



# **AFRICAN TELECOMMUNICATIONS UNION**

**1<sup>st</sup> African Preparatory Meeting for World Telecommunications  
Development Conference (WTDC-25) – Nairobi, KENYA**

**8 – 9 February, 2024**

**REPORT**

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# REPORT OF THE 1<sup>ST</sup> AFRICAN PREPARATORY MEETING FOR WTDC-25

## Kenya, February 08 – 09, 2024

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

The 1<sup>st</sup> African Preparatory Meeting for World Telecommunications Development Conference (WTDC-25) was organized for both physical and online attendance by the African Telecommunication Union (ATU) and kindly hosted by the Communications Authority of Kenya (CA).

The main objectives of the 1st preparatory meeting were:

- i. To establish the Bureau and Committees that will lead the formulation of the African Common Proposals for the World Conference to be held in 2025.
- ii. To review the report by ATU on the African participation and outcome of the WTDC-22.
- iii. To evaluate the report by ITU Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT) on the WTDC-22 main outcomes and WTDC-25 preparation status as well as present the highlights on the implementation of WTDC-22 outcomes.

### 2. PARTICIPANTS

The meeting was attended by over 220 participants from the following 35 Member Countries: Algeria, Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d’Ivoire, Cape Verde, Chad, Comoros, Djibouti, DRC, Egypt, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Ghana, Gabon, Kenya, Lesotho, Mali, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania, Tunisia, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

The following institutions and organizations were also represented:

- the International Telecommunications Union, (ITU);
- Seven (11) Associate Members (Apple, Djibouti Telecom, Meta, Inmarsat, ISOC, GSOA, GSMA, Huawei Technologies, Intel Corporation, MTN and SONATEL);
- Three (3) Regional organizations (EACO, CEPT & RCC)
- The African Telecommunications Union, (ATU).

The full list of participants is attached in **Annex 1**.

### 3. OPENING CEREMONY

**The Director General, Communications Authority of Kenya, Mr. David Mugonyi, MBS,** thanked the ATU for leadership and direction towards the examined, thoughtful and strategic common positions ahead of the world conference next year, stressing the

importance of Africa speaking with a common purpose at WTDC-25. He noted that the development of ICT is integral to the present and future of Africa and appreciated that the Kigali 2022 report would set the conversation rolling on forging responsive regulatory regimes in the wake of emerging issues in ICT and evolving global trends, citing Artificial Intelligence, cyber security, e-waste, digital skilling and child online safety as some of the highlights.

He stated that the preparatory meeting presented a forum for sharing ideas, experiences and forging strategic partnerships and a common game plan and thanked the ITU for continued technical assistance to Member States towards bridging the digital divide, pursuing digital transformation and in capacity building, for effective management of universal funds. He added that Kenya shall continue working with strategic partners towards promoting affordable access to ICTs, healthy competition and hunting for new investors to create jobs, noting too that Kenya is now ranked among Africa's most progressive ICT ecosystems with the mobile money transfer, payment services and an explosion of innovation hubs.

**Dr Cosmas Zavazava, Director ITU Telecommunications Development Bureau (BDT)** noted that out of the 46 least developed countries, 26 are in Africa, courtesy of lack of access to the submarine connectivity, limited bandwidth and according to the ICT development Index published last year which mentioned that Africa is facing a number of legacy challenges. He informed the meeting that Thailand who were set to host the next WTDC-25 will not do so due to financial challenges.

Highlighting the thematic priority outcomes of Kigali 2022, one of them is driven by Africa pertaining the impact of meaningful connectivity and internet usage, he singled out innovation and entrepreneurship as initiatives which would be driven by the African group at WTDC-25. In addition, Dr. Zavazava also informed the meeting that he initiated the Innovation and Entrepreneurship Alliance which had established 17 acceleration centers across Africa and established an advisory board with 18 members, of which 8 are African and focusing on cyber security among other priority areas. He added that establishing 14 ITU Academy training centers across the globe supported the digital transformation initiative and called on Africa to capitalize on her youthful demographic dividend as well as more actively engage with international cooperation and the private sector for resource mobilization and to adapt application of digital technologies in monitoring and responding to disasters triggered by climate change. He also mentioned the GIGA joint initiative with UNICEF which aims to connect every school to the internet and every young person to information, opportunity and choice, in addition to other initiatives launched in Rwanda, Dubai, South Africa and Mozambique. He also added that the BDT sector succeeded in accessing a 23 million Swiss franc fund which benefited the African continent most and ensured that the BDT sector works at a fast pace to accelerate the implementation of the projects. He concluded by inviting the participating experts to prepare for the WTDC 2025 by prioritizing the needs of the continent, being able to work with other regions and engaging with the private sector.

