

Manohar Balaji SARWATE- Ex-Wireless Adviser, Secretary General in ITU from 30th Oct-1965 to 19th Feb-1967

Manohar Balaji SARWATE

Deputy Secretary-General of ITU from 1 January 1960 – 31 December 1965
Secretary-General of ITU from 30 October 1965 – 19 February 1967

Biography Manohar Balaji Sarwate, of India, was the first holder of the title ITU Deputy Secretary-General, a role he took for five years from 1960. The ITU Plenipotentiary Conference in 1959 in Geneva had decided that instead of two Assistant Secretaries-General, there was to be one “Deputy.” In addition, the post, and that of Secretary General, would be filled through election by each plenipotentiary conference, rather than by ITU’s Administrative Council. Sarwate was subsequently elected Secretary-General in 1965 by the Plenipotentiary Conference in Montreux. Sarwate had contributed to ITU for a number of years before joining its leadership. He had attended ITU conferences since 1946 and had served as India’s representative on the Administrative Council. He was also active in the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), where he was Chairman of several committees and meetings. Sarwate’s background combined aviation and radio. After graduating from Bombay University with a degree in physics and mathematics, he went to the United Kingdom where he obtained a doctorate in radio engineering from Liverpool University in 1938. On the eve of World War Two, he began work at the Royal Aircraft Establishment on the crucial technology of radar. He continued its development at the Telecommunications Research Establishment in 1940-1941. For the

rest of the war, Sarwate saw active service with the Technical Radar Branch of the Indian Air Force, becoming a Squadron Leader. In 1946 he joined the Indian Government's Civil Aviation Department with responsibility for aeronautical communication services. **From 1953 he spent six years at the Ministry of Transport and Communication, supervising all aspects of wireless planning and coordination at national and international levels. During this period, he was also Chairman of the Radio and Cable Board of India.** Sarwate had a strong interest in telecommunications development, and, as Secretary-General, he visited developing countries to promote technical cooperation. He was also keen to see efficiency and economy in the work of ITU. He is said to have told a colleague: So long as there are starving people in the world we cannot commit Members of the Union to expenses which are not absolutely essential. A hard-working official, in 1967 Sarwate was still at his desk in ITU at nine o'clock in the evening on the day before he went to hospital for a critical operation. He did not recover from the procedure. With his untimely death, ITU lost a truly dedicated servant.