

UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC
AND
SOCIAL COUNCIL



GENERAL

E/AC.24/SR.68
9 August 1950

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Dual Distribution

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

Eleventh Session

CO-ORDINATION COMMITTEE

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE SIXTY-EIGHTH MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Monday, 24 July 1950, at 3.15 p.m.

CONTENTS:

Report of the International Telecommunication Union
(item 40 of the agenda) (E/1679)

/Present:
E/AC.24/SR.68

Present:

Chairman:

Mr. MOREIGA (Mexico)

Members:

Australia	Mr. CUMES
Belgium	Baron de KERCHOVE d'EXAERIE
Brazil	Mr. MURTINHO
Canada	Mr. HALSTEAD
Chile	Mr. BERNSTEIN
China	Mr. TAO
Denmark	Mr. FRIIS
France	Mr. HERIER
India	Mr. VELLODI
Iran	Mr. SCOUDER
Pakistan	Mr. AKHTAR
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. LEDWARD
United States of America	Mr. KOTSCHNIG

Representatives of specialized agencies:

International Labour Organisation	Mr. COX
Food and Agriculture Organization	Mr. OLSEN
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization	Mr. BERKELEY
International Telecommunication Union	Mr. MULATIER

Secretariat:

Mr. Martin Hill	Director of co-ordination for specialized agencies and economic and social matters.
Mr. Lukac	Director, Transport and Communications Division
Mr. Urquhart	Secretary to the Committee.

/REPORT OF

REPORT OF THE INTERNATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATION UNION (item 40 of the agenda)
(E/1679)

Speaking at the invitation of the CHAIRMAN, Mr. MULATIER (Secretary-General of the International Telecommunication Union) thanked the Chairman for the opportunity afforded him to make some observations on the annual report of the International Telecommunication Union (E/1679).

The Administrative Council of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) had been unwilling for the full report to appear before its session scheduled for September 1950. By that date, the eleventh session of the Economic and Social Council would have ended. The report submitted was, therefore, merely a summary.

He wished to point out that the budget of the organization was a small one, namely, 1,000,000 dollars a year. It was not his intention to defend an agency with so fine a record and of so long standing. He would like, however, to draw attention to the magnitude of its task. He read out the following passage from the International Telecommunication Convention:

"ARTICLE 3

1. The purposes of the Union are:
 - (a) to maintain and extend international co-operation for the improvement and rational use of telecommunications of all kinds;....
2. To this end, the Union shall, in particular:
 - (a) effect allocation of the radio frequency spectrum and registration of radio frequency assignments in order to avoid harmful interference between radio stations of different countries;....."

He hoped that passage would suffice to explain the diversity and difficulty of the task entrusted to ITU.

When it was merely a question of drawing up operating rules for telegraph, telephone or radiotelegraph networks, the task was comparatively easy, even if major economic interests were involved. The International Administrative

Telegraph and Telephone Conference, for instance, which had met in Paris in 1949, had been able successfully to complete its work of revising the Telegraph and Telephone Regulations in the comparatively brief period of two and a half months.

The work of preparing the new International Frequency List, on the other hand, had presented greater difficulties. That was why numerous long regional administrative conferences had been required to study that problem; that was also why the results had seemed less satisfactory than might have been expected. The frequency spectrum was limited, whereas requests for services from different governments were not; it was therefore not possible to satisfy all requirements. The technical difficulties could not all be surmounted, and there were others of a quite different nature.

The resolution adopted by the Economic and Social Council on 12 July 1950 (E/1773) concerning implementation of the decisions of the Atlantic City Telecommunication Conference in 1947 called upon member States to give the preparation of the new International Frequency List the most careful consideration at the highest policy level, and not to approach it exclusively from a technical point of view. He felt that resolution was wise.

ITU worked in silence; it gave no publicity to its work. That was why the general public knew little about it, and took slight interest in its achievements, other than to offer criticism. That public might, however, be interested in the fact that during 1949 the International Telephone Consultative Committee had completed its plan for a new telephone network connecting Europe and North Africa.

Mr. PERIER (France) thanked the Secretary-General of ITU for his valuable observations. He was sure that the Committee would join him in congratulating him on his work as Secretary-General during the present year, in congratulating the new Assistant Secretary-General, Mr. Townshend, and in congratulating Mr. von Ernst on his work as Secretary-General from 1935 to 1949.

/He agreed

He agreed with the representative of ITU that the number and length of conferences and sessions constituted the weak part of the report. He realized that it was a weakness due to political difficulties, not to the Secretary-General of the Union. On purely technical matters agreement could have been achieved.

