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Committee on Information

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Draft report of the Committee on Information

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* To be issued in A/AC.198/1998/L.1/Add.1.

I. Introduction

1. At its thirty-fourth session, the General Assembly decided to maintain the Committee to Review United Nations Public Information Policies and Activities, established under Assembly resolution 33/115 C of 18 December 1978, which would be known as the Committee on Information, and to increase its membership from 41 to 66. In paragraph 2 of section II of its resolution 34/182 of 18 December 1979, the Assembly requested the Committee on Information:

“(a) To continue to examine United Nations public information policies and activities, in the light of the evolution of international relations, particularly during the past two decades, and of the imperatives of the establishment of the new international economic order and of a new world information and communication order;

“(b) To evaluate and follow up the efforts made and the progress achieved by the United Nations system in the field of information and communications;

“(c) To promote the establishment of a new, more just and more effective world information and communication order intended to strengthen peace and international understanding and based on the free circulation and wider and better balanced dissemination of information and to make recommendations thereon to the General Assembly;”

and requested the Committee on Information and the Secretary-General to report to the Assembly at its thirty-fifth session.

2. At its thirty-fifth session, the General Assembly, in resolution 35/201 of 16 December 1980, expressed its satisfaction with the work of the Committee on Information, approved the report of the Committee and the recommendations of its Ad Hoc Working Group,¹ reaffirmed the mandate given to the Committee in Assembly resolution 34/182, and decided to increase the membership of the Committee from 66 to 67 members. The Committee on Information agreed, at its organizational session in 1980, that the principle of geographical rotation would be applied to all the officers of the Committee and that they should be elected for two-year terms of office.

3. At its thirty-sixth to fifty-first sessions, the General Assembly again expressed its satisfaction with the work of the Committee on Information, approved the reports of the Committee² and its recommendations, and reaffirmed the mandate given to the Committee in resolution 34/182 (General Assembly resolutions 36/149 B, 37/94 B, 38/82 B,

39/98 A, 40/164 A, 41/68 A, 42/162, 43/60, 44/50, 45/76, 46/73 B, 47/73 B, 48/44 B, 49/38 B, 50/31 B, and 51/138 B. At its fifty-second session, the Assembly took note of the report of the Committee³ and adopted its consensus recommendations (52/70 A and B of 10 December 1997). The Assembly further requested the Committee to report to it at its fifty-third session.

4. At its thirty-ninth session, the General Assembly appointed two new members of the Committee, namely China and Mexico; at its forty-first session the Assembly appointed Malta as a new member of the Committee; at its forty-third session, Hungary, Ireland and Zimbabwe were appointed; and at its forty-fourth session, the Assembly appointed Nepal a new member.

5. At its forty-fifth session, the General Assembly decided, on the recommendation of the Committee on Information, to increase the membership of the Committee from 74 to 78 members, and appointed Czechoslovakia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Jamaica and Uruguay members of the Committee. The General Assembly also decided on the appointment of the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic as a member of the Committee on Information, with immediate effect, to fill the vacancy left by the German Democratic Republic.

6. At its forty-sixth session, the General Assembly decided, on the recommendation of the Committee, to increase the membership of the Committee from 78 to 79 members, and appointed Burkina Faso a member of the Committee.

7. At its forty-seventh session, the General Assembly decided, on the recommendation of the Committee, to increase the membership of the Committee from 79 to 81 members, and appointed the Republic of Korea and Senegal members of the Committee.

8. At its forty-eighth session, the General Assembly decided, on the recommendation of the Committee, to increase the membership of the Committee from 81 to 83 members, and appointed Gabon and Israel members of the Committee.

9. At its forty-ninth session, the General Assembly decided to increase the membership of the Committee on Information from 83 to 88 members, and decided to appoint Belize, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Kazakhstan and South Africa members of the Committee.

10. At its fiftieth session the General Assembly decided, on the recommendation of the Committee, to increase the membership from 88 to 89 members, and appointed the Democratic People's Republic of Korea a member of the Committee.

11. At its fifty-second session, the General Assembly decided, on the recommendation of the Committee, to increase the membership of the Committee from 89 to 90 members, and to appoint Georgia a member of the Committee.

