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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 20th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. AL-KAWAR (Qatar)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.40 a.m.

Tribute to the memory of General Seyni Kountché, Head of State of the Niger

1. At the invitation of the Chairman, the members of the Committee observed a minute of silence in tribute to the memory of General Seyni Kountché, President of the Supreme Military Council and Head of State of the Niger.

2. Mr. KUNSTADTER (United States of America), speaking in his capacity as the representative of the host country, paid tribute to the memory of President Kountché, whose political wisdom was a pledge of security and stability in West Africa. In those particularly critical days for Africa, he had worked unremittingly for the economic recovery of his country. Under his leadership, the Niger had always been able to show a constructive spirit in the United Nations.

3. Mr. BAALI (Algeria), Mr. CISSE (Mali), Mr. AGUILAR-HECMI (Guatemala) and Mr. POLICHTCHOUK (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) extended their delegations' condolences to the delegation of the Niger.

4. Mr. ALASSANE (Niger) expressed appreciation, on behalf of the Government and people of the Niger, to the Chairman and members of the Committee for their touching words following the sad death of the late General Seyni Kountché, Head of State of the Niger. The death of President Kountché, who had been one of the most respected heads of State in Africa, created a tremendous void in Niger, where the people had identified with him in his struggle against the constraints of nature.

AGENDA ITEM 76: INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION IN THE PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE
(continued) (A/42/20, A/42/518 and Corr.1 and A/SPC/42/L.18)

(a) REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE (continued)

(b) REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued)

5. Mr. HOHENFELLNER (Austria), introducing draft resolution A/SPC/42/L.18 on behalf of the Working Group on International Co-operation in the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space of the Special Political Committee, drew the attention of Committee members to paragraphs 4, 5, 7 and 12 of the text. He also pointed out two inadvertent errors in paragraphs 8 and 10 and said that the first line of paragraph 8 should read: "Considers, in the context of paragraph 7 (a) (ii) above, ..." and paragraph 10: "Endorses the recommendations of the Working Group of the Whole as endorsed by the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, contained in paragraphs 11 to 13 of the report of the Working Group of the Whole;".

6. He thanked the members of the Working Group for the spirit of co-operation which they had shown and which had made it possible to reach agreement on the text of the draft resolution. He hoped that the draft would be adopted without a vote.

AGENDA ITEM 78: QUESTIONS RELATING TO INFORMATION

- (a) REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION (A/42/21)
- (b) REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/42/494)
- (c) REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION (A/42/571)

7. The CHAIRMAN draw the attention of Committee members to documents A/42/411 and A/42/431 containing the text of the Pyongyang Declaration and the final documents of the Second Conference of the Ministers of Information of Non-Aligned Countries, submitted under the present agenda item by the representative of Zimbabwe.

8. Mrs. SEVIGNY (Under-Secretary-General for Public Information)* said that the discussions that had taken place during the sessions of the Committee on Information and the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination and the comments made there had been extremely useful in the efforts made to revitalize the Department of Public Information. The same was true of the extensive consultations which she had held with delegations, representatives of the mass media and non-governmental organizations.

9. The basic direction of the work of DPI was determined by the General Assembly and other intergovernmental bodies. They set the priorities and the targets. In implementing the resolutions of those bodies, the Department of Public Information must take into consideration the realities of a world of 5 billion people and the imperatives of a mass media environment of enormous complexity.

10. The basic mandate for United Nations information activities had been articulated by the General Assembly at its first session in 1946. In creating the Department of Public Information, the Assembly had asked it to "promote to the greatest possible extent an informed understanding of the work and purposes of the United Nations among the peoples of the world".

11. When that mandate had first been adopted by the General Assembly, the dimensions and nature of the public information challenge facing the United Nations had been simpler than they were today. The United Nations had then been an Organization invested with the hopes of a generation exhausted by war. It had been the standard-bearer of the unprecedented international co-operation that had followed the Second World War. Millions of peoples in many countries had benefited directly and visibly from the work of various programmes of the Organization, and it had required no great effort on the part of the United Nations to gain public understanding and support.

