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QUESTIONS RELATING TO INFORMATION

Report of the Secretary-General

1. In its resolution 35/201 of 16 December 1980, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report to it at its thirty-sixth session on the implementation of that resolution. Within the resolution, there are also specific matters on which the Secretary-General was requested to report to the Assembly. The present report covers both requests contained in the resolution. In several instances, the Secretary-General was asked to report to the Committee on Information on various aspects of the work of the Department of Public Information.
2. The following documents related to topics covered by resolution 35/201 were submitted to the Committee on Information at its substantive session, held from 27 April to 15 May, and on 30 May and 26 August 1981:
 - (a) Over-all plan on the system of the United Nations information centres, focusing on the evolving relations between the Department of Public Information at Headquarters and the Centres (A/AC.198/33);
 - (b) Review of the regional structure of the Radio and Visual Services Division of the Department of Public Information:
 - (i) Plan for regionalization of the Radio and Visual Services Division (A/AC.198/34);
 - (ii) Strengthening and improvement of the regional structure in the Radio Service of the Department of Public Information (A/AC.198/35);
 - (c) Increases in the number of short-wave broadcasts of the United Nations (A/AC.198/36);

(d) Improvement and strengthening of United Nations interagency co-operation and co-ordination in the field of information (A/AC.198/37 and Add.1 and 2);

(e) Co-operation between the Department of Public Information and international and regional news organizations (A/AC.198/38);

(f) Participation by Economic and Social Council in the utilization of satellites for television broadcasting of United Nations programmes (A/AC.198/39);

(g) Training of journalists and broadcasters from developing countries (A/AC.198/40);

3. These reports are reflected in the report of the Committee on Information to the General Assembly. ^{1/} The present report therefore avoids repetition of the contents of the reports submitted to the Committee on Information. This report deals mainly with the following aspects of General Assembly resolution 35/201:

(a) Those aspects of the resolution that were not directly dealt with by the Committee on Information;

(b) Those aspects of the resolution upon which the Secretary-General was specifically requested to report to the General Assembly at its thirty-sixth session;

(c) Paragraphs in the resolution in which there is information bringing up to date the reports which were submitted to the Committee on Information.

4. The present report also meets the request to the Secretary-General contained in section III, paragraph 2, of resolution 35/201, "to implement the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Group of the Committee on Information, as approved by the Committee in its report, and to report on the progress achieved to the General Assembly at its thirty-sixth session".

5. In section III, paragraph 3, of General Assembly resolution 35/201, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General "to take urgent measures to redress the present geographical imbalance in the staff of the Department of Public Information in order to ensure equitable participation of personnel from all countries, especially from the developing countries, particularly in posts at the senior and decision-making levels, in accordance with Article 101, paragraph 3, of the Charter of the United Nations, and to submit a progress report thereon to the General Assembly at its thirty-sixth session".

6. It was brought to the attention of the Committee on Information at its 1981 session that personnel questions were normally examined in the Fifth Committee, which makes pertinent recommendations to the General Assembly.

^{1/} Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 21 (A/36/21).

The geographical distribution of the staff has been the subject of detailed directives of the General Assembly to the Secretary-General, the latest of which was contained in its resolution 35/201 of 16 December 1980. The last report of the Secretary-General on the composition of the Secretariat (A/35/528) gave the distribution of the staff in posts subject to geographical distribution as of 30 June 1980, and the report on the subject this year will give the position as of 30 June 1981.

7. The distribution, by region, of those members of the staff of the Department of Public Information whose posts were among those subject to geographical distribution, as stated in the last five reports of the Secretary-General, covering the period 1976 to 1980, show progress towards improved geographical balance, although this may have been somewhat uneven. To illustrate, the following changes took place between 1976 and 1980, as measured against the regional mid-points in percentage terms:

Region	Mid-point	Change			
		All posts		P-5 and above	
		1980	1976	1980	1976
Africa	13.5	11.1	8.7	12.5	8.2
Asia and the Pacific	18.1	14.1	14.1	14.3	14.3
Europe (eastern)	13.2	11.1	12.5	12.5	14.3
Europe (western)	22.8	21.1	22.3	25.0	24.5
Latin America	7.7	7.0	7.1	8.9	10.2
Middle East	5.5	5.5	3.2	5.4	2.0
North America and the Caribbean	19.2	30.1	32.1	21.4	26.5
		<u>100.0</u>	<u>100.0</u>	<u>100.0</u>	<u>100.0</u>
Group of 77	36.1	28.1	21.2	32.1	20.4
Others	63.9	71.9	78.8	67.9	79.6
		<u>100.0</u>	<u>100.0</u>	<u>100.0</u>	<u>100.0</u>

8. These figures indicate an appreciable move in the period concerned towards a more balanced regional distribution of nationals of the developing countries as compared with those of developed countries, particularly at the more senior levels, where there are only four percentage points between the regional mid-points and the actual percentage in 1980.

