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ITU Plenipotentiaries agree on a new ITU

The Additional Plenipotentiary (APP) Conference of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) closed on 22 December 1992 with the signature of the new Constitution and the new Convention of the Union.

The ITU's new structure is organized into three sectors: development, standardization and radiocommunication.

The standards-setting activities of the International Telegraph and Telephone Consultative Committee (CCITT) and the International Radio Consultative Committee (CCIR) have been consolidated into a

telecommunications Standardization Sector. The rest of the CCIR activities—essentially those tasks related to the efficient management of the radio-frequency spectrum in terrestrial and space radiocommunications—has been integrated into a new Radiocommunication Sector along with the activities of the International Frequency Registration Board (IFRB).

Although the role and functions have been redefined, the structure of the Telecommunication Development Sector remains essentially unchanged given the restructuring of the ITU development machinery in 1990. An assessment of its structure and operational effectiveness will be made when sufficient time has elapsed to provide the type of feedback required. The Conference however has given the Development Sector its first ever Director.

The APP

The Conference, which ran from 7 to 22 December 1992, was attended by 801 delegates from 140 countries as well as by observers from the following organizations: the United Nations, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the World Health Organization (WHO), the Universal Postal Union (UPU), the Asia-Pacific Telecommunity, the League of Arab States, the European Conference of Posts and Telecommunications Administrations (CEPT), the Caribbean Telecommunications Union (CTU), the European Telecommunications Satellite Organization (EUTELSAT), the International Maritime Satellite Organization (INMARSAT), the International Telecommunications Satellite Organization (INTELSAT), the Panafrikan Telecommunication Union (PATU), the African National Congress (ANC) and Palestine.



ITU 930001

General view of the conference room with, in the foreground, from left to right: Messrs D. Maclean (ITU) and B. de Riedmatten (Switzerland)

The Conference was chaired by Mr B. de Riedmatten, Ambassador and Permanent Observer of Switzerland to the United Nations Office and Permanent Representative to the other international organizations in Geneva. The Vice-Chairmen were: Messrs Bradley P. Holmes (United States), Vladimir Bulgak (Russia), Abderrazak Berrada (Morocco) and Yoshio Utsumi (Japan).

The agenda

The Conference, on the basis of the proposals submitted by Member States, had to decide on the scope and timing of structural changes and associated functioning and modify the ITU Constitution and Convention accordingly. It was also called on to elect the Director of the Telecommunications Development Bureau (BDT) and to elect a Member State from Region C (Eastern Europe and Northern Asia) to the ITU Administrative Council.

Major decisions

□ Elections

On 16 December, Mr A. Ph. Djihatampu (Indonesia) was elected Director of the BDT on the fourth ballot. Romania was elected member of the Council on the first ballot which took place on 11 December.

□ Reform of the Union

The Conference recognized the need to adapt the Union's structure, management practices and working methods to the changes in the world of telecommunications and to the increasing demands placed upon it to keep pace with the ever-accelerating progress in telecommunications. It overhauled ITU's main areas of activity: development, standardization and radio-communication in the light of the recommendations made by the High-Level Committee (H.L.C.) and on the basis of proposals by ITU's Member States.

The Union now comprises: a Plenipotentiary Conference which is the supreme authority of the Union, the Council which acts on behalf of the Plenipotentiary Con-

ference, world conferences on international telecommunications, the Radiocommunication Sector (including world and regional radiocommunication conferences, radio-communications assemblies and a Radio Regulations Board), a telecommunication Standardization Sector (including world telecommunication standardization conferences), a telecommunications Development Sector (including world and regional telecommunication development conferences) and a General Secretariat.

□ Plenipotentiary Conferences

Plenipotentiary Conferences will be held every four years and will focus on long-term policy issues. In this respect, they will take decisions on draft Strategic Plans submitted by the Council outlining the objectives, work programmes and expected outcome for each constituent of the Union until the following Conference. After the 1994 Kyoto Conference, the duration of Plenipotentiary Conferences will normally be limited to four weeks.

