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## Telecommunications for development: an ideal theme for a special World Telecommunication Day

The year 1985 will mark the 120th anniversary of the Union. Naturally, this anniversary will not be celebrated with the same pomp as the centenary in 1965 but it is still an important step on the way to the bicentenary in 2065.

The event is an important one not only because it is the first time that an organization in the United Nations system has attained such a venerable age, but also because of its timing, just when the decisions of the Nairobi Plenipotentiary Conference (1982) will be beginning to bear fruit.

For example, 1985 will be:

- the mid point in the intersessional activity for the improved planning of the long-distance broadcasting in preparation for the second session of the World Administrative Radio Conference for the planning of the HF bands allocated to the broadcasting service;
- the year of the first session of the World Administrative Radio Conference on the use of the geostationary-satellite orbit and the planning of the space services utilizing it.

Both conferences will represent major landmarks in the history of the Union in search for more effective and guaranteed access in practice in the use of natural resources, i.e. the radio frequency spectrum and the geostationary orbit to meet the growing demands of the Members of the Union.

1985 will also see the progress in the implementation of the Recommendations of the VIIIth Plenary Assembly of the CCITT which will crystal-

lize new recommendations and guidelines for the evolution of the integrated services digital network (ISDN) concept.

It is in 1985 that the Independent Commission for World-Wide Telecommunications Development will have submitted its report. All the Members of the Union await with interest the advice and recommendations of the Commission which, we hope, will show us the way to achieve the necessary co-operation, planning and establishment of the appropriate investment priorities for the realization of accelerated telecommunication development on a truly universal scale. The Commission is giving special attention to the importance of basic services for development.

Also to be published in 1985 is the overall report on World Communications Year. This report will give an idea of the progress achieved by the various countries in the definition and fulfilment of their telecommunications needs. It should help the Member countries of the Union to direct and pursue their efforts to realize one of their main goals, namely the development of communications infrastructures.

The year 1985 will also see the first Regional Telecommunication Exhibition – Asia TELECOM 85 – organized in Singapore under the auspices of the ITU. It will include a session of the World Telecommunication Forum to meet the growing interest in discussion on specific subjects between Member administrations, service providers



(recognized private operating agencies), the telecommunication industry, users and others with an interest in telecommunications.

These various landmarks—and they are only landmarks, since the activities of the Union are manifold and ongoing—illustrate some of the main routes plotted by the Plenipotentiaries: regulation of telecommunication services for ensuring reliable use of the remarkable resources, i.e. natural and technical, which are now available; consideration of ways and means of promoting the development of telecommunications infrastructures wherever they are lacking, and further development of means of transferring knowledge including through exhibitions and seminar-type activities.

This is why it is hardly surprising that for 1985 the members of the Administrative Council of the Union, at the 39th session held in Geneva from 2 to 13 April 1984, adopted for the 17th World Telecommunication Day, traditionally celebrated on 17 May, the theme: "Telecommunications for development".

After the efforts deployed during World Communications Year 1983 and in the light of the very positive outcome of this world-wide action involving so many governments and intergovernmental or international bodies and organizations, 1985 may provide an opportunity to publicize the results achieved and the lessons to be learned from the hard thinking done by all those concerned. It is at the national policy and planning levels of developed and developing countries that the future of telecommunications will be determined with the necessary international co-operation and, where appropriate, support from external sources and resources. The World Telecommunication Day is a unique occasion, provided that it is prepared in advance and that all those

responsible for planning, management and provision of services adequately inform the public, who are the real users of telecommunications.

The ITU, by way of its "Telecommunication Journal" and through its information service, will supply the necessary material for preparation of the activities foreseen for the World Telecommunication Day, i.e. texts, posters, photographs, films, etc. In the final analysis, however, the action taken will depend wholly and ultimately on the Member countries of the Union.

For those countries which set up and maintained after 1983 a National Committee for World Communications Year, an appeal to the Committee may be one way of preparing an educational programme of high standard. For others, World Telecommunication Day may be the right moment for a vigorous publicity campaign on telecommunications.

Finally, those who so wish may renew the opportunity to promote the notion of international co-operation without which the world telecommunication network would be an impossible dream. The challenge is really the mobilization for action.

The 20 years which have passed since the celebration marking the centenary of the Union have seen a growing awareness on the part of governments, other decision makers and the public in all countries of the world of the need for telecommunications, no longer seen as a privilege but considered as a right on which socio-economic development depends.

However, harmonious development of all telecommunication networks would be impossible without the determination to work together being shared by all the Member countries of the Union.

**R. E. BUTLER**