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IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISIONS OF THE ATLANTIC CITY
TELECOMMUNICATION CONFERENCES OF 1947

I. INTRODUCTION

1. At its fifth session, the Transport and Communications Commission noted a report by the Secretary-General (E/CN.2/109 and E/CN.2/109/Corr.1) informing the Commission of the adoption by the Economic and Social Council, on 12 July 1950, of resolution 298 J (XI), recommended by the Commission at its fourth session, on the implementation of the decisions of the Atlantic City Telecommunication Conferences of 1947. The main concern of the Council, as expressed in resolution 298 J (XI), was that failure to establish a new international list of frequencies was likely to result in a disruption of radio communications, that that would be detrimental to existing services, especially in the fields of aviation, shipping, point-to-point radio-telegraphy and radio-telephony, safety aids to navigation, broadcasting, and police and security services, and that that, in turn, would have the most adverse effect in the fields of economics, culture, education and health entrusted to the Council. The Council directed the Secretary-General of the United Nations to bring the foregoing considerations to the attention of all Members of the United Nations with a view to ensuring that the Extraordinary Administrative Radio Conference (EARC) called to approve the international list of frequencies, should reach a successful conclusion. The majority of the members of the Commission reiterated at the fifth session their support for the resolution recommended at its fourth session considering the establishment of the international frequency list to be an extremely urgent matter. In the view of the representatives of the USSR and the Byelorussian SSR, this was a subject which should be discussed at the next ordinary administrative radio conference of the ITU, then scheduled to be held in 1952.

II. THE EXTRAORDINARY ADMINISTRATIVE RADIO CONFERENCE (EARC)

2. The Conference was convened in Geneva on 16 August 1951 and concluded its work on 3 December 1951 with the signature of an "Agreement for the preparation and adoption of the new international frequency list for the various services in the bands between 14 kc/s and 27,500 kc/s with a view to bringing into force the Atlantic City table of frequency allocations".

3. Seventy-six member countries of ITU, out of a total of eighty-four invited, sent delegations and, of the delegations present, sixty-three signed the above mentioned Agreement. Of the thirteen delegations present at the Conference which did not sign the Agreement, four raised no substantial objections; two of them in fact indicated that they were prepared to sign, but apparently did not receive their legal authorization in time for the day of signature. The remaining nine delegations, namely, those of the People's Republic of Albania, the Byelorussian SSR, the People's Republic of Bulgaria, the People's Republic of Hungary, the Republic of Poland, the People's Republic of Romania, the Ukrainian SSR, Czechoslovakia and the USSR, were unanimous among themselves in declaring that the decisions of the Conference were unacceptable to them and they reserved the right to take such future action as they deemed appropriate. For ease of reference, a summary of the objections made by these countries against the main parts of the Agreement is given under each subheading below.

4. The agenda of the Conference was contained in resolution No. 199 of the Administrative Council of the ITU (see annex to E/CN.2/109), which directed the Conference to consider those draft frequency lists already prepared by the Provisional Frequency Board (PFB) and by previous regional and service frequency conferences held since 1947 which appeared sufficiently advanced to afford promise of early agreement; to establish from them new frequency lists for that part of the spectrum below 4,000 kc/s and for the maritime mobile and aeronautical mobile services between 4,000 and 27,500 kc/s; to find methods of bringing into effect those parts of the Atlantic City Table by which the Conference might be unable to establish frequency lists in advance of implementation of the table; and to determine what tasks the IFRB should assume in the light of decisions taken by the conference.

5. An alternative course, which was supported by the nine countries above-mentioned, was proposed at the outset of the Conference. This was to evolve a method for the preparation of a new international frequency list for the whole band from 14 to 27,500 kc/s, first consideration being given to fixed services and light-frequency broadcasting, "since the problem of frequency utilization by these services is one of the indispensable conditions of success in solving the problem for the other services". It was considered that the methods used by the PFB and previous frequency conferences had been based upon unsound technical principles. It was suggested that the new method should be based on the existing situation, by taking into account as far as possible the existing utilization of frequencies and the 1939 Berne list published by the ITU.

