

UNITED NATIONS
GENERAL
ASSEMBLY



Distr.
GENERAL

A/34/379 + add. 1
29 August 1979

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Thirty-fourth session
Agenda item 102

JOINT INSPECTION UNIT

Report on the United Nations Information Centres

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the members of the General Assembly the report of the Joint Inspection Unit on the United Nations Information Centres (JIU/REP/79/10).

REPORT ON THE UNITED NATIONS
INFORMATION CENTRES

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Geneva, June 1979

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INTRODUCTION

1. At its first session in 1946, the United Nations General Assembly established as part of the Secretariat a Department of Public Information (DPI) - later called the Office of Public Information (OPI) and recently renamed Department. Its task was to provide the peoples of the world with up-to-date and complete information on the aims and achievements of the United Nations. In 1946, the United Nations was a less complex organization than it is today. There were only 52 Member States, most of them having just emerged from the rigours of war. The attainment of a just and lasting peace was a priority concern of the world community. It was DPI's job to tell the story.
2. Over the period of 30-odd years, the aims and the nature of the work of the United Nations have evolved rapidly and enlarged in scope. Sustained emphasis has been placed on economic and social programmes, including major efforts in development co-operation. There has been a three-fold increase in the number of Member States; the resources on call have greatly expanded; new and challenging plans of action have been launched; new inter-governmental bodies with special secretariats have been created. The features and functions of the United Nations have changed, become more intricate, more complex.
3. This major evolution has demanded changes in the concepts governing the dissemination of public information as well as changes in the methods used. DPI has not sufficiently responded to these needs. There have been minor improvements but not enough fundamental re-thinking of the goals and content of public information or the structural adjustments necessary to meet the new criteria.
4. This report principally concerns the United Nations Information Centres (UNICs), the field units of DPI. Nine (9) of them were opened in 1946-47. At present there are 59 UNICs in all parts of the world. The Inspectors believe, more so in the light of the importance being given to matters of information by the U.N. General Assembly and the General Conference of UNESCO, that it is time to review the functioning of the UNICs in order to suggest some reorientation of their activities and some improvements in their methods of operation. This way UNICs will be better able to contribute to a "more effective world information and communication order".
5. The report presents findings on the methods of operation of UNICs and makes recommendations to improve their effectiveness. Taking into account budgetary constraints, it suggests the broad outlines of a new structure and enlarged functions for UNICs.
6. Although this report is devoted essentially to UNICs, they cannot be considered in isolation from DPI. Therefore, the Inspectors have also examined the functions and resources of DPI Headquarters as they relate to UNICs. The findings of the Inspectors are based on visits to 28* UNICs during which discussions were held with government officials responsible for public information, representatives of the mass media and the staff of UNICs. Inspectors also had extensive discussions with members of DPI at Headquarters. They gathered additional data from a questionnaire completed by 42 UNICs.
7. The Inspectors wish to thank all those who have contributed information and suggestions, including government officials, media representatives and the staff of DPI at Headquarters and in the field.

* The 28 Centres visited by the Inspectors were in the following regions: 4 in Western Europe, 2 in Eastern Europe, 2 in Middle East, 11 in Africa, 3 in Asia and the Far East, 6 in Latin America and the Caribbean.

I. HIGHLIGHTS OF INFORMATION ACTIVITIES

8. In order to place their findings and recommendations in a proper context, the Inspectors present below the highlights of the developments, within the United Nations, in the field of public information.

9. The Department of Public Information was established in 1946 by Resolution 13(I) of the General Assembly, which set forth various principles to guide the new department in its activities. These principles were revised, but not substantially, by Resolution 595(VI) in 1952. They state that: "the basic policy of the United Nations in the field of public information is to promote to the greatest extent possible, within its budgetary limitations, an informed understanding of the work and purposes of the Organization among the peoples of the world; that to this end, the Department of Public Information should primarily assist and rely upon the services of existing public and private agencies of information, educational institutions and non-governmental organizations and should not engage in "propaganda"; that the Department of Public Information should undertake, on its own initiative, positive informational activities to supplement the services of existing agencies; and that it should pay particular attention to the needs of regions where information media are less well developed" (A/33/146, p.3).

10. The Secretary-General in his annual report on the work of the Organization said in 1947 that "the development of informed world opinion and intelligent support of the United Nations depends as much on the establishment of a wide and well organized network of information-distributing offices at appropriate world-centres as on an adequate and efficient public information service at headquarters" (A/315, p.64). By 1947 nine UNICs had come into being and plans were well advanced to open UNICs in five other countries. From then on additional UNICs were created until the present number of 59 was reached (see Table I below).

TABLE I

GROWTH IN NUMBER OF UNITED NATIONS INFORMATION CENTRES (UNICs)

<u>Region</u>	<u>1946</u>	<u>1951</u>	<u>1956</u>	<u>1961</u>	<u>1966</u>	<u>1971</u>	<u>1976</u>	<u>1978</u>
1. Africa	-	2	2	7	15	16	18	20
2. Asia and the Far East	-	4	5	8	10	10	10	10
3. Europe (Eastern)	-	3	3	3	3	4	4	4
4. Europe (Western)	1	4	5	6	6	6	8	9
5. Latin America	-	4	5	7	9	9	9	9
6. Middle East	-	2	1	2	4	4	5	5
7. N. America and Caribbean	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2
Total	2	19	22	34	49	51	56	59

Note: When the Centre in Libya is opened the total will be 60.

11. In 1958 a special six-member committee of experts submitted a report (A/3928) to the Thirteenth Session of the General Assembly, which was the first and only review of Public Information activities undertaken by an outside group. In addition to recommending changes in the public information programmes, the expert group suggested that UNICs should place greater emphasis on working through governments and non-governmental organizations. After considering the report of the expert committee, the General Assembly by its Resolution 1335(XIII) decided that the Secretary-General should "place greater emphasis than heretofore upon enlisting the co-operation of Governments of Member States, privately-owned mass media of information, private institutions, non-governmental organizations and educators in the programme of informing the peoples of the world of the United Nations and its activities". The Assembly also approved the other recommendations of the committee of experts and requested the Secretary-General to implement them.

12. The Fourteenth Session of the General Assembly (1959), after considering the action taken by the Secretary-General to implement the measures recommended by the Committee of Experts, adopted Resolution 1405(XIV) and asked the Secretary-General, inter alia, "to give continuing and special consideration to the importance of adequate regional representation at the policy making level of the OPI and in the information centres; to establish such new information centres as appear necessary and practicable particularly in regions where mass information media was less developed and to enlist the co-operation of the Member States concerned in providing all possible facilities for the establishment of such new centres and in assisting actively in efforts to promote wider public understanding of the aims and activities of the United Nations".

13. In the years that followed, the General Assembly discussed reports of the Secretary-General on the implementation of its decisions. These reports dealt mainly with the administrative, budgetary and operational aspects of the DPI and its UNICs.

14. In 1971, during its Twenty-sixth Session, the General Assembly discussed a report of the Secretary-General, which gave a detailed analysis of the activities of DPI, and suggested that the principles adopted by the General Assembly in 1946 and revised in 1952 need not be changed or amended. However, in 1972 in his report to the General Assembly at its Twenty-seventh Session (A/C.5/1452), the Secretary-General expressed the view that the gradual reorientation of the OPI away from its traditional media-based approach towards a more effective thematic approach would permit greater flexibility in the use of staff and facilities, avoid duplication, contribute to the elaboration of basic concepts and programmes, and achieve greater co-operation and co-ordination between DPI and other United Nations bodies.

15. In his report to the Thirtieth Session of the General Assembly in 1975 (A/C.5/1679), the Secretary-General stressed that although DPI has to rely primarily on the co-operation of governmental and non-governmental information agencies and organs, and assist and encourage coverage of the United Nations events by them, it should give particular attention to closer contacts with journalists, editors and other representatives of the mass media, both at Headquarters and through the Information Centres. The General Assembly, by Resolution 3535(XXX), took note of the Secretary-General's intention to colla-

borate closely with the national information media, the United Nations Associations and other non-governmental organizations concerned throughout the world. The Resolution further requested the Secretary-General "to make new efforts in the field of information activities of the Organization and convey to the general public comprehensive information regarding the political, economic, social, cultural and humanitarian achievements and undertakings of the United Nations system, including the principles and aims related to the new international economic order, and to submit to the General Assembly at its thirty-third session a report on the activities of OPI and to consider the question at that session as a separate item entitled "United Nations public information policies and activities".

16. In 1976, at the Thirty-first Session of the General Assembly, the Fifth Committee discussed the report of the Secretary-General on Information Centres (A/C.5/31/14). Delegates once again underlined the need for further strengthening of the Centres, and also stressed that their activities should be aimed at the general public and not at a small group of specialists. There was support for the observations and comments of the ACABQ (A/31/255) that the Directors of the Information Centres should give their individual attention to the dissemination of information about the United Nations rather than act as representatives of the Organization. In connection with the opening of new information centres, the view was expressed that "it might even be desirable to open new centres only in countries where the host Government was prepared to make a contribution, and provision should be made for the gradual absorption of information centres' costs by the host Governments" (A/C.5/SR.31/SR.10, para.35). It was also stressed that DPI, in programming activities, should take into account the particular conditions of each country, but there should be no question of Information Centres replacing national mass media.

17. In implementation of Resolution 3535(XXX), the Secretary-General, in 1978, submitted to the General Assembly a comprehensive report on public information policies and activities (A/35/146). The Assembly was also informed of the adoption by the Twentieth Session of the General Conference of UNESCO (October 1978) of a declaration on fundamental principles concerning the contribution of the mass media to strengthening peace and international understanding (A/33/144/2) and had a report by the Director-General of UNESCO on international co-operation in the field of information and communication (A/35/144 Annex). The Special Political Committee which examined these documents on behalf of the General Assembly also had before it a study submitted by the delegate of Tunisia entitled "The New World Order for Information".

18. As a result of the work of the Special Political Committee, the General Assembly in 1978 adopted Resolution 35/115 on "Questions relating to information". This Resolution had three main parts: (a) co-operation and assistance in the application and improvement of national information and mass communication systems for social progress and development; (b) international relations in the sphere of information and mass communications; (c) United Nations public information policies and activities. The first two parts of this Resolution are of concern to this present study insofar as they give indications of the directions along which the functions of the UNICs might be reoriented. This aspect is discussed in Chapter X of this report. The final part of the Resolution established a Committee, consisting of 41 Member States, to review United Nations public information policies and activities. The Inspectors believe that this present report may be of interest to that Committee.

II. PUBLIC INFORMATION RESOURCES AND THEIR ADEQUACY

19. In this chapter, the Inspectors attempt to analyse and compare the resources made available by the General Assembly to DPI with special emphasis on UNICs.

1. Budgets. For the purpose of the analysis which follows, the budget of the Information Service of DPI located in Geneva is considered together with that of DPI Headquarters since DPI in New York and Geneva have similar functions which are different from those of UNICs.

20. Although no direct relationship can be claimed to exist between the total budget of the United Nations and that of DPI for assessing the adequacy of DPI funds, such a comparison does provide some useful indicators. For example, whereas in 1951 the DPI budget represented some 7% of the total United Nations regular budget, by 1978-1979 this percentage had dropped to 4%. The explanations for this decline are many but the basic reason is no doubt the choice of priorities approved by the General Assembly. The Inspectors do not believe that any fixed ratio can be usefully established between DPI and total budgets and they consider that the existing budget levels for DPI, being based upon a political judgement of the General Assembly, should be the ceiling (except for inflation and currency changes) which should guide their recommendations. In other words, the Inspectors refrain in this report from making recommendations whose cost could not be covered by compensating savings. This will not permit DPI to do all of the work that governments might wish and will require some painful choices.

