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SPECIAL POLITICAL COMMITTEE  
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held on  
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at 10 a.m.  
New York

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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 8th MEETING

Chairman:

Mr. ARCILLA

(Philippines)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 74: UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND WORKS AGENCY FOR PALESTINE REFUGEES IN THE NEAR EAST (continued) (A/SPC/45/L.5, L.6 and L.7)

1. The CHAIRMAN noted that, in addition to the draft resolution already circulated in document A/SPC/45/L.5, the Committee had before it two other draft resolutions relating to item 74 (A/SPC/45/L.6 and A/SPC/45/L.7).

AGENDA ITEM 77: QUESTIONS RELATING TO INFORMATION (A/45/21 and A/45/533)

2. Mrs. SEVIGNY (Under-Secretary-General for Public Information) said that the changes in the global political environment and the end of the cold war had given new impetus to the role, credibility and relevance of the United Nations. The international community was placing renewed hope in the United Nations, which was now perceived as the unique forum for the collective search for solutions to global problems. The need to provide information was imperative and the Department of Public Information (DPI) was being called on to meet a surge in demand for its products and services.

3. The Secretary-General's visit to Amman at the outset of the Gulf crisis had riveted world attention on him and on the United Nations. More than 60 of the largest media outlets had demanded exclusive interviews with him. At New York Headquarters alone, the Department had prepared and distributed summaries of 478 regular and special briefings held over the past 12 months. It had also arranged 103 briefings by delegations and 52 by United Nations officials.

4. In recent months, the Security Council had met at all hours of the day and night, often on weekends. DPI staff were always on duty during those times, servicing the press, and arranging for television, radio and photographic coverage. Spokesmen provided by DPI represented the Council, the President of the General Assembly and the many peace missions in the field, such as those in Namibia, Nicaragua and El Salvador. During the recent Security Council meetings on the Gulf crisis the Department had readjusted its news service in response to the needs of listeners in Europe and had also provided news agencies with the appropriate material.

5. In the months of August and September, DPI had produced some 20 hours of television news packages on the same issue and had produced 32 press releases in English and French totalling more than 200 pages. It had also produced a World Chronicle TV magazine programme featuring the Chairman of the United Nations Security Council Committee established by resolution 661 (1990) concerning the situation between Iraq and Kuwait. There had been a significant increase in requests for documents and audio-visual material as well as telephone inquiries, which showed the increased interest not only of specialists but the general public. That interest was also demonstrated by the fact that 2,000 journalists had been accredited for coverage of the General Assembly's general debate and more than 3,500 media representatives from 100 countries had been accredited to cover the World Summit for Children.

(Mrs. Sevigny)

6. During the past year, the Department had continued to assess public opinion. Poll results from 23 developed and developing countries had been released and results from three more countries would be released soon. The polls assessed awareness and knowledge of the United Nations. More than half of the countries surveyed registered awareness levels of 90 per cent or above and two thirds of those polled assessed the Organization's performance as good. The polls, however, showed a declining awareness of the United Nations system as a whole. In November 1989, 22 senior journalists from Latin America, the Caribbean and Europe, representing 22 countries, had been invited to Headquarters for a three-day programme of briefings. Fifteen journalists from as many African countries had also been taken to Namibia to cover first-hand the historic elections there. An Asian Round Table at Headquarters would be held shortly.
7. One of DPI's major concerns continued to be the development of information programmes for peace and security. DPI's major publication on peace-keeping, the Blue Helmets, had recently been redesigned and expanded to cover the five new peace-keeping operations undertaken by the Organization since 1988. A variety of background material on United Nations peace activities in Cambodia and Central America, and an educational video and teacher's guide for use in high schools, were also being prepared. In March 1991, DPI planned to hold a round table in Singapore, under the auspices of the Governments of Singapore and Japan, on peace-making and peace-keeping operations, in anticipation of the important role the United Nations might be called on to play in the Cambodia peace process.
8. Building on its experience on Namibia, the Department had developed general standards for the information component of peace-keeping activities which would shortly be applied in connection with the Western Sahara mission. At present guidelines were being prepared for all public information activities in that area and for the promotion and strengthening of coverage of major United Nations conferences.
9. On the day that Namibia had taken its seat in the General Assembly, the Department had inaugurated a photo exhibit at Headquarters on the land and its people, published a booklet entitled Namibia Outlook, and organized a tour of Namibia for senior and influential correspondents from newspapers in potential donor countries. Many of the same correspondents had recently participated in a series of one-day seminars on Namibia's future held in Frankfurt, Bonn, Helsinki and Gottenburg. A compilation of the articles they had published had been issued in a booklet entitled Namibia in the News. Negotiations were also in progress with the Government of Namibia for the establishment of an information centre at Windhoek early in 1991.
10. The Department attached great significance to information on the work of the United Nations with regard to decolonization, particularly in the framework of the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism. Now that Namibia had become independent, the Department intended to change the name of the Anti-apartheid, Namibia and Palestine Programmes Section to the Anti-apartheid, Decolonization and Palestine Programmes Section. In connection with its campaign