**ATU Secretary General, Mr. John Omo**, while recognizing Kenya for hosting WTSA-24 and WTDC-25 preparatory meetings, also appreciated the African group for robust presentations, specifically highlighting the role of women in ICT and their contributions to the forums. The SG also highlighted the proposals, resolutions, and initiatives that were the outcomes of WTDC-22, in particular, the Kigali Declaration and Action Plan. He added that WTDC-25 shall demonstrate Africa's contribution to the development of global connectivity, highlighting the ATU Africa Innovation Challenge as one of the initiatives of the Union that encourages young people to research and innovate and for which, the Union is greatly indebted to GSMA, Huawei and Intel and ITU for the support. He also called upon every participant to contribute with effectiveness in decisions and outcomes as happened in 2022, define the key thematic areas that are of priority for the region and work on influencing the cost of connectivity to leave a legacy to the next generation to manage.

**The Permanent Secretary, State Department for Broadcasting and Telecommunications, Professor Edward Kisyangani**, in his speech said that, the entire country had moved to the digital space and would work with other key global and regional stakeholders to ensure a structured and targeted approach in the design and implementation of programs to spur the regional ICT ecosystem. He also highlighted the catalytic role that ICTs play in the integration agenda of the continent and in boosting intra Africa trade. He added that there was a need to scale up efforts to develop ICT infrastructure and meaningful universal access and called for increased investment in telecoms infrastructure including broadband which remain below 40% in the region so as to ensure the actualization of the sustainable development goals and Agenda 2063.

While noting that the mobile connectivity continued to drive the digital social economic transformation, AI was another key trend that was shaping the mobile ecosystem and that there was opportunity for it to drive growth, increase accessibility and a move towards the circular economy principles in the light of growing climate change concerns and the rise of Fintech which is driving collaboration across the region. Acknowledging the accessibility challenges in Africa, he pointed out that Universal access projects had improved digital financial inclusion and participation in the digital economy, noting that Kenya had put in place measures to mitigate Cyber crime as an existential threat. He concluded by encouraging members to consolidate on common objectives, sustain their support and collaborations with the Union on various issues of mutual interest and declared the session officially open.

#### 4. ELECTION OF THE MEETING BUREAU

Following informal consultations by the ATU General Secretariat and as per the practice established and followed for many years within the ATU, the following bureau was established:

Position	Country/entity	Name
Chairman	Ivory Coast	<b>Mrs. Regina Fleur ASSOUMOU BESSOU</b>
Vice Chairman	Kenya	<b>Mr. Christopher KEMEI</b>
1 <sup>st</sup> Rapporteur	Zambia	<b>Ms. Sharon NKUMBWA</b>
2 <sup>nd</sup> Rapporteur	Gabon	<b>Dr. Christian NZENGUE PEGNET</b>
Support	ATU General Secretariat	<b>Mrs. Meriem SLIMANI</b>

\*It is to be noted that the established Bureau will manage all the preparations up to and during WTDC-25.

#### 5. WORKING AGENDA AND PROGRAM

The Working agenda and program was adopted without any objection (**Annex 2**).

#### 6. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WTDC-22 OUTCOMES

##### 6a) Report on Africa preparation and participation in the WTDC-22 and Main Outcomes by ATU – Mrs. Meriem SLIMANI

ATU gave an overview of the WTDC-22 meeting citing that the conference was held on the African continent for the first time in Kigali, Rwanda from the 6<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> of June 2022 with the theme: “Connecting the Unconnected to Achieve Sustainable Development”.

Mrs. Slimani gave an outline of the outcomes of the conference and the following key developments were noted;

##### i) The preparations for WTDC-22

The preparatory process was made up of two working groups with focal points being Burkina Faso for WG1 and South Africa for WG2.

