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QUESTIONS RELATING TO INFORMATION

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to submit to 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 41/68 B of 3 December 1986.

Report of the Director-General of the United Nations Educational,  
Scientific and Cultural Organization on the application of the  
International Programme for the Development of Communication as  
well as on the social, economic and cultural effects of the  
accelerated development of communication technologies

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## I. INTRODUCTION

1. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 41/68 B of 3 December 1986, the Director-General of UNESCO presented to the one hundred and twenty-sixth session of the Executive Board, held in Paris in May 1987, under item 7.1 of the Board's agenda ("Recent decisions and activities of the organizations of the United Nations system of relevance to the work of UNESCO") a report on questions relating to information. In accordance with decision 7.1.1 adopted by the Executive Board at the same session and inviting the Director-General to submit to the General Assembly at its forty-second session a detailed report on the implementation of the International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC) of UNESCO, as well as on the social, economic and cultural effects of the accelerated development of communication technologies, the Director-General of UNESCO has the honour to submit the present report to the General Assembly.

## II. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMME FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNICATION

### A. Activities of the Programme

2. Since the submission of the report to the General Assembly at its forty-first session (A/41/582 and Add.1), the Intergovernmental Council of IPDC held its eighth ordinary session in Paris in January 1987.

3. The Council approved contributions from the IPDC Special Account to 69 projects, including 37 current projects that required additional funding. Five of these projects are interregional, 26 regional and 38 national.

4. The Africa region received allocations amounting to \$726,000 or 32 per cent; Latin America and the Caribbean: \$690,000 or 30.4 per cent; Asia and the Pacific: \$395,500 or 17.4 per cent; the Arab States: \$340,500 or 15 per cent; Europe: \$30,000 or 1.3 per cent; and interregional projects: \$88,000 or 3.9 per cent.

5. The African region received allocations for the following regional projects: (a) Pan African News Agency (PANA): editorial training project; (b) Inter-State School of Journalism for the African countries whose official language is Portuguese; (c) communication training and career development for women journalists in Africa; (d) Africa Regional Film and Television Institute in Ghana; (e) feasibility study for the development of a television industry in Africa; (f) general history of film-making in Africa; (g) establishment of a subregional mass communication school for Liberia, Sierra Leone and the Gambia; and (h) network of multimedia promotion agencies. The following African countries received allocations for their national projects: Benin, Botswana, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Ghana, Kenya, Mozambique, Senegal, Togo, Zaire and Zimbabwe.

6. The Latin American and the Caribbean region received allocations for the following regional projects: (a) automated information network for the Latin American Special Information Services Agency (ALASEI); (b) Centre for the

Development and Experimentation of the Graphic Arts (CEDE-Poligráfico); (c) training centre for the creation of images for the media; (d) creation and initiation of the Information Service for the Evaluation of Communication Technologies (SIETCOM); (e) Latin American and Caribbean Broadcasting Union (ULCRA); (f) television policies in the Latin American countries; (g) strengthening of satellite news exchange among television stations in the Caribbean; (h) international meeting on women, communication and development in Latin America; (i) multinational radio co-production service for development; (j) modernization of television training facilities at the Caribbean Institute of Mass Communication; and (k) involving the communication media as a force for health and nutrition in the Caribbean and Central America. The following countries of Latin America and the Caribbean also obtained allocations for their projects: Argentina, Barbados, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, El Salvador, Haiti, Jamaica, Mexico, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname and Venezuela.

7. The Asia and the Pacific region received allocations for the following regional projects: (a) book publishing training course for Asia and the Pacific at the Institute of Mass Communications, University of the Philippines; (b) Pacific broadcasting training and development projects; (c) training in broadcasting by the Asia-Pacific Institute for Broadcasting Development (AIDB); (d) training in information, education and communication on nutrition for rural women; and (e) journalism training and development of the printed media in the Pacific region. The following countries also received allocations for their national projects: Indonesia, Mongolia and Tonga.

8. The Arab States region received allocations for the following projects: (a) Arab Centre for Exchanges of News and Features for Television, Algiers; and (b) establishment and operation of an Arab network of documentation centres on communication and research policies. The following countries also received allocations for their national projects: Algeria, Democratic Yemen, Egypt, Sudan and Yemen.

9. In the European region, Albania received an allocation for its project to modernize the national news agency.

10. The following interregional projects also received allocations: (a) the project of the International Radio Television University (URTI) for the acquisition of NTSC duplication equipment to improve programme exchanges in developing countries; (b) the IPS project for the creation of an interregional network of women journalists; (c) the project to strengthen networks for exchange of cultural publications among countries of the south; (d) the project for improving the level of education in communication/public relations in developing countries; and (e) the periodic report on the state of communication in the world.