* This statement is reproduced in full in the summary record, in accordance with the decision taken by the Committee in the course of the meeting on the proposal of the representative of Colombia.

(Mrs. Sevigny)

12. The situation was now substantially different. Politics, economics and technology had transformed the world and, in the process, reduced the visibility of the United Nations. That was despite the fact the membership of the Organization was now nearly universal and represented the full range of the world's rich diversities. The Organization had a much wider set of goals, preoccupations and concerns now, among them many that were shared by all members of the Committee. Decolonization, the struggle against apartheid, the long process of economic and social development and the protection of human rights - those were objectives on which States agreed firmly as to the ends to be achieved.

13. She was committed to conveying to as wide a public as possible the message that, in achieving those and other important objectives, the United Nations was more important and relevant now than it had been four decades ago. She stressed the importance today of co-operating in protecting the global environment and fighting the spread of old and new infectious diseases, for the magnitude of the potential danger was greater than anything the world had faced 40 years ago. In the formulation of international law, in furthering human rights, in supporting the struggle against racism and the system of apartheid, in supporting economic and social development and in providing humanitarian relief, the United Nations role was now central to the world's welfare.

14. To inform the world's people about the relevance and value of United Nations work, DPI must be able to deal with the realities of what had been called the "global village" of modern mass communications. In that modern media village, communication was extremely rapid at the technical level but the quality of the information distributed was becoming increasingly ephemeral.

15. The Department had the option of adopting a strategy that would bring information to key audiences world wide, whether or not it was visible in the mass media. It could plan its information efforts with an eye to specialized media. The capacity could be developed to discover the views of the citizens of the world and to meet their demands for information with flexibility and precision. In order to do so, DPI must have the appropriate skills and tools. It must have the management structures that would allow flexibility of response and positive action. It must have adequate resources. The changes in the Department had been proposed with those ends in view. They were in no way politically motivated. It should be noted once again that the restructuring of DPI was not aimed at changes either in the political focus or in the order of priorities set by the General Assembly.

16. In 1986, DPI had been given the task of fulfilling some 56 programme objectives, for most of which no discretionary funds had been available. Not enough had been done to provide the Department with the mix of skills and tools necessary to deal with a rapidly changing media environment. Inevitably, staff and budgetary resources had been stretched thin.

17. When she had joined the United Nations in March 1987, her mandate from the Secretary-General, based on the call for reform made by the General Assembly at its

(Mrs. Sevigny)

preceding session, had been a broad one. It had been to act as speedily as possible in increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of the Department of Public Information.

18. To meet such large needs, she had proposed a new structure for the Department, which the Secretary-General had accepted. The basic aim of the change was to increase efficiency in operations. Essentially, the restructuring called for a multi-media approach with functional units. A clear set of operational goals had been established. In planning, it was a more focused and co-ordinated approach to United Nations priority issues. In production, it was higher quality and timeliness. In providing services, it was flexibility and responsiveness. In dissemination of material, it was speed and accurate targeting. In evaluation, it was to identify the audiences more clearly and to assess the impact of the Department's activities with greater accuracy.

19. The new arrangements within DPI would make it possible to judge what needed to be done in different parts of the world and to act and react in the most timely and flexible manner. There would be a coherent structure for the overall planning and co-ordination of operations. Far more than at present, the Department should be able to reach out to media and governmental and non-governmental organizations, in all parts of the world, and to work with them in furthering greater international understanding.

20. One of the questions she was most often asked concerned the substantive implications of the changes. In response, she could only emphasize that the objectives and aims of the Department were and would remain those laid down by the intergovernmental bodies. The great issues of peace, development, human rights and self-determination would remain the focus of the Department's attention and effort. The campaign for disarmament, the struggle against apartheid, the question of Namibia, the situation in the Middle East and the issues of economic and social development would all continue to be of central concern, in accordance with the wishes of the General Assembly. The major difference would be an increase in the scope and impact of the information programmes on those topics and in the Department's impact.

