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Address by the Secretary-General of the ITU to the closing meeting of the Regional Administrative Broadcasting Conference¹

Mr. Chairman,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

A little more than a year ago, the Dean of the First Session of the Conference, Mr. Arto Madrazo, speaking at the closing meeting, struck a final note of optimism when he expressed the hope that the period from then until the Second Session would give everyone time to reflect and to benefit to the full from the efforts made during the session over which he had had the honour to preside.

After seven weeks of intensive work we note with great satisfaction that his hope has been fulfilled, since for the first time we have a broadcasting plan which covers four out of five continents, an event unprecedented in the long history of the ITU.

I speak deliberately of a plan and not of the list of more or less co-ordinated fre-

quency requirements which some people feared not so long ago.

At the outset, as you will recall, the difficulties were immense but thanks to a number of concordant factors it proved possible to surmount them.

The first factor is a technical one since the work done at the First Session, based on the conclusions of the CCIR, has given this Second Session a very solid foundation for its work, a foundation which has at no time been challenged.

Another factor was the impressive amount of work done by computer, a feat quite beyond the imagination of our predecessors at Copenhagen in 1948.

But I sincerely believe that the fundamental reasons for this success are mainly of a human nature.

I should like especially to mention the co-operative attitude and the goodwill shown by all delegations without exception. While such a will to co-operate is an established tradition in the conferences and meetings of our Union, never, to my knowledge, has it been shown so strongly and with such success.

The same co-operative attitude prevailed in the negotiation groups and I think that it is this concept of negotiation which will go down to history as one of the major features of the present Conference. This confirms, once again, the efficacy and success of the methods of work of the ITU and its ability to adapt itself, in any circumstances to any problems, however difficult, that it has to face.

I therefore take the opportunity now offered me heartily to thank, on behalf of our Union, each and every delegation for the understanding it has shown throughout these seven long and difficult weeks. Their positive attitude has **strengthened the moral authority of the ITU** and has made of the Agreement and the Plan which you are about to sign an international treaty of inestimable value which will make it possible to bring

order into a vital service which concerns close on three-fourths of mankind.

Those who do not know our Union and the methods it uses in its approach to problems will once more and quite rightly be amazed by the results you have achieved, which are in every respect remarkable.

On behalf of all the Members of the ITU, and on my own behalf, I am happy to offer you my sincerest thanks and my heartiest congratulations.

Thanks to you, this Conference will be remembered as an outstanding event and as a milestone in the century-old history of our Union.

* * *

Another decisive factor in ensuring the success of this Conference was the skill with which you, Mr. Chairman,² piloted our deliberations.

¹ Second Session of the Regional Administrative LF/MF Broadcasting Conference (Regions 1 and 3), Geneva, 6 October-21 November 1975.

² The Chairman of the Conference was Mr. Derek C. Rose (New Zealand).

It often happens that certain names bring good luck. I think that the LM/MF Conference did well in choosing a President whose name predisposed us to take a rosy view of its future, despite scepticism in certain quarters.

With outstanding tact and diplomacy but, when necessary, with a well-tempered firmness which never exceeded the acceptable dose, thanks also to your profound knowledge of men and of the problems involved, to your praiseworthy efforts and your unstinting work, you have been able, Mr. Chairman, to straighten out the many difficulties not only by the masterly way in which you guided the debates, but also—and perhaps above all—by your personal contacts with so many delegates outside the meetings.

For the past twenty years I have taken part in all the major ITU conferences, either as a delegate of Tunisia, or as the Secretary-General of the Union, and I can state today that you have been one of the best Chairmen that the ITU has known for a long time.

It is therefore with great pleasure that I offer you on behalf of the Members of the Union,

my congratulations and my thanks. We shall long retain the memory of your outstanding chairmanship.

My thanks are also due to the Vice-Chairmen of the Conference and to the Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of the Committees. They have all discharged their duties in the most admirable way and have taken an active part in the organization of the Conference activities within the Steering Committee.

Of course, it is not for the Secretary-General of the ITU to thank the staff of Union headquarters for the outstanding efforts it has made or for the indispensable assistance which it has provided, since the ITU staff has done nothing more than its duty; however, I think that, in view of the exceptional devotion to duty displayed by all the members of the Union working for this Conference, whether they belong to the General Secretariat, the Specialized Secretariat of the IFRB or were simply recruited specially for the Conference, I must pay tribute to their contribution now that this historic Conference is about to close. Let them find here, and in the words of the Secretary-General of the ITU, the expression of our sincere gratitude.

We also owe a debt of gratitude to the staff of the Geneva International Conference Centre³ for its invaluable aid.

* * *

Without attempting to sum up the achievements of so great a Conference, I should like to quote a few figures: in preparing the plan adopted, some 10 000 frequency requirements had to be examined and many thousands of adjustments had to be made to them. All these data were processed by computer after numerous and fruitful negotiations.

As you know, the Preamble to the Agreement enunciates the principle of the equal rights of countries as regards the assignment of frequencies in so narrow a spectrum.

This is a fundamental principle for which, it must be confessed, no clearly defined criteria, enabling it to be applied systematically, have yet been evolved; this Conference, nevertheless, took it as a guide in its work.

I believe that these two poles which have emerged so clearly from your deliberations:

³ The Conference was held at this Centre, the CICG.

on the one hand, negotiations, and, on the other, the application of more systematic criteria, will continue to dominate future administrative radio planning conferences. In regard, therefore, both to the principles of frequency assignment and to the problems of frequency sharing, this Conference, which is drawing to its close, gives food for reflection before the forthcoming World Administrative Radio Conference in 1979. Fortunately, however, technique is making rapid strides and the use of improved antennae, synchronized networks, new modulation processes and new systems for bringing programmes to the listener, either by satellite broadcasting or by cable, open up prospects which, with the aid of the CCIR, will doubtless in the near future become realities.

All these new factors will unquestionably change the face of the Planning Conference which, in fifteen years or so, will once again grapple with the problem of assignments within those same bands of frequencies on which the first sound programmes were broadcast more than fifty years ago.

Geneva, 21 November 1975

M. MILI