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QUESTIONS RELATING TO INFORMATION

Report of the Secretary-General

I. INTRODUCTION

1. In section II of its resolution 44/50 of 8 December 1989, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report to the Assembly at its forty-fifth session and to the Committee on Information at its twelfth session on the implementation of recommendations in the resolution.

2. The following documents, related to topics covered by the resolution, were submitted to the Committee on Information at its twelfth session, held from 5 April to 2 May 1990:

(a) Activities of the Department of Public Information (A/AC.198/1990/2);

(b) Public information activities of the United Nations against the policies and practices of apartheid (A/AC.198/1990/3);

(c) Public information activities of the United Nations pertaining to the situation in the Middle East and the question of Palestine (A/AC.198/1990/4);

(d) Proposed medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997. Major programme VIII (Public information), Programme 38 (Public information) (A/AC.198/1990/5 and A/45/6, Prog. 38);

(e) Assessment of needs for technical assistance to radio stations that are broadcasting or willing to broadcast to South Africa (A/44/698) and study of existing and potential interest in broadcasting United Nations anti-apartheid radio programmes and the extent to which audiences in selected urban centres in South Africa listen to them (A/45/162).

3. The Under-Secretary-General for Public Information provided additional information in several statements to the Committee on Information.

4. The deliberations of the Committee on Information on those topics and others on its agenda are reflected in its report to the General Assembly. 1/ As in the past, the present paper avoids, as much as possible, repetition of the contents of the reports submitted to the Committee on Information. The present report deals mainly with items not considered by the Committee or updates the information in the reports submitted to the Committee.

5. The present report focuses essentially on special activities and products of the Department. It avoids reference to topics and events covered in regular publications and radio and television programmes such as UN Chronicle, Notes for Speakers, "Perspective", UN in Action and World Chronicle, which disseminate on a continuing basis information on the whole range of issues dealt with by the United Nations.

II. CO-OPERATION WITH THE UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

6. In resolution 44/50, section II, paragraph 1, recommendation 2 (a), the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to ensure that the Department of Public Information co-operate more regularly with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), especially at the working level.

7. As part of its information programme for International Literacy Year (1990), the Department released an educational video and study guide on literacy that highlight the work of UNESCO and the Year. The video and its companion volume are part of the educational series About the United Nations, which is produced in English, French and Spanish.

8. A student leaflet, issued in English, French and Spanish, is among various publications produced by the Department in connection with International Literacy Year. Development Forum continues to report extensively on educational, scientific and cultural issues in general and on UNESCO activities in particular.

9. Complementing UNESCO programmes, the tenth annual training programme for journalists, which runs from 10 September to 18 October 1990, is providing skills training and briefings to young journalists on major issues before the United Nations. As in previous years, trainees from 16 developing countries around the world are assigned activities in the Department and are encouraged to cover the proceedings of the General Assembly for their home media.

10. In response to resolution 44/50, section II, paragraph 1, recommendation 3 (h), on co-operation with educational institutions of Member States, educators and education policy makers, the Department organized at Headquarters, for some 200 educators and organizers of scholastic model United Nations conferences, a one-and-one-half day seminar on ways of introducing United Nations-related issues into the classroom.

III. CO-OPERATION WITH THE POOL OF NON-ALIGNED NEWS AGENCIES

11. In resolution 44/50, section II, paragraph 1, recommendation 2 (b), the Department was requested to enhance its co-operation with news agencies of and in the developing countries, in particular the News Agencies Pool of Non-Aligned Countries, the Eco-Pool of the News Agencies of Non-Aligned Countries and the Broadcasting Organization of Non-Aligned Countries, as well as with other news agencies and intergovernmental and regional organizations.

12. The Department continues to co-operate with the News Agencies Pool of Non-Aligned Countries, by sending news dispatches through TANJUG, at Belgrade, to the more than 90 news agencies members of the Pool. News dispatches are also sent to various agencies of the Pool on subjects of interest to them.

13. Pursuing its efforts to enhance its co-operation with the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and to strengthen its working relations with news agencies of non-aligned countries, a representative of the Department attended the Third Conference of the Ministers of Information of Non-Aligned Countries, held at Havana, from 24 to 29 September 1990.

