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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 12th MEETING

Chairman: RODRIGUEZ-MEDINA (Colombia)

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

AGENDA ITEM 72: QUESTIONS RELATING TO INFORMATION (continued) (A/SPC/38/L.3 and L.5)

- (a) REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION (continued) (A/38/21)
- (b) REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued) (A/38/387 and Add.1)
- (c) REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION (continued) (A/38/457)

1. Mr. HAYASHI (Japan) drew attention to the wide disparity between the developed and the developing countries in the field of information and observed that all Member States shared the developing countries' desire for the mass media to provide more balanced reporting of their political, economic, social and cultural affairs. Since inaccurate information about a developing nation could adversely affect its nation-building efforts, the international community must seek the means of enhancing the accuracy, objectivity, fairness and balance of mass media reporting.

2. However, it was also important to proceed with extreme caution in fulfilling that difficult task. Freedom of thought and freedom of expression were the most important of all human rights. On a personal level, they were essential to the pursuit of self-fulfilment. On a broader level, they were essential to the development of a healthy and free society, in which people and organizations representing all points of view could express their opinions freely.

3. His Government listened to criticism and considered constructive proposals from as wide a public as possible, and it encouraged its people to monitor its activities and to express their views. Only in that way could the Government enact policies which responded to the needs of its people.

4. However, that process could be carried out only when there was free and wide circulation of information, unimpeded access to information and uncensored, independent mass media. In that context, his Government believed that the disparity between the developed and the developing countries should be corrected by gradually enhancing the media capabilities of the developing nations, without imposing national or international controls on either the flow or the content of information. His delegation therefore supported paragraph 13 of the recommendations adopted by the Committee on Information (A/38/21, p. 23). However, his Government would not associate itself with any proposal which might suggest the establishment of a set of principles or norms that would in any way orient, guide, control or regulate the activities of the mass media for any purpose. Such restraints had never served the long-term interests of any country or civilization.

5. Japan had been making considerable efforts to extend economic co-operation to the developing countries in the field of information infrastructures and related human resources development. Within the context of the International Programme for

(Mr. Hayashi, Japan)

the Development of Communication (IPDC), Japan had announced a contribution of \$300,000, and he expressed the hope that the projects adopted by the Programme's Intergovernmental Council would be executed effectively.

6. The public image of the United Nations must be enhanced if it was to continue to receive support from the international community, and, in his Government's opinion, the Department of Public Information (DPI) had been carrying out that difficult task with admirable effectiveness. The recommendations contained in the report of the Joint United Nations Information Committee (A/AC.198/68) on public perceptions of the United Nations system should also be implemented, but he stressed that the Secretariat must be cautious and strictly impartial, particularly in dealing with criticism of the United Nations. The most effective way of enhancing the Organization's image was to provide world public opinion with information about the concrete achievements of the United Nations, especially in the non-political fields. To that end, the Secretariat should carefully examine the expectations people around the world had of the United Nations.

7. Referring to the role of the Committee on Information, he expressed concern about the fact that a growing number of recommendations had been adopted, both in that Committee and in various other committees, requesting DPI to begin new projects or to expand its existing programmes. Such recommendations were adopted without any indication of priority or any regard for the financial and personnel constraints of DPI. His delegation feared that that situation would oblige DPI to spread its available resources too thin and would inevitably lead to a deterioration of the quality of its activities. In his delegation's opinion, the Committee on Information should exercise its co-ordinating function and, with the co-operation of Member States, the Organization should exercise self-restraint.

8. Clearly, the report and recommendations submitted by the Committee on Information reflected a sincere commitment to compromise, and he expressed the hope that the tradition of seeking a consensus on questions relating to information would be maintained during the current session.

