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QUESTIONS RELATING TO INFORMATION

Report of the Secretary-General

I. INTRODUCTION

1. In its resolution 38/82 B of 15 December 1983, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit a report to it at its thirty-ninth session on the implementation of the resolution and, in particular, on the implementation of all the recommendations contained in the annex to the resolution.
2. In several instances, the Secretary-General was asked to report to the Committee on Information on various aspects of the work of the Department of Public Information. The following documents relating to topics covered by resolution 38/82 were submitted to the Committee at its substantive session held from 16 June to 6 July and on 6 September 1984:
 - (a) Acquisition by the United Nations of its own communications satellite (A/AC.198/73);
 - (b) World-wide United Nations short-wave network (A/AC.198/74);
 - (c) Report containing concrete proposals in respect to suggestions presented in paragraphs 44 to 46 of document A/AC.198/61 (A/AC.198/75);
 - (d) Second progress report on the establishment of systematic procedures for monitoring and evaluation of the activities of the Department of Public Information (A/AC.198/76);
 - (e) Report on the programme and activities of the Joint United Nations Information Committee (A/AC.198/77);

* A/39/150.

(f) Interim report of the International Telecommunication Union on World Communications Year (A/AC.198/79);

(g) Progress report on the staff of the Department of Public Information in posts subject to geographical distribution (A/AC.198/80);

(h) The Department of Public Information as the focal point for the formulation and implementation of information activities of the United Nations (A/AC.198/82);

(i) Information and documents of the United Nations Centre on Transnational Corporations relevant to the mandate of the Committee on Information (A/AC.198/81).

3. In addition, oral reports were submitted by the Under-Secretary-General for Public Information on the following items on the agenda of the Committee on Information:

(a) Provision of an adequate service in the German language by the United Nations Information Service at Vienna in order to act as an information centre for Austria and the Federal Republic of Germany (item 5 II (g));

(b) Co-operation between the Department of Public Information and the Pool of Non-Aligned News Agencies (item 5 II (h));

(c) Maintenance and enhancement of the functions of the Middle East and Arabic Radio Unit (item 5 II (k)).

4. The deliberations of the Committee on Information with respect to those reports and its recommendations are contained in its report to the General Assembly. 1/ The present report therefore avoids repetition of the contents of the reports submitted to the Committee and deals mainly with the following aspects of General Assembly resolution 38/82 B:

(a) Items not dealt with by the Committee;

(b) Items on which the Secretary-General was specifically requested to report to the Assembly at its thirty-ninth session;

(c) Additional information bringing up to date the reports submitted to the Committee.

II. RADIO PROGRAMMING IN PORTUGUESE

5. In paragraph 26 of the annex to resolution 38/82 B, the Secretary-General was requested, inter alia, to implement fully the proposals contained in his report regarding programming in the Portuguese language in the African Unit of the Radio Service (A/AC.198/64).

6. Those proposals have been fully implemented in the course of 1984. A radio producer has been recruited within the African Unit of the Radio Service and weekly news and feature programmes are produced for the Portuguese-speaking regions of

Africa. During the period of the General Assembly, the news programmes are produced on a daily basis. In addition, some six special anniversary and thematic feature programmes are produced each year.

III. RADIO PROGRAMMING IN BENGALI AND INDONESIAN

7. In paragraph 29 of the annex to resolution 38/82 B, implementation was requested of the previous year's recommendation for the inclusion of Bengali and Indonesian among the languages of the Asian Unit of the Radio Service for the purpose of undertaking programming at a meaningful level. Responding to that request, the Asian Unit of the Radio Service has initiated the production of a weekly programme in Bengali and a monthly programme in Indonesian. The process of recruiting qualified candidates for the two newly created writer-producer posts in the Bengali and Indonesian languages is under way.

IV. REOPENING OF THE INFORMATION CENTRE AT JAKARTA

8. In response to paragraph 11 of resolution 38/82 B in which the Department of Public Information was invited to reopen the United Nations Information Centre at Jakarta as a matter of priority, negotiations have been initiated in consultation with the United Nations Legal Counsel and with the Permanent Mission of Indonesia to the United Nations on a draft agreement between the Government of Indonesia and the United Nations on the reopening of the Centre. It is hoped that the agreement will be finalized in the near future.

V. APPOINTMENT OF THE DIRECTOR AT THE INFORMATION CENTRE AT YAOUNDE

9. Under paragraph 12 of resolution 38/82 B, the Department of Public Information was invited to give a favourable reply to the request of the Government of Cameroon that the United Nations Information Centre at Yaoundé be strengthened and that a full-time director be appointed. The appointment of the director for the Information Centre at Yaoundé has been under active consideration.

VI. APPOINTMENT OF THE DIRECTOR AT THE INFORMATION CENTRE AT BUJUMBURA

10. Under paragraph 13 of resolution 38/82 B, the Department of Public Information was invited to give a favourable reply to the request of the Government of Burundi that the United Nations Information Centre at Bujumbura be strengthened and that a full-time director be appointed. The appointment of the director for the Information Centre at Bujumbura has been under active consideration.

VII. CO-OPERATION BETWEEN THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INFORMATION AND THE UNION OF NATIONAL RADIO AND TELEVISION ORGANIZATIONS OF AFRICA

11. In paragraph 24 of the annex to resolution 38/82 B, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to continue the co-operation between the Department

of Public Information and the Union of National Radio and Television Organizations of Africa, as well as with radio stations which were members of that Union, in order to broadcast United Nations radio programmes from those radio stations, and further requested the Secretary-General to co-operate with the national radio broadcasting organizations in Africa for wider broadcasting of United Nations radio programmes. The Department has been in contact with broadcasting organizations in five African countries concerning various aspects of the question including fees to be charged for use of their transmitters. In this regard, further information from the radio stations concerned is awaited.

12. The Department of Public Information has pursued its efforts for co-operation with the Union of National Radio and Television Organizations of Africa, as well as with radio stations which are members of that Union and which broadcast United Nations radio programmes. The Department was represented at the annual meeting of the Union held earlier this year. On that occasion, consultations were undertaken with broadcasting officials of a number of countries in the region. The Department received assurances from members of the Union that they would continue to utilize, as far as possible, United Nations programmes in their broadcast schedules.

VIII. WORLD DISARMAMENT CAMPAIGN

13. In paragraph 48 of the annex to resolution 38/82 B, the Department of Public Information was asked to fulfil the role assigned to it by the General Assembly within the World Disarmament Campaign and Disarmament Week by utilizing its expertise and resources in public information to ensure maximum effectiveness. In response to that mandate and those in paragraph 6 of Assembly resolution 38/73 D of 15 December 1983 and paragraph 7 of Assembly resolution 38/183 L of 20 December 1983, a report on the Department's activities undertaken in implementation of the Campaign is incorporated in the report of the Secretary-General on the World Disarmament Campaign to the Assembly at its thirty-ninth session.

IX. SECOND ROUND TABLE ON A NEW WORLD INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION ORDER

14. In paragraph 17 of resolution 38/82 B, the Secretary-General was requested to ensure the convening of a second round table in 1985 in order to follow up the progress made towards the establishment of a new world information and communication order, in which professional journalists, decision-makers and researchers in the various disciplines concerned, representatives of the international media and professional organizations and associations would participate. In response to that request, the Department of Public Information has already held consultations with UNESCO with a view to convening a round table in 1985.

Notes

1/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 21 (A/39/21).
