

REPORT
OF **THE**
COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

OFFICIAL RECORDS: FORTY-FIRST SESSION

SUPPLEMENT No 21 (A/41/21)



UNITED NATIONS

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New York, 1986

NOTE

Symbols of United Nations documents are composed of capital letters combined with figures. Mention of such a symbol indicates a reference to a United Nations document.

[21 August 1986]

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. At its thirty-fourth session, the General Assembly decided to maintain the Committee to Review United Nations Public Information Policies and Activities, established under Assembly resolution 33/115 C of 18 December 1978, which would be known as the Committee on Information, and to increase its membership from 41 to 66. In its resolution 34/182 of 18 December 1979, the Assembly requested the Committee on Information:

"(a) To continue to examine United Nations public information policies and activities, in the light of the evolution of international relations, particularly during the past two decades, and of the imperatives of the establishment of the new international economic order and of a new world information and communication order;

"(b) To evaluate and follow up the efforts made and the progress achieved by the United Nations system in the field of information and communications ;

"(c) To promote the establishment of a new, more just and more effective world information and communication order intended to strengthen peace and international understanding and based on the free circulation and wider and better balanced dissemination of information and to make recommendations thereon to the General Assembly;"

and requested the Committee on Information and the Secretary-General to report to the Assembly at its thirty-fifth session.

2. At its thirty-fifth session, the General Assembly expressed its satisfaction with the work of the Committee on Information, approved the report of the Committee 1/ and the recommendations of its Ad Hoc Working Group, reaffirmed the mandate given to the Committee in Assembly resolution 34/182, decided to increase the membership of the Committee from 66 to 67 and requested the Committee to report to the Assembly at its thirty-sixth session (resolution 35/201 of 16 December 1980). The Committee on Information agreed, at its organizational session in 1980, that the principle of geographical rotation would be applied to all the officers of the Committee and that they should be elected for two-year terms.

3. At its thirty-sixth session, the General Assembly expressed its satisfaction with the work of the Committee on Information, approved the report of the Committee 2/ and its recommendations, reaffirmed the mandate given to the Committee in resolution 34/182 and requested the Committee to report to the Assembly at its thirty-seventh session (resolution 36/149 B of 16 December 1981).

4. At its thirty-seventh session, the General Assembly expressed its satisfaction with the work of the Committee on Information, approved the report of the Committee 3/ and all its recommendations and urged their full implementation, reaffirmed the mandate given to the Committee in resolution 34/182 and requested the Committee to report to the Assembly at its thirty-eighth session (resolution 37/94 B of 10 December 1982).

5. At its thirty-eighth session, the General Assembly expressed its satisfaction with the work of the Committee on Information, approved the report of the

Committee 4/ and all the recommendations contained in paragraph 94 A, affirmed the requests and appeals reproduced therein and urged their full implementation, reaffirmed the mandate given to the Committee in resolution 34/182, and requested the Committee to report to the Assembly at its thirty-ninth session (resolution 38/82 B of 15 December 1983).

6. At its thirty-ninth session, the General Assembly expressed its satisfaction with the work of the Committee on Information, approved the report of the Committee 5/ and all the recommendations annexed to the resolution, affirmed the requests and appeals therein and urged their full implementation, reaffirmed the mandate given to the Committee in resolution 34/182, and requested the Committee to report to the Assembly at its fortieth session (resolution 39/98 of 14 December 1984). The General Assembly also appointed two new members of the Committee, namely: China and Mexico, bringing the membership to 69.

7. At its fortieth session, the General Assembly expressed its satisfaction with the work of the Committee on Information, approved the report of the committee and its recommendations contained in paragraph 139 of the report, 6/ affirmed the requests and appeals therein and urged their full implementation, reaffirmed the mandate given to the Committee in resolution 34/182, and requested the Committee to report to the Assembly at its forty-first session (resolution 40/164 A of 16 December 1985).

8. The Committee is composed of the following Member States:

Algeria	Germany, Federal	Romania
Argentina	Republic of	Singapore
Bangladesh	Ghana	Somalia
Belgium	Greece	Spain
Benin	Guatemala	Sri Lanka
Brazil	Guinea	Sudan
Bulgaria	Guys na	Syrian Arab Republic
Burundi	India	Togo
Chile	Indonesia	Trinidad and Tobago
China	Italy	Tunisia
Colombia	Japan	Turkey
Congo	Jordan	Ukrainian Soviet Socialist
Costa Rica	Kenya	Republic
Côte d'Ivoire	Lebanon	Union of Soviet Socialist
Cuba	Mexico	Republics
Cyprus	Mongol is	United Kingdom of Great Britain
Denmark	Morocco	and Northern Ireland
Ecuador	Netherlands	United Republic of Tanzania
Egypt	Niger	United States of America
El Salvador	Nigeria	Venezuela
Ethiopia	Pakistan	Viet Nam
Finland	Peru	Yemen
France	Philippines	Yugoslavia
German Democratic	Poland	Zaire
Republic	Portugal	

9. The Committee held its organizational session on 17 March 1986 and its substantive session, the eighth session of the Committee, from 23 June to 3 July 1986.

10. The officers of the Committee for the period 1985-1986 are as follows:

Chairman: **Mr. Willi Schlegel (German Democratic Republic)**

Vice Chairmen: **Mr. Melchior Rwakira (Burundi)**
 Mr. Q. A. M. A. Rahim (Bangladesh)
 Mr. Ernesto Rodríguez-Medina (Colombia)

Rapporteur : **Mr. Pablo Barr ias (Spain)**

11. ORGANIZATIONAL SESSION

A. Opening of the session

11. The Committee held its organizational session at United Nations Headquarters on 17 March 1986. It held one meeting.

B. Organization of the work of the Committee

12. The Committee agreed to a proposed list of questions to be considered by the Committee, which formed the basis of the agenda of the substantive session:

- (a) Promotion of the establishment of a new, more just and more effective world information and communication order intended to strengthen peace and international understanding and based on the free circulation and wider and better balanced dissemination of information
- (b) Continuation of examination of United Nations public information Policies and activities in the light of the evaluation of international relations, particularly during the past two decades, and of the imperatives of the establishment of the new international economic order and of a new world information and communication order

Consideration of questions in this area would include reports on:

- (i) a. Implementation of the recommendations of the Committee on Information,
 - b. Implementation of General Assembly resolution 40/164 A and the recommendations contained therein)
- (ii) The restructuring of the Radio and Visual Services Division of the Department of Public Information;
- (iii) The Department of Public Information as the focal point for the formulation and implementation of information activities;
- (iv) Outcome of the activities of the International Telecommunication Union regarding World Communications Year;
- (v) Public information activities of the Department of Public Information in implementation of the relevant provisions of the Paris Declaration on Namibia and the Programme of Action on Namibia 7/ and the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action on Namibia; 8/
- (vi) Improvement of Gate-collection procedures with regard to actual use made by redissemulators of materials distributed by the Department of Public Information and its information centres;
- (vii) The Department of Public Information/United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) round table on a new world information and communication order;

- (viii) **Situation regarding the staff of the Department of Public Information in posts subject to geographical distribution;**
- (ix) **Strengthening and expansion of the Middle East/Arabic Unit;**
- (x) **The results of the daily short-wave radio broadcasting experiment from Headquarters;**
- (xi) **Charges for use of video tapes, audio tapes and news photographer**
- (xii) **Implementation of recommendations contained in document A/AC.198/99 on the distribution of taped radio programmes produced by the Department of Public Information)**
- (xiii) **Implementation of General Assembly resolution 38/82 B regarding the work programme of the Caribbean Unit;**
- (xiv) **Opening of information centres at Cotonou, Benin, and Warsaw, Poland;**
- (xv) **Coverage by the Department of Public Information of policies and practices that violate the principles of international law relative to belligerent occupation, in particular the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, 9/ wherever they occur, especially those policies and practices which frustrate the attainment and exercise of the inalienable and national legitimate rights of the Palestinian people in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the United Nations;**
- (xvi) **Comments on the report of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) on publications policy and practice in the United Nations system, contained in document A/39/602 ;**
- (xvii) **Organization by the Department of Public Information and UNESCO of a workshop in 1985 for familiarization of news agencies of developing countries with modern technologies and production of training manuals for training centres of the Pool of Non-Aligned News Agencies.**
- (c) **Evaluation and follow-up on the efforts made and the progress achieved by the United Nations system in the field of information and communication**

The programme and activities of the Joint United Nations Information Committee.
- (d) **Report of the Committee on Information to the General Assembly at its fortieth session.**

III. SUBSTANTIVE SESSION

A. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

13. The substantive session, the eighth held by the Committee on Information, took place at United Nations Headquarters from 23 June to 3 July 1986. The Committee held 12 meetings.

14. At its opening meeting, the Committee adopted the following agenda (A/AC.198/102) :

- 1. Opening of the session.**
- 2. Adoption of the agenda and programme of work.**
- 3. Statement by the Chairman.**
- 4. Consideration of substantive questions.**
- 5. Adoption of the report of the Committee to the General Assembly at its forty-first session.**

15. The Committee agreed, on the basis of the decision of the Committee at its organizational session, that the consideration of items 4 and 5 of its agenda could proceed in accordance with the following schedule proposed by its officers;

Item 4

From 23 to 25 June

(a) Promotion of the establishment of a new, more just and more effective world information and communication order intended to strengthen peace and international understanding and based on the free circulation and wider and better balanced dissemination of information:

Report on the second round table on a new world information and communication order.

26 and 27 June

(b) Continuation of the examination of United Nations public information policies and activities in the light of the evolution of international relations, particularly during the past two decades, and of the imperatives of the establishment of the new international economic order and of a new world information and communication order :

26 June

- (i) Report on the implementation of the recommendations of the Committee on Information;**
- (ii) Report on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 40/164 A and the recommendations contained therein)**

- (iii) **Report on the Department of Public Information as the focal point for the formulation and implementation of information activities;**
- (iv) **Report on the improvement of data-collection procedures with regard to actual use made by redisseminators of materials distributed by the Department of Public Information and its information centres.**

Review of the distribution of photo materials produced by the Department;

- (v) **Comments on the report of the Joint Inspection Unit on publications policy and practice in the United Nations system, contained in document A/33/6021**
- (vi) **Report on the restructuring of the Radio and Visual Services Division of the Department of Public Information;**
- (vii) **Report on the results of the daily short-wave radio broadcasting experiment from Headquarters;**
- (viii) **Report on the implementation of recommendations contained in document A/AC.198/99 on the distribution of taped radio programmes produced by the Department of Public Information;**
- (ix) **Report on charges to Member States and the media for United Nations video tapes, audio tapes and news photographs;**

27 June

- (x) **Report on the strengthening and expansion of the Middle East/Arabic Unit;**
- (xi) **Report on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 38/82 B regarding the work programme of the Caribbean Unit)**
- (xii) **Report on the outcome of the activities of the International Telecommunication Union regarding World Communications Year;**
- (xiii) **Report on the opening of information centres at Cotonou, Benin, and Warsaw, Poland;**
- (xiv) **Progress report on the situation regarding the staff of the Department of Public Information in posts subject to geographical distribution;**
- (xv) **Organization by the Department of Public Information and UNESCO of a workshop in 1985 for familiarization of news agencies of developing countries with modern technologies and production of training manuals for training centres of the Pool of Non-Aligned News Agencies;**
- (xvi) **Report on public information activities of the Department of Public Information in implementation of the relevant provisions of the Paris Declaration on Namibia and the Programme of Action on Namibia 7/ and the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action on Namibia; 8/**
- (xvii) **Report on coverage by the Department of Public Information of policies and practices that violate the principles of international law relative to belligerent occupation, in particular the Geneva Convention relative**

to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, 9/ wherever they occur, especially those policies and practices which frustrate the attainment and exercise of the inalienable and national legitimate rights of the Palestinian people in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the United Nations.

