



Sixteenth session
Agenda item 63

PUBLIC INFORMATION ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS

Report of the Secretary-General

Introduction

1. General Assembly resolution 1558 (XV) of 18 December 1960 requests the Secretary-General "to report to the General Assembly at its sixteenth session on the progress made in implementing the present resolution". The full text of the resolution is annexed to this report.
2. The present report is presented in compliance with this request. Further details on the policy and programmes of the Office of Public Information to be executed during the coming year have been included in the Secretary-General's 1962 budget estimates as an information annex on public information.^{1/}
3. As requested in General Assembly resolution 1558 (XV), the Secretary-General has consulted with both the Consultative Panel on Public Information and with the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions with regard both to the policies and programmes of the Office of Public Information and to the content of this report.

Regional representation at the policy-making level

4. As described in previous reports, the central policy, planning and management of OPI rest with the Under-Secretary, assisted by the Principal Officer in his

^{1/} Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixteenth Session, Supplement No. 5 (A/4770), annex III to the Expenditure estimates.

Office, together with the Directors and Deputy Directors of the three divisions. In resolution 1558 (XV), the Assembly requested the Secretary-General "to intensify his efforts to achieve a more effective regional representation at the policy-making level of the Office of Public Information".

5. In accordance with this request, the Secretary-General has now arranged a wider range of geographical representation at the policy-making level in OPI. There are nine posts with the rank of Principal Officer (D-1) and above in OPI at Headquarters. The regional distribution of these posts is as follows: Asia - 1; Australia - 1; Eastern Europe - 2; Latin America - 2; North America - 1; Western Europe - 2.

Information centre programmes

6. In his report to the General Assembly at its fifteenth session on public information activities of the United Nations^{2/}, the Secretary-General reported that budgetary provision had been made for three new centres in 1961 making a total of thirty-five centres (including the Information Services of the European Office and of the regional economic commissions) for the current year. Subsequently, at the 780th meeting of the Fifth Committee, the representative of the Secretary-General announced that a further re-examination of the resources of OPI had been undertaken and that it was intended during 1961 to open eight instead of three centres. Five of these would be situated in Africa, and one each in Asia, Eastern Europe and Latin America. The General Assembly in resolution 1558 (XV) welcomed this announcement.

7. In implementing this programme for the opening of eight additional centres during the current year, the Secretary-General's plans have been modified by several developments. The requests for centres in Latin America and in Eastern Europe have been temporarily deferred. The General Assembly in resolution 1538 (XV) of 15 December 1960 on "Dissemination of information on the United Nations in the Non-Self-Governing Territories" has requested the

2/ Ibid., Fifteenth Session, Annexes, agenda item 59, document A/4429.

Secretary-General "to take action towards the establishment of information centres in Territories such as those in Eastern and Central Africa, Papua and the Caribbean Territories". Further, the Assembly in resolution 1607 (XV) of 21 April 1961 on "Dissemination of information on the United Nations and the International Trusteeship System in Trust Territories" has requested the Secretary-General "to take the necessary action to establish, without any further delay, in Tanganyika, Ruanda-Urundi and New Guinea, United Nations information centres in which the responsible positions would be occupied by indigenous inhabitants of the Trust Territories concerned". Separate reports on the implementation of these resolutions have been requested by the General Assembly.

8. As at 1 August 1961, new Centres had been established in Colombo to provide services to Ceylon, in Dar es Salaam to provide services to Tanganyika and adjacent Non-Self-Governing Territories and in Usumbura to provide services to Ruanda-Urundi. An information centre is scheduled to open in Lagos later in the year to provide services to Nigeria. Attached to the Lagos Centre will be an audio-visual team which will serve the area as a whole (see below para. 23).

9. At the time of the preparation of this report, discussions were continuing with the Governments concerned regarding the opening of the remaining four centres scheduled for 1961. It is hoped that all of these will be in operation before the end of the year and that at least three of them will be located in Africa.

10. In connexion with the time-table for the opening of new centres, it may be pointed out that the Secretary-General is requested by General Assembly resolution 1405 (XIV) of 1 December 1959 "to enlist the co-operation of the Member States concerned in providing all possible facilities for the establishment of such new centres and in assisting actively in efforts to promote wider public understanding of the aims and activities of the United Nations". Discussions with the host Governments concerning the facilities which they may be in a position to provide for new centres inevitably take some time.