21. When the Committee on Programme and Co-ordination (CPC) examined the DPI budget in May-June 1976, it noted that the Secretary-General had proposed real growth of 2% whereas CPC and ECOSOC had recommended well below average growth. Thus it appears that Member Governments are not prepared to endorse significant increases in the DPI budget.

22. Of special importance to this study is the proportion of the DPI budget devoted to Headquarters and that to the UNICs in the field. In 1975 the Secretary-General had informed the General Assembly of the importance of strengthening UNICs and indicated that some additional resources would be required. In 1976 he again drew attention to budgetary constraints and added that strengthening of UNICs might depend on host governments bearing a greater share of the cost. During the period when most UNICs were created (1947 to 1964) their budgets naturally increased much more rapidly than that of DPI Headquarters. During the period from 1964 to 1978, only 12 additional UNICs were created, and the proportion of the total DPI budget devoted to UNICs continued to increase irregularly. In 1951 the proportion was 24%, in 1966 it had reached 35% but declined to 28% in 1971. In the 1978-79 budget, UNICs account for 34% of the total DPI budget.

23. The increase in the proportion of the total DPI budget for UNICs is encouraging, particularly since even at DPI Headquarters funds are devoted to serving UNICs. But the Inspectors believe that a correct balance has not yet been reached. There are only 59 UNICs and although some serve neighbouring countries, this service is at best intermittent. The majority of Member States are not effectively covered by UNICs. The Inspectors believe that the trend towards a larger share of the total DPI budget being devoted to UNICs should continue at least until UNICs account for 50% of the total DPI budget.

24. The breakdown among main objects of expenditure of the budget for UNICs for 1978-1979 also requires adjustment. Of a total of approximately \$12.5 million some 85% is devoted to staff costs and the greatest part of this amount pays for internationally recruited staff. General operating expenses (rental of premises, utilities, equipment, supplies) account for almost all of the remaining 15% with only 1% for travel within the areas covered by UNICs. Thus UNICs have practically no funds for the translation or adaptation of information materials and the provision for travel is so small that UNIC staff are virtually confined to the capital cities in which they are stationed. The Inspectors recommend that in the future the distribution of UNICs' budgets by object of expenditure should provide a much greater proportion of funds for contracts for the preparation and adaptation of information material geared to the needs of the area of the UNIC and for travel to permit UNIC staff to maintain contact with the mass media and with projects located outside the city of the UNIC.

25. Another point regarding the breakdown by main objects of expenditure of the UNICs' budgets gives rise to concern and emphasizes the need to reapportion the budget. Staff costs have been rising faster over the years than those of other objects of expenditure. If this trend continues it would further aggravate the imbalance between funds for staff and funds to enable the staff to perform their duties - travel, communication, reproduction, dissemination, etc.

26. The existing contributions made by many host countries, particularly in the developing regions, in various forms (rent, free postage, maintenance, etc.) are clear indications of the readiness of Member States to participate more actively in the work of the DPI and its Information Centres. The establishment by Resolution 33/115 of 18 December 1978 of the Committee of 41 with the task of reviewing the United Nations information policies and activities is further evidence of the interest of Member States.

27. The paragraphs which follow give more specific observations on each main object of expenditure.

28. Staff costs including common staff costs, temporary assistance and overtime account for 85% of UNICs' budgets in 1978-79, 81% in 1976-77 and 83% in 1974-75. These percentages are too high to permit UNICs to do an effective job. Because so little funds are available for essential work such as the reproduction and distribution of information material, the impact of the work done by the staff suffers. General temporary assistance represents only 0.5% of UNICs' budgets or about \$ 500 per year per UNIC. For small UNICs, usually self-contained, it would appear important to provide more flexibility in the use of staff than the small percentage for temporary assistance would permit, particularly since the workload of UNICs is not regular.

29. Travel represents 1% of the budget of UNICs or on average about \$ 1,000 per year per UNIC. This small amount is unevenly and seemingly arbitrarily distributed as shown by selected examples below based upon replies to the JIU questionnaire.

<u>Location of UNIC</u>	<u>Annual Travel Budget</u>
New Delhi	\$ 900
Dar es Salaam (covering also Malawi, Uganda and Zanzibar)	\$ 700
Dakar (covering also Gambia, Guinea Bissau, Ivory Coast and Mauritania and Upper Volta)	\$ 1,500
Moscow (covering also Ukraninan SSR and Byelorrussian SSR)	\$ 2,500
Paris	\$ 2,200
London	\$ 600
Rio de Janeiro	\$ 1,500
Port of Spain (covering also Bahamas, Barbados, Grenada, Jamaica and Surinam)	\$ 1,800
Lima	\$ 700
Mexico (covering also Cuba and Dominican Republic)	\$ 850
Addis Ababa	\$ 800

30. Particularly for UNICs which cover several countries and also for UNICs in large countries, travel of UNIC staff is essential if the UNIC is to have a real impact outside the capital city in which it is located.

31. Communications (postage, telephone, telex, cables) are estimated to represent 3.3% of UNICs' budgets or \$ 420,000 for UNICs in 1978-79. Yet communication is a basic requirement of public information. One UNIC had to suspend the distribution of information material by post for lack of funds and all UNICs are limited in their distribution capacity.

32. Premises (rental, maintenance, utilities) represent about 4.7% of UNICs' budgets or \$ 594,000 for UNICs in 1978-1979. Many governments of developing countries pay part or all of these costs. UN Resident Representative Offices at times provide facilities free of cost. However, in most of the developed countries these costs are charged to the UNICs' budgets.

33. Supplies and equipment (for offices, reproduction, furniture, books, etc.) represent about 2.9% of UNICs' budgets or \$ 372,000 for UNICs in 1978-1979. The Inspectors believe that this allocation is wholly inadequate and inhibits the work performance of costly staff.

34. In summary, the Inspectors conclude that there is an imbalance in the distribution of funds between DPI Headquarters and UNICs which should be redressed in favour of UNICs and that within the budgets of UNICs there is an urgent need to reduce the portion devoted to staff costs in order to provide funds for essential travel and operating expenses without which much of the impact of staff work will be lost.

2. Staffing

(a) Number of staff

35. Table II shows from 1958 the evolution of the number of staff assigned to DPI at Headquarters (including Geneva) and at UNICs. Whereas in 1958 UNICs accounted for 29% of the Professional posts and above of DPI and 50% of the General Service posts, by 1978 these percentages had increased to 34% and 72% respectively. This increase was due to the rise in the number of UNICs from 25 in 1958 to 59 at present.

36. It can also be seen from Table II that in 1969 there was a sharp decrease in Professional posts assigned to UNICs and that it was only in 1978 that the number of posts exceeded their 1968 level. This situation led CPC in its report on its Seventeenth Session (1977) to observe that "any emphasis in the information centres had thus come solely through an increase in the number of staff in the General Service category". DPI as a rule provides 5 General Service posts for each professional in UNICs (A/32/38, para. 86.). The Inspectors conclude that the evolution of the staffing pattern at Headquarters and UNICs does not yet correspond to the many resolutions of the General Assembly urging the strengthening of UNICs and decentralization.

37. There is an acute shortage of Professional posts at many UNICs, particularly those in developing countries. Although the number of UNICs more than doubled since 1958, from 27 to 58, the number of Professional staff only increased from 49 to 68. The situation is even more serious than these figures imply because there are 40 Professionals at 14 UNICs in Europe and North America leaving only 28 Professionals in 44 UNICs in developing countries. Thus, 24% of the UNICs have nearly 60% of the Professional staff. To correct this situation the Inspectors are not proposing an overall increase in staff but they believe that there should be some redeployment from DPI Headquarters and better staffed UNICs to the UNICs in developing countries. The Inspectors also consider that their proposals on Information Assistants (see para. 55) would help solve this problem and that the suggestions made in Chapter X of the report would provide a solution in the long-term.

(b) Geographical distribution of staff

38. The Expert Committee which reviewed the operations of the UN public information system in 1958 was of the opinion that one of the priorities of the system was to establish, at Headquarters, an organization "capable of providing basic facilities and services to correspondents of the media and capable of giving guidance to Information Centres". As regards the staff of UNICs, the Committee's judgement was that the choice of a Centre Director should be made "with the utmost care", and that "apart from possessing wide experience of work in the United Nations and the Agencies, he should possess basic understanding of the region and knowledge of the language of the country where the Centre is situated". The Committee was also of the view that the Centre Director "must have special aptitude for developing and maintaining a wide variety of contacts". (A/3928, page 73).

**TABLE II : NUMBER OF STAFF - PROFESSIONAL AND GENERAL SERVICE - OF DPI
HEADQUARTERS AND INFORMATION CENTRES (1958-78)**

Year	1958	1959	1960	1961	1962	1963	1964	1965	1966	1967	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974/75	1976/77	1978
Professional Staff																			
HQs	120	120	119	101	100	100	103	103	103	103	103	116	116	124	126	126	131	134	129
UNICs	49	49	49	56	56	63	61	61	61	60	60	48	48	48	48	48	51	52	68
Total Professional Staff	169	169	168	157	156	163	164	164	164	163	163	164	164	172	174	174	182	186	197
GS Staff																			
HQs	104	105	103	101	101	101	98	98	98	98	98	103	103	108	109	109	115	120	125
UNICs	103	108	112	143	163	195	214	235	230	240	240	240	240	240	240	240	271	283	321
Total GS Staff	207	213	215	244	264	296	312	333	328	338	338	343	343	348	349	349	386	403	446
TOTAL STAFF Professional and GS																			
HQs	224	225	222	202	201	201	201	201	201	201	201	219	219	232	235	235	246	254	254
UNICs	152	157	161	199	219	258	275	296	291	300	300	288	288	288	288	288	322	335	389
GRAND TOTAL	376	382	383	401	420	459	476	497	492	501	501	507	507	520	523	523	568	589	643

39. The Inspectors' investigations have confirmed the wisdom of this judgement, and particularly the requirement that UNIC Directors should possess a basic understanding of the country or countries in which they work. The Inspectors go further and suggest that the Director must be an experienced professional with training in and an intimate knowledge of the structure and functioning of the mass media in the geographical area of the UNIC. He should also have had adequate work experience there.

40. The staff at DPI must also include at the highest levels and throughout persons who not only possess the required professional qualifications and experience but who also know and understand the cultural and social milieu of the UNICs. In its staff composition, DPI should therefore reflect the geographical diversity of the UNICs. The General Assembly stressed this point in its Resolution 1405(XIV) of 1 December 1959 when it requested the Secretary-General, inter alia, "to give continuing and special consideration to the importance of adequate regional representation at the policy-making level of the DPI and in the Information Centres". This request was still being echoed, seventeen years later, in the Fifth Committee during its debate on the report of the Secretary-General on DPI to the Thirty-first Session. Delegates stressed the need for equitable geographical distribution of Secretariat and Centre posts and, in furtherance of this, suggested that vacancies in the Secretariat should be widely publicized to promote better geographical representation.

41. Table III shows the number of Professional staff at Headquarters and UNICs for 1978 by geographical regions and by the region of origin of the staff.