'0 June

(c) Evaluation and follow-up on the efforts made and the progress achieved by the United Nations system in the field of information and communication:

Report on the programme and activities of the Joint United Nations Information Committee.

Item 5

From 1 to 3 July

Adoption of the report of the Committee to the General Assembly at its forty-first session.

16. The Committee was informed that the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination (CPC), at its twenty-sixth session, had considered, *inter alia*, the report of the Secretary-General on the triennial review of the implementation of the recommendations made by the Committee at its twenty-third session on the work of the Department of Public Information (E/AC.51/1986/10). The conclusions reached and recommendations made in that regard by CPC were contained in paragraphs 81 to 96 of the report on its twenty-sixth session. 10/ The Committee was informed that these documents could be made available.

17. The Committee decided to establish an open-ended working group.

18. The following Member States took part in the session as observers: Afghanistan, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Belize, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Canada, Czechoslovakia, Jamaica, Mali, Nicaragua, Oman, Sweden, Uruguay, Zimbabwe. The Holy See, Switzerland and the Organization of the Islamic Conference also took part in the session as observers.

19. Representatives of the following bodies of the United Nations, the specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system attended the session:

Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

The Inter-American Press Association and the International Organisation of Journalists, non-governmental organizations in category II, also participated in the session as observers.

20. At its 11th and 12th meetings, the Committee took up consideration of the draft recommendations contained in documents A/AC.198/L.30, A/AC.198/L.31 and A/AC.198/L.32. The Chairman provided the Committee with options on how to proceed with the adoption of its recommendations. He announced that the Group of 77 had formally submitted for action by the Committee the draft set of recommendations contained in document A/AC.198/L.30, as revised to have "the new world information and communication order" replaced with "a new world information and communication

order". The representative of the United States asked that the recommendations contained in the above document be put to a roll-call or recorded vote. The draft recommendations were subsequently adopted by a roll-call vote of 41 to 11, with 5 abstentions. The voting was as follows:

In favour: Algeria, Argentina, Bangladesh, Benin, Brazil, Bulgaria, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Cuba, Egypt, El Salvador, Ethiopia, German Democratic Republic, Guatemala, Guinea, India, Indonesia, Jordan, Kenya, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Romania, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Yugoslavia.

Against: Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Federal Republic of Italy, Japan, Netherlands, Portugal, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

Abstaining: Burundi, Greece, Nigeria, Spain, Turkey.

The representatives of Ecuador, the Niger, Togo and Zaire subsequently indicated that, had they been present, they would have voted in favour of the recommendations contained in document A/AC.198/L.30. The representative of Nigeria said that he had intended to vote in favour rather than to abstain.

21. There was no agreement on the recommendations contained in documents A/AC.198/L.31 and A/AC.198/L.32. The sponsors did not ask that action be taken on these recommendations and the two documents are annexed to the present report at their request (annexes II and III).

22. The representative of Costa Rica introduced a draft statement on the International Year of Peace (A/AC.198/L.34), which was orally amended and adopted by consensus by the Committee.

23. The representative of Mongolia introduced a draft decision on the fortieth anniversary of UNESCO (A/AC.198/L.35) with revisions for consideration by the Committee. It was subsequently decided that no action would be taken by the Committee but that the revised text would be annexed to the present report (annex IV).

B. Statement by the Chairman

24. The Chairman of the Committee on Information made a statement at the opening of the substantive session (annex I).

C. Consideration of substantive questions

Item 4

- (a) Promotion of the establishment of a new, more just and more effective world information and communication order intended to strengthen peace and international understanding and based on the free circulation and wider and better balanced dissemination of information

Report on the second round table on a new world information and communication order (A/AC. 198/97)

25. In his statement to the Committee on Information, the Under-Secretary-General for Public Information said that the current session of the Committee had assumed a crucial importance. With regard to the promotion of the establishment of a new world information and communication order, he expressed the view that a sufficient amount of consensus existed concerning the practical and pragmatic action to be taken by the Secretariat. Its programme of action would involve assisting developing countries in strengthening their communication and information infrastructures. The Department of Public Information would continue, despite the financial crisis, with its training programme for young journalists and broadcasters from developing countries. The second round table on a new world information and communication order, held at Copenhagen earlier in the year, showed that there was considerable agreement on many of the necessary remedial actions.

26. The Under-Secretary-General recalled that stringent economy measures introduced during the current financial crisis had hit the Department hard. Since public perceptions of the Organization's effectiveness were a factor behind the crisis, it was perhaps short-sighted to cut information activities. The Department's share in the regular budget of the Organization had shrunk from over 12 per cent in the 1940s to the current 4.5 per cent. The Department was nevertheless taking the opportunity to re-examine its resources and objectives, keeping in mind its intergovernmental mandates. While short-wave broadcasts had had to be suspended, taped radio programmes continued and telephone feeds would be increased. The Department's catalytic role would be emphasized. It would co-operate with external public and private organizations, such as in the plans for an international television event on United Nations Day. Future programme budgets might give a more desirable balance between staff costs and operational expenses, as well as between coverage and in-depth information activities.

27. The Under-Secretary-General stressed the extensive deployment in the field of the Department's resources and personnel. Information centres had been particularly affected by the current financial constraints. With regard to suggestions to reduce the number of centres or merge them with UNDP offices, he emphasized the unique political and information responsibilities of the centres within their host countries.

28. The Under-Secretary-General affirmed the Department's commitment to objectivity in its activities. Departmental guidelines had been formulated to ensure balanced reporting. In recent years, the Department had been requested, in resolutions, to mobilize public opinion in support of various objectives. Harmonizing traditional coverage requirements with such positive information support was at times difficult. The Department's work was not infallible but its essential impartiality was assured.

29. In their statements, most delegations expressed regret at the Committee's failure in recent years to achieve a consensus and urged that serious efforts be made for its restoration. A number of delegations emphasized the need to focus on information questions rather than extraneous ideological issues. Some delegations suggested that, from 1987, the Committee should meet on a biennial basis. One delegation proposed that the Committee consolidate its organizational and substantive sessions. Several delegations stated that the breakdown of consensus reflected a gradual erosion of co-operation on information. A number of other delegations affirmed that consensus would prevail were it not for the intransigence of a group of countries. One delegation stressed that consensus should not be an end in itself, but instead reflect substantive accommodation between differing points of view. Several delegations stated that a degree of politicization of the Committee's work was inevitable, given the nature of the subjects discussed. A number of delegations indicated that the Committee's mandate should be reaffirmed.

30. A number of delegations drew attention to the International Year of Peace, recalling that the General Assembly had invited Member States, intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations and the mass media to co-operate with the Secretary-General towards the achievement of the Year's objectives. Several delegations affirmed that the Committee on Information and the Department of Public Information had an important role to play in this regard. Several delegations stressed that the announcement of the International Year of Peace gave all nations and organizations the opportunity to make the Year a turning-point in international relations, promoting the collective efforts of states for the elimination of the threat of nuclear war. The Year would thus become a decade of peace and ensure that mankind entered the twenty-first century in an atmosphere of peace, confidence and co-operation. One delegation proposed that the Committee adopt a special declaration on the occasion of the Year.

31. Most delegations referred to the current financial crisis of the Organization and commended the Department for maintaining its essential activities despite the constraints imposed. Some delegations expressed the view that economy measures should be based on consultations with Member States of the various regions and on criteria to be established by the Committee on Information. A number of delegations observed that the current situation, when the United Nations faced considerable criticism from certain quarters and when political factors contributed to the financial crisis, made it all the more necessary for the Department to mount an effective information campaign on behalf of the Organization. Some delegations expressed support in this context for the planned 24-hour television event. Three delegations expressed concern about the situation regarding radio broadcasts to their regions. Another delegation urged that the economy measures should not affect the equal treatment to be given to the Organization's two working languages. A strict linguistic balance should apply to publications, press releases and radio programmes. Some delegations called for the maintenance and further strengthening of press releases which should cover comprehensively the meetings of United Nations organs. Other delegations emphasized the need for the Department to use the opportunity to streamline and rationalize its activities and identify lower-priority programmes. One delegation called for a comprehensive review of the Department's role and function. Some delegations noted that the Department should continue to be guided by the mandates and priorities assigned by the General Assembly. Some delegations expressed the hope that the financial crisis would not affect the Organization's information policies, nor reduce its activities in support of specific political objectives ignored by the media.

32. Many delegations supported the call for the establishment of a new world information and communication order, based, inter alia, on the free circulation and wider and better balanced dissemination of information, guaranteeing the diversity of sources of information and free access to information and, in particular, the urgent need to change the dependent status of the developing countries in the field of information and communication as the principle of sovereign equality among nations extended also to this field, and was intended also to strengthen peace and international understanding, enabling all persons to participate effectively in political, economic, social and cultural life and promoting human rights, understanding and friendship among all nations. Many delegations stated that the gap in the exchange of information between North and South was widening further, a situation that was aggravated by the rapid technological advances that were taking place. A number of delegations criticized the information monopoly of the industrialized countries, whose news agencies did not reflect the interests nor respect the cultural identities of the developing countries. In this respect, the information issue was of key importance and should not be denied its rightful place in the political debate. One delegation drew attention in this context to the threat to national sovereignty posed by trans-border data flows and mentioned the relevant report of the Commission on Transnational Corporations. Another delegation drew attention to the need to protect infant industries in developing countries, particularly in the field of communication technologies. Several delegations stressed that a new world information and communication order was an important complement to the cause of development and the efforts to attain a new international economic order. Some delegations pointed to their suggestion that a moratorium be observed on the question of the definition of a new order. Some delegations emphasized that a new order should be based firmly on the principle established in article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

33. A number of delegations expressed the view that the debate on a new world information and communication order should be set aside so as to allow the Committee to concentrate on practical work with respect to United Nations public information policies and activities. They suggested that that objective could be achieved by bringing the mandate of the Committee on Information into line with the consensus language of UNESCO on a new world information and communication order, seen as an evolving and continuous process. They also emphasized that UNESCO was the appropriate forum to deal substantially with the issue of a new order. The Committee should focus on activities that commanded consensus and refrain from introducing controversial questions. Those delegations reaffirmed their support for the strengthening of the information and communication capabilities of developing countries and for practical training programmes such as those already operating under several international, both public and private, auspices throughout the developing world. They also emphasized their wish to improve and facilitate a free flow and better balanced dissemination of information both within and between all countries. One delegation maintained that the very concept of a new order was flawed and that change could only be furthered by voluntary activities aimed at raising the status of journalism, educating journalists and improving the technical means of communication.

34. A number of delegations, in supporting the establishment of a new world information and communication order, emphasized the importance of information in promoting understanding, trust and co-operation among peoples. The mass media had a special responsibility to assist in attaining these objectives, as well as in efforts for the prevention of nuclear war and towards disarmament. Some delegations indicated that a new order, based on respect for national sovereignty, would also further the decolonization of information and the democratization of

world communications, which would contribute to the achievement of peace. It would also rectify the current situation in which many developing countries continued to be victims of "information imperialism". The new order was not intended to be restrictive but rather to ensure the implementation of the Charter principles in the field of information. One delegation affirmed that the consensus language adopted by the General conference of UNESCO applied to resolution 3.1 of 1985 ^{11/} as a whole. Some delegations criticized certain radio broadcasts aimed at interfering in the internal affairs of States. They also opposed the use of the mass media for the conduct of propaganda campaigns against sovereign States as contrary to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. A number of delegations strongly urged the elaboration of a document setting out the fundamental principles and norms of a new world information and communication order, as well as a programme of action to implement them. Some delegations proposed that the United Nations establish international legal norms and principles on the activities of the mass media for the promotion of peace and international understanding.

