

**EXECUTIVE COUNCIL 2023**

**Report of the APPU/UPU Reform Working Group Meetings during the 2023 Executive Council**

1. Subject	References/ Paragraphs
Informing the EC on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The outcome of the meeting of the Reform Working Group on Tuesday 15 August</li> <li>- The outcome of the meeting of the Reform Working Group on Thursday 17 August</li> </ul>	§ 2 § 3
<b>2. Decision expected</b>  The EC is asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Note</b> the report</li> </ul>	§ 1-3

**1. Meetings during the 2023 Executive Council**

- 1.1 The APPU/UPU Reform Working Group met twice during the 2023 Executive Council Meeting: on Tuesday 15 and Thursday 17 August. A number of work items of the Reform Working Group were also considered during the Plenary sessions of the Executive Council, being EC 2023 Doc 4, EC 2023 Doc 19 and EC 2023 Doc 13.7, and their associated addendums and proposals.
- 1.2 The Reform Working Group has separately reported on its meetings during the preceding 12 months. Details can be found in EC 2023 Doc 13.
- 1.3 There were also a number of items developed by the Reform Working Group that were discussed in Plenary. These include:
  - Rules of Procedure of the Executive Council EC 2023 Doc 4
  - Online Participation EC 2023 Doc 19
  - A legal framework for the Asia Pacific Post Cooperative EC 2023 Doc 13.7

**2. Tuesday 15 August Meeting**

- 2.1 The Reform Working Group met on Tuesday afternoon 15 August to discuss a number of work items.
- 2.2 The Vice-Chair of the Executive Council opened the meeting and invited nominations for new members to join the Reform Working Group. The Secretary-General made some opening remarks, encouraging productive discussion and collaboration.
- 2.3 The agenda for the meeting was:
  - Introduction
  - Report of the Reform Working Group EC 2023 Doc 13
  - Bangkok cycle workplan EC 2023 Doc 13.4

- APPU vision to guide treaty development EC 2023 Doc 13.1 and Add 1
  - Review of Governing Documentation and archiving project EC 2023 Doc 13.3
  - Reform Consultant presentation on archiving progress EC 2023 Doc 13.3 Add 1
  - Review of Governing Documentation implementation plan EC 2023 Doc 13.5
  - Finalise outstanding items from the Tehran cycle EC 2023 Doc 13.2
  - Budget for the Reform Consultant EC 2023 Doc 13.6
  - Any other business
- 2.4 The Chair of the Reform Working Group provided an overview of the working group and thanked all the members, the previous working groups, the Reform Consultant and the Bureau for their contributions to the work to date, before turning to the substantive items on the agenda.
- 2.5 The Report of the Reform Working Group (EC 2023 Doc 13) and the Bangkok cycle workplan (EC 2023 Doc 13.4) were both presented and all decisions expected taken without comment. The APPU vision to guide treaty development (EC 2023 Doc 13.1 and Add 1) was also adopted by the Reform Working Group, with a supportive intervention from India.
- 2.6 Following the presentation by the Chair on the Review of Governing Documentation and archiving project (EC 2023 Doc 13.3), Vietnam intervened acknowledging the importance of the archiving project and seeking greater clarity around the resourcing implications. The Chair explained that this item would be progressed using resources on an as-available basis, so it would not distract from other priorities and had a net-zero resource implication. The Bureau supported this explanation, noting the Bureau was seeking resources from other avenues to progress the work. All decisions expected were taken.
- 2.7 The Reform Consultant then made a presentation on archiving progress (EC 2023 Doc 13.3 Add 1). Following the presentation, the Secretary-General suggested a different way of categorising the activities. The Reform Working Group agreed this suggestion and the Chair and Reform Consultant confirmed the change would be implemented. All decisions expected were taken.
- 2.8 The Chair presented the Review of Governing Documentation implementation plan (EC 2023 Doc 13.5) and advised that the Reform Working Group would provide a 6-monthly update to the Union through circular. The Secretary-General supported the implementation plan but suggested that the work be expedited where possible. The Reform Consultant highlighted that there were complexities in relation to the interaction with Thai law which could slow progress but could (and perhaps should) be progressed separately. The Chair confirmed that work would begin with agreeing the themes for the review and agreed that it was important to follow best-practice procedures to ensure the review was done correctly. The Chair encouraged members who have capacity to provide more resources to accelerate work.
- 2.9 Vietnam supported the approach of moving provisions into less-than-treaty instruments where appropriate and proposed that the timeline for policy development be shifted forward to provide member countries with more time to engage in their domestic approval processes. Vietnam highlighted their desire for wide-ranging reform and simplification of governance frameworks, to ensure the work is not needed to be done twice. Vietnam also sought clarification on how members can contribute and who will take responsibility for drafting the zero-draft treaty amendments. Vietnam advised they would dedicate available resources to this important work. The Chair thanked Vietnam and supported the desire to be ambitious. The Chair explained any member could contribute to developing the policy behind the treaty changes – no legal or technical knowledge would be required to provide input into what the