The groups submitted African Common proposals that were developed through a series of working group and interregional meetings leading up to the conference, as well as documents sent by the Telecommunication Development Advisory Group (TDAG).

- a) Four regional initiatives were adopted;
- **AFR01:** Supporting digital transformation to usher in a rapid transition to a digital economy while accelerating innovation in Africa
  - **AFR02:** Implementation and expansion of broadband infrastructures, connectivity and emerging technologies
  - **AFR03:** Building trust, safety and security in the use of telecommunications/information and communication technologies and protection of personal data
  - **AFR04:** Fostering emerging technologies and innovation ecosystems
- b) Nineteen (19) proposals for resolution modification, these being; (1, 2, 5, 8, 9, 11, 17, 21, 34, 36, 45, 55, 63, 69, 73, 82, 85).
- c) three (3) new draft proposals;
- Resolution on digital transformation
  - Resolution on fostering telecommunications/ICT-centric Entrepreneurship and digital innovation ecosystems for sustainable digital development
  - Resolution on Partner2Connect
- d) Twelve (12) study questions, six (6) from study group one and six (6) from study group two.

**ii) Outcomes from WTDC-22**

- 80% of proposed revisions for existing resolutions and recommendations were adopted.
- The New draft resolutions were adopted
- The New regional initiatives were approved
- 7 Study questions were approved for both Study Group 1 and Study Group 2
- RES 45 had important attention because it touched on spam and cyber security.
- The GIGA project was also an important highlight under the New Resolution on connecting all Schools to the Internet.

**iii) Participation of Africa in the conference.**

A. Regional Representatives in the various Committees of the Conference (WTDC-22)

Position	Name	Country
Chairman of the conference	Ms. Paula Ingabire	Rwanda
Vice-Chairmen of the conference	Mr. Faycal Bayouli	Tunisia
Committee 2 (Budget Control Committee)	Mr. Biggie Chiripanhura	Zimbabwe
Committee 4 (ITU-D Working Methods) Vice Chairman	Mr. Mohamed Benziane	Algeria
Committee 5 (Editorial Committee) Vice Chairman	Ms. Sharon Bosire	Kenya
Working Group of the Plenary (Strategic plan and Declaration) Vice Chairman	Mr. Richard Anago	Burkina Faso

#### B. Telecommunication Development Advisory Group (TDAG) Bureau

Position	Name	Country
Vice Chairman	Mr. Christopher Kemei	Kenya
Vice Chairman	Mr. Abdulkarim Oloyede	Nigeria

#### C. ITU-D Study Group 1 and Study Group 2

Position	Name	Country
Chairman Study Group 1	Ms. Regina Fleur Assoumou Bessou	Côte d'Ivoire
Vice Chairman Study Group 1	Ms. Caecilia Nyamutswa	Zimbabwe
Vice Chairman Study Group 1	Mr. Amah Vinyo Capo	Togo
Chairman Study Group 2	Mr. Fadel Digham	Egypt
Vice Chairman Study Group 2	Ms. Zainab Ardo	Nigeria
Vice Chairman Study Group 2	Mr. Mohamed Lamine Minthe	Guinea



#### **iv) Preparation for WTDC-25**

Issues to consider for the preparation of WTDC-25;

- Ensure that some of the modifications to resolutions that were not accepted for WTDC-22 can be proposed again during WTDC 2025
- Preparatory meetings will be in a Hybrid format (both online and physical)
- Ad-hoc group meetings.
- Member states should participate as chair and rapporteur on rotational basis for each online meeting
- African Common Proposals AfCPs

The focal person for each proposed AfCPs should be selected early enough with redlines clearly defined such that the focal person can fully understand what is expected. ATU should therefore encourage member states to submit proposals early enough.

