



Radiocommunication Bureau (BR)

Circular Letter
CR/473

21 December 2020

To Administrations of Member States of the ITU

Subject: Minutes of the 85th meeting of the Radio Regulations Board

Pursuant to the provisions of Nos. 13.18 of the Radio Regulations and in accordance with §1.10 of Part C of the Rules of Procedure, please find attached the approved minutes of the 85th meeting of the Radio Regulations Board (19-27 October 2020).

These minutes were approved by the Members of the Radio Regulations Board by electronic means and are available on the RRB pages of the ITU web site.

Mario Maniewicz
Director

Annex: Minutes of the 85th meeting of the Radio Regulations Board

Distribution:

- Administrations of Member States of ITU
- Members of the Radio Regulations Board



Radio Regulations Board
 Geneva, 19 – 27 October 2020

Document RRB20-3/15-E
27 October 2020
Original: English

MINUTES^{1*}

OF THE

85TH MEETING OF THE RADIO REGULATIONS BOARD

19– 27 October – Teleconference

Present:

Members, RRB

Ms C. BEAUMIER, Chairman

Mr N. VARLAMOV, Vice-Chairman

Mr T. ALAMRI, Mr E. AZZOUZ, Mr L.F. BORJÓN FIGUEROA,

Ms S. HASANOVA, Mr A. HASHIMOTO, Mr Y. HENRI, Mr D.Q. HOAN,

Ms L. JEANTY, Mr S.M. MCHUNU, Mr H. TALIB

Executive Secretary, RRB

Mr M. MANIEWICZ, Director, BR

Précis-writers

Mr T. ELDRIDGE, Ms C. RAMAGE

Also present:

Ms J. WILSON, Deputy Director, BR and Chief, IAP

Mr A. VALLET, Chief, SSD

Mr C. C. LOO, Head, SSD/SPR

Mr M. SAKAMOTO, Head, SSD/SSC

Mr J. WANG, Head, SSD/SNP

Mr T. PHAM VIET, SSD/SNP

Mr N. VASSILIEV, Chief, TSD

Mr K. BOGENS, Head, TSD/FMD

Mr B. BA, Head, TSD/TPR

Ms I. GHAZI, Head, TSD/BCD

Mr D. BOTHA, SGD

Ms K. GOZAL, Administrative Secretary

* 1 The minutes of the meeting reflect the detailed and comprehensive consideration by the members of the Radio Regulations Board of the items that were under consideration on the agenda of the 85th meeting of the Board. The official decisions of the 85th meeting of the Radio Regulations Board can be found in Document RRB20-3/14.

Subjects discussed	Documents
1 Opening of the meeting	–
2 Adoption of the agenda and consideration of late submissions	RRB20-3/OJ/1(Rev.1)
3 Report by the Director of BR	RRB20-3/8(Rev.1), Addenda 1-6
4 Rules of procedure	RRB20-3/1 (RRB20-2/1(Rev.1)), RRB20-3/2; CCRR/66
5 General concerns regarding issues and requests relating to the extension of regulatory time-limits to bring into use frequency assignments to satellite networks	–
6 Issues and requests relating to the extension of regulatory time-limits: Submission by the Administration of Pakistan requesting the extension of the regulatory time-limit to bring into use the frequency assignments to the PAKSAT-MM1-38.2E-KA and PAKSAT-MM1-38.2E-FSS satellite networks	RRB20-3/3
7 Issues and requests relating to the extension of regulatory time-limits: Submission by the Administration of Israel regarding the extension of the regulatory deadline to bring into use the frequency assignments to the AMS-C8-113E satellite network	RRB20-3/7
8 Issues and requests relating to the extension of regulatory time-limits: Submission by the Administration of Indonesia requesting the extension of the regulatory time-limit to bring into use the frequency assignments to the PSN-146E satellite network	RRB20-3/9
9 Issues and requests relating to the extension of regulatory time-limits: Submission by the Administration of India requesting the extension of the regulatory time-limit to bring into use the frequency assignments to the INSAT-EXK82.5E and INSAT-KUP-BSS(83E) satellite networks	RRB20-3/11
10 Requests for the cancellation of the frequency assignments to satellite networks under No. 13.6 of the Radio Regulations	RRB20-3/4, RRB20-3/5, RRB20-3/6
11 Submission by the Administration of the United Arab Emirates regarding the orbital position tolerance to bring into use a geostationary satellite orbital position	RRB20-3/10
12 Submission by the Administration of Saudi Arabia regarding the implementation of the RRB decisions on the coordination of satellite networks at 25.5°E/26°E in the Ku-band	RRB20-3/12, RRB20-3/DELAYED/4
13 Submission by the Administration of the United Kingdom requesting consideration of interference issues affecting the reception of United Kingdom HF broadcasting transmissions (RR Article 12 refers)	RRB20-3/13, RRB20-3/DELAYED/1, RRB20-3/DELAYED/2
14 Election of the vice-chairman for 2021	–
15 Confirmation of the dates of the 86 th meeting of the Board and indicative dates for subsequent meetings	–

16 Approval of the summary of decisions

RRB20-3/14

17 Closure of the meeting

–

1 Opening of the meeting

1.1 The **Chairman** opened the meeting at 1300 hours on Monday, 19 October 2020 and welcomed the members of the Board to the 85th, virtual meeting. She wished them a fruitful meeting despite the difficult circumstances resulting from the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

1.2 The **Director**, speaking also on behalf of the Secretary-General, welcomed the members of the Board. The COVID-19 pandemic was showing no signs of abating, particularly in Europe, and a second virtual consultation of councillors was shortly to be held. Work in ITU-R was nevertheless continuing at its usual pace, and participation in study group and capacity-building activities had actually doubled since the introduction of remote participation. He wished the Board a productive meeting.

2 Adoption of the agenda and consideration of late submissions (Document RRB20-3/OJ/1(Rev.1))

2.1 The Board **agreed** to adopt its agenda as follows:

“The draft agenda was adopted with modifications as provided in Document RRB20-3/OJ/1(Rev.1). The Board decided to include Documents RRB20-3/DELAYED/1 and 2 under agenda item 9, and Document RRB20-3/DELAYED/4 under agenda item 8, for information. The Board further decided to defer the consideration of Document RRB20-3/DELAYED/3 to its 86th meeting and instructed the Executive Secretary to add the document to the agenda of that meeting. The Board also instructed the Bureau to bring Document RRB20-3/DELAYED/3 to the attention of the Administration of the Republic of Korea.”

3 Report by the Director of BR (Document RRB20-3/8(Rev.1) and Addenda 1 to 6)

3.1 The **Director** introduced his customary report in Document RRB20-3/8(Rev.1). Referring to §7, he observed that the list of filings subject to the Article 22 EPFD review set out in Table 8 continued to grow. Referring to §10, he said that the Bureau had received only two delayed replies to correspondence relating to the application of regulatory procedures to satellite systems, from the Administrations of Italy and India. Both had invoked lockdown measures related to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Bureau had accepted both delayed replies since the filings concerned affected no other administration.

3.2 He was pleased to report that, in the issue between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Bahrain relating to pending assignments in the GE84 Terrestrial Broadcasting Agreement (item 12.1 of Annex 1), the administrations had accepted three of the four assignments proposed by the Bureau and had submitted no further documents to the current Board meeting. The complaint from the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea regarding harmful interference to its analogue broadcasting service remained pending (item 11 of Annex 1), the Bureau having received no response to its correspondence to the Republic of Korea on the matter.

3.3 Referring to Addendum 4 to Document RRB20-3/8(Rev.1), which contained the Bureau’s progress report on the work undertaken on Resolution 559 (WRC-19) submissions since the previous Board meeting, he was pleased to report that the Bureau had already considered 90 filings from 45 administrations. The filings had all been approved and would be published by 27 October 2020. The Bureau had received many messages of thanks from the administrations concerned, which had also expressed gratitude for the work of the Board. The Board’s recommendation regarding Part B submissions had been well accepted and was being implemented by the Bureau, notably in the cases of the Netherlands and the Russian Federation, where it had led to no difficulties.

Actions arising from the previous RRB meeting (§1 and Annex 1 of Document RRB20-3/8(Rev.1))

3.4 **Mr Vassiliev (Chief TSD)** reported that, since the 84th meeting of the Board and with regard to the registration in the MIFR of notified assignments located in disputed territories (item 3a) of Annex 1), the Bureau had continued to align the ITU Digitized World Map (IDWM) with the United Nations map and had come up with proposals for two territories for which notifications were pending. It had also considered the rule of procedure on Resolution 1 (Rev.WRC-97) and possible modifications to it.

3.4bis It was **agreed** that these proposals would be taken up by the Working Group on the Rules of Procedure (see §4.7).

3.5 The **Chairman** proposed that the Board conclude as follows on §1 and Annex 1 of Document RRB20-3/8(Rev.1):

“The Board noted with appreciation Annex 1 and in particular the progress report on activities concerning the GE84 terrestrial sound broadcasting issue between the Administrations of the Islamic Republic of Iran and Bahrain. The Board instructed the Bureau to continue to assist the Administrations of the Islamic Republic of Iran and Bahrain in their coordination efforts for the 13 remaining assignments and to report on progress at the 86th Board meeting.

On the issue of frequency assignments to stations located in disputed territories, noted in Annex 1, the Board thanked the Bureau for its efforts to find solutions for the registration in the MIFR of notified assignments. The Board instructed the Bureau to:

- Pursue efforts to resolve discrepancies between the ITU Digitized World Map (IDWM) and the United Nations map;
- Pursue efforts to develop principles for the possible modification to the rule of procedure on Resolution 1 (Rev. WRC-97), for the registration in the MIFR of frequency assignments to stations located in disputed territories, taking into account the comments from the Board; and
- Report on the progress to the 86th Board meeting.”

3.6 It was so **agreed**.

Processing of filings for terrestrial and space systems (§2 and Annexes 2 and 3 of Document RRB20-3/8(Rev.1))

3.7 **Mr Vassiliev (Chief TSD)**, referring to Annex 2 to Document RRB20-3/8(Rev.1), on the processing of notices for terrestrial services, drew attention to the four tables therein. Since the 84th meeting of the Board no findings for terrestrial services had been reviewed.

3.8 **Mr Vallet (Chief SSD)**, referring to Annex 3, on the processing of notices for satellite networks, drew attention to the six tables therein. Table 1 showed that, since April 2020, the Bureau had met the two-month deadline introduced by WRC-19 for processing advance publication information for satellite networks. Table 2 showed that it had slightly exceeded the regulatory time-limit of four months for the publication of coordination requests, owing to the need to update the software in line with the decisions of WRC-19, but that processing times were falling. Regarding Table 3, the Bureau remained well under the six-month performance indicator for processing satellite networks submitted under Appendices 30/30A, despite the large number of filings submitted pursuant to Resolution 559 (WRC-19). The processing of networks under Appendix 30B (Table 4) was currently on hold, as the Bureau had received five requests from countries of the former Yugoslavia that did not have a national allotment under the Plan. In accordance with Article 7 of Appendix 30B, such requests had to be dealt with as a priority and current network processing activities had therefore been suspended.

3.9 **Mr Hoan** expressed appreciation for the Bureau’s efforts to process notifications and requests in timely fashion despite the constraints resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. The Board should express appreciation for the Bureau’s work.

3.10 **Mr Hashimoto** endorsed that suggestion.

3.11 The **Chairman** proposed that the Board conclude as follows on §2 and Annexes 2 and 3 of Document RRB20-3/8(Rev.1):

“The Board noted with appreciation the information provided in §2 of the Report of the Director on the treatment of notices. The Board further expressed its appreciation for the efforts of the Bureau and for the fact that regulatory time-limits, where applicable, and performance indicators in the processing of notices had been observed or were improving for the most part. The Board instructed the Bureau to continue to observe these regulatory time-limits and performance indicators in the processing of notices and to take necessary measures to complete the required software development to eliminate delays in the processing of coordination requests.”

3.12 It was so **agreed**.

Implementation of cost recovery for satellite network filings (late payments) (§3 and Annex 4 of Document RRB20-3/8(Rev.1))

3.13 **Mr Vallet (Chief SSD)**, referring to Annex 4 to Document RRB20-3/8(Rev.1), said that no special section has been cancelled because of non-payment since the previous Board meeting.

3.14 The Board **agreed** to conclude on that item as follows:

“The Board noted §3 and Annex 4 of the Report of the Director dealing with the implementation of cost recovery for satellite network filings (late payments) and agreed with the actions of the Bureau for the reasons provided in the Report.”

Reports of harmful interference and/or infringements of the Radio Regulations (Article 15 of the Radio Regulations) (§4.1 of Document RRB20-3/8(Rev.1))

3.15 **Mr Vassiliev (Chief TSD)**, referring to Tables 1 to 4 of the Director’s report, noted that a total of 523 communications concerning reports of harmful interference and/or infringements had been received by the Bureau between 1 September 2019 and 31 August 2020.