11. The Council discussed at length at its eighth session, as at its seventh session, the agenda item concerning the preparation of the World Communication Report. The Council decided that work on the preparation of the report could continue. The Council pointed out to the UNESCO secretariat, however, that in its view, the table of contents proposed at the eighth session was only intended as a

guide and asked the bureau of the Council to ensure that the work of the secretariat was based on the guidelines of the bureau and also took account of the discussions at the eighth session.

12. During the session, the second IPDC-UNESCO Prize for Rural Communication was awarded to the rural radio project of the People's Republic of the Congo. The prize was presented by Mr. Michel de Bonnecorse, Deputy Director-General of UNESCO, to Mr. Francois-Xavier Katal, Minister for Rural Development of the Congo.

13. Particular attention was paid during the session to the problem of selecting projects for submission to the Intergovernmental Council. The members of the Council all agreed that it was necessary to improve selection methods and stressed the importance of reviewing the rules and procedures drawn up by the Council at its second session, held at Acapulco.

14. The Council expressed the hope that the funds in the Special Account would not be thinly spread over too many approved projects again. It hoped that its work would in future result in the choice of outstanding projects which would provide a boost for the development of the media in the environment concerned and also have a multiplier effect on the mobilization of funds.

15. For this reason the Intergovernmental Council after taking note of a preliminary study submitted by the secretariat on the procedures and working methods of IPDC and taking account of the observations made by members of the Council during the session, recommended that the secretariat supplement their work with another study on improvements in the preparation, presentation, selection and evaluation of the projects submitted to the Programme and asked for recommendations dealing specifically with the evaluation of projects before their submission, during their execution and after their implementation and with project-selection and decision-making methods.

#### B. Resources of the Programme

16. To date, a sum of \$11,582,877 has been contributed to the Special Account. Total contributions, including amounts pledged, come to \$12,590,104. In this connection, it should be noted that Finland, France, India, Japan, Norway and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics continue to make regular contributions to the Special Account.

17. Since the establishment of IPDC and up to May 1987, the following countries had paid or pledged to pay the following amounts to the Special Account:

	<u>Paid (in United States dollars)</u>	<u>Pledged (in United States dollars)</u>
Norway	5 382 137	-
Union of Soviet Socialist Republics	1 869 136*	465 019
Japan	1 200 000	300 000
France	781 518	204 208
India	600 000	-
Canada	282 389	-
Venezuela	250 437	-
Finland	225 000	-
Italy	168 573	-
Sweden	145 476	-
China	100 000	-
Iraq	100 000	-
Kuwait	100 000	-
Nigeria	100 000	25 000
Indonesia	93 505	-
Yugoslavia	39 995	new contribution pledged
Pakistan	25 000	-
Gabon	17 094	-
Tunisia	12 729	-
Cameroon	10 714	-
Algeria	10 000	-
Benin	10 000	-
Egypt	10 000	-
Mexico	10 000	-
Oman	10 000	-
Turkey	6 438	-
Zambia	5 231	-
San Marino	5 000	-
Bangladesh	2 000	-
Guyana	2 000	-
Jamaica	2 000	-
Trinidad and Tobago	2 000	-
Luxembourg	1 961	-
Cyprus	1 944	-
Zimbabwe	-	10 000

\* Including amounts in non-convertible rubles.

18. Since the establishment of IPDC the following eight countries have contributed funds for the financing of various IPDC projects under funds-in-trust arrangements:

	<u>Paid (in United States dollars)</u>	<u>Pledged (in United States dollars)</u>
Switzerland	1 200 000	1 607 843
United States of America	1 062 294	-
Germany, Federal Republic of	1 062 061	1 648 350
France	734 824	214 521
Netherlands	489 018	-
Republic of Korea	393 248	-
Canada	148 913	-
Sweden	22 332	200 000

19. The funds-in-trust programme is financing the following projects:

Funds-in-trust: Federal Republic of Germany

Guinea-Bissau: development of broadcasting

ALASEI (phases I and II): special information services

Nepal: community broadcasting

CANA (phase II): Caribbean News Agency

Lesotho: Lesotho Press Agency

Africa: South-east Africa news agency development (phase I)

Africa: West-central Africa news agency development (phase II)

Funds-in-trust: Canada

Feasibility study on the computerization of the International Network of Documentation Centres on Communication Research and Policies (COMNET)

Communication training and career development for women journalists in Africa

Promoting public health and information in the French-speaking countries of west and central Africa

Funds-in-trust: Sweden

Biennial presentation of cinema and television (International Film and Television Council (IFTC))

Seminar at the Bangladesh Press Institute

Training of journalists of the Union of Women Journalists of Nigeria (television production)

