords: ITU, TSAG, standardization*

### 1. Introduction

From January 10 to 17, 2022, the 9th meeting of the Telecommunication Standardization Advisory Group (TSAG) of the International Telecommunication Union - Telecommunication Standardization Sector (ITU-T) was held remotely with 206 participants from 49 countries. From Japan, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications served as the Head of Delegation for Japan, with 15 representatives from Japanese companies and organizations (National Institute of Standards and Technology (NICT), NTT, KDDI, NEC, The ITU Association of Japan, Hitachi, Mitsubishi, and the Telecommunication Technology Committee (TTC)).

### 2. Outline of the TSAG meeting

The 9th TSAG meeting consisted of plenary sessions for overall deliberation and Rapporteur Group (RG) meetings for detailed examination of each issue, with two online sessions per day. As this was the final TSAG meeting of the study period (2017–2021) for the World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly (WTSA-20), the closing plenary was allocated for two days on January 14 and 17.

The plenary sessions were led by TSAG Chair Bruce Gracie (Ericsson, Canada), and the RG meetings were led by four Rapporteurs: RG on Work Programme (RG-WP), RG on Working Methods (RG-WM), RG on Strengthening Collaboration (RG-SC), and RG on Review of Resolutions (RG-RR). RG on Standardization Strategy (RG-StdsStrat) had completed the discussion of major issues, and there was no discussion at this meeting. From Japan, Ms. Miho Naganuma (NEC) participated as an RG-WP Rapporteur.

The online conference was held at 13:00–16:00 Geneva time (21:00–24:00 Japan time), with 1 session of 90 minutes and 2 sessions a day as the core time, taking into account the time difference between participants.

We used Zoom for this meeting as a remote meeting tool. The ITU has its own remote meeting tool, MyMeetings, which is built on open source, but for large meetings with more than 200 participants, Zoom will be used for the time being. From the viewpoint of improving accessibility, captioning in English was provided at all meetings and simultaneous interpretation in six official languages of the United Nations was provided at plenary sessions in core time.

### 3. Inter-regional Meeting for WTSA

On January 6, the week before the 9th TSAG meeting, the Inter-regional Meeting (IRM), a preparatory meeting for WTSA, was held by representatives of six regional telecommunications organizations (the Asia-Pacific Telecommunity (APT), League of Arab States/Arab Standardization Team, African Telecommunications Union (ATU), European Conference of Postal and Telecommunications Administrations (CEPT), Inter-American Telecommunication Commission (CITEL), and Regional Commonwealth in the Field of Communications (RCC)), and a summary report was given to the TSAG plenary. Sixty-one proposals for revision or withdraw of existing WTSA resolutions, 12 proposals for new resolutions, and 17 proposals for revision of ITU-T A-Series Recommendations were submitted as their common proposals to WTSA-20 for discussion.

The purpose of the IRM is to exchange information in advance to promote mutual understanding of the proposals, including a comparative analysis of the proposals made by regional organizations for resolutions and recommendations of the WTSA.

From APT, Mr. Yoichi Maeda of the TTC presented a progress report as the chair of the APT WTSA Preparatory Meeting and provided the latest information on the 29 focal points of the APT Co-Proposals for deliberation toward the unification of the draft resolutions at the WTSA.

### 4. Discussions toward WTSA-20

WTSA-20, the highest decision-making meeting for the ITU-T's operational policies, was scheduled to be held in Hyderabad, India in November 2020, but was postponed twice due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The meeting in India was finally cancelled, and the WTSA was held from March 1 to 9 in 2022 in Geneva, where the ITU headquarters are located. The venues were the Geneva International Conference Center adjacent to the ITU headquarters and the Montbrillant building of the ITU headquarters.

On February 28, just before WTSA-20, the Global Standards Symposium (GSS) was held. The theme of this GSS was "International standards for enabling digital transformation and achieving sustainable development goals," and WTSA-20 attendees were expected to participate in the GSS.

Under the current WTSA rules, votes at the WTSA-20 plenary session can only be taken by physical participants representing each country, and remote

participants cannot participate in the vote. However, in consideration of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, participants were able to participate in discussions at all WTSA-20 meetings in a remote online format and were able to participate in monitoring of plenary sessions.

### 5. Meetings of Focus Group, Joint Coordination Activities, and Ad-Hoc Group

The activities of the Focus Group (FG), Joint Coordination Activities (JCA), and Ad-Hoc Group (AHG) were reported. The results of the FG's deliberations will be transferred to the relevant Study Groups (SGs), which will be considered as new issues handled by the ITU-T. This will have an impact on the structure of Questions for each SG in the next study period and will be important to understand the trends of future deliberations.

#### (1) FG on Quantum Information Technology for Networks (FG-QIT4N)

The final activity report of FG-QIT4N on quantum information and communication technology was presented, and the report was approved. This FG was established in September 2019 under the leadership of TSAG and worked until December 2021, producing nine outcome documents. To promote the specific standardization of the outcome document, FG members proposed to plan a briefing session for each SG to facilitate the transition of the outcome document to the related SG and agreed to send a liaison document to all SGs to that effect.

The outcome documents will be compiled into nine documents, including glossary terms, use cases, the quantum key distribution network protocol, and network technology. They will be transferred to SG13, SG17, SG11, and SG15, which are closely related to each other, for further study. This FG was managed by three co-chairs from Russia, the United States, and China.