3.16 The Board **noted** the information provided in §4.1 of Document RRB20-3/8(Rev.1).

Harmful interference to broadcasting stations in the VHF/UHF bands between Italy and its neighbouring countries (§4.2 of Document RRB20-3/8(Rev.1) and Addenda 1, 2, 5 and 6)

3.17 **Mr Vassiliev (Chief TSD)** informed the Board that, in addition to the information provided in the Director’s report from the Administrations of France and Switzerland, the Bureau had received updates from the Administration of Slovenia (Addendum 1) stating that the only change in the situation was an additional case of interference; from the Administration of Malta (Addendum 2) to the effect that its FM sound broadcasting services continued to be affected by Italian transmissions, with measured field strength values as high as almost 60 dBµV/m in some instances; and from the Administration of Croatia (Addendum 6) to the effect that it continued to suffer significant interference resulting in reduced or no coverage for Croatian TV broadcasting service stations, but providing no information on FM sound broadcasting services. The Administration of Italy, for its part, had provided an update (Addendum 5) to the roadmap of its actions to resolve the cases of harmful interference, in which it stated that no interference had been reported to TV broadcasting services except in Croatia and that such interference was related to the transitional period for the release of the 700 MHz band for mobile services. Addendum 5 went on to provide the Italian Administration’s view of the situation country by country mainly with regard to FM sound broadcasting.

3.18 In reply to a question from the **Chairman**, he said that, in the GE84 Agreement, the normal value for reliable reception of FM programmes was 54 dBµV/m, which was the wanted field strength. To obtain the level of allowed interference, a protection ratio of 37 dBµV/m had to be deducted from that value. While the

resulting value of 17 dB μ V/m was only a very approximate indication, generally speaking values of more than 17 to 20 dB μ V/m could cause interference issues.

3.19 **Ms Jeanty** expressed satisfaction at the amount of information received and the progress being made in some cases. She noted that, while the Italian Administration stated in Addendum 5 that no further interference had been detected in 16 of 19 cases involving Malta, Addendum 2, from the Administration of Malta, did not paint such a positive picture.

3.20 **Mr Vassiliev (Chief TSD)** said that the Bureau had asked the Italian Administration to explain the discrepancy. The Italian Administration had forwarded the question two weeks previously to its regional office in Sicily, which was nearest to the principal source of interference. The Bureau had to date received no reply. In addition, Addendum 5 indicated measured frequencies but gave no indication of the location – the two addenda used different formats.

3.21 **Mr Azzouz** observed that the small size of some of the countries concerned made it even more difficult to resolve the interference issues they had. He suggested that the Board should encourage the administrations involved to make every effort to resolve outstanding issues, and ask the Bureau to continue to assist them in their coordination efforts and to report on progress at future meetings.

3.22 **Mr Hoan** expressed appreciation for the Italian Administration's continued efforts to resolve interference issues with an appropriate action plan. The restrictions arising from the COVID-19 pandemic had further hampered its activities. With regard to interference to TV broadcasting services, he observed that by June 2022 the Italian Administration would be using only the channel assigned to it by international agreement. The Board should nevertheless urge the Italian Administration to take appropriate measures to reduce interference to Croatian TV broadcasters.

3.23 **Ms Hasanova** also expressed appreciation for the Italian Administration's efforts and asked whether, if it reallocated the frequencies mentioned in the roadmap, all issues of interference with respect to Croatia would be resolved.

3.24 **Mr Vassiliev (Chief TSD)**, noting that the Bureau had received the update to the roadmap on 28 September 2020, said that it would take time to ascertain whether the shift in frequency would eliminate the interference. He added that the regular meeting between the Bureau, the Italian Administration and its neighbouring countries scheduled to take place in July 2020 had had to be cancelled owing to the COVID-19 pandemic. Since the situation was not changing, and given that the Radio Spectrum Policy Group regularly discussed the issue of interference, the Bureau would explore the possibility of resuming such multilateral meetings.

3.25 The **Chairman** proposed that the Board conclude as follows on §4.2 of Document RRB20-3/8(Rev.1):

"In relation to §4.2 of the Report of the Director and its Addenda 1, 2, 5 and 6 concerning harmful interference from the broadcasting service transmitters of Italy to its neighbours, the Board noted with appreciation the continued efforts of the Administration of Italy and its neighbours towards resolving the cases of harmful interference from its sound broadcasting stations to its neighbours despite the challenges posed by the pandemic. The Board also noted that while measures have been, or are being, taken to eliminate or reduce the level of interference to several stations, a significant number of stations continue to experience harmful interference and additional cases were reported. The Board further noted that there was no progress in resolving the cases of harmful interference to television broadcasting stations of one administration. The Board urged the administrations concerned to continue to make all efforts to resolve all remaining cases of harmful interference to television and sound broadcasting stations. The Board further instructed the Bureau to continue to assist the administrations concerned in their coordination efforts, to consult with these administrations to organize a multilateral frequency coordination meeting in early 2021 and to report progress to future meetings of the Board."

3.26 It was so **agreed**.

Implementation of Nos. 11.44.1, 11.47, 11.48, 11.49, 9.38.1, Resolution 49 and No. 13.6 of the Radio Regulations (§5 of Document RRB20-3/8 (Rev.1)).

3.27 The Board **agreed** to conclude on §5 of Document RRB20-3/8(Rev.1) as follows:

“The Board noted §5 of the Report of the Director on the implementation of RR Nos. 11.44.1, 11.47, 11.48, 11.49, 9.38.1, Resolution 49 (Rev.WRC-19) and No. 13.6 and expressed its appreciation for the information provided. The Board instructed the Bureau to correct the heading in Table 5 of the column for RR No. 11.48 to include all relevant provisions.”

Council work on cost recovery for satellite filings (§6 of Document RRB20-3/8(Rev.1))

3.28 The Board **noted** §6 of Document RRB20-3/8(Rev.1).

Review of findings for frequency assignments to non-GSO FSS satellite systems under Resolution 85 (WRC-03) (§7 of Document RRB20-3/8(Rev.1))

3.29 **Mr Vallet (Chief SSD)** said that §7 of Document RRB20-3/8(Rev.1) contained the Bureau’s usual report on the review in question and the work carried out since the Board’s 84th meeting. Responding to questions by **Mr Hashimoto**, he said that no correspondence group had been set up under Working Party 4A to work on Recommendation ITU-R S.1503, but the working party was to meet soon virtually and might well set up such a group on the Recommendation. However, a group had been set up to work by correspondence on Resolution 769 (WRC-19), and initial discussions had commenced. The funding for the necessary software had been identified so that a call for bids could be launched as soon as Working Party 4A indicated the appropriate way forward.

3.30 Responding to a question by **Mr Varlamov** regarding the processing times reflected in Table 8 of the Director’s report and the possibility of acquiring hardware to speed up the publication process, he said that bids had been received for two new servers for the epfd examination, and it was hoped that they would be purchased in December 2020. Nevertheless, examinations could take more time than might be expected because the Bureau would process and publish initial requests received in 2017 along with any subsequent modifications at the same time.

3.31 The **Chairman** proposed that the Board conclude on §7 of Document RRB20-3/8(Rev.1) as follows:

“The Board noted §7 of the Report of the Director on the review of findings for frequency assignments to non-GSO FSS satellite systems under Resolution 85 (WRC-03) and thanked the Bureau for the additional information provided. The Board noted with satisfaction the efforts of the Bureau to reduce delays in the review of frequency assignments but noted that some delays continued to exist in the processing of certain cases. The Board instructed the Bureau to:

- Continue its efforts to process filings in a timelier manner;
- Complete the implementation of the necessary changes to the required software; and
- Report on the progress to the 86th Board meeting.”

3.32 It was so **agreed**.

Possible suppression of the note attached to the rules of procedure on No. 11.48 following a WRC-19 decision (§8 of Document RRB20-3/8(Rev.1))

3.33 It was **agreed** that the matter would be taken up by the Working Group on the Rules of Procedure.

Review of the rules of procedure on No. 9.11A (§9 of Document RRB20-3/8(Rev.1))

3.34 **Mr Vallet (Chief SSD)** said that the proposed changes to the rules of procedure on No. 9.11A came further to the instructions given by the Board to the Bureau at the 84th meeting.

3.35 It was **agreed** that the proposed changes would be taken up by the Working Group on the Rules of Procedure.

Delayed replies to correspondence from the Bureau related to the application of regulatory procedures to satellite systems (§10 of Document RRB20-3/8(Rev.1))

3.36 **Mr Vallet (Chief SSD)** introduced the two cases outlined in §10 of the Director's report involving late replies from the Administrations of Italy and India, which the Bureau had accepted because there was no impact on other administrations.

3.37 **Mr Henri** endorsed the Bureau's approach in both cases. He noted with regard to the case involving Italy that the 30-day period referred to was an internal practice of the Bureau, regarding which flexibility was therefore admissible. Given the sensitivity of operations notified under RR No. 4.4, he requested clarification of the bands involved.

3.38 **Mr Vallet (Chief SSD)** said that the Italian case involved the downlink in band S for TT&C. It did not really represent a departure from the Table of Frequency Allocations; operation was only possible under RR No. 4.4 because the transmissions exceeded the limits set down in RR Article 21.

3.39 **Mr Borjón** welcomed the flexibility shown by the Bureau in both cases, given that there would be no impact on other administrations.

3.40 The **Chairman** noted that the action taken by the Bureau was being presented to the Board for information only and therefore proposed that the Board conclude on §10 of Document RRB20-3/8(Rev.1) as follows:

"The Board noted §10 on delayed responses from administrations to correspondence from the Bureau and expressed its appreciation to the Bureau for the flexibility demonstrated in accepting late replies resulting from COVID-19-related challenges or informal consultations with the Bureau."

3.41 It was so **agreed**.

Report on the coordination activities between the Administrations of France and Greece concerning their networks at 38°E and 39°E (Addendum 3 to Document RRB20-3/8)

3.42 **Mr Vallet (Chief SSD)** introduced the report in Addendum 3 on the coordination activities between the Administrations of France and Greece concerning the ATHENA-FIDUS-38E satellite network at 38°E and the HELLAS-SAT-2G satellite network at 39°E. The next meeting between the two administrations with the Bureau's participation was tentatively scheduled for late January 2021. While it was not surprising that it was taking time to find a technical solution – the matter was extremely complex – there were grounds for optimism, since progress was made each time the parties met.

3.43 **Mr Hashimoto** expressed appreciation to the Bureau for the help it was providing to the two administrations concerned. He hoped that the efforts would continue and that a viable solution would be found in the end.

3.44 The **Chairman** proposed that the Board conclude on Addendum 3 to Document RRB20-3/8 as follows:

"The Board noted with satisfaction the progress on the coordination efforts of the Administrations of France and Greece as contained in Addendum 3 to the Report of the Director. The Board encouraged the Administrations of France and Greece to continue their coordination efforts in order to reach a mutually acceptable outcome and instructed the Bureau to continue to provide the necessary support to the two administrations and to report on the progress to the 86th meeting of the Board."

3.45 It was so **agreed**.

Report on the work on Resolution 559 (WRC-19) submissions (Addendum 4 to Document RRB20-3/8)

3.46 **Mr Wang (SSD/SNP)** introduced the report on the progress of work on Resolution 559 (WRC-19) submissions since the Board's 84th meeting. Having recalled the Director's comments on the subject earlier in the present meeting, he drew attention to the follow-up given to four Part B submissions received after 21 January 2020 and associated with Part A submissions received before 22 May 2020 that might affect the EPM of some Resolution 559 submissions and for which the Bureau had finished the completeness review before the present meeting. Thus far, cooperation among administrations on the few submissions received had been very good, giving grounds for optimism regarding future coordination between Resolution 559 submissions and other Part B submissions.

3.47 The **Chairman** agreed that it was to be hoped that administrations would heed the Bureau and Board's plea for them to take account of Resolution 559 submissions when making their Part B submissions. The Bureau was to be warmly thanked for all the assistance it was providing in order to ensure the compatibility of submissions.

3.48 **Mr Alamri** agreed that the Bureau was to be thanked for its excellent work under the very difficult circumstances prevailing on account of COVID-19. Work on Resolution 559 submissions appeared to be progressing very well. The Board should welcome the fact that the measures it had endorsed at the 84th meeting based on the Bureau's proposals appeared to be accepted by administrations making Part B submissions associated with Part A submissions received before 22 May 2020, thus avoiding degradation of the situation. He hoped that those submitting Part B notifications would continue to show goodwill, bearing in mind that the main goal of Resolution 559 was to enable countries to recover their Plan assignments, in pursuit of the objectives evoked in Article 44, No. 196, of the ITU Constitution.

3.49 **Mr Henri** echoed Mr Alamri's comments, adding that the BR engineers concerned were to be commended for identifying and implementing solutions that benefited all parties.

3.50 **Mr Hashimoto, Mr Varlamov** and **Mr Hoan** endorsed previous speakers' comments, adding their thanks and appreciation to those already expressed both to the Bureau and to those administrations that had submitted Part B submissions in compliance with the EPM criteria identified. They hoped that administrations would continue to show such goodwill and spirit of cooperation.

3.51 **Mr Mchunu, Ms Jeanty, Mr Azzouz, Ms Hasanova, Mr Borjón** and **Mr Talib** supported the previous speakers.

