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(ITU) للاتصالات الدولي الاتحاد في والمحفوظات المكتبة قسم أجراه الضوئي بالمسح تصوير نتاج (PDF) الإلكترونية النسخة هذه والمحفوظات المكتبة قسم في المتوفرة الوثائق ضمن أصلية ورقية وثيقة من نقلاً.

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The new Regulations governing maritime radiocommunications*

For seven weeks, since 22 April, a World Administrative Conference has been revising the Regulations governing maritime radiocommunications and bringing them up to date.

Two factors which made it imperative to convene such a Conference were the new demands, due to the spectacular growth of large tonnage merchant shipping and of fishing fleets, and the imminent use of communication satellites for navigation at sea.

Inspired by a genuine spirit of international co-operation, this Conference has seen to it that, henceforth, the maritime mobile service will have the Regulations required both to permit its expansion and to ensure its adaptation to the changing conditions of sound operation in the years to come.

In the first place, I should point out that the essential feature of this Conference was that the improvement of operations already in existence and that the new provisions adopted concern services for which the procedures applied by operating and maintenance staff are already contained in existing Regulations.

The point therefore was to ensure that operators and other service staff throughout the world, even in the most remote regions, all interpret in the same way the changes they will have to apply when the new Regulations come into force.

Now, the Radio Regulations contain highly explicit provisions on the action to be taken by operating staff, so that the decisions of the Conference will affect the work of operators and possibly the characteristics of the installations on nearly 60 000 ships and in some 2900 coast stations.

The Geneva Maritime Conference will therefore be a turning point in the regulatory activities of the Union as it will be a prelude to an increasing number of administrative conferences whose task will be to amend the maintenance and operating rules applying to existing services in order to increase their efficiency by employing more advanced and more sophisticated techniques.

* The ideas put forward in this editorial were developed by the Secretary-General of the ITU in his opening speech at the World Administrative Maritime Radio Conference (Geneva, April-June 1974).

Typical of the pattern of such future conferences will be the need for a highly detailed agenda such as was drawn up for this Maritime Conference.

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So far as the Maritime Conference is concerned, let us note with satisfaction that an interesting evolution is taking place in the regulatory and legislative processes of the ITU, while at the same time realizing that it is for us to make the necessary effort to examine closely, analyse and understand this development. For we must at all times be able to perceive clearly the path before us along which we want to go. We must therefore look beyond the short-term demands of one technique or another and be guided rather by the basic needs of the users of telecommunication services.

What then are these needs in the case of the maritime services? I believe that they can be divided into three general categories:

Firstly, the traffic connected with the safety of navigation and consequently with the safety of life at sea. Although the details of these operations may not be known to persons outside the maritime mobile service,

they are—with the notion “SOS”, possibly the widest known of all telecommunication procedures—something which both the man in the street and the telecommunication specialist recognize readily as a necessity. I shall consequently not enlarge on this.

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The situation is rather different when we consider the remaining two types of traffic, i.e. communications with the shore required to ensure the efficient commercial operation of ships, and the private traffic of passengers and especially of crews.

The traffic which is required to ensure the commercially efficient operation of ships is of primordial importance. Ships represent a very considerable capital investment and one must also consider crew costs, which often are far from negligible. Their efficient operation consequently implies a high rate of productivity with rapid turn-rounds in ports.

It is imperative to ensure that ships do not stand idle, either awaiting entry into port or for wharf-side discharging operations. Hence the vital importance of messages enabling shipowners to route ships to the most

suitable harbours for taking on or unloading cargoes, or for informing importers and exporters of the estimated time of arrival so that they may take the necessary steps to ensure that stevedores and other services for loading and unloading are on the spot almost as soon as the ship docks.

I make special mention of this matter as a very large proportion of the world's trade is carried by sea, especially between the developing and industrialized countries. The cost of the raw materials which the former export and of the capital goods which they have to import to further their development is affected to a greater or lesser extent by transport costs. Consequently, the developing countries have a strong incentive to ensure that their maritime radiocommunication facilities are as efficient and comprehensive as possible.