He wished to ask the Secretary-General of the Union whether he had any suggestions to make concerning the request contained in the Council resolution of 12 July 1950 (E/1773). It was necessary for governments to arrive at some previous agreement on the political side over matters which fell outside the purely technical sphere.

He appreciated the explanation given by the representative of ITU concerning the brevity of the report. He thought, however, that it might have been desirable to add an annex providing financial details.

In commending the report, he mentioned particularly the list of the organization's publications appearing in Section A I (2). He observed that the publications were distributed on a commercial basis, which was both unusual and commendable in the case of a technical body. He also commended the work of the International Laboratory and the part of the report dealing with administrative regulations: the regulations recommended by the Union had been accepted and there had been no occasion for recourse to arbitration in connection with them. In that ITU provided an example for other organizations.

Mr. KOISCHENIG (United States of America) emphasized the new importance which the work of ITU had recently acquired. Radio communications had become vital, not only culturally and commercially, but in connection with security and propaganda. The field of its activities had been discussed in the Sub-Commission on Freedom of Information and of the Press, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, and the Social Committee of the Economic and Social Council. Instead of being a purely technical body the work of ITU was of immediate relevance to issues of high policy, both national and international. In view of that new scope and importance of ITU he had a number of criticisms to make both of the report and of the work of the organization itself.

In the first place, the report did not reflect any realization on the part of the organization itself of its importance as an integral part of the efforts to establish effective international co-operation in the interests of peace. It only offered a mere summary of technical data unrelated to any statement of the objectives of the organization during the year under consideration, and of the difficulties encountered in attaining those objectives.

He appreciated the desire of the Administrative Council to consider the organization's report before it was submitted in its full form to the Council. He felt however that the report submitted might have been much fuller, taking the form of an advance copy of the final report rather than a mere skeleton summary.

He would have liked the report to contain a fuller description of the relations developing between ITU and the United Nations, specialized agencies and other international organizations. It ought to have given an account of the meetings of those international organizations which ITU had attended. He found little light or information in the following words appearing in Section A I (3): "Thus the General Secretariat was called upon to help in solving problems common to inter-governmental organizations."

As stated earlier the report ought also to have contained a brief appraisal of the organization's accomplishments during the year in relation to the difficulties it had encountered. Such an appraisal might enable the Committee to assist ITU in its work. Couched in non-technical language such an appraisal would also be of interest to the non-technical reader.

The list of publications appearing under Section A I (2) was voluminous, but gave no information about the functions of the various publications. Section A I (4) provided no information concerning the form and substance of the General Secretariat's finances. If the budget were too small, it might be possible to increase it if the report provided governments with information showing the importance of the organization's work. In Section A I (6), which dealt with the International Frequency Registration Board, a bare list of meetings was given, with no account of the attendant difficulties and accomplishments.

/The report,

The report, in fact, failed to indicate the purposes, difficulties and achievements of ITU.

Concerning ITU itself, he wondered whether the organization was operating in such a way as to call for the whole-hearted support of governments. Before the war it had been essentially a technical organization with rather severely limited functions. Now, however, that it had acquired greater importance, leadership was called for from the General Secretariat, which should take greater initiative in preparing conferences and meetings, take a more positive part in technical discussions at meetings, and improve the ways and means of implementing the organization's decisions. He realized that frequently the representatives sent by governments were technicians not always fully aware of the broad political and other implications of the organization's work. The Secretariat might help by contributing expert knowledge, administrative skill and broad vision. Conferences might perhaps be shortened and their results improved if preliminary discussions with governments took place before they met.

He suggested that the Committee, without taking a formal resolution on the matter, might urge its members to bring before their governments the urgent need for member States of ITU to agree on the subject of allocation of frequencies. That was a matter for agreement between governments at the highest level. His own Government was giving it consideration at the appropriate level.

If co-operation were not achieved, mankind would become the victim of its own inventions, and chaos, not progress, would result.

