WORLD COMMUNICATIONS YEAR
Development of Communications Infrastructures

1983

The General Assembly,

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Recognizing the fundamental importance of communications infrastructures as an essential element in the economic and social development of all countries,

Convinced that a World Communications Year would provide the opportunity for all countries to undertake an in-depth review and analysis of their policies on communications development and stimulate the accelerated development of communications infrastructures,

1. Endorses the proposal made by the Economic and Social Council in paragraph 1 of its resolution 1981/60 and proclaims the year 1983 World Communications Year: Development of Communications Infrastructures, with the International Telecommunication Union serving as the lead agency for the Year and having responsibility for co-ordinating the interorganizational aspects of the programmes and activities of other agencies;

2. Requests all States to participate actively in the attainment of the objectives of the World Communications Year;

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Extract from United Nations General Assembly resolution 36/40 adopted on 19 November 1981

Message from Mr. R. E. Butler
Secretary-General of the ITU and Co-ordinator for WCY

In proclaiming 1983 World Communications Year, the General Assembly of the United Nations drew attention to the need, in each country, for an in-depth review of communications in view of their significance not only for social and economic development but also for the development of culture, health, agriculture, the environment and, in fact, all sectors of human activity.

The United Nations General Assembly also stressed the need for information and communication as essential elements for such studies.

In addition, it invited States to review the priorities they have established at the national level with regard to aid programmes and investments.

In response to this proclamation by the United Nations General Assembly, which made

the ITU lead agency for the Year, the delegates at the Plenipotentiary Conference, the supreme organ of the ITU which met in Kenya, adopted measures designed to assist in the achievement of the objectives assigned to the Union by the General Assembly.

In one resolution, for instance, they confirmed the support of the Member countries of the Union for World Communications Year and appealed to each of them to participate and ensure its success.

They also examined the possibility of improving the efficiency of telecommunication administrations in developing countries through stronger ITU presence in the regions of the world, and created a special voluntary programme for technical co-operation.

Lastly, they set up an "Independent International Commission for World-Wide Telecommunications Development". This Commission made up of representatives of the highest decision-making authorities, will study methods, including novel ones, of stimulating the development of communications infrastructures through appropriate techniques that have proved their reliability.

Thus, as 1983 opens, we have the tools for making World Communications Year: Development of Communications Infrastructures a reality. The Year should be the catalyst for co-ordination, dialogue and concerted action among those responsible for all sectors of activity in the design, implementation and operation of communication facilities, which are the basis of any development programme.

WCY News

Venezuela inaugurates new documentation centre

As part of Venezuela's programme to celebrate World Communications Year 1983, the Venezuelan Minister of Transport and Communications, Ing. Vinicio Carrera Arismendi, inaugurated the new *Centro de Documentación, Información y Publicaciones de Comunicaciones* (CEDINCO) of the *Dirección General Sectorial de Comunicaciones de Venezuela* on 7 January 1983, by signing the first loan card of the *Telecommunication Journal* in the presence, among others, of

Mr. Luis Leañez Lugo, *Director General Sectorial de Comunicaciones*, and Mr. Carlos I. Ortuño, Director of CEDINCO.

Addressing an audience of some 150 dignitaries representing the communications community and government departments, Mr. Carrera Arismendi emphasized the value of information and of the physical and technological infrastructure of communications which enables information to circulate and be of use. He likened information to a serum flowing through the arteries of communications and serving as an antidote to improvisation and arbitrariness. Information, Mr. Carrera Arismendi said, was the lever to combat

under-development, the basis for prognoses based on past experience and for the establishment of programmes to educate and build for the future, thereby enhancing progress and the well-being of peoples.

Among the distinguished guests were Lic. Virginia Betancourt, President of the *Instituto Autónomo Biblioteca Nacional y de Servicios de Bibliotecas*, representatives of the *Compañía Anónima Nacional Teléfonos de Venezuela* (CANTV), the *Instituto Postal Telegráfico* (IPOSTEL) and Venezuelan academic circles, as well as a representative of ITU, Mr. A. G. El-Zanati, Chief of the Central Library and Documentation Section.

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The Minister of Transport and Communications of Venezuela, Mr. Carrera Arismendi (left), and Mr. Ortuño, Director of CEDINCO (second from left) listen attentively as Mr. Leañez Lugo, Director General Sectorial de Comunicaciones, delivers an introductory address at the inauguration of the new CEDINCO installations in Caracas. Among the other guests (far right) are the representative of ITU, Mr. El-Zanati, and Mrs. Betancourt, President of the Instituto Autónomo Biblioteca Nacional y de Servicios de Bibliotecas

The new installations which contain the 4000-volume collections of CEDINCO are housed in modern premises located on the 6th floor of *Centro Valores* in Caracas. An atmosphere of efficiency underlines the important role played by the dissemination of information in ensuring the efficacious operation of the Venezuelan Telecommunication Administration. The Centre boasts a comprehensive collection of documents and publications of the ITU and other international organizations (International Telecommunications Satellite Organization—INTELSAT, Inter-American Telecommunications Conference—CITEL, etc.), as well as monographs in the area of telecommunications, computers and mass communications. The establishment of this new documentation and information centre represents a major step forward in the development of Venezuela's telecommunications infrastructure.

