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QUESTIONS RELATING TO INFORMATION

Note of the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the members of the General Assembly the report of the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, prepared in accordance with General Assembly resolution 36/149 A of 16 December 1981.

\* Reissued for technical reasons.

ANNEX

Report of the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization on the implementation of the International Programme for the Development of Communication and the Establishment of a New World Information and Communication Order

1. The Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has the honour to submit the present report to the General Assembly in pursuance of resolution 36/149, which invited him to submit to the General Assembly at its thirty-seventh session a progress report on the implementation of the International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC) as well as on the efforts of UNESCO for the establishment of a new world information and communication order. This report is a follow-up of the progress report submitted to the General Assembly at its thirty-sixth session (A/36/530), which covered the period 1980-1981.

A. INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMME FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNICATION

Intergovernmental Council of IPDC - second session

2. The second session of the Intergovernmental Council of the International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC) was held from 18 to 25 January 1982 at Acapulco, Mexico, at the invitation of the Government of Mexico. The 35 member States which make up the Council, elected by the General Conference of UNESCO at its twenty-first session (Belgrade, 23 September-28 October 1980), were all represented, together with 17 other member States, eight organizations of the United Nations system, 10 other intergovernmental organizations and 12 international non-governmental organizations.

3. The Chairman of the Council, Mr. Gunnar Garbo, recalled that at its first session the Council had stated that the most urgent task of IPDC was the mobilization of resources which would make the Programme operational as quickly as possible. The Council had therefore decided that it would be best to approve certain projects and begin to put them into effect, within the limits of available resources, while needs were being assessed in greater depth and priorities and selection criteria were being determined.

4. The Chairman of the Council also said at Acapulco that the essential task of IPDC was to set in motion practical technical co-operation that would develop training and establish the necessary structures for communication. Without a proper infrastructure, freedom of information had little meaning to people who were deprived of access to newspapers, the radio and other modern means of communication.

5. The Council of IPDC took decisions at its second session regarding general priorities, the criteria for selecting projects and the financing and resources of the Programme. It also approved and decided to finance a limited number of regional and interregional projects.

6. The Council decided that, in approving and financing projects, priority should be accorded to:

(a) Projects for the planning and implementation of national policies and plans for the development of communication, as well as for research activities necessary to that end, especially in countries where communication facilities are least developed;

(b) The development and strengthening of the infrastructures necessary for the production, storage and utilization of supports, as well as for the production, storage, reception, transmission and dissemination of messages, with preference being given to the development of endogenous technologies and know-how;

(c) Projects aimed at the creation or improvement of national and regional structures and capacities for the production of messages for dissemination by any support or channel, such as news agencies, the press, the cinema and radio and television programmes, with the object of facilitating a free flow and a wider and better balanced exchange of news and cultural products;

(d) The professional and technical training of human resources in the areas of research, planning, management and technology of communication systems, production and dissemination of messages;

(e) Regional and interregional co-operation in the sphere of communication, especially between developing countries;

(f) The improvement and expansion of communication in support of other development activities, such as education, agriculture, health and rural development;

(g) Regional projects, particularly at the early stages; subregional projects, particularly those which have a major element of technical co-operation between developing countries (TCDC); national projects of those countries whose communication systems are least developed;

(h) Projects which facilitate the access of developing countries to the latest communications technology, such as satellites and data banks.

7. With regard to selection criteria governing the approval and financing of projects, the Council decided that:

(a) Projects should:

(i) Be in conformity with the objectives, principles, aims and purposes of IPDC and take into account the cultural identity, educational needs and orientations of the countries and regions concerned;

(ii) Be relevant to development, especially as reflected in regional, subregional and national development policies and plans;

- (iii) Increase the self-reliance, equality, independence and capacity for endogenous development of developing countries in the field of communication and information;
- (iv) Have some spin-off effect in the communications sector and/or the development process as a whole within a given country or countries;
- (v) Increase domestic and regional exchanges of information and, in particular, increase the capacity of developing nations to participate effectively in the international exchange of information;
- (vi) Increase the communications capacity to receive and transmit information of individuals and groups at both the rural and the urban community levels;
- (vii) Respond to the needs of countries whose communication systems are least developed;

(b) Regional and interregional projects should have the support or sponsorship of two, and preferably more, countries of the regions concerned.

8. The Council of IPDC decided that these priorities and criteria were neither exhaustive nor exclusive and that they should be reviewed and revised in the light of experience.