9. One notable development in the Department of Public Information, consequent on the decision to establish an anti-apartheid section in the Radio Service, was the appointment of a number of nationals of States in southern Africa, which will considerably increase the representation of African countries.

Balance in the use of official and other languages

10. In section III, paragraph 8, of resolution 35/201, the Secretary-General was requested "to take immediately the necessary measures to ensure balance in the use of official languages in the publications and programmes of the Department of Public Information and to strengthen the effectiveness of the adaptation unit established for this purpose so that the best use is made of the resources for informing the public about the United Nations activities".

11. Continuing efforts have been made towards achieving balance in the use of official languages in the publications programme of the Department.

12. All requests from the Information Centres for basic United Nations documentation (in public information format) have been met, whether in official or non-official languages. The last edition of Basic Facts was published in Arabic, English, French, Spanish, Japanese, Burmese, Urdu and the Scandinavian languages. The next edition will be issued in Russian as well. The latest edition of UN in Brief was issued in 13 languages; the forthcoming edition will be published in 24 languages.

13. Two publications on decolonization and one on disarmament are being published in Russian as well. The Strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade is being published (in public information format) in all official languages. As for expansion in regional languages, a budgetary allocation has been made for a publication in Swahili, to be selected by the United Nations Information Centre in Dar es Salaam.

14. The UN Chronicle is now being issued in Arabic, English, French and Spanish. The adaptation unit has been strengthened through the addition of a Russian writer/adaptor, as authorized by the General Assembly. The resources of the unit are being employed to the greatest extent possible to speed up the preparation of adapted or translated versions of publications.

15. The publication United Nations Today (Suggestions for Speakers), which is widely used as reference material by schools, universities and non-governmental organizations throughout the world, is printed in all official languages as well as in a number of other languages widely used by Member States.

16. The annual Graduate Student Intern Programme has increased the number of its participants from developing countries. The programme has been conducted in English but it will also be conducted in French beginning in 1982.

Working space and facilities for journalists at Headquarters

17. In section III, paragraph 10 (g), of resolution 35/201, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to take the necessary measures to ensure that adequate facilities should be made available, to the extent possible within existing resources, to journalists, particularly those from developing countries, during the sessions of the General Assembly.
18. The Department of Public Information is in the process of reviewing facilities available for the press. This includes working space, press facilities and seating in the General Assembly. Within the limits of space and available funds, every effort will be made to make these facilities as suitable as possible. In keeping with the resolution, particular attention will be given to the needs of journalists from developing countries.
19. In section III, paragraph 10 (h) of the resolution, the Secretary-General was requested to take the necessary measures to allot permanent working space equitably at United Nations Headquarters to representatives of news media, giving special attention to the needs of those from the developing countries.
20. The question of office, desk and working space at Headquarters for the press is extremely difficult. The task of the Secretary-General is continuously to fit an increasing number of people into a fixed space. There is a lengthening waiting list of accredited correspondents - several of which are from developing countries - who need working space. In the absence of new space, these needs can be met only when space is vacated. This happens rarely. As a result, the space needs of some qualified applicants have not been met.
21. In keeping with the resolution, whenever space has been available, preference has been given to media representatives from developing countries.

Contacts with non-governmental organizations and educational groups

22. The Working Group of the Committee on Information noted that public information materials on United Nations issues should be directed to non-governmental organizations and educational groups and that "timely in-depth background information material should be prepared for these and other groups". ^{2/}
23. Increased activities have been undertaken to promote teaching about the United Nations in schools and teacher-training institutions of Member States by bringing together in various regions policy planners and specialists in curriculum development through the United Nations Fellowship Programme for Educators. Teaching aids such as the annual United Nations Day Student Leaflet continue to be published in English, French and Spanish at Headquarters. This publication has been translated and reproduced in nine other languages.

^{2/} Ibid., Thirty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 21 (A/35/21), para. 77, sect. A, para. 1 (h).

24. A new initiative this year will be the publication of a collection of 26 exemplary teaching units (comprising the best projects by participants in the Fellowship Programme for Educators) about the United Nations, which may be adapted for use by classes on various subjects and at all levels from pre-school to teacher training. It will be printed initially in English (in 15,000 copies) and later in French and Spanish. This project was undertaken in consultation with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and other organizations of the United Nations system.