(Mrs. Sevigny)

against apartheid, DPI continued its close collaboration with the Centre Against Apartheid. That covered a wide range of activities which included the preparation for and the multi-media coverage and promotion of the General Assembly's special session on apartheid and the visit to United Nations Headquarters on 22 June 1990 of the African National Congress leader, Mr. Nelson Mandela. The Department had mounted a major travelling photo exhibit on apartheid which had been shown in New York, London, Madrid and Frankfurt. It also continued to produce and distribute anti-apartheid radio programmes.

11. On the question of Palestine, the Department had vigorously continued its special programme, which included publications such as an educational video with an accompanying teaching guide for high schools, a news mission for senior journalists to the Middle East and 12 regional and national journalists encounters in Europe, Asia and Latin America.

12. The Department was continuing its work in connection with the economic crisis in Africa and the efforts to overcome it. Its quarterly newsletter Africa Recovery went to 30,000 readers. It published briefing papers on the African least developed countries and had publicized the African Charter for Popular Participation in Development. In co-operation with UNDP, it had organized a tour by Western and African journalists to two African countries prior to the Second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries.

13. The Department had worked closely with UNCTAD in designing an information strategy for the Paris Conference on the Least Developed Countries. The press kit it had prepared in connection with the Secretary-General's report on the debt crisis had been in such demand that it was later reprinted as a pamphlet entitled Debt: A Crisis For Development. It had also produced a totally revised version of an earlier booklet on global economic issues entitled The World Economy: A Global Challenge.

14. Following the consensus achieved in 1990 in the Committee on Information, DPI and UNESCO had decided to plan and finance jointly a seminar, to be held in Namibia in 1991, on possible ways of developing an independent and pluralistic press in Africa. The year 1989 had seen several notable events in the United Nations, and in each of those events DPI had co-operated with the services and departments concerned. In September, the Department had played a major role in assisting UNICEF in arranging and publicizing the World Summit for Children. Prior to the Summit, DPI had held its annual conference for non-governmental organizations. Attended by 1,100 participants from 60 countries, the conference had been the best-attended function for non-governmental organizations in United Nations history.

15. The Department had actively participated in the preparations for the awards ceremony in which the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) had honoured four current or former women heads of State or Government. It had also produced news features, booklets, posters and press kits on development, as well as a video on women and illiteracy.

(Mrs. Sevigny)

16. DPI had been given the primary responsibility for co-ordinating activities for the World Public Information Campaign on Human Rights. In that regard, the Department continued to use all its available facilities, including radio, television, films, publications and periodicals, to promote public awareness of human rights and the United Nations role in that field. The Department had undertaken 20 reprints and new productions of human rights publications and was currently producing a documentary film on human rights.

17. DPI programmes could be heard on radio stations throughout the world; produced in New York, they comprised news and current-affairs magazines. The Department also provided weekly news-magazine programmes in 22 languages to national and other radio organizations world wide for broadcast over their own transmitter facilities.

18. Difficulties were being encountered with financing certain publications, in particular Development Forum, the sole inter-agency publication on development issues in the whole United Nations system, which had relied on voluntary contributions and was currently in danger of folding.

19. Every effort was being made by the 67 information centres and services to intensify direct and systematic exchanges of information with non-governmental organizations, educational institutions and local media. Recognizing the need for closer ties between the information centres and DPI at Headquarters in New York, a meeting of centre directors in Arab countries had been held in March 1990 to review the role and function of those centres and to enhance their co-operation with other United Nations offices in the promotion of and understanding for the Organization's role in tackling the issues and problems of concern to that region. In May 1990, a meeting had been held of centre directors serving in Asia and the Pacific, which had coincided with the launching in Manila of a publicity campaign to promote public awareness of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The information centres in the region had co-operated with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Centre for Human Rights, and the event had been broadcast by satellite throughout the region.

