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Celebrating the past but looking to the future

THE 17th of May was a very special day for the ITU. The Union was celebrating three events: the World Telecommunication Day, its 130th anniversary and the centenary of radiocommunication.

Speaking on this year's theme "Telecommunications and the environment", Pekka Tarjanne, ITU's Secretary-General, stressed the crucial role of telecommunications in protecting and enhancing the quality of the natural environment. "I hope that all of us share a commitment to preserving nature's beauty and richness, for the benefit and enjoyment of future generations", he said.

The ITU is indeed a fortunate organization to be celebrating 130 years of existence as much in terms of past achievements — of which it may be justly proud — as of new challenges. "We were the first, and we are still the best!", said Mr Tarjanne. A hundred and thirty years of existence can be seen in the "standards that make it possible for different networks and services to intercommunicate". They can also be seen in the "harmonious use of the radio frequency spectrum and satellite orbital positions". In recent years, the ITU has taken on a new task which may have astonished the men who met in Paris in May 1865: assisting developing countries so that they can, at least, have access to basic telecommunication services. "This is a record of achievement without parallel in the history of international organizations", said Mr Tarjanne. However, many challenges lie ahead.

We are entering a new information society in which telecommunications will be superabundant. Yet, "... for a large part of the world's population, many of life's other necessities remain scarce or non-existent. Today, no one could seriously claim that we face a global superabundance of basic human necessities — such as food, shelter, jobs, educational opportunities and political freedoms — and there is widespread concern that any improvement in this situation can only come at the expense of the natural environment", Mr Tarjanne cautioned.

Our next goal should surely be: what we, the ITU, can do "to ensure that telecommunications superabundance leads to a decent basic standard of living for people everywhere". That is food for thought for the entire international telecommunication community. If we look at the huge contribution that radio has made to the development of mankind over the past hundred years, we have every reason to believe that we will one day achieve that goal.

Pekka Tarjanne

"It appears almost certain that new radiocommunication systems will finally make it possible for people everywhere to have access to basic telecommunication services. If this happens, it means that we will have achieved the goal set by the Maitland Commission. The right to communicate will be universal", Mr Tarjanne remarked, referring to Les Barclay's lecture on the history of radiocommunication. So while "we celebrate the past let us pause for a moment to think about our responsibility to the future", the Secretary-General concluded. ■

Study Group 14 approves new Recommendations

STUDY Group 14 and its two Working Parties met in Geneva (19 to 27 April) under the Chairmanship of K. Kern (Germany). Working Parties 1/14 and 2/14 were chaired by R. P. Brandt (United States) and B. Korop (Ukraine), respectively.

Accomplishments

The most important work accomplished was the approval of previously determined draft Recommendations R.106, V.8 *bis*, V.12, V.25 *ter*, V.56 *bis*, and V.130 and the decision to submit draft Recommendations V.asvd, V.gmux, R.21 and R.22, as well as the revision of Recommendation V.120 to Resolution 1 approval procedure.

The revision of V.120 provides for a new annex which incorporates V.42 *bis* data compression.

V.asvd on the simultaneous transmission of an audio source (voice, music, etc.) with 4800 bit/s data prescribes a new modulation technique combining voice and data signals in an analogue manner which does not require separate multiplexing techniques or digitization of the voice.

V.gmux is the first in a series of Recommendations dealing with digital simultaneous voice and data. This Recommendation provides an HDLC-based multiplexing scheme which will be used to combine the digitized voice signals with the data signals.

As regards Recommendation V.8 *bis*, France, the United Kingdom and the United States have requested a six-week evaluation period which ended 8 June 1995. If a negative vote is received from any of these countries during this period, V.8 *bis* will be considered re-confirmed for the March 1996 meeting of the Study Group. This Recommendation provides procedures for identification and negotiation of functions at the beginning of and during a voice call. Although primarily aimed at supporting simultaneous voice and data work, it also addresses the broader issue of terminals incorporating multiple functions (e.g., facsimile, voice, simultaneous voice and data).