IV. ACTIVITIES IN CONNECTION WITH INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND SECURITY

14. The Department was urged, in resolution 44/50, section II, paragraph 1, recommendation 2 (c), to continue to disseminate, in co-ordination with the information services of other relevant agencies, information about United Nations activities pertaining, inter alia, to international peace and security. In recommendation 2 (f), the Department was also requested to continue to disseminate information about activities of the United Nations directed at a comprehensive, just and lasting solution of international conflicts by exclusively peaceful means.

15. To highlight United Nations peace-keeping and peace-making activities in Central America, the Department produced a four-page feature article in UN Focus on the United Nations role in the Central American peace process. The article, issued in English and Spanish, was prepared in close collaboration with the Office of the Personal Representative of the Secretary-General for the Central American peace process. A second article, on the United Nations role in the demobilization of the Nicaraguan resistance, was prepared in consultation with the Office for Special Political Affairs. Also issued in English and Spanish, that article included a number of photographs on the demobilization process. Both articles were widely distributed through the network of United Nations information centres and services and through direct mailings to press, research and educational institutions, particularly in North and Latin America. A supply of copies was also provided to the headquarters of the United Nations Observer Group in Central America (ONUCA) and the United Nations Observer Mission to verify the electoral process in Nicaragua (ONUVEN).

16. To highlight the recent developments pertaining to Cambodia and the ongoing good offices role of the Secretary-General in the negotiating process, the Department published for world-wide distribution an article in the UN Focus series

entitled "Towards Peace in Cambodia". The article, issued in English and French, was prepared with the co-operation of the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for humanitarian affairs in South-East Asia.

17. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 44/49 of 8 December 1989, paragraph 13, an updated version of The Blue Helmets was prepared in close collaboration with the Office for Special Political Affairs. The book presents a summary of the practice of United Nations peace-keeping, taking into account the current international political climate. New sections deal with the five peace-keeping operations begun since the book was last published in 1985. Sections referring to ongoing operations, along with maps and charts, have also been updated. It was issued in September 1990 with a total print of 20,000.

18. The new version of the pamphlet United Nations Peace-Keeping was printed and distributed world wide through United Nations information centres and services and through direct mailings to the media, research and educational institutions and non-governmental organisations. The eight-panel colour pamphlet provides basic information on the United Nations concept of peace-keeping, a complete listing of United Nations peace-keeping operations and details of operations currently in the field. One panel also deals with the awarding of the 1988 Nobel Peace Prize to the United Nations peace-keeping forces. The pamphlet, issued in English with a total print of 60,000, will also be available in French and Spanish.

V. WORLD DISARMAMENT CAMPAIGN

19. In resolution 44/50, section II, paragraph 1, recommendation 2 (c), the Department was further urged to continue to disseminate information about United Nations activities pertaining to disarmament.

20. As part of its information activities in the field of disarmament, the Department of Public Information prepared, in consultation with the Department for Disarmament Affairs, a comprehensive press kit on the occasion of the Fourth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, held at Geneva from 20 August to 14 September 1990. That kit, produced in English and French, focused on the background of the Treaty and its main provisions. It was distributed world wide to the media through special mailings and United Nations information centres and services, and was also made available to the journalists attending the Conference.

21. The Department produced several special radio programmes on disarmament, which included "Efforts towards a Complete Ban on Nuclear Weapons Tests", adapted into French and distributed to some 350 radio stations world wide, one Spanish-language programme on "Efforts to Prohibit Underground Nuclear Tests" and two Russian-language programmes entitled "United Nations Disarmament Commission: The Results of the 1990 Session" and "From Partial Tests Ban Treaty to the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban".

22. The Department received a contract with a non-governmental organization to co-produce a one-hour documentary on chemical weapons and warfare. Production is expected to start early 1991.

VI. ACTIVITIES RELATING TO DECOLONIZATION AND THE SITUATION IN NON-SELF-GOVERNING TERRITORIES

23. In recommendation 2 (c), the Department was also requested to continue to disseminate information about United Nations activities pertaining to decolonization and the situation in the Non-Self-Governing Territories.

24. In pursuance of that mandate, the Department developed a comprehensive information programme to publicize the thirtieth anniversary, on 12 October 1990, of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. As part of its programme, the Department prepared a booklet profiling the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories. To be issued under the English title Decolonization: The Task Ahead, the booklet will also be produced in French and Spanish.

