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Agenda item 74

QUESTIONS RELATING TO INFORMATION

Note by the Secretary-General

Addendum

The attached additional information, which covers the activities of the International Telecommunication Union in the field of communication, is issued as section V of the report of the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

ANNEX

Report of the Director-General of the United Nations Educational,
Scientific and Cultural Organization on the application of the
International Programme for the Development of Communication,
the activities relating to the establishment of a new world
information and communication order and on the social, economic
and cultural effects of the accelerated development of
communication technologies

CONTENTS

V. ACTIVITIES OF THE INTERNATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATION UNION

55. In the framework of international co-operation, particularly co-operation with the developing countries, the International Telecommunication Union carried out activities in line with the provisions of General Assembly resolution 40/164 B, article 4 ("Purposes of the Union") of the International Telecommunication Convention, held at Nairobi in 1982, and the preamble to the Convention, which fully recognizes "the sovereign right of each country to regulate its telecommunication having regard to the growing importance of telecommunication for the preservation of peace and the social and economic development of all countries ...".

Technical co-operation

56. On 2 April 1985, the foundation stone of the Multinational School of Advanced Telecommunication Studies (ESMT) at Dakar was laid. This project, launched in 1981 with the financial support of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and ITU technical back-up, has therefore reached a decisive stage of consolidation. The School, which is part of a global endeavour to achieve fuller control of telecommunication network management, serves eight African States: Benin, Burkina Faso, Central African Republic, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal and Togo. However, it has already received pupils and trainees from other countries or organizations, including Burundi, Cameroon, Chad, the Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Gabon, the Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Zaire, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Panafrican Telecommunication Union (PATU) and the Rufisque Multinational Telecommunication School (EMT) in Senegal.

57. Project RAB 81/0/13 for the translation into Arabic of ITU telecommunication terms is also in the final stage of implementation. The project has several objectives, one of which is to contribute towards international co-operation by transferring know-how and technology to a group of nations by means of a rigorous and precise terminological medium that correctly renders the meaning of the original languages. It represents a practical approach based on the implementation of a decision taken by the Plenipotentiary Conference of ITU at Nairobi in 1982 (article 16 of the International Telecommunication Convention), whereby Arabic became an official language of the Union. In addition, it is designed to ensure the transfer and adaptation of telecommunication technology to 21 Arab member administrations of ITU. The project was launched in 1982 with the recruitment of a Director, based in Rabat, and is due to be completed in October 1986. In December 1985, the project team completed the translation into Arabic of the 22,800 terms in the ITU "Provisional Glossary of Telecommunication Terms" and the 5,200 terms relating to space telecommunications. The former were adopted by the Arab Congress held at Rabat in December 1985; the others are to be studied in August/September with a view to their adoption in September 1986 at the Co-ordination Committee's last meeting, scheduled for 18 to 25 September at Rabat. A draft first version of the 22,800 terms has been printed. The final version is still under consideration. The total cost of the project is $US 1,850,000, including $860,000 provided by UNDP.

58. Early in 1986, ITU organized an important event: a workshop on maintenance matters, the first of its kind in Africa, with the participation of African telecommunication administrations and the suppliers of telecommunication

equipment. The objective was to work out agreed solutions to known problems with a view to achieving good quality of service, the common goal of all the interested parties. The workshop forms part of the programme for project RAF 80/018, "Maintenance of telecommunications, Pan-African network", initiated by ITU and implemented since 1981 with the assistance of UNDP.

59. With the Inter-Agency Co-ordination Committee (IACC), the Union continued to play a leading role in the feasibility study for a Regional African Satellite Communication System (RASCOM) for the development of Africa. The study is concerned with a global integrated telecommunication network, taking into account the need to provide satisfactory services, particularly in rural areas. The decision to conduct the study was taken at the Fifth Conference of African Ministers of Transport, Communications and Planning on the programme for the Transport and Communications Decade in Africa, held on 10 and 11 March 1986 at Harare, Zimbabwe. The Conference welcomed offers of financial assistance from the African Development Bank (ADB), UNDP, ITU and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization for carrying out the feasibility study and charged IACC to negotiate with other interested bodies for complementary funding. For its part, the forty-fourth ordinary session of the Council of Ministers of the Organization of African Unity, which took place at Addis Ababa from 21 to 26 July 1986, recommended to all the parties concerned, inter alia, that every effort to implement the satellite communications project be made, in accordance with the strategy elaborated by the Fifth Conference of African Ministers of Transport, Communications and Planning.

60. For the most part, ITU technical co-operation is implemented in association with UNDP. In the framework of co-operation with the United Nations system, however, mention may also be made of the Union's participation in the International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC). The related activities included participation and elaboration of evaluation of the "telecommunication" components of projects proposed by countries, the submission of ITU projects and, finally, participation in the seventh session of the Intergovernmental Council of IPDC, held in Paris from 13 to 20 January 1986, at which two projects submitted by the Union were approved and classified among those to receive priority funding. These projects are entitled, respectively, "The development of broadcasting in Africa" and "The rural radio network for the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen".

International co-operation

61. ITU held a number of conferences, meetings and exhibitions among which:

    (a) The World Administrative Radio Conference on the Use of the Geostationary-Satellite Orbit and the Planning of Space Services Utilizing It held its first session - ORB(1) - at Geneva from 8 August to 15 September 1985. It succeeded in finding an acceptable way of establishing the bases that will find a satisfactory way to guarantee in practice to all countries equitable access to the geostationary-satellite orbit and the frequency bands allocated to the space radiocommunication services, while reconciling that objective with the efficient and economic use of these natural resources. The second session of this Conference will take place in 1988.