9. With regard to finances and resources, member States had, by 31 July 1982, contributed to the Special Account of IPDC set up by the Director-General \$US 3,363,988.68, of which \$1,184,568.32 had actually been paid. Some Governments had, in addition, offered contributions in kind to IPDC, particularly in the form of training facilities, the services of specialists and equipment.

10. The Director-General launched an initial appeal to member States in June 1981 for contributions to the Special Account of IPDC and he addressed a second appeal to Governments in July 1982 for assistance in executing the Programme, so as to allow the implementation of the activities proposed by member States as part of their efforts to develop better communication systems (news agencies, radio and television, books, etc.).

11. At the second session, at Acapulco, the members of the Council of IPDC emphasized that flexibility of financing and a plurality of sources should be assured from the outset. After discussing the various types of financing and contributions, pursuant to the resolutions on the matter adopted during previous conferences, they concluded at the close of the debate that no source of financing should be excluded. Some delegates, however, made the point that offers of financing should not be tied or made subject to any condition whatsoever.

12. The Council of IPDC decided to adopt the following budget for 1982, to be met out of the Special Account of IPDC:

	\$US
Projects	741,000
Preparatory assistance	75,000
Training	50,000
Promotion	44,000
	<hr/>
	910,000

13. The Council of IPDC approved 12 regional projects and 2 interregional projects, part of which will be financed from the Special Account:

(a) The regional projects approved for Africa concern the Pan-African News Agency (PANA), the ACCE Institute for Communication Development and Research, and the establishment of a network for the exchange of economic news among the press agencies of CEAO countries;

(b) For the Arab States, the regional projects approved include the Arab project for communication planning and exchange (ACPE) and the Arab States regional broadcasting training centre;

(c) In Asia and the Pacific, among the regional projects approved are the Asia-Pacific News Network and the regional bank of films and television programmes in Asia and the Pacific;

(d) The regional projects approved for Latin America and the Caribbean include the Caribbean regional project for broadcasting training and programme exchange (Caribbean), the creation of the Latin American Special Information Services Agency (ALASEI), a centre for communication research and application (Mexico), a centre for automated publishing and translation (ASIN) and the training of technicians for the development of communication at the community level.

Some of these projects will receive funding in addition to that provided by the Special Account, especially from UNDP and funds-in-trust.

14. The two interregional projects approved concern a feasibility study on facilities for the international dissemination and exchange of information by global satellite systems, and the application of communication technology to rural areas. The first of these projects is described in greater detail in paragraph 27 of this report.

E. UNESCO PROGRAMME IN THE FIELD OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

15. The resolutions of the General Conference of UNESCO, at its twenty-first session (Belgrade, October-November 1980), continued to provide the framework for the organization's comprehensive and broad-based programme on communication for the period 1981-1982. The four important resolutions which underline the major role played by UNESCO in intellectual and operational activities in the field of communication were:

- (a) Resolution 21 C/19 on the International Commission for the Study of Communication Problems;
- (b) Resolution 21 C/20 on the Application of the Declaration on Fundamental Principles concerning the Contribution of the Mass Media to Strengthening Peace and International Understanding, to the Promotion of Human Rights and to Countering Racism, Apartheid and Incitement to War;
- (c) Resolution 21 C/21 on the International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC);
- (d) Resolution 21 C/22 on International Telecommunication Tarriffs.

16. Resolution 21 C/19, agreed upon by consensus, provided for the first time the following set of considerations upon which could be based a new world information and communication order:

- (a) Elimination of the imbalances and inequalities which characterize the present situation;
- (b) Elimination of the negative effects of certain monopolies, public or private, and excessive concentrations;
- (c) Removal of the internal and external obstacles to a free flow and wider and better balanced dissemination of information and ideas;
- (d) Plurality of sources and channels of information;
- (e) Freedom of the press and information;
- (f) Freedom of journalists and all professionals in the communication media, a freedom inseparable from responsibility;
- (g) The capacity of developing countries to achieve improvement of their own situations, notably by providing their own equipment, by training their personnel, by improving their infrastructures and by making their information and communication media suitable to their needs and aspirations;

(h) The sincere will of developed countries to help them attain these objectives;

(i) Respect for each people's cultural identity and for the right of each nation to inform the world public about its interest, its aspirations and its social and cultural values;

(j) Respect for the right of the public, ethnic and social groups and of individuals to have access to information sources and to participate actively in the communication process.