3.52 The **Chairman** proposed that the Board conclude on Addendum 4 to Document RRB20-3/8 as follows:

"The Board considered Addendum 4 to the Report of the Director and expressed its appreciation to the Bureau for the detailed report and its continued efforts to assist administrations with the implementation of Resolution 559 (WRC-19) and finding suitable solutions to ensure the compatibility of submissions. The Board also noted with satisfaction the efforts made to date by administrations that have filed Part B submissions receivable after 21 January 2020 and associated with Part A submissions received before 22 May 2020 to implement the measures proposed by the Bureau to minimize the impact on Resolution 559 (WRC-19) and related Article 4 submissions (hereafter referred to as Res. 559 submissions).

Therefore, the Board decided to instruct the Bureau to continue to implement the decisions taken at its 84th meeting to address the potential impact of Part A submissions received before 22 May 2020 on the reference situations of the 45 Res. 559 submissions. In addition, the Board continues to urge administrations with Part A submissions received before 22 May 2020 to make all efforts to accommodate these Res. 559 submissions and to take into account the results of the Bureau's review when preparing their Part B submissions."

3.53 It was so **agreed**.

3.54 3.54 Having considered in detail the Report of the Director as contained in Document RRB20-3/8(Rev.1) and Addenda 1-6, the Board thanked the Bureau for the extensive and detailed information provided

4 Rules of procedure (Documents RRB20-3/1(RRB20-2/1(Rev.1)), RRB20-3/2; Circular Letter CCRR/66)

List of rules of procedure (Documents RRB20-3/1(RRB20-2/1(Rev.1)); Circular Letter CCRR/66)

4.1 Following two meetings of the Working Group on the Rules of Procedure, **Mr Henri**, chairman of the working group, reported that the group had met on Thursday, 22 and Tuesday, 27 October 2020. It had updated the list of proposed rules of procedure set out in Document RRB20-3/1(RRB20-2/1(Rev.1)) to reflect the decisions taken by the Board at the present meeting on the rules contained in Circular Letter CCRR/66 and in the Director's report to the present meeting (Document RRB20-3/8(Rev.1)).

4.2 The group had agreed to suppress the WRC-15 Plenary Note on RR No. 11.48, the substance of which was reflected in RR No. 11.48.1 adopted by WRC-19. It had also agreed to the partial revision of Table 9.11A-1 of the rule of procedure on RR No. 9.11A, consisting in the alignment of text in column 4 of the table listing all the other space services subject to RR No. 9.11A. It recommended that both decisions should be made available in a forthcoming circular letter for information only, and therefore not opened to comments by administrations.

4.3 Regarding the possibility of drawing up a draft rule of procedure on RR No. 5.564A, the group had decided, in the absence of any notifications or recordings of frequency assignments in the land mobile and fixed services in the bands subject to RR No. 5.564A, that there was no clear need for such a rule at present and therefore not to develop one for the time being.

4.4 The group had examined Annex 6 of Circular Letter CCRR/66 and agreed on the text of the note to Table 4. It had also examined Annex 7 and agreed on a common editorial format for an introductory text to include in the rules of procedure for WRC-19 decisions that did not appear in the conference's final acts, but were instead reflected in the minutes of WRC-19 plenary meetings.

4.5 The group had also agreed on the presentation of references to the definitive numbering of resolutions or provisions listed in the final acts and included in the plenary meeting minutes of WRC-19. It had agreed to cross-reference parts of the rule of procedure on Resolution 170 (WRC-19) with the rules of procedure on Annexes 3 and 4 of Appendix 30B, to avoid duplication of a long text, and set out an explanatory note on Resolution 750 (Rev.WRC-15), *resolves* 1 and Table 1-1.

4.6 The group had discussed the development of a draft rule of procedure to reflect the existing internal Bureau rule on the GSO orbital tolerance (submission from the United Arab Emirates to the present meeting) under No. 13.12Ab) and decided not to develop such a rule at the current time.

4.7 Lastly, the group had welcomed the Bureau's explanations and proposed possible approaches to the registration in the MIFR of frequency assignments to stations located in disputed territories and consequent modifications to the rule of procedure on Resolution 1 (Rev.WRC-97). Regarding the alignment of the IDWM and the United Nations map, the group had encouraged the Bureau to start by aligning the status of two particular territories for which it had suspended processing of submissions. Having noted that the administrative status of one of the territories was currently identified as a "disputed territory" on the United Nations map, it had agreed that the status in the IDWM should be changed accordingly. Regarding the consequences of such changes on existing recorded assignments in the MIFR and the treatment of assignments in abeyance, the group had agreed to exchange initial views on principles for such recordings and a possible review of findings leading to an assessment of the rule of procedure on Resolution 1 (Rev.WRC-97) at a future meeting. It had focused on the principles for a possible approach for processing assignments

under Resolution 1 and agreed on most of the principles discussed. Two issues, however, required further discussion. First, although the group had concurred that the procedure set out in Section 1 of the rule of procedure for terrestrial services should be divided into two procedures (notifications in a territory of another administration and notifications in a disputed area), it remained undecided about how to treat notifications of stations in the disputed areas (whether they should be accepted only if each administration claiming the territory agreed, without conditions, on the basis of a special list, etc.). Second, regarding space services, the group had reached no conclusion for cases involving the coordination contour of an earth station located in a territory that was formally under the jurisdiction of one administration but claimed by another that objected to the earth station's notification.

4.8 Noting that the Board's conclusion on §4.7 would be captured under agenda item 3 (see §3.5), the **Chairman** proposed that the Board should conclude as follows:

"Following a meeting of the Working Group on the Rules of Procedure, under the chairmanship of Mr Y. HENRI, the Board decided to update the list of proposed rules of procedure in Document RRB20-3/1 taking into account the proposals by the Bureau for the revision of certain rules of procedure. The Board instructed the Bureau to publish the updated version of the document on the website.

The working group also considered §8 and §9 of the Report of the Director dealing respectively with the possible suppression of the note attached to the rules of procedure on RR No. 11.48 and the review of the rules of procedure on RR No. 9.11A and updated the list of proposed rules of procedure accordingly. The Board further instructed the Bureau to circulate these modifications to the Rules of Procedure to administrations for information."

4.9 It was so **agreed**.

Draft rules of procedure and comments from administrations (Document RRB20-3/2; Circular Letter CCRR/66)

4.10 **Mr Vallet (Chief SSD)** introduced Circular Letter CCRR/66, which contained draft new and modified rules of procedure, and Document RRB20-3/2, which contained comments thereon from the Administrations of Thailand and Canada in Annexes 1 and 2, respectively.

MOD rule of procedure on RR No. 9.11A – Table 9.11A-1 (Annex 1 to Circular Letter CCRR/66)

4.11 The modification to Table 9.11A-1 in the rule of procedure on RR No. 9.11A was **approved**, with effective date of application 27 October 2020.

MOD rule of procedure on RR No. 9.21 (Annex 2 to Circular Letter CCRR/66)

4.12 Subject to the incorporation of the editorial modifications proposed by the Administration of Canada, the modified rule on RR No. 9.21 was **approved**, with effective date of application 27 October 2020.

MOD rules of procedure on RR Nos. 11.44 and 11.44B to 11.44E (Annex 3 to Circular Letter CCRR/66)

4.13 In reply to an observation by **Mr Henri** on the rule of procedure on RR No. 11.44 B, C, D and E, **Mr Vallet (Chief SSD)** suggested that the phrase "from the date of deployment defined in Nos. 11.44D or 11.44E" be aligned with the wording used in RR Nos. 11.44 D and E and modified to read "... from the end of the period referred to in No. 11.44 for cases related to Nos. 11.44D or 11.44E ...".

4.14 It was so **agreed**.

4.15 The modified rules of procedure on RR Nos. 11.44 and 11.44B to 11.44E were **approved**, as amended, with effective date of application 27 October 2020.²

ADD rule of procedure on RR No. 11.46 (Annex 4 to Circular Letter CCRR/66)

4.16 **Approved**, with effective date of application 1 January 2021.

ADD rule of procedure on Appendix 1 to Annex 4 of RR Appendix 30B (Annex 5 to Circular Letter CCRR/66)

4.17 **Approved**, with effective date of application 27 October 2020.

MOD rule of procedure on RR Part B, Section 6 (Annex 6 to Circular Letter CCRR/66)

4.18 Following a discussion of various editorial questions arising in connection with the text of the note to Table 4 of the modified rule of procedure, the **Chairman** suggested that the Board should agree to approve the rule of procedure in principle pending further consideration by the Working Group on the Rules of Procedure of the wording used.

4.19 It was so **agreed**.

4.20 The modified rule of procedure on RR Part B, Section 6, was subsequently **approved** with the editorial modifications made to the text of the note to Table 4 by the Working Group on the Rules of Procedure and with effective date of application 1 January 2021.

MOD rules of procedure on RR Nos. 9.11A, 9.52C, 11.31, 11.47, Article 13, Annex 7 to Appendix 30, Annexes 3 and 4 to Appendix 30B, and ADD rules of procedure on Resolutions 170 (WRC-19) and 750 (Rev.WRC-19) (Annex 7 to Circular Letter CCRR/66)

4.21 Following a discussion of the editorial format of the introductory text to include in the rules of procedure for WRC-19 decisions that did not appear in the conference's Final Acts, but were shown in the plenary minutes of WRC-19, and of the presentation for references to the definitive numbering of resolutions or provisions listed in the final acts and included in the plenary minutes of WRC-19, the **Chairman** suggested that the Working Group on Rules of Procedure be asked to provide appropriate texts.

4.22 It was so **agreed**.

4.23 The modified rules of procedure on RR Nos. 9.11A, 9.52C, 11.31, 11.47, Article 13, Annex 7 to Appendix 30 and Annexes 3 and 4 to Appendix 30B, and the new rules of procedure on Resolutions 170 (WRC-19) and 750 (Rev.WRC-19) were subsequently **approved**, following the incorporation of the editorial modifications proposed by the Administration of Canada in Annex 2 to Document RRB20-3/2 and by the Working Group on the Rules of Procedure.

4.24 The **Chairman** proposed that the Board conclude as follows on its consideration of draft new or modified rules of procedure:

“The Board discussed the draft rules of procedure circulated to administrations in Circular Letter CCRR/66, along with the comments received from administrations as contained in Document RRB20-3/2. The Board adopted these rules of procedure with modifications as contained in the Attachment to this summary of decisions.”

² *Note by the Secretariat:* Due to a discrepancy in the effective date of application of the modification of the rules of procedure on RR Nos. **11.44** and **11.44B** to **11.44E**, the effective date was further changed from 27 October 2020 to 1 January 2021, which is the date of entry into force of the modification of RR No. **11.44** and the addition of RR Nos **11.44B** to **11.44E** approved by WRC-19.

4.25 It was so **agreed**.

5 General concerns regarding issues and requests relating to the extension of regulatory time-limits to bring into use frequency assignments to satellite networks

5.1 In the course of the Board's examination of four submissions to the present meeting requesting extensions of regulatory deadlines citing the COVID-19 pandemic as grounds for *force majeure* (see §§6-9 of these minutes), various concerns were expressed by Board members regarding all four submissions. At the proposal of the **Chairman**, it was **agreed** to summarize those concerns as follows in order to provide administrations with general clarification on the Board's expectations and requirements on such matters:

"Having reviewed at this meeting a number of requests for extension of regulatory deadlines citing the COVID-19 pandemic as a *force majeure* event, the Board expressed the following concerns:

- Several submissions were deemed incomplete which delayed the treatment of the case;
- Some requests were submitted at the early stage of the satellite project before all possibilities to mitigate the risks of missing the deadline had been considered or pursued.

The Board concluded that while the COVID-19 pandemic had caused delays to satellite projects around the world, not all situations will satisfy the conditions to qualify as a case of *force majeure*. Some projects will have sufficient contingencies in the project timelines to meet regulatory deadlines, others would have missed the deadline even if the pandemic had not occurred.

Therefore, the Board wished to remind administrations that the threshold to meet the four conditions for a situation or event to qualify as a case of *force majeure* is high and the onus is on the administration requesting the extension to provide all the required information and justification, and to do so in sufficient detail to clearly demonstrate that their case does meet all four conditions including that the length of the extension requested is reasonable. It does not suffice to say that the restrictions imposed to contain the virus affected the project timelines and caused delays. When preparing a submission, administrations are invited to address, *inter alia*, the following questions:

- How the pandemic made it impossible to meet the deadline?
- What other options or measures were pursued or envisaged to avoid missing the deadline?
- How was failure to meet the deadline the direct result of the pandemic and not of other factors independent of the pandemic?
- How was the length of the extension derived, including a breakdown of the delay experienced so far, the additional delay projected by the manufacturer and launch service provider, and any planned contingency?"

6 Issues and requests relating to the extension of regulatory time-limits: Submission by the Administration of Pakistan requesting the extension of the regulatory time-limit to bring into use the frequency assignments to the PAKSAT-MM1-38.2E-KA and PAKSAT-MM1-38.2E-FSS satellite networks (Document RRB20-3/3)

6.1 The **Chairman** recalled that at its 84th meeting, based on explanations provided by the ITU Legal Adviser, the Board had understood that it was authorized to consider the COVID-19 pandemic as constituting grounds for *force majeure* on the following basis: the pandemic satisfied the first two of the four conditions that had to be met in order to constitute *force majeure*, whereas it was up to the Board to examine on a case-by-case basis whether or not each submission satisfied the third and fourth conditions. She asked the Board members to bear those points in mind when taking up the four submissions to the present meeting which cited COVID-19 as grounds for *force majeure* justifying their requests for extensions. She stressed that, in

order for a case to qualify as *force majeure* resulting from the pandemic, the pandemic had to have made it impossible, and not simply difficult, for the administration concerned to fulfil its regulatory obligations.

