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## High-frequency broadcasting

The adoption two months ago of the report of the First Session of the World Administrative Radio Conference for the planning of the high-frequency bands allocated to the broadcasting service brought to a successful completion five weeks of intense conference work. The technical criteria, the planning principles and the planning method that were so diligently evolved at this session should provide a sound basis for the work that lies ahead both during the intersessional period and the Second session itself.

Clearly, a firm foundation has been laid for a new approach to the planning of the short-wave broadcasting service that had been called for by the World Administrative Radio Conference, 1979.

At the First Session, many diverse points of view were able to find a measure of harmonization. Taken into account have been the interests of all users—large and small—the diverse needs for long-distance broadcasting, and the concerns of developing as well as developed countries. The results achieved indeed pay tribute to the long-standing tradition of the Union in the negotiation of international agreements in the realm of telecommunications. The spirit of conciliation that prevailed at this Conference should greatly encourage all those on whom lies the responsibility of taking the results of this First Session forward.

Some of the decisions reached at this session have been hailed as historic. Truly they are.

Thirty-five years ago, at the Mexico International HF Broadcasting Conference, seasonal plans in an international context and on a continuing basis for short-wave broadcasting did not seem to be a viable proposition. Even as late as 1979 they appeared to some as too complicated.

Yet, today we can all be appreciative of the fact that such plans are well on the road to practical realization, with all their attendant advantages, both as regards the planning process and the efficient use

of the spectrum with consequential benefits for all countries, large and small, and, of course, for the listeners.

The recognition of the submission of broadcasting requirements and their translation, with necessary flexibility, into radio frequency needs in a centralized planning concept should enable more effective and reliable service use of the high-frequency bands.

Such reality is dependent, of course, on the appropriate application of computer technology and the establishment of the necessary computing software in the International Frequency Registration Board (IFRB) with the operational support of the ITU computing services in the General Secretariat. The Board has, indeed, been given a heavy programme of system development and studies as its contribution to the intersessional activity. Some technical elements will be studied further by the CCIR.

There is no doubt that many difficult tasks remain to be done before the new concept in co-operative planning for HF broadcasting can come into regular existence.

I am, however, confident that with the goodwill and dedication of all, and the necessary preparation by all the Members of the Union, the tasks ahead will not only be accomplished but they will lead to the success of the Second Session of the Conference in 1986 at which the necessary international treaty arrangements are to be drawn up.

For a large number of countries, short-wave radio is an invaluable tool for the spread of information and knowledge. The wider access to the high-frequency spectrum for broadcasting that the seasonal plans, as well as the progressive introduction of SSB transmissions will provide, should enlarge the scope of this far-reaching medium in enriching the social, economic and cultural life of millions of people all over the world.

**R. E. BUTLER**