12. The Committee is composed of the following Member States:

Algeria	France	Poland
Argentina	Gabon	Portugal
Bangladesh	Georgia	Republic
Belarus	Germany	of Korea
Belgium	Ghana	Romania
Belize	Greece	Russian Federation
Benin	Guatemala	Senegal
Brazil	Guinea	Singapore
Bulgaria	Guyana	Slovakia
Burkina Faso	Hungary	Somalia
Burundi	India	South Africa
Chile	Indonesia	Spain
China	Iran (Islamic	Sri Lanka
Colombia	Republic of)	Sudan
Congo	Ireland	Syrian Arab
Costa Rica	Israel	Republic
Côte d'Ivoire	Italy	Togo
Croatia	Jamaica	Trinidad and
Cuba	Japan	Tobago
Cyprus	Jordan	Tunisia
Czech Republic	Kazakhstan	Turkey
Democratic People's	Kenya	Ukraine
Republic of Korea	Lebanon	United Kingdom of
Democratic Republic	Malta	Great Britain and
of the Congo	Mexico	Northern Ireland
Denmark	Mongolia	United Republic of
Ecuador	Morocco	Tanzania
Egypt	Nepal	United States of
El Salvador	Netherlands	America
Ethiopia	Niger	Uruguay
Finland	Nigeria	Venezuela
	Pakistan	Viet Nam
	Peru	Yemen
	Philippines	Yugoslavia
		Zimbabwe

II. Organizational questions

A. Opening of the session

13. The organizational meeting of the twentieth session of the Committee on Information was held at United Nations Headquarters on 4 May 1998. The session was opened by the

Chairman of the Committee, Mr. José Alberto de Sousa (Portugal).

B. Election of officers

14. Upon the nomination of the representative of Egypt, the Committee elected by acclamation Mr. Abdullahi Abubakar (Nigeria) to serve as a Vice-Chairman to complete an unexpired term of office in the Bureau. The officers of the Committee on Information for the period 1997-1998 are thus as follows:

Chairman:

Mr. José Alberto de Sousa (Portugal)

Vice-Chairmen:

Mr. Holger Martinsen (Argentina)

Mr. Abdullahi Abubakar (Nigeria)

Mr. Salman Abbasy (Pakistan)

Rapporteur:

Mr. Alyaksei Skrypko (Belarus)

C. Adoption of the agenda and programme of work

15. At its organizational meeting, the Committee adopted, without objection, the following agenda and programme of work (A/AC.198/1998/1):

1. Opening of the session.
2. Adoption of the agenda and programme of work.
3. Election of officers.
4. Statement by the Chairman.
5. Statement by the Under-Secretary-General.
6. General debate and consideration of substantive questions:
 - (a) Promotion of the establishment of a new, more just and more effective world information and communication order intended to strengthen peace and international understanding and based on the free circulation and wider and better balanced dissemination of information;
 - (b) Continuation of the examination of United Nations public information policies and activities, in the light of the evolution of

international relations and of the need to establish the new international economic order and the new world information and communication order;

- (c) Evaluation and follow-up of the efforts made and the progress achieved by the United Nations system in the field of information and communications.

7. Preparation and adoption of the report of the Committee to the General Assembly at its fifty-third session.

16. The Committee held the substantive meetings of its twentieth session at United Nations Headquarters from 4 to 15 May 1998.

17. For consideration of item 6, the Committee had before it the reports of the Secretary-General on: (a) implementation of the measures regarding information and communications (A/AC.198/1998/2); and (b) activities of the Joint United Nations Information Committee (A/AC.198/1998/3).

D. Observers

18. The following Member States took part in the session as observers: Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Canada, Dominican Republic, Haiti, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Luxembourg, Malawi, Moldova, Namibia, Oman, Panama, Qatar, Solomon Islands, Suriname, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Tajikistan and the Holy See.

19. Representatives of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the International Monetary Fund, the International Labour Organization, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, the World Health Organization and the Organization of African Unity also attended.

E. Other matters

20. The Chairman informed the Committee that the Republic of Moldova had requested membership in the Committee.

Notes

¹ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 21 (A/35/21), annex, sect. V.*

² *Ibid., Thirty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 21 (A/36/21);*
ibid., Thirty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 21 (A/37/21

and Corr.1); *ibid., Thirty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 21 (A/38/21 and Corr.1 and 2);* *ibid., Thirty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 21 (A/39/21);* *ibid., Fortieth Session, Supplement No. 21 (A/40/21);* *ibid., Forty-first Session, Supplement No. 21 (A/41/21);* *ibid., Forty-second Session, Supplement No. 21 (A/42/21);* *ibid., Forty-third Session, Supplement No. 21 (A/43/21);* *ibid., Forty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 21 (A/44/21);* *ibid., Forty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 21 (A/45/21);* *ibid., Forty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 21 (A/46/21);* *ibid., Forty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 21 (A/47/21);* *ibid., Forty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 21 (A/48/21);* *ibid., Forty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 21 (A/49/21);* *ibid., Fiftieth Session, Supplement No. 21 (A/50/21);* and *ibid., Fifty-first Session, Supplement No. 21 (A/51/21).*

³ *Ibid., fifty-second Session, Supplement No. 21 (A/52/21).*