Participation in Plenipotentiary Conferences

Plenipotentiary Conferences will be open to ITU Member countries, the United Nations and its specialized agencies, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), regional telecommunication organizations and intergovernmental satellite operators.

□ Development sector

The vertical structure of the BDT will be made up of world and regional development conferences and of a bureau headed by an elected Director. Increased emphasis will be placed on BDT's crucial role of presenting to developing countries the range of policy and structural options that would lead to greater resources for telecommunication development and of acting as a catalyst in mobilizing resources for development. The Development Sector will have, as members of right, the administrations of ITU Member countries. Other members will be: operators, scientific and industrial groups, financial and development institutions as well as other telecommunication

entities, provided their participation is approved by their respective countries, and regional and international telecommunication, standardization, financial and development organizations.¹

Financing

All participants, except those exempted by the ITU Council, will contribute towards defraying the expenses of the Sector of which they are a member on the basis of a freely-chosen class of contribution ranging from 1/16 to 40 units. The value of the unit for organizations other than administrations is valued at one-fifth that of administrations. In addition, any organization authorized to take part in the work of the ITU will defray the costs of conferences and assemblies of sectors of which they are not members but in which they participate. In the latter case, the amount of the contributory unit for administrations will be set by dividing the total amount of the budget of the conference or assembly by the total number of contributed units. As in the first case, the value of the unit for organizations other than administrations will be 1/5 the value of the unit for administrations.

Development conferences

The development conferences will be convened at regular intervals to encourage international cooperation with a view to harmonizing and enhancing the development of telecommunication services and facilities. They will be fora for the discussion and consideration of topics, projects and programmes relating to telecommunications development. In principle, one world conference and, subject to availability of resources, one conference in each of the

¹ APP-92 adopted a Resolution instructing the Council to study, develop and recommend the criteria, procedures and rights and obligations that should govern participation in the activities of the Union by telecommunication entities whose participation is approved by their respective countries as well as regional and international telecommunication standardization, financial and development organizations and to make its final recommendations to the Kyoto Plenipotentiary Conference.

regions (Africa, Asia/Pacific, Americas, Europe, Middle East) will be held in the four-year period between Plenipotentiary Conferences. The output of development conferences will take the form of resolutions, decisions, recommendations or reports. Unlike other ITU conferences, Final Acts which have a binding character on Member States will not be produced.

World development conferences will also provide guidance and direction to the BDT (setting guidelines for defining development priorities and planning of BDT activities as well as establishing work programmes). Moreover, development conferences will set up project-oriented development study groups and working groups to undertake studies on specific aspects of issues to be considered by the conferences. The subjects will deal with telecommunications questions of interest to developing countries including development policy and financing, network planning, operation and new services. These study groups will replace the present CCITT Special Autonomous Groups whose role is to study questions of interest to developing countries.

The first World Telecommunications Development Conference will take place before the 1994 Kyoto Plenipotentiary Conference and its agenda will be drawn up by the ITU Council at its 1993 session on the basis of a report to be prepared by the BDT Director and the comments received from the Members during extensive consultations to be carried out.

As the programme of work of the BDT will be adopted by this conference, the APP adopted a resolution outlining the main thrust of action to be undertaken by the BDT until then. In addition to preparing a consolidated programme of activities, special attention will be given to measures to be taken for the increased participation of developing countries in the standardization activities of the Union.

Participation in conferences

Development conferences will be open to all members of the sector.

Advisory Board

A Telecommunications Development Advisory Board will be established to advise the BDT Director on priorities and strategies in the Union's development activities and to recommend steps to foster cooperation and coordination with other organizations involved in telecommunications development.

The Board will be established and the members appointed by the Director in consultation with the ITU Secretary-General. It will be composed of individuals with a wide and equitable cross-section of interests and expertise in telecommunications development. The Chairman of the Board will be elected from among its members.

