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**Author:** Richard E. Butler

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## The Mobile Services Conference

Extremely complex and diverse issues were a characteristic of the World Administrative Radio Conference for the mobile services (MOB-87) which closed in Geneva on 17 October last and on which readers will find a full report elsewhere in this issue.

Taking account of the importance of mobile services and the associated complexity of regulatory provisions required for the mobile (aeronautical, land and maritime) services, radio-navigation and radiodetermination-satellite services, it was essential to review and partially revise the Radio Regulations. We know that the World Administrative Radio Conference (WARC-79) was not empowered to modify matters solely related to these services. Rapid advances in both terrestrial and space technologies led to the need for appropriate responses to new requirements and the modification of existing regulatory provisions.

This Conference has also drawn up provisions for the new frequency bands allocated by WARC-79 and to be made available for the maritime mobile service. In this process, the Conference revised, amongst others, Appendices 16 and 31 to 35 in such a way that the subdivision of the HF maritime bands reflects present and future requirements for an increasing use of those bands by narrow-band direct printing telegraphy and radiotelephony.

By its action relating to the certificates for operators of ship stations, the Conference allayed the fears of many operators that their responsibilities might be downgraded. The existing classes of certificates and the conditions for obtaining them were maintained whilst four new categories of certificates were established for the personnel of ship stations and ship earth stations using the frequencies and techniques prescribed for distress and safety communications in the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS) and for public correspondence.

Recognizing the importance of reaching agreement, the delegates spared no effort to harmonize many initially differing views and achieved substantive results with the establishment of the regulatory basis and the definitive frequency provisions for the GMDSS. This will permit Member countries of the ITU and International Maritime Organization (IMO) to carry forward the implementation of the new distress and safety system. Further review of present and transitional provisions might be necessary and

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could be undertaken by a future competent administrative radio conference.

The Conference found practical ways to enable the implementation of new forms of satellite communication, for example, the radiodetermination satellite services and land mobile satellite services in certain bands with common user sharing between services having primary allocations, for example land mobile satellite services with the aeronautical mobile-satellite services, to respond to the growing needs of users. The experience acquired will be very important in the approach to a more general world administrative radio conference.

The output of the Conference was remarkable considering the volume of work achieved in the course of five weeks. The regulatory texts and the associated Resolutions, including those of a transitional character, amount to some 400 pages in the Final Acts. Work programmes were established for on-going technical studies in administrations, in industry, as well as in the International Radio Consultative Committee (CCIR). The results of these studies should facilitate not only the application of the new provisions and continued development of the services and technology, but also the technical preparations for further revisions of the Radio

Regulations as the particular services evolve in the next few years. Already the Plenipotentiary Conference of 1989 has before it Recommendations from preceding conferences for a new type of administrative radio conference in the early 1990s which would deal with more than one service but would presumably have a limited mandate.

On-going tasks have also been assigned to the International Frequency Registration Board (IFRB) and the General Secretariat.

The present period, that is since the Plenipotentiary Conference in Nairobi (1982), has had to meet unprecedented demands for establishing regulatory texts through world and regional administrative conferences. This Mobile Conference has been no exception.

Extensive, complex and particularly animated discussions at all levels have contributed to a better mutual knowledge of the problems of different countries. MOB-87 fulfilled its mandate in the traditional spirit of co-operation and mutual understanding, leading to further advances in finding accommodation within that limited natural resource which is the radio-frequency spectrum, of various competing and indeed conflicting service needs.

**R. E. BUTLER**