Africa: ACCE - Development of communication training and training materials

Funds-in-trust: France

Rwanda News Agency

Regional Communication Institute of the Economic Community of the Great Lakes Countries (CEPGL) (Central Africa)

Promoting public health and nutrition in the French-speaking countries of West and Central Africa

Africa: Pan African News Agency - Development of telecommunications

African Council on Communication Education

Agence Maghreb Arabe Press (Morocco)

Development of communication system in the Comoros

Communication training and career development for women journalists in Africa

Training and development of broadcasting in the Pacific

Training at the Asia-Pacific Institute for Broadcasting Development (AIDB)

Laos: development of broadcasting

Funds-in-trust: Republic of Korea

Radio/television training fellowships for the KBS Training Institute (Seoul)

Funds in Trust: Netherlands

Communication project in Indonesia

Communication project in Zimbabwe

Funds-in-trust: Switzerland

Zimbabwe: Institute of Telecommunications (phases I and II)

Funds-in-trust: United States of America

Communication training in the United States

Development of the Kenya Institute of Mass Communication

Somalia Telecommunications Training Institute (ITU)

Asian Mass Communication Research and Information Centre (AMIC), Singapore

20. During the period concerned, the following six countries proposed new fellowships to the IPDC training programme: German Democratic Republic, India, Poland, Republic of Korea, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and Yugoslavia.

21. All in all, the following fellowship programmes have been proposed to IPDC since its establishment:



Algeria:	5 fellowships
Argentina:	54 fellowships
India:	28 fellowships
Nigeria:	26 fellowships
International Organization of Journalists:	10 fellowships
Poland:	Fellowships amounting to 6 million zloty (45 already awarded)
Mexico	20 fellowships
Czechoslovakia:	10 fellowships
Hungary	15 fellowships
Union of Soviet Socialist Republics:	50 fellowships per year since 1984 and 30 up-grade short-term fellowships since 1986
Yugoslavia:	80 fellowships
German Democratic Republic:	55 fellowships for university and technical studies
Democratic People's Republic of Korea:	10 fellowships (from September 1987)
Republic of Korea:	112 fellowships
United States of America:	103 fellowships

To date 470 fellowships have already been awarded by IPDC under this training programme.

### C. General observations

22. Since its establishment IPDC has received requests for financing in the amount of \$79,210,000. Financing has been authorized from the Special Account amounting to \$11,710,000, which covers 14.7 per cent of expressed needs. Average financing for each project is \$42,122. These figures make it clear that the response from the international community to these stated needs has not yet been such as to launch a process that would put an end to the imbalance existing world-wide in respect both of the means of communication and of the flow of information. This is why the Intergovernmental Council at its eighth session requested the UNESCO secretariat to make a detailed study of ways of improving the mobilization of IPDC's financial resources.

23. Following a report by the Director-General to the Executive Board of UNESCO at its 125th session (September-October 1986) on the situation of the IPDC Special Account, the Board adopted decision 5.1.1. (125 EX/Decisions), in which it appealed to member States to strengthen, by means of voluntary contributions, the financial

resources of the Special Account of IPDC. At its 126th session (May-June 1987), the Executive Board reiterated this by expressing the hope that more substantial extrabudgetary resources would be mobilized to enable this Programme to attain its objectives in full (126 EX/Decision 4.1, para. 47).

### III. SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL EFFECTS OF THE ACCELERATED DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES

24. In resolution 41/68 B the General Assembly also invited the Director-General of UNESCO to submit to it at its forty-second session a report on the social, economic and cultural effects of the accelerated development of communication technologies. The present report therefore continues the account already begun in earlier documents submitted to the General Assembly, in particular that prepared for the Assembly at its forty-first session (see A/41/582, annex, paras. 37-54).

25. A major part of the report will be concerned with the progress of UNESCO's ongoing programme of collaborative research into the impact of the new communication technologies, which extends throughout the period of the organization's second medium-term plan (1984-1989). The purpose of the programme is twofold: to promote a series of co-operative research studies, initially at the regional level; and to prepare and distribute inventories of research in progress throughout the world. The function of UNESCO in this process has not been to conduct research in its own right or to develop a highly structured methodology for comparative research, but rather to act as catalyst and facilitator in an attempt to bring together individual researchers and institutions and to encourage them to pool their efforts, so extending the comparability of their work. It was believed that, by using its limited resources in such a way, UNESCO could maximize its contribution to a research field that is becoming increasingly vigorous and complex.