25. Another booklet on Teaching about Decolonization, to be issued in English, French and Spanish, was prepared as part of the About the United Nations educational series. An educational video on the issue of decolonization will also be produced in those language versions to complement the teaching guide and to be used in class-rooms for the benefit of students at the secondary-school level.

26. In addition to short items in news and current affairs magazines, the Department produced a special feature radio programme in Arabic on the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism.

27. The photo exhibit on decolonization, on display at Headquarters, was updated to reflect the current situation and expectations with regard to the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories. Appropriate versions of the updated photo exhibit will be dispatched to United Nations information centres and services for world-wide public viewing.

VII. ACTIVITIES IN CONNECTION WITH HUMAN RIGHTS

28. In recommendation 2 (c), the Department of Public Information was further requested to continue to disseminate information about United Nations activities on human rights.

29. Activities of the Department pertaining to human rights have focused, inter alia, on promoting the Convention on the Rights of the Child (General Assembly resolution 44/25, annex) and on publicizing its entry into force on 2 September 1990. Among other publications of the Department, the June 1990 issue of Objective: Justice carried an article on the Convention on the Rights of the Child and reproduced the full text of the Convention adopted by the General Assembly on 20 November 1989. The Department is distributing world wide, through the United Nations information centres and services, a press kit in English, French and Spanish on the Convention. The kit was produced by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the Centre for Human Rights at the United Nations Office at Geneva. The Department is also producing, in the six official languages of the United Nations, the text of the Convention for world-wide distribution.

30. The Department assisted the secretariat of the World Summit for Children in media coverage of this major event, held at Headquarters on 29 and 30 September 1990. The annual conference for non-governmental organizations, convened by the Department from 12 to 14 September 1990 at Headquarters, had as its theme "A World Safe for Children: Meeting the Challenge in the 1990s".

31. Among other activities in observance of Human Rights Day, the Department is assisting the International Task Force on Literacy and UNESCO in the preparation of an exhibit and a special presentation to the Secretary-General on 10 December 1990 and a seminar on literacy and human rights, to be held at Headquarters on the following day.

32. The Department produced during the first half of 1990 a special feature on the "United Nations and the Human Rights Situation in South Africa" in the "One South Africa" radio series, which is broadcast in English, Sesotho, Setswana, Xhosa and Zulu. As part of the series About the United Nations, an educational video and teaching guide on human rights-related issues is scheduled for completion in 1991. A 30-minute documentary film on the work of the United Nations in the field of human rights is under production.

33. The Department is producing a number of new publications and reprints, including a catalogue of human rights and social development publications, and brochures and pamphlets on the Declaration on Social and Legal Principles relating to the Protection and Welfare of Children, with Special Reference to Foster Placement and Adoption Nationally and Internationally (Assembly resolution 41/85, annex), on the Principles of Medical Ethics, and on the International Convention against the Recruitment, Use, Financing and Training of Mercenaries (Assembly resolution 44/34, annex).

VIII. ACTIVITIES RELATING TO WOMEN AND THEIR ROLE IN SOCIETY

34. In this same recommendation, the Department was further requested to continue to disseminate information about United Nations activities pertaining to the advancement of the status of women and their role in society.

35. As part of its efforts to develop a more effective information programme aimed at the public, the Department has produced a series of UN Focus features on issues relating specifically to poverty, domestic violence against women, and literacy as a tool for empowering women.

36. In response to Economic and Social Council resolution 1990/14, the Department is preparing a booklet aimed at increasing awareness of the obstacles encountered in the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women to the year 2000, particularly in relation to education and to economic and political participation and decision-making.

37. A 30-minute video on women and literacy was co-produced by the Department and the United Nations Development Fund for Women in co-operation with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UNICEF, the United Nations Population Fund

(UNFPA), the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs of the United Nations Office at Vienna, the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the World Health Organization (WHO) and UNESCO.

38. Other activities of the Department include the co-ordination, for the Fund, of a special event honouring women in leadership to be held at Headquarters on 1 October 1990, and the organization, in co-operation with WHO, of a seminar on women and acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) to be held at Headquarters in November 1990, as part of activities in observance of World AIDS Day.