20. The information centres were facing the task of reaching a proper balance within available resources for their threefold functions: official representation of the United Nations; the promotion of United Nations information and coverage of its activities; and collaboration with other United Nations agencies and programmes, in particular on social and economic development issues. In that regard, DPI had succeeded to a great extent in maintaining closer and smoother relations with other United Nations agencies, particularly the United Nations Development Programme.

21. Several Member States had expressed the wish to have information centres opened in their capitals, which would be possible if the request was approved by the General Assembly together with the necessary financial resources. In that connection, it was important to reiterate the need for ensuring the availability of operational funds for information centres. Several Governments did contribute to the financing of information centres in their capitals. Countries must meet their commitments; those that did not contribute must seriously consider doing so.

(Mrs. Sevigny)

22. In the highly competitive information market, the efficient and prompt dissemination of DPI materials was an absolute necessity for publicizing the Organization's activities. That was usually done in six languages. The Department had had to rely increasingly on expensive courier service for such work. Drawing on diverse means of dissemination, DPI had stepped up its promotional activities for the United Nations guided tours, had increased its involvement of New York and had recently produced an announcement on the United Nations that had been aired on the local channels 5, 11 and TBS.

23. The Department had expanded its use of computers and other technological innovations to improve its information products, means of distribution and ties with information centres. It had also upgraded its computer infrastructure to ensure that staff had access to a network linking them with each other and with the mainframe computers. DPI currently had one computer for every two people, and 56 information centres and services had facsimile machines installed and fully operational (A/45/533, para. 94), 22 of which were connected to Headquarters through an electronic mail system.

24. Although the Department had undergone a 15 per cent cut in its staffing in the past five years, it had tripled its publications production and increased its radio and television output by 20 per cent. But it had reached a ceiling, and it could not accomplish any more with existing financial resources, let alone face future demands. It needed more flexibility both in reaching out for the support of outside groups ready to lend their co-operation in conformity with the principles of the Charter and in budget management.

25. It was important for the international community to realize that, without an effective communication programme, it was impossible to sustain strong public support for multilateralism. Furthermore, improving the media was an essential and integral component of progress, and there could be no development without it. In order to reach the public, DPI needed the co-operation of all the information media, not only to stimulate interest in multilateralism, but also to promote development itself. It was essential to foster a better understanding of the United Nations and its role, in particular among younger generations.

26. Mr. FASEHUN (Chairman of the Committee on Information) introduced the report of the Committee on Information (A/45/21). Referring to the twelfth session of the Committee, held at Headquarters from 5 April to 2 May 1990, he said that the Committee had initially planned to complete its work on 20 April 1990. The fact that the session had been extended to 2 May was a reflection of the difficulties encountered in the negotiating process and the conviction on the part of delegations that their prolonged efforts would ultimately bear fruit.

27. The positive debate that had taken place on questions relating to a new world information and communication order and the work of the United Nations in the field of information and communication reflected the determination of all delegations to bridge the long-standing differences in approach to those key issues. It had also revealed broad recognition of the fundamental principles and objectives with regard to information and communication activities at national and international levels,

(Mr. Fasahun)

namely, freedom of information and the reduction, through international co-operation, of disparities existing between the information systems and communication infrastructures of the developing and developed world.

28. The debate of the Committee had also emphasized that support for a new world information and communication order had been based not on any opposition to the principle of freedom of information, but on the fact that the imbalance between the media capacities of the developing and developed world was incompatible with that fundamental principle (para. 26). A commitment to those same principles and objectives had been instrumental to the successful outcome of the twenty-fifth General Conference of UNESCO, which had unanimously adopted a new strategy for "Communication in the service of humanity" (para. 19). The breakthrough achieved by the General Conference and the significant progress made by the General Assembly at its forty-fourth session had paved the way to reaching a consensus in the Committee on Information.

29. He introduced draft resolution I, entitled "Information in service of humanity", and draft resolution II, entitled "United Nations public information policies and activities" (A/45/21, Part IV), both of which had been adopted by consensus and had overcome the stalemate which for years had deadlocked the deliberations of the Committee on Information and the Special Political Committee on those key issues.