- The Action Plan and KPI's should be regularly reviewed and the TDAG vice chairmen should regularly give an update to ATU and member states.
- Other resolutions that other regions are proposing to change
  - Member states appoint a focal person for all other resolutions that other regions are proposing to change, but where no change is proposed by the African group. This would ensure that these other resolutions are not modified in a way that the interest of the African group would be affected negatively.
- There is a need to ensure that Youth from the region who participated in the Youth Summit are further engaged in future meetings.
- Member states should support the Network of Women (NoW) so that the initiative would continue.
- A group to follow up on needed resolutions and also on the future action required to include KPIs in the Kigali Action Plan. This group should be headed by one of the TDAG vice chairpersons from the region.
- There should be coordination and communication between delegates such as the use of WhatsApp platforms to effectively cover all resolutions at the Conference.
- There is a need to organize a Regional Development Forum in collaboration between ATU and ITU regional offices soon, where all stakeholders would be invited to activate

the African regional initiatives, seek & talk with funding institutions and determine the time of implementation.

The presentation is attached in Annex 3

**6b) An overview of the implementation of WTDC-22 main results, including Regional Initiatives in the Africa Region**

**Ms. Christine SUND, ITU** presented the current state of the implementation of the WTDC-22 results and highlighted the following outcomes:

- 67 projects under implementation with a project budget of 65 Million Swiss Franc. 36% of the funds are being utilized for African Projects.
- By 2023, a total of 23 million Swiss Franc had been mobilized in funding and 18.2 million went to supporting interventions that benefited the African region.

i) Overview of ongoing ITU/BDT projects in Africa:

<b>Portfolio of national/regional/global projects with activities in the region</b>	<b>ITU-D Priority Projects</b>
<p><b>15</b> Global Projects with activities in the region.  <b>6</b> regional projects benefiting the whole region.  <b>5</b> National Projects; Benin, Central African Republic, Mozambique, South Africa and Uganda.</p>	<p><b>4</b> ongoing projects under affordable connectivity  <b>12</b> of the ongoing projects are in Digital Transformation  <b>7</b> of ongoing projects under Enabling policy and regulatory environment  <b>3</b> projects are in Inclusive and secure ICTs</p>

ii) ITU-D SG1 and SG2 Questions under study

WTDC-22 (Resolution 2) established 2 Study Groups in ITU-D and assigned 7 Questions to each Study Group. SG1 had the theme of enabling the environment for meaningful connectivity while the SG2 theme was Digital Transformation.

iii) Regional Initiatives outlined in the Kigali Action Plan address specific needs for each region to advance and accelerate digital transformation.

Broad themes across ITU's six global regions include:

- Infrastructure development
- Digital transformation
- Enhancing cybersecurity
- Nurturing enabling policy and regulatory environments

- Advancing digital skills development
  - Developing smart and sustainable cities. Working with the UN Development System
- iv) Four (4) New Resolutions
    - Entrepreneurship and Digital Innovation
    - Connecting every school to the internet
    - Digital Transformation for sustainable development
    - Partner to connect(P2C)
  - v) Seven (7) Modified Resolutions
  - vi) Conclusion

In her conclusion, Ms. Sund stated that while good progress was being made under existing projects and activities, greater collaboration would be needed to advance the implementation of WTDC-22 Regional Initiatives. She closed by making a call to action for member states and other stakeholders to work together to advance Africa's digital development and implement regional priorities.

The presentation is attached in Annex 4.

## 7. PROPOSED STRUCTURE FOR WTDC-25 PREPARATION

In the perspective of the preparation of the WTDC-25, the meeting considered and approved the proposed structure by ATU Secretariat.

<b>PLENARY GROUP</b>	
<p><b>Chairperson : Mrs. Regina Fleur Assoumou Bessou (Cote d'Ivoire),</b>  <b>Vice-Chair: Mr. Christopher (Kenya)</b>  <b>1<sup>st</sup> Rapporteurs: Ms. Sharon NKUMBWA (Zambia)</b>  <b>2<sup>nd</sup> Rapporteur: Dr. Christian NZENGUE PEGNET (Gabon)</b></p>	
<p><b>Sub-group 1 of the Plenary: Study questions &amp; Revision of WTDC Resolution</b>   <b>Chair: Ms. Caecilia Nyamutswa (Zimbabwe)</b></p>	<p><b>Sub-group 2 of the Plenary: ITU-D Contribution to the ITU Strategic Plan</b>   <b>Chair: Mr. Dominic Ooko (Kenya)</b></p>
<b>WORKING GROUPS</b>	