17. This resolution also points out that: (a) the new world information and communication order should be based on the fundamental principles of international law, as laid down in the Charter of the United Nations, and (b) diverse solutions to information and communication problems are required because social, political, cultural and economic problems differ from one country to another and, within a given country, from one group to another.

18. The report of the International Commission for the Study of Communication Problems entitled "Many Voices, One World", based on a global study, considered to be the first of its kind and translated into 18 languages, was, in the period 1981-1982, the subject of a number of seminars and studies aimed at suggesting areas of further reflection.

19. A series of meetings further clarified an additional aspect of communication, i.e., the right to communicate, and analysed in detail the fundamental principles which might serve to identify this right in the context of a new world information and communication order. For this purpose, meetings were convened, in co-operation with the International Institute of Communications (IIC), in Strasbourg, Bucharest and Paris.

20. An important study, in which several institutes from different parts of the world participated, was also undertaken in order to clarify the relationship between the new international economic order and a new world information and communication order. The subjects of other studies, either in the process of being conducted, or planned, include: the present characteristics of international flow of television news and programmes, in which six regional research centres participate; the impact of advertising; the right of reply; and the cultural, social and economic implications of the use of technology, and of the communication industries.

21. Resolution 21 C/20 on the Declaration on Fundamental Principles concerning the Contribution of the Mass Media to strengthening Peace and International Understanding, to the Promotion of Human Rights and to countering Racism, Apartheid and Incitement to War has been widely discussed, in particular through consultations with professional organizations which were encouraged to examine the question of the practical implementation of the instrument. The Declaration, together with the concept of a new world information and communication order, was the subject of two meetings of journalists organized by UNESCO in Latin America and

the Caribbean. Another meeting was convened in Dakar, in November 1981, to discuss the follow-up to the Declaration, especially with regard to the contribution of the mass media to countering racialism and apartheid on the African continent. A publication containing the history of the Declaration has been published and given wide circulation.

22. Resolution 21 C/21 on the International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC) reflects the desire of Member States for operational activities to ensure that tomorrow's means of communication do not reproduce today's inequalities. The activities of the IPDC have been described earlier (see paras. 2 to 14).

23. UNESCO has, therefore, since the thirty-sixth session of the General Assembly, been striking a balance between thought, on the one hand, and action, on the other.

24. Resolution 21 C/22 (International Telecommunication Tariffs) provides the framework for UNESCO's continued effort to reduce telecommunications tariffs for the transmission of news and television material in collaboration with the International Telecommunication Union (ITU). As from 1981-1982, the relevant Working Group, although initiated a few years earlier, was enlarged to enable the representation of all media of communication. The Working Group is to meet before the end of 1982.

25. Intergovernmental conferences on communication policies in Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia and Oceania, and in Africa, have already been held, with another conference for the Arab States scheduled for 1983.

26. One of the largest symposia ever held by UNESCO was organized in Paris, in October 1981, with the aim of examining the development of exchange of news and television programmes. The symposium which was attended by 44 governmental and non-governmental organizations, has led to a "Global Satellite Project for Dissemination and Exchange of Information". A similar symposium is to be held towards the beginning of 1983.

27. The objective of the Global Satellite Project is to promote a greater flow of information among developing countries and between them and the developed countries. It proposes to achieve this through the permanent leasing of additional satellite capacity, of both INTELSAT and INTERSPUTNIK, by broadcasting houses, news agencies and newspaper organizations. Field studies have been undertaken and meetings organized to collect data on the users' needs so as to allow for the technical configuration for an experiment at the beginning of 1983 - the World Communication Year. The Global Satellite Project is one of a set of proposals aimed at greater freedom in the flow of information, as well as at its wider and more balanced dissemination. It has been approved by the Council of IPDC which decided to finance it partly (see para. 14).

28. In the context of facilitating greater freedom in the flow of information and wider and more balanced communication, UNESCO, with the collaboration of ITU, is assisting in the development of national news agencies as well as facilitating news



exchanges in Africa. The Panafrican News Agency (PANA) aims at linking national news agencies into a continent-wide network and it will be supported by projects financed by the Special Account of IPDC as well as by UNDP. National news agencies in Africa and their linkage to PANA will be developed through funds-in-trust projects financed by the Federal Republic of Germany and the Arab Gulf Programme for the United Nations Development Organizations (AGFUND).

29. In the course of 1982, a series of subregional meetings of participating news agencies at the Pool centres of PANA as well as a meeting of the Technical Group at PANA were organized. These meetings were convened to work out detailed proposals on equipment needs, training requirements and routes and schedules for the transmission of PANA news. The training of additional specialized personnel and the provision of equipment will start in 1983.