6.2 **Mr Loo (Head SSD/SPR)** introduced Document RRB20-3/3 in which, for the reasons it set forth, the Administration of Pakistan requested an extension of the regulatory period up to 30 June 2024 for bringing into use the frequency assignments to the PAKSAT-MM1-38.2E-KA and PAKSAT-MM1-38.2E-FSS networks listed in Table 2 of the submission, on the grounds that the delay caused by the COVID-19 pandemic constituted *force majeure*. He noted that Pakistan was requesting an extension for all the bands relating to PAKSAT-MM1-38.2E-FSS published in the AP30B/A6A special section, but not for all the bands relating to PAKSAT-MM1-38.2E-KA published in the CR/C special section.

6.3 **Mr Talib** noted that the main grounds cited by the Administration of Pakistan for its request appeared to be the delay in signing the contract with the satellite manufacturer, from the first to the fourth quarter of 2020, and yet the extension requested was for somewhat longer. Was there any regulatory justification for asking for a far longer extension than the delay suffered?

6.4 **Mr Loo (Head SSD/SPR)** said that it would be very difficult to establish what precise correlation there should be between the delay suffered and the extension requested especially since the regulatory deadlines are still several years in the future. He assumed that Pakistan was attempting to allow itself as large a margin as possible, given the unpredictability of the COVID-19 situation.

6.5 **Mr Hashimoto** said that the extension requested appeared to be reasonable and should therefore be granted, coming as it did from a developing country. He wondered whether the Bureau had any information on the manufacturer concerned and on the coordination status of the networks.

6.6 **Mr Loo (Head SSD/SPR)** said that Pakistan had provided no information on the manufacturer or any documentation demonstrating the status of contract signature. The regulatory deadlines were still three to four years hence, and the Bureau had no information on the coordination status: no Resolution 49 information or notification had yet been received for either network.

6.7 The **Chairman** noted that the extension requested was not very long. However, the regulatory deadlines were still a good way off, and in a sense the Board was being requested to predict the future: could the Board state now that no measures could be taken by the Administration of Pakistan to meet the deadlines, and that COVID-19 would be the direct cause of its failure to meet those deadlines? Requests for extension were usually submitted to the Board much later in the regulatory process.

6.8 **Mr Hoan** agreed with Mr Loo (Head SSD/SPR) that Pakistan was no doubt attempting to give itself an adequate time margin for the steps it had to take to implement its two networks. He considered that the Board had sufficient information before it to decide on the requests. A clear understanding had been reached at the Board's 84th meeting that the COVID-19 pandemic met the first two conditions for *force majeure*, and the information provided by Pakistan was adequate to conclude that the remaining two conditions were also satisfied. Moreover, the extension requested was limited. The Board should grant the requested extension at the present meeting.

6.9 **Ms Hasanova** stressed the importance of satellite communications to a country with terrain like Pakistan's. With the prevailing situation resulting from COVID-19, she saw no reason not to grant the extension requested.

6.10 **Mr Azzouz** said that he could readily agree to the extension requested, although the Pakistan Administration should be encouraged to communicate to the Board's next meeting the contracts signed for the manufacture and launch of the satellite. He nevertheless wondered why Pakistan appeared to be requesting an extension for some C- and Ku-bands already brought into use on 1 March 2018.

6.11 **Mr Loo (Head SSD/SPR)** confirmed that different bands had indeed been brought into use under other filings. There was some overlap regarding the unplanned bands, so that the ASIAT-4 satellite could be used for some of them, although different characteristics were possibly involved. The Pakistan

Administration appeared to have grouped together in the present request all the bands intended to be operated by the new satellite.

6.12 **Mr Alamri** noted that the request before the Board was for a relatively short extension and came from a developing country with special needs and a particular geographical situation as referred to in Article 44, No. 196, of the ITU Constitution. The networks would be essential in bringing vital telecommunications to the whole of the country. Moreover, there was a direct link between the restrictions resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic and the non-signing of a contract with the satellite manufacturer that might have an impact on the administration's ability to meet the regulatory deadlines involved. He would be in favour of granting the extension requested up to 30 June 2024.

6.13 The **Chairman** observed that, in order to grant the requested extension, the Board would have to be sure that there was a direct link between the impact of COVID-19 and the non-signing of the contract with the manufacturer that definitely made it impossible to meet the relevant deadlines. It might be premature to take a decision on the request at the present meeting.

6.14 **Mr Varlamov** said that there were a few grey areas in the request from Pakistan, for example concerning the statement that a contract was expected to be signed in the fourth quarter of 2020. However, he was convinced that, as no doubt with numerous other satellite ventures worldwide, restrictions relating to COVID-19 had impeded the timely pursuit of the project, resulting in the present instance in a case of *force majeure*. Endorsing the importance of the networks to Pakistan's telecommunication services as voiced by other Board members, he said he would be in favour of granting an extension of around six months.

6.15 **Ms Jeanty** said that, with the relevant bringing-into-use periods ending in December 2023/January 2024, and with no manufacturing and launch contracts yet signed, Pakistan's request might be viewed as somewhat premature; the administration could surely pursue its efforts to meet the deadlines and have recourse to the Board at a later stage if it proved necessary. Nevertheless, in light of the decisions taken by the Board at its 84th meeting regarding the pandemic as grounds for *force majeure*, it was only to be expected that administrations would submit COVID-19-related requests as soon as they could. The same appeared to be the case with some of the other extension requests before the present meeting. She noted that the six-month extension, requested in this case, was relatively short.

6.16 **Mr Henri** said that, over and above the question of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the decisions taken by the Board at its 84th meeting, each case had to be considered on its own merits. The request before the meeting was extremely elusive in some respects, referring for example to "due to some other unavoidable constraints, the project could not be started till 2017" in § 4 of Annex-A and containing no real information on key aspects such as a potential manufacturer, contract, and how exactly COVID-19 had impacted signing of the contract and the further development of the project. While sympathetic to Pakistan's situation, he would like to receive more precise information in several regards, with a view to deciding on the request at a future Board's meeting. Moreover, the seven-year regulatory periods would not expire for another three years or more, so there was still time to fully assess the case.

6.17 **Mr Talib** said that with the explanations provided by the Bureau and since restrictions caused by COVID-19 were clearly recognized as grounds for *force majeure*, he could support a decision whereby the Board acceded to the Administration of Pakistan's request on a provisional basis, subject to confirmation at the 86th meeting if in the meantime Pakistan provided additional information, *inter alia* confirming that the contract with the manufacturer had been signed and clarifying the specific bands concerned by the request.

6.18 **Mr Borjón** said that he sympathized with the difficult situation faced by Pakistan in its efforts to bring vital satellite communications to its entire population. He nevertheless agreed that the request was somewhat premature, as at the present stage it was unclear how long the project had been set back by the problems encountered and thus what length of extension might be justified. More information was required, particularly regarding the contract, and the Board should therefore defer its decision on the matter to its next meeting, by which time things would be clearer.

6.19 **Mr Varlamov** said that delays in the signing of the contract with the manufacturer could be due to uncertainties regarding how long it might take for Pakistan to fulfil its regulatory obligations, particularly as it was unclear how much delay might ultimately be caused by the pandemic. That might explain why Pakistan was submitting its request so early on in the process. If the matter was to be deferred to the 86th meeting subject to the receipt of additional information, it was nevertheless important to send a positive signal to the Administration of Pakistan so that it could sign the contract in the knowledge that it had sufficient time and flexibility to fulfil all its obligations.

6.20 **Mr Alamri** endorsed those comments. Given the expense involved, it was important for a developing country like Pakistan to have some degree of certitude when pursuing a satellite project. The extension requested was for a mere six months, and there was no reason not to grant it at the present meeting.

6.21 **Mr Mchunu** said that he would prefer to grant the extension at the present meeting, as the request invoking the COVID-19 pandemic met the four conditions for *force majeure*. He would nevertheless not oppose coming back to the case at the Board's 86th meeting.

6.22 **Mr Hoan** said that certain information was indeed missing regarding the manufacturing contract. However, in the past the Board had based its decisions on extensions on the grounds of *force majeure* on whether or not *force majeure* existed, and not on matters relating to contracts or whether or not coordination had been completed, etc. In many cases, the Board's decision could be decisive to whether or not an administration continued with a satellite project. In the present case, the contract was expected to be signed in the last quarter of 2020, and the six-month extension was perfectly reasonable. The Board should grant the request at the present meeting. To defer its decision to the next meeting might lead Pakistan to call into question the entire project, and in the past the Board had not deferred such decisions to subsequent meetings.

6.23 **Mr Azzouz** said that the Board should grant the six-month extension requested, on condition that the Administration of Pakistan provided documentation to the Board's 86th meeting bearing out the fact that a contract with a manufacturer had been signed by then.

6.24 **Ms Hasanova** fully endorsed the comments made by Mr Alamri and Mr Varlamov, and reiterated her view that the Board should grant the six-month extension at the present meeting.

6.25 **Mr Varlamov** said that there appeared to be consensus that the present case constituted *force majeure*. The problem facing the Board was that of defining a limited and qualified period of extension that would meet Pakistan's requirements, bearing in mind that it might not be admissible for Pakistan to submit a further request for extension based on *force majeure* if an extension granted by the Board at the present juncture proved inadequate. The Board might therefore confirm its view that the case was one of *force majeure*, thus sending a positive signal to the Administration of Pakistan, but request further information before taking a final decision on the length of the extension to be granted.

6.26 **Mr Henri** said that, although the case before the Board contained elements of *force majeure*, he would need to receive more information in order to be confident that it fully satisfied the four conditions therefor. The Board might inform the Administration of Pakistan accordingly, and defer its decision to the 86th meeting.

6.27 Regarding the question that arose during informal discussions of whether multiple requests for extension invoking *force majeure* relating to COVID-19 could be considered by the Board for a single network, the **Chairman** subsequently informed the Board that she had consulted the ITU Legal Adviser on the question. He had indicated that the assumption was that requests for more than one such extension were receivable but only if the administration concerned could demonstrate that it had been impossible to foresee how much the situation would deteriorate and the extent of the delays involved. Even if the deterioration had been foreseeable, an additional extension could be granted if the consequences of the deterioration were insurmountable and irresistible, making it impossible for the administration concerned to meet the deadline of the initial extension.

6.28 She went on to note that, although sympathy had been expressed for Pakistan in its present predicament, it had not submitted sufficient information to demonstrate that the four conditions for *force majeure* were met in its case. For example, it was not clear why it had been impossible to sign the contract with the manufacturer given the electronic means available in today's connected world. She therefore proposed that the Board conclude on the matter as follows:

"The Board carefully considered the request from the Administration of Pakistan, as presented in Document RRB20-3/3, to extend the regulatory deadline to bring into use the frequency assignments to the PAKSAT-MM1-38.2E-KA and PAKSAT-MM1-38.2E-FSS satellite networks. The Board indicated its sympathy with the Administration of Pakistan for the difficulties encountered and noted that:

- The PAKSAT-MM1-38.2E-KA and PAKSAT-MM1-38.2E-FSS satellite networks were part of a multi-year effort to provide reliable telecommunication services in remote areas within its territory;
- The satellite project was at an early stage with regulatory deadlines for bringing into use frequency assignments on 17 December 2023 and 26 January 2024;
- A contract with a manufacturer was scheduled to be signed in the first quarter of 2020 but delayed to the fourth quarter of 2020;
- The Administration of Pakistan had invoked *force majeure* due to the COVID-19 pandemic and Article 44, CS 196 (RR No. 0.3) in relation to the special needs of developing countries in its request for a 6-month extension of the regulatory period to bring into use the frequency assignments to the PAKSAT-MM1-38.2E-KA and PAKSAT-MM1-38.2E-FSS satellite networks.

The Board concluded that while there were elements of *force majeure* in the request, there was insufficient information at this time to determine whether the situation of these two satellite networks met all the conditions to qualify as a case of *force majeure*. The Board therefore instructed the Bureau to invite the Administration of Pakistan to provide additional information in sufficient detail to demonstrate how the COVID-19 restrictions made it impossible, and not just difficult, to meet regulatory deadlines, including the efforts and measures that have been and will be taken to meet these deadlines. A detailed rationale for the length of the extension requested should also be provided with supporting documentation (e.g. letter from the manufacturer, project milestones for construction and launch of the satellite)."

6.29 It was so agreed.

7 Issues and requests relating to the extension of regulatory time-limits: Submission by the Administration of Israel regarding the extension of the regulatory deadline to bring into use the frequency assignments to the AMS-C8-113E satellite network (Document RRB20-3/7)

7.1 **Mr Loo (Head SSD/SPR)** introduced Document RRB20-3/7, in which the Administration of Israel requested a two-year extension of the regulatory deadline for bringing into use the AMS-C8-113E satellite network – to 26 May 2024 – owing to a *force majeure* event – the COVID-19 pandemic – that prevented the network from being brought into use on the originally scheduled date of 26 May 2022. According to the administration, the submission met all four conditions for *force majeure*. Some of the information it contained was confidential, but the administration had authorized publication thereof. The annexes provided details of the complex web of relationships between the companies involved, with Annexes 4 and 5 specifically confirming that the manufacture of the satellite had been heavily impacted by the pandemic.

