

Chair McMorris Rodgers

What are the Administration's priorities at the WRC?

As participants on the United States delegation to the upcoming WRC, the FCC is supportive of the ITU's core mission of promoting connectivity, broadband access, and fostering a flexible international regulatory framework for an evolving telecommunications ecosystem.

Since the WRC-23 agenda was defined at the previous WRC in 2019, FCC staff has been engaged in the four-year ITU preparatory study cycle for WRC-23, fostering opportunities for new satellite and terrestrial operations, participating in sharing studies to ensure compatibility of various spectrum access technologies.

Domestically, the FCC collaborates with the public and private sector to develop priorities in line with the FCC's own domestic initiatives. The FCC also collaborates with our partners at the federal level to ensure that the access to new spectrum bands considers vital U.S. interests in science, safety and national security.

The FCC's engagement to WRC-23 is focused on three core themes: (1) promoting and harmonizing FCC's recent domestic actions, (2) supporting the emerging space economy and (3) establishing strategies to meet the increasing demands for next generation wireless technologies. Below, we identify some important WRC-23 agenda items that fall into these themes.

- One key item for the FCC is an agenda item (AI 1.2) to identify additional mid-band spectrum for International Mobile Telecommunications (IMT) mobile 5G use on a primary basis. This agenda item covers the following frequency bands: 3,300-3,400 MHz, 3,600-3,800 MHz, 6,425-7,025 MHz, 7,025-7.125 MHz and 10.0-10.5 GHz. The FCC is working to ensure the actions on these bands are consistent with domestic priorities and decisions. For example, in the 6,425-7,025 MHz band, we are working to make sure there is no change to the Radio Regulations that could undermine unlicensed use of the spectrum.
- The FCC is also supportive of an agenda item (AI 1.19) that is considering a new primary allocation in the space-to-Earth to the Fixed-Satellite-Service in the 17.3-17.7 GHz band in the region in which the United States is included. Last year, the FCC adopted rules for this type of operation. The allocation will allow satellite operators additional spectrum for broadband services.
- Another key agenda item is one which would identify frequency bands for earth stations in motion or ESIMs that are communicating with non-geostationary orbit satellites (NGSO) (AI 1.16). The frequency bands that are currently under study are: bands 17.7-18.6 GHz, 18.8-19.3 GHz and 19.7-20.2 GHz (space-to-Earth) and 27.5-29.1 GHz and 29.5-30 GHz (Earth-to-space). ESIMs will provide broadband connectivity via satellite to aircraft and ships.
- Another key agenda item for the FCC is one that seeks to create a regulatory framework to permit the operation of space-to-space links between satellites, or inter-satellite-links, in specific frequency bands (AI 1.17). Creating a defined regulatory framework, including a spectrum allocation for this service, would allow for innovation and efficiency as some satellite operators are looking at the use of spectrum and optical resources to relay data back to earth using geostationary satellite orbit (GSO) and NGSO satellites in space rather than using earth stations, reducing cost and enhancing efficiency.
- Another important priority for the FCC is an agenda item (AI 7) that has studied possible changes to certain satellite regulatory provisions involving the coordination and notification of satellite networks currently in the ITU Radio Regulations. These include certain milestone and "bring into use" dates.

- Another key agenda item is associated with regulatory actions to support the modernization of the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS) (AI 1.1.1). GMDSS is a world-wide maritime safety and distress systems used by vessels and coast station to respond to distress calls at sea. The key issue on this item is the inclusion of new satellite networks into the GMDSS, in this case a new Chinese satellite (Beidou). There are many regulatory and technical concerns with allowing the Chinese entry into the GMDSS. There are also other broader policy concerns from the perspective of security by allowing a Chinese satellite to interoperate in the GMDSS.