



SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 50th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. MATHIAS (Portugal)

CONTENTS

AGENDA ITEM 59: QUESTIONS RELATING TO INFORMATION (continued)

- (a) REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION (continued)
- (b) REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued)
- (c) REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION (continued)
- (d) CO-OPERATION AND ASSISTANCE IN THE APPLICATION AND IMPROVEMENT OF NATIONAL INFORMATION AND MASS COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS FOR SOCIAL PROGRESS AND DEVELOPMENT: REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION (continued)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.55 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 59: QUESTIONS RELATING TO INFORMATION (continued) (A/SPC/35/L.26 and Corr.1-2)

- (a) REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION (continued) (A/35/21)
- (b) REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued) (A/35/504 and Corr.1, A/35/603)
- (c) REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION (continued)
- (d) CO-OPERATION AND ASSISTANCE IN THE APPLICATION AND IMPROVEMENT OF NATIONAL INFORMATION AND MASS COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS FOR SOCIAL PROGRESS AND DEVELOPMENT: REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION (continued) (A/35/362 and Add.1)

1. Mr. SORENSEN (Venezuela), introducing draft resolution A/SPC/35/L.26 on behalf of Members States which were members of the Group of 77, said that, as in previous years, the text had emerged from long consultations with a view to reaching consensus. He drew attention to the various preambular paragraphs and to operative parts I and II of the draft.

2. In the tenth preambular paragraph of the English text of the draft resolution the words "on the report" should be added after the word "debate".

3. Part I, paragraph 2, should be amended to make it consistent with the text adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO, which represented an amendment to the programme of work of UNESCO and not a resolution of that agency. The new text should read:

"2. Takes note of the invitation to the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization 'to take immediate steps to initiate studies with a view to drawing up the fundamental principles underlying a new world information and communication order and exploring the possibility and desirability of such studies serving as a basis for a Declaration on the Establishment of a New World Information and Communication Order'".

4. In part II, paragraph 11, the words "while bearing in mind the need for cost effectiveness" should be deleted.

5. In conclusion, he expressed the hope that the draft resolution would be adopted by consensus, and thanked all those who had contributed to its preparation.

6. Mr. SHERIFIS (Cyprus) said that his delegation had been one of the drafters of the original text of document A/SPC/35/L.26, but was aware that the text was neither ideal nor perfect, owing to the need to accommodate a wide range of positions and viewpoints and to achieve the widest possible consensus.

(Mr. Sherifis, Cyprus)

7. The text reflected the imperative need for a new world information and communication order which would safeguard a free and balanced flow of information based on diversity of sources and free access to information; the non-aligned countries attached considerable significance to those questions, as had been made clear during their Sixth Conference of Heads of State or Government and in the important UNESCO Declaration on Fundamental Principles concerning the Contribution of the Mass Media to Strengthening Peace and International Understanding, to the Promotion of Human Rights and to Countering Racism, Apartheid and Incitement to War.
8. He recognized the key central role which UNESCO played in the field of information and communication and the constructive efforts which it had initiated for the establishment of a new world information and communication order.
9. He expressed his delegation's appreciation for the work done by the Department of Public Information and by the Under-Secretary-General, Mr. Akashi; in view of the increased number of the Department's activities it would be reasonable to provide it with adequate resources. The Department should increasingly orient itself towards fostering public understanding and support for United Nations activities and for the need to establish a new world information and communication order.
10. The Committee on Information could play a useful role by supervising the Department's activities, by establishing priorities and by providing specific guidelines; however, he had misgivings as to the Committee's ability to play the role of watchdog over the activities of newly established specialized organs and bodies such as the Intergovernmental Council for the International Programme for the Development of Communication. In that connexion, inter-organizational and intra-organizational co-ordination was essential in order to avoid overlapping and duplication which would lead to discord and frustrations and would defeat the purposes pursued.
11. Mrs. KEKEH (Togo) said that the text of draft resolution A/SPC/35/L.26 had been developed by consensus as a result of informal consultations based on the original document submitted by the Group of 77. The informal consultations had demonstrated the great interest of the regional groups and of many delegations in the questions relating to information and to the establishment of a new, more just and effective world information and communication order. Her delegation expressed its appreciation to all delegations, particularly those of the countries of Eastern Europe, Western Europe and the United States, for their spirit of conciliation, which had made it possible to achieve a measure of compromise on a question that was so important to the developing countries. She also thanked the representatives of the Department of Public Information and UNESCO as well as the representatives of the Secretariat in general for the efficient support they had given during the discussions.
12. Her delegation considered that the text of draft resolution A/SPC/35/L.26 was well rounded. The preamble referred to a number of relevant resolutions of the General Assembly, to certain articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

(Mrs. Kekeh, Togo)

and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and to the Declaration on the Preparation of Societies for Life in Peace, as well as to decisions adopted at meetings of certain States Members of the United Nations, including the Sixth Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries, held in 1979; and the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, held in 1975. In the three operative parts, reference was made to the twenty-first session of the General Conference of UNESCO and to the activities of the Department of Public Information and the Committee on Information. In addition, the operative parts contained recommendations and decisions which represented an important step towards the establishment of a new, more just and effective world information and communication order. Draft resolution A/SPC/35/L.26 represented a balanced compromise which took account of the concerns of all the regional groups and States which had participated in the informal consultations. She urged the Committee to adopt the draft resolution by consensus, as it had done in the case of resolution 34/182.

13. Mr. SOKALSKI (Poland) drew attention to an error in the English text of draft resolution A/SPC/35/L.26, part III, paragraph 2, in which the word "recommendation" should have been in the plural.

14. His delegation expressed its appreciation to those delegations which had contributed to the work of the Working Group in a spirit of broad co-operation. The questions under study were controversial but the Working Group had nevertheless found compromise solutions which had incorporated the positions of the different delegations.

15. His delegation nevertheless had a number of reservations on draft resolution A/SPC/35/L.26. First, the text was not sufficiently explicit in recognizing the decisive role of national opinion-makers in promoting the proper image and perception of the United Nations. His delegation had already made that point in both the Special Political Committee and the Committee on Information. It was to be hoped that the latter could submit proposals to the General Assembly at its thirty-sixth session which would be acceptable to all delegations.

16. Second, the draft resolution did not address itself to the extremely important problem of respect for the international character of the premises of United Nations Headquarters and Offices. The matter was of special interest in a situation like the current one when hostile propaganda against Member States contributed to a distorted image of the United Nations.

17. Finally, real progress on questions relating to information and the establishment of a new world information and communication order could come about only in conditions of a more propitious international atmosphere. In other words, international détente in all its aspects was a sine qua non of the objectives to be reached in the field under discussion. In that context, his delegation could not pass over in silence the hysterical attempts during recent days made by certain news media to exploit the internal developments in Poland in order to poison the climate of world relations and step up the armaments race. Such an approach was not in the spirit of efforts to establish a new world information and communication order.

(Mr. Sokalski, Poland)

18. His delegation thanked those members of the Committee who had spoken in the discussion on item 59. His Government would study their contributions and would submit its own comments to the Committee on Information as well as to the General Assembly at its thirty-sixth session.

The meeting rose at 11.50 a.m.