42. It is seen from Table III that there were altogether 197 staff members in 1978 in the Professional category and above at DPI. Of these, 129 staff members were at Headquarters and 68 at Information Centres. Western Europe and North America were represented by 97 staff members, of whom 68 were at Headquarters and 29 in the field (43% of the total Professional staff at the Centres). The developing regions (Middle East, Africa, Asia and the Far East and Latin America and the Caribbean) were represented altogether by 78 Professional staff members (one staff member in grade D-2 was from a European developing country); 46 of the 78 were at Headquarters and 32 in the field offices.

43. If we compare the posts occupied by staff from developed countries with those from the developing countries, the picture is as follows: out of 129 Professional staff at Headquarters, 84 come from developed and only 45 from developing countries. At Headquarters, there are four divisions. One is headed by a national of a developing country in the Eastern European region while the Heads of the other three divisions are from Western Europe and North America. The special co-ordinator assigned to the Head of DPI is also from a developing country but of the 11 units, 16 sections and 4 services comprising the Department, only 3 units and the 4 services are headed by staff members from developing countries.

44. Table IV compares the region of the location of UNICs with the region of origin of the Directors. Whereas in the developed regions of the world 9 of the 14 Directors are from the region in which the UNIC is sited, in the developing regions (excluding Belgrade and Bucharest which are in developing countries in European region) only 11 of the 21 Directors come from the region of the UNIC.

**TABLE III : NUMBER OF PROFESSIONAL STAFF BY GRADE AND REGION OF ORIGIN :
HEADQUARTERS AND INFORMATION CENTRES/SERVICES (1978)**

Regional origin of staff	HQs/Field	USG	ASG	D2	D1	P5	P4	P3	P2	P1	Total
1. Western Europe and North America	Total			2	7	14	24	29	17	4	97
	HQ			2	5	6	14	23	15	3	68
	Field			-	2	8	10	6	2	1	29
2. Eastern Europe	Total			2	2	2	7	5	4	1	23
	HQ			2	1	1	3	5	4	-	16
	Field			-	1	1	4	-	-	1	7
3. Middle East	Total				1	3	4	-	1	-	9
	HQ				-	-	2	-	1	-	3
	Field				1	3	2	-	-	-	6
4. Africa	Total				2	3	8	3	4	-	20
	HQ				2	2	3	1	3	-	11
	Field				-	1	5	2	1	-	9
5. Asia and the Far East	Total	1	-	-	2	5	8	9	3	1	29
	HQ	1	-	-	2	5	4	6	3	1	22
	Field	-	-	-	-	-	4	3	-	-	7
6. Latin America and Caribbean	Total				1	5	6	3	4	-	19
	HQ				-	2	1	3	3	-	9
	Field				1	3	5	-	1	-	10
Total	Col. Total	1	-	4	15	32	57	49	33	6	197
	HQ	1	-	4	10	16	27	38	29	4	129
	Field		-	-	5	16	30	11	4	2	68

Source: UN General Assembly, Personnel Questions, Composition of the Secretariat, Report of the Secretary-General, A/C.S/33/L.2, 20 September 1978.

Notes: 1. The breakdown of the Professional staff is as follows:

(i)	DPI HQ		129
(ii)	Regional Commissions, UNIDO and Brussels:		
	Geneva	16	
	Bangkok	3	
	Santiago	1	
	Addis Ababa	2	
	Beirut	1	
	UNIDO	4	
	Brussels	1	28
(iii)	Information Centres		40

TOTAL 197

TABLE IV : NATIONALITY OF DIRECTORS OF UNICs
EXCLUDING THOSE HEADED BY RESIDENT REPRESENTATIVES AND THOSE WHOSE DIRECTORS POSTS ARE VACANT 1/

Location of UNICs	Nationality of Directors or Acting Directors						Total
	1. W.Europe and North America	2. Eastern Europe	3. Middle East	4. Africa	5. Asia, Far East	6. Latin America	
1. Western Europe and North America Athens Brussels Copenhagen London Paris Rome Vienna Washington Lisbon Geneva	USA France Sweden UK FRG Italy Austria				New Zealand	Bolivia Costa Rica	10
2. Eastern Europe Moscow Prague Belgrade Bucharest		USSR Czechoslovakia	Iraq Jordan				4
3. Middle East Teheran Beirut Baghdad		USSR	Lebanon Lebanon				3
4. Africa Dakar Khartoum Addis Ababa Nairobi Cairo Lagos Lusaka Kinshasa	France USA UK		Iraq Jordan	Cameroon Tanzania		Venezuela	8
5. Asia and Far East New Delhi Tokyo Bangkok Islamabad Port Moresby Sydney	Austria USA				Japan Nepal Japan	Brazil	6
6. Latin America and Caribbean Rio de Janeiro Buenos Aires Mexico City Bogota San Salvador Port of Spain	Spain France					Colombia Mexico Nicaragua Uruguay	6
Total	14	3	6	2	4	8	37

1/ UNDP Resident Representatives act as Directors of 13 Centres: 5 in Africa: Bujumbura, Lome, Monrovia, Tananarive, Yaunde. 6 in Asia: Ankara, Colombo, Kabul, Kathmandu, Manila, Rangoon. 2 in Latin America: Asuncion, La Paz. Nine Centres have vacant Directors posts. 7 in Africa: Accra, Algiers, Dar es Salaam, Maseru, Ougadougou, Rabat, Tunis. 2 in Latin America: Lima, Santiago.

/...

45. Fourteen Information Centres are headed by nationals of Western Europe and North America, three by nationals of Eastern Europe, two by nationals of Japan and one by a national of New Zealand. Altogether, therefore, staff from the developed areas head 20 Centres. On the other hand, the distribution among developing countries is as follows: Middle East nationals 6 Centres, African two, Asian and Far East one, and Latin American and Caribbean eight - a total of 17.

46. In developing countries, out of 23 Centres which are headed by staff from DPI (excluding those headed by Resident Representatives), 14 Directors are nationals of developing countries, while 9 are from developed countries. On the other hand, out of 14 Centres in the developed world, only 3 are headed by citizens of developing countries.

47. To summarize, out of 37 Centres which have Directors (excluding those headed by Resident Representatives), 20 are headed by citizens of developed countries. If we consider also the number of staff from developed countries who head most of the units and sections at DPI Headquarters, then it becomes apparent that both at the policy-making level and in the field offices, the developing countries are not adequately represented.

48. The Inspectors have met qualified journalists in all regions and are of the opinion that it would not be difficult to appoint as Directors of UNICs persons with full professional qualifications and with a detailed knowledge of the area covered and the main language(s) used. Usually, though not always, this will mean that the Director should come from the region, sub-region or country in which the UNIC is located.

(c) Qualifications of professional staff

49. The General Assembly in its Resolution 2897 (XXVI) of 22 December 1971 requested the Secretary-General, inter alia, to "appoint to United Nations Information Centres highly qualified Professional staff in the field of public information". The Secretary-General in his comprehensive report to the Thirty-first Session assured Member States that "since the end of 1971 OPI has made a special effort to recommend for appointment as new Centre Directors only professionals competent in the field of public information who are considered to have the necessary qualities of personality and leadership essential to the effective functioning of a UN Information Centre"; he added as a further assurance that "considerations of equitable geographical distribution and the desirability of increasing the number of women as Centre Directors" were also being kept in mind. The ACABQ in considering the report observed, inter alia, that Information Centre Professional staff should be highly qualified in the field of information.

50. The Secretary-General in the above-mentioned report to the General Assembly (A/C.5/31/14) gave the following profile of a UNIC Director:

"The Centre Director is the key to an effective, smoothly operating and active information centre. He or she must not only be fully competent professionally in the field of public information and its techniques, but must also have a thorough knowledge of United Nations affairs. The centre director should be in a position of suf-

ficient seniority to deal directly with high-level contacts in the governmental and media circles, and he should have the capacity to act as a spokesman for the United Nations. In addition of a suitable personality for the establishment and maintenance of good relations outside the office, a particularly important attribute is the ability to provide constructive leadership and supervision to the staff of the centre. In addition to the full responsibility for the administration and supervision of what is usually a small but active office, far removed from United Nations Headquarters, there must be added all the other duties listed in the standard job description for directors of United Nations Information Centres as follows: "Establishes and maintains active contact with all information media and national information bodies throughout the working area, furnishing information on all activities of the United Nations and specialized agencies; maintains liaison with the Ministry of Education, teachers' organizations, schools and universities in programmes relating to teaching about the United Nations; maintains active liaison with non-governmental organizations. Fulfills speaking engagements. Assists in planning the observance of United Nations Day, Human Rights Day and other commemorations. May be called upon from time to time by Headquarters to function in a representative or observer capacity or to assume responsibility for coverage of official meetings, conferences, etc., in the region".

51. The Inspectors fully agree with the above but would add one other dimension. In the dissemination of information in the field, UNICs have hitherto relied largely on the printed word with some radio programmes usually supplied by Headquarters and a minimum of television material also produced at Headquarters. It seems to the Inspectors that Directors must increasingly make more use of the radio and television media in their midst by themselves seeking programme time on these media. This will mean that Directors must have been exposed to the possibilities of all the communications media and be sensitive to the potential at hand in the use of radio and television as well. A Director whose training and experience may have qualified him to work best in only one of the print or broadcast media, should also be receptive to the requirements of the other media for the successful dissemination of information.

52. From 42 replies to the JIU questionnaire and visits to 28 UNICs, the Inspectors concluded that only 10 Directors had a professional background in print or broadcast. On the other hand, the locally-recruited Information Assistants were almost all professional journalists before joining the UNIC. This explains why in many UNICs it is the Information Assistant who maintains direct relations with local representatives of the mass media.

53. The Inspectors also studied the qualifications of senior staff of DPI Headquarters. A good number did not appear to have a professional background in communications media prior to their appointment. Information more than many of the other United Nations activities requires a high level of professional specialization and this in turn calls for professionally qualified leadership. In summary, it is clear that although the need for highly qualified professional staff has increased and has been stressed by the General Assembly and by the Secretary-General, this objective has not yet been attained to the degree desirable.

(d) General Service staff of UNICs

54. The General Service staff of UNICs vary in number and functions depending on the number of Professional staff and on whether the UNIC operates autonomously or receives services from other United Nations units such as the office of a Resident Representative. Typically, General Service staff occupy the following positions:

- Information Assistant
- Reference Assistant
- Administrative Assistant
- Secretary to the Director and Receptionist or Clerk/Typist and Receptionist
- Driver/Projectionist/Reproduction Clerk/Messenger
- Messenger/Cleaner

55. At present, there are 321 General Service staff employed at UNICs. Of these approximately 16% are Information Assistants and 16% are Reference Assistants. The posts of Information Assistant and Reference Assistant, though classified in the General Service category, call for professional skills and qualifications. It is self-evident that persons performing these functions should be locally recruited but those who have the required professional training and experience should receive appropriate status and pay. A comparison of the salary and emoluments of a Director with, for instance, those of an Information Assistant suggests too wide a disparity. The Inspectors commend the practice adopted by UNICEF of appointing as "local professionals" persons who have professional skills and paying them at salaries appropriate to the nature of the work in their country. The Inspectors support the introduction of this category of "local professional" for the payment of appropriately trained and experienced officers in the two posts mentioned.

56. The suggestions in the preceding paragraph are in conformity with the Secretary-General's own views and intentions as expressed in his report on DPI to the 31st Session of the General Assembly. In discussing recent "significant improvements in the staffing and operations", he gave as an example, "a greater recognition of the professional status of the Information Assistants", and promised to eliminate the word "Assistant" from their title. He saw the "better Information Assistants as potential candidates to become future Centre Directors or for other appointments to the international professional staff of OPI". Similar remarks were made about the Reference Assistants (A/C.5/31/14, p.13).

