



WITSA Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

09:00 – 16:00

Sunday October 6, 2019

Venue: Armenia Marriott Hotel Yerevan
1 Amiryan Street, Yerevan, Armenia 0010

Room: Tigran the Great Ballroom

Yvonne Chiu, Chairman

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

	Country	Name	Organization
1.	Armenia	Mr. Aleksandr Yesayan	UATE
2.	Belarus	Dr. Boris Komrakov	INFOPARK
3	Brazil	Dr. Raul Colcher	ASSESPRO
4	Egypt	Eng. Tarek Abd-elmonem Taha	EITESAL
5	Greece	Mr. Yannis Sirros	SEPE
6	Malaysia	Mr. Sean Seah	PIKOM
7	Spain	Antonio Cimorra	AMETIC
8	Nigeria	Mr. Olutayo Adeniyi	ITAN
9	Taiwan	Ms. Yvonne Chiu	CISA

IN ATTENDANCE

	Country	Name	Organization
1.	Armenia	Arman Poghosyan	UATE
2.	Armenia	Sophie Mehrabyan	UATE
3.	Armenia	Irina Dumanyan	UATE
4.	Armenia	Karen Vardanyan	UATE
5.	Ukraine	Mr. Constantine Vasuk	IT Ukraine
6.	Ukraine	Ms. Iryna Grygoryeva	IT Ukraine
7.	Ukraine	Ms. Yulia Malich	IT Ukraine

8.	United Kingdom	Mr. Paul Moorby	teckUK
9.	Argentina	Mr. Alberto Patron	CESSI
10.	Bangladesh	Md. Shahid Ul Munir	CISA
11.	Taiwan	Mr. Chin Zen	CISA
12.	Taiwan	Mr. Ben Ja	CISA
13.	Taiwan	Mr. Steve Won	CISA
14.	USA	Dr. James Poisant	WITSA
15.	USA	Mr. Anders Halvorsen	WITSA
16.	USA	Ms. Molly Waldron Poisant	WITSA
17.	USA	Ms. Alicia Standridge	WITSA

REGRETS

	Country	Name	Organization
1.	Argentina	Mr. Anibal Carmona	CESSI
2.	Hong Kong	Mr. Hamano	JISA
3.	Bermuda	Mr. John Kyle	Bermuda Chamber of Commerce
4.	Korea	Mr. Woo Keon Park	FKII
5.	Hong Kong	Mr. Francis Fong	SEPE
6.	India	Mr. Shivendra Singh	NASSCOM
9.	USA	Ms. Martha Dorris	PSC

10.	Romania	Dr. Vasile Baltac	ATIC
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INTRODUCTIONS/CALL TO ORDER

1. Chairman's Remarks / Introductions

Ms. Yvonne Chiu welcomed everyone to the Board Meeting and said WITSA has been hard at work. Chairman Chiu and Dr. Poisant have been working alongside each other attending the WTO, World Economy Forum, ITU and the UN Conference on Trade and Development, as well as several other international organizations. At the WTO, there were more than 10 countries meeting with WITSA. Ms. Chiu and Dr. Poisant have travelled to many different countries and talked to many different ministers and would like to continue working with our WITSA members to help achieve their goals. Connecting our members to governments to help grow the industry is a key goal. Taiwan/CISA is offering fellow member associations to visit and learn how to grow IT in their respective regions.

Chairman Chiu said she was excited and enjoying her time working with UATE and Armenia. Over time, she has introduced Taiwan companies and organizations to Armenia; the value of these entities is estimated at \$1 trillion USD. She shared how proud she was of Armenia and congratulated Mr. Alex Yesayan. The Board congratulated Alex and his team.

2. Roll Call

Mr. Anders Halvorsen proceeded with the Roll Call. *Please see Roll Call at the front of this document.*

Dr. Jim Poisant acknowledged that some UATE Board members were present, and some would join later. He thanked everyone for their commitment and support over the past several years.

3. Call to Order / Approval of Minutes

Dr. Poisant called the meeting to order.

Dr. Poisant asked for a motion to approve the Minutes from the Board Meeting in Minsk. Mr. Alex Yesayan motioned; Mr. Tayo Adeniyi seconded the motion. The Minutes were approved unanimously.