□ Telecommunication Standardization Sector

A new Standardization Sector has been established to study technical, operating, and tariff questions and to issue recommendations on them with a view to standardizing telecommunications on a world-wide basis, including recommendations on interconnection of radiocommunication systems in public telecommunication networks and on the performance required for these interconnections. Technical or operating questions specifically related to radiocommunications will come within the purview of the Radiocommunication Sector.

The sector will include the standards-setting activities of the current CCITT and CCIR.

Allocation of work

The Conference endorsed the H.L.C. Recommendations on the broad terms of reference of both sectors, given the ongoing work done by the CCIR and CCITT under the strategic planning groups to allocate the work between the sectors. A joint meeting of the two groups was held at ITU on 18 January 1993 to establish an initial list of duties to be allocated to the Standardization and Radiocommunication Sectors. The detailed allocation of work will be confirmed by the next standardization and radiocommunication conferences and the matter will

be kept under review for any necessary adjustments.

The new sector will operate through world telecommunication standardization conferences to be held every four years and through study groups and a Bureau headed by an elected Director.

The role of the conferences will be to consider the reports of study groups, approve, modify or reject the draft recommendations they will contain and approve the programme of work of the sector, taking into account the priorities and urgency of issues. On that basis, they will also decide on which study groups to maintain, set up or abolish and on the allocation of questions to be studied.

Membership

The Standardization Sector will be open to the same participants as the Development Sector.

Financing

The financial contributions of members of the Standardization Sector will be the same as for the Development Sector with the exception of the classes of contributions of 1/4, 1/8 and 1/16, which will be reserved for Member countries.

Participation in conferences

Standardization conferences will be open to all members of the sector.

Approval of recommendations

Concerning the approval of Recommendations, the APP adopted a Resolution requesting the first World Telecommunication Standardization Conference and the first Radiocommunication Assembly, both to be held in 1993, to review the existing accelerated approval procedure.² The aim

² Under Resolution No. 2 of the CCITT and Resolution 97 of the CCIR, if a study group decides unanimously that a recommendation is urgent, it can be approved before the holding of the Plenary Assembly (every four years) by correspondence. The recommendation is sent to all administrations who, within a three-month period, indicate whether or not they approve it. If the majority expressed is in favour of the Recommendation, it is approved and put into effect.

of the Resolution is to set a certain majority of favourable replies for recommendations to be approved and to give Members the possibility, if they consider themselves to be adversely affected by the application of a recommendation approved under the accelerated procedure, of requesting a standardization conference to reconsider the text. For the time being, the existing provisions of the Nice Constitution and Convention have been retained.

Advisory Group

The conference agreed on the setting up of an Advisory Group for the Standardization Sector to:

- review priorities and strategies in the Union's standardization activities;
- review progress on the implementation of the work programme;
- provide guidelines for the work of the Study Groups;
- recommend measures to foster co-operation and coordination with other standard-setting bodies and within the various constituents of the Union.

The Advisory Group will be open to representatives of administrations and organizations authorized to participate in the work of the Union, as well as representatives of study groups of the sector. The precise terms of reference and working procedures will be developed by the first World Telecommunication Standardization Conference to take place in Helsinki from 1 to 12 March 1993. The Advisory Group will continue the work already undertaken by the Strategic Planning Group which was established by the Melbourne CCITT Plenary Assembly in its Resolution No. 18.

□ The Radiocommunication Sector

The CCIR activities relating to the efficient management of the radio-frequency spectrum in terrestrial and space radiocommunications have been integrated into a new Radiocommunication Sector along with the activities of the IFRB which essentially consist in examining and registering all notices for frequency assignments liable to cause interference outside the territory of

the country in which the station is located, examining all notices for orbital positions of geostationary satellites and carrying out the necessary calculations to ensure interference-free transmissions, and ensuring that the provisions of the Radio Regulations are properly applied by the ITU Member countries, providing assistance to developing countries to facilitate their access to the spectrum-orbit resource.

The sector will operate through world and regional radiocommunication conferences and assemblies, a Radiocommunication Bureau headed by an elected Director and a Radio Regulations Board.