11. Also in connexion with the development of OPI programmes in the field, it should be noted that since July 1960, OPI has been heavily engaged in providing information services in and from the Republic of the Congo (Leopoldville). The corps of international correspondents which has assembled there to report

developments has required many services. The military contingents of ONUC have been provided with background material on the United Nations, with special radio broadcasts, with films and with a weekly news sheet. The OPI information staff in the Congo has had to meet increasing requests from Headquarters services and from the information centres for material in all media regarding United Nations operations there, especially in the field of civilian assistance. The OPI information staff has also endeavoured to acquaint the Congolese people with the aims and purposes of the United Nations. Radio programmes in local languages have been produced, basic pamphlets have been prepared, feature material has been supplied to local newspapers and special attention has been given to the observance of United Nations Day. It is planned to expand these information services to the Congolese people during the coming months.

12. The 1962 budget estimates include provision for five new information centres and, in deciding the location of these centres, the Secretary-General will give careful attention to the "priority areas" mentioned in General Assembly resolution 1558 (XV).

13. It will be recalled that in his report on public information activities to the Assembly at its fifteenth session,^{3/} the Secretary-General outlined proposals for a new category of staff for positions of responsibility in the information centres. These information assistants, recruited locally from persons already engaged professionally in public information work, would be brought to Headquarters or to one of the field offices of the United Nations for further training. They would be employed by the United Nations on fixed-term contracts and at the completion of their service with the Secretariat would return to their normal professional careers in their home countries. Despite some initial difficulties in getting this programme under way, the training of these information assistants has begun. The calibre of those attracted to the programme has been high and the results are very promising. It is planned that by the end of 1962 a total of twelve information assistants will have been recruited, trained and placed on duty in the information centres.

^{3/} Ibid., para. 28.

14. In his report to the General Assembly at its fifteenth session^{4/}, it will also be recalled that the Secretary-General described the policy of increasing the administrative integration of information centres with existing United Nations field offices wherever this is possible. This policy was been continued and will be applied in connexion with the opening of new centres. For example, the new centres in Ceylon, Nigeria and Tanganyika are being linked with the Offices of the Resident Representatives of TAB in the countries.

15. In March 1961, the Directors of information centres came to Headquarters for their biennial meeting. This afforded them an opportunity for consultation with officers from all departments of the Secretariat as well as for meetings with the heads of the information departments of the specialized agencies in connexion with the annual session of the Consultative Committee on Public Information (CCPI). In August 1961, the Under-Secretary and the Director of the External Relations Division met in Geneva with the Directors of information centres in Africa to discuss plans for the further development of United Nations information programmes in that continent. In addition, the Under-Secretary and the Directors of the Press, Publications and Public Services Division, the External Relations Division and the Radio and Visual Services Division have, during the past year, visited centres in Europe, the Middle East, Africa, Asia and Latin America to confer with Centre Directors and their staffs on specific areas of work.

Fellowship and interne programmes

Triangular Fellowship Programme

16. The Triangular Fellowship Programme has been instituted in 1961 by OPI with the co-operation of the Economic Commission for Latin America, Asia and the Far East, and Africa as a special effort to make the activities of the United Nations and the specialized agencies in the fields of technical assistance and economic development more widely known among correspondents, editorial writers, radio and television commentators from areas where the information media are less developed. The programme will also place OPI technical skill and professional knowledge at the disposal of information media from these areas.

^{4/} Ibid., para. 20.

17. Fourteen "Triangular Fellowships" are being offered for a period of about six weeks to journalists from Latin America, Asia and Africa intent on specializing in economic development, economic planning and technical assistance. These fellowships will start with a period of intensive briefing at the headquarters of ECLA, ECAFE and ECA for the participants from these respective areas. Following this, the three groups will come together at United Nations Headquarters during the General Assembly for briefings by senior Secretariat officials, for consultations with OPI and for attendance at meetings of the General Assembly. Then the group will spend a week in Geneva where they will familiarize themselves with the activities of the Economic Commission for Europe, the specialized agencies located there and the OPI information programme at the European headquarters of the United Nations. Both at Headquarters and in Geneva the fellows will have an opportunity to study OPI techniques and to have contacts with the corps of international accredited correspondents.

Senior Fellowship Programme

18. Participants in United Nations Senior Fellowship Programmes in the past have been drawn from among educators, editors, representatives of non-government organizations, text-book writers on United Nations subjects, etc. The management of such a group of disparate status and interest, and the working out of a programme of activities for it, has in the past presented several practical problems. In order to overcome these, and at the same time to give a more sharply focused purpose to the programme, it has been decided this year to restrict it to one category of participants, namely outstanding press, radio and television professionals at the policy making levels. Accordingly, about twelve candidates fitting this description have been selected from all parts of the world for participation in the 1961 Senior Fellowship Programme, lasting for a period of four weeks at United Nations Headquarters. During their stay at Headquarters, this group will be afforded the opportunity not only of observing the United Nations General Assembly at work but also of carrying out studies in depth of special questions concerning the Organization. Opportunity will also be provided for them of meeting with the senior officials of the Secretariat and members of national delegations.