6. The Conference decided by majority vote to keep to the agenda as laid down by the Administrative Council.

Summary of the results of the Conference

7. The EARC discharged practically all points of its agenda. In the course of its work it prepared and adopted specific frequency assignments or allotment plans or lists which will ultimately provide for some 80,000 frequency assignments to specific stations:

- (a) For the low-frequency band 14-150 kc/s;
- (b) For the bands between 150 kc/s and 3950 kc/s for regions 1 (Europe and Africa) and 3 (Asia) and between 150 kc/s and 4000 kc/s for region 2 (Americas);
- (c) For the maritime mobile service exclusive bands between 4000 kc/s and 23,000 kc/s; and
- (d) For the aeronautical mobile service exclusive bands between 2850 kc/s and 18,030 kc/s.

8. Further, the Conference established procedures for transferring into their appropriate bands the fixed- and high-frequency broadcasting stations for which no specific assignment plans had been adopted, thus liberating in due course those parts of the spectrum to which other services must be transferred.

9. In those parts of the radio-frequency spectrum wherein the EARC has been able to adopt lists or plans (principally below 4,000 kc/s), the provisions of the radio regulations hitherto held in abeyance will be brought into force, and the new

international frequency list for those parts will be established as from the several dates during 1952 and 1953 stipulated in the Agreement for the particular frequency bands concerned.

10. In the other parts of the radio-frequency spectrum (principally between 3,950 and 27,500 kc/s), a process of evolutionary adjustment has been devised, requiring a period of years, and leading to a final phase wherein all the services involved should have been accommodated in their designated places according to the Atlantic City table of frequency allocation; whereupon the new international frequency list should become completely established. Also in this section of the spectrum the Agreement makes provision for the resumption of planning in the high-frequency broadcasting service.

11. It was provided that publication of the ITU list of frequencies (Berne list) would cease after 29 February 1952 and a new "radio frequency record" would be published in its place.

12. In all the operations described, the International Frequency Registration Board (IFRB) will play a large part.

13. Finally, the Agreement provides means whereby progress towards the final objective may be reviewed at each session of the Administrative Council of the ITU, thus permitting the Council to make to members of the union such recommendations as may, from time to time, appear to be necessary.

Details of the Agreement

14. Frequency assignment or allotment plans or lists were adopted as follows.

(a) Low-frequency band: 14-150 kc/s

This band is allocated, on a world-wide basis, to fixed maritime mobile and radio navigation services.

A new international frequency list has been drawn up for this band to come into effect as follows:

14-55 kc/s (world-wide) and the corresponding part of the Atlantic City table:

15 August 1952.

55-150 kc/s

In region 1 (Europe and Africa), the list and the corresponding part of the Atlantic City table will come into effect on 15 August 1953, except for certain

radio-navigation frequency assignments which may be brought into use in advance of this date by special arrangements.

In regions 2 (Americas) and 3 (Asia), the lists will enter into force on 15 August 1952 and the corresponding parts of the Atlantic City table on 15 August 1953.

The objections stated as regards this list were that it put some countries in a privileged position and failed to satisfy the needs of others, could not ensure reliable operation of radio communications and ignored the existing distribution of frequencies as shown in the ITU Berne frequency list.

(b) Medium-frequency bands: 150-4,000 kc/s

These bands are allocated regionally, by sections, to fixed, broadcasting, amateur, aeronautical mobile, maritime mobile and radio-navigation services.

Region 1 (Europe and Africa)

A new list has been prepared for this area covering this band, less those parts reserved for the aeronautical mobile service, to come into effect together with the relevant part of the Atlantic City table on various dates between 1 July 1952 and 1 November 1953. For frequencies between 2850 and 3950 kc/s however, subject to any bilateral or multilateral agreements, the effective date will be determined by the Administrative Radio Conference which adopts new lists for the services mentioned in paragraph 15 below.

Region 2 (Americas)

A new list has been prepared for this area covering the band, to come into force for frequencies between 150 and 2000 kc/s and for the relevant parts of the Atlantic City table on dates between 1 January and 1 December 1952. For frequencies between 2000 and 4000 kc/s, the effective date will be determined by the Administrative Radio Conference mentioned in paragraph 15 below.