Communications and agriculture

In a message to *Agora*, the official publication of the Intergovernmental Bureau for Informatics, Mr. A. M. El-Sudeary, President of the International Fund for Agricultural Development, stressed the potential benefits for third world countries that could accrue through the use of informatics for meeting their development objectives. "Average yields in most developing countries at the present time, for all major crops, are only a half or a third of what they could be through the application of already known technology. The problem is that very few farmers are using such technology" Mr. El-Sudeary said.

"It is evident", he added, "that the work of modernizing food production in developing countries will be a vast and complex task… clearly, the entire agricultural environment in these countries will need to be upgraded. The rural population will need to be made more aware of the possibility of change and of the improvements in living conditions that such a change could bring. Their capacity to receive and to use new technology", he continued, "will need to be strengthened through improved methods of education and training. Essential elements of the rural infrastructure such as communications will need to be expanded". He concluded by saying that "there is an evident need in all developing countries for comprehensive national policies regarding the use of informatics, and such policies should provide for the gradual introduction of informatics in such relevant areas of activity as education, agricultural research and extension, agricultural credit and marketing".

These words take all their significance when one considers the correlation between, on the one hand, agriculture on which close to two-thirds of the world population draws its livelihood and on which depends the future of millions of people, and on the other hand, telecommunications without which informatics could not fulfill its role.

The following text is an abridged version of an article written by Mr. Fernando de Elzaburu Márquez* on this subject. It appeared in the April-June 1982 issue of "Agora".

The agricultural sector cannot turn its back on the transformations that are now taking place world-wide. In a world undergoing total change, not even farming escapes mutation. Indeed, it is fast becoming impossible to discuss farming today without talking about the agrarian system, forming part of that greater system of information and services which is becoming ever more of a protagonist in our daily lives.

At the bottom of this system is an input sector, which enables the farmer to produce by furnishing him with supplies and services. The system is extended by a series of processes, from transportation to marketing and including food preservation, brand introduction, packing, shipping, advertising and distribution. It is the agrarian system which turns the land into the food the consumer buys on the market. Standing behind it, supporting it and making it possible is a whole world of industries and services.

The growing complexity of our world added to its constantly decreasing size—everything is being made to respond to a universal approach—means that the information needed for farming is becoming extraordinarily varied both as to origin and to nature. Yet, the information distribution systems of the industries and services in the agrarian system are not always well-established or operational. In fact, one of the problems those working in agriculture face is their difficulty in finding where to go to obtain the information they need. This is rendered even more problematical since rural areas are not always provided with the necessary means of communications.

We need to give the agrarian system the ability to distribute information relative to an enormous number of activities and to the tremendous number of people and institutions connected to the production and service sectors, if we want to give the farmer all the information he needs. This is a two-fold problem. On the one hand, the necessary infrastructures and physical facilities—the information system—must be set up; on the other, the immaterial resources—the information—must be stored, made accessible in a comprehensible form and regularly updated. The entire world of information requires continuous adjustment so that the farmer can acquire an up-to-date piece of information or learn how, when and from whom to get it.

Rural information centres

We could make all this possible through rural information centres, which would offer access to data banks, or through operation centres which would offer the possibility of using the facilities provided to us today by modern communications.

For all those unfamiliar with the idea, the fundamental functions of the rural information centres, which, to be clearer, could be called information stores would be to bring together productive sectors as well as persons and nations.

Farmers are not generally familiar with the new techniques which supply and process information, nor can they be expected to be able or prepared to obtain and operate all the communications apparatus available to us today. On the other hand, this is not the case with clerks or specialists, who could be trained to find the information the farmer requires, just as in a store. Something of the sort could be set up in, for example, already existing post offices, agricultural associations, telegraph offices or municipal buildings, where space could be made available for the installation of telephones, computer terminals, telex apparatus, facsimile or electronic mail machines, relays or antennas for satellite transmission pick-up and small radio transmitters to cover the local area. Space could even be made available for teleconferencing.

The information needed for farming would be obtained and processed in these centres in such a way as to be easily accessible. It could be transmitted by radio, perhaps to the automobiles or homes of those interested in it, as already occurs in some countries where the telephone patch or radiotelephone connection can be established in a controlled manner by the telephone companies, so that one may speak to any part of the world from an isolated place, such as a vehicle, by means of radio.

Changes would come about if we were to select a half dozen strategically located municipalities in a rural area anywhere in the world and introduce these centres. With the aid of informatics, these centres and duly qualified specialists could explain new ways of dealing with current problems, show how to answer many old questions and, above all, open up new horizons.

Since the necessary information frequently comes directly from the rural areas themselves, obtaining it punctually and organizing it with exactness on the spot would also be the task of these professional centres and agents. They would co-operate with each other and with related organizations and personnel in other countries.