35. Several delegations expressed strong satisfaction with the second round table on a new world information and communication order, which had been held earlier in the year at Copenhagen. They maintained that it had made a valuable and constructive contribution towards a better understanding of the concept and the scope of a new order. Some delegations observed that many suggestions put forward at the round table opened the way for further dialogue. One delegation pointed to the many areas of agreement which had emerged among the participants in the round table. Some delegations expressed concern that the round table had revealed the appearance of new inequalities just as others were eliminated. One delegation indicated that the discussions had confirmed the key importance of questions of information and communication, as well as the continued existence of serious inequalities in that sphere. The desirability of holding further round tables for reflection on the subject was emphasized. One delegation requested that a third round table be held on "the establishment of the new world information and communication order". Another delegation opposed the use of United Nations funds for such a purpose, since no further agreement on the topic seemed likely.

36. Many delegations expressed strong support for UNESCO and for the International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC). Additional resources for IPDC, on a more predictable basis, were called for. One delegation urged that the Department of Public Information should continue to extend its support to IPDC and widen its co-operation with UNESCO in the field of information and communication. One delegation proposed that a special decision be adopted by the Committee in Commemoration of the fortieth anniversary of UNESCO.

37. A number of delegations referred to the press and news agency accounts of the disaster at the Chernobyl nuclear reactor as indicative of media irresponsibility and the dangers of disinformation. Some other delegations maintained that the disaster had exposed the problems created by a restrictive system of information.

38. Many delegations expressed their support for the invaluable work performed by United Nations information centres. They had a crucial role to play in disseminating information in all Member States about the broad spectrum of the Organization's activities. One delegation urged that the centres reinforce their co-operation with national non-governmental organizations in priority areas. Some delegations emphasized the special role of the information centres as distinct from the UNDP field offices. They opposed the closure of centres or their merger with other offices. The desirability of having the centres headed by professional

directors was also mentioned. Another delegation affirmed that further co-operation between information centres and UNDP offices should be encouraged. One delegation noted with appreciation that the Information Service in Vienna had become operational, but expressed concern at the insufficient staff and funds provided to meet its growing needs.

39. Several delegations expressed their satisfaction with the activities of the Pool of Non-Aligned News Agencies. They urged that the Department of Public Information continue its co-operation with the Pool. Some delegations suggested that the Department extend similar co-operation to the Eco-Pool. Some delegations expressed the hope that co-operation with other regional news agencies would be strengthened.

40. Many delegations expressed appreciation for the training programme for young journalists and broadcasters organized by the Department of Public Information. Such programmes for developing countries were a useful contribution towards the strengthening of the developing countries' information infrastructures.

41. Some delegations emphasized the importance of drawing world attention to the needs of the African continent. The Organization had played a helpful role in providing information on the recent crisis and the special session of the General Assembly. The Department of Public Information should be encouraged to strengthen its coverage of questions of concern to Africa.

42. In response to several points raised during the debate on this item, the Under-Secretary-General announced that a conference room paper on the impact of the financial crisis on the Department would be circulated. He indicated that decisions had been taken on a financial basis and that they had inevitably affected programmes in an uneven manner. He noted that financial considerations had led to the elimination of radio programmes in certain languages and agreed that they should eventually be resumed. He also pointed out that the recruitment freeze had had an adverse effect on such areas as the appointment of information centre directors and on regional radio broadcasts. With regard to the international television event for United Nations Day, he explained that it was intended to raise consciousness rather than funds. Should there be any excess income, the United Nations would receive a proportion. The external production company's arrangement was for participating countries to contribute a segment of broadcasting in return for the entire programme.

(b) Continuation of examination of United Nations public information policies and activities in the light of the evolution of international relations, particularly during the past two decades, and of the imperatives of the establishment of the new international economic order and of a new world information and communication order

(i) Report on the implementation of the recommendations of the Committee on Information

43. The Under-Secretary-General indicated that reports on the Committee's recommendations had been circulated. The Department was making every effort to meet the requests made by the Committee.

(ii) Report on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 40/164 A and the recommendations contained therein

44. The Under-Secretary-General stated that the Department was making every endeavour to implement the various parts of the resolution. Further information would be provided in his reports on subsequent items.

(iii) Report on the Department of Public Information as the focal point for the formulation and implementation of information activities

45. The Under-Secretary-General referred to the ongoing discussion within the Secretariat between centralist and pluralist tendencies. Since the General Assembly had not made a decision on this question it was difficult for the Department fully to carry out its role as the focal point for information activities.

46. Several delegations expressed concern with the proliferation of information units within the Secretariat. One delegation pointed to the danger of duplication in this regard. Some delegations urged that no further information units be created.

(iv) Report on the improvement of data-collection procedures with regard to actual use made by redieseminators of materials distributed by the Department of Public Information and its information centres (A/AC.198/108)

Review of the distribution of photo materials produced by the Department

47. The Under-Secretary-General indicated that the Department had been able to carry out a systematic monitoring of the end-use of some of the material which it distributed and to conduct a detailed review with regard to photo materials. While it would be desirable to evaluate many of the Department's activities, resource limitations had to be taken into account.

48. Several delegations underlined the need for a thorough evaluation of the use made of all the materials distributed by the Department. Some delegations referred in this regard to the conclusions reached by the triennial review of CPC. The cost, target audience and impact of information materials should be assessed in order to maximize the use of existing resources at a time of financial constraints. Some delegations, while commending the scope and comprehensiveness of the review of photo materials, expressed concern at its results and urged that the four recommendations listed be implemented.

(v) Comments on the report of the Joint Inspection Unit on publications policy and practice in the United Nations system, contained in document A/39/602

49. The Director of the Press and Publications Division recalled that the Department's publications had several characteristics which distinguished them from material emanating from other departments, in that they were mostly for free distribution, non-technical in nature, mandated by the General Assembly and produced within a certain time-frame and in various languages. While resource constraints had prevented their systematic use, readership surveys had indeed taken place for some publications and had indicated that the target audiences were being reached. Such surveys might well be undertaken for the free-of-charge publications.

as well. The establishment of a publications committee within the Department would be time-consuming and of little value. Additional feedback was already provided by information centres and non-governmental organizations.

50. Several delegations emphasized the need for the Department to observe the strictest political balance in all of its materials. Other delegations commended the Department for fulfilling this objective.

(vi) Report on the restructuring of the Radio and Visual Services Division of the Department of Public Information

51. The Under-Secretary-General outlined the managerial reasons for the restructuring. The Radio and Visual Services Division was too large in comparison with the other divisions and its structure was cumbersome. Administrative authority would be streamlined without affecting staff mobility. There would be no financial implications and a slight saving would ensue. Implementation should take place at a time when the Secretary-General deemed appropriate after 1 January 1987.

(vi i) Report on the results of the daily short-wave radio broadcasting experiment from Headquarters (A/AC.198/110)

52. The Under-Secretary-General affirmed that the external evaluation of the daily short-wave radio experiment had indicated that a potential audience existed. Short-wave broadcasts, however, had been suspended due to the increase in transmission fees. It was hoped that the suspension would not be permanent. In the mean time, tapes were distributed and telephone news feeds were being increased and expanded in further languages.

53. Several delegations expressed regret at the discontinuation of short-wave radio broadcasts and hoped that they would be resumed as soon as funds become available. Some delegations urged that the Department of Public Information continue its discussions with broadcasting organizations, particularly in developing countries, with a view to securing alternative transmission facilities. One delegation questioned whether short-wave and taped broadcasts had been confused in the evaluation and also asked whether any listener comments had been received since the suspension.

(viii) Report on the implementation of recommendations contained in document A/AC.198/99 on the distribution of taped radio programmes produced by the Department of Public Information (A/AC.198/104)

54. The Under-Secretary-General explained that the evaluation process was continuing. Particular importance was attached to a proper balance between the production and satisfactory dissemination of information material. One delegation emphasised that further and more precise evaluation was needed since the Department could not afford to produce programmes of which full use was not made.

(ix) Report on charges to Member States and the media for United Nations video tapes, audio tapes and news photographs (A/AC.198/106)

55. The Under-Secretary-General indicated that the Department was taking steps to reduce charges for video tapes and other material providing coverage of United Nations activities. However, such charges could not be eliminated entirely. The Committee's comments would be welcome on an arrangement whereby the charges for developing countries might be lowered with a corresponding increase for use by

developed countries. One delegation suggested that the fees might be paid in local currencies.

(x) Report on the strengthening and expansion of the Middle East/Arabic Unit

56. The Under-Secretary-General recalled that, owing to the financial situation, the Department had been compelled to reduce its output, including the production of radio programmes. Under the economy measures endorsed by the General Assembly, funds for outside contractors producing radio programmes had been frozen. The Department was making every effort to maximize the use of limited resources and would continue to conduct discussions on that matter.

57. Some delegations asked whether the Middle East/Arabic Unit would retain responsibility for programme production under the proposed restructuring. One delegation recalled that the relevant General Assembly resolution had also referred to television coverage and inquired as to the state of such programming. One delegation observed that it was in the Department's interest for the programmes to remain under the supervision of those who were most familiar with the language, mentality and culture of the target audience.

(xi) Report on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 38/82 B regarding the work programme of the Caribbean Unit

58. The Under-Secretary-General reiterated that the financial crisis had necessitated severe limitations on the Department's output. One delegation expressed grave concern with regard to the financial decisions affecting the Caribbean Unit and urged that they be reversed. Such decisions ran counter to the recommendations of the Committee and resolutions of the General Assembly. The introduction of language programming was of particular significance given recent developments in the region. Existing programming deprived more than half of the region's non-Spanish-speaking population of relevant information on the work and activities of the United Nations. Existing programming did not take the region's special characteristics into account.

(xii) Report on the outcome of the activities of the International Telecommunication Union regarding World Communications Year

59. The Under-Secretary-General stated that an extensive report by the Secretary-General of the International Telecommunication Union could be made available to delegations.

(xiii) Report on the opening of information centres at Cotonou, Benin, and Warsaw, Poland

60. The Under-Secretary-General informed the Committee that agreements on the opening of the two new centres had been signed during the spring. Consultations were continuing with respect to the implementation of the agreements and the opening of the centres at a mutually convenient time.

(xiv) Progress report on the situation regarding the staff of the Department of Public Information in posts subject to geographical distribution (A/AC.198/103)

61. The Under-Secretary-General referred to the serious situation that existed with regard to the representation of two regional groups. The current freeze on

recruitment had adversely affected the attainment of desired levels, toward8 which progress might be achieved once recruitment resumed. Maintaining the hiqueet standarda of efficiency, competence and integrity would not conflict with the due regard to be paid to qeographical balance.

62. A number of delegations expreneed concern with the inadequate representation of their regional group within the Department, particularly at senior levels. The situation had even deteriorated in recent years. One delegation addcd that due regard to a balanced qeographical distribution should also be observed in the came of information centre directors. Another delegation expressed the view that the principle of balanced qeographical distribution ehould apply to the Secretariat au a whole rather than on a departmental basis, which would adversely affect administrative flexibility and efficiency.

- (xv) Organization by the Department of Public Information and UNESCO of a workshop in 1985 for familiarization of news agencies of developing countries with modern technologies and production of training manuals for training centres of the Pool of Non-Aligned News Agenciee

63. The Under-Secretary-General explained that, owing to the financial difficulties facing both UNESCO and the United Nations it had not been possible to organize a workshop in 1985. nor were there plane to do so during the current year. One delegation expressed the hope that such a project could be kept in mind once the financial situation improved.