57. The Inspectors after visiting 28 UNICs came to the conclusion that both the Information and Reference Assistants were, as a rule, rendering valuable service which was still not sufficiently recognized. For this reason morale had sagged in many instances. The Inspectors therefore concur with the Secretary-General's views as expressed above and strongly recommend that action be taken rapidly along the lines suggested in paragraph 55.

III. PREMISES, LIBRARIES, EQUIPMENT

(a) Premises

58. The location and accommodation of a Centre are major factors in the achievement of a Centre's objectives. They are of particular importance to the success of a Centre library.

59. A Centre should be centrally located and easily accessible. It should provide suitable working areas for the staff and adequate space for a library, a reading room and a store. A film projection room, where possible, would be a valuable facility.

60. Centres have not had much choice in the location of their premises or in the accommodation made available to them. Suitability of location and adequacy of accommodation therefore vary greatly from country to country. The Inspectors were, however, forcibly struck by the wide difference between the standard of accommodation of the UNICs and that of the other organizations of the UN family.

61. Thirty-one of the Centres responding to the questionnaire said they regarded the location of their premises as suitable. Ten did not. Twenty-four of the Centres regarded their accommodation and facilities as adequate; seventeen as inadequate. Some of the "inadequate" accommodation and facilities seen by the Inspectors were depressing and adversely affected morale, efficiency and public regard for the Centre.

62. The available office space was often cramped; libraries were congested; the reading rooms, where available, were frequently too small and poorly furnished; and generally provision for the proper storage of films and delicate audio-visual equipment was not adequate.

63. Housing field offices of the UN system under the same roof or at the same location has obvious administrative advantages. However, experience has shown that accommodation allocated to UNICs under such circumstances is often inferior and almost always inadequate. Moreover, such arrangements tend to make the Centres less easily accessible.

64. According to the information about premises given for 56 UNICs in the Secretary-General's report (A/C.5/31/14), 21 Centres have their own premises, 27 share with other organizations in the UN system, 5 share with UNDP exclusively and 3 others (Geneva, Vienna and Santiago) are in the UN premises. Information about premises for 3 Centres (Lisbon, Ouagadougou and Maseru) is not presently available.

65. Available information for 50 UNICs indicates that 18 Centres are in rent-free premises provided by the host government under various arrangements. Two such Centres are in developed countries (Brussels and Rome) and 16 are in developing countries. In two of the latter the host governments make cash grants to DPI equal to the rent being paid. In respect of 18 Centres DPI pays rent: 8 in developed countries and 10 in developing countries. 13 other Centres are reportedly in rent-free premises as a result of sharing accommodation with the UN or UNDP. The Paris Centre occupies a section of the UNESCO building rentfree in return for free accommodation supplied to UNESCO by UN in New York.

66. Of late, the provision of rent-free premises is becoming more and more a precondition for the opening of a Centre. This will be particularly hard on the least developed countries, only 8 out of the 29 of which have Centres at present.

(b) Libraries

67. Reference libraries are essential to the operations of the Centres. The general public, mass media representatives and students, turn to them for knowledge and information about the UN.

68. The value of the libraries, however, depends on a number of factors:

- First and foremost is the comprehensiveness of their holdings. The publications and documents must cover not only all aspects of the Organization's activities, as well as those of its subsidiary organs, but also publications of the other members of the UN system. It is essential that when material or specific information required is not immediately available at the Centre, it should be possible to obtain it rapidly from Headquarters or, better still, from a depository library within the country.
- The second factor is the calibre of the librarian or the reference assistant. The person responsible for organizing this store of information must be professionally qualified. An important aspect of the librarian's function is that of guiding and directing the researcher to relevant sources or pertinent information. This calls for professional competence and experience.
- The third factor is the ease with which information can be retrieved and this depends on the qualifications of the librarian as well as on the facilities available to him/her. The publications and documents must be classified according to professionally acceptable standards.
- The fourth factor concerns the physical facilities available to the reference library; facilities of floor and shelf space, equipment and supplies.

69. The questionnaire sent to the Centres sought information on these factors. In all, information was obtained on 42 Centre reference libraries; 28 of them were visited by the Inspectors. The Inspectors' observations below are based both on the visits and the questionnaire.

70. Comprehensiveness of holdings: Almost all Centres were satisfied with the comprehensiveness of their holdings. Only one expressed dissatisfaction. But the Inspectors observed that in most Centres the holdings were inadequate. There were three general problems:

- Slowness in response to specific requests. Centres complained that Headquarters was sometimes slow in responding to requests for specific publications and documents. An Inspector was told of a request for a publication which took six months to meet. A depository library was disappointed because it could not persuade Headquarters of the need to provide the papers of experts upon which reports of expert conferences were based.
- Absence of publications other than those of the UN system. Centres mentioned that their holdings consisted only of publications of the UN system. They had no reference books on the UN system published by sources other than the UN system.
- Inadequacy of funds. At some Centres the librarians did not have funds for the major local newspapers and periodicals let alone necessary reference books on the UN.

71. Reference Assistants: The Secretary-General in his report (A/C.5/31/14) said that the "qualifications and status of the Reference Assistant or Librarian were being raised throughout the system". This is an encouraging statement and action on it will be welcome. Very few of the Reference Assistants interviewed had had any training since they were appointed. Answers to the questionnaire indicated that the Centre Directors regarded the qualifications of 80% of the Reference Assistants as "adequate". The Inspectors, however, met very few of them who were professionally qualified. The majority had acquired whatever competence they had on the jobs. The Inspectors recommend more systematic training courses for Reference Assistants.

72. Retrieval of information: Organization of reference libraries: eighteen percent of the Centres regarded their retrieval facilities as poor, and another thirty-eight percent thought they were just adequate. This is not surprising considering the poor physical facilities of some of the Centres, and the lack of professional training within the cadre of Reference Assistants.

73. Physical facilities at Centres: It is necessary to consider, under this heading, four separate facilities as follows:

- Storage and presentation of books and materials: Some 43% of Centres considered this aspect to be good. Another 38% thought the conditions were, at the moment, adequate; a few of them added that there was no room for further expansion. The remaining 19% reported that their facilities were inadequate. Two Centres said they are obliged to give some materials away. The Inspectors visited some of these Centres with inadequate or poor facilities and were rather distressed by what they saw. Books and documents were stacked in all sorts of places: on the floor of the library and adjoining corridors; on tables and on the tops of shelves; on stairways or in basements.
- Seating arrangements for the public. The responses showed that seating facilities at 43% of the Centres are satisfactory. Conditions at the majority of the rest are barely adequate and in eight cases they are either very poor or non-existent. Very few Centres have space and furniture enough to allow each serious student/researcher an individual table/desk. Most Centres provide a large working table. Where space is inadequate this table becomes cluttered with unsorted books and documents. Quite often the library provides a working area for other Centre staff apart from the Reference Assistant. The general picture in the 28 Centres visited by the Inspectors is that where there is a shortage of space the area which should have been reserved for the public is taken up by some of the Centre staff. In some Centres, the staff and the public are not separated and are in such close proximity that they disturb each other. There are Centres where clients have to take turns at finding somewhere to sit.
- Keeping of records: Equipment materials. The "automatically printed library index cards" promised in the Report of the Secretary-General have not yet arrived at the Centres. Some Centres are using strips of paper instead of ordinary index cards. The up-dated "Guide to the Maintenance of UNIC Libraries" is also not yet available at the Centres and inexperienced Reference Assistants are instituting their own methods of classification. Some Centres have books and documents with no identification marks on them; not even the Centre stamp.

- Space. A number of Centres indicated that very soon their holdings would outgrow the space available. Since increases in space are unlikely, the two possible solutions are: a disposal policy and the use of micrographic techniques. Indications are that the latter solution is unlikely to be expeditious enough. So far, only three of the Centres visited seem to have a complete set of microfiche apparatus. Three others have the reader/printer, but neither the microfiche nor the funds to buy it with. With many inexperienced Reference Assistants manning the Centre libraries, some guidance is needed on disposal of documents and publications. It is quite possible that part of the cluttering-up is due to the retention of disposable material.

74. Students, teachers and research workers are ranked first among the patrons of UNIC reference libraries on the whole. They are followed by the general public. The media and government officials are ranked together third and they are followed by United Nations experts. Two Centres which specifically mentioned diplomats gave them fifth ranking. One gives third ranking to business firms and another gives second ranking to people looking for jobs with the UN. Brussels gives third ranking to EEC and ACP organizations. Only one country (a developing country) gives the information media first ranking. Seven countries (3 developing) give the media second ranking and ten (4 developing) give it third ranking. These figures are based only on the record of actual visitors to the Centres; Centres receive many enquiries by telephone and correspondence and these, even when recorded, have not been included.

75. The Inspectors conclude that the shortcomings from which the Centre Libraries suffer result from insufficient effort on the part of DPI Headquarters to improve their operations as well as from the considerable lag in the training and recruitment of professionally qualified Reference Assistants.

(c) Equipment

76. The Information Centres are so differently equipped that it is impossible to draw a general conclusion. However, it is apparent that many Centres lack basic items of equipment. Inadequately equipped Centres, of which there are many, cannot be expected to work effectively. For example, the Centres must have mimeograph facilities in order to provide and disseminate information promptly. Some are quite old and are often in disrepair. Some Centres depend on Headquarters for their replacement parts and supplies but the system does not always respond quickly to the Centres' requests. One Centre had to suspend the issue of its monthly newsletter because it had no ink and no paper. Another Centre said it had no address plates for its addressograph; another one had a cine projector but no screen.

77. Telex is an important piece of equipment which if readily available can have a significant influence on the work of the Centres. Most Centres have, more or less, limited access to telex machines but only eleven have their own, and these are mainly in the developed countries. DPI Headquarters plans to equip Centres with telex machines but little progress has been made so far owing to lack of funds. This, in the Inspectors' view, is regrettable. The use of telex belonging to other organizations is not very effective. The Centres have to take their turn; and some are located far away from the machines.

78. The Inspectors regard the provision of telex machines as of highest priority in any news organization and recommend that every effort be made to equip all Centres with this facility.

IV. RELATIONS BETWEEN DPI HEADQUARTERS AND UNICs

79. DPI is the hub of the network of UNICs. Its External Relations Division (ERD), as reported in A/C.5/31/14, p. 9, is responsible for their management and direction including their budget; ERD recommends the appointment of Centre Directors and their re-assignment to other duty stations. The Policy and Programme Section sees to the detailed planning and execution of the work programme of the Centres: it reviews and co-ordinates their operational requirements.

80. The Information Support Section keeps the Centres abreast of U.N. news and activities: it feeds the Centres with press releases, weekly summaries, copies of speeches and statements made by the Secretary-General, documents, pamphlets, posters, etc.

1. Printed material

81. DPI cannot compete with the international news agencies: at Headquarters there are extensive facilities for providing information to foreign correspondents. Despite this - and rightly - DPI provides the Centres with the official transcript of the news.

82. The question which inevitably arises is whether Headquarters should exercise some selectivity in the news it issues routinely to the different regions. The Inspectors are of the view that with a better knowledge at Headquarters of what specially interests individual regions and sub-regions, DPI staff can - and should - select the news that Centres will find relevant to their country or area. In this way, DPI will not merely be duplicating the work of the international news agencies but will be "beaming" to the regions and sub-regions stories which the agencies may not have covered but which are of special news value to those regions. This type of service will call for the presence at Headquarters of trained media personnel who by culture and experience have an affinity with individual regions and appreciate their sensibilities. Centres would of course continue to receive all publications which record the wide spectrum of U.N. activity.

