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The Vth Plenary Assembly of the CCITT

by
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THE Vth Plenary Assembly of the International Telegraph and Telephone Consultative Committee (CCITT) and the final Study Group meetings which preceded it were held in Geneva from 13 November to 15 December 1972.

1. Accommodation for meetings

Circumstances made it necessary to hold the meetings at the *Maison des Congrès*, which is well known to participants in International Telecommunication Union (ITU) meetings but whose facilities are hardly of the standard expected nowadays for such large meetings. The Assembly expressed the hope that future Plenary Assemblies of the CCITT would be held in more congenial surroundings. The Assembly also expressed its gratitude to the Swiss Administration for the excellent organization of the international telephone, telegraph and telex services placed free of charge at the disposal of delegates.

2. Organization and proceedings

From 13 November to 1 December each of the Study Groups met for several days under its Chairman to finalize its report to the Plenary Assembly.

The Plenary Assembly itself met from 4 to 15 December 1972, with the participation of 86 administrations, 26 recognized private operating agencies and 18 international organizations, making a total of 358 delegates or observers.

Mr. E. Bigi (Italy), dean of the Assembly, opened the inaugural meeting, which elected Mr. H. Baczko (People's Republic of Poland) as Chairman and the following as Vice-Chairmen:

Mr. R.T. Black (United States)
Mr. J.J. Hernández-G. (Mexico)
Mr. Y. Makino (Japan)
Mr. M.A. Sow (Mali)
Mr. Y. Savitskii (USSR)

At the inaugural meeting, the Assembly observed one minute's silence in memory of the late Director, Mr. J. Rouvière.

The Assembly set up four Committees charged with major decisions to be taken by the Plenary Assembly:

- **Committee A**—Working methods and resources
Chairman: Mr. D. van den Berg (Netherlands)
Vice-Chairman: Mr. J.R. Marchand (Canada)
- **Committee B**—Programme of work of Study Groups
Chairman: Mr. L. Burtz (France)
Vice-Chairman: Mr. M.B. Williams (United Kingdom)
- **Committee C**—Plenary Assembly Budget
Chairman: Mr. M. Ghazal (Lebanon)
Vice-Chairman: Mr. N'D. Cisse (Senegal)
- **Committee D**—Technical co-operation
Chairman: Mr. A.S. Irrera (Argentina)
Vice-Chairman: Mr. A. Gravell (Australia)

Mr. Mohamed Mili, Secretary-General of the ITU, attended the meetings of the Plenary Assembly; other ITU officials participated as required.

The work of the Plenary Assembly fell into two main categories:

- examination of the final reports of Study Groups, approval of Recommendations and selection of new questions for study;
- discussion and adoption of proposals put forward by Member countries or Plenary Assembly Committees concerning the general administration of the CCITT.

3. Results of the work of Study Groups

3.1 Telegraphy and data transmission

In accordance with the terms of Resolution No. 36 of the Plenipotentiary Conference of the ITU (Montreux, 1965), Study Group I completed the drafting of a simplified set of International Telegraph Regulations and CCITT Recommendations which will supplement them. In the presentation of these proposals, the new Regulations were arranged editorially on lines similar to the proposed Telephone Regulations.

The draft Telegraph Regulations approved by the Plenary Assembly were submitted to the World Administrative Telegraph and Telephone Conference (Geneva, 1973).

Study Group VIII continued its work on the standardization of apparatus with International Telegraph Alphabet No. 5 and set up a number of new Recommendations laying down the essential characteristics of such printers together with international texts for tests and measurements.

Study Group IX, in view of the imminent requirements for medium-speed telegraph channels, drew up a Recommendation on the frequency division of a primary group to derive 2400 and 9600-baud channels.

One of the most important tasks of Study Group X during this study period was the study of a new telex signalling system, specifically designed for computer-controlled exchanges and with the possibility of handling telex and data traffic with the same system.

In the field of data transmission, Special Study Group A examined modems for increased modulation rates on switched

and leased telephone circuits for which there is a significant demand. The Plenary Assembly decided that for an interim period both methods already recommended for 2400 bit/s transmission on leased circuits might be employed and that the question of an improved modulation method should be investigated.

Other draft Recommendations included one on a modem for 4800 bit/s over leased circuits.

