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QUESTIONS RELATING TO INFORMATION

Programme of fellowships and scholarships for the training  
 of journalists and broadcasting personnel

Report of the Secretary-General

CONTENTS

	<u>Paragraphs</u>	<u>Page</u>
I. INTRODUCTION . . . . .	1 - 3	2
II. EXISTING TRAINING CAPABILITIES IN THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INFORMATION . . . . .	4 - 8	2
III. EXISTING TRAINING CAPABILITIES IN SPECIALIZED AGENCIES AND PROGRAMMES . . . . .	9 - 28	3
IV. CONCLUSIONS . . . . .	29 - 44	6

## I. INTRODUCTION

1. The General Assembly, in its resolution 34/182 of 18 December 1979, section II, paragraph 12 (a), requested the Secretary-General, in consultation, as appropriate, with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization or other organizations of the United Nations, to submit recommendations concerning the establishment of a programme of fellowships and scholarships for the training of journalists and broadcasting personnel from the developing countries in the Radio and Visual Services of the United Nations.

2. With a view to pooling resources and expertise available in the United Nations system for training journalists and broadcasters, the United Nations Department of Public Information (DPI) surveyed existing training capabilities of its own four divisions, as well as those of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR).

3. As for the type of training envisaged and where it should be carried out within the United Nations, consultations with representatives from DPI and the specialized agencies indicated that the resolution should not be interpreted in its literal sense. It was felt that the resolution may have singled out the Radio and Visual Services of DPI as the training area in order to emphasize the needs of some developing countries for increased audio-visual communication: on the other hand, journalists and broadcasters should be trained in all communication media and sensitized to all aspects of United Nations work. This broader interpretation of paragraph 12 (a) would be beneficial to the journalists themselves, to their countries of origin and to the United Nations.

## II. EXISTING TRAINING CAPABILITIES IN THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INFORMATION

4. DPI thus far has not been geared nor equipped to undertake actual training of journalists on a continuing basis, except for ad hoc programmes to help a small number of broadcasters.

5. DPI conducts a number of seminars or internship programmes for graduate students (Student Intern Programme) and for teachers and educational administrators (Triangular Fellowship Programme). These projects are used to familiarize participants with the goals and workings of the United Nations and to develop a network of sympathetic supporters for the Organization. These programmes are usually of very limited duration - several weeks to three months - and cannot be classified as training programmes. Participation is open to both developed and developing countries, and, while among the student interns some have journalistic training or background, the programmes are not devised for journalists.

6. DPI also organizes two other familiarization projects specifically for those in the mass media, namely: Journalists Encounters and Editors Roundtables. In both of

these, however, the idea is not to train journalists, but rather to develop an informed group of redisseminators on United Nations matters, with the expectation that this will improve the coverage of United Nations events and programmes. The duration of Roundtables and Encounters varies from two to four days.

7. Journalists Encounters have been organized with a deliberate effort to include journalists from developing countries, whose participation is usually sponsored by the United Nations. This has contributed to expanded and well-informed coverage of United Nations events. The duration of these projects, however, has been short owing to financial constraints. Moreover, the follow-up to such programmes has been inadequate for lack of the necessary staff to maintain the contacts and provide a constant stream of well-prepared information materials.

8. The Editors Roundtables are yearly events designed for chief editors and managing editors of the major media of developing and developed countries. Their short duration and their very nature do not qualify them as training programmes for journalists, as envisaged in resolution 34/182.

### III. EXISTING TRAINING CAPABILITIES IN SPECIALIZED AGENCIES AND PROGRAMMES

9. The specialized agencies and programmes of the United Nations system, especially UNESCO, have had a wider experience in training journalists or communicators.

10. Since the early 1950s, assistance to Member States in planning and training for mass communication has been part of the UNESCO programme in all parts of the world, and systematic efforts have been made since the early 1960s to help establish national and regional institutions for this purpose.