4.	<p>Welcome to Yerevan, Armenia</p> <p>Mr. Alex Yesayan of UATE welcomed the Board to Armenia. He said this was a very exciting time for him personally, and for all UATE members, and said he was delighted to have the WITSA Board and their guests in Armenia. He said this was a remarkable event for UATE and one they had been preparing for over a long period of time. The opening concert, to be held in the Republic Square will not be a usual standard, he said. They wanted to show how technology is impacting all industries and so they invited musicians from each of the 15 countries that have hosted the WCIT, along with Armenian musicians, to perform under one conductor, forming a global orchestra. Mr. Yesayan said they also put together scientists and tech engineers to integrate AI music. The orchestra will play music that has not been created before and they will play it for the 1st time. He closed by saying that the 2019 World Congress will be a great and exciting event.</p> <p>Dr. Jim Poisant gave a status update on a previous Board member, Mr. Nizar Zakka, who was captured and held hostage in Iran for over 4 years. He said that he was very delighted to share with the Board that Mr. Zakka had been released and was in the US recovering. He said, WITSA did a number of things to help get him released, from letters, lobbying, and speaking and meetings.</p>
TREASURER'S REPORT	
5.	<p>Treasurers Report</p> <p>Mr. Tarek Taha, referred to the two slides that reflected Total Assets of \$1,130,776.13 as of August 31, 2019. Total Liabilities were reported: \$93,907.51 and Total Equity of \$1,036,868.62. Total Liabilities and Equity were \$1,130,776.13. He said he worked with WITSA's accountant monthly to ensure we stayed within budget. He stated that the projection for the end of year will meet the budget and that WITSA will have some savings going into 2020. He thanked Dr. Poisant for achieving these numbers as well as the WITSA staff.</p> <p>Dr. Poisant shared the status on licensing fees. Armenia 2019: paid in full. Malaysia 2020: balance of \$187,500.00 to be paid by December 2019. Bangladesh 2021: paid in full.</p>
DECISION BLOCK	
6.	<p>Board of Directors Replacement (2018-2020)</p> <p>Dr. Poisant presented the Director change nominations. FKII (Korea) requested Mr. Woo Kean Park be replaced by Ms. Choi, Min-Hee. JISA (Japan) requested that Mr. Hamano be replaced by Mr. Toshio Iwamoto. BCS (Bangladesh) requested that Mr. Abdullah Kafi be replaced by Md. Shahid UI Munir. After taking a moment to review the nominees' qualifications, a unanimous vote was cast for all three replacements.</p>

	<p>Chairmen Chiu presented Board members with Board Certificates (2018-2020 term), as well as a gift for each Board Member present.</p>
7.	<p>Status of Business Excellence Certification Program</p> <p>Dr. Poisant explained how WITSA is providing more value to the membership. The Business Excellence Certification Program (BECP) launched in Malaysia, Jordan and Taiwan in the Fall of 2019 and WITSA is looking to add more countries as well. This is a revenue source that is a 50/50 split between WITSA and the member association.</p> <p>Ms. Molly Waldron Poisant explained the program to the Board. The website and platform can be customized for any country. Currently it is in English and Chinese, but we are able to add more languages. There are two (2) main pillars, integrity and performance. Each country launching the program will need to designate a salesperson(s) who will be supported by WITSA’s Secretariat Office. The online application process has been streamlined. More details on the program are available at www.witsabecp.org</p> <p>Dr. Poisant explained that the applicant pays in advance depending on the size of company seeking certification. The program requires an annual renewal. Since this is an international certification, it can be useful to recipients as they bid for future jobs.</p> <p>Mr. Tarek Taha asked if the program prices can be adjusted. He asked if a country can sell it at a higher rate and will it remain 50/50 split? Dr. Poisant agreed but said there would be some backend work for this. Ms. Waldron-Poisant will follow up with Mr. Taha directly. <i>[ACTION]</i></p>
8.	<p>BECP Country Participants (Call for additional Country Members)</p> <p>Dr. Poisant called for countries that want to get into this program. Egypt, Argentina and Nigeria are interested in launching the program and Ms. Waldron Poisant will follow up with them directly. <i>[ACTION]</i></p>