7.2 **Mr Varlamov** observed that, according to the submission, the satellite launch originally scheduled for the first quarter of 2022 had been "significantly delayed" by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on labour and supply markets and rescheduled for the fourth quarter of 2023. The submission invoked the four conditions for *force majeure*, but the explanations it provided did not justify an extension to 26 May 2024. The Board could ask the Administration of Israel to provide additional information. It could also limit the

extension to an earlier date, in the fourth quarter of 2023, enabling the administration to present its case to WRC-23 if any difficulties had arisen in connection with the launch in the meantime. WRC would then make a decision based on the information provided at that time.

7.3 **Mr Loo (Head SSD/SPR)** explained that the regulatory time-limit for the original launch date was 26 May 2022, with the launch planned about five months earlier. Since the launch was now scheduled for the fourth quarter of 2023, the requested date of 26 May 2024 provided roughly the same five-month window to provide a margin for any delays.

7.4 **Mr Borjón** said that he was in favour of granting the extension, as the submission met the conditions for *force majeure*, but that he could find no clear justification for a two-year extension in the request.

7.5 **Mr Henri** said that he was also in favour of granting an extension but questioned the need for two years. He understood the need for caution, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, but the pandemic should have waned significantly by the time the extension became applicable.

7.6 **Ms Jeanty** said that she was in favour of granting an extension, but was not sure that it should be for two years. She expressed surprise that the launch date had been rescheduled for nearly two years later. Usually launch dates were rescheduled within a few months. However, if the Board accepted the rescheduled launch date, it should have no difficulty in granting a two-year extension.

7.7 **Mr Hashimoto** said that if the rescheduled launch date was confirmed by the satellite launch company, the Board should accept the extension request on the grounds of *force majeure*.

7.8 The **Chairman** said that the delay apparently concerned the manufacturing of the satellite itself, which had been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

7.9 **Mr Talib** said that he agreed that the principle of *force majeure* applied in the case but that he had reservations about the length of the extension requested. He suggested that the Board ask the Administration of Israel to provide further information about the two-year delay in launch date.

7.10 **Mr Hoan** agreed that the conditions for *force majeure* were met. He shared his colleagues' concern at the absence of a justification for a two-year extension, but considered that such an extension was not too long and could be granted by the Board at its current meeting.

7.11 **Mr Alamri** said that it was clear from the document and its annexes that the submission concerned a multiparty project and met the conditions for *force majeure*; the information justifying a two-year extension was nonetheless insufficient and no evidence had been provided to support that request, e.g. a letter from the launch company or satellite manufacturer containing a specific date from which to extrapolate the timing of an extension. He agreed that the Board could ask the Administration of Israel to provide more information.

7.12 **Mr Mchunu** expressed support for granting an extension but agreed that it was difficult to determine how long the extension should be.

7.13 **Ms Hasanova** said that, in the absence of sufficient information on the launch date, the Board could ask the Administration of Israel for information justifying a two-year extension. It should nevertheless grant an extension at the present meeting because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

7.14 **Mr Azzouz** said that he had no difficulty in granting an extension, since the case was one of *force majeure*. However, since the submission provided no clear justification for a two-year extension, he suggested that the extension be granted to the end of WRC-23 and that the Administration of Israel be asked to provide additional information justifying an extension beyond that date.

7.15 The **Chairman** said that she was reluctant to grant an extension linked to WRC-23 or to a launch date in the fourth quarter of 2023, as the Board did not typically defer decisions to the conference. She preferred to ask for clarification of the need for a two-year extension. In so doing, the Board would also send

a signal to other administrations that their requests for extensions would benefit from very detailed submissions.

7.16 **Mr Vallet (Chief SSD)** pointed out that the submission by the Administration of Israel provided information on the relationships between all the players involved with the exception of the satellite network operator, Spacecom. He suggested that further information could be requested on that point.

7.17 The **Chairman** proposed that the Board conclude on the matter as follows:

“The Board carefully considered the request from the Administration of Israel, as contained in Document RRB20-3/7, to extend the regulatory deadline to bring into use the frequency assignments to the AMS-C8-113E satellite network. The Board noted that:

- A contract with a manufacturer was signed in the first quarter of 2019 and manufacturing had begun;
- A launch was planned for the first quarter of 2022 but rescheduled to the fourth quarter of 2023 with a regulatory deadline to bring into use the frequency assignments to the satellite network of 26 May 2022;
- The Administration of Israel had invoked *force majeure* due to the COVID-19 pandemic in its request for a 2-year extension of its regulatory deadline.

Based on the information provided, the Board noted that the case may meet all the conditions to qualify as a situation of *force majeure* due to manufacturing delays that had a direct causality with the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the Board requires additional information to determine whether the situation met all the conditions to qualify as a case of *force majeure* and to determine an appropriate time-limited extension. The Board therefore instructed the Bureau to invite the Administration of Israel to provide additional information in sufficient detail to describe the status of the satellite construction, to describe the relationship between Spacecom and the other partners in this venture and to quantify the delays experienced so far as well as to justify the length of the requested extension period, including how it was derived. Supporting documentation and/or information (e.g. letter from the manufacturer and launch service provider, initial and revised project milestones for the construction and launch of the satellite, etc.) should also be provided.”

7.18 It was so **agreed**.

8 Issues and requests relating to the extension of regulatory time-limits: Submission by the Administration of Indonesia requesting the extension of the regulatory time-limit to bring into use the frequency assignments to the PSN-146E satellite network (Document RRB20-3/9)

8.1 **Mr Sakamoto (Head SSD/SSC)** introduced Document RRB20-3/9, containing a request for extension of the regulatory time-limit until 31 May 2024 for bringing into use the frequency assignments to the PSN-146E satellite network in the bands 27-31 GHz and 17.7-21.2 GHz, on the grounds of *force majeure* caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. In its request, the Administration of Indonesia recalled the extension already provided for the same satellite network by WRC-19, up to 31 March 2023; cited the measures taken by Indonesia in response to the pandemic and how they were affecting the ability to bring into use the assignments in question; provided the administration’s rationale for considering the case as *force majeure* caused by the pandemic; and stressed the importance of the network to Indonesia’s commitment to bringing satellite communications to the whole of its population, pursuant to Article 44, No. 196, of the ITU Constitution.

8.2 **Ms Jeanty** noted that it might be premature to consider granting an extension for a regulatory deadline that was still some two and a half years hence. She also sought confirmation that the Board could grant a further extension to a deadline already extended by the WRC, bearing in mind that the initial

extension had been given by the conference once all coordination matters had been settled to the satisfaction of all countries concerned, possibly under certain conditions.

8.3 The **Chairman** considered that the Board would be competent to grant a further extension on the grounds of *force majeure* provided all the relevant conditions were met.

8.4 Following comments by **Ms Hasanova** and the **Chairman, Mr Sakamoto (Head SSD/SSC)** confirmed that a contract with the manufacturer had been signed in 2019, prior to WRC-19.

8.5 **Ms Hasanova** said that the administration's request appeared to be fully justified and the extension requested was reasonable. The Board should accede to the request.

8.6 **Mr Borjón** agreed that the Board was fully competent to grant the further extension now requested. In establishing the initial extension, the conference could not have anticipated the situation of *force majeure* caused by the COVID-19 pandemic; *force majeure* was indeed unforeseeable and irresistible. The Board might nevertheless examine how long the extension should be – for example, perhaps up until WRC-23.

8.7 **Mr Hashimoto** recalled that the Board had already considered a similar case submitted by the Administration of Indonesia in the past, for which the WRC had already granted an extension. In his view, the Board could accede to the request provided there was no negative impact on other administrations. However, if the submission failed to provide adequate information on elements such as the satellite manufacturer, as in the case of request to the present meeting by the Administration of Pakistan, the Board should deal with it in the same way.

8.8 The **Chairman** noted that no other country had objected to the present request.

8.9 **Mr Varlamov** said that, to his understanding, the WRC had placed no limits on the Board's authority to consider cases of *force majeure*, and the Board was therefore competent to consider the present request for an additional extension. The Board was not being asked to review a decision taken by the WRC. No comments had been received from other administrations, which could be taken as confirmation that all coordination requirements had been satisfied, as taken into account by WRC-19. He could agree to grant an extension on the grounds of *force majeure*, but the same questions arose as with other requests before the meeting: how long should the extension be, and what was being done to advance the project? Each case was unique, but the Board must be consistent in its approach.

8.10 **Mr Talib** considered that the Board was fully competent to discuss the present request, as the situation of *force majeure* had arisen after the WRC had granted the initial extension. No other administrations had objected to the request. As the principle of recognizing COVID-19 as grounds for *force majeure* was accepted, it should certainly apply to the present case. The request provided ample information for the Board to take a decision on it. The length of the extension appeared to be reasonable and it should therefore be granted.

8.11 **Mr Henri** said that he sympathized with Indonesia's situation, but would like to receive additional information on how exactly the COVID-19 pandemic had impacted discussions between the different parties involved – manufacturer, launcher, investors – making it necessary to put off the bringing into use by a little more than one year up to 24 May 2024. He noted that the PSN-146E network had already benefited already from more than 10 years for its implementation. He would also like to receive clarification of the coordination status and the precise Ka-band assignments to which the extension would apply. To his understanding, the bringing-into-use deadline for the band 30-31 GHz would be 14 May 2025 after the requested extension.

8.12 **Mr Sakamoto (Head SSD/SSC)** confirmed Mr Henri's understanding. The fact that WRC-19 had granted an extension that had included the 30-31 GHz band might have been an oversight on the part of the conference. **Mr Vallet (Chief SSD)** added that, in its present request, the Administration of Indonesia appeared to have grouped together all the bands that were to be operated under the same network.

8.13 **Mr Azzouz** said that travel restrictions resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic were affecting everyone, and he wondered why the parties involved were not holding virtual meetings to replace physical meetings. The Board must be consistent in its handling of requests for extension, not least when establishing the lengths thereof vis-à-vis the delays actually incurred.

8.14 **Mr Alamri** said that the request on the grounds of *force majeure* caused by the COVID-19 pandemic appeared to be fully justified and reasonable, and no other countries had objected. Moreover, Indonesia was a developing country with special needs and a particular geographical situation. A contract had been signed with the manufacturer and operator. The Board should grant the extension requested up to 31 May 2024.

8.15 **Mr Hoan** agreed that the request for an extension was justifiably based on *force majeure* and should be granted. As to its duration, it was extremely difficult to assess the precise direct and indirect effects of the pandemic on the project, and he could therefore agree to grant the full extension requested.

8.16 **Mr Sakamoto (Head SSD/SSC)** subsequently informed the meeting that on 12 February 2020 the Bureau had received information to the effect that parts of the bands related to the case under consideration, namely 19.7-20.2 GHz and 29.5-30 GHz, had been brought into use on 15 October 2019. However, according to reliable information, they had ceased operating on 25 April 2020, but no notification of suspension had been submitted to the Bureau.

8.17 The **Chairman** proposed that the Board conclude on the matter as follows:

“The Board carefully considered the request from the Administration of Indonesia, as contained in Document RRB20-3/9, to extend the regulatory time-limit to bring into use the frequency assignments to the PSN-146E satellite network in the 17.7 - 21.2/27 - 31 GHz bands and taking into account additional information provided by the Bureau. The Board noted that:

- The regulatory deadline to bring into use the Ka-band frequency assignments to the satellite network was extended by WRC-19 from 25 October 2019 to 31 March 2023;
- A contract with a manufacturer was signed on 1 July 2019;
- For the band 30-31 GHz, the current regulatory deadline for bringing into use the frequency assignments was 14 May 2025;
- The Administration of Indonesia had invoked *force majeure* due to the COVID-19 pandemic and Article 44 CS 196 in relation to the special needs of developing countries in its request for a 14-month extension of the regulatory period to bring into use the Ka-band frequency assignments to the satellite network.

The Board concluded that while there were elements of *force majeure* in the request, there was insufficient information at this time to determine whether the situation met all the conditions required to be considered as a case of *force majeure*. The Board therefore instructed the Bureau to invite the Administration of Indonesia to provide additional information in sufficient detail to demonstrate how the restrictions imposed to combat the pandemic made it impossible, and not just difficult, to meet regulatory deadlines, including the efforts and measures that have been and will be taken to meet these deadlines. A detailed rationale for the length of the extension requested should also be provided with supporting documentation and/or information (e.g. letter from the manufacturer, initial and revised project milestones for the construction and launch of the satellite, status of the satellite construction, etc.).”