- (xvi) Report on public information activities of the Department of Public Information in implementation of the relevant provisions of the Paris Declaration on Namibia and Programme of Action on Namibia 7/ and the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action on Namibia 8/ (A/AC.198/107)

64. The Under-Secretary-General referred to the numerous activitiee undertaken by the Department on the question of Namibia and stressed the extensive coverage given to the public hearings on the role of transnational corporations in South Africa and Namibia. Several delegations emphasized the priority attention to be given to coverage of the Namibian question. One delegation expreemed the view that coverage of this issue should not absorb a disproportionate amount of the Department's resources and that General Assembly mandates allowed flexible interpretation.

- (xvii) Report on coverage by the Department of Public Information of policies and practices that violate the principles of international law relative to belligerent occupation, particular the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, 9/ wherever they occur, especially those policies and practices which frustrate the attainment and exercise of the inalienable and national legitimate rights of the Palestinian people in accordance with he relevant resolution8 of the United Nations (A/AC. 198/105)

65. The Under-Secretary-General outlined the numerous activitiee undertaken by the Department on this question in accordance with the mandates of General Aeembly resolutions. Several delegations expreeed appreciation with the Department's successful and objective coverage of this issue. Some delegations urqed that such activitiee be increased in view of the United Nations special reeponsability to the Palestinian people. In the face of media distortions, it was essential to give the world an accurate account of the real dimensions of the question of Palestine and

of the human tragedy involved. Another delegation expressed its opposition to the Department's selective coverage of this question since it did not contribute to a resolution of the problem at hand.

(c) Evaluation and follow-up on the efforts made and the progress achieved by the United Nations system in the field of information and communication

Report on the programme and activities of the Joint United Nations Information Committee (A/AC.198/111)

66. Some delegations expressed support for the valuable contribution made by Development Forum and one delegation urged that a sound financial basis for the publication should be secured. One delegation stated that the lucid report that had been prepared illustrated the importance for the United Nations of providing concrete examples of achievements in the economic and social fields. The Non-Governmental Liaison Service was also extremely useful, given the essential role of non-governmental organizations in multilateral development co-operation. Another delegation commended the World Newspaper Supplement for its attention to development and to the United Nations endeavours in this sphere.

. . .

67. Some delegations expressed support for the Graduate Student Internship Programme, as well as for the educational programme. Such activities were most effective and incurred little financial expenditure. Delegations also urged the continued publication of the UN Chronicle, which provided one of the few means of informing public opinion about crucial international activities. The Department was also urged to issue brochures already planned on several priority issues. The useful contribution made by radio programmes emanating from information centres was commended.

68. One delegation suggested that thought be given to the effect of General Assembly instructions on the Department of Public Information. Requests were made for departmental action in numerous spheres, which impeded the supervisory role properly exercised by the Committee on Information.

D. Recommendations

69. The Committee on Information submits the following recommendations to the General Assembly:

1. The mandate of the Committee on Information, as set forth in General Assembly resolution 34/182 of 18 December 1979 and reaffirmed in Assembly resolutions 35/201 of 16 December 1980, 36/149 B of 16 December 1981, 37/94 B of 10 December 1982, 38/82 B of 15 December 1983, 39/98 A of 14 December 1984 and 40/164 A of 16 December 1985, should be renewed.

2. The recommendations of the Committee on Information approved by the General Assembly in resolution 40/164 A, as well as the provisions of that resolution, should be reiterated, taking into account the views expressed by delegations at the 118th plenary meeting of the fortieth session of the Assembly on 16 December 1985, and the Secretary-General should be requested to report to the Committee on Information at its substantive session in 1987 on measures taken for the implementation of these recommendations and provisions pending implementation.

Promotion of the establishment of a new, more just and more effective world information and communication order intended to strengthen peace and international understanding and based on the free circulation and wider and better balanced dissemination of information

3. All countries, the United Nations system as a whole and all others concerned should collaborate in the establishment of a new world information and communication order based, inter alia, on the free circulation and wider and better balanced dissemination of information, guaranteeing diversity of sources of information and free access to information and, in particular, the urgent need to change the dependent status of the developing countries in the field of information and communication, as the principle of sovereign equality among nations extends also to this field, and intended also to strengthen peace and international understanding, enabling all persons to participate effectively in political, economic, social and cultural life and promoting human rights, understanding and friendship among all nations.

4. "The ongoing efforts of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization to contribute to the clarification, elaboration and application of the concept of a new world information and communication order should be noted. In this regard, resolutions 4/19 of 27 October 1980, 12/3.1 of 25 November 1983 13/ and 3.1 of 8 November 1985, 11/ adopted by consensus by its General Conference, should be recalled, in particular the following relevant paragraphs:

(a) **Resolution 4/19 of 27 October 1980, section VI, paragraph 14**

"The General Conference,

"...

"14. Considers that

"(a) This new world information and communication order could be based, among other considerations, on:

- "(i) Elimination of the imbalances and inequalities which characterize the present situation;**
- "(ii) Elimination of the negative effects of certain monopolies, public or private, and excessive concentrations;**
- "(iii) Removal of the internal and external obstacles to a free flow and wider and better balanced dissemination of information and ideas;**
- "(iv) Plurality of sources and channels of information;**
- "(v) Freedom of the press and information;**
- "(vi) The freedom of journalists and all professionals in the communication media, a freedom inseparable from responsibility;**

- "(vii) **The capacity of developing countries to achieve improvement of their own situations, notably by providing their own equipment, by training their personnel, by improving their infrastructures and by making their information and communication media suitable to their needs and aspirations)**
- *(viii) The sincere will of developed countries to help them attain these objectives;**
- "(ix) **Respect for each people's cultural identity and for the right of each nation to inform the world public about its interests, its aspirations and its social and cultural values;**
- "(x) **Respect for the right of all peoples to participate in international exchanges of information on the basis of equality, justice and mutual benefit;**
- "(xi) **Respect for the right of the public, of ethnic and social groups and of individuals to have access to information sources and to participate actively in the communication process ;**
- "(b) This new world information and communication order should be based on the fundamental principles of international law, as laid down in the Charter of the United Nations,**
- "(c) Diverse solutions to information and communication problems are required because social, political, cultural and economic problems differ from one country to another and, within a given country, from one group to another ;"**

(b) Resolution 3.1 of 25 November 1983, paragraph 8

"The General Conference,

"...

"8. Requests the Director-General, in executing these activities, to give special attention to those:

"(a) Which help to redress the situation of the countries most disadvantaged as regards communication,

"(b) Which will encourage a plurality of information sources and media ;

"(c) Which take account of the need for differing solutions to information and communication problems according to the country, socio-economic system and cultural environment concerned,

"(d) Which will facilitate an in-depth analysis of the concept of a new world information and communication order, seen as an evolving and continuous process, so as to strengthen the basis upon which such an order conducive to a free flow and wide- and better balanced dissemination of information might be established;

"(e) Which help to reduce certain internal imbalances in various countries especially by furthering the development of rural communication, particularly in the poorest regions, and facilitating the access of young people and disadvantaged social groups to communication)

"(f) Which stimulate co-operation between the different professional circles working for the cause of communication;

"(g) Which can stimulate the contribution of communication to development processes in the Organization's fields of competence and in those falling within the competence of other bodies in the United Nations system)

"(h) Which involve collaboration between the organizations of the United Nations system and co-operation with other international governmental and non-governmental organizations at world or regional level ;

"(i) Which lead to the mobilization of extra-budgetary resources;

"(j) Which can be carried out, in the matter of book development, in co-operation with the competent institutions at the national and regional level, in order to promote a spirit of solidarity and co-operation in favour of book development in the regions concerned."

(c) Resolution 3.1 of 8 November 1985, paragraph 5

"The General Conference,

"...

"5. Invites the Director-General, in particular:

"(a) Under Programme III. 1, 'Studies on communication'

"(i) To stimulate research on the socio-cultural impact of new communication technologies;

"(ii) To undertake overall analyses of work already carried out or currently in progress on the concept of a new world information and communication order, seen as an evolving and continuous process, the right to communicate, pluralism, and access to and participation in the field of communication, taking steps where necessary to broaden the study base and maintaining links of close co-operation with the competent professional organizations and non-governmental organizations;

"(iii) To contribute to the strengthening of research and documentation capacities in the field of communication, and to the training and further training of research personnel."

5. Under the current international climate of political conflicts and economic disorders, the Committee on Information, fully aware and cognizant of the important contribution that the mass media world-wide can make in

enhancing and strengthening peace, deepening international understanding, promoting justice, equality, national independence, development, the exercise of human rights, fundamental freedoms for all and the establishment of a new world information and communication order, recommends that the General Assembly address appeals to the followinar

(a) The international media, in order to obtain their support for the efforts of the international community towards alobal development and, in particular, for the efforts of the developina countries to achieve economic, social and cultural progress;

(b) The United Nations system as a whole to co-operate in a concerted manner, through its information services, in promoting a more comprehensive and realistic image of the activities and potential of the United Nations system, in all its purposea and endeavours, as laid down in the Charter of the United Nations, with particular emphasis on the creation of a climate of confidence in relations among States as a means of easing tension, on the strengthening of multilateralism and on the promotion of development activities of the United Nations system for further improvement of the conditions of the lives of the peoples of the developing countries.

6. Aware of the existence of structural imbalances in the international distribution of news affecting the two-way flow of news, the Committee on Information recommends that urnent attention should be given to the elimination of existing inequalities and all other obstacles in the free flow and wider and better balanced dissemination of information, ideas and knowledge by, inter alia, diversifying the sources of information and respecting the interests, aspiration8 and ecocio-cultural values of all peoples, as a step towards the attainment. of a free and more balanced flow of information between developing and developed countries.

7. The United Nations system an a whole, as well as the developed countries, should be urged to co-operate in a concerted manner with the developing Countries towards strengthening the information and communication infrastructures of the latter countries, in accordance with the priorities attached to such areas by the developina countries, with a view to enabling them to develop their own information and communication policies freely and independently and in the light of their history, social values and cultural traditions. In this regard, full support for the International Programme for the Development of Communication, which constitutes an important step in the development of these infrastructures, should always be emphasised.

8. The Committee on Information recommends that the need be stressed to ensure and promote the access of the developing countries to communication technology, including communication satellites, modern electronic information systems, informstics and other advanced information and communication facilities with a view to improving their own information and communication systems corresponding to the specific conditions prevailing in each country.

9. The Committee on Information, while expressina satisfaction with the successful co-ordination and co-operation displayed by the Department of Public Information with the Pool of Non-Aligned News Agencies, as well as with regional news agencies of developing countries, recommends that the Department of Public Information continue to strengthen this co-operation as it constitutes a concrete step towards a more just and equitable world flow of

information, thus contributing to the establishment of a new world information and communication order.

10. With regard to its co-operation with the Pool of Non-Aligned News Agencies, as well as with the regional news agencies in developing countries, the Department of Public Information should co-operate with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in assisting that organization in the preparation and implementation of a plan of integrated communication network and regional data and communication centres and in the provision of facilities for meetings on data and communication exchange of the public information bodies of the non-aligned countries.

11. The Committee on Information also recommends that the Department of Public Information, as well as the specialized agencies of the United Nations system, should extend co-operation to the Eco-Pool of the Pool of Non-Aligned News Agencies, which began its operation in September 1985 in order to receive and transmit daily economic information to relevant government, economic, banking and other institutions responsible for economic and social development, and which should help in promoting economic co-operation with and among developing countries.