21. As to the effect of those changes on the geographical distribution of staff, there should be no doubt that DPI would continue to have staff from all regions of the world, for without such diversity it would be unable to perform at the level of excellence that would be the standard in the new DPI. It went without saying that the Department would be governed by the same rules on geographical representation of staff as those that applied on a secretariat-wide basis.

22. The modern world, 42 years after the Second World War and barely 12 years before the twenty-first century, was passing through a period of major international and national adjustments. It was not a matter of choice or policy but the effect of generational change. In every region of the world, in developed and developing countries alike, those now moving into positions of national power and influence had been shaped by experiences and technologies that had no precedent

(Mrs. Sevigny)

in history. They were inclined to perceive, think and act differently from the generation before them. It was imperative that the United Nations should be in a position to keep abreast of those great changes and to communicate afresh the great vision that inspired its work. It was her hope that, with the changes currently being implemented in DPI, it would be able to do its share in that direction and would rise to the challenge.

23. It had to be recognized that there was scant room in the building for air and innovation. She could not, however, recommend stepping back half a century for the future of the United Nations was at stake. The financial crisis should not be allowed to stifle information and communication for ever. The entire structure of the United Nations was shaky. Missed opportunities and undischarged obligations afflicted the secretariats and all specialized agencies. The whole sphere of multilateralism was under scrutiny. Should one therefore be satisfied with an uncertain and uneasy allegiance throughout the world? Or should an attempt be made to raise what courage, discipline and money remained in order to undertake action in the field of communication which, if properly carried out, could perhaps help mankind to regain its pride and sense of solidarity? The agenda was clear. It was perhaps long but every effort would be made to carry it out.

24. Mr. RODRIGUEZ-MEDINA (Colombia) asked that the text of the statement made by the Under-Secretary-General for Information should be reproduced in full in the summary record of the meeting.

25. Mr. BARRIOS (Chairman of the Committee on Information), introducing the report of the Committee on Information (A/42/21), said that the report was the outcome of extensive negotiations in which all members of the Committee had played an active part. Consideration of the substantive issues had given rise to a keen discussion which had, however, been marked by moderation and which had reflected a desire to arrive at an understanding on those extremely important questions.

26. It was regrettable, however, that a broader agreement had not been reached on the 48 recommendations submitted by the Committee. The recommendations had been adopted by a roll call vote, with 50 votes in favour, one against and 13 abstentions. Yet unanimity among all groups was the more needed in that the Department of Public Information and UNESCO alike were currently involved in a major process of reform with a view to improving their operation and the efficiency of their work.

27. It had to be recognized nevertheless that, since the adoption of resolution 41/68, the gap separating the various groups was narrowing. He urged that the dialogue should be pursued during the Special Political Committee's deliberations, and appealed to all countries to display due flexibility with a view to achieving broad agreement. In conclusion, he welcomed the Working Group's resumption of its work, which he hoped would be as fruitful as at the previous session. He thanked the new Under-Secretary-General for Public Information for her co-operation and reiterated the Committee's wish to co-operate closely in the difficult and essential task of revitalizing the Department of Public Information.

28. Mr. MEHAN (Representative of the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) presented, on behalf of the Assistant Director-General for Culture and Communication, who had remained in Paris for the work of the twenty-fourth session of the General Conference, the report of the Director-General of UNESCO on the application of the International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC) as well as on the social, economic and cultural effects of the accelerated development of communication technologies (A/42/571). In accordance with the provisions of General Assembly resolution 41/68 B of 3 December 1986, the report dealt in detail with the implementation of IPDC. The programme was financed on the basis of three types of voluntary contributions: contributions to the Special Account, funds-in-trust and contributions in kind in the form of fellowships. To date, the sum of \$11,582,877 had been contributed to the Special Account, including the funds approved in January 1987 by the Intergovernmental Council of IPDC at its eighth session; the total contributions, including amounts pledged, came to \$12,590,104. Under funds-in-trust arrangements, eight countries had contributed a total of \$8,480,629, and 470 fellowships had been attributed under the training programme. Since the submission of the Director-General's report to the General Assembly at its previous session, the IPDC Intergovernmental Council had approved a budget for 1987 totalling \$2,500,000, of which \$88,000 had been allocated for five interregional projects, \$985,500 for 26 regional projects and \$1,197,000 for 38 national projects. In all, the Council had approved allocations for 69 projects, including 37 ongoing projects requiring further funding. In addition, some 70 fellowships had been awarded for training.