11. At one time, training was anchored to developed country institutions, cast in their industrialized framework. But as the result of a sequence of meetings, conferences and practical experiments, a far more relevant pattern of local and regional training has begun to emerge. The principle of conducting basic training locally, in familiar cultural surroundings, and reserving international exposure for experienced personnel, has become part of today's communication-training philosophy.

12. The specific work of UNESCO in this area has taken various forms: for example, providing assistance to communication institutes and training centres; encouraging the formation of professional associations and groups; carrying out surveys of training needs; devising, producing and testing training materials; and offering advisory and consultant services. UNESCO also co-operated with universities in the various regions in the establishment of regional centres for education in journalism.

13. UNESCO helped to establish the Centro Internacional de Estudios Superiores de Periodismo para América Latina (CIESPAL) at Quoto. CIESPAL has organized annual two-month courses for teachers in journalism in Latin American countries, as well as

seminars on the communication media and research. Over 800 teachers have benefited from its courses since its establishment in 1958.

14. At the University of Dakar, UNESCO collaborated in the founding of the Centre d'études des sciences et techniques de l'information (CESTI); many Africans have participated in its courses and a number have received its diploma. Subsequently, UNESCO helped in the development of a Mass Communication Institute at the University of the Philippines to serve the Asian region, more recently in establishing a School of Journalism at the University of Nairobi to serve East Africa, and latterly, in establishing the Institute of Mass Communication at the University of the West Indies to serve the English-speaking Caribbean.

15. Parallel with these regional efforts, UNESCO has responded to requests of Member States in establishing national schools and training centres in the communication field (for example, the Film and Television Training Institute of India and the Communication Studies Programme at the Science University of Malaysia in Penang). In 1968, UNESCO assisted in creating the Department of Mass Communication at the University of Lagos. From a one-year diploma course designed to prepare broadcast practitioners for immediate needs, this Department of Mass Communication has developed a degree programme, increased its faculty, and steadily acquired professional communication-training facilities.

16. In its six years of operation, the Asia-Pacific Institute for Broadcasting Development (AIBD) has provided specialized training for more than 1,200 radio and television personnel from Iran to Samoa.

17. Established in collaboration with the Government of Malaysia, UNDP and UNESCO, AIBD became legally an intergovernmental organization within the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) region in 1978. It now enjoys the financial assistance not only of its 15 member states but also that of many governmental and non-governmental technical co-operation agencies and foundations both from within and outside the region.

18. AIBD courses of a regional, subregional and in-country character cover the gamut of broadcast media needs from basic radio production (always in-country) to electronic field production for television. These courses, typically of four to six weeks' duration, are organized on an annual schedule to respond to established needs. AIBD does, however, have the flexibility to mount special courses of any appropriate duration for almost any defined area of broadcasting, including, for example, broadcast journalism, rural programmes and population communication.

19. In 1967, the Caribbean Heads of Government expressed dissatisfaction, at their annual conference, with existing national information and mass communication systems, including their lack of interest in development.

20. Upon the request of that Conference, UNESCO contributed to the founding of the Caribbean Broadcasting Union in 1969, but it was in 1972 that a major project on the "Development of Communication in the Caribbean" began, with a team of UNESCO experts, national and international advisers and consultants and with the financial help of UNDP. The practical outcome of this project was, among other things:

- (a) To strengthen the Caribbean Broadcasting Union (CBU) and establish its broadcasting exchange system;
- (b) To help to create the Caribbean News Agency (CANA), with its underlying principle of co-operation between government and private media;
- (c) To form the Institute of Mass Communication of the West Indies;
- (d) To found the Caribbean Press Council;
- (e) To help to produce the Barbados Plan for the development of communication, and contribute to an experimental communication project for the communities of Trinidad and Tobago.

21. Since January 1980, UNESCO has set up two specific training projects in Africa in collaboration with donor countries: the recycling, under the auspices of PANA (L'Agence panafricaine d'information, recently created by the Organization of African Unity), of journalists from agencies of countries from west Africa; and other programmes of on-site training and re-orientation of radio and television journalists from southern Africa.