#### (2) JCA on Digital COVID-19 Certificates (JCA-DCC)

Regarding the JCA-DCC whose establishment was agreed at the previous TSAG meeting, it was agreed to issue a liaison document to publicize the establishment of the JCA, the purpose of its activities, and the deadline for applications to participate in the JCA of the end of February. The scope of the JCA is to coordinate the work of standardizing digital COVID-19 certificates among the relevant ITU-T SGs, external organizations, and forums; promote compatible data

architectures for data sharing; and promote interoperability, agility, and security for all parties involved with users. The JCA-DCC is chaired by Mr. Heung Youl Youm (Korea, Chairman of SG17), and the first meeting will be held electronically in May 2022.

### (3) FG on Testbeds Federations for IMT-2020 and beyond (FG-TBFxG)

The establishment of an FG-TBFxG was reported, with SG11, which handles signaling protocols and test specifications, as its parent. This FG functions as a platform to harmonize testbed specifications between standards developing organizations/Fora, develops an application programming interface (API) along the testbed federation reference model defined in Recommendation ITU-T Q.4068 developed in collaboration with European Telecommunications Standards Institute (ETSI) Technical Committee on Core Network and Interoperability Testing, and defines a set of federated testbeds and API use cases.

## 6. RG meeting

The following is a summary of the main issues discussed in the RG established at TSAG. The report of each RG is approved at the closing plenary of TSAG and reflected as part of the TSAG meeting report at WTSA.

### (1) RG-WP

The RG-WP is a group that deals with issues related to SG restructuring, and was given a two-session time frame for deliberation. This RG reviewed all SG activity reports, sought endorsement of the proposed agenda in plenary, and compiled discussions on SG restructuring toward WTSA-20.

It was assumed that the SG configuration would be maintained at the current configuration with 11 SGs at the WTSA-20. Full-scale reorganization will be discussed in the lead-up to WTSA-24. To accelerate this discussion, the Correspondence Group (CG) was established under the RG-WP to analyze and study the optimal distribution of SG configuration. Mr. Philip Rushton (Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport, United Kingdom), Chairman of CG, reported the action plan of CG and agreed on the action plan for analysis of SG restructuring.

The action plan for the SG restructuring analysis was discussed during the meeting with two additional editing sessions. This action plan aims to thoroughly review the potential restructuring options of the ITU-T based on empirical analysis, with a view to

approving the SG restructuring plan at WTSA-24. In advancing the action plan, it was agreed that the definition of the key performance indicators (KPIs)/metrics to be collected would be clarified, the priorities of the various KPIs/metrics to be collected and the timing of implementation of KPIs/statistics would be clarified, and consideration would be given to the funds to be considered.

### (2) RG-WM

The RG-WM reviews the WTSA Resolution 1 and A-Series Recommendations (Resolution 32, Recommendation A.1, Recommendation A.7, Recommendation A.8, etc.), which stipulate various ITU-T work procedures and rules. There were many issues to discuss at this meeting, and the RG-WM was allocated a three-session time frame. Regarding the proposal to revise Chapter 5.3 of the JCA proposed by Korea in ITU-T Recommendation A.1, “Working Method of ITU Telecommunication Standardization Sector,” the necessity was not fully understood based on the discussions at the RG-SC, and the proposal to revise JCA was not agreed upon.

### (3) RG-SC

The RG-SC is studying ways to strengthen cooperate with other standards bodies and measures. At this meeting, we discussed liaison activities to strengthen cooperation between sectors within the ITU and other standardization organizations such as International Organization for Standardization/International Electrotechnical Commission (ISO/IEC) Joint Technical Committee 1 and oneM2M. It was agreed in plenary on the revised draft recommendation of A.5 “General procedure for including references to other organizations’ documents in ITU-T Recommendations” as a WTSA-related issue after 1 drafting session, and it was decided to propose the revised draft recommendation to WTSA-20. It was also agreed on a draft recommendation to revise ITU-T Recommendation A. 23, “Cooperation with the International Organization for Standardization on Information Technology (ISO) and the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) - Appendix II: Best Practices” and proposed it to WTSA-20.

## 7. Schedule of future meetings

The first meeting of TSAG for the new study period (2022–2024) is scheduled to be held in Geneva on December 12–16, 2022.

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He received a B.E. and M.E. in electrical and electronic engineering from Sophia University, Tokyo, in 1993 and 1995. He joined NTT Access Network Service Systems Laboratories in 1995, where he researched and developed operation and maintenance systems for optical fiber cable networks. He has been contributing to standardization efforts in ITU-T SG6 since 2006. He was the rapporteur of Question 6 of ITU-T SG6 from 2006 to 2008 and the rapporteur of Question 17 of ITU-T SG15 from 2008 to 2012. He also served as the chairman of the ITU-T Focus Group on Disaster Relief Systems and Network Resilience and Recovery. He was the vice-chairman of ITU-T SG15 from 2013 to 2022. He also contributes to the activities of IEC Technical Committee 86 (fiber optic systems). He received the ITU-AJ award from the ITU Association of Japan in 2017. He is a member of the Institute of Electronics, Information and Communication Engineers (IEICE).

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