In the new area of dedicated data networks, Recommendations on the following subjects were drafted: user classes and data signalling rates; recommended user facilities; control signalling system between anisochronous data networks; parameters of multiplexing schemes for the interface between synchronous data networks; customer interfaces.

3.2 Telephone transmission

Study Group XII made progress with its study of methods of objective measurement of transmission quality, taking into account the work done in several countries and the results of subjective tests and objective measurements carried out in the CCITT Laboratory. It drew up a work programme for the Laboratory to carry out in the next study period which will enable it to arrive at an international agreement on this important question. The Laboratory will continue to make calibration tests of telephone sets used in a number of countries. Study Group XII retained the limits at present recommended for propagation time in a telephone call, but is greatly interested in new ways of combating echoes. Study Group XVI was associated with some of the work of Study Group XII; in addition, it finished the transmission plan for the switched telephone network and began studying the characteristics of leased circuits.

Study Group XV studied a large number of questions relating to cables and analogue transmission systems, especially carrier systems with frequency-division multiplex. Although there is as yet no international visual telephone service (telephone calls accompanied by picture transmission) studies are in progress for the standardization, on a world-wide scale if possible, of the basic parameters to be used for the interconnection of national systems.

Special Study Group D studied pulse code modulation systems. Two types of primary order multiplex and two types of secondary multiplex were standardized. A study was made of the interconnection between these different multiplexes and the possibilities of intercontinental transmission via satellite. A study was also made of encoding signals other than speech signals (sound broadcasting, visual telephone, television).

Special Study Group C (Joint CCITT/International Radiocommunication Consultative Committee (CCIR)) pursued its work on circuit noise and permissible signal power. It undertook a general study of reliability problems, in connection with which Study Group XV began to collect data on the real service reliability of cable transmission systems.

3.3 Telephone operation, tariffs and switching

Study Group II defined the scope of the Recommendation on international telephone accounting between administrations and recognized private operating agencies. This Recommendation (E.250), which was adopted by the IVth Plenary Assembly, completely changes the traditional rules contained in particular in the Telephone Regulations. It also introduced a number of amendments and additions to CCITT Recommendations to give concrete expression to the general principles, which were the only provisions retained in the draft Telephone Regulations examined by the IVth Plenary Assembly in pursuance of Montreux Resolution No. 36 (1965).

Study Group III concentrated mainly on tariff questions and the conditions governing the use of leased continental and intercontinental circuits.

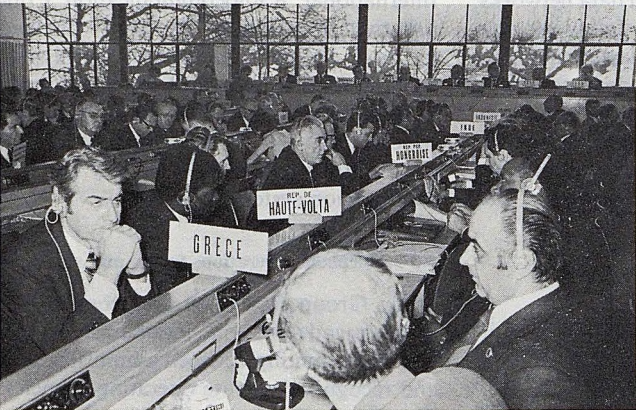
Four regional Tariff Groups (Africa, Latin America, Asia, Europe and the Mediterranean Basin) were set up under the auspices of Study Group III by the IVth Plenary Assembly and satisfactory progress was achieved by the TEUREM and TAF Groups in the 1969-1972 period.

Study Group XI was involved in the standardization of Signalling System No. 6 in the light of the field trials carried out by various administrations and co-ordinated by the CCITT. It studied the use of System No. 6 or of systems derived from it for national networks.

The Vth Plenary Assembly of the CCITT



Views of the meeting room



Study Group XI devoted a great deal of time to the specifications of other standardized signalling systems and to the conditions governing their interworking and it defined the characteristics of a signalling system for demand assignment satellite circuits.

In addition to being jointly responsible with Study Group XI for the supervision of the tests of System No. 6, Study Group XIII dealt with many subjects. Apart from the problems connected with the operation of demand assignment satellite telephone circuits and the World Routing Plan, it prepared Recommendations relating to the quality of the international telephone service (including overall grade of service) and the organization of switching equipment maintenance.