39. Production of the special radio feature/documentary programme on "Women" has continued on a weekly basis in English, and production of the programme in Arabic, French and Spanish has resumed on a monthly basis. Among the major themes and issues of the series are "Rural women's role in the economy", "Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women", "Elderly women", "Women in political life", "Women in promotion of peace", "Debate on women's status", "United Nations women's institute in the Dominican Republic", "Equal participation by women in political decision-making", "UNIFEM", "Income-generating women in Kenya", and "Women confront AIDS". The weekly video programme, UN in Action, broadcast world wide in Arabic, English, French, Spanish and Russian, featured a special magazine item entitled "Improved production methods help village women in Ghana".

IX. ACTIVITIES ON ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

40. In the same recommendation, the Department was also requested to continue to disseminate, in co-ordination with the information services of other relevant agencies, information about United Nations activities pertaining to the problems of economic and social development, as well as international economic co-operation aimed at resolving external debt problems. In recommendation 2 (i) the Assembly specifically urged the Department to ensure the provision of coverage of the special session of the General Assembly devoted to international economic co-operation, in particular to the revitalization of economic growth and development of the developing countries (eighteenth special session).

41. In pursuance of those mandates, the Department has focused its activities on development issues to publicize these major United Nations events in 1990: the special session of the General Assembly devoted to international economic co-operation held at Headquarters from 23 April to 1 May 1990, the Second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, held in Paris from 3 to 14 September 1990, and the adoption, by the General Assembly at its forty-fifth session, of the international development strategy for the fourth United Nations development decade.

42. The Department prepared a comprehensive information kit on the eighteenth special session of the Assembly, directed primarily to the media, on issues relating to international economic co-operation. The kit, comprising background papers, graphics and features on debt, trade, human resources development, among others, was distributed world wide in English, French and Spanish. The Department

also organized for the international media and non-governmental organizations special briefings prior to the special session. A summary note on the special session and on the Declaration on International Economic Co-operation, in particular the Revitalization of Economic Growth and Development of the Developing Countries (Assembly resolution S-18/3, annex), adopted by the General Assembly, was prepared in English, French and Spanish for world-wide dissemination. Assistance was also provided to non-governmental organizations in their preparation of an international seminar on women and global economic issues, which was held concurrently with the special session.

43. A comprehensive information strategy was developed for the Second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, in co-operation with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). Special media briefings were organized prior to and during the Conference. A background feature on the least developed countries was disseminated world wide in English, French and Spanish. Among other Department publications, a special supplement on those countries was published in the March-April 1990 issue of Development Forum, and a paper on them was issued in September 1990 as part of the Africa Recovery briefing paper series.

44. As part of its information programme on the international development strategy for the fourth United Nations development decade, the Department is producing in English, French and Spanish, for world-wide distribution, a feature article on regional trading blocs. The text of the strategy, when adopted by the Assembly, and a series of feature backgrounders on various elements of the strategy will be produced and consolidated into a booklet.

45. A press summary on the United Nations World Economic Survey 1990 was produced in English, French and Spanish and distributed world wide. The Department organized press briefings at Headquarters and Geneva to publicize the survey. The international and national media widely reported on the survey, many of them reproducing or extensively using the summary prepared by the Department. A related United Nations publication issued in English, Global Outlook 2000, was also publicized at the press briefings.

46. Among other activities on the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons (1983-1992), the Department has published in English, French and Spanish a brochure entitled The United Nations and Disabled Persons. Made possible by funding from the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the promotion of the Decade, the brochure is aimed at heightening awareness of the role of the United Nations in advancing the situation of persons with disabilities. The Department, in co-operation with the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, is also currently working out plans for a major publication to reflect United Nations accomplishments during the Decade.

47. In August 1990, a group of 50 disabled Japanese citizens and their friends visited Headquarters to present a "peace message" to the Secretary-General. The Department organized a programme for the occasion, which included briefings on the Organization and its work concerning disabled persons, a screening of Breaking Barriers and a press briefing.

48. The Department provided full coverage of the Eighth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, held at Havana from 27 August to 7 September 1990, and prepared a comprehensive information kit for the media on issues relating to the Congress. The kit, comprising background papers and a 12-page preview, was distributed world wide in English and Spanish. To further publicize the Congress and its major issues, the booklet UN and Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice was published and distributed in English and Spanish for non-governmental and professional organizations. A poster for the Eighth Congress was also produced in English and Spanish.