DISCUSSION BLOCK	
9.	<p>WCIT Status</p> <p>WCIT 2020: Mr. Sean Seah announced at the previous board meeting the overall theme of WCIT 2020 will be “Connecting the World” and will focus on the digital economy. Currently, they are working on getting the program in place. WCIT 2020 will take place on the island of Penang and in an area called Georgetown. It is considered the Silicon Valley of South East Asia and hosts the top 100 factories for manufacturing for around the world. Penang will also host the Spring Board Meeting in March. Their</p>

goal, he said, would be to bring out the best of WITSA at the WCIT 2020 event just as WCIT 2019 is doing in Armenia.

Ms. Ngai Yuen Low, the CEO for the WCIT 2020 provided a presentation. We are looking at what the WCIT 2019 is doing, she said, and taking notes, so we do well in Malaysia. Visit Malaysia 2020 is the overarching theme throughout the country and has the support of their the government. She explained the current schedule for the WCIT 2020 and also discussed how to bring businesses to Southeast Asia not just to Malaysia. There are currently 16 speakers out of 184 speakers confirmed. The venue is the 1st hybrid convention centre in the world and the hotel next to it will be open in June 2020. The venue offers a cashless option for the event and that will also be available at local businesses before and after the event. The city of Penang is on schedule to be 5G-ready by the event. The global marketing plan will begin as soon as WCIT 2019 has ended.

WCIT 2021: Md. Shahid UI Munir explained that the government is working closely with BCS and are fully supporting WCIT 2021. Senior Bangladeshi officials are in attendance at WCIT 2019.

WCIT 2022: Dr. Jim Poisant announced that WCIT 2022 is open for bids and some countries have already expressed an interest: Russia and Indonesia. Mr. Sean Seah shared details of a conversation three months ago with high level officials from Indonesia. First, they (ASPILUKI) want to become a member of WITSA and possibly organize a WCIT event, he said. The original discussion was about 2023 but 2022 is still on the table, Seah shared. Indonesia has elected their President and the new government has not yet been formed. Ms. Yvonne Chiu commented that anyone who wants to host the WCIT will need to become a member of WITSA first. *[ACTION]*

BREAK

10. **Standing Committee Update /Executive Committee Updates**

Finance Committee

Mr. Sean Seah said the numbers provided from our Treasurer are very good. Finances are split into 2 sections, checking and savings and additionally there is a high yield CD. There is still plenty of money in the savings and checking accounts, Seah said.

Dr. Poisant made a recommendation to have the committee report at our next board meeting the amount of interest we earn in each of the accounts. *[ACTION]*

Mr. Sean expressed a need for investment for the future of WITSA. Dr. Poisant suggested a meeting in Taiwan before the end of the 2019. An invitation was extended to all WITSA Members to attend. Dr. Poisant said we need a critical mass of Board Members to make that meeting worthwhile. *[ACTION]*

Mr. Tarek Taha asked for 2 date options for the December meeting.

Global Policy Action Committee

Mr. Halvorsen stated that WITSA had a series of successful meetings at E-Commerce Week in Geneva during the spring, including meetings with international organizations such as the World Economic Forum and the International Telecommunications Union. Perhaps most importantly, he said, they organized a main session at e-commerce week at the UN headquarters in Geneva on globalization. In previous months, we have been working on anti-globalization and multilateral trade.

Dr. Poisant stated that this is the first time WITSA has ever been invited to host a main session workshop at the United Nations.

Mr. Halvorsen continued, the G7 had a meeting in August in France. Meeting recaps are reposted on the WITSA website. We have also been working with the Digital Trade Network, of which WITSA is a founding partner, and the WTO in Geneva. He said they continue to work on taxation of digital products and services.

Mr. Halvorsen continued by saying after this Congress, he will be circulating WITSA's key policy position papers to member organizations for their perusal. Any questions, please contact Anders.

Halvorsen recently completed a paper on globalization that shows the multilateral trading system is under attack and that major markets are not following multilateral rules and that they are undermining the WTO.