World and regional radiocommunication conferences and radiocommunication assemblies

World radiocommunication conferences will be held every two years along with a radiocommunication assembly. The main function of radiocommunication conferences will be to review and revise, as necessary, the Radio Regulations on the basis of an agenda adopted by the Council following consultation with the membership.

Regional radiocommunication conferences may be held to deal with specific radiocommunication questions of a regional nature.

The radiocommunication assembly will carry out the present functions of the CCIR Plenary Assembly (that is to provide the technical basis for the work of world radiocommunication conferences, approve the programme of work of radiocommunication study groups³ and decide on the priority, urgency and time-scale for the completion of their study). In addition, the Radiocommunication Assembly will consider reports of the study groups and approve, modify or reject the draft recommendations they contain, decide on which study groups to maintain, set up or abolish the allocation of questions to be studied.

Membership

The Radiocommunication Sector will be open to the same participants as the other two sectors.

Participation in radiocommunication conferences and assemblies

Radiocommunication conferences will be open to the same categories of participants as Plenipotentiary Conferences in addition to international organizations other than the United Nations, its specialized agencies and the IAEA. Operators authorized by their country to participate in the work of the sector will also be admitted to radio conferences.⁴

Radiocommunications assemblies will be open to all members of the Radiocommunication Sector.

Financing

The financial contributions of members of the Radiocommunication Sector will be the same as those of the Standardization Sector.

Radio Regulations Board

A part-time nine-member Radio Regulations Board will replace the current full-time five-member International Frequency Registration Board. The new Board will approve the rules of procedure which are used in the application of the Radio Regulations to register frequency assignments, will consider any matter which cannot be resolved through the application of the rules of procedure and will perform any duties related to the assignment and utilization of frequencies and to the equitable utilization of the geostationary-satellite orbit. It will also consider the reports of the Director of the Radiocommunication Bureau on investigations, at the request of one or more ITU

³ Radiocommunication study groups are groups of experts in which administrations and public/private sector entities participate. They study technical questions relating to radiocommunication issues and adopt recommendations. In the new Radiocommunication Sector, the focus of study will be on the use of the radio-frequency spectrum in terrestrial and space radiocommunications (including the geostationary-satellite orbit), the characteristics and performance of radio systems, the operation of radio stations and the radiocommunication aspects of distress and safety matters.

⁴ World Conferences on International Telecommunications will be open to the same categories of participants as radiocommunication conferences.

Members, of cases of harmful interference and formulate recommendations for their resolution. The Director of the Radiocommunications Bureau will act as executive secretary to the Board. As in the past, the chairman and vice-chairman of the Board will be elected from among its own members for a period of one year. The vice-chairman will then succeed the chairman and a new vice-chairman will be elected.

The Board will hold up to four meetings a year and a quorum of two thirds will be required for meetings to be held. Decisions will be taken by consensus. If a consensus cannot be reached, the concurrence of at least five members will be required for a decision to be adopted. The Board will not exercise management functions over the bureau. The Board members will serve as custodians of an international public trust and not as representatives of their respective Member States or region. Hence, members of the Board will not be authorized to be part of national delegations at any conferences or meetings of the Union. They will be elected by Plenipotentiary Conferences.

Advisory Group

As for the Standardization Sector, the APP agreed on the setting up of an advisory group for the Radiocommunication Sector with the same broad mandate and the same composition. The precise terms of reference and working procedures will be developed by the first World Radiocommunication Conference to take place in Geneva from 15 to 19 November 1993.⁵ The Advisory Group will continue the work already undertaken by the Strategic Planning Group which was established by the Düsseldorf CCIR Plenary Assembly in its Resolution 106.

Electronic access to ITU documents and publications

The conference also approved a Resolution concerning the electronic availability (at a cost in the case of official publications) of all ITU documentation intended to facilitate the timely development of ITU Recommendations. The Resolution indicates the

obligations on the purchaser of electronic publications in terms of use, duplication and distribution. It stresses, however, that paper copies should also be made available rapidly so as not to be detrimental to users without access to electronic facilities.