30. Draft resolution I was a careful amalgamation of the major elements of General Assembly resolution 44/50, on information in the service of mankind, and of resolution 25/C/104 of the General Conference of UNESCO, on communication in the service of humanity. The text underscored the importance of international co-operation to enhance the media capacities of the developing world, as well as the equal importance of respect for freedom of information, for the plurality of sources and for the ownership of the means of communication.

31. Draft resolution II reflected both the plurality and the concurrence of views on the general guidelines for the work of the Department of Public Information and on the specific tasks assigned to the Department. It provided the Department with a set of clear and well-balanced directives to enable it to address key issues of concern to Member States.

32. As indicated in paragraph 75 of the report, both draft resolutions had been adopted by consensus by the Committee on Information, on the understanding that it would be left to the Special Political Committee to agree on the preambular paragraphs that might be added to them.

33. The broad agreement on a new world information and communication order and on freedom of information was a significant milestone which reflected the extraordinary spirit that currently prevailed. It was to be hoped that the Special Political Committee, in the same spirit of co-operation, would endorse the hard-won consensus of the Committee on Information.

(Mr. Fasehun)

34. Draft decisions I and II attested to the interest and importance which Member States attached to the Committee on Information.

35. Mr. ISAKSSON (Director of the UNESCO Liaison Office with the United Nations) said that few questions before the United Nations had greater importance for the well-being of humanity than that of the free flow of information and the right of all peoples to freedom of expression and communication. In accordance with its Constitution, the first priority of UNESCO was to promote the free flow of information and to advance the communication and information capacities of member States, especially in developing countries.

36. He noted with satisfaction that previous controversies in that area had been put to rest and that in April 1990 the Committee on Information had achieved a consensus on the draft resolution currently before the Special Political Committee. His delegation took pride in having paved the way for the consensus reached in New York. At its twenty-fifth General Conference, held the previous year, UNESCO had approved its new strategy for the development of communications as part of its 1990-1995 medium-term plan. The UNESCO programme, "Communication in the service of humanity", consisted of three basic elements: encouraging the free flow of information at the national and international levels; promoting wider and better-balanced dissemination of information, without any obstacle to freedom of expression, and using all appropriate means to develop the communication capacities of developing countries in order to increase their participation in the communication process, including the reinforcement of the International Programme for the Development of Communication; and advancing the mutual knowledge and understanding of peoples through mass communication.

37. The new strategy unequivocally supported freedom of the press and called upon UNESCO to strive for the development of free, independent and pluralistic media in both the public and private sectors; to facilitate and guarantee, along with its member States, the freedom of journalists to report; and to ensure that public, private and other media in developing countries were provided with the conditions and resources necessary to increase their strength and consolidate their independence.

38. The new communications programme had already yielded results. For example, in February 1990, a meeting at UNESCO headquarters had brought together journalists, editors and news executives from emerging independent publications in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union with their counterparts from Western Europe, the United States and Canada. That meeting, organized in response to requests from several leading media organizations, had produced a number of concrete results, such as the establishment or strengthening of bilateral contacts between news organizations in East and West, the announcement of new training and internship programmes and the initiation of efforts to help the emerging news media in Eastern Europe to function in free market systems.

39. In order to facilitate that aid and to guarantee its continuation, UNESCO was studying ways in which it could serve as a co-ordination centre in order to maximize co-operation. Since that objective would probably involve the



(Mr. Isaksson)

establishment of a central data base that could be accessed over international telecommunications networks, UNESCO had initiated talks with a number of news media research organizations to investigate that possibility.

40. Perhaps the most important result of the February 1990 meeting had been the creation, in Warsaw, of a centre for communication for Eastern and Central Europe, which would serve as a training, research, library and computer facility. The centre had been proposed by the Polish Journalists' Association, and the Director-General of UNESCO had immediately provided the first \$20,000 to initiate the centre's operations. The International Federation of Journalists had contributed another \$10,000, and other contributors included the World Press Freedom Committee and the United States Department of State.

41. UNESCO was also preparing for an African press seminar, to be held in Windhoek, Namibia in early 1991. The sum of \$50,000 had already been pledged to cover the costs of the seminar, at which 60 to 80 African journalists, editors and publishers would hold discussions with their counterparts from the North on ways to strengthen their media organizations. Another meeting, to be held in January 1991 at UNESCO headquarters, would focus specifically on the needs of media in French-speaking Africa.

