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Journal Title: Telecommunication Journal

Journal Issue: vol. 52, no. 8

Article Title: The Arusha Declaration

Page number(s): pp. 441-443

The Arusha Declaration

A World Telecommunications Development Conference was held in Arusha (Tanzania) from 27 to 30 May 1985. The purpose of the Conference was to study and exchange views on the many aspects of the Report entitled "The missing link" of the Independent Commission for World Wide Telecommunications Development, that have national government policy implications.

Delegations from 93 countries, Members of the International Telecommuni-

cation Union, and representatives from many international and regional organizations, took part in the Conference which was chaired by Mr John S. Malecela, Minister of Communications and Works (Tanzania). The Conference elected four Vice-Chairmen from different regions of the world:

The Americas

Mr Francisco Aramayo, Minister of Transport and Communications (Peru)

Western Europe

Mr Paul A. Henkeld, Head of the Netherlands delegation

Eastern Europe

Mr Yuri Zoubarev, Vice-Minister, Posts and Telecommunications (USSR)

Asia and the Pacific

Mr Ram Niwas Mirdha, Minister of State for Communications (India).

The Conference Bureau was composed of the Chairman and the Vice-Chairmen of the Conference. The Bureau, with the inclusion of Mr Djibo Laity Ka, Minister of Information (Senegal), functioned as a Drafting Group for the preparation of a Declaration on World Telecommunications Development, issued by the Conference under the title "The Arusha Declaration" and reproduced below.

Arusha Declaration on World Telecommunications Development

1. The First World Telecommunications Development Conference was held in Arusha from 27 to 30 May 1985. Delegations from 93 Member countries of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), headed by Ministers or senior officials, and representatives from many international and regional organizations participated in the Conference. The purpose of the Conference was to bring together the Members of the Union, preferably at ministerial level, so as to study and exchange views on the many aspects of the Report of the Independent Commission for World Wide Telecommunications Development* that have national government policy implications.

2. The Conference, inaugurated by H.E. Ali Hassan Mwinyi, the Vice-President of the United Republic of Tanzania and President of Zanzibar, was chaired by H.E. Mr John S. Malecela, Minister of Communications and Works, Government of the United Republic of Tanzania. Following an opening statement by Mr R. E. Butler, Secretary-General of the ITU, the keynote address was delivered by Sir Donald Maitland, Chairman of the Independent Commission for World Wide Telecommunications Development. Many ministers and representatives of government and international organizations addressed the Conference, expressing their support and commitment to the development of telecommunications on a world-wide basis.

3. The Conference appreciated the initiatives taken by the ITU and the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania for convening it at this opportune time. While considering the Report of the Independent Commission, the Conference discussed a range of issues relevant to the development of telecommunications, particularly in the developing regions of the world.

4. The Conference noted with satisfaction the increasing measure of recognition being extended the world over to the contribution of telecommunications to the process of development and its crucial, catalytic role, particularly in developing countries for achieving rapid

social, economic and cultural progress. This is recognized by the United Nations Proclamation of the Transport and Communications Decade for Africa, 1978-1987, World Communications Year 1983: Development of Communications Infrastructures, and the Transport and Communications Decade for Asia and the Pacific and West Asia, 1985-1994. The Conference specially highlighted the role of telecommunications as an important instrument for bringing together peoples from the different parts of the world and as a factor for peace and prosperity.

The Conference noted:

- a) the spectacular strides taken by telecommunications technology and the pivotal role played by it in various facets of human activity;
- b) the poor state of telecommunication facilities in most developing countries and even more so in the least developed countries;
- c) the serious and worsening imbalance in the availability of telecommunication technology and services, between the developed and developing countries;
- d) the imperative and immediate need to improve this situation in order that all countries may benefit from telecommunications and become equal partners in progress;
- e) the necessity to achieve this goal through a range of actions including co-operative endeavours of both the developed and the developing countries.

5. The Conference recalled that the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference, Nairobi, 1982, had, *inter alia*, included specific provisions concerning the supportive role of the Union for the realization of telecommunication development including the promotion and offering of co-operation and assistance to developing countries as one of the purposes of the Union and had decided, under its Resolution 20, to set up the Independent Commission with the following mandate:

* See paragraph 5.

"to examine the totality of existing and possible future relationships between countries in the field of telecommunications involving technical co-operation and a transfer of resources in order to identify the most successful methods of such transfer;

to recommend a range of methods including novel ones for stimulating telecommunication development in the developing world using appropriate and proven technologies in ways which:

a) serve the mutual interest of governments, operating companies, the public and specialized user groups in the developing world and of the public and private sectors in the developed countries; and

b) lead to progressive achievement of self-reliance in the developing world and the narrowing of the gap between the developing and developed countries;

to consider the most cost-effective way in which the Union could stimulate and support the range of activities that might be necessary to achieve a more balanced expansion of telecommunication networks".

6. The Conference welcomed the Report of the Independent Commission aptly titled "The missing link", and commended the comprehensive manner in which the Commission had accomplished its task. The Conference endorsed the general thrust of the conclusions and recommendations embodied in this Report, and the principal objective set out therein: "by the early part of the next century, virtually the whole of mankind should be brought within easy reach of a telephone and, in due course, the other services telecommunications can provide".