Student Interne Programme

19. Forty-three students spent four weeks at Headquarters in August 1961 under the Interne Programme for college students which is open to candidates of 20-25 years of age. Students from twenty-one countries participated in the programme. All of the students were sponsored financially by their colleges or in some cases by their respective Governments. No travel or living costs were paid by the United Nations. During their stay at Headquarters the internes were briefed by senior members of the Secretariat and a number of them were attached to substantive departments of the Secretariat for specialized study in particular fields.

Teaching about the United Nations

20. The Office of Public Information has participated in two important regional seminars on Teaching about the United Nations. The first held in Armindale, Australia, in January 1961 under the sponsorship of the World Federation of United Nations Associations and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization was attended by participants from eight countries and territories in South East Asia. The second, sponsored by the World Federation of United Nations Associations, was held in Ghana in August 1961 and was attended by participants from eight African States.

21. OPI has also prepared, in collaboration with UNESCO, a handbook on model United Nations sessions which is designed to meet a long-felt need from schools, colleges and teacher-training institutes in many parts of the world.

Radio and visual programmes

22. In the Radio and Visual Services Division, there has been increasing application of policies aimed at the greater decentralization of production, increased utilization of national information facilities for the organization and dissemination of materials, and the development of services in general to less developed areas.

23. The decentralization of the Division's production activity is intended to adapt the output more closely to regional information needs and outlets. In line

with this policy, existing arrangements for the local production of radio and visual materials in Asia, Latin America and Europe are being maintained. Similar service for Africa is being added through the establishment of an audio-visual production unit in Lagos, Nigeria. Administratively attached to the United Nations Information Centre in that country, the unit, comprising a radio officer and a film officer, will serve the area as a whole, assisting national organizations in gathering material and preparing programmes on the activities of the United Nations and the specialized agencies. This material will also be available for distribution as part of OPI's over-all information output to other parts of the world.

24. A further step towards decentralization has been taken in the establishment of a visual information office in Paris in collaboration with UNESCO. The function of this office, to which reference was made in the Secretary-General's report on public information activities to the Assembly at its fifteenth session is to supplement Headquarters resources for the development of television and film materials for world-wide use. This office will thus share with Headquarters responsibility, not only for providing service in the existing areas of television demand, but also to meet expanding requirements in Africa, Asia, the Middle East and Latin America where this medium is taking root and developing rapidly.

25. The establishment of similar decentralized production units in other regions is being kept under close study. Meanwhile, steps have been taken to ensure the increased supply of United Nations visual materials to the under-developed regions of the world - particularly in new Member States of Africa and Trust and Non-Self-Governing Territories. In addition to the film libraries already established at existing United Nations offices and various national and private organizations, new distributing points have been established in Africa through TAB Resident Representatives and United Nations information centres. Films in appropriate language versions have thus been made available at the following points:

Congo (Leopoldville)	Madagascar	Sudan
Ethiopia	Morocco	Tanganyika
Gambia	Monrovia	Togoland
Ghana	Nigeria	Tunisia
Guinea	Sierra Leone	Uganda
Liberia	Somalia	United Arab Republic
Libya	South Africa	

26. As a parallel development, the Radio and Visual Services Division is placing increased emphasis on utilizing the information resources and facilities of specialized agencies and of national media, both official and non-official.
27. Maximum co-operation and co-ordination between the Radio and Visual Services Division and the specialized agencies is being maintained through the Visual Information Board. In 1961, the Board met in New York and approved distribution arrangements for the first two films jointly produced for the Board - "Water" and "The International Atom". Approval was also given in principle for the joint production in 1963 of a film in furtherance of the Freedom from Hunger Campaign of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.
28. At the same time, OPI is engaged upon a plan to carry out a policy, through bilateral collaboration with individual specialized agencies, of placing its budgetary and manpower resources behind specific information projects to which the agencies attach priority. During 1962, an effort along bilateral lines is contemplated in co-operation with the World Meteorological Organization.
29. In the Secretary-General's report on public information activities to the fifteenth session,^{5/} reference was made to a radio and visual project undertaken in Asia during 1960-1961. The objective was to produce for Asian audiences, in direct collaboration with their own national organizations, radio and visual information on the economic and social plans, problems and progress of the region as a whole. The project, which involved the sharing of expenses and talents between OPI and the national organizations of eleven countries of the ECAFE region, has been completed. As already reported, the participating organizations of India, Pakistan, Indonesia, Federation of Malaya and Japan have broadcast a series of radio programmes over their national transmitters based upon material gathered in the field by their own representatives working as part of the OPI-sponsored international team. On the visual side of the project, three documentary films have now been completed on the Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East and its work, on community development in Asia and on agricultural development in Asia. The films were produced for OPI by the government film units