Forum to discuss strategies and policies in the changing telecommunication environment

Another resolution was approved requesting the ITU Council to submit a concrete plan to the next Plenipotentiary Conference (Kyoto, 1994) on the setting up of a forum in which administrations would formulate strategies and policies on telecommunications.

Strengthening of relationships with regional telecommunication organizations

Stressing the need to cooperate closely with regional telecommunication organizations and given their increasing importance, the conference adopted a resolution requesting the Secretary-General to explore avenues of cooperation and to report to the ITU Council for appropriate measures to be taken.

Conferences

The role of the first World Radiocommunication Conference will be to make recommendations to the ITU Council for the agenda of the 1995 World Radiocommunication Conference, which should include an item dealing with the use of the frequency bands allocated to the mobile-satellite service, and to make recommendations for the preliminary agenda of the 1997 World Radiocommunication Conference.

It was decided that the next Plenipotentiary Conference will take place in Kyoto from 19 September to 14 October 1994.

Entry into force of the Geneva Constitution and Convention

The Geneva Constitution and Convention will enter into force between Members having ratified, approved, adopted or acceded to them at a fixed date (1 July 1994), contrary to the procedure established at

Nice which required the deposit of 55 instruments of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession for the Constitution and Convention to come into force. For this purpose, the conference adopted a recommendation inviting the Members to expedite their respective national procedures for ratification, acceptance, approval or accession, and not to proceed with the procedures with regard to the Nice Constitution and Convention.

Attendance of the press and the public at conferences

The APP took a first step in the direction of openness and decided to authorize the attendance of the press and the public at conferences subject to guidelines to be approved by the meeting of the heads of delegations which take place on the first day of each conference.

Interim arrangements

Given the importance of rapidly implementing the new structure to maintain the pre-eminence of the ITU in the development of world telecommunications and to ensure that the work of the ITU continues to be relevant to the needs of not only Member States but also their major telecommunication providers, satellite operators, equipment manufacturers and the many millions of users of telecommunication services, the Conference adopted a resolution aimed at provisionally applying all the provisions of the Constitution and Convention relating to the new structure and working methods as from 1 March 1993. As a result, the current Director of the CCITT will act as Director of the Standardization Bureau, the current Director of the CCIR will act as Director of the Radiocommunications Bureau. The current five-member IFRB will discharge the duties of the Radio Regulations Board, will assist in the on-going work of the simplification of the Radio Regulations and will

⁵ The associated Radiocommunication Assembly will take place in Geneva from 8 to 16 November 1993.

carry out any special task entrusted to it by the Secretary-General.

The present staff of the specialized CCITT, CCIR and IFRB Secretariats will be assigned to the new Bureaux.

The Conference also decided that the election of the BDT Director by the present Conference will not count as the first term of office for the purpose of calculating the number of mandates an elected official can serve.⁶ The election of the Directors of the current CCITT and CCIR in 1989 will count as their first term of office for the directorship of the new Standardization and Radio-communication Bureaux. All elected officials will remain in office until a date to be decided by the Kyoto Plenipotentiary Conference for the taking of office of all 14 officials it will have elected.

Conclusion

In his closing address, ITU Secretary-General Pekka Tarjanne said that this Conference was only the first step in the ITU reform process, the beginning of the beginning. He added, "We have restructured the ITU so that our three fundamental sectors of activity, radiocommunications, standardization and development, have been given a framework in which they can operate more efficiently. The challenge", he continued, "is to use these new structures to tackle the fundamental problems of international telecommunications, not only better to achieve our goals of developing telecommunication networks and services in a harmonized and efficiently regulated and managed manner, but to ensure that telecommunications contribute to human development by promoting economic growth as well as the improvement of our environment: social, cultural, political and ... natural."

He concluded, "I think there is every reason to be satisfied and confident in ITU's capacity to respond to change."

The final word belongs to the Chairman of the Conference, Mr de Riedmatten: "L'UIT est bien partie."

⁶ Elected officials can serve a maximum of two terms of office.