29. Positive as the Programme's accomplishments might be, they were far from satisfying the developing countries' needs. The figures indicated in paragraph 22 of the report showed that the member States' contributions had so far been largely inadequate as a response to the stated needs. In order to promote the Programme's implementation, the secretariat had intensified its participation in certain activities: production of booklets and posters, publication of specialized articles, press reports and radio and television programmes and the award of an IPDC-UNESCO Prize for Rural Communication, awarded for the first time in 1985 to the Kheda Communication Project of India, and in 1987 to the rural radio project of the People's Republic of the Congo.

30. The Intergovernmental Council had also, at its eight session, asked the secretariat to prepare a detailed study, in the context of reviewing the Programme's working methods and procedures, on how to improve the mobilization of financial resources for IPDC. The second feature of the review, to evaluate and codify the results of those practices, had been supplemented by a third study concerning the preparation, presentation, selection and evaluation of projects submitted to the Programme. A report had been submitted to the extraordinary meeting of the Council's Bureau on 2 November 1987 and would be considered, with the comments and recommendations of the Bureau, at the Intergovernmental Council's ninth session in February 1988. The Council would also have before it the experimental version of the World Communication Report, which, as decided by the Council, was of an essentially practical nature.

(Mr. Mehan)

31. The programme of collaborative research being carried out by UNESCO on the impact of new communication technologies had a twofold purpose: 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. UNESCO's function in that process had not been to conduct research in its own right or to develop a highly structured methodology for comparative research, but rather to act as a catalyst and facilitator in an attempt to bring together researchers and institutions and to encourage them to pool their efforts, thus extending the compatibility of their work. By using its limited resources in such a way, UNESCO could maximize its contribution to an increasingly vigorous and complex research field.

32. In conclusion, he noted that 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), was the interaction between traditional and modern technologies and the latter's impact 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, in July 1987) had placed a strong emphasis on the impact of new communication technologies, in particular ARABSAT, the regional satellite currently in operation. UNESCO's draft programme and budget for 1988-1989 also extended that area of research and proposed to investigate such phenomena as the impact of new technologies on press development and freedom and the problems posed by changing technologies in such areas as copyright and circulation of materials. The impact of the new technologies on research methods would constitute a further important field of study; in particular, the monitoring of information flow would need to be supported in future by new audience measurement techniques, since modern communication forms, such as cable and satellite, extended beyond national boundaries. The programme also envisaged a number of regional workshops on communication policy, which would focus on decision-making needs and processes associated with the introduction of new technological forms.

33. Mr. BAALI (Algeria) said that the communication media were assuming growing importance in everyday life and played a prominent role in society, which provided them with unimagined scope for action and pressure on events and people which they could currently influence at will. Such power was all the more formidable in that the media were controlled by a handful of interests which exercised a virtually absolute monopoly over all information production and distribution circuits and were usually motivated by an unbridled quest for profit and geared to satisfying the needs and demands of a certain public avid for cheap sensationalism and exoticism. There was no need to cite detailed statistics in that regard; it sufficed to recall that more than 80 per cent of press reports originated from the four Western agencies which dominated the world market, and that the bulk of newsreel footage was shot by a small number of United States companies. It was precisely in the sphere of communications, in which the constant exchange of ideas and the harmonious coexistence of all views should be upheld in rules of behaviour, that tolerance of the values of others and the plurality of opinions and interests were least apparent. In such conditions, it was easy to understand the justified