9. Mr. NOWAK (Poland) said that the general climate of international relations was influenced to a considerable extent by the scope and character of exchanges of information. Unfortunately, the situation had not improved over the past year and, in some respects, had even deteriorated. Hostile radio propaganda, particularly the propaganda broadcast by so-called "Radio Free Europe", contributed to the deterioration in international relations. Such behaviour showed deliberate disregard for international law and was designed to destabilize other Governments and States. Poland was one of the targets of such unlawful actions. Although his delegation was aware of the objective reporting of certain Western mass media and their contributions to the promotion of international understanding, it felt that negative phenomena were on the rise and should become the subject of serious dialogue.

10. The large-scale technological transformations in the information and communication field deepened existing imbalances. Technologically stronger

(Mr. Nowak, Poland)

countries were tempted to use their advantage to the detriment of the cultural and ideological identity of other States. Such information imperialism required constant attention in order to prevent new problems and tensions from arising. The establishment of a new, more just and more effective world information and communication order, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 34/182, was an urgent task of great political importance. While Poland fully shared the concern of developing countries with regard to the technological imbalances in the field of information and communication, his Government felt that the new order should also include basic political and legal principles governing the exchange of information. Furthermore, steps should be taken to balance the flow of information so that all nations could benefit from it equally.

11. While affirming the importance of freedom of information, his delegation emphasized the importance of objective information and respect by the news media for the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of States. A proper balance between freedom of expression through the various communication media and the responsible use of those media must be established.

12. A common effort was required in order to facilitate the freer and wider dissemination of information and encourage the mass media to promote détente and trust between peoples. UNESCO and the Committee on Information were the proper forums for a sober, businesslike dialogue in that regard. It was regrettable that certain delegations ignored the legitimate concerns of others and, under the pretext of protecting freedom of information, rejected differing views without considering their merits. More attention seemed to be given to political affiliation than to the matter under consideration.

13. UNESCO had made an important and tangible contribution to efforts to establish a new world information and communication order. The UNESCO Declaration on Fundamental Principles concerning the Contribution of the Mass Media to Strengthening Peace and International Understanding, to the Promotion of Human Rights and to Countering Racism, Apartheid and Incitement to War was a significant step in that direction. The work of both UNESCO and the General Assembly should be focused on the same objective and should complement each other.

14. The report of the Director-General of UNESCO (A/38/457) demonstrated the vast potential of that organization in promoting co-operation in the field of information. He expressed satisfaction at the report of the Committee on Information (A/38/387) and said that his delegation was prepared to support the United Nations public information policies and activities, as specified in that document. The efforts to stress the role of the Organization in promoting disarmament and harmonious relations between States should be increased. United Nations activities in the economic and social field should also be emphasized. Lastly, his delegation did not support the view that the main function of the Committee on Information was to monitor DPI's information policies. As a regular subsidiary organ of the General Assembly, that Committee should deal with all aspects of information, including the political aspects.

15. Mr. LOGOGLU (Turkey) stressed the importance which his delegation attached to the principle of freedom of information, which should be the corner-stone of all efforts in the field of information. If people were properly informed, they could improve the quality of their opinions and their ability to make better choices. Accordingly, his delegation regarded freedom of information as a basic right, whose natural corollary was the free flow of information, both within and between States.

16. Paradoxically, the modern world was characterized both by revolutionary improvements in means of communication and by less international understanding than ever. Clearly, the level, quality, flow and accessibility of information had a very important role to play in remedying intolerance, prejudice, ignorance and distorted perceptions. In that connection, half-truths, misrepresentations, distortions and outright lies about entire nations must be eliminated, because they were a factor in determining international behaviour, often with tragic consequences. Obviously, the word "information" excluded misinformation and propaganda, and every nation had a right to protect itself against the abuse of the information process.

17. Accordingly, Turkey firmly supported the establishment of a new world information and communication order. In that connection, the advanced countries should do their utmost to help the less developed countries to develop the capacity to produce, process and disseminate information. Moreover, technical co-operation was the only way to establish a new global order which would be more consistent with the concerns of the developing countries.

18. The recommendation adopted by the Committee on Information for the promotion of an informed understanding of the work of the United Nations in the area of terrorism and the protection of diplomats and consular officers was an important step, of which the Special Political Committee should take note.