In view of the importance of maritime telecommunications for the efficiency of harbour operations and for the safety of life at sea, we decided to send an identification mission to 14 African coastal countries. At the conclusion of this mission, which was organized jointly with IMCO at the end of 1972 and the beginning of 1973, specific recommendations for the improvement of the

radio-maritime services were submitted to each of the countries concerned, since it had been found that the maritime radiocommunication services of many of these countries were in a poor or even critical state.

With UNDP assistance, two experts will be sent to these countries to help them improve their services, and a seminar on the subject will be held in 1975.

Similar action will be taken in the South-American continent.

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The third category of traffic—the private traffic of passengers and crews—is also very important, especially that of crews, for here we are dealing mainly with a working population which depends on radiocommunications for its continuous link with home.

Unlike the large body of expatriate workers which are a fairly common feature of modern society, merchant navy personnel can only hope to receive mail sporadically at ports of call. Yet the bigger the ship the less likelihood of intermediary ports of call and consequently the greater the reliance on radio for urgent news.

Few of us appreciate just how large this seafaring population is. In this connection I recently noted in a Norwegian estimate that, at any one time, there were as many as 50 000 Norwegians serving at sea, which is the equivalent in fact of the entire working population of a sizeable town.

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I have emphasized the three broad categories of traffic handled by the maritime mobile service, but it would also be useful to say something about the context in which this activity takes place.

Most significant from the regulatory point of view is the fact that we are dealing with a strictly international service. Ships are for ever on the move and consequently a substantial number of them have to contact coast stations other than those of their own country. It is immediately evident that any restriction limiting communication between stations of this service would markedly diminish its usefulness.

This brings me to a very important feature of the maritime mobile service. We are dealing with a service in which at least one of the partners is not an administration but

a company or private person. Furthermore, it is a service built entirely on trust, on the assurance that the shipowner or the organization or person responsible for settling the accounts will honour the debts incurred.

Without this trust and the discipline necessary to ensure that the trust is deserved, the service runs the risk of becoming less effective because ultimately one would reach a point where certain coast stations might only accept traffic from known ships. It is not difficult to imagine the disastrous effects that this could have.

Furthermore, if traffic is to pass into the world telecommunication network through the nearest or most easily attainable coast station for onward routing, then it is necessary to do everything possible to foster this atmosphere of trust. I am glad to say that this trust has been consistently honoured everywhere, and I am sure that it will continue to be so in the future.

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Nevertheless, we must realize the magnitude of the challenge, given the number and kinds of ships involved. The users of the maritime service are extremely diverse, ranging from

small fishing vessels or private yachts to tankers of nearly half a million tons. Apart from this aspect there is also the steady increase in the number of ships. The following figures are eloquent.

In 1967, we found that the number of ships in the ITU "List of ship stations" had risen between 1960 and 1966 by nearly 20% from 33 200 to 39 500. The increase between 1966 and 1973 has, however, been far more striking. In both cases the period is about seven years, but in the last seven years the number rose by 15 500 to almost 55 000, in other words, by 39%.

On the technical side, the maritime mobile service has been at the forefront of progress by instituting the changeover from double sideband to single sideband operation.

Furthermore, extremely interesting proposals have been brought before the Conference concerning future satellite communications within the service, especially with a view to providing direct interconnection between ships and the international automatic telephone network.

Finally, there is also the work that is going on in connection with the introduction of teleprinters on board ships. And the Conference did not confine itself to finding

technical and operational solutions but also established the necessary administrative provisions to make this a viable service.

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To conclude, I should like to mention a function incumbent on the Secretary-General with respect to the maritime mobile service. It is perhaps not widely known that the ITU is a very large publisher of information of service to shipping in the form of the "List of coast stations", the "List of ship stations", the "List of radiodetermination and special service stations" and the "Alphabetical list of call signs used by stations in the maritime mobile service".

To illustrate this point, I need only mention that last year a total of over 230 000 copies of these lists or their supplements were dispatched to subscribers. I am convinced that this number would be even greater if all administrations ensured that the information contained in these lists was up-to-date and if the provisions regarding the compulsory carriage of these publications set out in Appendix 11 were more rigorously adhered to.

M. MILI