(Mr. Baali, Algeria)

disquiet of third world countries, buried by a constant barrage of information conceived in the North, peddling concerns alien to them and to their efforts to organize themselves, despite their limited resources, in order to promote genuinely national information policies in response to the needs and aspirations of their people and to replace that iniquitous information traffic by new rules designed to ensure the participation of all, in justice and equity, in the production and distribution of information. That was the developing countries' basic demand in the field of information and the objective of the new world information and communication order, itself an indissoluble element of the new international economic order.

34. The circumstances in which the international community had unanimously approved the idea of establishing a new world information and communication order were currently being grossly distorted and the new order was suddenly being found to have hidden flaws, unsuspected ills and undeclared intentions. His delegation recalled what the developing countries expected of the new world information and communication order. First of all, the new order should enable them to acquire the infrastructures and technical and human resources that they needed to set up national news agencies and independent information policies. Secondly, it should offer them the means to organize themselves at the regional or continental level through the establishment of continental agencies, such as the Pan-African News Agency, or genuine pools such as that of the non-aligned countries, with a view to promoting the South-South flow of information and exchanges of ideas and experience among developing countries. Thirdly, the developing world expected a qualitative and quantitative change in the coverage of its affairs by the media of the North, which often purveyed only worn-out clichés about the developing countries. In short, the third world expected the establishment of a new world information order to enable the developing countries to catch up with the industrialized world in the information and communications field and to play a full and effective part in the processing and circulation of information. All the other negative intentions attributed to the third world were nothing but fiction. With reference to the special responsibilities of the press, his delegation recalled that article 10, paragraph 1, of the European Convention on Human Rights recognized the freedom of everyone to receive and impart information and ideas, but the following paragraph immediately added that the exercise of those freedoms, since it carried with it duties and responsibilities, might be subject to certain formalities, conditions or sanctions.

35. His delegation welcomed the ambitious action undertaken by the Under-Secretary-General for Public Information to revitalize her Department and enable it to carry out its mandate more effectively. The Committee on Information should be fully associated with the restructuring of the Department in so far as that process could affect the Department's activities and programmes and the way in which the General Assembly's guidelines were implemented. The restructuring should not interfere either directly or indirectly with the priorities and programmes of activity established by the General Assembly. In that respect, his delegation attached the greatest importance to appropriate and complete coverage by the Department of certain questions, such as the decolonization and the self-determination of peoples, and those concerning Namibia, apartheid and

(Mr. Baali, Algeria)

Palestine. The principle of equitable geographical distribution among different world regions must also continue to be scrupulously respected so far as posts in the Department were concerned. His delegation also reaffirmed its attachment to the Department's activities relating to co-operation with the News Agencies Pool of Non-Aligned Countries and third world news agencies, the training of journalists from developing countries and the publication of Development Forum. It also supported strengthening the role and autonomy of United Nations information centres and welcomed the exemplary and tireless efforts of UNESCO and the International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC) to provide the developing countries with the means of communication and establish a new, fairer and more effective world information order.

36. His delegation regretted that the Committee on Information had been unable to reach general agreement in 1987 on its recommendations to the General Assembly. Intransigence, mistrust and the emergence of new demands had prevented the Committee from achieving consensus and forced it to resort to voting. His delegation hoped that the Committee's next session would enable all delegations to unite their efforts and achieve consensus. The impassioned discussions on information in the Special Political Committee showed that the subject aroused general interest and that information was not a simple technical tool to be protected from political and ideological debates. The discussions on information, the restructuring of the Department of Public Information and the establishment of programmes and priorities in the field of information were political acts. In fact, communicating was even more a civilizing act than a political one, and denying third-world countries the right to communicate amounted to denying them their fundamental right to make their contribution to the progressive and tolerant civilized society to which the whole of mankind aspired.

