

UNITED NATIONS  
ECONOMIC  
AND  
SOCIAL COUNCIL



GENERAL

E/2031/Add.3  
26 July 1951

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Thirteenth Session  
Item 20

Dual Distribution

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE DRAFT CONVENTION  
ON FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

Suggestions and Observations of Governments on the draft  
Convention

X. Denmark

The following suggestions and observations, dated 29 June 1951, were received from the Government of Denmark.

Denmark has participated with interest in the United Nations efforts to prepare a convention on freedom of information but according to Danish opinion the existing draft makes possible such infringement on the freedom of information - especially as far as article 2 is concerned - that if adopted it is not likely to provide sufficient guarantee for national and international freedom of information. As a result of the above consideration, my Government does not consider the draft suitable for implementation; according to Danish opinion the question of drafting a convention on freedom of information ought, therefore, for the time being to be omitted from the agenda of the General Assembly, in any case until article 14 of the Convention on Human Rights has been drafted in its final form.

## XI. Yugoslavia

The following suggestions and observations dated 29 June 1951 were received from the Government of the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia:

1. The Yugoslav Government attaches a great importance to the Convention on Freedom of Information and considers that the present international situation makes the adoption of such a Convention more necessary than ever. There is no doubt that a convention which would resolve the basic present problems of freedom of information adequately, would lead to an improvement in international relations. The Yugoslav Government therefore considers it necessary to pursue the efforts for the establishment of this Convention.

2. The Draft elaborated by the Special Committee on Freedom of Information, appointed by the General Assembly, does not, in the opinion of the Yugoslav Government, constitute a new step forward towards the successful completion of the efforts in which the United Nations have been for many years engaged.

The Yugoslav Government would like in this connection to refer to the final statement of its representative on the Special Committee on Freedom of Information which contains certain critical observations, the substance of which was to show that the Draft elaborated by this Committee did not take into sufficient consideration the principles and purposes of the United Nations (Document A/AC.42/7, pages 68 and 69).

3. The Yugoslav Government wishes to emphasize that in its opinion the elaboration and the successful application of such a Convention on freedom of information should be possible. Several years of the United Nations efforts in this field, as well as many aspects of the work of the Special Committee itself, show that a vast majority of the United Nations members today are in favour of a convention, provided:

- a) that the Convention contains a realistic implementation of rights, freedoms and responsibilities corresponding to the existing conditions in the world;
- b) that the tremendous differences between the media of information available to the big countries on the one hand, and to the small and under-developed countries on the other, are borne in mind.

Both of these principles are clearly derived from the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration on Human Rights.

4. The Yugoslav Government reserves the right to submit at the appropriate time, and to the competent bodies, its amendments to the Draft Convention, as well as possible separate proposals.

### XII. Norway

The following suggestions and observations dated 2 July 1951 were received from the Government of Norway:

The Norwegian Government, after having studied the draft Convention on Freedom of Information, has come to the conclusion that the draft does not present itself as a suitable basis for an International Agreement on Freedom of Information.

The Norwegian Government has based its opinion on the draft as a whole, and it does therefore not deem it necessary to enter into a detailed explanation of its views and the formulation and content of the various provisions.

It is the opinion of the Norwegian Government that the time has not yet arrived for the convening of an International Conference for the purpose of signing an International Convention on Freedom of Information.

For the time being the Norwegian Government thinks it would be preferable to include in the United Nations' Convention on Human Rights a generally formulated provision for the safeguarding of the Freedom of Information.

Until such a provision is formulated and adopted, the question of an International Convention on Freedom of Information, in the opinion of the Norwegian Government, should not be taken up by the General Assembly of the United Nations.