(b)   The permanent organs of the Union will conduct studies to provide the second session with full and accurate information on various aspects of a number of issues raised at the first session and carry out planning exercises based on the requirements submitted by administrations, in accordance with the recommendations of the first session of the Conference, including the development of the software package required for the preparation of the allotment plan.

62.   As part of the work of the ITU International Telegraph and Telephone Consultative Committee (CCITT), the Regional Plan Committee for Latin America met from 2 to 6 December 1985 at Paramaribo, Suriname, to review the Plan data and forecasts, having regard to the volume and flow of traffic, developments in major transmission systems and the impact of new technologies and services on network development.

63.   ITU took an active part in the second international round table on a new world information and communication order, held at Copenhagen from 2 to 7 April 1986. The round table, organized jointly by the United Nations and UNESCO pursuant to General Assembly resolution 38/82 B, discussed a number of important subjects, including the role of telecommunications in the establishment of a new world information and communication order, with particular reference to the developing countries.

64.   The Regional Administrative Radio Conference to Establish a Plan for the Broadcasting Service in the Band 1605-1705 kHz in Region 2 held its first session - BC-R2(1) - at Geneva from 14 April to 2 May 1986, and laid down the technical bases for the Plan. The second session of this Conference will be held in 1986. It will establish a plan for the use of the broadcasting service in the band 1605-1705 kHz in Region 2. To prepare for this session, activities will have to be carried out by the International Radio Frequency Registration Board (IFRB) the International Radio Consultative Committee (CCIR) and administrations:

(a)   IFRB will update the last International Frequency Register for assignments to stations other than broadcasting stations;

(b)   Region 2 administrations will re-examine the assignments of these bands to stations other than broadcasting stations in order to delete those which are no longer used; at all events, they will take all steps to avoid compromising the full implementation of the Plan to be adopted at the second session;

(c)   CCIR, in conjunction with administrations, will carry out studies on sharing criteria between the services using the band 1625-1705 kHz in Region 2.

65.   The sixteenth Plenary Assembly of CCIR, held from 12 to 23 May 1986 at Dubrovnik, Yugoslavia, examined reports prepared by its study groups on technical and operational matters relating specifically to radiocommunications. The Plenary Assembly adopted numerous recommendations dealing with:

(a)   Enhanced characteristics of earth station antennas with a view to a more economical use of the geostationary-satellite orbit;

(b)   The operating characteristics of satellite telecommunication systems in integrated services digital networks;

(c)   The mobile service, particularly with regard to the Future Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (FGMDSS);

(d)   Video-digital interfaces and digital television recording on magnetic tape.

66.   These new techniques hold out unprecedented possibilities for recording, editing and processing in the production of television programmes and the exchange of high-quality recorded programmes among broadcasting bodies.

67.   The Plenary Assembly took the necessary steps to speed up work relating to the standardization of high-definition television. The advantages of this new television technique consist in the provision of a picture of a much better quality than is possible with the existing television systems, and the application of complex television production techniques to productions of cinematographic quality.

68.   The first International Telecommunication User Conference (USERCOM 85), organized by ITU in co-operation with the International Telecommunication Users' Group (INTUG), took place at Munich from 17 to 19 September 1985. It provided an opportunity to examine and discuss user/telecommunication service supplier issues that may arise from the introduction of digital services and wideband facilities, and also to re-examine the telecommunication policy-making process at the international level with a view to the further development and improvement of telecommunication services for the benefit of all.

69.   In its report, "The Missing Link", the Independent Commission for World-Wide Telecommunications Development, set up pursuant to a decision of the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference held at Nairobi in 1982, recommended, inter alia, the establishment of a Centre for Telecommunications Development. The Centre was set up by the Administrative Council of ITU at its forty-first session, in June 1986. It is to comprise a Development Policy Unit, which will collect and analyse data on policies and experiences from around the world; a Telecommunications Development Service organized into teams of specialists to offer high-calibre advice to developing countries on aspects of creating and operating an effective public network; and an Operations Support Group to provide assistance with specific projects. The work of the Centre will complement the activities of the Technical Co-operation Department of the ITU.

ITU International Sharing System

70.   Under the terms of resolution 23, adopted by the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference, at Malaga-Torremolinos in 1973, work began on the development of training standards and eventually led to the ITU/UNDP project CODEVTEL (Course Development in Telecommunication), which ran from 1975 to 1982 inclusive. Its objectives were, inter alia:

(a)   To develop standards and information systems for sharing of training resources;

(b)   To assist ITU members in the development of their capabilities to apply the standards for training development and use the information systems for sharing of training resources.

71.   In 1982, the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference, held at Nairobi, decided to provide funds for the continuation of the CODEVTEL project on the ITU ordinary budget.

72.   Since 1981 three global meetings have been held at Geneva in February 1981 and May 1982, and at Montpellier, France, in October 1984.

73.   The first Regional Co-ordination Meeting on the ITU International Sharing System for Training for Europe and the Middle East countries was held at Oslo from 16 to 21 June 1986. It was organized in collaboration with the Norwegian Telecommunications Administration, which also provided financial support.

74.   This meeting, the theme of which was "training for management", provided participants with the opportunity, inter alia, of comparing their experiences and identifying ways in which the Sharing System could assist in meeting the training needs of countries in the region.

75.   Over and above the major publications of ITU concerning recommendations, reports and manuals adopted by CCIR and CCITT, the Union provided other studies on telecommunications. In April 1986, with the assistance of many eminent persons, ITU published a study entitled "Information, Telecommunications and Development", which is the second in a series devoted to the role of telecommunications in the social and economic development of the developing countries; in May 1986, ITU and UNESCO published a joint report on "Telecommunication Tariffs for the Mass Media", which could be of assistance to the developing countries in drawing up their national policies in this area.