42. The new strategy for communications had also produced changes in the International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC), which, for the first time, would allow privately owned media enterprises in developing countries to apply to it directly for assistance. At its eleventh meeting, IPDC had approved the financing of 31 communications projects in developing countries at a total cost of \$1.8 million. At its twelfth meeting, the Intergovernmental Council of IPDC would consider 49 communications projects, including 2 interregional, 13 regional and 34 national projects. Since its establishment in 1982, IPDC had assisted more than 370 communications projects in developing countries, at a total cost of nearly \$28 million. Since that figure was far from sufficient and the number of projects submitted was much greater than the number that could be approved, he reiterated the appeal by the Director-General of UNESCO and by the Chairman of IPDC for greater contributions to IPDC from those nations that were able to provide them.

43. Mr. TRAXLER (Italy), speaking on behalf of the States members of the European Community, observed that freedom, including freedom of opinion, was currently in ascendancy throughout the world. He recalled that article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights had proclaimed that freedom of opinion was a right, and that in 1946 the General Assembly had stated that it was "the touchstone of all the freedoms to which the United Nations is consecrated" (resolution 59 (I)). Freedom of information was a basic right that formed the foundation of any democratic society. Its exercise must therefore be free of any limitation. Considering that fact and convinced that only the free activity of journalists and the free flow of information could substantiate that basic right, his delegation felt compelled to condemn violations of freedom of the press wherever they occurred. In particular, it was gravely concerned about the increase in the number of journalists who had lost their lives in performing their duties over the previous few years.

(Mr. Traxler, Italy)

44. He expressed full satisfaction at the consensus reached at the last meeting of the Committee on Information, which represented a major step forward in the spirit of the resolution adopted by UNESCO in 1989 on communication in the service of humanity, and said that his delegation would spare no effort to maintain and expand the basis of that consensus.

45. The Community was well aware of the existing disparities in the capacity of the developed and developing countries to disseminate information and to communicate their views and was ready to assist the developing countries in formulating their own information and communications policies and to increase their participation in the communication process, and that included strengthening their infrastructure and technology. The Community welcomed the UNESCO Executive Board's recent decision to include in the priority programme areas for 1992 and 1993 the free flow and wider and better balanced dissemination of information at the international and national levels as well as its decision to strengthen the communication capacities of the developing countries and the International Programme for the Development of Communication. The Community attached great importance to the work of the Department of Public Information and would do everything possible to assist the Department in discharging its duties. He reaffirmed the Community's support for the work done by the Secretary-General in making the Department a more effective instrument in disseminating information about the United Nations, and congratulated the Under-Secretary-General for Public Information for the work done during the past year. Lastly, the Community was convinced that the time had come for the General Assembly to reaffirm the consensus reached in the Committee on Information and would do its utmost to contribute to a better understanding of the role of information in an interdependent world and of the need to give the Department a clearer mandate and to promote its efficiency.

46. Mr. RAFIRASME (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that the free flow of accurate and objective information was a fundamental element of international relations and national development. However, on account of the considerable imbalances between developed and developing countries in the field of information and communication, the countries which retained the monopoly of technology were able to promote their viewpoints unilaterally. As denounced in the final declaration of the Third Conference of the Ministers of Information of Non-Aligned Countries, held at Havana in September 1990, the current system facilitated the use of the communications media by a few countries to undermine the moral and religious values and the cultural identity of the other countries. For example, it was enough to note that, whereas four Western press agencies disseminated 32 million words per day, the 90 agencies of the non-aligned countries disseminated only 80,000 words.

47. In the same way that the developing countries had had to fight for their economic and political freedom, they now had to strive to obtain the necessary technical infrastructure to gain freedom of information. Consequently, their efforts at regional and interregional co-operation should be continued and intensified, and they should progress from mere declarations to the adoption of real, concrete and practical measures. The new world information and communication order was inspired by respect for the sovereignty of States and the traditions of peoples; it was based not on a presumed opposition to the principle of the free

(Mr. Rafirasme, Islamic Republic of Iran)

flow of information but on the fact that the prevailing situation was incompatible with that fundamental principle.