22. UNITAR has not been directly involved in the training of journalists from developing countries. The task of UNITAR is to train diplomats from developing countries and national officials from Member States in the main issues discussed or dealt with within the United Nations system.

23. UNITAR carries out its training programmes through a series of briefing seminars, and it has indicated that, in future, a seminar for press officers from permanent missions could be organized, mainly to impart background information on the structure of the United Nations and on the new world information and communication order. UNITAR also indicated that its training programmes would be organized in close co-ordination with DPI.

24. UNICEF does not have a programme to train journalists as such, but it does have a number of in-service training courses for project support communicators in its assisted programmes for community development. Occasionally, UNICEF has also given special training to broadcasters from developing countries in the production of radio and television programmes for children.

25. UNICEF has also co-operated with UNDP and the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA) in extending training to journalists in developing countries in their respective fields of interest.

26. The Information Division of UNDP has been organizing visits by media representatives to developing countries since 1973. These visits come under the Field Coverage Programme and are organized with a view to promoting the coverage of economic and social matters, including the development projects receiving UNDP support.

27. UNDP field offices, in co-operation with national Governments, have provided logistical support, including briefings, interviews and visits to project sites.

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Journalists undertaking such missions are completely independent and have total editorial control over the resulting material. It is made very clear to Governments concerned that media representatives on such assignments are not UNDP staff members and are not writing for or reporting to UNDP but are independent journalists reporting for their own newspapers, magazines or other media.

28. In the initial stages, the Field Coverage Programme was viewed solely as part of the fund-raising process and emphasis, therefore, was on getting developed-country media representatives to developing countries. However, increasingly, the Field Coverage Programme has become a means of familiarizing media representatives, both from the developing and the industrialized countries, with development activities supported by the United Nations development system. Either alone or in co-operation with other United Nations agencies, such as UNFPA, UNICEF and the World Health Organization (WHO), some 75 such missions are organized every year. The cost of specific missions is sometimes shared with bilateral aid agencies (such as the Danish International Development Agency or the Swedish International Development Agency) or with media organizations (such as Finnish Television, the Sankei Shimbun or Fuji TV). The objective is to create a corps of media representatives around the world familiar with the United Nations development system activities at the field level. In terms of immediate media coverage, the benefits are substantial. But what is even more important is the long-term benefit of a media corps familiar with non-political activities of the United Nations system, which currently absorb more than 80 per cent of the human and fiscal resources of United Nations agencies.

#### IV. CONCLUSIONS

29. Basic and advanced training for journalists and broadcasters from developing countries has been undertaken thus far mainly by national and regional centres, institutes and universities, with technical and other assistance from the United Nations system. Familiarization seminars and field trips have been organized by DPI, UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA and others. The training of journalists as proposed in resolution 34/182 should aim at the following main goals:

(a) To review some of the techniques of communication in specially designed refresher courses undertaken at the national or regional level by existing centres and institutes and sponsored by multilateral and bilateral aid;

(b) To familiarize and sensitize the trainees (fully trained junior journalists and broadcasters) with the activities of the United Nations system, through in-service training at Headquarters and through visits to development projects and their regional economic commissions;

(c) To emphasize the benefits to be derived by the world community in general and by the developing countries in particular from better co-operation on the part of well-informed journalists who would reflect United Nations activities in a spirit of realistic and constructive understanding;

(d) To explain the need for a new world information and communication order and how it will benefit developing countries and their media of communication.

30. On the basis of the above considerations, the following two training programmes - one for broadcasters and one for journalists - could be envisaged.

#### A. Broadcasters

31. On-the-job training would be provided, within the professional and technical capacity available to DPI, to 12 broadcasters a year, for a duration of six months. The fellows would be drawn from the ECA, ECLA, ECWA and ESCAP regions. Qualified candidates would be expected to have a minimum of three to five years' experience in their respective areas of specialization. Their participation in the programme would therefore serve to broaden an already existing professional base and to expose them to an international environment.