A draft statement on digital trade (entitled "Supporting Digital Trade Rules for Innovation and Sustainable Economic Development: *A Case for a Trade Agreement*") had been circulated Oct. 2nd. At the 11th WTO Ministerial Conference in December 2017, 70 countries agreed to work together on developing new digital trade rules. This is an important development as the last two decades have seen the exponential growth of domestic and cross-border electronic commerce, yet there are no specific multilateral rules in the WTO regulating this type of trade. Anders stated that the statement seeks to provide input into the ongoing negotiations in Geneva, seeking consensus on the scope and particulars of a future WTO plurilateral ecommerce agreement, having now expanded to include some 80 WTO members by the July 2019 round, accounting for more than 90 percent of global digital trade

He will circulate the draft paper again next week for a final review. *[ACTION]*

Next, we have begun working on a complicated issue; how to regulate big tech: companies like Microsoft, Facebook and Apple have been under attack from consumer groups and governments over a wide range of antitrust and privacy issues. We have developed a comprehensive set of draft policy principals that we would like to discuss with our members to see what is feasible. We would like to put together a call with our members who have interest in this in the next two weeks following this Congress

to discuss specific ideas that we can develop. There is a mine field of issues and we would appreciate your support, he said. The paper is written as a discussion right now and will be circulated to members for input, Halvorsen said. *[ACTION]*

Lastly, one more paper is in the pipeline, he said, and the topic is connecting the next billion; WITSA is looking for volunteers to work on this paper and interested parties should contact Mr. Halvorsen. *[ACTION]*

Halvorsen closed by saying WITSA will be issuing our annual membership and policy survey and look forward to your support with this as well. *[ACTION]*

Mr. Tarek Taha suggested we take the papers one by one and circulate to the members and ask for participation. That would be more appropriate, he said. *[ACTION]*

Someone asked what the time frame for these papers should be. Mr. Halvorsen said one to two weeks for the paper that has been circulated already. The big tech paper will not be finalized until November/December, if a consensus is reached and the next billion draft will be finished by the end of the calendar year. *[ACTION]*

11. **Status on European/Minsk, Belarus Office**

Dr. Boris Komrakov provided a report on the Status on European/ Minsk, Belarus Office, the Committee on Education, Training & Human Resources and the Non-EU Regional Report.

Dr. Komrakov stated that Europe must be united. Europe is experiencing a lack of programmers and spending more than three (3) billion euros fighting youth unemployment. Dr. Komrakov shared details of his program that identified talented youth who can move from early training to early job entry. People can stay at home to do their jobs from their home. He first proposed this seven (7) years ago and thanked Dr. Poisant for accompanying him to visit the Belarus IT Minister earlier in the week. Dr. Komrakov also stressed that his program would be an important incentive for participating European ICT industry associations to join WITSA as well. Congresses, he said, are in the past and we need to find greater value propositions that give them a reason to be involved. He shared details of his 3-day workshop on From Early Training to Work. A copy of Dr. Komrakov's presentation is [available here](#).

Status Taipei, Asia Pacific/Taipei, Taiwan Office

Ben Ja from CISA, who works closely with Yvonne Chiu in Taipei, stated that they have dedicated staff working on WITSA tasks. Right now, they are receiving support from the government, financial and policy support. He said they would like to extend their support in efforts in all these fronts. There will be a meeting in December in Taipei to discuss these issues. Our government is welcoming the discussion of policy or trade economic development with other Ministers to come to Taipei and the government will

	<p>help with the cost of travel. Mr. Ja said he was looking to expand their office in Taipei to work more closely on these issues with WITSA. Mr. Ja showed a slideshow from CISA – narrated by Chairman Chiu.</p>
12.	<p>Regional Vice Chairman Reports & Current Issues of Interest in each Region</p> <p><i>North America Region</i> Dr. Poisant reported on the status for the North America region. This region consists of Canada, USA and Mexico and the Vice Chairman is Santiago Gutierrez. Our member in the USA is PSC and in Mexico we are represented by CANIETI. Following the WCIT in Canada several years ago, we lost our Canadian partner, ITAC, but just last week, we were able to bring them back as a member in good standing and now we are whole, Dr. Poisant said.</p> <p><i>Caribbean Region</i> Mr. John Kyle from the Caribbean Region was not able to join.</p> <p><i>Asia Pacific Region</i> Mr. Toshio Iwamoto from the Asia Pacific Region was not able to join.</p> <p><i>European Union</i> Mr. Julian David from the European Union was not able to join.</p> <p><i>Latin America Region</i> Alberto Patron from CESSI provided the report for the Latin America region. He shared details of a treaty that was reached to avoid double taxation between Brazil and Argentina. There is also a new free trade agreement between Mercosur (Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay and Paraguay) and the European Union, forging closer commercial ties among regions that are home to 780 million people with combined trade and services worth over \$1 trillion. The region continues to grow and that is carrying over into the ICT market there, making ICT the 3rd largest sector after agricultural and automotive products. Today, Argentina exports 40% of its software products abroad. There has also been almost unanimous support to pass a new law supporting the knowledge sector.</p> <p>Dr. Poisant asked Alberto to bring the word back to his region that we need to bring Latin American countries back to WITSA. <i>[ACTION]</i> We used to have a very strong relationship with ALETI, and we would like to get that back on track. Looking ahead to WCIT 2020, Malaysia is making B2B a large component of their conference, so any businesses looking to expand into Asia should consider attending.</p> <p>Mr. Seah shared that he had recently been talking to companies out of Africa; intercontinental business is very difficult. WITSA has always served as the best platform, he said. One of the key components to a successful WCIT is business matching; Mr. Seah encouraged any WITSA member country who would like to talk about bringing a speaker, or having space in the pavilion, etc. to reach out to his team.</p>

Mr. Halvorsen said that he conversed with colleagues over the summer, said that ALETI was very inactive. He asked Alberto to let the Secretariat Office know if there was anything, we could do to support getting ALETI more active.

Ms. Chui encouraged the Board to utilize the 83-member associations to promote business in their respective regions. She acknowledged the steps WITSA has made in recent years by traveling to support local members and, in turn, bringing WITSA from nearly a zero balance to about \$1 million in the bank. She congratulated Dr. Poisant on his work to make this happen. She encouraged the Board to stay active, outside of the two (2) meetings a year, and work together to make WITSA stronger and more effective in our mission. *[ACTION]*

Dr. Poisant suggested to Mr. Seah that he get 50 companies from Malaysia to agree to populate a B2B platform to be used as a promotional tool. This will bring value to our members and encourage attendance at your event, he said. *[ACTION]*

Africa Region

Vice Chairman for Africa, Mr. Tayo Adeniyi (ITAN Nigeria), reported that they have made some progress after the crisis that he reported on last year. There had been some legal issues with representation, but Mr. Adeniyi found a solution and settled the case. Three months ago, in Gambia, he met with the President of that association to promote WITSA. Individually the associations can't do much, but together they can have an impact. Mr. Adeniyi will work closely with Mr. Taha in the coming months to figure out how to take Africa by storm. *[ACTION]*

Mr. Halvorsen asked about the passage of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement and how that would impact economic development in the region. Dr. Poisant said we are relying on Mr. Adeniyi's leadership to get Africa more engaged. There is an urgent need, he said, to get moving in the international arena. We need to get these associations, in Gambia, Kenya, and elsewhere in the region, engaged. He said we also needed the Vice Chairman's help to get AFICTA engaged with WITSA.

Middle East North Africa Region

Mr. Tarek Taha, Vice Chairman of MENA, shared that it is still a critical time in the region and that the region is still experiencing a great deal of unrest. Talking positively, we need to get these country members back; however, most of our former member associations are no longer active. Their websites haven't been updated for 3-4 years and our former WITSA contacts are no longer there, so we would need to identify new contacts within the organizations. He proposed an idea to get all of the associations together, and Egypt would host a two-day event during first half of 2020. This would require WITSA to allocate money to pay for travel and lodging for the attendees. By showing these members the progress WITSA has made and trying to bring them back again to the seats in the General Assembly, we have the best chance of getting the region more involved. He asked for a budget of \$60,000 if we are combining Africa and Middle East. He also said he would ask his government to add funding as well.