83. As important as the content is the languages in which information is communicated. It is hardly satisfactory that UNICs in Bangkok, La Paz, New Delhi, Tokyo and Rio (to mention only a few) should have to translate news releases from DPI into the language of the country or issue the information in English with considerably reduced impact. Manning tables at the Centres do not provide translators. The Inspectors were told that there used to be English, French, Spanish and Arabic desks in the Press Section.

This practice was discontinued. The Inspectors are of the view that, where many countries speak a common language as in the case of Arabic and Spanish, they should receive all information for immediate release in the language of the country. DPI should provide for the necessary translation facilities at Headquarters. In other languages extensively used in one or a small number of countries, arrangements should be made to have translation done if possible with the help of a UNA or other non-governmental organization. Governments might also be willing to make some contribution to this necessary service.

84. Where important documents are concerned, the most rapid means of despatch should be used. Often the Centres do not receive information as rapidly as needed. The vagaries of the pouch service do not allow this: there were frequent complaints about its irregularity. One African Centre considered the despatch of the "Namibia Draft Declaration and Programme of Action" by pouch - at a time when this topic was headline news - less than discriminating. The "United Nations Today" (Suggestions for Speakers), which is used extensively at the time of UN Day celebrations, often arrives late when one or two advance copies despatched early by air mail would permit the Centres to make use of this valuable information in time for the celebrations.

85. On the basis of the documents and press releases received, the Centres issue their own press releases and newsletters. These are sent to their clientele. In one of the biggest countries in Asia, the Centre issues 3,000 copies of its newsletter (2,700 in English and 300 in one of the local languages). The country has hundreds of millions of inhabitants and the newsletter issued in such small numbers obviously has only limited impact. The problem is one of insufficient funds for distribution.

86. Background material is very useful to columnists for news analysis in newspapers and in weekly reviews. Some columnists acknowledged the usefulness of material received from time to time but expressed the view that DPI and the Centres did not sufficiently consider the specific needs of weekly magazines or their influence on opinion formation. The editor of one such weekly said he received more background material on the UN when he visited New York privately than he did through the UNIC in his country. In some developing countries, newspapers and magazines editors showed interest in publishing features already prepared by DPI or the UNIC but there was not enough production of this kind. In this field, UNICs could certainly do much more.

87. Of 42 Centres responding to the questionnaire on the use of press releases, 29 rated their use by large circulation newspapers of national coverage, and/or by radio stations as good. On the other hand, the rating in the case of rural and provincial papers, small circulation newspapers, technical and professional periodicals and large circulation periodicals was equally divided between good and fair.

2. Audio-visual material

88. Generally speaking, the Centres made good use of the recorded radio programmes issued by DPI. Radio stations in several countries found the productions to be of good professional quality. Some media personnel had reservations concerning the relevance of the material to their audience. All senior radio executives emphasized that the material which did not have regional or country interest was seldom used. The Inspectors consider that increasing stress must be placed on the provision of material relevant to the regions and sub-regions.

89. Television stations were interested in short news film and in features. Executives said they would welcome short clips from the abundance of film coverage given to the General Assembly and other UN Conferences. Their only caveat: that the news and features should be relevant.

90. Almost all Centres have a good stock of films, often 150 or more. The storage conditions are as a rule, however, inadequate. This leads to deterioration in quality. Some Centres have prepared film catalogues, which are sent to potential users. Although Centres have been informed by DPI which films should be withdrawn from circulation, a disposal policy is required to permit centres to destroy obsolete films or to give those that are still of interest but no longer required by the Centre to Organizations (such as schools or Archives) within the country.

91. Some users of films thought U.N. films did not excite sufficient interest; others thought that the older films were rather bland but that a sharper focus was apparent in recent films. The Centres should be encouraged to advise DPI as to which films are successful, which are not and why.

92. In Rome, out of 126 films catalogued, six were in Italian. In New Delhi, the UN films were largely in English. The Inspectors recognize the problems (not least that of finance) of producing many language versions of each film. However, if the films are available only in a language other than that of the country in which they are to be shown, they are bound to have less - or no appreciable - impact. The Inspectors understand that DPI has been looking into a method of providing sound tracks with music and effects, the narration to be provided in local languages on tapes. They regard this as a step in the right direction.

93. The Inspectors were informed that DPI does not allow commercial users of UN films to take excerpts from films for transmission on television. As a result, many TV companies make little use of UN films. The Inspectors consider that TV companies, commercial or otherwise, should be permitted to use excerpts from UN films without charge. The present restriction loses a good deal of "mileage" for the UN.

94. The practice of collaboration and/or joint productions with television organizations for the making of films in Member States is a sound one. DPI should continue to exploit it.

95. Through JUNIC some coordination in film production has been achieved and overlapping avoided in the work of DPI and the specialized agencies. More positive efforts at cooperation in this field could yield useful results.

96. The Inspectors examined some of the posters, charts and other graphic material produced to illustrate the work of the UN. Some of them were excellent, others were esoteric and unlikely to attract the broad public to whom they were addressed. The Inspectors consider that the aim should be to make UN illustrative material comprehensible to the average man.

3. Delays in answering requests made by UNICs

97. Almost all the Centres visited complained about the slow reaction of DPI to requests; whether for spares, materials, information or guidance. There were many examples of replies to letters and memoranda which took an inordinately long time to come through, or of letters unanswered, in some cases, eight months after the date of issue. Suffice it to say, these delays caused a great deal of discontent and frustration. The Centres already feel that DPI is very remote. Protracted delays in responding to their requests and suggestions heighten their feeling of isolation and neglect.

98. The Inspectors raised this matter with DPI when they visited New York and were not entirely satisfied with the explanations given. They feel that one of the possible reasons for these delays is the considerable compartmentalization and dispersion of control and decision-making at Headquarters.

4. Role of the Field Operations Service

99. The Inspectors noted that, for administrative and some personnel matters (particularly matters concerning general service staff), Directors had to address themselves to the Field Operations Service (FOS), a division of "General Services", instead of the External Relations Division of DPI. The FOS then treats with Personnel Services in respect of such personnel matters.

100. Psychologically and practically, this arrangement removes DPI from being at the core of decision-making on matters that concern the daily running and morale of the Centres. While DPI is consulted by FOS on substantive questions that arise, the Inspectors consider that it would be more organically sound for DPI to deal with these administrative and personnel questions itself, consulting Personnel Services or others as required.

5. Reporting to DPI

101. DPI requests information from UNICs on their work performance and on public and press response to UN happenings. For these purposes the Directors have to prepare a number of reports:

Administrative	weekly
On dissemination of information	monthly
Progress	quarterly
Film, on usage	quarterly

102. Information supplied in one report often appears in other reports and the Inspectors are of the view that, generally speaking, the reporting required is excessive. Reporting should be simplified in order to avoid overlapping or duplication and Directors should be encouraged to report promptly, not on the routine matters which their appointment as Directors demands they deal with, but on the events which are significant to UN planning at Headquarters or to the specialized agencies. In other words, reporting by exception would be preferable, with a semi-annual or annual progress report.

103. While they fully recognize the importance of feedback without which, as the Head of DPI has stressed, the DPI would not be able properly to formulate policy, the Inspectors consider that some rationalization is required here. A general complaint was that too much petty administrative work was required of the Centres. The Inspectors were of the same view.

104. The Centres send press clippings regularly to Headquarters. The Inspectors were told at DPI that a special unit was being established to analyze the material. Relevant clippings are sent by DPI to the Headquarters of the specialized Agencies.

V. RELATIONS BETWEEN MEMBER STATES AND UNICs

1. General relations

105. A Centre is opened on the basis of an agreement reached between a Member State and the UN. The host country offers the necessary facilities to enable the Centre to function properly. These facilities vary from one country to another depending on the contribution which the host country makes.

106. Some Governments actively support the operations of the Centres. Many provide direct assistance by making premises available free of charge, allowing the privilege of free postage and sometimes meeting substantial staff costs.

107. Since 1958, many delegates in the Fifth Committee have discussed Governmental assistance to Centres, and a number of Member States have demonstrated their willingness by meeting, either in part or in full, the cost of establishing and operating Information Centres in their countries. The General Assembly has also, by various resolutions since then requested the Secretary-General, inter alia, to establish such new Information Centres as appeared necessary and practicable, and "to enlist the cooperation of Member States concerned in providing all possible facilities for the establishment of such new Centres." (Res. 1405(XIV) of 1/12/59).

108. During their visits to various Centres, the Inspectors noted the importance of the involvement of host governments in the work of the Information Centres. In the view of the Inspectors, host governments should not be mere passive onlookers, but should play an active supporting role in making the work of the Centres more efficient.

2. Ministries of Foreign Affairs

109. In general, Heads of Departments and other officials welcomed the presence of Information Centres in their midst. Relations between the Centres and Ministries of Foreign Affairs tended however to be limited to the occasions of visits by UN officials and, particularly to the celebration of events such as "UN Day", Human Rights Day", "Year of Women" and "Year of the Child".

3. Ministries of Information

110. During discussions Ministry officials gave indications of UN themes that are of particular interest to their regions. Some mentioned that they received more valuable information material from the Regional Economic Commissions than from the Centres. The main criticisms were directed at: the absence of selectivity in the information material; lack of adaptation of the materials to the needs and requirements of the countries in particular, and the region in general; insufficiency of the information material and delays in supply.

4. The Press

111. The Inspectors had interviews with chief editors of official and privately-owned newspapers as well as representatives of press agencies. These interviews apart from confirming the views of the Ministry Information officials, elicited the following additional points:

- a) Close relationships exist with the staff of the Centres, although in practice a great deal of the contact was with locally-recruited information officers.
- b) The UN jargon is difficult to follow and its adaptation time-consuming. They would prefer UN documents and press releases to be written in simple, direct and readily understandable language.
- c) Many top UN officials whose word would carry weight are reluctant to be interviewed. Others when interviewed do not provide useful information. UN officials must "give" more in communicating information on the work and problems of the UN.
- d) One regional news agency which did not have funds to keep a representative in New York at the UN enquired whether DPI could not provide it with UN news directly.
- e) It was important that journalists be assisted to attend major international conferences organized by the United Nations system.

VI. RELATIONS BETWEEN UNICs AND INTEREST GROUPS

112. The Inspectors considered how much and to what extent UNICs have been sensitive to and have supported the work of interest groups. Educational institutions, for instance, are good ground in which to nurture UN ideals. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) also provide opportunities for extending awareness of the UN, its goals and achievements. These are areas UNICs must not neglect.

113. The Inspectors noted that, generally speaking, UNICs had not played a significant part in helping the creation of UN clubs or in strengthening existing clubs. Much more could be done also to make the aims and objectives as well as the successes and failures of the UN known to young people. This is a very special educational task but one that deserves more emphasis. The Inspectors were however favourably impressed by the number and activities of UNESCO clubs.

114. The Inspectors tried to get some idea of the extent to which teaching about the UN is included in the curriculum of the secondary schools and universities. The situation varies from country to country. By and large, in the countries visited, subjects on the UN are not normal features of the school curriculum. There are a few exceptions. In some countries teaching about the UN is done in the social sciences but is rather restricted in scope. At the universities, particularly in the faculties of Law and Economics, some courses on the UN and its institutions are provided, more often at the post-graduate level. In many faculties of Law there are students who choose UN topics for their doctoral theses. At one Centre visited by the Inspectors, they were informed by a Professor of International Law that about 60 students at his university were preparing their theses on subjects connected with the UN. The Secretary-General might consult with UNESCO to develop measures by which teaching about the United Nations could be intensified with the assistance of UNICs.