12. Reaffirming the primary role that the General Assembly is to play in elaborating, co-ordinating and harmonizing United Nations policies and activities in the field of information and recognizing the central and important role of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in the field of information and communication, the Committee on Information recommends that the United Nations system as a whole and all others concerned should be urged to give that organization adequate support and assistance in the field of information and communication. The Department of Public Information, in particular, should co-operate more regularly with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, especially at the working level, with a view to maximizing the contributions of the Department to the efforts of that organization in further promoting the establishment of a new world information and communication order and to disseminating as widely as possible information on the activities of that organization in this respect.

13. Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which provides that everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression and that this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers, and article 29, which stipulates that these rights and freedoms may in no case be exercised contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations, should be recalled.

14. The United Nations system, particularly the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, should aim at providing all possible support and assistance to the developing countries with regard to their interests and needs in the field of information and to actions already adopted within the United Nations system, including, in particular:

(a) Assistance to developing countries in training journalists and technical personnel and in setting up appropriate educational institutions and research facilities;

(b) Granting of favourable conditions to provide access to developing countries to such communication technology as is requisite for the establishment of a national information and communication system and corresponding to the specific situation of the country concerned;

(c) Creation of conditions that will gradually enable the developing countries to produce the communication technology suited to their national needs, as well as the necessary programme material, specifically for radio and television broadcasting, by using their own resources)

(d) Assistance in establishing telecommunication links at subregional, regional and interregional levels, especially among developing countries, free from conditions of any kind.

15. All the information activities of the Department of Public Information should be guided by and carried out in conformity with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the aspiration for a new world information and communication order, as well as conform to the consensus reached among States in resolutions 4/19, 4/21 and 4/22 of 27 October 1980, 12/ adopted by the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, resolution 3.1 of 25 November 1983, 13/ adopted by the General Conference on Major Programme III, and resolution 3.1 of 8 November 1985 11/ adopted by the General Conference on Major Programme III.

16. The Secretary-General should be requested to ensure that the activities of the Department of Public Information, as the focal point of the public information tasks of the United Nations, should be strengthened, keeping in view the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and along the lines established in the pertinent resolutions of the General Assembly and the recommendations of the Committee on Information, so as to ensure a more coherent coverage of and a better knowledge about the United Nations and its work, especially in its priority areas, such as those stated in section III, paragraph 1, of Assembly resolution 35/201, including international peace and security, disarmament, peace-keeping and peace-making operations, decolonization, the work of the United Nations Council for Namibia, the struggle against apartheid and racial discrimination, economic, social and development issues, the promotion of human rights, the promotion of the Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women to the year 2000, as adopted by the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, 14/ held at Nairobi from 15 to 26 July 1985, and programmes on youth, as well as the establishment of the new international economic order and of a new world information and communication order.

17. The Department of Public Information should be requested to continue its co-operation with the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, as well as with intergovernmental organizations and regional organizations, and should monitor, as appropriate, important meetings of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries as well as those of intergovernmental and regional organizations, with a view to the promotion of a new world information and communication order.

18. In the light of the grave economic situation prevailing in Africa, the Secretary-General should be requested to ensure that the Department of Public Information does its utmost in bringing to the attention of the international

community the real dimensions of the **plight** of the African people and the tremendous efforts of the African countries, with a view to **increasing** its contribution towards alleviating this human **tragedy**. In this regard, the Secretary-General should be requested to ensure that the Department of Public Information does its utmost to disseminate widely and to **publicize** the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990, 15/ adopted by the General Assembly at its thirteenth special session, on the critical economic situation in Africa, held from 27 May to 1 June 1986.

19. The Department of Public Information should be urged to give the widest possible dissemination of information pertaining to acute world **economic** problems in general and, in particular, to the critical economic situation in Africa) the severe economic difficulties of the least developed countries and the external debt of developing countries, as **well** as to the adverse effect of the international economic environment on these countries.

20. The relevant provisions of the Final Act of the Conference on **Security** and Co-operation in Europe, **signed** at Helsinki on 1 August 1975, and ~~those~~ of the Concluding Document of the meetings of representatives of the participating States of the Conference **on** Security and Co-operation in **Europe**, held at Madrid from 11 November 1980 to 9 September 1983, should be recalled.

21. The Final Documents of the Conference of Ministers of Information of Non-Aligned Countries, held at Jakarta from 26 to 30 January 1984, 16/ should be recalled.

22. The Conference of Ministers of Information of States members of the **Organization** of African Unity, held at **Addis** Ababa in March 1985, which expressed its conviction in the importance of a new world information and communication order, should be noted.

23. The relevant resolution on the question relating **to information** of the Fourth Islamic Summit Conference, held at Casablanca from 16 to 19 **January** 1984, 17/ should be recalled.

Continuation of examination of United Nations public information policies and activities in the **light** of the evolution Of international relations, particularly **during** the past two decades, and of the imperatives of the establishment of the new international economic order-and of a new world information and communication order

24. In connection with the observance of the fortieth anniversary of the creation of the United Nations, the Department of Public Information should be **urged** to continue to **give** appropriate support to the **lasting** values of the **purposes** and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, which were reconfirmed as a reflection of the **high** hopes that peoples of the world continue to repose in the United Nations as the most appropriate framework for multilateral co-operation and the pursuit of shared objectives.

25. The Department of Public Information should, as it did in the past, maintain consistent editorial independence and accuracy in **reporting** for all material produced by the Department and should promote to the **greatest**

possible extent an informed understanding of the work and purposes of the United Nations among the people of the world, taking necessary measures to ensure that its output contains objective and equitable information about issues before the Organization, reflecting divergent opinions where they occur.

26. The Department of Public Information should continue to ensure that the daily dispatches of the Pool of Non-Aligned News Agencies that it receives are appropriately utilized in the performance of the public information tasks of the United Nations with a view to further promotion and development of functional and mutually beneficial co-operation between the Department and the Pool and the successful joint coverage by the Pool of important conferences and other events within the United Nations system. The Department should promote the utilization of dispatches received from the Pool to establish a data base on the information and communication facilities in the non-aligned countries.

27. The assessment contained in the report of the Secretary-General relating to the acquisition by the United Nations of its own communications satellite, 18/ in conformity with recommendation 36 made by the Committee on Information to the General Assembly at its thirty-seventh session, 19/ should be kept under constant review.

28. With regard to the improvement of communication infrastructures, the Committee on Information draws attention to the success attained by the ARABSAT, BRASISAT, INSAT-1B, MORELOS and PALAPA satellite systems, designed to promote national and regional integration. In this connection, it endorses the execution of satellite projects such as CONDOR by the Andean group of countries. The United Nations and the specialized agencies, in particular those in the financial sector, should support such activities and initiatives.

29. Note should be taken of the report of the Secretary-General 20/ in which the Department of Public Information considered that there was indeed a potential audience for a short-wave broadcasting network helonaina to the United Nations and used by it.

30. The Department of Public Information should, in the immediate future, contact interested countries and radio broadcasting organizations in order to examine ways and means to resume, at favourable conditions for the Organization, short-wave broadcasting for which the Department of Public Information used to buy time on a rental basis, and the Secretary-General should be requested to report on the outcome of the contacts made by the Department to the General Assembly at its forty-first session.

31. The Department of Public Information should co-operate closely with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the Pool of Non-Aligned News Agencies to continue to organize a workshop in 1987 for the familiarization of news agencies of developing countries with modern technology of relevance to news agencies and for the standardization of teaching methods and syllabuses and to produce training manuals in various languages for the training centres of the Pool, and should report to the Committee on Information at its substantive session in 1988 on progress made to this effect.

32. In order to enhance awareness and understanding of the loftv objectives

of the United Nations, the Department of Public Information should endeavour to promote teaching in the educational institutions of Member States about the structure, principles and aims of the Organization in conformity with the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. In order to implement this recommendation, the Department should continue to organize, on a yearly basis, a fellowship programme for educators.

33. The World Disarmament Campaign should give full consideration to the role of the mass media as the most effective way to promote in world public opinion a climate of understanding, confidence and co-operation conducive to peace and disarmament, the enhancement of human rights and development. Within the World Disarmament Campaign and Disarmament Week, the Department of Public Information should fulfil the role assigned to it by the General Assembly by utilizing its expertise and resources in public information. It should ensure its maximum effectiveness and achieve maximum co-operation and co-ordination with the Department for Disarmament Affairs in order to avoid duplication.

34. The Committee on Information stresses that the mass media should contribute to the fostering of mutual respect, equality, non-interference, peace and development and should not be used as an instrument of hostility against the sovereignty of other States.

35. The Department of Public Information should be requested, in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions, to continue to cover adequately the Israeli policies and practices that violate and affect the human rights of the populations in Arab territories occupied since June 1967, including Jerusalem and the Golan Heights, especially those policies and practices which impede the attainment and exercise of the inalienable national rights of the Palestinian people and to report thereon to the Committee on Information at its substantive session in 1987.

36. The Department of Public Information and the mass media world-wide should be urged to intensify their activities and the dissemination of information with regard to the policies and practices of apartheid and, pursuant to General Assembly resolutions 34/182 of 18 December 1979, 35/201 of 16 December 1980 and 40/164 A of 16 December 1985, to give due attention to the unilateral measures and official censorship imposed on the local and international media related to all aspects of this issue.

37. The Secretary-General should be requested to intensify his efforts in order to alert world public opinion with regard to the illegal occupation of Namibia and to continue to disseminate, with the full assistance of the United Nations Council for Namibia, the Department of Public Information and the United Nations system as a whole, information relating to the struggle of the oppressed people of Namibia for self-determination, national independence and freedom as well as the full, speedy and unconditional implementation of the United Nations plan for Namibia.

38. The Department of Public Information should be requested anew to use the official language of the General Assembly adequately in its documents and audio-visual documentation and to arrange accordingly for an appropriate number of staff in order better to inform the public about the activities of the United Nations. It should also make available to the French Language Production Section of the Press and Publications Division of the Department the means that will allow it consistently to distribute press releases in

sufficient quantity to satisfy the needs of the numerous journalists and delegations that use French as a working language.

39. The Department of Public Information should be requested to implement fully the provisions Of General Assembly resolution 38/82 B relating to the work programme of the Caribbean Unit and the Secretary-General should be requested to report to the Committee on Information at its substantive session in 1987 on the measures taken in implementation of this recommendation.

40. The Secretary-General should be requested once again to maintain the functions of the Middle East/Arabic Unit as the producer of Arabic television and radio programmes, to strengthen and expand this unit to enable it to function in an effective manner and to report to the Committee on Information at its substantive session in 1987 on the measures taken in implementation Of this recommendation.

41. United Nations information centres should continue to assist press and information media in their respective countries in accordance with the mandate given by the General Assembly and, inter alia, promote the establishment of a new world information and communication order. In this regard, the information centres should intensify direct and systematic communication exchange with local information and educational institutions in a mutually beneficial way, in accordance with priorities of the General Assembly and taking into account the areas of particular interest to host countries.

4 2 While the co-operation between the Department of Public Information and the United Nations Development Programme in the field should be promoted to the maximum extent, it is also important to bear in mind the intrinsic functions of the United Nations information centres as distinct from those of the United Nations development activities. The information centres should redouble their efforts to publicize the activities and achievements of operational activities for development, including those of the United Nations Development Programme, taking into account the priorities determined by the General Assembly.

43. The Department of Public Information should focus On and give wider coverage to the economic, social and development activities of the United Nations system aimed at achieving a more comprehensive image of the activities and potential of the United Nations system, taking into account the priorities set by the General Assembly.

44. The Department of Public Information should disseminate information concerning the decisions of the United Nations dealing with acts of terrorism in all its forms, taking into account particularly General Assembly resolution 40/61 of 9 December 1985, which was adopted by consensus, as well as the relevant statements made by the President of the Security Council and the Secretary-General 1.

45. The Secretary-General should continue his efforts to develop a system for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the activities of the Department of Public Information, particularly in the priority areas determined by the General Assembly.