5/ Ibid., para. 38.

of Malaya, India and Ceylon with material contributions from the national film units of Afghanistan, Burma, Cambodia, Indonesia, Pakistan and Thailand. Arrangements are being made for the production of language versions and their widest possible distribution through the region on the same co-operative basis which made the productions possible.

30. The experience gained in the Asian project has contributed to the planning and execution of a regional radio and visual project for Latin America. In close co-operation with ECLA and the Governments of the region, the project has been designed to produce a series of radio programmes and a documentary film on the economic problems and progress of the region as a whole. A similar project is contemplated for Africa in 1962, in close co-operation with ECA.

31. In adopting the measures noted above for the increased supply of radio and visual services more directly suited to the needs of the under-developed regions particular attention has been paid to the requirements of the new Member States of Africa as well as the Trust and Non-Self-Governing Territories.

32. In conformity with Trusteeship Council and General Assembly resolutions, Trust and Non-Self-Governing Territories have received, in addition to the regular output of the Radio Services, a series of specially prepared radio programmes on the aims and activities of the United Nations, with particular reference to the Trusteeship System, the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Declaration on the granting of independence to colonial peoples and countries. The programmes were supplied in English and French from Headquarters. Budgetary provision was made for their adaption and voicing in the principal language of the territories concerned. Similar arrangements were made for the preparation and distribution of basic United Nations films, filmstrips and wall-sheets.

33. In July 1960, the regular pattern of United Nations news broadcasts was enlarged in order to provide special daily bulletins over transmitters beamed towards Africa. Several countries within the "target area" relayed these broadcasts, particularly during the General Assembly and Security Council discussions of the Congo question. This service was maintained on a five-day-a-week basis during the fifteenth session of the General Assembly and continued to be relayed by a number of the national organizations of the newly admitted Member States.

34. As a further service for the new Member States of the region, United Nations Radio Services prepared and distributed, in English and French, a special series of twenty-one basic talks under the title "UN Guidebook". The series, which was also offered to the radio organizations of the region for adaptation and voicing in their national languages, was designed to serve as an introduction to the structure and functioning of the United Nations and its related agencies. Another special service prepared for the new Member States consisted of a radio series of one-half hour documentaries entitled "The New Voices" giving an "actuality" account of the participation by these States in the major political, social and economic questions before the fifteenth session of the General Assembly. Also arrangements were made for extensive radio and visual coverage of the human rights seminars in Wellington, Addis Ababa, Bucharest and Mexico City, the third session of ECA and the UNESCO-ECA Conference on the Development of Education in Africa (Addis Ababa). Recorded radio programmes, as well as photo coverage, were provided to the participating countries in co-operation with the national delegations and information organizations.

35. A further extension of service for the new Member States is expected to result from the establishment of the regional audio-visual production unit referred to in paragraph 23 above.

Press and publications programme

36. To maintain the quality level of Headquarters service in the face of increasing demands while increasing the production of information material suited to other regions has been the directive to which the Press and Publications Services of OPI have worked in the past year and which will guide their operations in 1962.

37. The increase in United Nations membership and in the importance of the Organization's role in world affairs have stimulated public interest in United Nations affairs which has resulted in increased coverage and additional calls on the press facilities and services provided by OPI.

38. This was particularly noticeable during the opening weeks of the fifteenth session of the General Assembly. During the peak period, the number of accredited representatives of information media rose to 1,600 from sixty-three countries, and, of these, 790 were press correspondents representing 405 newspapers, news agencies and periodicals.

39. While providing basic factual coverage of all United Nations activities, together with background releases, texts and other documentation, the existing liaison service for correspondents at Headquarters has been strengthened by the institution of a regular schedule of briefings which has been welcomed as a means of keeping correspondents abreast of current United Nations activities and alerted to upcoming developments of news interest. Also in answer to a long-felt need, OPI in January 1961 began a new service, Coup d'Oeil, for senior members of the Secretariat. This mimeographed bulletin summarizing the coverage of international news in the press of many countries is also made available to accredited correspondents at Headquarters and to members of delegations on request. Coup d'Oeil is issued both at Headquarters and at the European Office, five days a week.

