

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

DRAFT PRELIMINARY VIEWS ON WRC-11

AGENDA ITEM 1.9: to revise frequencies and channeling arrangements of Appendix 17 to the Radio Regulations, in accordance with Resolution 351 (Rev. WRC-07), in order to implement new digital technologies for the maritime mobile service

ISSUES: Appendix 17 outlines the frequencies and channelling arrangements in the high-frequency bands for the maritime mobile service (MMS). During WRC-03, changes to Appendix 17 allowed for the use of digital technology on a no-protection, non-interference basis in certain bands (footnote “p”).

WRC-07 modified Resolution 351 (Rev. WRC-07) to invite WRC-11 to consider necessary changes to Appendix 17 to implement the use of new technology by the MMS with a view to promote efficiency. To this end, the ITU-R tasks are to finalize studies:

1. to identify any necessary modifications to the frequency tables contained within Appendix 17;
2. to identify any necessary transition arrangements for the introduction of new digital technologies and any consequential changes to Appendix 17; and
3. to recommend how digital technologies can be introduced while ensuring compliance with distress and safety requirements.

BACKGROUND: The future spectrum needs of the maritime mobile service in the HF bands are closely related to the introduction of new data exchange technologies as an alternative standard for narrow-band direct printing (NBDP). The use of NBDP is in rapid decline worldwide. The International Maritime Organization (IMO) has noted that NBDP currently is for broadcasting of maritime safety information (MSI), ship reporting, weather forecasts, and for business communications, e.g. by fishing fleets. All these functions are achievable by alternative data communications technology.

The global maritime community expects to improve the utilization of maritime mobile service spectrum by allowing the use of data transmissions on certain Appendix 17 voice channels. This utilization of spectrum will provide additional flexibility for data exchange services.

The ITU and IMO will evaluate the HF data service for incorporation into the Global Maritime Distress Safety System (GMDSS). Additionally, the ITU and IMO will need to review communication protocols of the HF data service before completely removing the NBDP requirement from GMDSS. HF NBDP remains useful for distress communications in the Polar Regions (sea area A4) where other terrestrial means of communication are no longer reliable, and there is no coverage from geostationary satellites. Preservation of NBDP is possible using the HF distress and safety frequencies in Appendix 15.

Amendments to RR Appendix 17 may also have consequential impact to RR Appendix 25.

U.S. VIEW: If studies under Resolution 351 (WRC-07) show that new digital technologies protect existing distress and safety frequencies, the United States supports the revision of RR Appendix 17 to accommodate new digital technologies for the maritime mobile service.
