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| **World Radiocommunication Conference (WRC-15)Geneva, 2-27 November 2015** |  |
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| **PLENARY MEETING** | **Document 110-E** |
| **18 October 2015** |
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| Colombia |
| PROPOSALS FOR THE WORK OF THE CONFERENCE |
| Proposal to extend the deadline for bringing into operation of the Colombian satellite system “SATCOL” 1B 70.9° West |
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Background

Owing to the difficulties experienced by the Administration of Colombia in bringing into use the frequency assignments for network SATCOL 1B, it presented to the Plenipotentiary Conference (Busan, 2014), which met from 20 October to 7 November 2014, its document CLM 87 “*Extension of the deadline for bringing into operation of the Colombian satellite system “SATCOL” at orbital positions 70.9° West, 38° West and 131° West*”. In response to that request, PP-14 included the following recommendation, stemming from the report by the Chairman of COM5[[1]](#footnote-1), in the minutes of the Plenary:

“Recommendation 6: Regarding the SATCOL 1B (FSS) satellite network, should the Administration of Colombia not be in a position to comply with the regulatory deadlines for bringing into use, it is recommended that the Administration of Colombia (Republic of) bring the matter to the attention of WRC-15 for action, as appropriate, taking into account Article 44 of the ITU Constitution and the difficulties this developing country has and is experiencing bringing the frequency assignments into use. On an exceptional basis, it is also recommended that the Radiocommunication Bureau should take any appropriate action to facilitate consideration of the case by the 2015 World Radiocommunication Conference.”

It is important to recall that, in response to Resolution 80, the Radio Regulations Board (RRB) observed in its report to WRC-2000 that statutory time-frames such as those in No. 11.48 might often be insufficient for developing countries to be able to complete the regulatory requirements as well as the design, construction and launch of satellite systems.

In this respect, it is important to note that the Government of Colombia is continuing to make tremendous efforts and has confronted various difficulties over the past seven years in order to bring this orbital position into use, with due respect for all of the processes laid down in the Radio Regulations for exploitation of the orbit/spectrum resource. Those efforts and difficulties have included the following:

1 Opening up of a competitive bidding process for the acquisition of a satellite in Colombia in 2010. Following various rounds of negotiation, and in the face of technical difficulties, that process was abandoned;

2 As a result, and in order to meet the country’s connectivity requirements, the National Government has developed a national fibre-optic network in recent years, providing broadband connectivity to 96 per cent of the country’s municipal head-ends;

3 The foregoing notwithstanding, despite the deployment of the national fibre-optic network, and bearing in mind the country’s difficult and mountainous terrain, there are some areas of Colombian territory which, owing to their geographic location, are without connectivity or internet access, and for which the satellite solution is the only alternative for providing access. This is the case of some 30 000 public schools in remote parts of the country that are still without broadband access, affecting a school population of more than 2 million children;

4 Subsequently, public calls for tenders aimed at the satellite industry were held with a view to identifying synergies that would enable the development of orbital positions to be managed by Colombia vis-à-vis ITU.

Despite these measures, it has not yet been possible to overcome the difficulties experienced in developing the orbital position, or those that are typically encountered when seeking to develop satellite projects in the KA band in tropical areas such as Colombia. It is for these reasons that the Government of Colombia is currently preparing a strategy to tackle these challenges by using the SATCOL 1B network. This strategy, which will include the request to extend the deadline for bringing the orbital position into use, will be submitted by Colombia to WRC-15 for examination, in accordance with the minutes of the PP-14 Plenary.

In addition, please be informed that the Administration of Colombia has submitted a new API (advance publication information) to ITU’s Radiocommunication Bureau for a Colombian satellite network, known as COLSAT-1A-70.9W, at position 70.9°W. This API was published in the BR IFIC on 16 July 2014, and reaffirms the Colombian Administration’s interest in accessing the orbit/spectrum resource at the orbital position in question.

It is important to note that, in December 2014, this Administration undertook administrative due diligence with the Radiocommunication Bureau, pursuant to Resolution 49 of the Radio Regulations, and submitted notices for the SATCOL 1B network, thereby meeting the requirements of the notification procedure for satellite networks within the established time-frame.

Proposal

In line with the foregoing, I respectfully request that, in accordance with the decision of the Plenipotentiary Conference (Busan, 2014) and the provisions of Article 44 of the ITU Constitution, the Plenary of WRC-15 approve the continued registration of the SATCOL 1B network after 21 December 2014 and the extension of the deadline for bringing into operation the Colombian satellite system SATCOL 1B 70.9° W for three years as of the end of WRC-15.

This Administration is fully confident that accepting Colombia’s proposal will give the country the opportunity to bring this satellite project to a successful conclusion. Although the project has faced the difficulties associated with such projects in developing countries, it will be fundamental to bridging the digital divide and making broadband available to the most marginalized and disadvantaged communities in Colombia, in accordance with the Sustainable Development Goals recently adopted by the UN.

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1. Document S14-PP-C-0161!!MSW-E. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)