UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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

BACKGROUND:

The current and future spectrum needs of the maritime mobile service in the HF bands are closely related to the introduction of new data exchange technologies as a potential standard for narrow-band direct printing (NBDP). In the past decade the use of NBDP for commercial communication worldwide, has rapidly declined. The International Maritime Organization (IMO) noted that NBDP in the past has been mostly used for broadcasting of maritime safety information (MSI), ship reporting, weather forecasts, and for business communications, e.g. by fishing fleets. All of these functions could be accommodated through alternative HF digital data communications technology and Satellite transmissions.

The global maritime community has successfully demonstrated that improved utilization of maritime mobile service spectrum can be achieved by formally adopting the ongoing practice of using data transmissions on a variety of Appendix 17 voice channels, NBDP channels and/or fax frequencies previously used primarily for radio telegraphy, Morse code and facsimile transmissions. Utilization of spectrum in this manner will provide critical additional flexibility for data exchange services in future.

The ITU has already adopted technical characteristics for the exchange of HF digital data service in the maritime mobile service. The IMO will need to review these HF digital data characteristics for incorporation into the Global Maritime Distress Safety System (GMDSS). HF NBDP remains useful for distress communications in the Polar Regions (sea area A4) where other terrestrial means of communication are less reliable. Preservation of NBDP can be achieved by using the HF distress and safety frequencies in Appendix 15. Amendments to RR Appendix 17 may also have consequential impact to RR Appendix 25.

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.
PRELIMINARY VIEWS:

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

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