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Robert Jones entrusted with a second term of office

Radiocommunication Bureau (BR)



Standing as the sole candidate, Robert Jones (Canada), or Bob, as he prefers to be called, was re-elected Director of the Radiocommunication Bureau (BR) on 22 October 1998 by the Ninth Plenary Meeting of the Minneapolis Plenipotentiary Conference. Bob obtained 145 votes out of the 151 votes cast (6 ballot papers being blank). The required majority was 73.

He was first elected to this post by the 1994 Kyoto Plenipotentiary Conference and took up office in January 1995.

■ Priorities into the new millennium

As a staunch supporter of multilateralism and ITU, my vision for the new millennium is driven by three basic challenges:

- the rapid introduction of new technologies which require access to the limited spectrum resource and which could help

bridge the gap between developed and developing countries;

- the evolving institutional structures providing and regulating the new radiocommunication technologies;
- the financial situation facing many governments, and consequently the ITU.

In the wake of these, and other challenges, we in BR and the Radiocommunication Sector (ITU-R) as a whole have been preparing strategies for the new millennium. We have come up with nine priorities which form an integral part of the Union's Strategic Plan for 1999–2003.

■ Review and fine-tune WRC process

As a top priority we will review and fine-tune the process for planning and agreeing agendas for World Radiocommunication Conferences, which address these challenges. We must ensure that such a process is effective and

efficient. Throughout our experience in the first four years of the restructured and reformed ITU-R, I have stressed the need to improve this process.

In particular, we must ensure that the agendas developed for WRCs do not unduly burden Member States, Sector Members and the resources of BR.

We continue to see WRC agendas grow far larger than the limited agendas intended by the High Level Committee (H.L.C.) during its review in 1990–1991.

In fact, these agendas are now so large that they cover almost every radio service and every frequency range. In addition, the planning of agendas and their associated technical studies is not being conducted on a four-year basis as foreseen in the H.L.C. review but rather on a two-year (in reality even less) basis. This is posing serious problems for all those involved in preparing WRCs.

In recent times, we have seen the number of pages of documentation handled during a WRC soar from about 7 million pages at WRC-95 to some 25 million pages at WRC-97.

The delegates and the Conference Secretariat simply cannot cope with such volumes in a four-week conference. Neither can the ITU's limited budget!

■ Management reform

Another important priority is what I call management reform. While it is true that being a specialized agency of the United Nations and part of the UN Common System gives rise to certain constraints, I believe we can be much more progressive in our management culture and systems. True, much of the reform is dictated by decisions of Member States, but management is an

area where elected officials can and must push for further reform. Let me cite a few examples of what I mean.

I have pushed for greater budget delegation and transparency wherever I had the authority to do so. One example has been to give ITU-R Study Group Chairmen a real budget (in Swiss francs) to manage for the work of their Study Groups. For the first time, these Chairmen and their Study Groups were able to decide on priorities and to make trade-offs knowing, for example, the cost of translation, interpretation, and documentation. This has enabled them not only to hold more meetings, but also, to produce more with less.

I have also instituted annual operational plans for BR. Based as they are on ITU's Strategic Plan, the plans are developed each year and presented to the Radiocommunication Advisory Group (RAG) for comment and advice. This allows us to establish our priorities. The operational plans are made available to all Sector Members and Member States and can be found on our Web site under the RAG documentation. My department heads submit written reports to me every three months on the results achieved against their objectives in the operational plan. As the Minneapolis Conference has approved operational planning on an ITU-wide scale, we look forward to making further improvements and to sharing our experience.

■ Promote innovative, global and regional services

Another key priority will be to accommodate the global and regional spectrum requirements of innovative services poised to provide communication and information services "anytime, anywhere". This is the case for global mobile personal communications by satellite (GMPCS), International Mobile Telecommunications-2000 (IMT-2000) and high altitude platform stations, all of which include innovative terrestrial and space applications. We will be looking to WRCs to give these services appropriate consideration. The Bureau for its part will continue to issue

needed radiocommunication standards (Recommendations in ITU jargon) to facilitate the development and implementation of radiocommunication services.

We will continue to encourage greater participation by Member States, Sector Members and other organizations in ITU-R activities. This will include concluding formal and informal task-oriented cooperation arrangements. Such arrangements will be of strategic importance to ITU Study Groups developing standards critical to building the infrastructure needed to support the global information society. It is no secret that more and more of this standardization work is being undertaken outside ITU in various forums and groups. My approach has been to try to embrace these groups and to develop partnerships. I know of one example where a forum is seeking to quickly develop a standard for specific radiocommunication devices. While this forum is still in the process of being established, many of those who participate in its work are, in fact, also participants in ITU-R Study Group work.

■ Encourage greater participation

I have attempted to build strong links with this forum and to develop a partnership with them which, of course, is subject to the approval of ITU Member States. Meanwhile, the forum has already joined the ITU-R as a Sector Member. I believe it is by

means such as this that we can be in "win-win" situations, as initial work on some standards can sometimes take place more quickly outside ITU (and indeed will be in any event with or without ITU). Yet, the players can see the benefits of truly global standards and can be encouraged to bring their work into the ITU Study Group process for completion and approval.

Bob Jones was born in St Catharines (Ontario, Canada) on 22 November 1943. He obtained his Bachelor and Master of Applied Science degrees from the University of Toronto in 1965 and in 1967. He holds a Master of Business Administration degree obtained from York University in 1975. He is also a registered Professional Engineer.

Before joining BR on 1 January 1995 as its Director, Bob was Director-General of the Radiocommunications and Broadcasting Regulatory Branch in Industry Canada. In addition to ten years in the Canadian radiocommunication manufacturing industry and seventeen years in the Canadian Department of Communications (now Industry Canada), he was the first Director of the Frequency Management System project of the International Frequency Registration Board between 1981 and 1983. He headed Canadian delegations to the 1992 World Administrative Radio Conference, the 1992 Additional Plenipotentiary Conference, the 1993 Radiocommunication Assembly, the 1993 World Radiocommunication Conference, as well as the 1994 World Telecommunication Development Conference.

In addition, he participated in World Administration Radio Conferences since 1977, in Plenipotentiary Conferences since 1982, in the High Level Committee and in two Voluntary Groups of Experts, and even chaired a third such Group.

Bob's achievements are well known to regular readers of *ITU News*. Since 1995, he has placed great emphasis on sound management in BR and in the ITU as a whole. Transparency is a key aspect of his management style.

Let me just list a few other priorities for the sake of completeness.

We will study and apply improved international spectrum management techniques.

We will facilitate and seek to achieve more timely coordination between new and existing active and passive systems in both space and terrestrial environments. In addition, we will assist

ITU Member States in developing spectrum regulation initiatives so as to harmonize better frequency allocations and the use of satellite orbits, while continuing work to improve the frequency coordination and planning process for satellite networks.

We will expand the assistance offered to Member States in coordinating and registering frequency assignments and in applying the Radio Regulations, with special attention to developing countries and Member States that have recently joined the Union.

We will continue to provide assistance to the Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT) for the introduction of modern radio systems in developing countries, particularly in rural areas.

We plan to conduct information meetings and world and regional seminars to assist Member States in their preparations for WRCs.

We will increase the use of information technology for the notification and processing of frequency assignments. ■



Bob Jones congratulated by Thomas L. Siebert, Chairman of the Conference, when taking the oath of office

Photo: Allen Brisson Smith (ITU 980127)