25. The Department of Public Information services over 700 representatives of 364 non-governmental organizations (NGOs) at Headquarters and communicates with an additional 2,342 through the information centres. Efforts are continuing to associate NGOs in the field through the information centres. So far there are 81 in New Delhi and others in the Philippines, Thailand and Colombia.

26. Non-governmental organizations associated with the Department of Public Information of the United Nations Secretariat are reached through:

(a) Regular weekly briefings at Headquarters, which are given by representatives and senior Secretariat staff. The briefings cover such topics as human rights, disarmament, decolonization, development, peace-keeping, the struggle against racial discrimination, the new international economic order, and a new world information and communication order;

(b) Conferences on subjects of special importance to the United Nations. The 1980 annual NGO conference was devoted to the theme "The Arms Race and the Human Race" and drew over 500 NGOs from 35 countries. At a recent annual conference (8-10 September 1981), the theme was "Energy: Development and Survival";

(c) Special meetings and programmes. A meeting on disarmament and development was held in October to launch Disarmament Week 1980. On 26 March 1981, a programme on "South African Women and Labour under Apartheid" was organized and was attended by over 350 persons. A decolonization meeting to mark the Week of Solidarity with the Colonial Peoples of Southern Africa was held on 28 May 1981;

(d) The dissemination of documents, press releases and other information material to NGOs for redissemination in publications, speeches, conferences, seminars and meetings.

New United Nations Information Centres

27. In section III, paragraph 6 (a), of General Assembly resolution 35/201, the Secretary-General was requested to improve "the network of information centres by reviewing their functions and role in the structure of the Department of Public Information and by establishing, to the extent possible within existing resources, new centres, where deemed necessary, in particular one in Zimbabwe and one in Bangladesh, taking into account, inter alia, the need to ensure regional balance".

28. As already indicated, the report was submitted to the Committee on Information on the Question of Information Centres. The Committee's report addresses itself on the question.

29. A United Nations Information Centre was established in Dacca, Bangladesh, in August 1981. The Director of the new centre is already in Dacca. Preparations for the establishment of a centre in Salisbury (Zimbabwe) are in their final stages. Negotiations have also begun between the Department of Public Information and the Government of Panama for the establishment of an information centre in Panama.

Use of United Nations radio broadcasts to southern Africa by Member States

30. In section III, paragraph 11, of resolution 35/201, the Secretary-General was requested "to explore the possibility of increasing the number of United Nations radio broadcasts to southern Africa by utilizing the facilities of more Member States".

31. In 1980, it was reported that United Nations radio programmes for southern Africa were being broadcast in full by 13 national broadcasting organizations, while nine additional broadcasting organizations used the material in their own programmes (A/35/504, para. 63).

32. The Department of Public Information has been exploring the possibility of increasing the number of radio stations which broadcast the anti-apartheid programmes. Radio Madagascar is now broadcasting the programmes in six languages (English, Afrikaans, Zulu, Xhosa, Sesotho and Stswana) on a daily basis. Zimbabwe Broadcasting Services broadcasts the programmes in English only. Radio Mozambique will soon broadcast the programmes daily in English.

33. A total of 22 radio stations all over the world make use of the programmes. Twelve of them broadcast the programmes as received from United Nations Radio. These are: Botswana (English); Egypt (English and Xhosa); Guinea (English); Lesotho (English and Sesotho); Madagascar (all six languages); Nigeria (English, Afrikaans, Sesotho and Xhosa); Swaziland (English and Zulu); United Republic of Tanzania (all six languages); Zambia (all six languages); and Zimbabwe (English).

34. Ten stations use excerpts of the programmes for their own local productions as follows: BRT, Belgium (English); Radio Peking, China (English and Xhosa); Czechoslovak Radio (English); Internationale Verbindungen Staatliches Komitee für Rundfunk, German Democratic Republic (English); Radio France International (English); Magyar Radio, Hungary (English); Polskie Radio, Poland (English); Voice of America, United States of America (English); Radio Moscow, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (English); Radio Vatican, Holy See (English).

Short-wave broadcasts by the United Nations using its own facilities and frequencies

35. In section III, paragraph 10 (c), of resolution 35/201, the Secretary-General was requested "to prepare on an urgent basis, for consideration by the Committee on Information, the technical, financial and legal studies regarding international short-wave broadcasts by the United Nations using its own facilities and frequencies".

36. It was reported that these studies would be undertaken by consultants and that specific proposals would be submitted to the Committee on Information in 1981 (A/35/504, para. 27). Unfortunately, the studies were not ready in time for the 1981 sessions of the Committee.