49. In connection with the twentieth anniversary of the Declaration on Social Progress and Development, the Department issued a pamphlet entitled UN Social Agenda. The pamphlet, issued in English, French and Spanish, covers social issues dealt with by the United Nations.

X. ACTIVITIES IN CONNECTION WITH AFRICAN RECOVERY AND DEVELOPMENT

50. In recommendation 2 (d), the Department was urged to do its utmost to disseminate widely and to publicize the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990 (General Assembly resolution S-13/2, annex) and the tremendous efforts of the African countries towards recovery and development, as well as the positive response by the international community to alleviate the serious economic situation prevailing in Africa.

51. The Africa Recovery Unit of the Department has continued to produce the widely read publication, Africa Recovery, and to provide essential information on issues related to the United Nations Programme of Action.

52. In addition to the publication of the quarterly Africa Recovery, a series of articles dealing with issues of African economic development was published in major newspapers.

53. Activities related to the Second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries included the production of a briefing paper on the African least developed countries for policy makers, development planners and journalists. A journalists' tour to Togo and the United Republic of Tanzania was organized, with the participation of a high-level group of journalists.

54. A multi-media kit was prepared for the report of the Secretary-General's Expert Group on African Commodity Problems. A press conference and interviews with journalists were organized for the Chairman of the Expert Group, Mr. Malcolm Fraser, to launch the report. Those press contacts and conferences and the press kit resulted in substantial coverage of the report by the media.

55. Assistance was provided to the secretariat of the United Nations Steering Committee for the Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development for the convening of a conference on Africa held in London on 6 June 1990. Extensive media planning helped to ensure coverage of the conference by all the major United Kingdom newspapers, as well as by television and radio.

56. The Department has continued to produce and disseminate the weekly telephone feed on African economic recovery and development. An average of six stations in North America, Africa and the Caribbean call in to receive the feed each week.

XI. ACTIVITIES PERTAINING TO THE ENVIRONMENT

57. The Department was also requested in recommendation 2 (c) to continue to disseminate, in co-ordination with the information services of other relevant agencies, information about United Nations activities pertaining to the environment.

58. In preparation for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, to be held in Brazil in June 1992, the Department is developing a comprehensive information programme in close co-operation with the secretariat of the Conference and the Joint United Nations Information Committee. The programme includes promotional efforts leading up to the Conference, comprehensive coverage of the Conference itself, and extensive follow-up after the Conference.

59. The first backgrounder on the Conference, entitled "United Nations to Hold World Conference on Environment and Development in Brazil in 1992", was produced in English, French and Spanish and distributed world wide, in time for the first session of the Preparatory Committee for the Conference, held at Nairobi from 6 to 31 August 1990.

60. In connection with World Environment Day 1990, the Department produced, with partial funding from the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), two special radio documentaries on the theme of children and the environment, entitled "Present Concerns and Future Dangers" and "Galvanising the Young into Action". Two similar special documentaries were also produced in Spanish, in collaboration with UNEP. "Preservation of the Environment" and "Chernobyl: Scope of Disaster" were among other features produced.

61. Other activities in co-operation with UNEP included the holding, on 11 June 1990 at Headquarters, of a press conference by the Executive Director of UNEP and Olivia Newton-John, on the occasion of her appointment as goodwill ambassador for UNEP, and the organization of a major exhibit on Inuit art, which remained on view in the public lobby of the General Assembly building from 5 June to 30 September 1989.

62. The Department is developing, in co-operation with the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator (UNDRO) and the secretariat of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction, a comprehensive information programme to publicize the Decade (1990-1999). In this context, an illustrated brochure on the aims and purposes of the Decade was produced in English, French and Spanish and distributed world wide to the media, non-governmental organizations, governmental agencies and educational institutions. A poster has been designed and distributed world wide in time for the observance, on 10 October 1990, of the first International Day for Natural Disaster Reduction.

XII. CAMPAIGN AGAINST ILLICIT TRAFFICKING IN NARCOTICS AND DRUG ABUSE

63. The Department of Public Information was also urged in recommendation 2 (c), to continue to disseminate information about United Nations activities pertaining to the international campaign against drug abuse and illicit trafficking, including adequate coverage of the special session of the General Assembly to consider the question of international co-operation against illicit production, supply, demand, trafficking and distribution of narcotic drugs (seventeenth special session).