There are a myriad of new and fast-moving areas about which farmers must be kept informed. New systematic nutrition processes are constantly being discovered and implemented.

Due to the new technologies of the informatics age, ideas can now be moved instead of people. Furthermore, a well-organized agrarian activity and its related service companies and facilities require increasingly fewer hours of work. It is becoming less and less necessary for rural people to perform the 1800 to 2000 working hours per year of a normal working person. Men and women will be dedicating more and more of their time to other activities. But it is obvious that all this depends on there being true communications, so that we receive all the information which will make it possible for us to work from the place we choose.

The information needed in farming

It is up to us. We must not limit the potential of these new tools. They are capable of running our machines and of feeding our livestock; of calculating and predicting our fertilizer costs and of aiding us in knowing when best to plant and rotate our crops. They can correlate each and every factor depending on the data which we have supplied. The problem lies only in our ability to imagine ways of making them useful. Yet, once again, it must be emphasized that all this is not possible if farmers do not have access to the necessary information, from news of the latest technological innovations to commodity price listings and information on current supply and transport conditions.

Clearly, such information must be collected at the source, transmitted and then summarized. Figures on the outflow and inflow of capital and stock, the time needed for planting various crops and harvesting certain fields, the availability of vehicles, seeds, fertilizers, fuel, lubricants, phytosanitary products and, in general, any other products and equipment required for agrarian activity should be included.

In addition to the fundamental information needed by farmers to make better agricultural production possible, other types of information are of crucial importance.

Food transportation becomes more rapid and progress is made in refrigeration and food-canning techniques and local seasonal markets are fast being confronted by new kinds of competition from abroad.

As food producers in a competitive field in a competitive world, farmers must know what is being done elsewhere, must know the market situation throughout the world, so that they can understand, without fooling themselves, what their true competitive situation is. Farmers and those involved in marketing their products need to be kept informed of the availability of agricultural products throughout the world. A data bank containing the offerings and requirements of all the firms dedicated to export or import in each country is only one of the many ways informatics could be useful in responding to this situation.

Thus, national agricultural production must, more than ever, be co-ordinated. Now, more than ever, farmers cannot plant crops without first knowing where and to whom they can sell them.

Immediate attention must be given to supplying the fundamental information needed for profitable competition in the world market. Rural information centres, dedicated to providing those services which would make it possible to perform in a field in which the competition is universal, would help in understanding and dealing with this situation. Perhaps as no other, agricultural activity needs information.

We must not forget, nor can we afford to allow politicians to forget, that, if our land is thirsty or if our crops are threatened by frost, a satellite somewhere above our heads could inform us in time no matter who we are; that, quicker than we think, a global agricultural information system could be set up so that efficiency in food production on a world scale would be possible; that, no matter where they are, people need never go hungry. We must hope that all this is not for the distant future, but is something which has already begun.

News from the radioamateurs of Colombia, the Federal Republic of Germany and the USSR

A radio amateur society of Colombia, *Asociación de Radioaficionados de Boyacá*, has expressed its keen interest to promote WCY in the country and to stimulate the organization of special events in recognition of the Year. In this connection, its Secretary-General, Mr. Hernán Castro Rodríguez, has offered to organize a competition in conjunction with World Communications Year. In addition, a recent issue of the periodical *Perspectiva de Boyacá*, of which Mr. Castro Rodríguez is director, highlighted WCY 83 and explained the main features of this international joint undertaking.

The *Deutscher Amateur Radio Club* (DARC) has also decided to celebrate World Communications Year by planning a series of activities intended to convey to the general public the firm and positive attitude of the German radio amateurs towards the aims of WCY and of the International Telecommunication Union.

Subject to confirmation, a preliminary programme has been developed. Here are the main points.

It is envisaged to hold a radio amateur training course in a developing country, possibly Tanzania, in the summer of 1983, as part of the International Amateur Radio Union (IARU) Region I PADC project (promotion of radio amateur in developing countries) *(DF7ZH)*; DARC also considers the possibility of installing an aurora warning beacon on 10 144 kHz for day-time operation *(DK4VW, DK2ZF)* and of participating in various amateur contest activities such as the WCY contest organized by the Potomac Valley Radio Club in January 1983 or the World Telecommunication contest held every year in May 1983 on the occasion of the World Telecom-

munication Day; in addition, DARC has requested its local groups to stimulate the interest of their young members for the "Youth in the Electronic Age 83" competition organized within the framework of TELECOM 83 and in conjunction with World Communications Year. In connection with the foregoing activities, a number of special event stations in various districts of DARC/VFDB will

become operational and will all feature call signs with the suffix "WCY". The special "DOK" WCY, valid for some DARC awards, will be allocated to these stations.

DARC is looking forward to hearing from other societies, particularly those of Region I, about their WCY activities. Please contact *DL1FL/DL1XJ.*

In the USSR, the Radio Sport Federation has decided on a number of activities it is willing to undertake during WCY and has submitted its proposed programme to the Soviet Ministry of Communications for its consideration and approval. Further information will be published in a forthcoming issue of the *Telecommunication Journal* as it becomes available.

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