37. Mr. Cissé (Mali), answering the criticisms repeatedly levelled at UNESCO, underlined the fundamental role that the organization could play in disseminating information, ideas and knowledge on behalf of developing countries constantly confronted by manifold difficulties. Forced to choose between priorities each more absolute than the next, the Governments of those countries could be reduced to considering the cultural sphere a luxury. The help that UNESCO could give them in that sphere was therefore of prime importance. For nearly a decade, the developing countries had been urging that the imbalances from which the international flow of information suffered should be put right. The lack of objectivity of information media that portrayed a world characterized on the one hand by civilization, wealth and a monopoly of democracy, intelligence, knowledge and ability, and on the other by poverty, immaturity, ignorance and inability to master technological progress, was aggravating the lack of understanding prevailing in North-South relations. The importance attributed by developing countries to questions relating to information was therefore understandable. Their concern arose from their wish to achieve the establishment of a new information order incorporating the methods, means and instruments that were really the common heritage of mankind. However, the Manila Declaration of 29 March 1982 had indicated that, to be effective, science and technology must be interwoven in the cultural fabric of society, and their applications must be available to, and accepted by, the nation as a whole. Respect for differences was therefore essential.

(Mr. Cissé, Mali)

38. Referring to the report of the Director-General of UNESCO (A/42/571), he thanked countries which were making contributions to IPDC. That Programme, which was helping developing countries to acquire the infrastructures and the technical and human resources that they needed, proved that UNESCO could play a vital role in setting up a new information and communication order inseparable from the establishment of a new international economic order as an essential condition for achieving real international understanding and strengthening peace.

39. As for the follow-up to the recommendations made in General Assembly resolution 41/68 A, commendable efforts had been made by the Department of Public Information to establish, in particular, genuine co-operation with the News Agencies Pool of Non-Aligned Countries and the national news agencies of developing countries. However, it was regrettable that, as a result of budgetary restrictions, the programme of fellowships for educators and education officials had been suspended, and that the seminar intended to familiarize the news agencies of developing countries with modern technology had been cancelled together with the publication of training manuals for the training centres of the News Agencies Pool of Non-Aligned Countries. Since co-operation was bound up with making the best use of human resources, financial constraints could not justify cancelling those activities in such a strategic area as training. His delegation therefore wanted the decisions reviewed. It was by helping to ensure the development of human resources that the United Nations would meet the expectations of Member States, especially in the information field.

40. Mr. AGUILAR-HECHT (Guatemala) stressed the importance of informed public opinion for the United Nations in its pursuit of the purposes set out in Article 1 of the Charter. As the Secretary-General had pointed out at the opening of the ninth session of the Committee on Information, the role of the United Nations in maintaining peace and security needed to be better understood, together with the reasons why the possibilities that it offered had not been fully utilized. Member States might be better disposed to support the Organization if they felt that the weight of national and international public opinion were fairly and squarely behind it.

41. The Department of Public Information was responsible, on the basis of recommendations made by the Committee on Information and in implementation of various General Assembly resolutions, in particular resolution 35/201 of 16 December 1980, for disseminating information on all United Nations programmes and activities in all fields, including peace-keeping operations and the disarmament campaign. It was also responsible for drawing attention to the efforts of the developing countries in the economic, social, humanitarian and political spheres and to the urgent need for the establishment of the new international economic order and the new world information and communication order. The need to put a swift end to the dependent status of the developing countries in that area made the collaboration of the United Nations essential to help them acquire the appropriate infrastructure. To that end there should be a strengthening of the collaboration initiated between the Department of Public Information and UNESCO. Activities such as the second Round Table held in Copenhagen on the new world information order had had tangible results and the third Round Table promised further progress in that area.