64. In addition to previously reported activities in connection with the special session, the Department published and distributed a media backgrounder in English, French and Spanish summarizing the session's main accomplishments.

65. On 26 June 1990 the Department organized a special theatrical presentation at Headquarters for the third International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking.

66. The Department provided press coverage and media liaison for the World Ministerial Summit to reduce demand for drugs and to combat the cocaine threat, organized by the Government of the United Kingdom in association with the United Nations and held in London from 9 to 11 April. Press kits and other publications were distributed.

67. Among audio-visual materials produced by the Department, a UN in Action programme received the CNN World Report Award for best coverage of an ongoing issue. Aired by CNN World Report on 18 February 1990 and distributed to some 90 television stations world wide, the programme portrayed Egyptian drug control efforts reflecting United Nations objectives and strategies.

68. Public service announcements carrying the message "The United Nations Fights Drug Abuse World Wide" have continued to be placed in major international news magazines. These announcements are designed and produced by the Department and placed by the respective magazines free of charge.

XIII. ACTIVITIES AGAINST THE POLICIES AND PRACTICES OF APARTHEID

69. In recommendation 2 (e), the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to ensure that the Department of Public Information strengthen its activities and the dissemination of information on United Nations activities against the policies and practices of apartheid, giving due attention to the unilateral measures and official censorship imposed on the local and international media with regard to all aspects of that issue.

70. The Department actively participated in preparations for the first visit to Headquarters of African National Congress leader, Mr. Nelson Mandela, on 22 June 1990. The Department provided full press, radio and television coverage of this historic event, which culminated with Mr. Mandela's address before the Special Committee against Apartheid in the General Assembly Hall. A press conference with

Mr. Mandela was also organized on the occasion of his visit. Among other publications of the Department, the June 1990 issue of Objective: Justice featured a special article on the South African leader.

71. The Department also continued to implement its comprehensive information programme to promote the ideas and issues embodied in the Declaration on Apartheid and its Destructive Consequences in Southern Africa (General Assembly resolution S-16/1, annex). A photo exhibit, jointly produced by the Centre against Apartheid and the Department under the title Apartheid South Africa Travelling Exhibit, constitutes a key element of the promotion campaign. In light of the rapidly changing situation in South Africa, the photo exhibit has been updated to reflect current developments.

72. Other activities included the issuance, in brochure-form in English, French and Spanish, of the report of the Secretary-General on progress made in the implementation of the Declaration on Apartheid and its Destructive Consequences in Southern Africa (see A/44/960 and Add.1-3), to coincide with the opening of the General Assembly debate on the report. A poster on the Declaration was produced for world-wide distribution. Arrangements have been made for French artist Michel Granger, who produced the poster on the independence of Namibia, to do the art work for another poster that will promote the idea of a negotiated settlement in South Africa.

73. During the first half of 1990, 24 special editions were produced in English, Sesotho, Setswana, Xhosa and Zulu as part of the "One South Africa" radio series. Other special features produced in weekly programmes included "South African Exiles: Prospects for Their Return", in "Perspective", which is distributed to some 350 radio stations world wide; "Apartheid: Last Bastion of Racial Discrimination" in the French-language programme "Perspectives internationales"; "Complete Eradication of Apartheid", in the Spanish-language programme "Perspectiva Internacional"; a series on "The Pillars of Apartheid", in "UN Caribbean Echo"; "A New Approach to a Political Transformation in South Africa" and "Children: The Most Vulnerable Victims of the Destabilization Policies of South Africa", in the Portuguese-language programme "As NU em Acção". "The Release of Nelson Mandela and its Meaning in the Peace Process in South Africa" and "A New Agenda for Peaceful Change in South Africa" were broadcast in official and non-official languages in numerous special editions of radio and television programmes of the Department.

XIV. ACTIVITIES RELATING TO THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND THE QUESTION OF PALESTINE

74. In recommendation 2 (g) the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to ensure that the Department of Public Information continue to cover all United Nations activities pertaining to the situation in the Middle East, and the question of Palestine in particular, and current developments therein.

75. Coverage of the question of Palestine during the past year focused increasingly on news items and information concerning the situation in the occupied territories and efforts to convene an international peace conference on the Middle East under United Nations auspices.