115. Within DPI itself, there is a section that deals with the work of NGOs. The section maintains contact with NGO representatives stationed in New York and with NGOs in different parts of the world. The United Nations Associations (UNAs) are well-known among the NGOs.

116. The Inspectors had a useful discussion with the Secretary-General of the World Federation of UNAs. There are some 62 national associations of which about 18 were considered dormant over the past two years. 21 had reported some activity such as the celebration of UN Day; 19 had regular programmes and 4 - USA, UK, Japan and Norway - were large associations with extensive programmes at both local and national levels.

117. The majority of UNAs are not as well developed as might be hoped but, recognizing their potential, the General Assembly has in many resolutions stressed the need for UNICs to increase their contacts with UNAs - and with other NGOs. Last year, the Head of DPI in a circular urged UNICs to assist local UNAs in every way possible.

118. One UNA visited by the Inspectors in a developed country had a membership of 25,000 persons. It publishes a newspaper, fact sheets on the UN, pamphlets and special publications as the need arises. Its President mentioned that the Association needs about four months' lead time to prepare and cover an event properly on a national scale. "1000 copies of a UN document for this purpose would be a mere drop in the ocean", he said. This is a strong Association and one which shows what a UNA can do when the human resources are available.

119. Bearing in mind the good results achieved by some UNAs the Inspectors consider that the General Assembly might wish to recommend that Member States, using the services of DPI, encourage the establishment and strengthening of UNAs. Some UNAs can share substantially in the dissemination of information on UN activities and DPI should enlist them as partners in this endeavour. This could be promoted gradually and on an experimental basis by concluding contracts with UNAs for specified information services. Under such an agreement, DPI could give a suitable subsidy to a UNA to enable it to carry out, at a cost lower than could be accomplished by a UNIC, an important information activity.

120. Other NGOs do good work for the UN as well. Some NGOs have been active, for example, in giving publicity to and challenging racism and racial discrimination. Membership is often made up of young people who organize meetings, mobilize opinion and publish material. (Some posters produced by one NGO were adopted by the UN Committee on Apartheid).

121. The Inspectors wish to draw attention in particular to one non-governmental organization, the United Schools Organization (USO), which was founded in India in 1951. It became a volunteer educational centre for the UN in 1953 with the aim of spreading information about the UN and its specialized agencies in Indian schools. The USO is made up of several subsidiary bodies. Its Council for Information disseminates information about the UN and the specialized agencies in the form of pamphlets, books and posters which are distributed to schools throughout India. The Council also organizes programmes for teachers to train them to teach UN courses. Since 1957, the Council has been holding the All-India UN Information Tests for students of the higher secondary schools in August of each year. 84,000 students from 1,056 schools have taken part in these tests up to August 1976. The USO also has an extensive publication programme including: (a) a periodical entitled "World of Information", (b) the Asian edition of the UN Monthly Chronicle; (c) a booklet entitled "UN in Schools", which was first issued in 1958 and has since been revised and brought up to date each year; and (d) the UN primer for students of secondary schools.

122. The USO maintains very good relations and co-operation with the UNIC, which informs it of all new UN publications and documents as they are received. The Inspectors hope that a similar school organization could be established in every developing country. They recommend that DPI, through its UNICs and in co-operation with UNESCO, should encourage this both by technical advice and some financial assistance in the form of travel grants to enable selected persons to visit and study the work of the Indian USO. Some publicity for the efforts of the USO would not be amiss.

VII. RELATIONS BETWEEN THE UNICs AND OTHER UN BODIES

123. Relations between the UNICs and other UN organizations such as UNDP, the Regional Economic Commissions and the specialized agencies vary from country to country. These relations depend essentially on the personalities of the representatives of these organizations. If personal relations are harmonious, there is a basis for a good working atmosphere and for the co-ordination of activities. But, generally speaking, the impression of the Inspectors was that there is room for improving relationships.

1. Regional Economic Commissions

124. The Information Services of the Regional Economic Commissions are closely linked with the work of the Commissions. The greater part of their time is devoted to publicizing the Commissions' activities : the broader claims of UN information take second place.

125. To cover its functions as a UNIC, DPI provides the Information Service of the Commissions with one professional post and very modest amounts for travel and hospitality.

2. UNDP

126. Thirteen Centres are under the regular direction of the Resident Representatives. Resident Representatives also sometimes act in the absence of the Centre Directors. The normal work of Resident Representatives is often so demanding that the functioning of the UNIC cannot be other than secondary to him. The Inspectors, however, found that the Resident Representatives generally give satisfactory guidance. There have, however, been some complaints about the comparative lack of transport facilities for the UNIC and the administrative control exercised over the UNIC by other staff of the UNDP office.

127. UNDP also provides administrative and financial services for a number of other UNICs. A few of the Centres said they could themselves perform some of these functions more satisfactorily.

128. Relations between UNDP and UNICs, where there are separate organizations, depend greatly on the respective personalities of the Resident Representative and the UNIC Director. Until the UN General Assembly resolution on restructuring, in which it was proposed that the Resident Representative should also represent the Secretary-General in the field, was adopted, there were sometimes disputes of jurisdiction and primacy between the two classes of officers.

129. Up to the time of writing this report no precise instructions concerning the matter have been issued. It is to be hoped that the decision made by ACC that the Resident Representative appointed by the Secretary-General should be the representative of the UN system in a given country will remove this source of friction and make for improved relations between Resident Representatives and Directors of Centres.

3. The Specialized Agencies

130. Relations with the specialized agencies depend in large measure on the type of representation of the specialized agency in the country, the number of projects being assisted by the agency and the agency's information policy. The Joint United Nations Information Committee (JUNIC) attempts to co-ordinate information work of the UNICs with that of the specialized agencies.

131. The true purpose of the information work of the United Nations organizations is not to publicize individual agencies as such, important though their separate responsibilities are, but to create a climate of understanding and support among the peoples of the world for the aims of the entire United Nations system. Thus, there is a need for UN agencies to co-operate by merging scarce resources for common objectives. As the Resident Representatives have a leadership role in development activities in the field, so UNICs should co-ordinate and lead the public information efforts of the UN away from Headquarters.

132. The organizations of the United Nations system are spending some \$46 million under the Regular Budget annually on public information of which the United Nations itself accounts for 46%. The Inspectors consider that if the use of these funds was better harmonized, their impact would be greater.

VIII. INFORMATION CENTRES IN DEVELOPED COUNTRIES

133. The Inspectors studied the staffing and work of UNICs in six developed countries : London, Paris, Rome, Moscow, Tokyo and Washington. Visits were made to the first four of the six named. The Information Service at the European Office in Geneva is dealt with separately in the next chapter.

134. Of the six Centres mentioned, three are headed by Directors and three by Acting Directors. Altogether they have 15 professionals (almost 25% of all professional staff of the DPI in the field) and 44 General Service staff. The Paris Centre, with five professionals and 13 General Service staff, has the most.

135. The accommodation of the Centres varies: while the Paris UNIC is located in a building belonging to UNESCO Headquarters and has reasonably good accommodation, the UNIC in Rome suffers from cramped and inadequate accommodation, in spite of the fact that it is located in one of the main squares in Rome. Its library and documentation services need much more space.

136. The Moscow Information Centre is located in a building rented by the Centre through the Government in the heart of the capital, near Government offices, educational institutions, radio and TV stations, the NGOs and press centres. Although the office accommodation for staff is suitable, the facilities for the library leave much to be desired.

137. Relations between these Centres and the DPI Headquarters are similar to those of the other UNICs, as already described in this report.

138. In three of the four countries visited by the Inspectors there are well-organized active United Nations Associations (UNAs) which greatly support the activities of the Centres. In the U.K. the UNA has 25,000 members, 10 regional councils and 30 branches. In Rome, the Italian Society for International Organizations (SIOI), located in the same block as the Centre, combines research and the dissemination of information on international affairs and institutes. It has become the focal point of the UNAs and participates in their work. The Moscow Centre has the support of the Soviet UNA which comprises more than 400 members and collaborates with governmental, educational and other institutions.

139. A general complaint among the Centres visited by the Inspectors was that non-information activities took up a high proportion of their time. The non-information work usually had to do with servicing of the diplomatic pouch, arrangements for visits of high officials from Headquarters, recruitment interviews and coverage of meetings of UN organizations in the country. The Inspectors consider that these complaints are not fully justified. DPI should examine this matter in order to find ways and means to rationalize the use of professional staff time in non-information activities. In one of the Centres visited, the Inspectors found that at least one staff member could be released from the services of the Centre for duties elsewhere in DPI.

140. Three of the six Centres are headed by Acting Directors who carry this title because they are citizens of the host countries. The Inspectors consider that if a citizen is qualified to head an Information Centre and is so appointed he should be given the full status of Director and receive the emoluments appropriate to the post.

141. Of the six Centres, the UN pays rent for four : London, Moscow, Tokyo and Washington. UNESCO provides office space for the Paris Centre in return for space provided by the UN to the UNESCO office in New York. The Secretary-General should continue efforts to persuade the Governments concerned to meet the rental costs of UNIC premises in their country.

IX. THE UNITED NATIONS INFORMATION SERVICE IN GENEVA

142. The United Nations Information Service (UNIS) in Geneva is a special one; it is neither a part of the Economic Commission for Europe nor of the Geneva Office of the UN. Its activities are not limited to the European region but go beyond. Some of the organizations it services, e.g., UNCTAD, UNHCR, UNDR0, are not regional in character. It covers a large number of meetings organized by the United Nations in a way similar to DPI-Headquarters. It is in fact a microcosm of DPI.

143. Budget. The budget of the Service represents a significant part of the total DPI budget - some 7.6% in 1978-79 or 20% of the budget of all UNICs. The budget of the Service has increased owing to a growth in activities, the need to replace equipment, increases in staff and the fall of the U.S. dollar.

144. The consideration of draft budget proposals for the Geneva Office is a somewhat complex procedure and does not permit those directly concerned to play a sufficient role. It would be preferable for the budget consultations to take place in New York with the participation of the Director of the UNIS Office in Geneva, DPI and the Budget Division in Headquarters.

145. Staff. There are 16 professionals and 22 General Service staff. Some of the professionals have had no special training or prior experience in the communications media.

146. None of the Units in the Service is headed by a staff member from a developing country. The only Asian on staff is the Director of the Service who is from a developed country of Asia.

147. There is some imbalance in the distribution of staff among Units. For example, the Press Unit is composed of a chief and only four press attachés. In times of heavy workload, additional assistance is secured temporarily from New York. There are 200 accredited correspondents in Geneva of whom 100 have their offices in the Palais des Nations. Forty per cent of them work in French and about 50 of them are regularly on the spot. The work with journalists consists either of weekly briefings (once a week on Fridays) or responding to individual journalist's enquiries. A similar service is rendered to the permanent missions in Geneva. One of the tasks of the Unit, if not the main one, is to cover meetings. There are about 8,000 meetings yearly and they are covered on a selective basis. In spite of the dedication of the staff, it is impossible to secure full coverage even of the most important meetings.