Union should do and how it should work. The Chair advised Australia may provide specialist legal resources to contribute to the treaty amendment drafting. All decisions expected were taken.

- 2.10 Following the coffee break, the working group discussed 'Finalise outstanding items from the Tehran cycle' (EC 2023 Doc 13.2). The Bureau questioned whether this item should be considered independently of EC 2023 Doc 20, which was deferred for decision to the Friday Plenary and proposed this item be deferred also.
- 2.11 The Chair sought the views of the members. Samoa supported the Bureau's suggestion to delay. New Zealand sought clarity on the process proposed, which was provided. The Bureau raised a procedural question on who was taking decisions – the Reform Working Group or the Executive Council, which was also resolved. The Reform Working Group agreed to defer EC 2023 Doc 13.2 until a decision had been taken in relation to EC 2023 Doc 20.
- 2.12 The Chair advised that prior to considering EC 2023 Doc 13.6 – Budget for the Reform Consultant, an issue had been raised in the Finance Committee meeting the previous day which needed to be considered before considering that document. The Chair explained the issue and gave members the opportunity to ask any questions of the Reform Consultant before requesting he left the room to facilitate a closed discussion.
- 2.13 China noted that whilst engaging a reform consultant came at a cost to the budget, China considered this an investment in the Union. Following the Reform Consultant leaving the room, India raised that the concern was not around the work of the Reform Consultant but ensuring there was a proper and defensible process in place. Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Singapore and Australia supported retaining the current consultant. Samoa confirmed whether any option included additional financial implications and outlined that the future contract with the consultant should include deliverables and assessments. The Chair confirmed no additional financial costs as this has already been approved. Iran reflected that the existing Reform Consultant has significant knowledge but at some point someone new will need to take over. The Bureau asked a number of procedural questions which were also discussed.
- 2.14 After extensive discussion, it was agreed to defer the item to the Thursday session to allow time for the Bureau and the Chair to evaluate possible scenarios and return with a consensus option.
- 2.15 As the discussion was deferred, EC 2023 Doc 13.6 was not considered by the working group.
- 2.16 The final agenda item was any other business. No members raised items for discussion.

### **3. Thursday 17 August Meeting**

- 3.1 The second meeting of the Reform Working Group was designed to finalise any remaining matters and to start the conversation for moving into the next 12 months of work.
- 3.2 The Chair advised the Reform Working Group that since the Tuesday meeting he had discussed the issue of the Reform Consultant contract and procurement with the Bureau and a resolution had been found. Reflecting upon UPU procurement rules, the Bureau would conduct a closed single provider limited tender for consultancy services in 2024, inviting the existing service provider. The application would be evaluated against criteria developed by the Bureau and the Chair of the Reform Working Group.
- 3.3 Given the resolution at paragraph 3.2, EC 2023 Doc 13.6 was withdrawn from consideration by the Executive Council, pending the outcome of the tender process.

3.4

The Chair then moved into logistical and procedural matters for the coming 12 months and sought feedback from members on what was working well and what could be improved about the Reform Working Group. The reform consultant, India, New Zealand, Vietnam, Iran and the Secretary-General all made positive and constructive comments for moving forward which were noted by the Chair.

3.5

The Chair thanked the Reform Working Group members, the Bureau and observers for their hard work and dedication before closing the meeting.