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REQUEST FOR THE INCLUSION OF AN ADDITIONAL ITEM IN THE
AGENDA OF THE FIFTY-FIRST SESSION

PROCLAMATION OF 21 NOVEMBER AS WORLD TELEVISION DAY

Letter dated 5 December 1996 from the Permanent Representative of
Italy to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon instructions from my Government, I have the honour to request, in accordance with rule 15 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, the inclusion in the agenda of the fifty-first session of the General Assembly of an additional item entitled "Proclamation of 21 November as World Television Day".

In accordance with rule 20 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, an explanatory memorandum and a draft resolution are annexed to the present letter. We have the honour to request that the item be considered in plenary meeting.

I further have the honour to request that the present letter be circulated as a document of the General Assembly.

(Signed) F. Paolo FULCI

ANNEX I

Explanatory memorandum

On 21 and 22 November 1996, the first World Television Forum was held at the United Nations. During the event, leading media figures from around the globe, representing more than 50 countries, met under the auspices of the United Nations to discuss the growing significance of television in today's changing world and to consider how they might enhance their future cooperation.

The representatives of the broadcasters - both private and public - who attended the event discussed at length the increasing impact television has on decision-making by alerting world attention to international conflicts and threats to peace and security and its potential role in sharpening the focus on other major issues, including economic, social and cultural issues, and in promoting understanding among peoples.

It was also recognized that the United Nations itself faces increasing demands to address the major issues facing mankind and that television, as one of today's most powerful communications media, could play a role in presenting those issues to the public. Other topics discussed were the opportunities of the current technological revolution in communications, which vastly increases possibilities of cultural exchange, the role of both private and public broadcasters in providing information on global events and the possibility for the United Nations system to strengthen its partnerships with the media, thereby ensuring the capacity of its organizations to better reach the general public and also reinforcing their links to civil society.

During the World Television Forum, broadcasters supported the idea of establishing an annual World Television Day, to be celebrated each 21 November. This special day would be marked by global exchanges of television programmes focusing in particular on such issues as peace and security, economic and social development and the enhancement of cultural exchange.

As a consequence, it would seem appropriate for the General Assembly to give formal recognition to a day on which special attention would be devoted, by broadcasters all around the world, to the critical issues the international community is facing today.

ANNEX II

Draft resolution

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 13 (I) of 1 February 1946, in which it stated, inter alia, that the United Nations cannot achieve its purposes unless the peoples of the world are fully informed of its aims and activities,

Recalling also its resolutions concerning information in service of humanity and United Nations public information policies and activities,

Reaffirming its commitment to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, and in particular to the principles of freedom of information, as well as to those of the independence, pluralism and diversity of the media,

Underlining that communications have become one of today's central international issues, not only for its relevance for the world economy, but also for its implications for social and cultural development,

Recognizing the increasing impact television has on decision-making by alerting world attention to conflicts and threats to peace and security and its potential role in sharpening the focus on other major issues, including economic and social issues,

Underlining that the United Nations faces ever-increasing demands to address the major issues facing humankind, and that television, as one of today's most powerful communications media, could play a role in presenting these issues to the world,

Noting with satisfaction the holding at the United Nations on 21 and 22 November 1996 of the first World Television Forum, when leading media figures met under the auspices of the United Nations to discuss the growing significance of television in today's changing world and to consider how they might enhance their mutual cooperation,

1. Decides to proclaim 21 November World Television Day, commemorating the date on which the first World Television Forum was held;

2. Invites all Member States to observe World Television Day by encouraging global exchanges of television programmes focusing, among other things, on such issues as peace, security, economic and social development and the enhancement of cultural exchange;

3. Requests the Secretary-General to bring the present resolution to the attention of all Governments and appropriate non-governmental organizations.
