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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 40th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. EL-CHOUFI (Syrian Arab Republic)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 53: QUESTIONS RELATING TO INFORMATION (continued) (A/34/21 and Corr.1, A/34/148, A/34/149, A/34/195, A/34/379 and Add.1, A/34/574; A/SPC/34/L.16/Rev.1 and L.18)

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1. The CHAIRMAN drew attention to the revised text of the draft resolution previously introduced by the representative of Malaysia (A/SPC/34/L.16/Rev.1). He invited the representative of India to introduce draft resolution A/SPC/34/L.18, which had just been circulated.

2. Mr. NEVREKAR (India) said that two changes must be made in the draft resolution. In the fourth line of the fourteenth preambular paragraph, the words "strict and efficient" should be replaced by the word "effective", while operative paragraph 4 should read as follows: "Affirming the primary role the United Nations General Assembly is to play in elaborating, co-ordinating and harmonizing United Nations policies and activities in the field of information towards the establishment of a new, more just and more effective world information and communication order, recognizes the central and important role of UNESCO in the field of information and mass communications and in the implementation of the relevant decisions on information and mass communications adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO at its twentieth session, and of the relevant parts of General Assembly resolution 33/115."

3. Introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations which were members of the Group of 77, he noted that it was a symbol of unity in the developing countries' endeavour to strengthen peace and international

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(Mr. Nevrekar, India)

understanding through the medium of information and mass communications. He also noted the spirit of goodwill, co-operation and understanding of differing viewpoints which had prevailed in the meetings of the Working Group. As a result, the draft resolution reflected a consensus achieved among the representatives of the Western and Eastern European Groups and of the Group of 77.

4. In view of the important role played by the mass media in today's world, it was not surprising that the draft resolution was lengthy. The preambular paragraphs recalled the relevant General Assembly resolutions and international instruments and took note of the recommendations of the Sixth Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries. They also noted with satisfaction the relevant reports of the Secretary-General, of the Director-General of UNESCO, of the Committee to Review United Nations Public Information Policies and Activities and of the latter's Ad Hoc Working Group and emphasized the need for the organizations of the United Nations system, and in particular UNESCO, to continue their co-operation with developing countries by assisting them to identify and eliminate the obstacles to the establishment of greater reciprocity in the circulation of information and to define their needs and objectives in the communications sector by the elaboration of action programmes and the mobilization of the necessary resources with a view to increasing their ability to produce and disseminate information. The preambular paragraphs also reaffirmed the obvious need to change the dependent status of the developing countries in the field of information and communication and to guarantee the diversity of sources of information and free access to information. In addition, they reaffirmed the need to maintain a linguistic balance in the dissemination of information by the United Nations and an equitable geographical distribution of the relevant personnel.

5. The operative paragraphs of the draft resolution were divided into two parts. Part I dealt with the mandate of the Committee to Review United Nations Public Information Policies and Activities which would henceforth be called the "United Nations Committee on Information". Its mandate would include promotion of the establishment of a new, more just and more effective world information and communication order together with the continued examination of United Nations public information policies and activities. The operative paragraphs in part I recognized the essential role played by UNESCO in the field of information while affirming the primary role of the General Assembly in elaborating and harmonizing United Nations policies and activities.

6. Part II requested the Secretary-General to undertake various measures with a view to improving the activities of the Department of Public Information, especially in the light of the views expressed by Member States during the relevant debates at the thirty-second and thirty-third sessions of the General Assembly and in the Committee to Review United Nations Public Information Policies and Activities. It also reaffirmed the need to intensify the struggle against apartheid through the information media and requested the Secretary-General to take the necessary measures to present recommendations concerning the establishment of a programme for the training of journalists and broadcasting personnel from the developing countries in the United Nations Radio and Visual Services. The Secretary-General was also requested to ensure that United Nations programmes were broadcast in a

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(Mr. Mevrekar, India)

manner which would enable public opinion throughout the world to be directly and properly informed on United Nations decisions and recommendations. In that connexion, Member States whose broadcasting stations were best able to serve the region of southern Africa were invited to retransmit the programmes beamed to South Africa and those whose national broadcasting stations operated short-wave transmission were invited to share their broadcasting time with United Nations Radio.

7. He hoped that draft resolution A/SPC/34/L.18 would be adopted by consensus, thus demonstrating the sincere desire of members of the Committee to work together for a better world through the establishment of a new, more just and more effective world information and communication order.

8. Mr. KILIÇ (Turkey), speaking on behalf of the members of the Group of Western European Countries, said that, without prejudice to any reservations those countries might have, the experience gained in the Working Group had been most rewarding. He hoped that the spirit of co-operation to which the representative of India had referred would continue to prevail in the work of the Committee on Information.

9. Mr. BELOBROV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), speaking on behalf of the Eastern European Group, noted that draft resolution A/SPC/34/L.18 was the result of a collective effort among the Group of 77, the countries of Western Europe and the countries of Eastern Europe. He noted, however, that although the last-mentioned group of countries had participated actively in the preparation of the draft resolution, their views had not been taken fully into account in its provisions. They would give the draft resolution careful study and would indicate their positions on it at the appropriate time.

10. Mr. KOUYATE (Guinea) said that, in his opinion, changes should be made in the wording of certain parts of draft resolution A/SPC/34/L.18. Recalling that the President of the General Assembly had set 1 December as the deadline for the submission to the Fifth Committee of resolutions having financial implications, he asked what time-table the Committee envisaged for the consideration of draft resolution A/SPC/34/L.18 and whether any exception had been made to the deadline.

11. The CHAIRMAN said that no exceptions had been made to the deadline set by the President of the General Assembly. Therefore, unless the representative of Guinea wished to propose amendments having financial implications, he should seek to reach agreement with the representative of India on the changes he wished to make. In any case, a revised version of draft resolution A/SPC/34/L.18 was to be issued.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

12. The CHAIRMAN said that the statement regarding the financial implications of draft resolution A/SPC/34/L.18 should be available by 3 December and, accordingly, the Committee would take up the draft again at 3 p.m. on 4 December in the hope of concluding its work on agenda item 53 at that meeting.

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13. He also drew attention to the statement of the administrative and financial implications of draft resolution A/SPC/34/L.10, which appeared in document A/SPC/34/L.20. The general debate on agenda item 51 would be resumed on 5 December following the General Assembly's consideration of item 25 on the situation in the Middle East. He urged delegations to inscribe their names early on the list of speakers for that debate, since they would be invited to speak in the order in which they were listed.

14. Lastly, he announced that the Pledging Conference on the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East would be held on 4 December at 10.30 a.m.

The meeting rose at 3.50 p.m.