#### C. DRAFT MEDIUM-TERM PLAN (1984-1989)

30. The year 1982 has been a particularly challenging one for UNESCO. In addition to the execution of its full programme of activities, the organization, with the close collaboration of member States and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, has embarked on the preparation of the second medium-term plan for the period 1984-1989, which is to be discussed at an extraordinary session of the General Conference convened for this purpose, from 23 November to 3 December 1982.

31. With respect to communication, the proposals made by member States in response to the request of the Director-General may be grouped under the following three main headings: (a) communication as a complex socio-cultural phenomenon occupying a prominent position in contemporary societies and contributing to the solution of world problems; (b) world-wide inequalities and disparities in the field of communication and the promotion of a free and balanced flow of information at the international and regional levels; and (c) promotion of national action to develop communication in ways that are responsive to the needs of individuals and of society and with a view to guaranteeing freedom of access to information for all.

32. The second medium-term plan lays emphasis on communication between people, as well as between different cultures, as one of the world's major problems. It suggests that communication and information are becoming, in themselves, one of the most substantial sectors of activity in today's world and that their increased importance in bringing about major changes in society is leading to a greater appreciation of their role in development. The plan discerns two distinct groups of problems in the complex world of communication and information: "that relating to the media, focusing on the collection, flow and distribution of news among the general public, and that relating to specialized information, particularly in science and technology, centred on the collection, flow and distribution of factual, numerical or bibliographical data for the use of specialists".

33. "Resulting from the convergence of various interrelated and interacting technologies", the draft plan adds "the very great disparities in the different countries' situations as regards communication and information capacity" are

becoming increasingly serious. Developing countries are "deprived of some of the most effective means of controlling the various aspects of the development process". In addition, they "seldom have any say in determining the content of information and have virtually no opportunity of making their views or problems known through the media". The draft plan concludes that "it seems essential, therefore, to do away with the obstacles that prevent people and nations from gaining access to all sources of information and from directly expressing their own points of view, as also to avoid the distortions which compromise the dignity and independence of peoples".

#### D. THE WORLD CONGRESS ON BOOKS

34. A World Congress on Books was organized by UNESCO in London from 7 to 11 June 1982 with the aim of deriving new strategies to promote reading and the use of books. The Congress was attended by 315 participants and observers from 92 countries, including 214 specialists invited in an individual capacity, and representatives or observers from 20 member States, the Holy See, 3 organizations of the United Nations system, 6 intergovernmental organizations and 15 international non-governmental organizations. They included writers, publishers, printers, booksellers, librarians, educationalists, government officials and members of the general intellectual community.

35. The Congress adopted the London Declaration entitled "Towards a Reading Society", reaffirming in particular, the right of men and women "to learn and to educate themselves" and "to acquire knowledge and to acquaint themselves with the wisdom and experience of other nations, of other cultures, and of previous generations", and calling "upon all concerned, particularly Governments, to seek the removal of restraints of all kinds on the creation, production and publication of books and their distribution within and across national boundaries in both directions".

36. For the 1980s the Congress recommended six objectives to Governments, namely:

(a) Formulation of a national book strategy to provide an overall view and integrated approach, as well as to ensure that appropriate measures are taken to help solve problems of readership and book production and distribution;

(b) Recognition by Governments that book production and distribution is a vital industry for national development, by encouraging endogenous authorship, by making available raw materials, appropriate equipment and adequate credit facilities for book production, and by providing more and better facilities for training;

(c) Integration of new technologies into the book chain so as to take advantage of the opportunities they offer in every phase of book production and distribution;

(d) Creation of a reading environment in all types and at all levels of society, beginning at pre-school age and extending through formal, non-formal and

life-long education, and embracing all types of reader including new literates, minority-language groups, immigrants, slow readers and those with poor eyesight;

(e) Stimulation of international co-operation to build national book capacities by making the experience, expertise and, where appropriate, equipment existing in some countries available to others;

(f) Increase in the two-way flow of books across borders through the ratification by all countries of standard-setting instruments to remove obstacles to book exchanges throughout the world.

37. The Congress also recommended the preparation of national legislation based on international copyright conventions, the elimination of all duties and taxes on books in accordance with the spirit and letter of the Florence Agreement and its Protocol, the production and distribution of children's books in national languages, with due regard for the importance of books outside the educational system and the establishment of appropriately stocked libraries.