8.18 It was so **agreed**.

9 Issues and requests relating to the extension of regulatory time-limits: Submission by the Administration of India requesting the extension of the regulatory time-limit to bring into use the frequency assignments to the INSAT-EXK82.5E and INSAT-KUP-BSS(83E) satellite networks (Document RRB20-3/11)

9.1 **Mr Wang (Head SSD/SNP)** introduced Document RRB20-3/11, in which the Administration of India requested a two-year extension, on the grounds of *force majeure*, to the regulatory time-limit for bringing back into use and bringing into use the frequency assignments to the INSAT-EXK82.5E and INSAT-KUP-BSS(83E) satellite networks, to 3 January 2023 and 7 February 2023, respectively. The submission cited the COVID-19 pandemic and consequent country-wide lockdown, which had severely affected the movement of people and transportation and led to delays in satellite manufacturing, testing and launch. The case of INSAT-EXK82.5E, which had been the subject of submissions to the Board's 75th and 76th meetings, had also been considered at WRC-19, which had granted a three-month extension of the regulatory time-limit from 9 March to 30 June 2017 and accepted a request that the network filing be suspended as of 3 January 2018, with a time-limit for bringing back into use its frequency assignments of 3 January 2021. INSAT-KUP-BSS(83E), for its part, was in fact two networks – one providing a BSS downlink service, the other corresponding to the feeder link – and the regulatory time-limit in their case would expire on 7 February 2021. The document also contained two communications, one from the manufacturer and one from the launch service provider, confirming the role played by the pandemic in the launch delays.

9.2 In reply to a question from **Mr Talib**, he added that the submission provided no justification for an extension of two years. It referred to an anticipated delay of seven to eight months in the satellite launch but suggested that more time might be required owing to changes in the pandemic situation.

9.3 **Mr Henri** understood from the information submitted by India that the original planned launch date of the GSAT-24 satellite was originally foreseen in Q3/Q4 2020 and should be extended by eight months, so around Q3 2021 quite a bit earlier than January 2023, as requested by India. He was in favour of granting an extension for both networks on the grounds of *force majeure*, but rather for nine to twelve months instead of two years. Observing that the GSAT-24 satellite would apparently have on board BSS Plan and FSS Plan frequency assignments with BSS and FFS Plan filings separated by 0.5 degrees, and that current regulations did not allow a single satellite to operate frequencies in both plans in such cases, he suggested that the Board request the Administration of India to provide more information on the status of the GSAT-23 satellite and on which satellite would be used to bring into use the BSS Plan and FSS Plan filings. He also suggested that the Bureau be asked to maintain the relevant filings until such time as that information had been provided, preferably by the next RRB meeting.

9.4 The **Chairman** said that GSAT-24 was clearly the BSS satellite and GSAT-23 the FSS satellite. It was unclear, however, whether the satellites would be launched together or sequentially. Sequential launches might explain the need for a two-year extension.

9.5 **Mr Wang (Head SSD/SNP)** replied that the BSS and FSS filings concerned different orbital positions. The Bureau allows for some tolerance between the notified orbital position and the orbital position actually used but did not allow administrations to take advantage of that tolerance to use a single satellite to bring into use two orbital positions. According to the submission, two separate satellites were being manufactured and would be used to operate the INSAT-EXK82.5E and INSAT-KUP-BSS(83E) satellite networks respectively.

9.6 **Mr Azzouz** said that he had no difficulty granting the Administration of India an extension on the grounds of *force majeure* in connection with the COVID-19 pandemic. However, according to the communications appended to the submission, which were dated September 2020, the manufacturer planned to finish its work in the third quarter of 2020 and the satellite launch operator anticipated a delay of eight months. He therefore found it difficult to grant an extension for two years.

9.7 The **Chairman** pointed out that the satellite launch operator mentioned a delay of at least eight months. The submission itself referred to the growing number of cases of COVID-19 in India, the

unpredictability of the situation and the administration's desire to avoid having to request an extension for the same networks twice.

9.8 **Mr Borjón** said that there was no question that the case met the conditions for *force majeure*. India was one of the countries most impacted by COVID-19 and, as the administration stated in the document, it was uncertain when a vaccine would become available. The current regulatory time-limit was early 2021, making it very hard for the Board to request further information. The Board should make a decision at the present meeting. In view of the circumstances, he would be happy to grant an extension of two years.

9.9 The **Chairman** said that, given that the regulatory deadlines were indeed before the next Board meeting for both filings, the Board would have to decide on an initial measure at its present meeting if it considered that it needed more information to justify a two-year extension.

9.10 **Ms Jeanty** said that she accepted the *force majeure* arguments made in the submission. Viewpoints understandably varied on the period of the extension, but the Board should review the submission in relation to the other requests currently before it. The Board had to be consistent in all cases.

9.11 **Mr Alamri** agreed that the conditions for *force majeure* were met but shared previous speakers' concerns about the length of the extension requested. According to the communications annexed to the submission, he noticed that the expected delivery date of "3rd quarter of 2020" indicated in the communication from the manufacturer fell within the period of the current Board meeting, and the satellite launch operator anticipated a delay of eight months with further delay because of continued uncertainty. Given the proximity of the regulatory deadlines which would expire in early 2021, the Board had to decide on an extension at the present meeting. In view of the uncertainty surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic, he was in favour of granting a two-year extension.

9.12 **Mr Mchunu** expressed support for an extension of between one and two years, given that the regulatory deadlines would expire in early 2021.

9.13 **Mr Hashimoto** noted that the regulatory deadline of January 2021 was approaching rapidly and that the COVID-19 pandemic might well have an impact on the launch schedule. The Board should therefore grant an extension of two years for both networks.

9.14 **Mr Varlamov** agreed with previous speakers that the conditions for *force majeure* were met. The period of the extension required further thought, however. In the absence of any information in the submission on the status of the GSAT-23 satellite, the Board could take a decision in principle to extend the regulatory deadlines by two years at the present meeting and ask the Administration of India to inform the Bureau about the status of the satellites. In so doing, it would make it clear to the administration that further information was required.

9.15 **Ms Hasanova** said that, given that the regulatory deadlines would have expired by the next Board meeting, that the conditions for *force majeure* were met and that India was one of the countries most impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, she was in favour of granting a two-year extension at the present meeting.

9.16 **Mr Hoan** agreed with previous speakers that the conditions for *force majeure* were met and that an extension should therefore be granted for both networks at the present meeting. With regard to the duration thereof, the submission was very clear: one year would suffice if the situation were normal, but because there was no telling how the COVID-19 pandemic would evolve, and to avoid having to resubmit the case to the Board, the Administration of India had requested a two-year extension, which he therefore supported.

9.17 The **Chairman** proposed that the Board conclude on the matter as follows:

"The Board carefully considered the request from the Administration of India, as contained in Document RRB20-3/11, to extend the regulatory deadline to bring back into use the frequency assignments to the INSAT-EXK82.5E satellite network and bring into use the frequency assignments to the INSAT-KUP-BSS(83E) satellite network. The Board noted that:

- The GSAT-24 satellite was nearly completed and expected to be delivered by the third quarter of 2020, but no information was provided on the status of the GSAT-23 satellite;
- The launch of the GSAT-24 satellite was initially planned for the third quarter of 2020, with a regulatory deadline to bring into use the frequency assignments to the INSAT-KUP-BSS(83E) satellite network of 7 February 2021;
- The launch of the GSAT-23 satellite was initially planned for the fourth quarter 2020, with a regulatory deadline to bring back into use the frequency assignments to the INSAT- EXK82.5E satellite network of 3 January 2021;
- Launch campaigns are now expected to require eight months, instead of the typical two months under normal conditions;
- The Administration of India had invoked *force majeure* due to the COVID-19 pandemic in its request for a 2-year extension of its regulatory deadlines.

Based on the information provided, the Board concluded that the case related to the INSAT-KUP-BSS(83E) satellite network met all the conditions to qualify as a situation of *force majeure* due to launch delays that had a direct causality with the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the Board required additional information to determine whether the situation met all the conditions to qualify as a case of *force majeure* for the INSAT-EXK82.5E satellite network. In addition, the Board required additional information to determine an appropriate time-limited extension for bringing into use or bringing back into use the frequency assignments to the two satellite networks.

The Board therefore instructed the Bureau to invite the Administration of India to provide, in time for the 86th meeting of the Board, additional information in sufficient detail to describe the status of the GSAT-23 spacecraft construction, to quantify the delays experienced so far as well as to justify the length of the requested extension period, including how it was derived. Supporting documentation and/or information (e.g. letter from the manufacturer and launch service provider, initial and revised project milestones for the construction and launch of the satellite, etc.) should also be provided.

The Board further instructed the Bureau to continue to take into account the frequency assignments to these two satellite networks until the end of the 86th meeting.”

9.18 It was so **agreed**.

10 Requests for the cancellation of the frequency assignments to satellite networks under No. 13.6 of the Radio Regulations (Documents RRB20-3/4, RRB20-3/5 and RRB20-3/6)

Request for a decision by the Radio Regulations Board for the cancellation of the frequency assignments to the PHOBOS-GRUNT satellite network under No. 13.6 of the Radio Regulations (Document RRB20-3/4)

10.1 **Mr Loo (Head SSD/SPR)** introduced Document RRB20-3/4, containing the Bureau’s request for cancellation of the frequency assignments to the PHOBUS-GRUNT satellite network under RR No. 13.6.

10.2 The Board **agreed** to conclude on the request as follows:

“The Board considered the request by the Bureau for a decision on the cancellation of the frequency assignments to the PHOBOS-GRUNT satellite network under RR No. 13.6. The Board further considered that the Bureau had acted in accordance with RR No. 13.6 and had sent requests to the Administration of the Russian Federation to provide evidence of continuous operation of this satellite network and to identify the actual satellite which was currently in operation, followed by two reminder letters, to which no response had been received. Consequently, the Board instructed the Bureau to cancel from the MIFR the frequency assignments to the PHOBOS-GRUNT satellite network.”

Request for a decision by the Radio Regulations Board for the cancellation of the frequency assignments to the NANOACE satellite network under No. 13.6 of the Radio Regulations (Document RRB20-3/5)

10.3 **Mr Loo (Head SSD/SPR)** introduced Document RRB20-3/5, containing the Bureau's request for cancellation of the frequency assignments to the NANOACE satellite network under RR No. 13.6.

10.4 The Board **agreed** to conclude on the request as follows:

"The Board considered the request by the Bureau for a decision on the cancellation of the frequency assignments to the NANOACE satellite network under RR No. 13.6. The Board further considered that the Bureau had acted in accordance with RR No. 13.6 and had sent requests to the Administration of the United States to provide evidence of continuous operation of this satellite network and to identify the actual satellite which was currently in operation, followed by two reminder letters, to which no response had been received. Consequently, the Board instructed the Bureau to cancel from the MIFR the frequency assignments to the NANOACE satellite network."

Request for a decision by the Radio Regulations Board for the cancellation of the frequency assignments to the CICERO satellite network under No. 13.6 of the Radio Regulations (Document RRB20-3/6)

10.5 **Mr Loo (Head SSD/SPR)** introduced Document RRB20-3/6, containing the Bureau's request for cancellation of the frequency assignments to the CICERO satellite network under RR No. 13.6.

10.6 The Board **agreed** to conclude on the request as follows:

"The Board considered the request by the Bureau for a decision on the cancellation of the frequency assignments to the CICERO satellite network under RR No. 13.6. The Board further considered that the Bureau had acted in accordance with RR No. 13.6 and had sent requests to the Administration of the United States to provide evidence of continuous operation of this satellite network and to identify the actual satellite which was currently in operation, followed by two reminder letters, to which no response had been received. Consequently, the Board instructed the Bureau to cancel from the MIFR the frequency assignments to the CICERO satellite network."

11 Submission by the Administration of the United Arab Emirates regarding the orbital position tolerance to bring into use a geostationary satellite orbital position (Document RRB20-3/10)

11.1 **Mr Vallet (Chief SSD)** introduced Document RRB20-3/10, containing a submission from the Administration of the United Arab Emirates relating to the Bureau's internal practice for dealing with a situation where a satellite might need to operate no more than 0.5° away from its nominal orbital position, owing for example to overcrowding of that nominal orbital position. The Bureau had reported the practice to WRC-15 in the Director's report to the conference, in §3.2.4.1 (Station keeping of space stations) of WRC-15 Document 4(Add.2)(Rev. 1) but the conference had taken no substantive decision on the practice and therefore the Bureau had continued to apply it, encountering no problems in doing so. In its submission, the administration maintained that, owing to significant overcrowding of certain parts of the GSO orbit, it was not possible to accommodate all satellites within 0.5° of some nominal orbital positions without compromising their physical safety. It therefore proposed that the Bureau maintain its internal rule on the matter as the standard practice but allow a narrow exception for operations beyond 0.5° from the nominal orbital position under four conditions, as set out in the proposal. The administration outlined the advantages of the proposal, predicated on a clear commitment by the satellite operator that the network in question would not cause more interference, or seek more protection, than if it were operated at the filed nominal orbital position. It maintained that there were no disadvantages and requested that, if the Bureau did not consider that it could amend its internal rule itself, it submit the proposal to the Board for consideration. The

Bureau was doing so in order to ensure that all administrations would be aware of whatever decision was taken on the matter, just as they had been made aware of the internal rule at WRC-15.

