

Special Announcements

1983 – World Communications Year

Communications: man's biggest problem

In recent years, decision-makers, planners and implementers at all levels have become increasingly aware that the biggest bottleneck for economic and social progress is inadequate communications. The degree of inadequacy varies from place to place and from project to project, but it affects all sectors of development at local, national, regional and international levels.

This awareness and concern resulted in many formal and informal discussions about a possible 'Year' to focus on and to identify the problems, and to accelerate their resolution. Consensus on the concepts for such a Year was finally reached and, in 1980, the United Nations General Assembly approved a World Communications Year – if the budgetary requirements could be met based upon voluntary contributions. The Resolution:

- states that the purpose of the Year is the “development of communications infrastructure”;
- states that 1983 will be the Year;
- designates the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) as the “lead agency” for coordination and preparation for this observance.

Focus on national-level infrastructures

The World Communications Year efforts will focus upon communications infrastructure development at the national level. National coordinating committees, representing all the relevant sectors, could identify and undertake the most pressing communications-infrastructure projects. Alongside the country-originated projects, pilot projects can be undertaken as models for adaptation and use elsewhere. Possibilities include:

- Master Plans for development of a national integrated telecommunications network;
- extending telecommunications to rural areas;
- widespread installation of public telephones;
- establishment of infrastructures that would benefit particular sectors, i.e.

fishing, agriculture, civil administration, rural medicine, education, weather-services etc.

Regional coordination and support

Coordination of the many regional bodies concerned with communications will be necessary, in order to identify and to undertake their own priority projects of maximum support for the national efforts. Parallel regional pilot projects might also be carried out, for example in connection with:

- standards for the maintenance of an inter-country radio relay route;
- a network to forecast, and to minimize destruction from, natural disasters, and for the organization of rescue, relief and reconstruction;
- establishment of a regional coast-station system;
- establishment of a training-resources and course-development center.

World coordination and support

The world WCY efforts will stimulate and support the national efforts. The ITU is presently holding regular coordinating meetings with the UN specialized agencies and, as a result, many constructive projects are developing.

General principles of the WCY program

The World Communications Year entails a specific set of activities forming part of the United Nations system's action to foster balanced economic and social development. World Communications Year will provide the opportunity for all countries to undertake an in-depth view and analysis of their policies on communications-development, and to stimulate the accelerated development of communications infrastructures. It will therefore enable those responsible for all sectors concerned to direct their actions towards fostering the rational construction of essential infrastructures, including national and international communication policies, concerted organization and management of communications and the financial, material and human resources needed for installing and operating communications systems.

Communication-facilities are in many countries growing extremely rapidly and in a haphazard manner beyond the control of the competent authorities. The wealth of modern technical facilities available tends to increase the complexity of this problem, which can only be solved by a determined coordination and planning-effort at the national level. World Communications Year will contribute to that effort by defining the means required for national coordination and by fostering their implementation.

Communication infrastructures can be developed only on the basis of the

national realities of each country. WCY will not propose a universal pattern for establishing the infrastructures, but will aim to foster the internal development of communications in every country.

Under the terms of ECOSOC Resolution 1980/69, special attention will be given to programs of potential interest to the developing countries. In addition, WCY will be in accordance with the objectives of the Transport and Communications Decade in Africa and will provide support for the achievement of its objectives.

The development of a world communication network is a major historical event in keeping with the emergence of a collective awareness among mankind as a whole. Once this is realized, nobody should any longer be isolated from the national or international community. World Communications Year will mark the importance of this development for achieving the objectives of the United Nations system, and will allow preparations to proceed for developing communication infrastructures for the benefit of mankind as a whole.

Criteria applicable to the projects proposed

The following criteria will be applicable to the projects proposed in the program for World Communications Year:

- The projects taken together must constitute a consistent program of definite value to all countries;
- Each project must make a specific contribution to facilitating the coordinated establishment of communication infrastructures;
- Each project must foster endogenous economic and social development in the country (or countries) concerned;
- Each project must be designed to provide productive ideas aimed at the rational establishment of communication structures, either through the implementation of the projects or through the analysis of the results achieved;
- Projects carried out in Africa must help to achieve the targets of the Transport and Communications Decade.

Financing

The resources for the World Communications Year must be provided through voluntary contributions to the Special Fund for WCY administered by the ITU. These contributions may come from governments, foundations, non-governmental organizations, or industry. They should reach the World Year Fund through the intermediary of the centralizing governmental body. All 154 ITU Member-countries have established machinery for this purpose. Information on the subject will be provided on request from the International Telecommunication Union, Place des Nations, CH-1211 Genève 20, Switzerland.

International conference on mini- and micro-computer applications in information, documentation and libraries

Mini- and micro-computers are increasingly becoming a working tool of the information scientist, the librarian, the documentalist, the archivist, and all others to whom the management of libraries and textual information storage and retrieval, and related topics, are of interest. New technologies are causing a major evolution of old-established concepts and procedures.