32. For the duration of their stay at Headquarters, the fellows would be assigned either to the Radio Service or to the Visual Service and would be expected to participate fully in the work of the Service to which they were assigned. In addition, the fellows would also serve as temporary United Nations correspondents of their broadcasting organizations. They would be provided with opportunities to become acquainted not only with the modern techniques used by DPI but also with the aims and activities of the international community as represented in the United Nations.

33. Preference would be given either to radio or television broadcasters, depending on the number of available training opportunities in each service during the six-month period under consideration. The Organization would provide each fellow with an economy round-trip air fare to Headquarters and with a stipend.

34. In addition to the above training programme at Headquarters, provision should be made for periodic visits by senior staff members of DPI to the existing regional training centres for young broadcasters in the developing world. Such regional training centres have been established, under the aegis of the respective regional broadcasting unions, at Kuala Lumpur, Abidjan, Damascus and Mexico City. A series of jointly-sponsored workshops at these centres would serve to convey at least some of the benefits of the United Nations broadcasters' training programme to a considerably larger number of young professionals from developing countries than can be accommodated at Headquarters at any given time.

#### B. Journalists

35. A two-part six-months' training programme for four journalists, each with a university degree and adequate professional experience in journalism, would be organized.

36. Journalists selected for this fellowship would be at United Nations Headquarters for the first three months, where they would have the opportunity to attend meetings of United Nations bodies, become familiar with some of the major issues under consideration, attend lectures on the activities of the United Nations

and the specialized agencies, and learn word-processing and other new techniques in journalism. During the second three months, the journalists selected would be at the headquarters of the United Nations regional commissions serving their respective countries. The trainees would also visit field development projects to see the United Nations system in action on matters of direct concern to their newspapers or publications. In all cases, they should be given an opportunity to file stories for their own newspapers or publications, thus increasing the coverage of the United Nations in the developing countries, particularly on the economic activities of the Organization.

37. Because of the extremely heavy meeting schedule during the General Assembly session, the actual training period for the journalists at Headquarters should end before mid-September when the General Assembly session begins, so that adequate time will be available for training purposes.

38. The journalists selected for the programme, while at United Nations Headquarters, would attend meetings of United Nations bodies with coverage officers and, under supervision, prepare draft releases on meetings dealing with a wide range of United Nations issues, both political and economic.

39. On alternate days, they would attend lectures under the existing arrangements of the Visitors Service and be given an opportunity to do research in the United Nations Library and other sources of information, especially on the subject-matter of the press releases they have been assigned to write.

40. During their stay at United Nations Headquarters, they would also be given an opportunity to observe the techniques employed in the writing and production of the Yearbook of the United Nations and other publications and to do work-related training in the publications field.

41. Information centres and UNDP resident representatives acting as directors of information centres should be asked to act as a pivotal point in the initial nomination and selection of trainees, and to continue to act as liaison offices for follow-up programmes and contacts that may be necessary for the trainees after completion of their programmes.

42. United Nations specialized agencies, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNITAR and other interested organizations in the system should be invited to co-operate with DPI in sponsoring trainees for the proposed basic training programmes at the national and regional level and at Headquarters. They should also be invited to co-operate in sponsoring field trips for trainees who complete their familiarization programmes.

43. Refresher courses on the techniques of journalism and broadcasting may be necessary for the trainees selected by DPI. Regional and national training centres, universities and other governmental and non-governmental organizations should be invited to prepare special basic training curricula, in consultation with DPI and UNESCO. Upon satisfactory completion of these courses, the trainees would proceed to Headquarters for the broader familiarization programmes prepared by DPI, in co-operation with the United Nations system.



44. As indicated, the training programmes outlined above would be undertaken within the professional and technical capacity available to DPI. The additional costs relating to the provision of travel, stipends and office accommodation for the journalists and broadcasters and attendance at the workshops would be of the order of \$175,000 annually.

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