

NEWS RELEASE
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For immediate release

IARU Team on the Job as WRC-03 Opens in Geneva

Geneva, 11 June - The International Telecommunication Union's World Radiocommunication Conference 2003 got underway on Monday morning, 9 June, at the Geneva International Conference Center next to ITU Headquarters. More than 2,600 delegates and other participants are expected to attend the four-week conference. As the first order of business, Dr. Veena Rawat of Canada was elected Chairman of the Conference by acclamation.

There are several items on the conference agenda that are of great importance to radio amateurs, so the International Amateur Radio Union has fielded its largest team of observers at an ITU conference in more than a decade. The core IARU team consists of IARU President Larry Price, W4RA, Wojciech Nietyksza, SP5FM, Michael Owen, VK3KI, Ken Pulfer, VE3PU, and David Sumner, K1ZZ. Past ITU Radiocommunication Bureau Director Robert W. Jones, VE7RWJ, is serving as a consultant to the IARU. Also present on national delegations are approximately a dozen other radio amateurs who are representing their national IARU member-societies along with members of IARU regional executive committees serving in this and other capacities. Among the latter are IARU Vice President David Wardlaw, VK3ADW, who is on the Australian delegation; Region 1 Chairman Ole Garpestad, LA2RR, who is on the Norwegian delegation; Region 1 Vice Chairman Tafa Diop, 6W1KI, observing for the African Telecommunications Union; Region 2 Vice President Dario Jurado, HP1DJ, observing for the IARU; Region 3 Chairman Fred Johnson, ZL2AMJ, who is on the New Zealand delegation; Region 3 Secretary Keigo Komuro, JA1KAB, who is on the delegation of Japan; and Region 3 Director Y. S. Park, HL1IFM, who is on the delegation of the Republic of Korea. We will list the other national delegates, who are playing important roles on behalf of Amateur Radio, in a future release. In addition there are literally dozens of radio amateurs who are present in a wide range of professional capacities.

Amateur Radio is but a small part of the conference, which is trying to complete work on more than 40 agenda items. Three are especially important to us: realignment of 7 MHz allocations (agenda item 1.23), revision of the regulations governing the amateur and amateur-satellite services (agenda item 1.7), and consideration of an allocation for satellite-borne synthetic aperture radars (SARs) in the 70-cm band (agenda item 1.38). Two other agenda items that could potentially have a great impact are the drafting of an agenda for the next WRC scheduled for 2007 (agenda item 7.2) and the revision of footnotes to the Table of Frequency Allocations (agenda item 1.1). A member of the IARU core team has been assigned to follow each of these five items, with the most focus being on 7 MHz.

Except for SARs (Committee 5) and future conference agendas (Committee 7) the critical agenda items for Amateur Radio are all in Committee 4. The committee chairman is Eberhard George of Germany. Mr. George is a licensed amateur, DL7IH, but of course his selection to chair a key committee was based on his years of experience in ITU affairs and not on his holding of an amateur license.

Committees 4 and 5 held their organizational meetings on Monday afternoon and set up Working Groups that met on Tuesday and Wednesday. Working Group 4C chaired by Alan Ashman of Australia has agenda items 1.23 and 1.7, among others. Sub-Working Groups of 4C have been established but have not yet met. These include 4C1 chaired by Don Messer of the United States (agenda item 1.23 and two other agenda items related to HF broadcasting, 1.2 and 1.36) and 4C3 chaired by Keigo Komuro, JA1KAB (Article 25 of the international Radio Regulations, agenda item 1.7.1).

After just the first three days there are, of course, no final decisions on any issues and there has not even been formal discussion of the major issues although there has been plenty of informal discussion in the hallways and over coffee.

It is the intention of the IARU core team to send timely and accurate reports of final decisions reached on Amateur Radio issues. It is important to remember that nothing is final until the second reading of a document in the Plenary, which in the case of controversial issues will not take place until the final week of the conference, 30 June - 4 July.

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IARU Secretary
For the IARU WRC-03 Team