(Mr. Aguilar-Hecht, Guatemala)

42. As the recommendations of the Committee on Information guided the activities of the Department of Public Information, it was important to take the views of all States into account. General Assembly resolution 41/68 A, adopted almost unanimously, had shown that it was possible to bring about a rapprochement and reach agreement on a series of recommendations. That spirit of compromise had, unfortunately, not prevailed at the Committee's substantive session. Document A/AC.198/L.37, submitted by the Chairman of the Committee, did not adequately reflect the legitimate aspirations of the developing countries. The amendments proposed by the Group of 77 in document A/AC.198/L.38, based entirely on the provisions of resolution 41/68 A and incorporating many suggestions formulated by other regional groups and China, had not been approved. The Chairman of the Committee and the members of other regional groups had stated that the recommendations in document A/AC.198/L.37 were not negotiable. The Guatemalan Government hoped that it would be possible to remedy that situation at the current session and to provide the necessary impetus to boost the Department's efficiency and productivity. It was confident that the restructuring process described by the Under-Secretary-General for Public Information would be carried out prudently, so that the Department could continue to carry out its mandates. It was particularly important to maintain and, of course, improve programmes such as that on the introduction of the new information and communication order and that on the development of States, founded on social justice, equity, equality and social, economic and cultural progress, and the training programme for broadcasters and journalists from developing countries. The financial crisis should not serve as a pretext for curtailing certain activities coming within the Department's terms of reference.

43. Guatemala supported efforts to boost the Department's productivity by using the latest advances in science and technology.

44. Mr. POLICHTCHOUK (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) said that his Government wished to see effective and unhurried examination of the questions relating to international co-operation in the field of information and communication. The potential of the communication media was growing all the time owing to advances in technology and the mass-circulation press had the power either to exacerbate confrontation and distrust between peoples or to foster a climate of trust among peoples and States. New political thinking on international relations, which had originated in the Soviet Union, held that divergences in ideological and political views should give way to mankind's main problems and common values. Means of communication should be put at the service of the lofty ideals of mankind and of joint efforts to introduce a system of global security. Propaganda based on war or on racial, national or religious intolerance must be banned. The Great October Revolution, which was celebrating its seventieth anniversary, had transformed the face of the earth and was a milestone in the defence of humanitarian values. So as to improve the climate of trust between peoples, a world information programme could be implemented under United Nations auspices which would enable peoples to become more aware of the way of life in other countries and would provide for the free flow of information. The discussions at the current session confirmed the need to establish a new world information and

(Mr. Polichtchouk, Ukrainian SSR)

communication order and to take measures to restructure international relations in the field of information, taking into account the legitimate interests of the developing countries. Most peoples favoured such a restructuring, and that was why his delegation fully supported the final document of the second Conference of Ministers of Information of Non-Aligned Countries, held in Harare in June 1987. Within the framework of such restructuring, UNESCO and IPDC had an important role to play, although certain political groups were trying to hinder those activities by subjecting UNESCO to blackmail and pressure.

45. As to the Department of Public Information, his delegation supported the restructuring undertaken in order to improve its efficiency, but had a few comments to make in that regard. The new structure did not fully correspond with the recommendations of the General Assembly and the Group of 18 regarding economy and rationalization. The number of services in the Department had been increased from five to seven and were headed by senior officials, the number of whom should, on the contrary, be reduced pursuant to the decisions of the General Assembly. His delegation had doubts regarding the creation of the Bureau of Programme Operations, which might form a barrier between the Under-Secretary-General and the other services. His delegation also had objections regarding the separation of the functions of information dissemination and the information centres, which should not be separated from the management of the Department.

46. Restructuring should scrupulously respect the principle of geographical distribution and the socialist countries should have the appropriate number of posts allocated to them. Reduction of the number of posts should not affect the countries already represented in the Department; for example, his country had already lost one post in the Department on account of the freeze. When continuing its restructuring, the Department should give a high profile to priority activities defined in General Assembly resolutions as well as to information in printed form, particularly the UN Chronicle, the publication of which should continue. The conclusions in the documents before the Committee could provide a basis for drafting resolutions designed to improve United Nations activities in the information field and to strengthen the climate of mutual trust and understanding between States.

The meeting rose at 12.40 p.m.