76. The Department continued to distribute its publications on the question of Palestine, such as a revised version of the booklet The United Nations and the Question of Palestine in Arabic, English, French, German and Spanish; the booklet For the Rights of Palestinians: Work of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People; the booklet entitled Human Rights for the Palestinians: The Work of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Population of the Occupied Territories; and the brochure entitled The International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People in English, which is currently being translated into French and Spanish.

77. All aspects of the question of Palestine, including the Security Council meetings held at Geneva, Palestine refugees, Palestinian rights, the intifadah, the situation of the occupied territories, the work of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), the meetings of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the prospects for an international peace conference on the Middle East, were covered extensively in both official and non-official languages in news, current affairs magazines and other radio programmes of the Department.

78. Among special radio programmes, the Department produced two editions on "UNCTAD Assistance to the Palestinian People" and "The Question of Palestine" in the weekly programme in Arabic, Afakun Alamiya; two editions on "Palestine: Search for a Just and Durable Solution" and "Question of Palestine: Immigration of Soviet Jews to Israel" in French; "The Contribution of International Seminars and Symposia Focus on Palestine" in Kiswahili. The Caribbean Unit produced two editions on "The Question of Palestine and the Caribbean Media", which were distributed to all countries and territories in the Caribbean region. "The Work of UNRWA" was featured in the weekly English magazine Scope. All regional seminars and symposia for non-governmental organizations on the question of Palestine sponsored by the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People were covered extensively in weekly regional magazines.

79. The Department continued to organize activities to acquaint the media with the facts and developments pertaining to the question of Palestine. A team of 14 high-level journalists participated in a news mission to the Middle East organized by the Department, which provided them with an opportunity to gain first-hand knowledge and impressions on various aspects of the Palestine question. Between 13 and 31 May 1990, the team visited Tunis, Damascus, Amman and Cairo, and met and interviewed a large number of leaders and senior officials of Egypt, Jordan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). Numerous field visits, particularly to Palestine refugee camps, were also organized. The mission received extensive media coverage in all the countries visited. Numerous articles were later published and radio and television programmes broadcast by the participants on the basis of their experience and interviews conducted during the mission.

XV. ACTIVITIES PERTAINING TO NAMIBIA

80. In recommendation 2 (h) the Department was requested to continue to disseminate information about Namibia, in particular the independence process as

provided for in Security Council resolution 435 (1978) of 29 September 1978. The Department was also required to make adequate plans for the establishment of an information centre in Namibia, in consultation with the Government of the new nation after independence.

81. The Department provided full press, television and radio coverage of the admission, on 23 April 1990, of Namibia as the hundred and sixtieth member of the United Nations - a landmark in the history of the Organisation. On that day, the exhibit "Namibia: New Nation, New Needs", produced on the occasion of Namibia's independence, was opened by the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Prime Minister of Namibia. On view in the public lobby of the General Assembly building until 6 September 1990, and later at other United Nations sites, the exhibit will find a permanent home in Namibia. Articles on the exhibit and on Namibia were carried in the June 1990 issue of Objective: Justice.

82. As part of its activities to highlight the international donors' meeting on assistance to Namibia initiated by the Secretary-General and held in June 1990, the Department organised from 23 April to 4 May 1990 a journalists' tour to Namibia to acquaint journalists from major mass media with the basic economic and social issues facing the new nation. A team of 11 senior journalists from major potential donor countries participated in the tour. The numerous articles produced as a result of the tour form the basis of a publication of the Department, to be issued in English and disseminated world wide.

83. As a follow-up to the journalists' tour and in co-ordination with UNDP, a series of briefings intended for non-governmental organizations, local media and business people interested in the development of Namibia will be arranged in major potential donor countries to disseminate information about Namibia's economic and social needs. This series of briefings will take place in the last quarter of 1990 and will thus conclude the information programme of the Department pertaining to Namibia.

84. A 30-minute video entitled Namibia Independence: A Nation is Born was produced and distributed in English, as the third and last of a Department video series on the independence process of Namibia. Other language versions of the film, which focuses on the role of the United Nations and the independence celebration, are being prepared for world-wide distribution.

85. Arrangements have been made with the Namibian Government for establishing a United Nations information centre at Windhoek.