Mr. LEWARD (United Kingdom) shared the views of the United States representative concerning the report of the International Telecommunication Union (E/1679) which, it felt, did not reach the high standard of presentation that the Council had come to expect from the specialized agencies. It was improbable that the reason was entirely financial, and it was hoped that statements made in the Committee would be taken into account when the next report was drawn up. The United Kingdom Delegation would like to see

the report improved in the following ways. First, there should be a short opening chapter giving some indication of telecommunication developments during the previous year. The International Civil Aviation Organization had accepted a similar suggestion made by the Council the year before, and the result had been a very interesting chapter on recent developments in civil aviation in its report. Secondly, the accounts of conferences held should be more detailed. The Secretary-General had explained that the work of the Provisional Frequency Board had not, as was implied on page 6 of the report, been completed on the 28 February 1950. The Board had indeed terminated its meetings but its job was far from complete. On page 7 there was a reference to the European Broadcasting Conference, but no indication of the agreement that had been reached and the introduction of the Copenhagen Plan. Such details might well find a place in the report. Thirdly, he supported the suggestion of the representatives of France and the United States of America that the report should include half a page of details on financial matters. Fourthly, there should be a chapter concerned with relations with other organizations, such as the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO). It was unfortunate that the representative of ICAO was not present to give his views on collaboration between the two organizations.

The United Kingdom delegation was therefore in agreement with the representative of the United States regarding the report itself. It could not however associate itself with his suggestion that the activities of ITU were not such as governments should be called upon to support. Both the United States of America and the United Kingdom were members of the Administrative Council of ITU, and could therefore raise such grievances within the organization itself. It was true that the Conference of the Union now met only once every five years, but that made the work of the Administrative Council all the more important. Criticisms of ITU made in the Co-ordination Committee were in effect criticisms of the Administrative Council, and hence constituted criticism of the representatives of governments in that Council by representatives of the same governments in the Economic and Social Council. He quoted Article IV of the Relationship Agreement between the ITU

/and the

and the United Nations, which stated that ITU, "having regard to the obligation of the United Nations to promote the objectives set forth in Article 55 of the Charter and the functions and power of the Economic and Social Council under Article 62 of the Charter to make or initiate studies and reports with respect to international economic, social, cultural, educational, health and related matters, and to make recommendations concerning these matters to the specialized agencies concerned, and having regard also to the responsibility of the United Nations under Articles 58 and 63 of the Charter to make recommendations for the co-ordination of the policies and activities of such specialized agencies, agrees to arrange for the submission as soon as possible to its appropriate organ for such action as might seem proper of all formal recommendations which the United Nations might make to it." It was clear therefore that the recommendations of the Economic and Social Council must be cast in a wider framework than mere criticism of the administrative arrangements of specialized agencies.

However, the draft resolution of the United States delegation (E/AC.24/L.17) (which had been distributed in the course of the foregoing remarks) contained nothing objectionable and would receive the support of the United Kingdom delegation.

Mr. Martin HILL (Secretariat) explained that the representative of ICAO had been prevented by an accident from attending the meeting. The summary records would of course be sent to him.

Mr. KOTSCHNIG (United States of America) introducing the United States draft resolution (E/AC.24/L.17), pointed out that two corrections should be made to the text. In the first paragraph, "1949" should be substituted for "1950", and in the second paragraph the word "Requests" should be replaced by the "Invites".

The United Kingdom representative had suggested that it was not for the Council to discuss the administrative arrangements of the specialized agencies. The answer to that was that he (Mr. Kotschnig) had not discussed administrative arrangements, which were clearly within the competence of the particular agencies

concerned, except when they met to collaborate in the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination. What he had meant to touch on was a question of substance that interested the Secretary-General of ITU as much as it did the present Committee, namely, the reasons for the difficulties that the Union was encountering in such matters as the allocation of frequencies. Article 63, paragraph 2, of the Charter of the United Nations said that the Economic and Social Council might co-ordinate the activities of the specialized agencies through consultation with and recommendations to such agencies, and through recommendations to the General Assembly and to States Members of the United Nations. In other words, the task of the Council was to co-ordinate, not reports but activities. It was hoped therefore that the Secretary-General of ITU would not resent the raising of certain broad matters which were of interest to all the governments represented on the Council, and with which the Council as a non-technical body was perhaps specially qualified to deal. It was further hoped that the United States draft resolution, which made no appeals to governments and no recommendations to the General Assembly, in the hope that neither would be necessary, would secure the approval of the Committee.

Mr. CUMES (Australia) supported the request of the French and United States representatives that a financial statement be annexed to the next report, and wished to know if that statement could include a reference to the income budget of the Union and the relative contributions of member States. His Government was concerned at the way in which the Australian contribution had increased from 1,360 dollars in 1947 to something in the region of 16,000 dollars at the present time.

The Australian delegation would support the United States draft resolution.

The CHAIRMAN, before giving the floor to the Secretary-General of ITU to answer questions raised in the Committee, called attention to Council resolution 284 (X), which invited ITU to consider changing the date of the annual meeting of its Administrative Council, in order to facilitate the study of its report by the Economic and Social Council. It might be desirable to add to the United States draft resolution a new paragraph recalling that Council resolution.

