

**ECONOMIC  
AND  
SOCIAL COUNCIL****CONSEIL  
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## COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS

## SUB-COMMISSION ON FREEDOM OF INFORMATION AND OF THE PRESS

## Relations with Forthcoming Conference in the Field of Telecommunications

(Memorandum prepared by the Secretariat)

1. The attention of the Sub-Commission is drawn to the fact that the Government of the United States has issued invitations to a Radio Communications Administrative Conference and a Plenipotentiary Conference to be held on 15 May and 1 July 1947 respectively at Atlantic City for the purpose of revising the International Telecommunications Convention (Madrid 1932), and of re-organizing the International Telecommunications Union. (Note: A meeting of experts to prepare a draft agreement between the United Nations and the International Telecommunications Union will be held on 16 June 1947. The Secretary-General has called this meeting in accordance with the decision of the Economic and Social Council suggested by the Temporary Transport and Communications Commission, which expressed the hope that the International Telecommunications Union would be brought into relationship with the United Nations at the forthcoming Conference.) A Conference on International High Frequency Broadcasting will be convened between 15 May and 1 July 1947.
2. The Sub-Commission may wish to consider a number of matters in the field of telecommunications that may arise in connection with the meetings mentioned above. Having regard, however, to timing difficulties and, in particular, to the fact that the conferences in question will meet before the Fifth Session of the Economic and Social Council, it will not be possible for the Sub-Commission to communicate with the

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Telecommunications Union through the Economic and Social Council. Under the circumstances, the Sub-Commission may wish to suggest that the Secretary-General convey its views to these meetings.

The matters referred to above include the following:

- (a) Current trends in Telecommunications which relate to the effectiveness of broadcasting and other electrical media as means of spreading information internationally;
- (b) The question whether, in the allocation of the spectrum, adequate space will be made available for frequencies in the international broadcast bands;
- (c) The encouragement of the production and distribution in Member States of inexpensive full coverage receivers capable of receiving all international short-wave broadcasts;
- (d) Questions arising in connection with the proposed revision of the articles of the International Telecommunications Convention.  
(This convention contains many articles affecting the free flow of information between nations. These articles establish the methods and procedure for handling press and written record traffic at terminals, relay points and gateways. According to the convention, the application of restrictive regulation by contracting Governments is permitted only when the national security is in danger).
- (e) The possibility of establishing a code of ethics to be applied to international broadcasts. (In this connection, it might be recommended that it be recognized as a fundamental principle that no country has any fixed property right to any particular frequency but that the ether is the joint property of all the peoples of the world. If this concept were recognized, it would follow that all frequencies should be used in the interests of all the peoples of the world. The Sub-Commission might recommend that some machinery be established whereby subscribing states would be encouraged to promote international

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co-operation and peace in their broadcasting programmes. The degree to which subscribing states live up to such standards might be recognized as affecting their claim to frequencies in the international wave-band).

(f) The invitation of the Telecommunications Unions to the International Conference on Freedom of Information.

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