148. The staffing of the French section presents a problem. Ordinarily, meetings are covered in English by three staff members of the Unit. Their papers are processed by the Chief of the Unit and after that sent to the only professional staff member in the Unit who works in French. He translates the text into French. To offset the inevitable delays, a post was loaned temporarily from New York. By contrast, the Public Relations and Publications Section, which has four professionals and ten General Service staff, appears overstaffed.

149. The Radio Services and Visual Distribution Section consists of two professionals and four General Service staff. It has 11 studios, of which 3 are not equipped; four are in daily use. During a major conference, other studios, under the Plenary Hall, are put to use. Some of the equipment is reportedly reaching the stage of obsolescence. The monthly radio programmes offer great scope for expansion but the problem is in the comparative lack of information on UN family activities in the field. Documentary films and news programmes about the UN, such as "Le tour d'horizon", have been well received by audiences in schools, universities and clubs.

150. Public Relations and Documentation Section. This Section has three functions: (i) external relations, which is concerned with major UN events (UN Day, Human Rights Day, etc.); (ii) the documentation and reference library; (iii) and the answering of letters from schools, universities, governments and associations. There are 3 Units covering the respective functions. The office of the Chief of Section has 14 staff members altogether, of whom 4 are professionals. The Section maintains working relations with NGOs. Recently, a small hall was opened in the new building of the Palais for the use of NGOs. Geneva is the headquarters of many NGOs and there is scope for useful work. The Section also organizes training courses for information and reference assistants from other UNICs.

151. Visual Production Service. Relations between this service and DPI Headquarters leave something to be desired. Headquarters exercises control but is not always able to devote sufficient time to the solution of problems. Differences in professional views also produce difficulties. As an example, the difficulties encountered in the production of the film on the "International Court of Justice" may be cited. First, there were consultations with Headquarters before plans were finalised. The synopsis was sent to New York and was approved. Shooting started but later New York required that some historical aspects of the International Court of Justice be included in the film. This suggestion came at the editing stage. It is costly and inefficient to change plans in the middle of production of a film. Similar delays have been reported in the making of three other films.

152. The Inspectors consider that more delegation of authority is required to avoid waste and duplication of effort and that this should be accompanied by a transfer of resources from Headquarters. In other words, instead of Headquarters using staff time to control and revise the work of the Geneva office, it would be more efficient if qualified staff were made available directly to Geneva for production purposes and control at Headquarters was limited to the review and approval of work programmes.

153. In summary, firstly, since the Information Service in Geneva is not part of the UN Office in Geneva and since its budget is part of DPI's, its draft budget should be scrutinized in New York in consultation with the Director of the Service. Secondly, it is noted that the staff of the Service comes almost entirely from the developed world. Since responsibilities of the Service are not purely regional, the composition of its staff should better reflect the membership of the UN Organization.

X. NEW DIRECTIONS

154. So far, the Inspectors have examined the functioning of UNICs and made recommendations intended to improve their work under the existing structure and mandate. The new major developments in information, however, as foreshadowed by the decisions of the General Conference of UNESCO and the UN General Assembly in 1978, could well make fresh demands on UNICs. If a new Information Order is to have meaning, there must be more substantial world-wide coverage of UN activities as well as a change in vision. At present, UNICs are located in only 59 Member States and although many of these have responsibility for disseminating information in neighbouring countries, this function is largely neglected.

155. In making proposals for changes in the structure and functions of UNICs, the Inspectors have limited themselves to reforms which they believe can be introduced without an increase in the overall budget of DPI. The Inspectors envisage that a period of 3 to 4 years will be necessary to move from the present to the revised system proposed.

1. Structural Changes

156. Regionalization. The Inspectors consider that far too much decision-making, often on very routine matters, takes place at DPI Headquarters. The work of the 59 Centres limps and staggers because of DPI's heavily centralized approach to its duties. What appears to be a plethora of small units at Headquarters does not encourage swift action nor make co-ordination easy. Furthermore, the system induces in the UNICs an over-dependence on Headquarters - it does not put a premium on initiative in the field. In the world of news, where time is always of the essence, more resilience needs to be injected into the system. The Inspectors consider that the UN Information Service should be regionalized.

157. Regional Centres. The proposal is as follows: there should be a small number of Regional UNICs each co-ordinating and supervising the operation of UNICs and the flow of UN information within and out of its region. DPI would set the policy which should govern the work of the Regional UNICs, but they would be given authority to execute the regional programme and to produce information material relevant to the needs of the region. DPI would thus delegate to the Regional Centres authority for the operations of UNICs in their regions. The Inspectors consider that the UN Information Services now attached to Regional Commissions should continue to supply information services to those Commissions, but should be set up independently and with autonomy to take charge of the regional UN information programme.

158. Sub-regional UNICs (SRCs). Taking into account socio-economic differences among countries as well as differences in size, culture and language, the Inspectors consider that countries with some homogeneity or very large countries should have their information needs co-ordinated by a Sub-Regional Centre. This Centre would work under the guidance of the Regional UNIC. Where the SRC served a single large country, its main aim would be to service that country. Where it co-ordinated the needs of a group it would be responsible for the functioning of UNICs within its sub-region and for the dissemination of UN information where there was no UNIC.

159. Number of Regional and Sub-Regional UNICs. The Inspectors envisage that the number of such Centres could be about 25 to 30 in all. They would take over from Centres already in existence.

160. National Centres. There are two possibilities with regard to those Centres (about 30) which are not transformed into Regional or Sub-Regional Centres:

- (a) they may be closed; or
- (b) their nucleus retained in some form to make best use of the facilities which are already in place.

The Inspectors favour a situation which would allow for the continuing use of the libraries, film stock etc. and, not least, the good will which has been built up in these Centres. They therefore recommend that, subject to adjustments which would take cognizance of special needs, the staff of National Centres should be reduced to a nucleus of about four persons (details under "Staffing Patterns").

161. Correspondents. On the assumption that coverage of UN information must be world-wide and taking into account that some 90 countries would have no direct link with UN Information Centres, the Inspectors make the following recommendations:

- (a) that in a country which has no Regional, Sub-Regional or National Centre, a freelance journalist may be appointed, full-time or part-time, on contract to supply and publish stories on UN activities and generally to disseminate UN information. Such a correspondent would work under the authority of and under contract with a Sub-Regional or Regional Centre;
- (b) that in countries where DPI-Headquarters is satisfied there is a UNA or other appropriate non-governmental organization which can carry out the responsibilities, a contract between the Regional or Sub-Regional Centre and the UNA or other NGO may be entered into for the supply and dissemination of information on UN activities both within the country and outside;
- (c) that, as an alternative to (a) or (b), a local journalist may be employed with a Regional or Sub-Regional Centre and paid by funds of the Centre to gather, publish and disseminate information on UN activities. Such a journalist might either be attached to the staff of UNDP in the country or to an approved UNA. He should be paid in the local professional scale, as recommended in para. 55. The Inspectors consider that different solutions will fit different situations but that in all cases the Regional or Sub-Regional Centre should be a party to making the choice.

2. Functional Changes

162. The functions of the Regional and Sub-Regional UNICs should include the following:

- (a) Disseminating information on the objectives and achievements of the United Nations system, particularly in economic and social fields, and assisting the mass media of the region or sub-region to obtain information about the United Nations system.

- (b) Selecting and adapting information material prepared by DPI Headquarters to ensure its relevance to the region or sub-region and its presentation in local languages.
- (c) Preparing original information material on United Nations activities with the assistance, when necessary, of journalists working under contract, and disseminating the material within the region or sub-region.
- (d) Co-producing information material with governmental information officers or media organizations in the region.
- (e) Obtaining and preparing information on the development achievements of countries of the region or sub-region and disseminating this information widely through press agencies and other means with the assistance of DPI Headquarters, other UNICs and the information services of the specialized agencies.
- (f) Assisting the Resident Representatives of the region or sub-region by providing technical advice to them and at their request to governments on technical co-operation plans and projects in the fields of information. Participating, when requested, in reviews of such projects.

163. In carrying out the above functions (except (f)), the Regional or Sub-Regional UNICs would be assisted by their correspondents (organizations or individual journalists) in each country.

164. Finally, UNICs should be functionally associated with the information personnel or offices of the organizations of the United Nations system located in developing countries (Regional Commissions, UNESCO, etc.), (see also paragraph 154). The precise way in which this should be done should be negotiated between the agencies concerned and approved by ACC. The aim should be to ensure integration of information services in the field in accordance with the broad policy established by the General Assembly's resolution on "Restructuring of the Economic and Social Sectors of the United Nations System" (A/RES/32/197).

3. Work plans

165. In the past UNICs were not asked to present annual work plans to DPI. As a result they did not have to address themselves to framing concrete programmes whose relevance and likely efficacy could be judged. There was therefore little opportunity for Centres in the various regions to propose even short-term programmes to improve the receptivity of their region to UN information. For instance, a Festival in which artists commemorate in song, music or dance, aspects of the challenge to the human spirit might well be an appropriate way of celebrating Human Rights Day. Something of this nature has in fact been sponsored by at least one Centre. Planning which takes into account these possible initiatives by individual countries could strengthen regional perspectives in UN information. The Inspectors would recommend that

all Regional or Sub-Regional UNICs should prepare annual work plans to be submitted to the appropriate Regional Centre. DPI should consult with the Regional Centres to devise a suitable format for such work plans. The overall global work programme would be approved by DPI but its execution would be left to the responsibility of the Regional Centre. Work plans should include quantitative targets against which a Centre's performance might be analysed and norms established.

4. The Development Story

166. The General Assembly Mandate. Each year the General Assembly instructs DPI to give due publicity to the major issues confronting the world community: Peace and International Security, Disarmament, Racial Discrimination and Apartheid, Law of the Sea, Human Rights, Women's Rights, Decolonization, the New International Economic Order, Environment, etc. DPI's output naturally reflects this emphasis.

167. UN activities in the field. The Inspectors appreciated the efforts made by DPI to carry out the will of the General Assembly. Sufficient attention, however, has not been paid to the work of the United Nations in the field. Some Centres have the view that once they had re-issued the DPI material (which follows the General Assembly mandate), they had fully discharged their responsibilities. The Inspectors consider this view to be limited. Everywhere they went, journalists, government information personnel, radio and television executives found the UNIC activities deficient in one serious respect - insufficient publicity of concrete UN activities in the country or region. The Inspectors believe that Centres must not merely depend on DPI for information material on the major political/economic issues as these are played out in the General Assembly and in the conferences and fora of Member States, but must assist in promoting the concrete developmental work for which the UN is responsible and which is insufficiently known in individual countries.

168. National Development Efforts. The question has been asked whether the development efforts and successes of national governments should not also be publicized by the network of UNICs. On the premise that knowledge of development progress in one Member State could be of benefit to another, the Inspectors would not exclude this type of information from the purview of UNICs. Also, if a new Information Order is to be a priority concern, the UN should contribute its resources to help redress the current imbalance in the flow of information. The Inspectors consider therefore that the Regional or Sub-Regional Centres should have authority to publicize national projects as well where such information is newsworthy and would be of interest or benefit to other Member States.

5. Human Resources

169. Use of Nationals: In para.55 the Inspectors have made proposals for upgrading certain local staff to "local professionals". In para. 140, the Inspectors have made a recommendation concerning the appointment of nationals as Directors of Centres. The experience of the Inspectors during their visits has been that the locally recruited Information Assistants who have had training or experience as media journalists, mainly in the field of newspapers, keep lively contact with other media personnel and understand local information needs and sensibilities. The Inspectors are accordingly persuaded that in the several countries there exist nationals professionally capable of supervising the information job required of a UNIC. Such persons should not be barred from heading UNICs in their country.