3.4 Maintenance and protection

Study Group IV continued its work on two permanent questions intended to enable a check to be kept on the transmission characteristics of lines, circuits and chains of circuits in the world network. The conclusions were that while the transmission quality was being, in general, maintained, any accurate assessment of reliability expressed in terms of interruptions would not be practicable until new interruption recorders were available. These are now being studied as a matter of urgency.

Measurement apparatus for maintenance for which specifications have now been drawn up by Study Group IV include automatic transmission measuring equipment for telephone-type and for sound-programme circuits and apparatus for the measurement of group-delay distortion. Study Groups V and VI concerned with protection questions completed a number of texts for publication, notably in Volume IX (K and L series Recommendations), the "Directives" for the protection of telecommunication lines against harmful effects from electricity lines (new chapter on "Boost transformers" and "Guide lines for the use of the 'Directives'"), chapters of a handbook on "Lightning protection", a draft of a handbook on "Earthing", new texts for the "Recommendations for the protection of telecommunication cables against cor-

rosion" and revision of a handbook on the "Preservation of wooden poles."

4. Results of the work Plenary Assembly Committees and other decisions

4.1 Organization, resources and methods of work

The Plenary Assembly made a very thorough study of the present work-load, working methods and resources of the CCITT Secretariat on the basis of the report of the team of experts (set by the IVth Plenary Assembly in Resolution No. 7) and the report of Committee A. It was recognized that the CCITT Secretariat can discharge its rapidly growing duties in future only if either the number of engineers is substantially increased or its working methods are changed and drafting groups established at each meeting to assist the Secretariat. The Plenary Assembly, therefore, decided to amend the working methods of the CCITT, as laid down in Resolution No. 1, by adopting, *inter alia*, the following principles:

- final meetings of Study Groups shall precede the Plenary Assembly by at least three months,
- Study Groups shall set up drafting groups to sum up the results of the meeting,
- questions which have not elicited any contribution shall not be dealt with at a meeting,
- study of questions by correspondence should be encouraged,
- meetings of Study Groups with common interests should be grouped.

In addition, the Plenary Assembly recommended that a group of technical revisers be set up in the CCITT Secretariat to ensure the use of correct and uniform terminology in the three working languages in the documentation for meetings and the CCITT books.

As for its financial resources, an analysis of the financial needs of the CCITT for the period 1973-1976 was made which took into account the number of questions to be studied and the expected increase in documentation.

The Plenary Assembly attached great importance to the smooth and efficient

functioning of the CCITT, considering the "development, often described as explosive, of public telecommunications... and the large economic interest of the CCITT Recommendations, through the standardization they provide for the telecommunication undertakings of the Members of the ITU". An Opinion for submission to the Plenipotentiary Conference was unanimously adopted which expresses the wish "that the Plenipotentiary Conference, Torremolinos, 1973, take into due consideration

— the essential role to be played by the CCITT in the establishment at international level of standards for telecommunication networks, which now can be developed harmoniously only within the framework of a universal world-wide plan."

4.2 Structure and work programme of Study Groups

The Plenary Assembly disbanded several Joint Working Parties which had completed their work and set up new ones, but it made only two changes in the structure of the Study Groups.

CCITT Study Group VII, formerly responsible for means of expression, was disbanded. The work formerly carried out in Study Group VII will now be done in a joint study group under control of the CCIR. The CCITT Secretariat remains responsible for the classification of certain specialist vocabulary work carried out by individual CCITT Study Groups.

The former NRD Joint Working Party was made Study Group VII as the scope of the subject (New networks for data transmission) justified the setting-up of a Study Group.

The Plenary Assembly, basing itself on the report of Committee B, assigned the questions to the various Study Groups, noted questions which are of interest to several Study Groups and earmarked those which are urgent and should be fully studied and concluded during the study period 1973-1976.

The Plenary Assembly did not establish a programme of meetings for the period 1973-1976 as it was decided to convene meetings only if contributions to the study programme of the relevant Study

Group have been submitted and because it is extremely difficult to make any forecast of the activities of the members of a Study Group. Consequently, it was left to the Chairmen to establish their programmes in agreement with the Director of the CCITT and within the limit of the credits authorized by the Administrative Council.

4.3 Budget control

In accordance with its terms of reference, Committee C examined the organization of the Plenary Assembly, the facilities made available to the participants and the total expenditure of the Assembly.