46. Future reports of the Department of Public Information to the Committee on Information and to the General Assembly, in particular on new programmes or on the expansion of existing programmes, should contain:

(a) More adequate information on the output of the Department in respect of each topic included in its work programme, which form the basis of its programme budget)

(b) The costs of the activities undertaken in respect of each topic;

(c) More adequate information on target audiences, end-use of the Department's products, and analysis of feedback data received by the Department ;

(d) A statement detailing the priority level that the Secretary-General has attached to current or future activities of the Department in documents dealing with such activities;

(e) The Department's evaluation of the effectiveness of its different programmes and activities, with particular reference to the need constantly to review internal programme elements and activities.

41. The steps taken by the Department of Public Information in redressing the imbalance in its staff should be noted. The Department should continue to intensify its efforts to that end and the Secretary-General should be requested to take urgent steps to increase the representation of underrepresented developing countries and of other underrepresented groups, of countries, especially at the senior levels, in conformity with the relevant provisions of the Charter of the United Nations, and to submit a report to the Committee on Information at its substantive session in 1987.

48. Member States should be called upon once again to make voluntary contributions to the United Nations Trust Fund for Economic and Social Information.

49. The assessment contained in the report of the Secretary-General 21/ on the present system of charging Member States and the media for video tapes, audio tapes and news photographs of important United Nations events should be noted, and the Department of Public Information should report to the Committee on Information at its substantive session in 1987 on that subject with a view to reducing appropriately the final cost of these materials and spreading overtime charges legitimately incurred in an equitable way so as to enable the media in the Member States to give wider publicity to the aims and activities of the United Nations.

50. The interim report of the Secretary-General entitled "The Department of Public Information as the Focal Point for the Formulation and Implementation of Information Activities of the United Nations" 22/ should be noted and the Secretary-General should be requested to submit his final report to the Committee on Information at its substantive session in 1987 in the light of the ongoing consultations within the Secretariat on the role of the Department with respect to all information activities of the United Nations. The Committee on Information once again recommends that the proliferation of information units in the Secretariat independent of the Department should be discouraged.

51. The Committee on Information takes note of the report on the review of the distribution of taped radio programmes produced by the Department of Public Information in New York 23/ and requests the Department to take steps

to improve their distribution, to examine its current effectiveness and to report to the Committee at its substantive session in 1987. In this connection, the Committee views with concern the curtailment of certain language programmes by the Department of Public Information and calls upon the Department to suspend action in this regard until a policy regarding such curtailment is approved by the Committee.

52. The operations of the Non-Governmental Liaison Services (Geneva and New York) as voluntarily funded **inter-agency projects** reaching specific target audiences in the **industrialized countries on international development** issues should be continued on a stable financial basis through United Nations participation in these services. As with Development Forum, it is essential that United Nations financial participation, from the regular budget, should be ensured in the next biennium. Furthermore, the Secretary-General should be requested to urge all specialized agencies to make **long-term** contributions to the financing of these services, thereby stressing their inter-agency character.

53. The quality, usefulness and coverage of the daily press release and the weekly news summary issued by the Department of Public Information in all working languages should be further enhanced and improved in view of the important public information tasks that they can perform. Services provided by the Press Section of the Department both for the media and the delegations should be improved. The Department should continue to co-operate closely with and provide assistance to the United Nations Correspondents Association.

54. The Department of Public Information should improve the **timely** distribution of its materials to subscribers and United Nations information centres, particularly the UN Chronicle, a major source of information on the United Nations, to its recipients and to reassess the effectiveness of this publication and to report to the Committee on Information at its substantive session in 1987.

55. The report on the programme and activities of the Joint United Nations Information Committee 24/ should be noted, particularly in regard to Development Forum as the only inter-agency publication of the United Nations system that concentrates on development issues, and the Secretary-General should, while continuing his efforts to secure a sound and independent basis for the periodical, make such arrangements as necessary, through the regular budget, to ensure its continued publication. The resources of the United Nations system should be pooled in support of Development Forum and Development Business and any attempt in the United Nations system to duplicate the functions performed by these publications should be avoided. All specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system should be urged to contribute to the financing of this system-wide publication, thereby **recognizing** its inter-agency character.

56. The Secretary-General should continue to ensure that Development Forum retains its editorial policy of intellectual independence, thus enabling this publication to continue to serve as a world-wide forum in which **diverse** opinions on issues related to economic and social development can be freely expressed.

57. The Secretary-General should be encouraged to continue and intensify his efforts to explore all possibilities of securing the adequate resources for the continuation of the World Newspaper Supplement project.

E. Statement adopted by the Committee on Information on the occasion of the International Year of Peace

70. The Committee on Information,

In response to General Assembly resolution 40/10 of 11 November 1985, celebrates the solemn Proclamation of the International Year of Peace approved by the General Assembly in its resolution 40/3 of 24 October 1985 and expresses its intention to contribute, within its areas of competence, to the achievement of positive results in the international co-operation aimed at promoting peace during the Year and beyond)

Expresses the hope that the safeguarding of peace and the future of mankind, which is one of the primary objectives of the United Nations and the main theme of the International Year of Peace, will be fully achieved)

Emphasizes the important influence of information and communication on international relations and international co-operation.

Notes

1/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 21 (A/35/21), annex.

2/ Ibid., Thirty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 21 (A/36/21).

3/ Ibid., Thirty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 21 (A/37/21 and Corr.1).

4/ Ibid., Thirty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 21 (A/38/21 and Corr.1 and 2).

5/ Ibid., Thirty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 21 (A/39/21).

6/ Ibid., Fortieth Session, Supplement No. 21 (A/40/21).

7/ See Report of the International Conference in Support of the Namibian People for Independence, Paris, 25-29 April 1983 (A/CONF.120/13), part three.

8/ Adopted by the United Nations Council for Namibia at its extraordinary plenary meetings held at Vienna from 3 to 7 June 1985 (see A/40/375-S/17262, annex).

9/ United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 75, No. 973, p. 287.

10/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-first Session, Supplement No. 38 (A/41/38 and Corr.2).

11/ See United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, Records of the General Conference, Twenty-third Session, vol. I, Resolutions, sect. III.

12/ Ibid., Twenty-first Session, vol. I, Resolutions, sect. III.

13/ Ibid., Twenty-second Session, vol. I, Resolutions, sect. II.

Notes (cont inued)

14/ Report of the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace (A/CONF.116/28 and Corr.1-4), chap. I, sect. A.

15/ General Assembly resolution S-13/2.

16/ A/39/139-S/16430, annex.

17/ A/39/131-S/16414 and Corr.1, annex, resolution 15/4-P(1S).

18/ A/AC.198/95.

19/ See Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 21 (A/37/21 and Corr.1), sect. IV.

20/ A/AC.198/110.

21/ A/AC.198/106.

22/ A/AC.198/82.

23/ A/AC.198/104.

24/ A/AC.198/111.

ANNEX I

Statement by the Chairman of the Committee at the opening of the substantive session

We are about to enter a new round of substantive work of the Committee on Information, a session that surely will be of great interest not only to its 69 member States. The essential thing now is the preservation and enhancement of the specific role of this forum in the growing international debate on the importance, responsibility and tasks of information, of the international exchange of information. It is necessary, therefore, to prepare documents for submission to the forty-first session of the General Assembly, which should provide the basis for joint activities of the broadest possible scope.

It is for eight years now that the Committee on Information has proved its worth as a forum of dialogue and understanding. On the basis of its triple mandate it has offered its member States the opportunity to take an active part in shaping information policies and programmes within the United Nations system and to explain their positions on the conduct of the international exchange of information. Dialogue and understanding were both points of departure and foundations of the Committee's work. It was this dialogue and understanding that made possible or facilitated the adoption of documents based on the common will of States. This dialogue should be kept intact, especially at a time like this when information issues have become a global matter, putting a deep imprint on the conflict over the restoration of normalcy to international relations. Differences in the socio-economic systems of States, in their basic ideological positions, their size or their location on our globe must not be an obstacle to a consensus based on reason and realism.

Distinguished delegates, it is 10 years now since the concept of a new world information and communication order was placed on the agenda of professional and political debates on journalism, information and mass communication. The concept established by the non-aligned countries at New Delhi and Colombo and expected to be further developed at the forthcoming summit at Harare has undoubtedly proved its value. Its basic demands are generally accepted today, that is to overcome the serious inequalities marking the international exchange of information, strengthen media systems in developing countries and work towards constructive international co-operation on an equal footing in the field of information. These objectives are defined in important instruments such as the UNESCO 1978 mass media declaration a/ or the 1980 MacBride Report, b/ and also in recommendations of our Committee, and have been translated into initial practical steps through the establishment of the International Programme for the Development of Communication.

However, during the past decade no profound changes have as yet been achieved. The old information order has not been replaced by a new one. Inequalities and disparities continue to exist. New dependencies have ensued from the tremendous technological development of the media. Many questions call for valid answers. These include the expansion of national information structures in developing countries, the development of satellite-aided telecommunication, data and mass communication systems, the establishment of global communication networks and access to them, or the possibilities for information and communication resulting from the need for the peaceful use of outer space. Information has become one of the key resources of our planet. This is not free from problems. "The information revolution", said the Secretary-General of the United Nations,

Mr. Pérez de Cuéllar, before the Argentine Council for International Relations, "has triggered a clash of ideas unprecedented in history. Nowadays, television and, above all, transistor radios instantaneously bring to even the most isolated areas images, news and comment, which are received by viewers and listeners who are often ill-prepared to analyse and judge them. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that this prodigious expansion of the cultural and information horizon is sometimes perceived as a threat to national cohesion. There is a fear of the fascination exerted by dominant cultures and of the decline or loss of creativity or even identity, which might result. Above all, there is a fear of an invasion by ideas or beliefs which are incompatible with the system of values on which society is based." These questions are of tremendous interest not only for developing countries. The consequences of new technologies at the same time do concern the developed countries, be it in their positive or in their negative aspects.

To evade the discussion of such issues would be bound to have negative consequences for international relations, for understanding and co-operation among nations.

The establishment of a new world information and communication order was the subject of the second round table sponsored by the United Nations and UNESCO at Copenhagen a few months ago, which I had the opportunity to attend. Let me first say that the meeting fully lived up to the mandate it had received from the General Assembly, that is to bring together "journalists, decision-makers and researchers in various disciplines concerned, representatives of the international media and professional organizations and associations." A great deal of credit goes to the Under-Secretary-General, Mr. Yasuaki Akashi, to the Assistant Director-General, Mr. Henri Lopes, and to the active Danish hosts for the careful preparation of the event.

The main theme of the discussion at Copenhagen was the definition of conceptual criteria for a new world information and communication order. Although the participants started from different premises, there was a wide measure of agreement on the objectives to be pursued. Most of the participants advocated the establishment of a new order that would be free from the present inequalities, both national and international, would be based on the norms of international law and oriented towards a lively flow of information in the interest of peace.

In line with the well-known UNESCO documents, participants concurred in referring to the new order as an "evolving and continuous process" and, indeed, as an irreversible one, whose purpose it was to change things as they are and create a more equitable and effective order. It appears that such an approach can be helpful in the forthcoming discussions within this Committee and in the Special Political Committee.

Let me turn to another conclusion to be drawn from the Copenhagen meeting: a new order does not mean curbing the activities of the media or of journalists. On the contrary: there can be no new order unless the peoples' right to seek, receive and impart information is implemented, there can be no order unless the right of every human being to comprehensively educate himself and to be informed is put into practice. Active participation in the exchange of information, access to the media, and diversity of sources of information remain key elements of the new order to be established. But it is equally true that freedoms must not be seen divorced from obligations. In no event must their exercise run counter to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations but must be in conformity with the generally recognized norms of international law. Truthfulness and a sense of responsibility are therefore indispensable criteria of any information activity.