Region 3 (Asia)

A new list has been prepared for this area covering this band, to come into force, together with the relevant part of the Atlantic City table, for frequencies 150-2850 kc/s on dates between 4 January and 1 May 1952. For frequencies between 2850 and 3950 kc/s, the effective date will be determined by the Administrative Radio Conference mentioned in paragraph 15 below.

Objections were stated along similar lines to those expressed against the plan for 14-150 kc/s. In addition, it was stated that the region 1 plan illegally assigned frequencies to a country not situated in region 1 and arbitrarily extended the operation of the North-east Atlantic Standard LORAN (long range navigation) Chain (Iceland, Faroes, Hebrides), which is a source of serious interference. The region 3 plan was stated to disregard the present frequency utilization of the USSR in the Caucasus, Central Asia and the Far East, and to make about 400 frequency assignments to the countries bordering on the USSR which either coincide with or are close to frequencies used by that country. In addition, and this applied to all the plans, no account had been taken of the requirements of the Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China.

(c) Maritime mobile service (4000 kc/s, upwards)

A frequency allotment plan showing the frequencies to be used in particular areas or by particular countries has been adopted for the radio-telephone service (coast stations). A frequency assignment plan showing frequencies assigned to specific stations has been adopted for coast stations in the radiotelegraph service. These assignments will constitute the new international frequency list for the maritime mobile service. This list will come into effect upon a date to be determined by the administrative radio conference mentioned in paragraph 15 below.

These plans were objected to upon the grounds that they were based on incorrect and discriminatory principles and satisfied the requirements of some countries whilst discriminating against others.

(d) Aeronautical mobile service (2,850 kc/s, upwards)

Frequency allotment plans have been adopted showing the frequencies to be used in particular areas or by particular countries. These plans are based on the plans worked out by the two sessions of the International Administrative Aeronautical Radio Conference (IAARC) held at Geneva in 1948 and 1949. The allotments in these plans and the assignments to aeronautical radio stations made in accordance therewith will constitute the new international frequency list for the aeronautical mobile service. This list will come into effect upon a date to be determined by the Administrative Radio Conference mentioned in paragraph 15 below, except that frequencies below 4000 kc/s may be brought into effect earlier by separate agreement between administrations.

These plans were objected to on the ground that they were founded on incorrect and unfair principles, according to which 50 per cent of the total number of frequencies was allotted to the "major world air routes", which are in fact air-lines belonging to a few countries. This was detrimental to the interests of the regional and domestic air-lines of the other countries. Some countries had had only 50 per cent of their requirements satisfied, while the demands of others had been met in full.

Fixed, land mobile and tropical zone broadcasting services

15. The Conference was unable to prepare plans for these services and has directed the IFRB to undertake studies with a view to preparing a draft list for these services. When completed, this list should have taken into account unsatisfied new requirements, particularly for countries underdeveloped in the field of radio communications. The draft list will be submitted to an administrative radio conference for consideration and adoption. This conference will determine the date upon which the draft list and the relevant parts of the Atlantic City table will come into force. If the Board is unable to prepare this draft list, it will refer the matter to the Administrative Council of the ITU for appropriate action.

High-frequency broadcasting service

16. The IFRB has been entrusted with the task of drawing up draft plans for this service, taking into account the Mexico City plan prepared by the Mexico City High-Frequency Broadcasting Conference (22 October 1948 to 10 April 1949), the work subsequently done by the Technical Plan Committee, meeting in Paris, the High-Frequency Broadcasting Conference, which met at Florence and Rapallo in 1950, and any up-to-date requirements notified by administrations. The final date for notifying new requirements to the Board was fixed as 1 July 1952. Administrations will be requested to reduce their services during peak periods, especially during difficult periods of solar activity. The Board will submit its plans, together with the comments of administrations, to the Administrative Council of the ITU, which is invited to consider whether a high-frequency broadcasting conference should be called to consider them. When plans have been adopted, the assignments in them will be included in the new international frequency list.