170. UN practice has hitherto maintained that a national should not head a UNIC in his country. The Inspectors disagree with this view. Because of their understanding of the local milieu, nationals properly chosen have a significant advantage over non-nationals: nationals understand the country, they know the field. The Inspectors therefore urge a re-consideration of the principle which would exclude nationals from heading UNICs in their own country and recommend that this restriction be removed.

171. Recruitment for Regional and Sub-Regional Centres: In a similar vein, the Inspectors also suggest the appointment of qualified persons from the regions or sub-regions as professionals in the UNICs there.

172. Career Development and Training: The Inspectors have the impression that not enough attention has been paid to these two aspects of staff welfare. In a real sense they go hand in hand with decentralization to the regions and sub-regions; it should be practicable to mount the kind of training programmes which will strengthen career interests and toughen morale.

173. Staffing Patterns: Below the Inspectors set out three tentative patterns which might apply to Regional, Sub-Regional and National UNICs respectively under the new regime.

(a) Regional UNICs

Their responsibility for programming, co-ordination (see para. 157) and for the adaptation and preparation of information material would be considerable and they should therefore have more staff than the Sub-Regional UNICs. A typical staffing pattern might be as follows:

Professional

- 1 Director
- 2 Information Officers (international)
- 3 or 4 Information Officers (local professionals)
- 1 Librarian (local professional)

General Service

- 1 Administrative Assistant/Documentalist
- 1 Secretary/Receptionist
- 2 Clerk/Typists
- 1 Driver/office machine operator/projectionist
- 1 Cleaner/messenger/office machine operator

(b) Sub-Regional UNICs

Professional

- 1 Director
- 2 Information Officers (local professionals)
- 1 Librarian (local professional)

General Service

- 1 Administrative Assistant/Documentalist
- 1 Secretary/Receptionist
- 1 Clerk/Typist
- 1 Driver/office machine operator/projectionist
- 1 Cleaner/messenger/office machine operator

(c) National UNICs (on reduced scale)

- 1 Information Officer (local professional)
- 1 Librarian (local professional)
- 1 Secretary/Typist/Receptionist
- 1 Clerk/Messenger/Cleaner/Projectionist

174. Estimate of staff required: It is roughly estimated that about 40 regionally recruited professionals (compared to 68 at present) would be required for Regional and Sub-Regional UNICs. In addition, some 150 local professionals (at present they are in the General Service category) would be required, plus some 190 General Service staff.

175. The professional staff should be chosen for their competence and, equally important, their thorough knowledge of the structure, practices and requirements of the information media in their region. The local professional staff and the General Service Staff should be recruited from within the country in which the UNIC is located. Only if this is not possible should they be recruited from other countries in the region or sub-region.

6. Financial Implications

176. It is not possible at this stage to make precise cost estimates. However, in the following paragraphs suggestions are made to guide the making of cost estimates and attribution of funds. The Inspectors believe that it will be possible to introduce the revised structure and functions for UNICs gradually without increasing the overall budget of DPI, if governments undertake to meet the cost of rental and maintenance of the premises of UNICs in their country.

177. Distribution of costs between DPI Headquarters and UNICs: At present, UNICs have 34% of the total DPI budget. For the reasons given in Chapter B.1, and particularly paragraph 23, the Inspectors believe that this percentage should be gradually increased until it reaches at least 50%.

178. Communications: Some host governments may be prepared to pay some or all communications costs. If not, an adequate provision, including its own telex, should be made for each UNIC. This will be a most important ingredient of the budget.

179. Premises: The UNICs should be located in countries where premises (including maintenance and utilities) can be provided free of charge either by the government or in a building occupied by other United Nations organizations. Exceptions should be made only in the least developed countries and then on a temporary basis until rent free office space can be provided.

180. Contracts for the preparation, adaptation and translation of information material: The precise amounts would depend upon local costs but it is important that adequate provision be made. However, most UNICs in developed countries would not require such funds or only small amounts, since they have fewer problems of language or adaptation of material. For other UNICs, the amount might range from \$10,000 to \$20,000 a year.

181. Contracts with "correspondents" of the Sub-Regional UNICs: The amounts of these contracts will depend upon local costs in each country and will vary considerably. Some 90 odd contracts will be required to cover all countries in which Sub-Regional UNICs are not located. Their cost might be between \$1 and \$2 million per year.

182. Travel: Funds should be sufficient to permit required travel within the area including at least two visits per year of staff of the Sub-Regional UNIC to each of the countries it covers, or visits by the correspondents to the Sub-Regional UNIC. In addition, there should be one meeting per year of the UNICs and their correspondents at the Regional UNIC located at the Headquarters of each Regional Economic Commission.

183. Hospitality: Information work requires that each UNIC have an adequate budget for hospitality.

7. Conclusion

184. The Inspectors consider that the proposals made in this Chapter for the development of the UN Information system can build a more comprehensive service at roughly the same cost. The new system will not be as thorough-going as the information specialist would wish but within the limitations of the UN budget it would be feasible. A major ingredient of its success will however be the degree of support the system receives from governments. If governments consider the dissemination of UN information a matter of major concern, the new directions suggested in this Chapter can provide a viable avenue for change.

XI. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations are summarized below in the order in which they appear in the report and under the heading of the report to which they relate.

Public Information Resources and their Adequacy

Budgets

Recommendation 1: The trend towards a larger share of the total DPI budget being devoted to UNICs should continue at least until UNICs account for 50% of the total DPI budget (paras. 20-23).

Recommendation 2: The distribution of UNICs' budgets among objects of expenditure should be changed to provide more funds for operating expenses. The percentage of UNICs' funds devoted to staff costs is too high and leaves insufficient funds for travel, communications and equipment (paras. 24-34).

Staffing

Recommendation 3: To help alleviate the shortage of staff at many UNICs posts should be transferred to them from DPI Headquarters and some reallocation of staff among UNICs should be made while taking into account Recommendation 2 (paras. 35-37).

Recommendation 4: The geographical composition of DPI staff is unbalanced and action is required urgently to redress the imbalance in favour of developing countries (paras. 38-48).

Recommendation 5: The need for highly qualified professional public information staff has been stressed by the General Assembly; further efforts are needed to attain this objective (paras. 49-53).

Recommendation 6: The information and reference assistants of UNICs now in the General Service category should be classified as local professionals following the example of UNICEF (paras. 54-57).

Premises, Libraries, Equipment

Premises

Recommendation 7: A minimum space norm for UNICs should be established and should provide adequately for the library, reading room and store (paras. 58-66).

Libraries

Recommendation 8: UNICs libraries which are a nucleus for the Centres' contact with the public should be given adequate facilities, prompt support and regular professional guidance. Similarly, the servicing of depository libraries should be improved, and regular contact maintained between them and the Centres (paras. 67-75).

Recommendation 9: A career development plan should be introduced for Librarians/Reference Assistants of UNICs accompanied by an in-service training programme (para 71).

Equipment

Recommendation 10: Arrangements should be made to ensure that equipment is in regular running order and that consumable material is always available. Highest priority should be given to equipping UNICs with telex (paras. 76-78).

Relations between DPI Headquarters and UNICs

Printed materials (press releases, summaries, etc.)

Recommendation 11: DPI should carefully select the material it sends to UNICs and concentrate on that which responds to the interests of the area covered by the UNIC (paras. 82).

Recommendation 12: The DPI distribution service and techniques should be improved to ensure that information material reaches UNICs in time (paras. 84).

Recommendation 13: UNICs should make greater efforts to provide timely background material for newspaper and magazine editors and the national press services (paras. 86).

Audio-visual information

Recommendation 14: A more formal disposal policy for films and other material should be introduced (para 90).

Recommendation 15: Television broadcasters should be permitted to use excerpts from UN films without charge (para. 93).

Recommendation 16: Posters should be designed so as to be more easily comprehensible to the general public (para. 96).

Delays

Recommendation 17: Frequent and excessive delays by Headquarters in responding to requests and queries from UNICs should be eliminated (paras. 97-98).

Role of Field Operations Service

Recommendation 18: The Field Operations Service should not be involved in the administrative and personnel questions of UNICs (paras. 99-100).

Reporting to DPI

Recommendation 19: Reporting should be simplified and should cover substantive, not routine matters. There should be a semi-annual or annual progress report (paras. 101-102).

Relations between Member States and UNICs

Recommendation 20: Host Governments should play a more active role in making the work of UNICs more effective (paras. 105-108).

Relations between UNICs and interest groups

Schools, universities, scholars

Recommendation 21: More efforts are required by UNICs to enlist the co-operation of educational institutions and United Nations Clubs (paras. 112-113).

Recommendation 22: UNESCO should be consulted on measures to intensify teaching about the United Nations in schools (para. 114).

Non-governmental organizations

Recommendation 23: The General Assembly might wish to recommend that Member States facilitate the establishment and strengthening of UNAs and that in doing so they receive full co-operation and technical advice from DPI. UNAs should become partners of UNICs in the dissemination of information (paras. 115-120).

Recommendation 24: In some countries where United Nations Associations (UNAs) are well organized or where active United Nations or UNESCO clubs exist, the Secretary-General should on an experimental basis, possibly under a contractual arrangement, allow such organizations to share with UNICs in the dissemination of UN information (para. 119).

Recommendation 25: Commendable efforts being made by individual NGOs such as the United Schools Organization of India should be acknowledged, widely publicized and supported (paras. 121-122).

The role of UNICs in developed countries

Recommendation 26: Where UNICs are headed by "Acting Directors" because they are citizens of the host country, they should be given the title of Director (para. 140).

Recommendation 27: The Secretary-General should continue efforts to persuade the Governments concerned to meet the rental costs of UNIC premises in their country (para. 141).

United Nations Public Information Service in Geneva (UNIS)

Recommendation 28: The complex procedure for the preparation of the budget of the UNIS should be simplified (paras. 143-144).

Recommendation 29: The composition of the professional staff of the UNIS should be re-examined to improve geographical distribution and to ensure better professional qualifications. The staff should be more realistically deployed among the units (paras. 145-153).

Recommendation 30: More delegation of authority, particularly for the production of visual material, is required from Headquarters to avoid duplication of effort (paras. 151-152).

New Directions

Recommendation 31: The UN Information services should be regionalized within a transitional period of 3 to 4 years. Regional Centres independent of Regional Commissions should be established as well as sub-regional Centres to cover very large countries or homogeneous groups of countries (paras. 155-159).

Recommendation 32: A nucleus of about four staff members should be retained at those national UNICs which do not become Regional or Sub-Regional UNICs (para. 160).

Recommendation 33: Individual journalists or approved organizations should be employed as correspondents to write and disseminate information on the UN. Journalists may be assigned to UNDP offices or to approved UNAs or UN Clubs as correspondents of UNICs (para. 161).

Recommendation 34: National and Sub-Regional UNICs should each year present work plans to the Regional Centre. DPI would approve a global plan and Regional Centres would execute their section of the plan (para. 165).

Recommendation 35: UNICs must assist in publicizing the concrete development work of the UN in the field (para. 167).

Recommendation 36: UNICs should contribute to the dissemination of information on the development achievements of Member States (para. 168).

Recommendation 37: The staffing pattern of UNICs should be revised in accordance with the suggested new structure and priority should be given to recruiting staff from the country, region or sub-region of the UNIC. There is need for career development planning and for more training of the staff of UNICs (paras. 169-175).