<b>WG1: Declarations, Regional Initiatives, action plan &amp; Thematic priorities</b>	<b>WG2: Working Methods</b>	<b>WG3: Development related issues</b>
<b>Chair: Mr. Amr Safwat - Egypt</b> <b>Vice-Chair: TBC</b>	<b>Chair: TBC</b> <b>Vice-Chair: TBC</b>	<b>Chair: TBC</b> <b>Vice-Chair: Ms. Honey Makola (South Africa)</b>

The meeting adopted the proposed structure and the Chair and ATU Secretariat will do consultation to the vacant positions and invite Members to express their interest within 2 weeks. It was agreed to respect the regional, gender and language balance.

**8. AFRICAN REGION PRIORITIES FOR WTDC-25**

The ATU Consultant on WTDC-25 preparations, **Dr. Nagwa Shenawy**, in her presentation, gave an overview of the ‘African Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want’. She cited the key flagship programs which can boost Africa’s economic growth and development and lead to the rapid transformation of the continent. These included cyber security, eUniversity and the Pan African Networks programmes.

She gave an insight into the linkage between the African Agenda 2063 and the SDGs, highlighting areas such as infrastructure, education, economic growth, gender equity, youth empowerment and transformed economies.

She explained the African Union's vision for 2020 to 2030: The Digital Transformation Strategy for Africa. She gave the objective of the strategy, as well as its detailed specific goals.

Dr. Nagwa also gave a statistical breakdown of the 2023 digital development measurements in Africa by ATU. The metrics for the statistics were the percentage of individuals using the internet per region, the gender digital divide, urban and rural internet usage, active mobile broadband subscriptions, fixed broadband subscriptions, affordability of ICT services, percentage of individuals owning mobile phones and population coverage by type of mobile network. The data revealed that the African continent was lagging behind on most of these metrics of measurement.

**The following were proposed as African priorities for WTDC-25 and the reference documents**

- Bridging digital divide; WTDC-22 ref doc 37, 19
- Digital Technologies and Job Creation WTDC-22 ref doc 77, 89
- Digital Businesses, Digital Innovation Ecosystem & Entrepreneurship (Increase digital startups, platforms based firms/SMEs help achieve sustainable development. WTDC-22 ref doc 90)
- Digital skills WTDC-22 ref doc 40
- Gender balance or bridging the gender divide, support NOW initiative to empower & inspire women to join digitalization and this network. WTDC-22 ref doc 76
- Increased youth engagement in future meetings/events. WTDC-22 ref doc 76
- Cybersecurity and privacy WTDC-22 ref doc 45
- Telecom/ICT statistics and measurements which are key elements for drawing up evidence-based public policies. WTDC-22 ref doc 8
- Digital Platforms WTDC-22 ref doc 89
- Boost Digital financial services (Access and use of digital financial services)
- Create a dynamic sectoral strategy to digitally transform the agricultural, health, and education domains. WTDC-22 ref doc 89

She highlighted how digital technologies can enable economic transformation and boost job creation in the African region.

In terms of the status of women in Africa, Dr Nagwa pointed out that 60% of the African labour force is women. 30% of businesses in Africa are owned by women. The percentage of the total funding received by women-owned businesses is 4% and 24% of tech jobs are held by women.

The presentation is attached in annex 5.

**Presentation of an update by CEPT on the WTDC-25 preparations** by Mr. Oli BIRD

The CEPT informed the meeting that a project team had been established on ITU-D preparations for WTDC-25. The discussions are ongoing on what the region wants to achieve by the time of the Conference. Work is continuing at the Study Group level, and coordinators will soon be appointed.

### **Presentation of an update by RCC on the WTDC-25 preparations by Mr. Arseny Plossky.**

**Mr. Arseny Plossky**, RCC Coordinator for WTDC Preparation, made a presentation giving a breakdown of the structure of the RCC, highlighting the role of each section.

He informed the meeting about the schedule of events that have taken place since 2022 to prepare for WTDC-25, making special mention of the next meeting to be held in the spring of 2024 to review the first set of preliminary drafts RCC Common proposals for WTDC-25.