Interim Period

17. During the interim period between the signature of the EARC Agreement and the commencement of "the final adjustment period" (see paragraph 18 below), administrations will endeavour to interchange assignments among their own services in order to ensure that their frequency usage shall correspond to the Atlantic City table of frequency allocations. Suitable exchanges may be arranged with other administrations, and in this connexion the advice of the IFRB may be requested. Administrations are asked to reduce the number of frequencies used and to inform the Board of any frequencies they are able to free. Whenever necessary for studying the possibility of sharing a frequency the Board may ask administrations for information.

A special procedure has been agreed for clearing the maritime mobile and aeronautical bands. The first stage is to clear the ship radiotelegraph calling bands and to bring them into use within eighteen months of the date of signature of the EARC Agreement (3 December 1951). The Board will report on the situation to members of the union in advance of the Administrative Council session in 1953 so that, if progress is satisfactory, the Council can propose a date by which ship stations will commence to utilize the frequencies cleared by other users in the bands. Within six months of this date administrations should endeavour to complete the second stage, the clearing of the cargo ship radiotelegraph bands, and the Board will report thereon towards the end of this period to members of the union and, if progress is satisfactory, will recommend a date on which cargo ships will begin to take up their assigned frequencies. The same process will be initiated at six-monthly intervals in respect of the remainder of the maritime mobile bands.

Frequencies for the aeronautical mobile services will be brought into use, on the basis of areas, by co-ordination between administrations in consultation with the IFRB and, where appropriate, with the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO).

Final adjustment period

18. The Administrative Council is invited, at its session in 1955, to examine the progress made during the "interim period", with a view to recommending a specific date for the beginning of the "final adjustment period", taking into account that the plan for high-frequency broadcasting may have been accepted and its

implementation agreed. If no plans have been accepted for high-frequency broadcasting, or if the progress made by other services has not been satisfactory, the Council is invited to consider the situation and make recommendations to administrations for measures to be taken, amongst which will be considered the convening of the administrative radio conference referred to in paragraph 15 above.

If administrations do not agree with the date set by the Council for the commencement of the final adjustment period, the Council is invited to reconsider the matter at each of its subsequent sessions until a date can be agreed.

During the final adjustment period, the movement of out-of-band assignments will be made progressively by blocks of frequencies and for this purpose the spectrum has been divided into seven blocks. This period should last for seven months.

Interim procedure for the recording of frequency assignments

19. It is provided that articles 10 and 12 and sections VII and VIII of article 11 of the radio regulations, which do not pertain to the procedures for notification and registration of frequencies, shall come into force as from the date of entry into force of the EARC Agreement (1 March 1952). This means in effect that the IFRB can take up its substantive functions as a corporate body for the registration of radio frequencies and other associated duties as from 1 March 1952, but that the provisions of the radio regulations laying down procedures for notification and registration of frequencies will not be wholly in effect as from that date.

These provisions will, however, become effective in the regions on the dates when the parts of the new regional lists come into force.

Master radio frequency record

20. The IFRB will compile a master radio frequency record entering as initial data the assignments in the new lists adopted by regions and the aeronautical and maritime mobile services. Administrations have been asked to furnish certain other information to the Board for inclusion in the list.

Radio frequency record

21. The Secretary-General of the ITU is to publish, in place of the former ITU list of frequencies, a radio frequency record compiled from the master record.

Reservations

22. Thirty-six reservations were made by signatory countries. Several of these are concerned with territories the sovereignty of which is in dispute. Most of them reserve the position of the signatory countries, either in view of the fact that certain members of the ITU have declared their non-acceptance of the decisions of the Conference, or because the country concerned does not agree with the specific plans or parts of them. None of them seems to be incompatible with the basic provisions of the ITU Convention and regulations, but thirty-eight signatory countries have expressly declared that they will not accept any which may be incompatible.

In addition to these reservations and the objections noted above, the nine countries previously mentioned objected to the decision to change over to parts of the Atlantic City table before a new and international frequency list was completed. They considered that the procedure and methods proposed for the preparation of the draft international frequency list, for the keeping of the master frequency record and for the registration of frequencies, were contrary to the radio regulations and therefore illegal. They did not agree that the IFRB should assume the responsibilities which the Agreement delegated to it. They pointed out that the EARC had not settled the question of frequency allotments to the fixed- and high-frequency broadcasting services.