11.2 Responding to questions from **Mr Hashimoto, Mr Azzouz, Ms Jeanty, Mr Hoan** and the **Chairman**, he said that the main recommendation made by the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA) was the same as that of the Inter-Agency Space Debris Coordination Committee, namely that there should be no overlap between the different station-keeping windows. There were not many overcrowded GSO orbital positions, but he could provide the details of some. The Bureau had encountered no difficulties in applying its internal rule to date. When administrations operated satellites up to 0.5° away from their nominal orbital position, no new interference calculations were effected; the Bureau simply accepted the administration's commitment not to cause more interference or claim more protection than if the satellite was operated at the nominal position. If an administration so requested, the Bureau could change the longitudinal tolerance of the network in the database, which would not change the network's protection date but would indicate different protection requirements since the administration's commitment would not be reflected in the database. Administrations generally did not make that request, and such requests were not straightforward to manage. In its proposal, the Administration of the United Arab Emirates did not indicate how much more the orbital tolerance should be than 0.5°, it simply said that the administration concerned should select the "closest orbital position to the nominal orbital position at which a non-overlapping station-keeping can be achieved".

11.3 **Mr Varlamov** noted that actual cases of satellite overcrowding within 0.5° of particular orbital positions were relatively rare, and such problems often came down to a question of coordination. In principle he would see no difficulty in accepting the proposal for a tolerance greater than 0.5°, but a specific value would have to be applied. It should nevertheless be clearly established that, whatever tolerance was agreed, one satellite could not bring into use networks at more than one nominal orbital position. **Mr Vallet (Chief SSD)** confirmed that understanding, which was in fact covered in the second part of the Bureau's internal rule, which the Administration of the United Arab Emirates had not reproduced in its contribution. He also provided explanations as to why the longitudinal rather than other dimensions was taken into account in measures to ensure the physical safety of satellites in cases of potential overcrowding vis-à-vis given orbital positions.

11.4 **Mr Henri**, referring to the submission's mention to "significant overcrowding of certain parts of the geostationary orbit", said that he, too, would wish to receive more information on GSO orbital positions deemed overcrowded and the satellites operating at them. Moreover, he suggested that the "Background" section of the submission might appear to slightly confuse the capability of satellites to maintain the relevant tolerances prescribed in the Radio Regulations for the purpose of assessing compatibility in terms of interference (frequency sharing), and the physical behaviour of satellites operating those frequencies. From a RR perspective, the notion of a congested orbital position could be more a question of frequency sharing than of number of satellites at one orbital location. He added also that other factors such as the inclination and altitude of the satellite should be considered. The current technology provided greater flexibility than in the past, and current practice showed that more than five satellites could operate safely at a given orbital position with accurate measurement of distance, elevation and azimuth angle information given either directly or via triangulation. He was also somewhat surprised and might not share the submission's suggestion that the Bureau might not be adhering to UNOOSA guidelines or practices. He noted that the reference to "a narrow exception for operations beyond $\pm 0.5^\circ$ ", could be resolved today by submitting a new filing, a common practice by administrations with filings separated with an orbital separation of 0.5° or less, as could be seen in the MIFR. The proposals before the Board were somewhat unclear and ambiguous, whereas they implied a major and potentially beneficial change to existing practice. Before the Board or Bureau sought to take a decision on the matter, the questions of orbital tolerance and GSO flexibility should be studied carefully within ITU-R – perhaps most appropriately in Working Party 4A.

11.5 Responding to questions by the **Chairman, Mr Vallet (Chief SSD)** said that the tolerance value of 0.5° had been looked into briefly by WRC-12 and WRC-15 in relation to the bringing into use of networks, but

no real conclusion had been reached on it. The value was based on the maximum tolerance allowed in RR Article 22 for satellite networks. Regarding the feasibility of implementing the four proposals set out in the submission, it would be possible to check the first (based on the information provided by the administration and publicly available information) and the second (closest orbital location to the nominal orbital position). The commitment in the third posed no problem, and the fourth was up to the administration itself. Until such time as studies were completed on the matter, the Bureau would continue to apply the existing internal rule without exceptions, since it had been brought to the attention of all administrations at the WRC. The Administration of the United Arab Emirates was probably making the present proposal because it might soon submit a specific case requiring an orbital tolerance of over 0.5°.

11.6 The **Chairman** said that at some stage consideration might have to be given to devoting a rule of procedure to the Bureau's internal rule, in the light of RR No. 13.12Ab). That possibility could be referred to the Working Group on the Rules of Procedure for discussion. She also noted that, although a general decision could not be taken until studies had been completed on the subject, specific cases could be brought before the Board if received in the meantime.

11.7 **Ms Jeanty** endorsed the Chairman's comment regarding a possible rule of procedure and agreed with Mr Henri that the proposal represented a major change that would have to be studied carefully before a decision could be taken on it. Nevertheless, implementation of the Bureau's existing internal rule appeared to pose no problem.

11.8 **Mr Varlamov** agreed that if any general decision was to be taken with a view to its practical implementation, the subject must first be studied very carefully.

11.9 **Mr Alamri** agreed with previous speakers that before taking any general decision on the matter it should first be studied carefully by the most appropriate ITU-R body, *inter alia* since WRC-15 had not seen fit to take any decision on the matter, given the link in the Radio Regulations to Article 22 in regard to the value applicable to station keeping, and since the Bureau did not make any calculations regarding the interference caused by operating at the tolerated orbital position. Regarding the second proposal in the submission, he would consider it risky to let the administration select the "closest orbital location to the nominal position" without specifying a limit; perhaps the administration should submit new filings for operations beyond 0.5° from the nominal orbital position. He agreed that the Board could examine any specific cases received that were not covered by the existing internal rule.

11.10 **Mr Henri, Mr Borjón, Mr Azzouz and Mr Varlamov** agreed that any cases not covered by the existing internal rule could be dealt with by the Board on a case-by-case basis.

11.11 The **Chairman** proposed that the Board conclude on the matter as follows:

"The Board considered in detail the submission by the Administration of the United Arab Emirates as contained in Document RRB20-3/10. The Board noted that:

- The Bureau has not encountered any difficulties in the application of the current procedure as described in § 3.2.4.1 of Document CMR15/4(Add.2)(Rev.1);
- No studies have been conducted by ITU-R on this matter; and
- The request represented a hypothetical scenario and not an actual situation.

Consequently, the Board concluded that it would be premature to develop a general rule of procedure on this issue. As a result, the Board decided that it could not accede to the request from the Administration of the United Arab Emirates. However, the Board indicated that this would not preclude the Board from considering exceptions that would allow satellite operations beyond $\pm 0.5^\circ$ from the nominal orbital position under special conditions, on a case-by-case basis."

11.12 It was so **agreed**.

12 Submission by the Administration of Saudi Arabia regarding the implementation of the RRB decisions on the coordination of satellite networks at 25.5°E/26°E in the Ku-band (Documents RRB20-3/12 and RRB20-3/DELAYED/4)

12.1 **Mr Sakamoto (Head SSD/SSC)** introduced Document RRB20-3/12, in which the Administration of Saudi Arabia, the notifying administration for the ARABSAT satellite network, provided information on the coordination of satellite filings in the Ku-band at orbital positions 25.5°E and 26°E. According to the document, coordination meetings between the administrations concerned (Saudi Arabia, France (for EUTELSAT) and the Islamic Republic of Iran) had resulted in great progress but the signing of a trilateral frequency coordination agreement was being “kept on hold for unrealistic reasons”. Since 2011, the Ku-band had been split between the Administrations of France and Saudi Arabia under an operational arrangement reached by all three administrations pursuant to decisions taken by the Board at its 55th, 56th, 58th and 63rd meetings, with no interference to either administration, France or Saudi Arabia. Orbital position 26°E was essential to ARABSAT, for which it was currently procuring a new satellite. The operational arrangement had been successfully implemented for nine years. ARABSAT was of the view that the coordination agreement should be concluded immediately, based on the current operational arrangement and under the supervision of the Director of BR.

12.2 In Document RRB20-3/DELAYED/4 – taken up by the Board for information – the Administration of France said that neither it nor its operator, EUTELSAT, had been consulted before the submission of Document RRB20-3/12 to the Board. It expressed the view that the Board’s assistance should only be invoked in cases in which administrations were unable to reach a satisfactory outcome themselves, and noted the statement that the coordination agreement had been “kept on hold for unrealistic reasons”. The agreement should include the Ka-band, which was also subject to the operational arrangement reached at the time. The Administration of France remained ready to sign a coordination agreement covering both the Ku- and the Ka-bands and requested the Board to encourage the administrations concerned to resume their discussions to that end.

12.3 In reply to a query from the **Chairman**, he said that to his understanding the Bureau had indeed been involved in the original coordination discussions.

12.4 In reply to queries from **Ms Jeanty, Mr Hoan, Mr Azzouz, Mr Talib** and **Mr Varlamov** about the scope of the coordination in terms of frequency bands, **Mr Vallet (Chief SSD)** said that the negotiations conducted by the three administrations concerned from 2009 to 2013 had related to frequency assignments in the Ku- and Ka-bands. All three administrations had frequency assignments in the Ku-band, but only the Administrations of France and Saudi Arabia had assignments in the Ka-band. The negotiations had resulted in an operational arrangement between ARABSAT and EUTELSAT but no coordination agreement had been signed. It now appeared that two of three administrations were ready to sign such an agreement.

12.5 In reply to a query from **Mr Azzouz** as to whether the Board could express its views on the delayed submission from the Administration of France because it was related to the original submission from the Administration of Saudi Arabia, the **Chairman** recalled that the Board had agreed at the start of the meeting that Document RRB20-3/DELAYED/4 would be included for information in relation to that agenda item. The Board could also note that the submission before it, Document RRB20-3/12, referred only to the Ku-band, whereas Document RRB20-3/DELAYED/4 referred to the Ka- and the Ku-bands, suggesting that the coordination discussions had covered more than one band.

12.6 **Mr Hashimoto** said that it was desirable to facilitate completion of the agreement between the parties concerned. The Bureau should therefore convene a coordination meeting, to be held under its supervision and to include the Administration of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

12.7 **Mr Talib** said that both administrations had the same goal: to continue the bilateral and multilateral coordination engaged by default. He therefore proposed that they pursue their coordination discussions under the auspices of the Bureau and turn to the Board should any issues arise.

12.8 **Mr Azzouz**, referring to the Board's decisions in earlier cases involving the Administrations of Greece and France and of the United Kingdom and Saudi Arabia, and to the successful results obtained thanks to the Bureau's involvement in the relevant discussions, said that the Board should encourage all three administrations to continue their coordination discussions in a spirit of goodwill and mutual respect in order to reach a satisfactory agreement that enabled all networks to operate, avoided all interference and ensured efficient use of the radio spectrum for geostationary orbits. It should also encourage the Bureau to assist the administrations to explore all possible means of reaching a formal agreement and report the results to the Board at a future meeting. Any issues that subsequently arose could be brought before the Board at that time.

12.9 The **Chairman** said that it was her understanding that the administrations concerned had already managed to avoid interference and ensure efficient use of the spectrum thanks to an operational arrangement that now had to be formalized.

12.10 **Mr Varlamov** agreed, adding that the Board's decision on the case should state that a technical solution had been found for both the Ku- and the Ka-bands and that there had been no complaints of interference. The Board should call on all the administrations concerned to hold discussions, as successful coordination would strengthen the situation de jure. The Bureau could act as a mediator and ensure the involvement of any other administrations concerned.

12.11 **Mr Mchunu** said that the Bureau should facilitate a coordination meeting of the parties aimed at concluding a coordination agreement.

12.12 **Ms Jeanty**, observing that the operational arrangement covering both bands seemed to have worked for many years and that parties now wanted to formalize it, said that the Board should encourage them to do so and to involve the Bureau should any difficulties arise.

12.13 **Ms Hasanova** said that it was important for all administrations to act in good faith and in accordance with the provisions of the ITU Constitution and Convention and of the Radio Regulations. Like previous speakers, she believed that the Board should encourage all the parties to continue their discussions with a view to reaching a formal coordination agreement.

12.14 **Mr Borjón** said that the Board should acknowledge the good results achieved by the three administrations to date in terms of the operational arrangement for use of the frequencies involved and encourage them to reach one or several coordination agreement(s), as required.

12.15 **Mr Hoan** expressed satisfaction at the absence of interference since 2011. Given that the Administration of Saudi Arabia appeared eager to sign a formal coordination agreement immediately and that the Administration of France appeared ready to resume discussions to that effect, the Board should encourage the parties concerned to formalize and sign such an agreement as soon as possible.

12.16 The **Chairman** proposed that the Board conclude on the matter as follows:

"The Board considered in detail the submission by the Administration of Saudi Arabia as contained in Document RRB20-3/12, and also considered Document RRB20-3/DELAYED/4 from the Administration of France for information. The Board noted with satisfaction that the satellites have been successfully operating for several years without any interference and that the parties were ready to resume discussions to finalize a coordination agreement. The Board decided to encourage the administrations concerned to formalize the coordination of their satellite networks at the position 25.5°E/26°E as soon as possible and instructed the Bureau to provide the necessary assistance to the administrations and to report on the progress to the 86th meeting of the Board.

Administrations concerned were encouraged to discuss any pending issue in a spirit of mutual cooperation to finalize the required coordination between their satellite networks to ensure operation without any harmful interference."