	<p>Dr. Poisant said we are going to have a couple of requests for the 2020 budget. He said he had a previous conversation with Mr. Taha about a \$30,000 budget covering the Middle East. He recommended we do only one region at a time; Middle East first, then Africa. With any budget requests, we have the money, but we need a proposal and to spend it judiciously, then the Board will vote. <i>[ACTION]</i></p> <p>Deputy Chairman Sirros said while he was not opposed to this initiative, he wanted to better understand the business plan for the region. While he agreed, we must invest to get these members back, he asked to better define the mission of such initiatives. He asked us to look at those countries that would be supportive of promoting WITSA events, have the support of their local governments, etc. as it was unlikely that potential dues revenue from these country members would offset the cost of the initiative itself.</p> <p>Mr. Halvorsen said there may be funds available via UNCTAD through its eTrade for All initiative to help businessmen from Africa by provide limited funds to participate in its events in Geneva.</p> <p>Deputy Chairman Sirros asked if instead of having a 3rd event in early 2020 (one in Geneva, one in Malaysia, one in Egypt) can we combine anything?</p> <p>Mr. Taha said we are at level zero now, reconstructing our network, no local support no NGO, so he suggested we focus on bringing them onboard first, put first milestone to help them from local office, and then expose them to international opportunities.</p> <p>Dr. Poisant asked to see the proposal. <i>[ACTION]</i></p>
	<p>LUNCH</p>

13.	<p>WITSA’s Global Outreach</p> <p>Ms. Poisant shared details on the Membership Recruitment Drive. All good standing members were invoiced in January. The “Why WITSA” flyers highlighted all the benefits of membership, including the BECP program that was covered earlier today. The Secretariat’s Office continues to work with Vice Chairs in identifying both existing and potentially new members and we have had some success. At this point in the year, we are planning to redesign our “Why WITSA” flyer, to show why to join and why stay. We are really focusing our efforts on increasing membership moving forward; Ms. Poisant asked all the Vice Chairs present to get more involved with your regions and continue to communicate with us. We do a lot of emailing cold calls, she said, and it’s very hard to get good results without the support of the local WITSA member. <i>[ACTION]</i></p>
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Dr. Poisant said if you haven't seen the "Why WITSA" flyer, please let us know and we can send it to you. Also, he said that we have reduced the membership fees and kept them low and we will show you statistics soon as to why we reduced them.

Ms. Poisant also announced the launch of the new CRM, a customer relationship management system. This is a system specific to Association management and the Secretariat's Office has found this tool extremely useful in getting organized and keeping track of all contacts in real time. The system is through Your Membership and was launched in June to 83 administrators contact for each organization. This offered each association a blank slate to give us their most updated information. We then launched the system to about 595 individual members within each association in early September. Thus far, there has been roughly a 50% response rate. Members have not just updated their individual members but also their missions.

The CRM can assist members in connecting. For example, if one of your members is looking to do business in another locality, the member can use the search directory to communicate with WITSA members in that area. The Secretariat's Office will be switching from Constant Contact to the CRM to send out the newsletters in the short term. The CRM will also be used to send out the invoices automatically in 2020 which is a big change from our manual sending in 2019. Invoices will be paid online but if members want to pay by wire transfer, that will still be an option.

Mr. Halvorsen gave a brief highlight of how we have significantly reduced membership dues in the last few years. The current membership dues are based on a country's GDP and size of the IT sector.

Chairman Chiu added before Taiwan paid \$7,500 and now, they only pay \$1,000.

Dr. Poisant offered mentioned that our goal is to keep dues low so as not discourage associations from joining.

Ms. Standridge talked about the impact of the "Why WITSA" flyer and how it helped retain membership dues for 2019 and was able to also collect over \$8,000 for 2018 dues. The document also helped to bring some associations back to WITSA like Russia and Canada. We will be using this document to bring more Associations to WITSA in 2020. Dues collection in 2019 has been successful, having collected over \$34,000 so far in 2019.

The Secretariat's Office is still in constant contact with 5 countries that are interested in staying on board; the goal is to collect their dues by the end of the calendar year. Looking at the outstanding members, there are 7 countries that replied to the invoices letting us know they would not be paying dues and would not be active in 2019 but would like to stay on as associate members. Some of those asked us to contact them in 2020 to possibly come back to "good standing" members. Detailed notes are kept, and we will be reaching back out to them in January 2020. The 9 members that are unresponsive we have been working with the vice chairs on those.

	<p>Ms. Poisant asked if anyone had any questions on membership or the membership campaign or any suggestions on how we can better serve you.</p> <p>Mr. Seah asked about the unresponsive members and Ms. Poisant replied confirming, yes, these associations have not responded to multiply attempts from the Secretariat’s Office. Some members appear to be gone and most are in the Middle East and North Africa region. The list of unresponsive members include: Afghanistan, Algeria, Lebanon, Mexico. Palestine, Panama, Portugal, Venezuela and Vietnam. We keep a file that tracks every attempt, if anyone is ever interested in reviewing the work.</p> <p>Dr. Poisant began talking about the agreement with the ITU in Geneva with regard to our international outreach and branding. We have agreements with the UNCTAD in Geneva, with the US International Council, an MOU with ASOCIO, he said. Also people with disabilities can access our site thanks to Inclusite, a company from of Mexico that provides back end accessibility support. No matter what your handicap is, you can access and navigate the WITSA site. WITSA is also working with the World Health Organization, Poisant said. We are close to an agreement with Digital Europe. Dr. Poisant was invited to speak there.</p> <p>We also have a program called the Global Partner Program and we have one member from Taiwan: III. For the first few years, we were getting a lot of requests from economic development organizations, such as the Chamber of Commerce of Paris asking for access to our WITSA members. Initially, Dr. Poisant said no, but then thought certain ones would be important to WITSA. We can invite them in but with a cost attached to the access, he said. For \$15,000, he said, we would invite them to a Board Meeting and we would give them time to tell us why we should invest in their country or region. We haven’t marketed this for some time due to time restraints, but we used to have Fairfax County, which is the second highest level of high-tech firms in the United States; this is also where the WITSA Office is headquartered. Poisant encouraged Board members who have relationships with the Economic Development Association in their region, to reach out on behalf of WITSA. We will let them come and we give them 10 minutes, a booth space at WCIT, and they pay us \$15,000, we put them on our website and it is good for them and us, he said. We need to go back out and remarket this program, Poisant said. <i>[ACTION]</i></p> <p>Dr. Poisant also mentioned that in 2012, WITSA established an Advisory Council inviting distinguished individual from industry, governments and multilateral institutions in order to enable greater public policy dialogue and engagements globally for WITSA. WITSA sought members who were responsible for, or influencing, the role of ICT in sustainable growth and development. By engaging in discussion with the council WITSA would have a better understanding of policy issues affecting global ICT development. Dr. Poisant added that WITSA should reactivate this important advisory group <i>[ACTION]</i></p>
14.	<p>2019 ICT Excellence Awards/ Eminent Persons Update</p> <p>Mr. Halvorsen thanked all of our members for being very helpful and supportive and nominating excellent candidates for the 2019 Global ICT Excellence Awards. We had an impressive list of</p>

candidates this year, he said, and the awards ceremony would take place at the Gala Dinner on Tuesday. Also, Halvorsen said, there would be a press conference the following day at 10 a.m. Halvorsen reviewed the winners in each category and noted that one of the award recipients, Chipside (from techUK), was in attendance at the Board Meeting.

He concluded by thanking all of the award committee members who have participated and spent countless hours reviewing all of the content and helping us select the worthiest winners.

Dr. Poisant spoke about the Eminent Persons Award that was started in 2010. The award is the highest award you can receive from WITSA as it recognizes an individual or individuals who have made a significant contribution to mankind. It doesn't necessarily mean it has anything to do with ICT, he said. Our first award winning was President Nelson Mandela. Past winners were the Father of the Internet, the Fathers of WiFi, the Father of the smart phone, Dr. Bill McGee from Operation Smile. This year we will give the award to an Armenian, Mr. Karen Vardanyan of UATE. He is considered the Father of IT for Armenia.

Dr. Poisant referred back to the procedure and asked everyone to listen carefully because he is suggesting a change. Currently the judging process is not fair. He said there was one judge who only voted for nominees out of his country. Dr. Poisant proposed we have an outside council, people like Vint Cerf and an outside council to judge the Global ICT Excellence Awards moving forward. [ACTION] This was agreed to unanimously.

Director's Travel Financial Allotment Program - Status Report

15.

Dr. Poisant reminded WITSA Board Members that they have a total of \$1,000 USD to be applied towards Board Meeting travel/lodging. Take advantage of this opportunity, he said. We would like to add this to the budget for next year as well but would like to add a caveat to this: funds may only be used to attend a World Congress not for the mid-year Board Meeting. People that are not here today have used the money, but we hope it would be enough to come here. So, let's keep it to just the World Congress. [ACTION]

Ms. Poisant shared who had used their money and who was still left to use it. If you would like to use the financial allotment, we can provide a form for you to complete and return to me for reimbursement. [ACTION]

Dr. Poisant said the balance of this line item will go towards supporting the meeting in Taipei at the end of the year. [ACTION]

BREAK

16. **Overview of WITSA BOD Meeting Schedule**

Dr. Poisant presented the schedule for Board Meetings. The goal is to get everyone to Penang and go home and sell it to their association and members to come back in September 2020, he said.

Mr. Seah says Malaysia is a country you may have never been to, so how can you sell what you have never experienced. He mentioned the challenges to get into Yerevan with long layovers and difficulty in getting a connecting flight. Asia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand have many flights for convenience, he said.

At the March Board Meeting, he said, they plan to show the Board the venue and obtain information from the members on how many delegates from their respective countries can be expected to attend WCIT 2020. This will provide the host country who is putting five to 10 million dollars into hosting this event some advantages.

Mr. Halvorsen suggested to Mr. Seah that, to incentivize our members, a networking event between WITSA members and Malaysian companies be organized at the Spring Board Meeting.

Mr. Seah wants to achieve collaboration with these six (6) or seven (7) geographies apart from the annual basis. Such as business matching to show value for any countries. We need some do some brainstorming, he said. *[ACTION]*

Dr. Poisant recommend to Mr. Munir for Bangladesh to host the 2021 board meeting.

Mr. Munir agreed to hosting in Dhaka, Bangladesh. *[ACTION]*

17. **Network Readiness Report**

Dr. Jim Poisant presented the report as the best support for our industry in terms of taking advantage of ICT. The beauty of this report is very comprehensive and allows a country to be evaluated and understand what it needs to do to move up the ladder. This report was previously owned by the World Economic Forum and we have worked with them for years. The author of this report, Dr. Dutta, who is now a professor, is a friend of WITSA's. Recently, he stepped down from being Dean of the School of IT at Cornell and he advised Dr. Poisant that the World Economic Forum will not be supporting this report any longer and that it is for sale. If WITSA wants to own the whole report, the cost is \$400,000. Alternatively, the IT section (one of four) would cost \$100,000.

Mr. Halvorsen described the report.

	<p>Chairman Chui recommends WITSA support the report.</p> <p>Dr. Poisant said if WITSA Board approves this, we can bring in Professor Dutta and get countries that are interested. This is the global benchmark for ICT development</p> <p>Mr. Seah recommends do this on a trial basis for the 1st year.</p> <p>Mr. Taha would like more detailed information on this effort before making a decision.</p> <p>Mr. Sirros stated that the report was done in 2017-2018 and the World Economic Forum discontinued the use of that report in favor of its new global competitiveness report which is presented every year. Why was the report discontinued, he asked?</p> <p>Dr. Poisant said that Cornell and Dr. Dutta want to bring it back. We have a unique opportunity to be part of a very significant study, with all the global recognition that it entails.</p> <p>Mr. Taha recommends we do not respond until we receive a commitment from Dr. Dutta and get a detailed proposal in writing.</p> <p>Dr. Poisant will distribute the latest report to the Board within in 48 hours [<i>ACTION</i>]</p> <p>Chairman Chui suggests we get a detailed proposal and distribute to the Board and conditional approve the \$100,000 option. [<i>ACTION</i>]</p>
18.	<p>Open Discussion Chairman Chui invites everyone to a CISA lunch on October 8, 12:30-1:30 for business matching.</p>
19.	<p>Group Photo</p>
<p>ADJOURNMENT</p>	