They stated that they would continue to conform to the existing procedures for the registration and utilization of frequencies based on the Berne list and on recognition of the priorities of original notification dates. They will not be bound by the decisions of the Conference, which they regard as illegal, and reserved their rights to protect their radio services and to raise the matter of the decisions at the Buenos Aires Plenipotentiary Conference and the next administrative radio conference. They will take no share in defraying additional expenses incurred by the ITU in publishing the Final Acts of the Conference.

Recommendations and resolutions

23. The Final Acts contain thirteen resolutions and fourteen recommendations, mostly of a technical nature, of which the following may be of interest to the Commission.

29

Resolution No. 3 - This is concerned with ways of finding the best methods for preparing draft frequency lists or plans for the fixed, land mobile and tropical zone broadcasting services, recognizes the fact that under-developed countries may need special assistance in satisfying their frequency requirements and requests administrations to pay special attention to this point.

Resolution No. 9 - This dissolves the Provisional Frequency Board (PFB).

Recommendation No. 7 - Administrations of region 1 are requested to study the possibility of a combined use of their national radio-navigation installations by the maritime and aeronautical services, and experts from both services are invited to take part in any conferences called to consider the re-organization of the radio-navigation aids for either service.

Recommendation No. 10 - The Conference expresses the opinion that, unless it is specifically stipulated otherwise by special arrangements communicated to the union by the parties concerned, assignments of, or notifications for, frequencies made by the members of the union shall be communicated by the government on whose territory the station is installed.

Recommendation No. 13 - Recommends that administrations and the IFRB should consider whether the procedures laid down in the radio regulations are suitable for application to the whole frequency spectrum above 27,500 kc/s and, if not, what other procedures or methods of publication would be more appropriate.

Conclusions

24. The Administrative Council of the ITU concludes the section of its report to the International Plenipotentiary Telecommunication Conference of Buenos Aires on the EARC with the following statement:

"It must be admitted that the difficulties inherent in the detailed assignment of frequencies have not been completely solved by the Agreement, particularly as a number of countries made material reservations. But the Agreement provides members of the union with methods of approach which should eventually lead to the achievement of the combined objective - the adoption of a new international frequency list, the entry into force of the Atlantic City table of frequency allocations and the full application of the radio regulations which, together with the associated parts of the International Telecommunication Convention, are designed to secure the orderly use of radiocommunications."

III. RELEVANT DECISIONS OF THE SEVENTH SESSION OF THE
ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL OF THE ITU

Decisions regarding the work of the EARC

25. The Administrative Council of the ITU had before it at its seventh session (21 April to 6 June 1952) a report by the Secretary-General of the ITU on the results of the EARC. The representative of the Soviet Union informed the Council of the objections raised by his country's delegation at the EARC and proposed that the Secretary-General of the ITU should be instructed to observe without change the procedure laid down in the radio regulations in connexion with the notification and registration of frequencies, continuing in particular to publish the ITU frequency list. He further proposed that the Council should recommend to members of the union that they be guided in these matters by the radio regulations. This proposal was not adopted.

The Council agreed by majority vote to allocate special funds to cover, during 1952, the expenses incurred by the IFRB in carrying out the tasks delegated to it by the EARC.

Decisions regarding the convening of the ordinary administrative
radio conference

26. As was stated in the note on the implementation of the decisions of the Atlantic City Telecommunication Conferences (E/CN.2/109) circulated to the Commission at its fifth session, the Administrative Council of the ITU considered the question of a possible postponement of the ordinary administrative radio conference scheduled to meet at Buenos Aires in 1952 and decided not to take a decision on the matter until a later session. The Council agreed at its seventh session that no immediate action to convene this conference was called for and that it would examine the question at its session in 1953.

IV. INTERNATIONAL PLENIPOTENTIARY TELECOMMUNICATION CONFERENCE, 1952

27. Several administrations have requested that the question of the results achieved by the EARC should be placed on the agenda of the International Plenipotentiary Telecommunication Conference which opened in Buenos Aires on 2 October 1952. It is not known, at the time of writing this note, whether the Conference accepted or rejected these proposals.