7. The Conference felt that "The missing link" covered several realities, e.g. the ever-widening gap between the status of telecommunications in the developed countries and the developing world; the many constraints on the transfer of technology as well as the inadequate flow of material and financial resources from the developed nations to developing countries; the lack of full appreciation of the need for higher priority in resource allocations to telecommunications as a cardinal requirement for the progress of humanity as a whole; the imbalance between technology growth and the real needs of the developing world; the inadequate linkage between the urban and rural sectors and the insufficient attainment of self-reliance.

8. The Conference was convinced that these constraints have to be overcome as a matter of urgency.

9. The Conference noted that the progress of technology held great promise for the more rapid growth of telecommunication services in the developing world. The Conference also felt that this promise can be fulfilled through the active support of the developing and developed countries, motivated by a mutuality of interest in the rapid growth of telecommunications, because of the large and growing market of the developing world and also because improved telecommunication services between the developed and developing countries are, in themselves, of mutual benefit.

10. The Conference urged the governments of developing countries to consider the following:

a) to accord, in their respective national development plans, sufficiently high priority to the telecommunications sector for the purpose of resource allocation for expansion, upgrading and modernization of their networks;

b) to take specific measures, technical as well as managerial, to improve the maintenance and operational

efficiency of available facilities and to expand them in a planned manner availing themselves of the benefits of new technology and systems, as found appropriate;

c) to give particular emphasis to the training of personnel, at all levels, and for this purpose, to set up or augment necessary training facilities at the national, regional and subregional levels;

d) to establish, wherever practical, common specifications for various items of equipments with a view to facilitating consolidated procurement to obtain economies of scale and better operational back-up;

e) to establish, through co-operative endeavours, regional and subregional research and development activities and centres to study and resolve problems relevant to the local situation, as well as suitable manufacturing facilities whenever feasible;

f) to promote horizontal co-operation and mutual assistance for telecommunications development; and

g) to avail themselves of aid and technical assistance offered through multilateral and bilateral arrangements, in a co-ordinated manner, with the assistance, where necessary, of the ITU.

11. The Conference also urged the governments, telecommunication manufacturing and operating entities in developed countries to consider, where applicable:

a) matching the higher priority which the developing countries have been urged to accord to the telecommunications sector, with developed countries devoting larger financial and technical resources than hitherto for telecommunications within the various multilateral and bilateral aid programmes and, in this regard, paying special attention to the pressing needs of the least developed countries;

b) designing and marketing lower-cost equipment and systems, particularly matched to the needs of the developing countries, specially those for rural communities;

c) offering wider opportunities for training of personnel from developing countries in all aspects of modern telecommunications;

d) actively participating in the setting up of and giving support to existing national/regional/ subregional R & D centres and, where feasible, manufacturing facilities in the developing regions of the world, with appropriate technology-transfer arrangements;

e) co-operating closely with the ITU to enable co-ordinated delivery of assistance to individual countries/ regions/subregions and optimized benefit to recipient countries.

12. The Conference appeals to all governments of developed countries to support the rapid growth of telecommunications in the developing countries.

13. The Conference appeals to all governments and regional and subregional organizations of developing countries to give high priority to telecommunications as recommended by the Independent Commission and in the light of the results of the Arusha World Telecommunications Development Conference.

14. The Conference requests the UNDP, the World Bank, regional and subregional development banks and

all other interested international agencies, regional economic commissions and subregional economic committees, to bring the report of the Independent Commission to the attention of the respective policy-making bodies with a view to according a higher priority and enhanced allocations to the needs of the telecommunications sector.

15. The Conference emphasized the need for long-term, low interest loans for this sector, particularly to economically most disadvantaged countries.

16. The Conference noted with considerable interest the recommendation of the Independent Commission that a Centre for Telecommunications Development be set up, supported by voluntary contributions from government and non-government sources particularly in developed countries. This holds out prospects of significant augmentation of available resources for rendering technical assistance to developing countries. The Conference hopes that the Administrative Council of the ITU would consider this recommendation in the light of consultations being carried out by the Secretary-General, and take an appropriate decision at its forthcoming session in July 1985.

17. The Conference noted, however, that the conclusions of the Independent Commission will be submitted to the Administrative Council of the ITU, which will initiate any action that it considers appropriate.

18. The Conference recognized that there was a serious shortage of funds for actual investment in telecommunications in developing countries and that while, in principle, such investments could yield attractive returns, especially in the urban areas, for some time to come there is a need for accentuated investments to make up for past shortfalls such that eventual growth can be self-sustaining.

19. The Conference took note of the long-term measures proposed by the Independent Commission and called upon the Member countries of the ITU to study them and take appropriate action so that more satisfactory financing and related institutional arrangements could be evolved.

20. Convinced that the ITU, as the specialized agency of the United Nations for telecommunications, has to play a dynamic role in the fulfilment of its purposes as spelt out in the International Telecommunication Convention, Nairobi, 1982, the Conference calls on all Member States to extend every support to the Union in its endeavours to respond to its mandate.

21. The Conference expresses its appreciation for the excellent arrangements made by the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania and wishes to thank the Government and people of Tanzania for the very warm hospitality extended to it.

Done at Arusha
30 May 1985