37. The studies requested by the General Assembly are now under preparation and will be presented to the Committee on Information at its next substantive session.

United Nations frequency modulation broadcasts in the Headquarters area

38. In section III, paragraph 10 (d), of resolution 35/201, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to take the necessary measures "to clarify, as a matter of urgency, with the host country the legal questions concerned with the proposal to introduce frequency modulation broadcasts by the United Nations in the Headquarters area, and to submit a report to the Committee on Information, including a detailed study on the technical and financial aspects of the question".

39. The detailed study called for in the resolution is under preparation and will be submitted to the Committee on Information at its next substantive session, together with legal clarifications, as requested.

Television programmes in Spanish

40. In section III, paragraph 10 (j), of resolution 35/201, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to take the necessary measures "to initiate the production of television programmes in Spanish".

41. The recruitment of a television producer from Latin America is under way and the production of weekly magazines for Spanish-language audiences is to be produced on a weekly basis, beginning with the 1981 session of the General Assembly.

Television equipment for Geneva

42. In section III, paragraph 10 (e), of resolution 35/201, the Secretary-General was requested to take the necessary measures "to provide the Information Service at Geneva with the equipment necessary for the electronic recording and dissemination of visual information on United Nations activities, as far as possible from within existing resources".

43. The Secretary-General has determined that additional resources are necessary to implement this part of the resolution. Consequently, a request for additional resources for this purpose has to be included in the Secretary-General's proposed programme budget for 1982-1983. ^{3/} If the General Assembly approves the request, the United Nations Information Service in Geneva will be able to provide electronic coverage of United Nations activities and distribute the material to broadcasting stations during 1982.

^{3/} Ibid., Thirty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 6 (A/36/6).

Co-operation and support to the International Programme for the Development of Communications

44. In section I, paragraph 5, of resolution 35/201, the Secretary-General was called upon to render full co-operation and support to the International Programme for the Development of Communication and to seek and encourage interagency co-operation and the participation of the agencies in the activities of the Programme and its Intergovernmental Council.

45. At the invitation of UNESCO, the United Nations sent a representative to the first session of the Inter-Agency Working Group on the Programme (Paris, 31 March-2 April 1981) and to the first session of the Intergovernmental Council for the Programme (Paris, 15-22 June 1981).

46. At the first session of the Inter-Agency Working Group, the following organizations were represented: United Nations, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), International Telecommunications Union (ITU), Universal Postal Union (UPU), World Bank, World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). Besides the United Nations and UNESCO, the following were represented at the first session of the Intergovernmental Council: ITU, UPU, World Bank, UNDP and UNCTAD. During the session of the Intergovernmental Council, the Inter-Agency Working Group was convened to discuss ways and means of organizing input from various agencies for the Programme.

47. A second session of the Intergovernmental Council is scheduled to be held in Mexico in November. The Department of Public Information will send a representative to the meeting on behalf of the United Nations.

48. A progress report on the Programme will undoubtedly be included in the report of the Director-General of UNESCO to the General Assembly.

49. The Secretary-General is gratified by the progress made so far and will continue to give active support and encouragement to UNESCO and the Programme in this respect.

50. The question of co-operation and co-ordination between the United Nations and UNESCO with respect to the new world information and communication order is dealt with in the report of the Committee on Information. 4/

Joint United Nations Information Committee

51. In section II, paragraph 6, of resolution 35/201, the General Assembly expressed "appreciation to the Joint United Nations Information Committee for its efforts towards improving co-ordination of the public information activities of the various organizations of the United Nations system", and called upon JUNIC "further

4/ Ibid., Supplement No. 21 (A/36/21), chap. III, sect. C.

to improve and strengthen such co-operation and co-ordination by reporting through the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination to the Committee on Information regarding the extent of and prospects for such co-operation and co-ordination".

52. Besides its ongoing co-ordination work throughout the period under consideration and follow-up activities regarding the implementation of joint projects, JUNIC held its eighth regular session in Tokyo at the headquarters of the United Nations University from 3 to 6 February 1981 and a special session in Geneva from 8 to 10 July 1981. JUNIC Task Forces such as the ones on the United Nations Conference on New and Renewable Sources of Energy, the International Year of Disabled Persons and the United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries also met regularly to plan and co-ordinate the implementation of joint related activities undertaken by the organizations of the United Nations system. An Ad Hoc Working Group on Development Support Communication was also established. JUNIC will present a report to ACC at its spring session in 1982.