48. His delegation, aware of the need to promote development of the present system, was prepared to contribute to placing the vast information potential at the service of peace and mutual understanding. In that context, his delegation was pleased to note the consensus reached at the twelfth session of the Committee on Information. Furthermore, Iran's adherence to the principle of freedom of expression was reflected in the major efforts that Iran had made in that direction since the triumph of the Islamic revolution. In that connection, he pointed out that, while in 1987 the country had had 150 newspapers, today, there were 253; that efforts to improve the technical infrastructure of the mass media were proceeding satisfactorily; and that by 1993 the five-year plan for the eradication of illiteracy, begun in 1989, would reduce the illiteracy rate of persons between the ages of 6 and 35 to 0.6 per cent.

49. In the light of the recent strengthening of the authority of the Organization, the Department of Public Information should expand its efforts to promote the activities and objectives of the United Nations system, especially in the developing countries. His delegation felt, in particular, that greater attention should be given to matters of world importance, such as Palestine, apartheid, zionism, the promotion of the role of women and the fight against drug abuse; that more co-operation measures such as those described in document A/45/533 should be adopted; and greater attention given to the question of equitable geographical distribution of staff within the Department. Lastly, his delegation welcomed the Secretary-General's decision to strengthen United Nations information centres and highlighted the urgent need to reactivate the Tehran Centre.

50. Ms. QUENRAOGO (Burkina Faso) said that as a result of the recent changes in the world, including the rapprochement between the two great Powers, at its last session, the Committee on Information had finally been able to adopt a resolution on the Organization's policy and work with regard to information and also the long-awaited resolution on information in the service of mankind. Although the latter resolution was not satisfactory, it represented the first fruits of many years of negotiations and she hoped that it would be improved in the future.

51. Her delegation thought that the establishment of a new world information and communication order, based on freedom of the press and expression and disseminating full and varied information free from any manipulation and designed to impart knowledge and promote understanding, was necessary for the development of peoples. Unfortunately, information was being increasingly distorted according to the medium which disseminated it and depending on whether it dealt with the North or the South. In particular, the information on the South was not usually objective and appeared to be conceived to tarnish its image.

52. Her delegation commended the Department of Public Information for the work it had accomplished - despite the obstacles it had encountered - including its achievements within the framework of its information programme pertaining to the

(Ms. Ouedraogo, Burkina Faso)

independence of Namibia. Her country was aware of the Department's financial problems and wished to encourage it to continue its efforts to surmount them.

53. United Nations information centres were an excellent means of informing the population about the Organization's activities. They should therefore be given the requisite materials to increase their productivity, especially in the developing countries, to enable them to reach the people in the rural areas, who were thirsty for outside information. Tours could be organized, films shown about the United Nations and seminars held for the inhabitants of villages. She proposed that the Department of Public Information together with the Outer Space Affairs Division could publish material on the activities of the Organization concerning the preparations for International Space Year, because the developing countries needed to be informed about space activities. Her country wished to be provided with UNICEF publications as well as information on the applications of the Declaration and Plan of Action of the World Summit for Children adopted by the General Assembly.

54. In her opinion, there was a need to promote regional and international co-operation among States as well as among institutions regarding information in order to improve services, increase efficiency and remove the disparities between the different systems. In March, the member countries of the Economic Community of West African States had held their first Conference of Ministers of Information of Non-Aligned Countries, one of whose objectives had been to find a way to establish the flow of information among member States. So far, information on the Community's activities was disseminated through other media whose perspective diverged from the fundamental concern of peoples and the objectives of the Organization. It was planned to set up an information committee within the Economic Community of West African States.

55. Radio broadcasting had been in existence in Burkina Faso for 30 years but the national radio still did not devote enough broadcasting time to the majority of the people, most of whom were peasants. The Burkina Faso Journalists' Association had organized a seminar which had discussed the difficulties that journalists encountered in their work and had drafted a charter on their rights and obligations which reaffirmed the political independence of journalists from the power of the State. The virtual non-existence of the material with which to do their work was the chief difficulty of journalists in Burkina Faso. Burkina Faso's new information code recognized public freedoms in that sphere and the rights and obligations of citizens.

56. She said that her country firmly supported the International Programme for the Development of Communication adopted by UNESCO and reaffirmed that, in order for a new world information and communication order to be established, collaboration among States would have to be strengthened, the strategies of UNESCO implemented and the recommendations of the Committee on Information respected.

57. Lastly, she expressed the hope that the General Assembly would adopt by consensus the draft resolutions submitted by the Committee on Information.

The meeting rose at 12.05 p.m.