In its recommendations, the Committee on Information has always emphasized that the strengthening of peace and of international understanding were major objectives of an information order. This is even more relevant in the International Year of Peace. The pertinent General Assembly resolution on the Year of Peace stresses the great role of information in the promotion of peace. It should be recalled that this Committee, like other United Nations bodies, is called upon to undertake specific activities during the Year. The obvious thing to do, therefore, is to appeal to the media to pursue information policies that are based on the provisions of the Charter and serve the cause of peace and disarmament. It is necessary to harness the great potential of the mass media in the effort to create an atmosphere of trust between States and peoples. The media and all persons and organizations directly or indirectly involved in their activities bear a high responsibility in view of the influence they exercise on making Peace lastingly secure and promoting relations of good-neighbourliness and mutually advantageous co-operation among States. Through truthful and responsible reporting they can make a weighty contribution to peace. Supplementing political, military and economic measures, they can help create an atmosphere of confidence in relations between States that is so much needed in the world today.

Apart from further work on the concept of the content of a new information order it remains important to devise practical measures of direct assistance to developing countries. The International Programme for the Development of Communication, launched in 1980, has achieved a great deal in this context; under it, well over 100 projects have been carried out for the benefit of developing countries, such as training schemes for journalists, development of radio and television services, establishment of news agencies, extension of the press, and others.

The fact that developing countries have received only one fourth of what they had asked for underlines the need to allocate more funds to the Programme. At the same time it is important to bear in mind that the existence of sophisticated communication systems alone cannot solve the outstanding problems. The acquisition of new technologies must not, for example, create new, permanent dependencies. In this area, too, equality, justice and mutual benefit must be made to serve as the foundations of the common endeavours of States.

A critical analysis of the information policies and programmes within the United Nations system, and of the work of the Department of Public Information will again be a major topic of our deliberations. There is reason to stress once again that this Committee is the body to which the General Assembly has entrusted the mandate of discussing the relevant questions in an unbiased, balanced and businesslike manner.

It is well known that the Department as the focal point of the United Nations information services is engaged in a wide range of activities in the way of publications, audio tapes, video tapes, training programmes, meetings, conferences, and other things. These activities are being appreciated and have always been commended by the Committee. The progress reports submitted by the Secretary-General on the various programmes are a reflection of what has been accomplished. Those reports will be complemented by oral presentations. May I express thanks to the Under-Secretary-General, Mr. Akashi, and the staff of his Department for the great commitment and dedication they have shown. This appreciation also relates to the committed preparation of our session this year. And may I use this opportunity also to wish the new Secretary of the Committee, Mr. Chnar Halim, best success in his activities.

It goes without saying that **effectiveness** and the concentrated use of the available funds and resources will remain the main criteria in **assessing** the work of the Department. **As** regards the adoption of further programmes, a sense of **realism** based on what is needed and feasible should prevail more than ever in the light of the critical financial situation facing the United Nations. **It is logical** that the Department cannot undertake more and more programmes while the funds remain the **same** or are **being** reduced. It is therefore **essential** to set **genuine** priorities in terms of content, deriving them from the decisions of the General **Assembly** and the Security Council. **As** for necessary financial cuts, they must not jeopardise priority **programmes** or question the balanced approach of the Department. In **its** activities the Department **has** to take account of the **position** of majorities and minorities. It can never serve only one group of interests. Speaking about increased **efficiency**, I should like to repeat my appeal from last Year, namely to improve the co-ordination of all the, manifold **information** activities within the United Nations **system**.

The mutual information on results **reached in different** bodies **could be** an initial step to **start** with. There can be no doubt that, for example, the **deliberations** of the Committee on the **Peaceful** Uses of Outer Space or the **Commission on Transnational** Corporations are of great relevance for our Committee. Finally, **as** to our meeting this year, it should be mentioned that it is not acceptable if activities planned by **Member** States on a long-term basis are curtailed by administrative decisions taken at short notice and without **consulting** the groups. Budgetary cuts, any necessary changes require a balanced weighing of all interests.

The time available to the Committee is limited. We therefore will have to make a concentrated effort, exhausting whatever possibilities we have. And if we **as** we have so often assured each other - want to return to **consensus** on the final documents, we will need mutual understanding and readiness for **compromise**. **Let** us work together along these lines, in an atmosphere conducive to meaningful results that will further enhance the authority of the Committee on Information.

Notes

a/ Declaration on Fundamental Principles **concerning** the Contribution of the **Mass** Media to Strengthening **Peace** and International Understanding, to the **Promotion** of Human Rights and to Countering Racism, Apartheid and Incitement to War, adopted on 22 November 1978 by the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural **Organization** at its twentieth session.

b/ Sean **MacBride** and other Many Voices, One World (London, **Kogan Page/** New York, **Unipub/Paris**, UNESCO, 1980).

ANNEX II

Draft recommendations submitted to the Committee on Information by Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Federal Republic Of, Greece, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Turkey, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America*

1. The mandate of the Committee on Information, as set forth in General Assembly resolution 34/182 of 18 December 1979 and recalled in Assembly resolutions 35/201 of 16 December 1980, 36/149 B of 16 December 1981, 37/94 B of 10 December 1982, 38/82 B of 15 December 1983, 39/98 A of 14 December 1984 and 40/164 A of 16 December 1985, should be brought in line with the consensus language of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, so that it be renewed as follows:

"(a) To continue to examine United Nations public information policies and activities, in the light of the evolution of international relations, particularly during the past two decades, and of the imperatives of the establishment of the new international economic order and of a new world information and communication order, seen as an evolving and continuous process;

"(b) To evaluate and follow up the efforts made and the progress achieved by the United Nations system in the field of information and communications;

"(c) To promote the establishment of a new, more just and more effective world information and communication order, seen as an evolving and continuous process, intended to strengthen peace and international understanding and based on the free circulation and wider and better balanced dissemination of information and to make recommendations thereon to the General Assembly."

2. The Committee recalls article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which provides that everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression and that this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers. This basic human right should underlie all activities in the field of information and communication.

3. The Department of Public Information should promote to the greatest extent possible an informed understanding of the work and purposes of the United Nations and its contribution to the well-being of the peoples of the world. In this connection, coverage of United Nations activities in the area of social and economic development should be enhanced.

4. The Committee again stresses that the Department of Public Information should:

(a) Maintain editorial independence and accuracy in all its materials and ensure that its output contains objective and equitable information about issues before the Organization, reflecting divergent opinions where they occur;

* Previously issued as document A/AC.198/L.31.

(b) Ensure that there be open and unhindered access to all United Nations materials distributed through United Nations information centres.

5. In the light of the present financial difficulties of the United Nations and the need, when appropriate, to make resources available for new programmes, the Department of Public Information should maximize the efficiency of its operations by regularly reviewing the costs/benefits of its programmes and by scrutinizing its administrative and personnel costs.

6. In view of the present financial difficulties of the United Nations, which add urgency and increased importance to the need of the Department to define priorities for its work, the Committee recommends that the Department attach highest priority to:

(a) Programmes mandated by resolutions of the General Assembly adopted by consensus)

(b) Programmes reaching the greatest audience)

(c) Programmes that are most cost-effective and financially feasible.

7. The Department of Public Information is requested anew, within existing resources, to use all the official languages of the General Assembly adequately in its documents and audio-visual documentation.

8. The Secretary-General should continue his efforts to develop a system for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the activities of the Department of Public Information, paying special attention to the need, within existing resources, to improve data-collection procedures with regard to target audiences, end-use of the Department's products and analysis of feedback data and the actual use made by disseminators of the Department's materials.

9. Future reports of the Department of Public Information to the Committee on Information and to the General Assembly, in particular on new programmes or on the expansion of existing programmes, should contain:

(a) More adequate information on the output of the Department in respect of each topic included in its work programme, which forms the basis of its programme budget;

(b) The costs of the activities undertaken in respect of each topic;

(c) More adequate information on target audiences, end-use of the Department's products, and analysis of feedback data received by the Department;

(d) The Department's evaluation of the effectiveness of its different programmes and activities;

(e) A statement detailing the priority level that the Secretary-General has attached to current or future activities of the Department in documents dealing with such activities.

10. The Committee once again requests that the Secretary-General submit his final report on the role of the Department of Public Information as the focal point of all information activities of the United Nations, and recommends that no new

information units independent of the Department he created in the United Nations Secretariat.

11. The Committee recognizes the unique function of United Nations information centres as one of the most important means of disseminating information about the United Nations among the peoples of the world. In this regard, the Committee stresses the need to improve the efficiency of United Nations information centres, within existing resources. The Committee is strongly of the view, especially against the background of the financial difficulties facing the United Nations, that in the interests of efficiency and economy there should be close co-ordination of information activities within the United Nations system. In order further to avoid duplication of effort, there should be common information services wherever practicable.

12. The Joint United Nations Information Committee, as the essential instrument for inter-agency co-ordination and co-operation in the field of public information, should be further strengthened and given more responsibility for the public information activities of the entire United Nations system.

13. The Committee recognizes that free distribution of materials is necessary in the public information activities of the United Nations, but, as demands increase and whenever it is desirable and possible, the Department should actively encourage the sale of its materials.

14. In order to enhance awareness and understanding of the lofty objectives of the United Nations, the Department of Public Information should provide assistance, in an objective and equitable way, to educational institutions of Member States for teaching about the structure of the United Nations, as well as the principles and aims enunciated in its Charter.

15. The Department of Public Information should, as a matter of priority, continue its annual training programme for journalists and broadcasters from developing countries.

16. The Department of Public Information should continue its co-operation with the Pool of Non-Aligned News Agencies, as well as with regional news agencies of developing countries, and should ensure that press releases and other materials prepared by the Department are provided to the Pool and regional agencies.

17. With a view to assuring the best possible coverage of United Nations activities, the Department of Public Information should again be requested, in conformity with resolution 2 (I) of 1 February 1946, and the pertinent instructions of the Secretary-General, to make balanced use of the two working languages of the Secretariat in its written and audio-visual documents. In particular, the Department, within existing resources, should give to the concerned divisions the means to produce and distribute press releases and "blue notes" in the two working languages of the Secretariat.

18. The coverage provided by daily press releases and the weekly news summary issued by the Department of Public Information should be maintained to the extent possible, taking into account the Department's available resources. Services provided at the Press Section of the Department for the media should be improved. The Department should continue to co-operate closely with and provide assistance to the United Nations Correspondents' Association.

19. The Department of Public Information should disseminate information concerning the decisions of the United Nations dealing with acts of terrorism in all its forms, particularly General Assembly consensus resolutions 40/61 of 9 December 1985 and 40/73 of 11 December 1985 and the unanimous Security Council resolution 579 (1985) of 18 December 1985 as well as the statements by the President of the Security Council and the Secretary-General on the issue.

20. The Committee takes note of the successful outcome and final document a/ of the special session of the General Assembly on the critical economic situation in Africa, and urges the Department of Public Information to take further steps to promote public awareness of the need for international co-operation in alleviating the grave economic situation in Africa.

21. The Committee takes note of the report on the results of the daily short-wave broadcasting experiment b/ and in the light of the present financial difficulties of the Department of Public Information, recommends that it consider expanding the programme of telephone news bulletins.

22. The Committee takes note of the review of the distribution of photo materials produced by the Department c/ and urges the implementation of the recommendations contained in that report.

23. The Committee takes note of the report on measures taken to improve the distribution of taped radio programmes, d/ and requests the Department of Public Information to take appropriate measures in accordance with the results of the original survey. e/

24. The Committee takes note of the decision of the Department of Public Information to publish the UN Chronicle on a quarterly basis, and urges that it be distributed on a timely basis and that its content be objective and adhere to the highest professional standards.