Finally, he listed the topics/areas of focus for the RCC common proposals to WTDC-25.

The meeting took note of the presentation which is attached as **Annex 7**

### **Presentation by Mr. Linden Petzer from GSOA**

The GSOA Representative, **Mr. Linden PETZER** began by giving an overview of GSOA's involvement in ITU-D and ATU WTDC-25 Preparatory meeting.

He gave a brief background of the organization stating that the association represents the entire global satellite industry. It consists of 3 permanent staff members who are all female.

GSOA contributes to WTDCs and will continue to do so by actively participating in ITU-D study groups with a focus on q1, q3, and q5.

He said, Satellite is important because there is a large number of LDCs in Africa and there is a big urban-rural divide. To achieve universal access, we will need a substantial amount of money, which is not a sustainable solution.

In natural disasters, terrestrial infrastructure is destroyed and satellite is usually the only means of communication left.

A combination of the different orbits is required to provide proper coverage. He therefore reaffirmed GSOA's commitment to connect the unconnected.

In closing, he gave the advantages of satellite infrastructure and stated that GSOA offers its support to ATU in the WTDC-25 preparations.

The presentation is attached in **Annex 8**

### **Presentations From ITU-D Study Groups 1 and 2**

- i. ITU-D Study Group One (1) Presentation by Ms. Caecilia Nyamutswa, Vice Chair of SG1**

Ms. Nyamutswa began by presenting the mandate of the Study Group 1. She then gave an overview of the 7 questions under study in the Study Group.

She gave details and statistics of the meetings that the study group has held since its inception in 2022 to date. She cited that in the period 2022-2023, Africa was the largest contributor by region to the activities of ITU-D study group 1.

She concluded by highlighting the upcoming meetings of the Study Group and pointing out the focus area of each of the meetings.

The presentation is attached in **Annex 9**.

**ii. Presentation on the activities of ITU-D Study Group 2 by Mr. Michael Bile of Ivory Coast.**

The area of action of SG 2 is about digital communication, health, and building of capacity. The questions are available on the ITU website.

He shared with the meeting the management structure of the Study Group for the information of all participants.

Mr Bile went into the details of the meetings that the Study Group has held and provided some relevant statistics about those meetings. He also shared the dates and focus areas of the next Study Group meetings.

He highlighted some of the challenges being faced by the Study Group.

He ended his presentation by encouraging Africa to participate in the work of Study Groups so that Africa can have impactful solutions.

The presentation is attached in **Annex 10**

## 9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

ATU extended an invitation to the participants to attend the ATU Innovation Challenge Award ceremony scheduled for the 9<sup>th</sup> February 2024 at the venue of the WTDC-25 preparatory meeting.

## 10. DATE AND VENUE OF THE NEXT MEETING

The date and venue for the next African Preparatory Meeting (APM) will be communicated in due course once the dates and venue are determined.

## 11. CLOSING REMARKS

The ATU Secretary General, Mr. Omo in his closing remarks:

- Began by saying that he was pleasantly surprised at the pace at which the meeting had moved.
- Thanked all participants for their expertise and time adding that WTDC had been conceived in this region, and the initial thoughts were done in Tanzania.
- He stated that later in the year, there would be a second prep meeting, and the date will be communicated in good time.
- He commended the work done so far by other regions and hoped that they would together coordinate the proposals to the conference on areas of mutual interest. He envisaged a robust preparatory process between now and the next meeting where the proposals would be enhanced.
- He said that online dialogue would be facilitated and that participants should expect invitations to attend online meetings to develop proposals together.
- He further said that other entities would be engaged to help champion certain topics in Africa.
- He congratulated the Chair and the Bureau for their great work, the coordinators, experts, and each participant for their contributions and engagement. He also thanked the Secretariat for their support and wished all who were traveling back a safe trip.
- He reiterated his appreciation to Kenya for hosting the meetings in Nairobi.
- He declared the 1<sup>st</sup> APM25-1 preparatory meeting closed.

**Annexes available in the following link:**

[https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1NvBkHqZ1ZEahliZvoDkhuQPznaBjehEv?usp=drive\\_link](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1NvBkHqZ1ZEahliZvoDkhuQPznaBjehEv?usp=drive_link)