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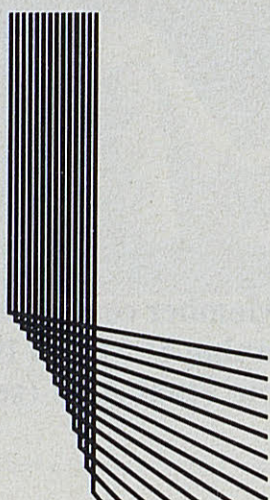
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Message from the Secretary-General of the ITU



17th World Telecommunication Day

"A giant stride towards universality"

On 17 May 1985, the International Telecommunication Union will be celebrating its 120th anniversary. One hundred and twenty years of dedication for the cause of telecommunications development — one hundred and twenty years which have witnessed, in step with technological progress, the gradual expansion of telecommunications throughout the world.

But 1985 is more than an anniversary year. It is above all the year of a new departure, of a new and decisive approach to the building up of the communication infrastructures that are essential for cultural, social and economic development.

For, as we all know from experience, there are unfortunately still vast areas of this little planet Earth which are lacking the most elementary modern means of providing essential communications.

That is why the 160 countries Members of the Union, aware of the need for co-ordinated action, entrusted 17 Wise Men from all the continents with the task of producing original, practical and effective solutions, designed to put an end to this intolerable situation.

Now, at the beginning of 1985, the proposals framed by this group of experts at the highest scientific, economic, humanitarian and managerial level have been made public.

If these proposals, which might serve as a point of departure for both the international community and the national authorities, are implemented without delay, they could reverse the general trend. They could give every one on the planet, whatever the region, access at least to distance communication, that is to say by telephone, within the next 20 years to the mutual benefit of all communities and nations.

In this way, 1985, the year of the 120th anniversary of our Union, under the watchword of telecommunications for development, could also go down in history as the real starting-point of the age of universal telecommunications.

R. E. BUTLER