25. The Committee takes note of the report on the programme and activities of the Joint United Nations Information Committee, f/ and urges the Secretary-General to continue his efforts to secure a sound and stable financial basis for Development Forum, the only inter-agency publication of the United Nations system that concentrates on development issues. The Secretary-General should continue to ensure that Development Forum retains its editorial policy of intellectual independence, thus enabling this publication to continue to serve as a world-wide forum in which diverse opinions on issues relating to economic and social development can be freely expressed.

26. The Committee takes note of the report on the second round table, g/ jointly held at Copenhagen from 2 to 7 April 1986 by the Department of Public Information and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

27. In view of the fact that the United Nations operates on a biennial budget, and in order to achieve greater productivity and cost effectiveness and to economise on conference and documentation costs, the organizational and substantive meetings of the Committee on Information should be combined into one biennial session, beginning in 1987.

28. The Committee recognizes that the establishment of a new world information and communication order, seen as an evolving and continuous process, as elaborated by consensus at the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization,

which retains the central role in this issue, requires the collaboration in practical measures of all countries, the United Nations system as a whole and all others concerned.

29. With a view to diversifying the sources of information as a step towards free and more balanced information, the United Nations system as a whole, as well as the developed countries, should be urged to co-operate in a concerted manner with the developing countries towards strengthening the information and communication infrastructures of the latter countries, in accordance with their development priorities. In this regard, full support for the International Programme for the Development of Communication of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization should be emphasized. This programme should encourage and stimulate a wide range of projects designed to improve the communication capabilities of developing countries.

30. Urgent attention should be given to the elimination of all obstacles, both internal and external, to the free flow and wider and better balanced dissemination of information, ideas and knowledge.

31. The Committee recognizes that the development of human resources is indispensable for the improvement of information and communication systems in developing countries, and supports the continuation and strengthening of practical training programmes such as those already operating under both public and private auspices throughout the developing world.

32. The Committee urges the Department of Public Information to encourage wider coverage by the mass media of the efforts of the developing countries to achieve economic, social and cultural progress and the efforts of the international community to that end. The Committee urges all countries to extend any assistance that journalists may need for the free and effective performance of their professional tasks.

Notes

- a/ General Assembly resolution S-13/2 of 1 June 1986.
- b/ A/AC.198/110.
- c/ A/AC.198/109.
- d/ A/AC.198/104.
- e/ A/AC.198/99.
- f/ A/AC.198/111.
- g/ A/AC.198/97.

**Draft recommendations submitted to the Committee on Information
by the socialist States of Eastern Europe***

1. All countries, the United Nations system as a whole and all others concerned should collaborate in the establishment of a new world information and communication order based, inter alia, on the free circulation and wider and better balanced dissemination of information, guaranteeing the diversity of sources of information and free access to information and, in particular, the urgent need to change the dependent status of the developing countries in the field of information and communication, as the principle of sovereign equality among nations extends also to this field, and intended also to strengthen Peace and international understanding, enabling all persons to participate effectively in political, economic, social and cultural life, and promoting understanding and friendship among all nations and human rights.

2. The ongoing efforts of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization to contribute to the clarification, elaboration and application of the concept of a new international information and communication order should be noted. With regard to the character of a new, more just and more effective world information and communication order as a continuous and evolving, but also an irreversible and progressive, process, resolutions 4/19 of 27 October 1980, a/ 3.1 of 25 November 1983 b/ and 3.1 of 8 November 1985, c/ which the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization adopted by consensus should be recalled.

3. Under the current international climate of political conflicts and economic disorder, the Committee on Information, fully aware and cognizant of the important contribution that the mass media world wide can make in enhancing and strengthening peace, deepening international understanding, promoting justice, equality, national independence, development, the exercise of human rights and, inseparably linked, the establishment of a new international information and communication order, recommends that the General Assembly address appeals to the following:

(a) The international media, in order to obtain their support for the efforts of the international community towards global development and, in particular, for the efforts of the developing countries to achieve economic, social and cultural progress;

(b) The United Nations system as a whole to co-operate in a concerted manner, through its information services, in promoting the development activities of the United Nations and, in particular, the improvement of the conditions of the lives of the peoples of the developing countries.

Such appeals should be aimed at achieving a more comprehensive and realistic image of the activities and potential of the United Nations system in all its purposes and endeavours, as laid down in the Charter of the United Nations.

4. Mindful of the proclamation by the General Assembly at its fortieth session of the International year of Peace, d/ stipulating that peoples must live together in

* Previously issued as document A/AC.198/L.32.

peace and practise tolerance, and stressing the need for renewed thought and action for the promotion of peace, and the Declaration on the Preparation of Societies for Life in Peace, e/ the Committee on Information recommends that the Assembly address an appeal to intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, the media and professional organizations of media representatives and corporations, both private and public, as well as others participating in the flow of information on international levels, inviting them:

(a) To contribute in their fields of competence to the strengthening of international peace, of efforts leading to disarmament and to the enhancement of the economic and political independence of the developing countries)

(b) To render all the support possible and necessary for a more balanced flow of information in greater reciprocity, aiming at the creation of a situation conducive to an international exchange of information on a just and equal basis;

(c) To observe the principle of sovereign equality of all States Members of the United Nations also in the field of information and communication, thus respecting the free choice of their independent economic, social and cultural development;

(d) To provide for a Greater flow of truthful and balanced information between peoples in order to enhance awareness of each other's national aspirations and the degree of mutual knowledge among them, thus promoting a climate of confidence in relations among States.

5. Reaffirming the lofty objectives of the International Year of Peace as proclaimed by the General Assembly, the Committee on Information emphasizes that the dissemination of information on the noble purposes and achievements of the United Nations is an essential task. In this regard, the elaboration of a declaration on the contribution of the mass media to the strengthening of peace, international understanding and co-operation should be considered. The Committee On Information recommends that the Department of Public Information, within the framework of its activities, should pay great attention to the world being well-informed about such important political questions as the strengthening of peace, disarmament, the development of understanding and confidence among peoples and should thus contribute to bringing about a comprehensive system of international security.

6. Reaffirming the primary role that the General Assembly is to play in elaborating, co-ordinating and harmonising United Nations policies and activities in the field of information and recognizing the central and important role of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in the field of information and communication, the Committee on Information recommends that the United Nations system as a whole and all others concerned should be urged to give that organisation adequate support and assistance in the field of information and communication. The Department of Public Information, in particular, should co-operate more regularly with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation, especially at the working level, with a view to maximizing the contributions of the Department to the efforts of that organization in promoting the establishment of a new world information and communication order and to disseminating as widely as possible information on the activities of that organization in this respect.

7. Acknowledging the constructive dialogue, the assessment of practical experiences and the positive results achieved at the second international round

table on a new world information and communication order, held at Copenhagen from 2 to 7 April 1986, the Committee on Information recommends that the Secretary-General should be requested to arrange, jointly with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, for a third round table on a new world information and communication order to be held not later than 1988.

8. The Secretary-General should be requested to ensure, under the prevailing circumstances of financial constraint, that the activities of the Department of Public Information, as the focal point of the public information tasks of the United Nations, are strengthened, keeping in view the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and along the lines established in the pertinent resolutions of the General Assembly and the recommendations of the Committee on Information, so as to ensure a more coherent coverage of and a better knowledge about the United Nations and its work, especially in its priority areas, such as those stated in section III, paragraph 1, of Assembly resolution 35/201 of 16 December 1980, including international peace and security, disarmament, peace-keeping and peace-making operat: Cons, decolonization, the promotion of human rights, the struggle against apartheid and racial discrimination, economic, social and development issues, the integration of women in the struggle for peace and development, the establishment of a new international economic order and of a new world information and communication order, the work of the United Nations Council for Namibia and programmes on women and youth.

9. Taking into account the requirement⁸ of financial constraint, the Committee on Information urges the Department of Public Information to continue coverage by press releases and in other appropriate ways in areas of priority to the General Assembly. Special attention should be devoted to the meetings of committees and the activities of relevant bodies established in conformity with these priorities.

10. In conformity with the relevant General Assembly resolutions, the Department of Public Information should be encouraged to give appropriate support in promoting the noble goals and accomplishments of the United Nations as a major forum for the constructive dialogue aimed at the pooling of efforts of States to contribute to the solution of vital world problems. All the information activities of the Department should be guided by the aspirations for both a new international economic order and a new world information and communication order.

11. The Committee on Information again stresses that the Department of Public Information should maintain editorial independence and accuracy in all material produced by the Department and should promote to the greatest extent possible an informed understanding of the work and purposes of the United Nations among the peoples of the world. The Department should ensure that its output contains objective, balanced and equitable information about issues before the Organization, reflecting at the same time divergent opinions where they occur appropriately.

12. The Committee on Information recommends that the media, especially radio broadcasting, should contribute to the fostering of peace and that their activities should be based on the principles of mutual respect for the sovereignty of States, non-interference and self-determination.

13. In order to enhance awareness and understanding of the lofty objectives of the United Nations, the Department of Public Information should endeavour to promote teaching in the educational institutions of Member States about the structure, principles and aims of the Organization in conformity with the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. In order to implement this recommendation, the Department should continue to organize, on a yearly basis, a fellowship programme for educators.

14. In view of the importance of United Nations broadcasting for the European region, the functions of the European Unit in the Radio Service should be enhanced and maintained.

15. Bearing in mind the important task of promoting to the greatest extent possible an informed understanding of the work and the purposes of the United Nations among the peoples of the world, the role of United Nations information centres should be strengthened. The Committee on Information stresses the need to consider the intrinsic functions of the information centres as distinct from United Nations development activities. At the same time, co-operation between the Department of Public Information and the United Nations Development Programme in this regard should be enhanced.

16. Under the guidance of the Department of Public Information, the United Nations information centres should continue to assist press and information media in their respective countries in accordance with the mandate given by the General Assembly and, later alia, promote the establishment of a new world information and communication order.

17. The World Disarmament Campaign should give full consideration to the role of mass media as the most effective way to promote in world public opinion a climate of understanding, confidence and co-operation conducive to peace and disarmament, the enhancement of human rights and development. In view of the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, the Department of Public Information should strengthen its role to promote the effectiveness of the World Disarmament Campaign and Disarmament Week.

18. The steps taken by the Department of Public Information in redressing the imbalance in its staff should be noted. The Department should continue to intensify its efforts to that end and the Secretary-General should be requested to take urgent steps to increase the representation of underrepresented groups of countries in order to achieve a balance in the regional distribution of posts within the Department both in the field and at Headquarters.

19. The Department of Public Information should improve the timely distribution of its materials to United Nations information centres and subscribers, particularly the UN Chronicle, as an important source of information on United Nations activities.

Notes

a/ See United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, Records of the General Conference, Twenty-first Session, vol. 1, Resolutions, sect. III.

b/ Ibid., Twenty-second Session, vol. 1, Resolutions, sect. II.

c/ Ibid., Twenty-third Session, vol. 1, Resolutions, sect. III.

d/ General Assembly resolution 40/3 of 24 October 1985, annex.

e/ General Assembly resolution 33/73 of 15 December 1978.

f/ A/AC.198/97.

Draft decision submitted to the Committee on Information by Mongolia
on the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of the United Nations
Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

The Committee on Information,

Reaffirming its strong support for the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization,

Considering the forthcoming fortieth anniversary of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization to be observed in November 1986 as an important event in international life,

Requests the Department of Public Information to pay particular attention to this event and to make broad use of that anniversary for the dissemination of information on the role of the United Nations and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in all the fields of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's competence - education, science and culture.

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