26. At the present time, 24 interdisciplinary studies of various dimensions of the new communication technologies and their impact are in progress in all world regions, co-ordinated by nine research institutes or non-governmental organizations. These include studies of the impact of direct broadcasting satellites in the Maghreb region and in various Asian countries, popular media and the new communication technologies in the Caribbean, the impact of the new technologies on the endogenous cultures of Africa, state-of-the-art surveys of ISDN (integrated services digital networks) in Western European countries and innovative applications of new communication technologies in the socialist countries of Europe. A particular emphasis is also being laid in certain studies, e.g. in Asia and in the socialist countries of Europe, on the legal implications of the new communication technologies, including questions of copyright.

27. At the same time, preliminary inventories of research in progress have been completed in world regions. In addition, the Latin American region has continued to distribute its newsletter on research in the new communication technology field and is seeking permanent support for its South-North network, devoted to information exchange between Latin America and the North American continent.

28. Proposals for the final phase of this programme are contained in the draft programme and budget of UNESCO for 1988-1989, which will be submitted for approval to the General Conference at its twenty-fourth session in October/November 1987. These include a review meeting to consider the findings of work carried out under this programme and a final publication summarizing the evolution, main trends and conclusions of the research undertaken.

29. Activities in this field are not, however, confined to the programme described above. Within UNESCO's regular programme, the impact and potential of the new communication technologies are recognized in a number of programmes which have been conceived and framed in a common perspective. The experimental edition of World Communication Report, a project jointly financed by the regular programme and IPDC will contain a special section on this theme, and an ongoing programme for the updating of COMNET (the International Network of Documentation Centres on Communication Research and Policies) focuses on both the progressive computerization of the network and the revision of its main classification instrument, the UNESCO Mass Communication Thesaurus, to take adequate account of the field.

30. One of the concerns of the World Decade for Cultural Development, as approved by the General Assembly at its forty-first session (resolution 41/187 of 8 December 1986) is the interaction between traditional and modern technologies and the impact of the latter on cultural creativity and development. The most recent meeting in the series of regional Intergovernmental Conferences on Communication Policies (ARABCOM, for the Arab States, held at Khartoum, Sudan, in July 1987) placed a strong emphasis on the impact of new communication technologies, in particular ARABSAT, the regional satellite, which is now in operation. The draft programme and budget for 1988-1989 also extends this area of research, proposing to investigate such phenomena as the impact of new technological forms on development and freedom of the press, and the problems posed by changing technologies in such areas as copyright and the circulation of materials. The impact of the new technologies on research methodology is not forgotten; in particular, the monitoring of information flow will, in future, need to be supported by new techniques of audience measurement, since modern communication forms, such as cable and satellite, extend beyond national boundaries. The programme also envisages a number of regional workshops on communication policy, which will focus on decision-making needs and processes associated with the introduction of new technological forms.

31. Another part of the regular programme of UNESCO is concerned with the development of technologies appropriate to developing countries and with their endogenous production and distribution. Under programme III.3.2 "Acquisition of appropriate plant and equipment and endogenous production of equipment", UNESCO commissioned the design of several low-cost items of broadcasting equipment (audio mixer, 10 Watt VHF/FM transmitters, 100 Watt amplifier, unmanned relay station, solar-powered VHF/FM receiver and solar units), following consultations between engineers and technicians from developing and industrialized countries. All this hardware has been designed in order to meet the requirements of the transfer of expertise. Its assembling leads to self-learning and understanding of the functioning and operation of hardware and at the same time facilitates

maintenance. Some hardware also follows ergonomical criteria and the environment of the users. A major aspect of this programme is that developing countries can gradually develop their infrastructures more independently of commercial considerations. To ensure a long-term base for continuing this work, the programme also envisages establishing a human resource network that will assist UNESCO in implementing projects in this field.

32. The radio broadcasting equipment has been used for community and regional radio purposes in different areas: Africa, Asia and the Caribbean. The transmitter is at present being used by news agencies to send their dispatches.

33. Regarding electronic data-transfer, UNESCO has co-operated closely with design engineers on a low-cost electronic mailbox, using ordinary telephone lines. It can be configured to operate with any kind of micro-computer or mainframe, and can even be accessed by a simple keyboard and VDU (video display unit).

34. The beginnings of an information network have been established between UNESCO headquarters and some regional field offices, as well as with several non-governmental organization offices working closely with UNESCO.

35. In the field of software, UNESCO has developed programmes able to write local dialects electronically, which fits into the modernization of printing for newspapers and books.

36. A software programme called OSCAR (open system for communication, administration and retrieval) has been developed and comprises message switching and distribution, editing of news dispatches, and filing or retrieval of archival dispatches. The programme is designed especially for regional and national news agencies.

37. A series of experiments with a compact satellite earth terminal based on the prototype designed by INMARSAT will be undertaken so as to adapt this equipment to meet the needs of developing countries on a low-cost basis.

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