12.17 It was so **agreed**.

13 Submission by the Administration of the United Kingdom requesting consideration of interference issues affecting the reception of United Kingdom HF broadcasting transmissions (RR Article 12 refers) (Documents RRB20-3/13, RRB20-3/DELAYED/1 and RRB20-3/DELAYED/2)

13.1 **Mr Vassiliev (Chief TSD)** introduced Document RRB20-3/13, containing a submission in which the Administration of the United Kingdom, making specific reference to Article 12, No. 173, of the ITU Constitution (corrected in Document RRB20-3/DELAYED/1 to refer to No. 173 of the ITU Convention), requested the Board to consider the case of harmful interference to the reception of its HF broadcasting stations. The administration was certain that the harmful interference received outside the territory of China came from within China. It recalled the background to the case; the results of the process bilaterally discussed but not formally signed at the meeting held in June 2019, as reflected in a document from that meeting; the continued reception of harmful interference after the meeting and some United Kingdom's fruitless attempts to contact the Chinese Administration by fax to report the issue; and the fact that on 18 March 2020, the Chinese Administration had responded that, for two frequencies documented in the United Kingdom's initial Appendix 10 reports, monitoring investigations from 14 to 19 February 2020 showed no suspicious signals under the jurisdiction of China. The Administration of the United Kingdom went on to review the current status of discussions between the parties and the different measures that might be taken to attempt to resolve the problems encountered. It concluded that none of them would achieve positive results, and therefore requested consideration of the case under Article 12, No. 173, of the ITU Convention.

13.2 He drew attention, for information, to Document RRB20-3/DELAYED/2, in which the Administration of China commented on the submission in Document RRB20-3/13. It stressed its commitment to resolving the harmful interference cases reported by the Administration of the United Kingdom and its respect for the contents of the summary record of the bilateral meeting held in June 2020 with the assistance of the Bureau. It responded to the assertions regarding inactive/inoperative fax machines; outlined the steps it had taken to respond to all the reports of harmful interference, bearing out how seriously it took its international obligations and commitments; and refuted the assertion that China had brought several HFBC issues to the attention of the Board since June 2019. Regarding a case referred to by the Administration of the United Kingdom on 6 195 kHz dating back to August 2017, it clarified that its letter of response had stated that "triangulation located a site outside China." It proposed that the two administrations continue to cooperate in eliminating harmful interference by exercising the utmost goodwill and mutual assistance in the application of RR Article 15, rather than seeking the intervention of the Bureau when there was still room for bilateral coordination and communication as the best way forward.

13.3 **Mr Azzouz** noted that the two administrations were not in agreement on the location of the source of the interference caused; he wondered whether the Bureau had undertaken any international monitoring to ascertain the location.

13.4 **Mr Vassiliev (Chief TSD)** said that the Bureau could not carry out any international monitoring unless specifically requested to do so by an administration, under RR No. 15.43. The main way to resolve interference cases was between administrations, and it would be not be desirable to depart from that approach.

13.5 Responding to questions by **Mr Varlamov**, **Mr Alamri** and **Mr Hashimoto**, he outlined the manner in which the HF broadcasting schedules were coordinated and agreed to twice a year at the High Frequency Coordination Conference (HFCC). As was clear from the situation in 2018, even when the Administration of the United Kingdom had opted to use a different frequency it had still encountered interference. The frequencies agreed to by HFCC were submitted to the Bureau under RR Article 12, published in a circular letter and posted on the ITU website, enjoying the status of frequencies endorsed by ITU and recognized as being in compliance with the Radio Regulations, but not enjoying the international recognition resulting from entry in the MIFR under RR Article 11. All the reports of interference submitted by the United Kingdom Administration were in regard to its stations published in the seasonal schedule, and the interference

received did not come from stations coordinated by Administration of China in the schedule. The “document” referred to by the United Kingdom Administration and the “summary record” referred to by the Administration of China were one and the same; the Bureau did not have a copy of it because BR had been asked to leave the June 2019 meeting before it ended.

13.6 The **Chairman** noted that, as the stations were registered and included in the schedule under Article 12, Article 15 became applicable if harmful interference was caused to them, with administrations urged to show the utmost goodwill and mutual assistance in their efforts to resolve the problems.

13.7 **Ms Jeanty** wondered what role the Board would play if No. 173 of the ITU Convention was to be applied. She recalled that cases of harmful interference caused by Cuban stations to United States stations had been brought before the Board on several occasions between 2007 and 2009.

13.8 **Mr Vassiliev (Chief TSD)** said that the Board’s role would be to consider, and endorse if it saw fit, draft recommendations drawn up by the Bureau, and possibly make other recommendations.

13.9 The **Director** noted that if use was not to be made of international monitoring stations, the Bureau could do little more than establish a record of the correspondence exchanged between the two administrations concerned, and the Board already had that correspondence. The key lay possibly in the reference in CV 173 to “make investigations”. However, one of the administrations maintained that no investigations needed to be made, as it was sure of the location of the harmful interference, whereas the other was opposed to intervention by the Bureau, preferring to pursue bilateral coordination.

13.10 **Ms Hasanova** suggested that one option might be for the Board to request the Bureau to prepare a technical report, outside the scope of No. 173, for consideration by the Board.

13.11 **Mr Vassiliev (Chief TSD)** said that, in order to prepare a technical report, the Bureau would have to know the source of the interfering signal, which, the **Chairman** noted, brought things back to the question of international monitoring.

13.12 **Mr Hoan** said that he shared the concerns expressed by the Director regarding recourse to international monitoring in the light of the positions adopted by the two administrations. The resolution of HF broadcasting interference was no straightforward matter, not least because the wanted signal would be detected at the monitoring site far more easily than the unwanted signal. Given the goodwill and spirit of cooperation demonstrated by both parties, he would be in favour of encouraging them to seek to resolve the interference through mutual cooperation, with the Bureau’s assistance and recourse to international monitoring if they so wished.

13.13 **Mr Varlamov** said that the Board should be careful not to accept at face value the assertions made by one administration while ignoring those made by the other. The Administration of China clearly stated, based on triangulation, that the source of interference in one case was located outside China, whereas the Administration of the United Kingdom maintained that the interference came from within China, but based its assertions on vague references such as to “several remote receivers” and “remote receiving stations” (case regarding 12 065 kHz). It was unclear what those receivers were and whether they were capable of carrying out the required measurements. It also begged the question of whether an administration could complain of harmful interference outside its national territory; it seemed no other reports of harmful interference had been made in the countries around China.

13.14 **Mr Vassiliev (Chief TSD)** agreed that it was unclear what equipment had been used to measure and locate the interference in the 12 065 kHz case. To his understanding, listeners, for example, in embassies in different countries, could complain of interference in the form of noise and music. The question of whether administrations could complain about interference outside their national territories – for example, in their embassies abroad – was unclear in regard to terrestrial services but might have arisen in regard to space services.

13.15 **Mr Vallet (Chief SSD)** confirmed that there were precedents of such complaints in regard to space services, when for example a notifying administration complained of interference to an uplink, or regarding a downlink when complaints were made of interference by other satellites to reception. With space services, cases involved not only each administration responsible for stations on its own territory, but also the administration responsible for the space station. Article 15, however, had been developed when only terrestrial communications had existed, and therefore drew no distinction between space and terrestrial services. It spoke only of administrations receiving interference.

13.16 **Mr Talib** expressed doubt as to whether much progress would be made by asking the two administrations to pursue coordination in order to resolve the issue; additional information was clearly required. He suggested that the Bureau be requested to prepare a report to the Board's 86th meeting providing technical information on the case, using international monitoring to triangulate the sources of interference, and laying out the regulatory aspects of the case taking account of the relevant provisions of the Radio Regulations and the ITU Constitution and Convention.

13.17 **Mr Azzouz** suggested that the Board should request the Administration of the United Kingdom to provide the Bureau with full details of the interference detected, so that it could be studied by the BR experts. It should also allow the two administrations further opportunity to pursue coordination, with support from the Bureau. Lastly, it should request the Bureau to report to the 86th meeting the results of the coordination efforts and of the technical study and investigations, allowing the Board to take a decision on the matter at its 86th meeting.

13.18 **Mr Borjón** said that, in order to take a decision on the matter, the Board required a factual report from the Bureau analysing the tests actually conducted by the Administration of the United Kingdom, recognizing that references to hearing interference when listening to devices was inadequate in terms of determining sources of interference. The administration could be requested to provide all necessary information, as could the Administration of China. International monitoring could be used to ascertain the facts of the case. Based on a report by the Bureau, the Board could take a fully impartial decision at its 86th meeting.

13.19 **Mr Alamri** said that, given the status of the frequencies concerned, which did not enjoy international recognition as such, it was clear that the case involved a technical problem which should be solved at the technical level. Moreover, No. 173 of the ITU Convention allowed administrations to request the Bureau's assistance on harmful interference without necessarily bringing matters to the Board. At no point had the Administration of the United Kingdom invoked RR No. 15.43 requesting the Bureau to check the source of the interference. A spirit of cooperation and goodwill had been demonstrated by both administrations thus far, despite the COVID-19 situation. There was therefore no need to investigate all the technical details of the case: the Board should encourage the two administrations to further seek to resolve the issue through mutual cooperation, without necessarily involving the Bureau or Board.

13.20 **Mr Varlamov** supported the way forward proposed by Mr Azzouz. Both administrations should be asked to provide full details of how they had reached their conclusions regarding the location of the source of interference. They should also be encouraged to continue bilateral negotiations. The Bureau should report back to the Board at a future meeting. If further coordination meetings proved fruitless, the Bureau could be asked to recommend the best way forward, with options possibly including international monitoring or changes to the schedule of frequencies.

13.21 The **Chairman** proposed that the Board conclude on the matter as follows:

"The Board considered Document RRB20-3/13 and also considered Document RRB20-3/DELAYED/1 from the Administration of the United Kingdom and Document RRB20-3/DELAYED/2 from the Administration of China for information. The Board noted that the Administration of the United Kingdom requested the consideration of this case under Article 12, CV No. 173, which is under the purview of the Bureau. Nevertheless, since the

Board had considered this case in previous meetings, the Board appreciated receiving updates on the situation since the 81st meeting from both administrations. The Board also noted that:

- The Administration of the United Kingdom continued to experience harmful interference to the reception of its HF broadcasting programmes published in accordance with RR Article 12 despite bilateral coordination discussions;
- The source of the interference had not been confirmed by the Administration of China, but the administration remained committed to pursuing coordination efforts to resolve the problem of harmful interference;
- Additional information was required to fully analyse the case.

Consequently, the Board urged both administrations to continue their efforts with the utmost goodwill and mutual cooperation in order to resolve the reported case of harmful interference to the reception of the HF broadcasting programmes in accordance with the HF broadcasting schedules.

The Board also instructed the Bureau to:

- Request the Administration of the United Kingdom to provide the Bureau with details of the interference cases reported since the June 2019 coordination meeting, including details of their monitoring efforts and findings;
- Request the Administration of China to provide the Bureau with details of their monitoring efforts and findings;
- Analyse the information received and present a report for consideration by the Board at the 86th meeting, noting that if the results were inconclusive, the use of international monitoring stations would be considered.”

13.22 It was so **agreed**.

14 Election of the vice-chairman for 2021

14.1 Having regard to No. 144 of the ITU Convention, the Board **agreed** that Mr Varlamov, Vice-Chairman of the Board for 2020, would serve as its chairman in 2021.

14.2 The **Chairman** reminded the Board that its vice-chairman for 2021 would be elected from among the Board members from Region D. Following consultations between them, the three members from that region had agreed to put forward the candidacy of Mr Azzouz for vice-chairman of the Board in 2021.

14.3 The Board **agreed** to elect Mr Azzouz as its vice-chairman for 2021 and thus as its chairman for 2022.

14.4 **Mr Azzouz** said that he considered it a great honour to represent Region D. He thanked the members of the Board for the trust in his abilities that his election expressed and said that he would be drawing on their experience in discharging his duties.

14.5 The **Director** congratulated Mr Azzouz on his election and assured him and Mr Varlamov of the Bureau’s total support in the coming year.

15 Confirmation of the dates of the 86th meeting of the Board and indicative dates for subsequent meetings

15.1 The Board **agreed** to confirm the dates for its 86th meeting as 22-26 March 2021 and to tentatively confirm the dates of its subsequent meetings in 2021 as:

87th meeting: 12-16 July 2021

88th meeting: 1-5 November 2021.

16 Approval of the summary of decisions (Document RRB20-3/14)

16.1 The Board **approved** the summary of decisions as contained in Document RRB20-3/14.

17 Closure of the meeting

17.1 The **Chairman** said that she had been honoured to chair the Board in 2020, even though the circumstances had not been as expected, and was proud at what had been accomplished. She was grateful for the support she had received from her colleagues on the Board and the Director and his team at the Bureau. She thanked all those who had provided essential services and wished the incoming chairman every success.

17.2 The Board members took it in turn to congratulate the Chairman on her professional management of virtual meetings throughout the year and to thank the Bureau and other ITU staff for enabling the Board to hold successful meetings in challenging circumstances.

17.3 The **Director** congratulated the Chairman on a job well done during a difficult year and the Board members for being constructive and positive, making it possible to reach agreement on all points. In particular, he praised the Board's willingness to tackle certain sensitive issues in response to the Bureau's request for their assistance. He concluded with sincere hopes for world health and an end to the COVID-19 pandemic.

17.4 The **Chairman** closed the meeting at 1620 hours on Tuesday, 27 October 2020.

The Executive Secretary:
M. MANIEWICZ

The
C. BEAUMIER

Chairman: