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QUESTIONS RELATING TO INFORMATION

Co-operation and assistance in the application and improvement
of national information and mass communication systems for
social progress and development

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the members of the General Assembly a report which has been communicated to him by the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in accordance with paragraph 4 of General Assembly resolution 33/115 A of 18 December 1978.

* A/34/150.

ANNEX

Report of the Director-General of the United Nations Educational,
Scientific and Cultural Organization on co-operation and assistance
in the application and improvement of national information and mass
communication systems for social progress and development

1. At its thirty-third session, the General Assembly had before it a report prepared by UNESCO on progress achieved in the development of mass communication systems (A/33/144). In its resolution 33/115 A, the Assembly took note with appreciation of the report and, in paragraphs 3 and 4, requested the Director-General of UNESCO to draw up a model plan for co-operation and assistance in the application and improvement of national information and mass communication systems for social progress and development, including the elaboration of a proposal for institutional arrangements to systematize collaborative consultation on communication development activities, needs and plans, and to submit a progress report to the Assembly at its thirty-fourth session.
2. It may be noted that this resolution is parallel to resolution 4/9.4/2 adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO at its twentieth session, in which the Director-General was requested to intensify and encourage communications development and to hold consultations designed to lead to the provision to developing countries of technological and other means for the purpose of promoting a free flow and a wider and better balanced exchange of information of all kinds. In its resolution the Organization further invited the Director-General to convene a planning meeting of representatives of Governments in order to develop a proposal for institutional arrangements to systematize collaborative consultation on communication development activities, needs and plans, and authorized him, in light of the recommendations of this planning meeting, to take the necessary steps to foster such institutional arrangements.
3. These two resolutions have aroused considerable interest and expectations in circles concerned with communication throughout the world. In particular, the Intergovernmental Conference on Communication Policies in Asia and Oceania, convened by UNESCO at Kuala Lumpur from 5 to 14 February 1979, adopted two recommendations in which it recommended to developing countries, and in particular those which are member States of UNESCO in Asia and Oceania, to assess their respective communication development needs and plans, in order to assist the planning meeting in proposing a suitable mechanism for meeting those needs. The Conference also invited the Director-General to study, within the model plan for co-operation and assistance in the application and improvement of mass communication systems for social progress and development, the possibility of the establishment of an international fund for the development of communication, under the auspices of UNESCO.
4. In other forums, the UNESCO and General Assembly resolutions were welcomed at the Conference of Ministers of Information of the Organization of African

Unity, held at Addis Ababa in April 1979, and by the Intergovernmental Council for the Coordination of Information of the Non-Aligned Countries, at its third meeting, at Lomé, also in April 1979, by the Latin American Federation of Journalists at its meeting in Caracas in July 1979, by the Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries, held in Havana in September 1979 and by the Tashkent Seminar for Journalists organized in September 1979 by the Soviet National Commission for UNESCO.

5. In order to implement the resolution adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO, the Director-General decided that the planning meeting of representatives of Governments should take the form of an "intergovernmental meeting other than intergovernmental conferences of States", as defined in the regulations for the general classification of the various categories of meetings convened by UNESCO, and submitted proposals concerning invitations to this meeting to the Executive Board of UNESCO at its one hundred and seventh session in May 1979. The intergovernmental meeting will take place at UNESCO headquarters in Paris, from 14 to 21 April 1980.

6. At the same time, the Director-General informed the Executive Board that he intended to follow his customary practice of convening a meeting of experts to advise him on the preparation of the intergovernmental meeting. At the generous invitation of the Government of the United States of America, this meeting of some 35 experts will be held in Washington from 6 to 9 November 1979.

7. The General Assembly may wish to re-examine this question at its thirty-fifth session, when the results of the intergovernmental meeting will be available.