Switching on the electronic library, and using mini- and micro-computers in the process, is fast becoming a reality. A major international conference is planned to take place in Tel-Aviv, Israel, on March 14–18, 1983. This conference will provide a first opportunity for all who work in this field to describe their work, to share experience, and to set a milestone from which future developments will be measured.

The conference organizers have identified the following areas as being of principal importance:

- (1) *Descriptions of existing systems* including their architecture, design, application, etc.
- (2) *Software requirements* including database management, file organization, portability, utilities, etc.
- (3) *Application software* including database creation and maintenance, command languages, algorithms, print- and photo-composition, etc.
- (4) *Networks and communication* including standards and protocols, interfaces, online capabilities, etc.
- (5) *Systems design and management* including economics, selection procedures, contracts, documentation, etc.
- (6) *Problems of developing countries* including specifics of hardware and software acquisition, technology transfer, systems maintenance, etc.
- (7) *Mission-oriented applications* including the social sciences, medicine, library management, numerical and fact retrieval, etc.

Several outstanding experts have already signified their readiness to contribute as keynote speakers or discussion leaders. An exhibition/demonstration of operating systems will be part of the conference.

The International Federation for Documentation (FID), the Gesellschaft für

Information und Dokumentation (GID) (Germany), the National Center of Scientific and Technological Information (COSTI) (Israel), and the Israel Society of Special Libraries and Information Centres (ISLIC), have already agreed to co-sponsor the conference.

For further information, please contact the Secretariat, Mini- and Micro-Computer Applications in Information, Documentation and Libraries, P.O. box 3054, Tel-Aviv 61030, Israel. Telex: 3-2332 CSTI IL.

Telecom 83

Telecom 83 is the fourth in a series of quadrennial World Telecommunication Exhibitions. Organized under the auspices of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), this series carries out ITU's mandate to keep telecommunication administrations, companies, organizations, and the telecommunication industry, informed of the latest advances in telecommunication techniques.

This outstanding event will be held at the New Exhibition and Conference Center in Genève, Switzerland, from October 26 to November 1, 1983. Focussing on the theme "Telecommunications for Everyone", Telecom 83 will be a multi-faceted event which catalyzes the exchange of information and transfer of technology in the fields of telecommunications and electronics.

The eight facets of Telecom 83 are:

(1) The World Telecommunication Exhibition. This event will be the most visible star in the galaxy of Telecom 83. The entire 73,000 m² surface of the exhibition-, conference- and outdoor floorspace will be used. Telecom 83 will be both public-communications and user oriented. The Exhibition will be a kaleidoscope of the world's telecommunications and electronics industry. National pavilions will show network planning and progress in developing countries or will demonstrate the capabilities of industrialized nations. These exhibits are sure to denote in varying degrees the conjunction of many fields of telecommunications and data processing technology.

(2) The presence of investment banks.

(3) The World Book Fair on Telecommunications and Electronics. The availability of comprehensive, up-to-date literature is vital to telecommunication and electronics specialists. To meet this need, the Book Fair, representing close to 100 publishers from all over the world, will be conveniently arranged for browsing and purchasing by all visitors. Book Fair 83 will provide a unique opportunity for publishers, authors, booksellers, and distributors of technical books and journals to make their publications known internationally, and will deal exclusively, on a world-wide scale, with works on telecommunications, electronics and related fields. It will be an invaluable occasion for the exchange of ideas and information.

(4) The World Telecommunication Forum. The World Telecommunication Forum is recognized as the most universal and authoritative symposium of telecommunication engineers and economists. Forum 83 will assemble a "brains-trust" of several thousand top executives to present and to discuss the planning, financing, management and implementation of the world telecommunication network, and the convergence of computers and communications. These specialists will continue the dialogue initiated at the three previous World Telecommunication Fora. During this "world summit of telecommunications", nearly 100 presentations will give participants the opportunity to hear, meet and question leaders from administrations, the economy and industry on the latest and future developments of the world telecommunication network.

The three-day Part 1 of Forum 83, entitled "Telecommunication Perspectives and Economic Implications", will consist of about 40 invited presentations by prominent figures in the world of finance and telecommunications. They will highlight the telecommunication requirements of both industrialized and developing countries and the efforts made, or to be made, to finance national, regional and world-wide development plans. Part 2, focussing on "Integration of the World Telecommunication Network", will be a technical and scientific symposium of universal character with approximately 60 contributions on the latest innovations and technological trends affecting the development of the world telecommunication network.

(5) The "Golden Antenna 83" Film Festival.

(6) The World Photo and Drawing competition, "Youth in the Electronic Age 83".

(7) The meeting of specialists in public relations.

(8) Social events 83.

For all further information on Telecom 83, write to the International Telecommunication Union, Place des Nations, CH-1211 Genève 20, Switzerland.