/Mr. MULATIER

Mr. MULATIER (Secretary-General of the International Telecommunication Union) said in connection with Council resolution 284 (X) that he had himself proposed to the Administrative Council of the Union that it in future hold its session in May.

Several representatives had asked for the addition to the report of a full financial statement. That suggestion would certainly be put before the Administrative Council. In fact, it had been the practice after every session of the Administrative Council to forward to the United Nations a financial statement which, however, usually arrived too late for consideration at the summer session of the Council.

The representatives of France and the United States of America had spoken of the desirability of reducing the length of sessions. It was true, as had been pointed out, that the length of sessions depended partly on previous preparation by the Secretariat, but it also depended on the goodwill of representatives, on the composition of delegations, and on sound preparation by governments. Before 1945 a number of wise provisions had been in force regulating the conditions under which conferences should be prepared, but since that date those regulations had been in abeyance for reasons that the United States representative would understand. That was the original sin which lay at the root of the present undue length and unsatisfactory results of conferences. Certainly, even the Atlantic City Conference might have produced better results had it been held a year later; but at that time, things had had to be done quickly, since the war had considerably disturbed the field of telecommunications. In any case, it was inevitable at present that there should be a rapid succession of conferences and there seemed very little one could do about it.

How could conferences be prevented from dragging on? For instance, the Administrative Council had asked the Florence Conference to finish its work by 1 August, 1950, but the Conference itself had decided to continue till September, and that might not yet be the last word. The problem was of course the same in all organizations, as the Council has seen the previous Friday.

It was clear that the report itself was perhaps too schematic, but it would be sufficiently full for an audience already well informed on the activities of ITU, and especially for the administrations of member States. He could promise the United Kingdom representative that the next report would contain the chapter on recent developments which that representative had requested.

The remark of the United States representative to the effect that before the Atlantic City Conference the Union had been only a sort of registration office was surprising. Perhaps that had been true of the Secretariat, but never of the Union itself with its manifold activities. It had to be remembered that the elaborate network of cables spanning the globe and the organization of radio communication services had been largely the result of the work of the ITU, which also had to its credit great achievements ensuring the safety of shipping.

A question had been asked about co-operation with other specialized agencies. UNESCO, WHO, ICAO and all other interested organizations were regularly invited to all the conferences of ITU. It should not be forgotten that the Union was concerned with communication by telegraph and telephone as well as by radio. It was in that last field that results had not proved all that had been hoped for, but that was exclusively due to the spirit of competition rather than co-operation which seemed to prevail wherever radio was concerned.

Neither should it be forgotten that the spectrum had to be apportioned among services pursuing the most diverse objectives; any layman would easily understand the many motives which prevented the attainment of perfect results.

It was worth mentioning that it had been largely owing to the co-operation of ITU that ICAO had been able to submit its excellent report complete with maps. That document had in fact been a sort of joint enterprise by the two agencies.

The United Kingdom representative had raised a point concerning the Provisional Frequency Board. It was true that the Board had not fully completed

its work by 28 February 1950; it had nevertheless covered the major part of its programme.

Finally, if anyone still felt that co-operation between the Union and other specialized agencies was insufficiently close, it had to be remembered: first, that lack of credits made it difficult, for example, to send a representative to a meeting of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination at Lake Success; and secondly, that owing to the peculiar nature of the province of ITU there was little danger of overlapping with the functions of other organizations, with the sole exception of ICAO. It was true that UNESCO was concerned with broadcasting, but not on the technical level.

The representative of the United States of America had suggested that the Secretary-General of ITU should intervene more actively in conferences. He (Mr. Mulatier) had not failed to do so quite recently at the Florence/Rapallo Conference, but such action was not to the taste of all representatives, who felt that he should confine himself to the responsibilities entrusted to him by the Convention.

The CHAIRMAN said that in the light of the Secretary-General's explanation his suggestion that a paragraph on Council resolution 284 (X) be added to the United States draft resolution would not be pursued.

He then put to the vote the United States draft resolution, as corrected by the United States representative. It read as follows:

"The Economic and Social Council,

Takes note of the report submitted by the International Telecommunication Union of the work of that organization in 1949;

Invites the International Telecommunication Union in its next report to include a general statement containing an appraisal of the work during the year together with a general statement as to its relationships with other international organizations and steps taken under its agreement of relationships with the United Nations; and

Requests the Secretary-General to transmit to the International Telecommunication Union the records of the discussion of the Report which took place at the 11th session of the Council."

The United States draft resolution was unanimously adopted.

The meeting rose at 6.15 p.m.