38. In this context, the International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC) is also intended to develop book production capacities in developing countries, and projects aimed at strengthening such capacities will be submitted to the Council of IPDC at its next session.

#### E. WORLD CONFERENCE ON CULTURAL POLICIES

39. Questions relating to information and communication, particularly those concerning the relationships between cultural and communication policies, the endogenous production of audio-visual programmes for the cinema, radio and television, and the cultural industries, were the subject of a searching debate and a number of recommendations at the World Conference on Cultural Policies, held at Mexico City from 26 July to 6 August 1982.

40. The Conference adopted by consensus the Mexico City Declaration on Cultural Policies, which, with reference to communication, provides in particular that:

"36. The free flow and widest and most balanced dissemination of information, ideas and knowledge, which are among the principles of the new world information and communication order, imply for all nations the right not only to receive but also to transmit cultural, educational, scientific and technical information.

"37. The modern communication media should facilitate objective information on cultural trends in the various countries, without detriment to the freedom of creativity and cultural identity of nations.

"38. The technological progress of the last few years has led to the expansion of cultural industries. Although prodigiously increasing the dissemination of cultural goods, these industries can nevertheless become instruments of cultural dependence and alienation in their own countries as well as in others

if, whatever the way in which they are organized and controlled, they disregard the traditional values of society and kindle hopes and aspirations which are not in keeping with the actual needs of its development. Furthermore, the absence of endogenous cultural industries may constitute a source of cultural dependence and give rise to alienation.

"39. It is consequently important to encourage the establishment of cultural industries in countries where they do not exist, through bilateral and multilateral assistance programmes, always ensuring that the production and distribution of cultural goods is in keeping with the integrated development of each society.

"40. The modern communication media are now fulfilling a basic role in education and the spreading of culture. Society therefore has to find ways and means of using new production and communication technologies to achieve genuine individual and collective development and to promote the independence of nations by preserving their sovereignty and strengthening peace in the world."

41. Among the recommendations on information and communication adopted by consensus at the Mexico Conference the following recommendations to member States should be noted:

- (a) To strengthen and to continue support for IPDC;
- (b) To promote the establishment of broadly representative national communication councils to contribute to the identification of needs and priorities;
- (c) To explore to the fullest extent the possibilities of endogenous development and horizontal co-operation in order to strengthen the exchange of programmes and technical collaboration, particularly among developing countries;
- (d) To evaluate and pool national experience concerning the dangers and damage to which valuable cultural traditions or identity features may be exposed in consequence of the impact of technological, audio-visual and telecommunications innovations, including transmission by satellite;
- (e) To ensure improved collaboration and co-ordination among institutions and activities in the fields of culture, education and communication;
- (f) To endeavour to facilitate the transfer of advanced technological experience in the field of cultural industries and to assist in their establishment and promotion in developing countries;
- (g) To encourage the media to use the resources of culture and information to promote peace and international understanding;
- (h) To take steps to improve the professional standard of people working in the field of information;

(i) To study carefully the London Declaration on books and the recommendations of the Congress on Books;

(j) To assist the development of international co-operation among film workers with a view to enhancing the educational role of the cinema;

(k) To encourage all those involved in and responsible for cultural development to make full use of available means of communication, modern as well as traditional, in their work;

(l) To invite developing countries to expand technical co-operation among themselves in the field of culture and mass communication so as to provide to the recipients of international co-operation in these fields a wider choice of appropriate technologies;

(m) To provide financial support to promote the production of audio-visual programmes and publications of a cultural nature for mass dissemination and to support any initiative to train professional staff and specialized technicians in the production of cultural programmes.

42. These same recommendations are also addressed to the Director-General of UNESCO, inviting him, in particular, to continue his activities with a view to:

(a) Defining the basic principles of a new world information and communication order;

(b) Increasing the assistance granted to professional training in the various fields of communication;

(c) Supporting efforts aimed at providing appropriate structures and means for the production and dissemination of information and communications in those countries which lack them;

(d) Strengthening IPDC's capacity to take action, particularly with a view to providing countries with endogenous cultural industries and achieving more effective promotion of books and writing in general;

(e) Studying the impact of the media on cultural development and national cultural industries;

(f) Promoting national cinema industries;

(g) Ensuring dissemination of the Declaration and the results of the World Congress on Books.

43. Account will be taken of these recommendations in the implementation of UNESCO programmes in the fields of communication and culture, particularly in the preparation of the UNESCO draft programme and budget for 1984-1985.

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