53. As part of the contribution of JUNIC to the promotion of the establishment of a new world information and communication order, and in accordance with the guidelines established by the Committee on Information in 1980, JUNIC is now increasingly action-oriented and is strengthening its role from mere co-operation planning to joint action. Among new examples of concrete joint action envisaged by JUNIC members in the near future, the following are worth mentioning in particular:

- (a) The training of journalists from developing countries;
- (b) Increased emphasis on Development Support Communication;
- (c) Wider use of "stringers";
- (d) The establishment of a joint feature service;
- (e) A system for the exchange of information staff among organizations of the United Nations system.

54. The Secretary-General wishes it to be noted that JUNIC members have many times expressed their concern at the deterioration of the image of and the erosion of support for, the United Nations and its system of organizations. In 1980 and 1981, JUNIC has been involved in preparing for ACC a comprehensive report on these issues, which were the object of extensive discussion at the eighth session of JUNIC in Tokyo. A JUNIC Ad Hoc Working Group, presided over by the Chairman of JUNIC, met in April 1981 at the United Nations Headquarters to draft a preliminary report, which was taken up by JUNIC itself at its special session in July 1981 in Geneva. The JUNIC secretariat is now completing the report, which will be presented to ACC at its forthcoming session.

55. In its efforts to improve and strengthen co-operation and co-ordination between the various United Nations bodies in the field of information, JUNIC also continued to promote and co-ordinate joint projects for major events taking place in 1981: audio-visual matters, development education, activities of the Non-Governmental Liaison Services and Development Forum. Detailed reports on these

matters were submitted to the Committee on Information during its substantive session in 1981 and are reflected in the Committee's report to the General Assembly. ^{1/} A separate section on Development Forum is included in the present report (see paragraphs 58-60, below).

56. Fourteen JUNIC members took part in the discussions in the Committee on Information.

Development Forum

57. In section II, paragraph 11, of resolution 35/201, the General Assembly reaffirmed the importance of the role played by Development Forum and its decision that continued publication of that periodical as an interagency project was essential. The Secretary-General was requested to continue his review of its financial status, to continue to seek to ensure long-term financial support for the publication from the organizations of the United Nations system, and to report on this subject to the Committee on Information at its next session.

58. JUNIC presented its report (A/AC.198/37 and Add.1 and 2) to the Committee on Information, outlining the latest developments concerning the general edition of Development Forum and giving the preliminary budget estimates for the 1982-1983 biennium, as well as a preliminary forecast of income for 1982-1983. In its conclusions, JUNIC stated that a renewed expression by the Committee on Information of long-term financial support for Development Forum was essential if the publication was to continue to break new ground in the debate on global issues, using communication to help shape the future.

59. The report of the Committee on Information to the General Assembly contains, inter alia, specific recommendations on Development Forum. ^{5/}

Programme for journalists and broadcasters

60. In section III, paragraph 9, of resolution 35/201, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General "to initiate, as early as possible, in-service training programmes, ranging from two to four months, for journalists and broadcasters from developing countries, as envisaged in his report to the General Assembly, designed to benefit the maximum number possible of such persons, to coincide to the maximum extent possible with the sessions of the General Assembly".

61. The Committee on Information discussed the programme during its substantive session in May 1981 and welcomed its early implementation. This is reflected in the report of the Committee to the General Assembly.

62. The 1981 Programme for Journalists and Broadcasters from Developing Countries included 19 journalists and broadcasters from Bangladesh, China, Congo, Democratic Yemen, Ecuador, Egypt, Jamaica, Kenya, Morocco, Nigeria, Peru, Suriname, United

^{5/} Ibid., chap. IV, para. 26.

Republic of Tanzania, and Upper Volta, five participants nominated by the Pool of Non-Aligned News Agencies (Madagascar, Nicaragua, Syrian Arab Republic, Viet Nam and Zimbabwe), and one participant nominated by the Pan-African News Agency (Madagascar).

63. The eight-week programme, which began on 8 September 1981, has three components:

(a) In-service professional work assignments in the Department of Public Information and in other United Nations programmes;

(b) Briefings by officials of permanent missions, the Secretariat, specialized agencies, United Nations bodies and others on issues of priority concern to the United Nations system;

(c) Coverage of United Nations meetings, press conferences and activities by the programme participants, serving as temporary United Nations correspondents for their respective media organizations.

64. The Programme participants took part in a day-long seminar at the World Bank/IMF on 17 September 1981. They also held discussions with officials of UNDP, the United Nations Children's Fund and the United Nations Fund for Population Activities at United Nations Headquarters.

65. Visits have been arranged with journalists and broadcasters from developed countries for exchange of views with professional media representatives on the principles and objectives of a new world information order. They will also observe different practical and technical means of news gathering and news reporting.