40. The programme of providing information centres with briefing, background and documentation services based on the individual and regional needs of the centres has been continued. During the past year three editions of the weekly United Nations Newsletter have been produced - in English, French and Spanish. These contain brief accounts of current developments in the United Nations and the specialized agencies, which serve as the basis for newsletters and bulletins produced by the centres, as well as material of particular regional interest. During the rapid developments in connexion with the Congo and during the fifteenth session of the General Assembly, centres were provided with the texts of important resolutions, reports and policy statements by pouch, airmail and cable. Further attention has been given to the improvement of library services to centres and discussions have been held with the Director of the United Nations Library regarding the preparation of a manual for centre libraries. The service of background notes and special kits of material to the centres has been continued. A kit on the United Nations and Latin America is currently in preparation.

41. Continuing a policy begun in 1959, the centres are being encouraged to translate and adapt publications in the languages of their areas. The sum of \$90,000 has been allocated for this purpose as against \$40,000 for the Headquarters programme.
42. The United Nations Yearbook and Everyman's United Nations continue to be the principal books published by OPI. As regards the latter publications, the pattern continues of issuing a new English edition every two years with French and Spanish editions appearing in the year after the English edition.
43. To bring the United Nations Reviews within the reach of a wider public, especially in less developed areas, the subscription rate for all three language editions was reduced in June 1961 to 50 per cent of the dollar price for subscribers outside North America. In preparation for the change-over to air freight distribution for bulk shipments, a lighter weight paper was adopted for the English and Spanish language editions, and a smaller page size for the former. Additional changes - in content to increase the information value of the Reviews and in format to reduce production costs - are being actively considered.
44. In accordance with the decisions of the General Assembly, special attention continues to be given to the production of material for use in Trust and Non-Self-Governing Territories. The Declaration on the granting of independence to colonial countries and peoples adopted by the General Assembly at its fifteenth session has been given wide publicity in the printed form as well as in other media. The text of the resolution has appeared in the three language editions of the United Nations Review, and leaflet editions have appeared or are in the course of production in English and French and in five of the principal languages of the territories concerned. Editions in other languages will be printed in the near future. In 1961, the publications programme also included the production of a pamphlet on the role of the United Nations in the advance of independent peoples towards self-government. Basic leaflets for use in Trust and Non-Self-Governing Territories on the operation of the United Nations, on the International Trusteeship System and on the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights are being issued in local languages as well as in English and French. New editions of such basic pamphlets as Basic Facts, UN in Brief and Technical Assistance in Brief have been published or are in preparation in several languages,

while the information leaflet series covering various aspects of United Nations work under some twenty-five titles has been scheduled for publication in as many languages as resources will permit.

45. In 1960, seventy-six different pamphlets and leaflets in forty-eight languages were issued. It is intended to concentrate on fewer titles but with production in more languages in 1961 and 1962.

ANNEX

GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 1558 (XV)

(Adopted at the 958th plenary meeting on 18 December 1960)

Public information activities of the United Nations

The General Assembly,

Noting with appreciation the Secretary-General's report of 25 August 1960 on public information activities of the United Nations, a/

Recalling its resolutions 1086 (XI) of 21 December 1956, 1335 (XIII) of 13 December 1958 and 1405 (XIV) of 1 December 1959 relating to the establishment of information centres and setting out the basic policy measures to be followed in the field of public information activities,

Noting further the progress achieved in the implementation of the above-mentioned resolutions,

Having regard to the increased membership of the African States in the United Nations,

Welcoming the Secretary-General's announcement of the intention to open during 1961 eight new information centres: one in Latin America, one in eastern Europe, one in Asia and five in Africa,

Noting that for the years 1960 and 1961 the Secretary-General has planned the public information programmes at an expenditure level of about \$5 million net for each year,

Emphasizing the importance of the dissemination of information on the United Nations objectives and activities in those regions where mass information media are less developed, particularly in the Trust and Non-Self-Governing Territories,

Requests the Secretary-General, in consultation with the Consultative Panel on Public Information and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, as appropriate:

a/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifteenth Session, Annexes, agenda item 59, document A/4429.

(a) To give high priority to the opening of information centres or arranging for adequate information facilities in the less developed areas, particularly in the newly independent countries and Trust and Non-Self-Governing Territories, by effecting economies in other directions;

(b) To intensify his efforts to achieve a more effective regional representation at the policy-making level of the Office of Public Information;

(c) To report to the General Assembly at its sixteenth session on the progress made in implementing the present resolution.
