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headquarters

AFRICAN BROADCASTING CONFERENCE MEETS BUT IS UNABLE TO CONTINUE

The African LF/MF Broadcasting Conference attended by fifty-six countries opened on Tuesday, 13 October, at the Palais des Nations in Geneva.

At the opening meeting on Tuesday morning, the delegates elected Mr. Alpha Diallo (Guinea) as Chairman.

At the same meeting the Algerian delegation proposed that the representatives of Portugal and South Africa be expelled from the Conference. The proposal, which received general support from the African and East European delegations present and the Chairman, was opposed by several West European delegations on the grounds that, under the ITU Convention, the question was outside the competence of the Conference. The Chairman's ruling that the question was admissible was formally challenged by the leader of the United Kingdom delegation, but the ruling was upheld by 29 votes to 21 with 1 abstention. On the exclusion proposal itself, there were 27 in favour, 9 against, 2 abstentions, and thirteen countries refused to participate in the vote.

Delegations withdraw

The delegations of Portugal and South Africa nevertheless continued to attend the Conference, with the result that the Chairman requested the ITU Secretariat to prevent them from entering the meeting-hall the following morning. The ITU Secretariat in its turn declared at the Wednesday morning session that it had been unable to comply with these instructions in view of the fact that the previous day's decision was contrary to the ITU Convention. At this, the general body of African delegations left the hall. Shortly afterwards, the United Kingdom delegation announced that it regarded

the exclusion decision as unconstitutional and was thus withdrawing from the Conference. The United Kingdom was followed by twenty-three other delegations, including Portugal and South Africa.

A proposal by the Deputy Secretary-General

The same evening, the Deputy Secretary-General addressed a letter to Mr. Diallo, with copies to all the delegations at the Conference, stating that

the decision to exclude two ITU Member countries was "in contravention of the provisions of the Convention" and that therefore "the Conference now meeting can no longer be considered as the one convened under Article 7 of the Convention." He nevertheless proposed as a solution that the Conference could be considered as convened under Convention Article 44, which provides for regional conferences. If that were done, the Secretariat could continue to provide conference facilities on a contractual basis. He drew attention to the financial aspects which would arise.

At the following morning's meeting, the Deputy Secretary-General's proposal was not accepted by the delegations present who stated that the Conference should proceed as originally convened by the ITU Administrative Council.

Adjournment *sine die*

When the meeting reconvened in the afternoon, the Deputy Secretary-General made a statement announcing that with great regret he must, in view of the circumstances as described in his letter, withdraw the services of the Conference Secretariat. This decision was reaffirmed by the Secretary-General.

On Monday, 19 October, the delegations present decided to suspend work *sine die*.

ECUADOR DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS VISITS HEADQUARTERS



(ITU)

Capitán de fragata Gabriel Jarrín Aguilar

Capitán de fragata Gabriel Jarrín Aguilar, Director-General of Telecommunications in Ecuador, visited ITU headquarters on 21 September, when he held discussions with Dr. M. B. Sarwate, Deputy Secretary-General and other ITU officials.

Referring to the remarkable progress of telecommunications in his country in the last few years, he laid particular stress on the development of automatic telephony between cities through the use of VHF. On the international side, plans are going forward for the establishment of microwave links between Ecuador and the outside world through Colombia in the north and Peru in the south. Ecuador would be ready for this development, he said, within two years.