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WARC-79: A brilliant success¹

At the end of eleven weeks of strenuous work,² the representatives of over 150 countries Members of the ITU adopted the new Radio Regulations which, in a volume of more than 1000 pages, will no doubt govern until the end of the century all services using the frequencies of the radio spectrum.

It has again been shown that, given goodwill and perseverance, the word impossible has no place in the ITU. And the vitality of the International Telecommunication Union, the soundness of its foundations and the effectiveness of its methods of work have once more been demonstrated.

It has in fact been proved that our Union, although 115 years old, knows how to adapt itself, today as in the past, to all new situations, whether technical, economic or political.

It has been proved that there is no problem, however difficult and complex it may be, which cannot be resolved, provided that everyone is animated by an unflinching determination, shows broad understanding and is imbued with a positive spirit of co-operation in the effort to arrive at a compromise solution which takes the interests of all parties into account.

In contrast to sterile confrontation, understanding and co-operation are the two key terms which have always prevailed in the ITU, and we are happy to note that they held good throughout the debates of the WARC.

Understanding and co-operation lead to the consensus which all conferences and meetings organized under the auspices of the ITU have consistently sought.

Thus, as soon as the Committees were established, the delegates set to work courageously in order to seek, in an atmosphere of serious application and cordiality, the reasonable compromises likely to command agreement among the great majority.

For 115 years, the ITU has applied these working methods successfully, and for a very long time they have proved effective.

. * .

However, unlike the situation that existed not so long ago, it will be remembered that, at the opening of this Conference, nothing was comparable to what had gone before.

First, the problems to be solved were never so difficult nor so complex and the participants were never so numerous and of such diverse origin, training and viewpoint. What is more, many of them had never before taken part in an important ITU conference.

¹ WARC = World Administrative Conference. Address by Mr. Mili, Secretary-General of the ITU, at the closing meeting.

² The WARC opened on Monday 24 September and ended on Thursday 6 December 1979. See the brief report on the proceedings on pages 4-10 and extracts from the closing addresses given by Mr. Severini, Chairman of the Conference, and Mr. Jiguet, Vice-Chairman of the Conference and Chairman of the ITU Administrative Council.

³ In fact the Conference was scheduled to last for ten weeks but had to be prolonged for five more days.

I must therefore humbly confess that on the eve of the Conference I greatly feared that those features which constituted the originality and efficiency of our Union would be discarded in favour of certain much tougher, more intransigent methods.

Fortunately, these fears were rapidly dispelled, because from the very start the work followed the traditional practices of the ITU, again demonstrating the Union's strength and vitality.

We shall of course be told that the laws of physics are what they are and that no power, however great, can change them.

We shall also be told that badly framed regulations will harm the interests of all Members of the ITU without exception.

But there is the manner of approaching a problem and the strategy used to find a solution. That also is important. In 115 years, the ITU has developed its own working methods in a pragmatic manner. We are therefore glad to find that it is these methods that prevailed at the Conference.

So I have pleasure in repeating my most sincere congratulations on the exemplary fashion in which all participants accomplished their task within a space of time that many considered quite insufficient.³

First and foremost, I must congratulate the Chairman of the Conference, who guided the debates with courage, patience, understanding and full impartiality.

I would also congratulate the Vice-Chairmen of the Conference and the Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of all Committees, without exception, on the expertise with which they carried a crushing task systematically forward to a successful conclusion.

I would commend particularly the 2000 or so delegates, all of whom showed rare competence, tireless energy and an impressive sense of responsibility.

The senior delegates of course, those who took part in the 1959 or even the 1947 Conference 32 years ago, have long acquired the habit of work well done. To them we owe a debt of gratitude.

But the new delegates, particularly those from countries which could not take part in the 1959 Conference, demonstrated their knowledge, enthusiasm and dynamism. By bringing a new approach, they introduced more spontaneity and thus contributed to the clarity of the debates. To all these delegates, I extend my warmest congratulations and hope to see them often at future ITU conferences.

In short, like all other ITU conferences, and perhaps even more so, the World Administrative Radio Conference of 1979 was a BRILLIANT SUCCESS.

M. MILI