During examination of the total expenditure of the Assembly it was noted that every effort had been made to observe the Administrative Council's instructions to exercise strict economy. In spite of this effort, it had not been possible to remain within the budget limits fixed owing to an unforeseeable increase in the output of documentation which was a reflection of the particularly intense activity of the Study Groups during the last year of the study period.

4.4 Technical co-operation

Committee D undertook a careful examination of CCITT activities in connection with technical co-operation, namely, those mentioned in Nos. 188 and 189 of the 1965 Convention and those covered by Administrative Council Resolution No.448. It decided to adopt a World Plan Committee Opinion as a new CCITT Resolution on the work of the Plan Committees.

In view of the information given by the CCITT Secretariat and the experience of administrations since the IVth Plenary Assembly, it was felt that the technical co-operation problems could not be separated from the other work of the CCITT and that they could be handled by other Committees of the Plenary Assembly. In particular, the very useful work done by the Special Autonomous Working Parties (GAS) is of interest to all countries and should not therefore be considered merely as an aspect of technical assistance for developing countries only. A number of Opinions and Resolutions were accordingly amended to reflect

these considerations. In Resolution No. 1 specific mention is made of the desirability of constituting in future a Plenary Assembly Committee on handbooks and CCITT activities in connection with seminars.

Although the publication of handbooks is not strictly tied to the dates of Plenary Assemblies, it will be recalled that the "New texts for the period 1969/1972" to supplement the "GAS 3 Handbook" were published at the beginning of 1973. These texts relate to satellite-communication, submarine cable and pulse code modulation systems.

In October 1972 GAS 5 published a new handbook entitled "Economic studies—1972" consisting of eight revised chapters and eleven new chapters dealing in particular with charging procedures in national traffic. It worked on the publication of a telecommunications statistical yearbook which was requested by the IVth Plenary Assembly and it assembled valuable information to define the scope of the yearbook. Finally, countries which are expanding their telecommunication networks by means of cable and open-wire lines will find useful information on the protection of these lines in the handbooks mentioned in point 3.4 above.

4.5 Other decisions

The Plenary Assembly discussed the merits and disadvantages of bound-book form versus loose-leaf form in the light of information provided by the CCITT Secretariat and the General Secretariat. It was decided not to retain the system utilized for the *White Book* (Mar del Plata, 1968) of a number of booklets in ring binders and to publish the next *Green Book* in bound form, with a page size of A4.

To overcome the difficulties in the preparation of the *Green Book* due to shortage of specialized staff in the CCITT Secretariat, an Opinion was approved to the effect that the ITU should take such exceptional staffing measures as may be necessary to ensure publication of the CCITT *Green Book* volumes within one year.

The attached table lists the Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of the Study Groups, Plan Committees and Special Autonomous Working Parties for the period 1973-1976.

The Plenary Assembly introduced a system of multiple vice-chairmanships, i.e. of providing more than one Vice-Chairman for the bigger Study Groups. The hope was expressed that the Vice-Chairmen should not only assist the Chairman in the meeting, but should also take on the chairmanship of Working Parties, especially of those which are of a more permanent nature. This was regarded as an experimental measure for the duration of the 1973-1976 study period only, so as not to prejudge the decisions of the forthcoming Plenipotentiary Conference in this respect.

The election of the Director was announced in the January 1973 issue of the *Telecommunication Journal* (page 7).

Several invitations to hold Study Group meetings elsewhere than in Geneva were issued and accepted in principle, subject to authorization of the corresponding expenditure by the Administrative Council.

The French Administration issued an invitation to hold the VIth Plenary Assembly in Paris, probably in the second or third quarter of 1976. The meeting accepted this generous invitation and expressed its gratitude to the French Administration.

5. Conclusions

By way of conclusion I could not do better than draw the attention of readers to the following extracts from the important closing speech made by Mr. Baczko. I would express the hope that many countries will take an active part in the work of the CCITT and examine problems with a view to arriving at an international agreement before incompatible solutions are concretized at national or regional level. This is essential for successful work in future in as much as the CCITT (need I remind you?) is made up first and foremost of its members. But the CCITT Secretariat also must be given the means required to discharge its task, which is becoming increasingly onerous and complex. If both of these conditions are met, it is quite reasonable to expect that the highly important results already obtained by the Vth Plenary Assembly of the CCITT will be improved upon still further.

(Original language: French)