XVI. STRENGTHENING OF THE UNITED NATIONS INFORMATION CENTRES AND SERVICES

86. In resolution 44/50, section II, paragraph 1, recommendation 6, the General Assembly requested United Nations information centres to intensify direct and systematic communication exchange with local media, information and educational institutions and non-governmental organizations. Every effort should be made to establish close co-ordination with other field offices of the United Nations

system, particularly those of UNDP, in order to avoid duplication of work, taking into account the functional autonomy that the United Nations information centres should have.

87. In this regard, every effort continues to be made by the network of 67 United Nations information centres and services to intensify direct and systematic communication exchange with local media, information and educational institutions, and non-governmental organizations. New contacts and co-operative endeavours with local media have been established in most countries. Centres have reported that the local media often use the contents of Department press kits and UN Focus feature series in full page spreads and special newspaper supplements.

88. The centres have secured additional regular time-slots for audio-visual programmes of the Department. Directors of the centres are often interviewed on radio and television, and arrangements are made by staff for interviews with visiting officials and representatives of the United Nations and its agencies.

89. The centres have also undertaken numerous activities with local media, broadcasting agencies, non-governmental organizations and educational institutions on occasions of special United Nations events.

90. They have issued information materials of the Department such as photographs, posters, wallsheets, teaching guides on selected topics, and other publications produced by organizations of the United Nations system in setting up United Nations stands at bookfairs and other public places, including schools, shopping malls and subway stations. Arrangements were made by various centres to have United Nations posters displayed at airports and major bus or train terminals in cities such as Brussels, Buenos Aires, Copenhagen, Geneva, London, Madrid, New Delhi, Rabat, Sydney and Vienna.

91. As part of its efforts to strengthen ties between Headquarters and the field, the Department held, from 21 to 23 March 1990 at Tunis, a meeting of information centres directors in Arabic-speaking countries. The role and functions of those centres were reviewed and discussions were held on ways of enhancing their co-operation with other United Nations offices to promote public understanding of the role of the Organization in tackling global issues and problems of regional concern and to mobilize public support for United Nations efforts. A five-day meeting of directors serving in Asia and the Pacific was held at Manila in May 1990. The meeting coincided with the launching in Manila of a regional publicity campaign to promote public awareness of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The information centres in the region co-operated with UNICEF and the Centre for Human Rights on this event.

92. A seminar for reference assistants from United Nations information centres and services in Europe was held at Geneva, with professional guidance from the Dag Hammarskjöld Library and participation of staff members of the United Nations, ILO, WHO and UNESCO libraries at Geneva, and of representatives of the Advisory Committee for the Co-ordination of Information Systems. Fourteen reference assistants met with 10 United Nations depository librarians and a UNDP senior library assistant for four days of discussion on programmes, documentation and

technological innovation. In the same spirit as in Nairobi, where 23 reference assistants from information centres in African countries met in December 1989, the Geneva seminar provided an opportunity to exchange ideas on more efficient and productive ways of responding to the information needs of the local public. The seminar also helped develop closer links among all local sources of information about the United Nations, including the United Nations depository libraries and libraries of United Nations agencies.

93. Pursuing efforts to strengthen their co-operation in the field, the Department and UNDP have agreed on the text of an Understanding between the Department of Public Information and the United Nations Development Programme for Rationalizing United Nations Field Representation, following careful consideration of all proposed changes and amendments to the initial text. While co-operation in the field between the Department and UNDP has been extremely positive and encouraging, there is an agreement that co-operation can be further strengthened through closer ties between the regional desk officers of both bodies, participation of senior staff in regional meetings, and thorough briefings of UNDP resident representatives and co-ordinators on public information matters. All measures are aimed at maximizing the joint skills and resources in the field.

94. In order to accelerate the process of linking information centres with Headquarters and with offices in all regions, 56 centres now have facsimile machines installed and fully operational. Several information centres have received new computer equipment and the staff has been trained to use it.

XVII. CO-ORDINATION OF INFORMATION ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

95. In recommendation 7, the Department was encouraged to continue its active participation in the work of the Joint United Nations Information Committee, in recognition of the need for co-ordinating information activities of the United Nations system.

96. As the secretariat of the Committee, the Department organized the sixteenth session of the Committee, convened under the chairmanship of the Under-Secretary-General for Public Information, and held on 21 and 22 June 1990 at Geneva. The report of the Committee has been submitted to the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination in document ACC/1990/11.

Notes

1/ See Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 21 (A/45/21).