19. In conclusion, he praised the work of the Under-Secretary-General for Public Information in fulfilling his complicated task and suggested that, given the extensive and varied nature of DPI operations, additional steps should be taken to ascertain the usefulness and effectiveness of the Department's activities. In that connection, the Joint Inspection Unit could perhaps be helpful in undertaking a comprehensive evaluation of DPI activities and in developing evaluation procedures.

20. Mr. TERNOV (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) said that it was profoundly regrettable that the forces of imperialism and reaction had further aggravated the international situation over the past year. In addition to their policy of political and military confrontation, they were conducting a massive propaganda campaign against peaceful coexistence and détente and in favour of the arms race and nuclear war. The psychological warfare waged against the socialist countries and a number of developing countries was daily increasing in intensity. The information media, particularly the radio media were being used increasingly to provoke subversive activity against sovereign States, both in Europe and in other areas of the world. The United States was planning to set up another radio station in an attempt to destabilize the Government of Cuba by broadcasting to Cubans slanderous information about life in their own country.

(Mr. Ternov, Byelorussian SSR)

21. It was more evident than ever before that information imperialism was a means for carrying out the aggressive policies of the forces of reaction. Information imperialism was the use by the imperialist States and their information monopolies of the most advanced technology in order to spread tendentious, false and inflammatory information in blatant disregard for the generally accepted principles of international relations which were the basis for the Charter of the United Nations. Many countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America and a number of developed Western States continued to depend on the multinational media corporations with regard to the content of information disseminated. Four of the large information agencies of the capitalist world accounted for 80 per cent of the information disseminated in capitalist and developing countries. The multinational information media were strengthening their monopoly by investing capital to create peripheral systems of mass information and communications and control the content and character of information.

22. The policy of information imperialism and psychological warfare was profoundly alien to the countries of the socialist community, which sought to strengthen mutual understanding and trust between peoples regardless of their social structure. They stressed the role of the mass information media in mobilizing broad support for peace and strengthening international co-operation throughout the world. At a meeting in Prague in January 1983 the member States of the Warsaw Treaty Organization had declared that they firmly condemned the use of the mass media to spread tendentious and slanderous information and promote enmity. No State should permit such subversive activity to be conducted from its territory. That approach was the only one that was in accordance with the spirit and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, the basic resolutions of the Organization in the field, the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe and the UNESCO Declaration on Fundamental Principles concerning the Contribution of the Mass Media to Strengthening Peace and International Understanding, to the Promotion of Human Rights and to Countering Racism, Apartheid and Incitement to War.

23. The danger created by the policy of information imperialism made the establishment of a new world information and communication order all the more urgently necessary. The far-ranging programme called "Project Democracy", which was designed to justify the foreign policy of the United States and interfere in the affairs of sovereign States, was totally at variance with efforts to establish a new information order. The struggle between the warmongers and the advocates of peace had encompassed the entire field of international relations, including the international exchange of information. The international political climate to a large extent depended on the type of information disseminated to people throughout the world.

24. Such international documents as the Charter of the United Nations, the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe and relevant international conventions and United Nations and UNESCO declarations, which set forth the strengthening of peace as the main goal of the international exchange of information and condemned propoganda in favour of militarism, racism, and

(Mr. Ternov, Byelorussian SSR)

interference in internal affairs, were crucially important. The imbalance in the circulation of information in the world was growing more acute. Developing countries were still the victims of information imperialism. Such a situation was not only abnormal, it was dangerous. Developing countries, together with other States, must promote the elaboration of the principles of the new international information and communication order and the adoption of appropriate documents within the United Nations and UNESCO.

25. His delegation supported the decisions taken at the seventh Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries with regard to the question of mass information and would continue to assist those countries in their struggle for a new information order. The establishment of that order was one of the most pressing tasks of contemporary international relations. A number of the provisions set forth in the reports under consideration could be used in the elaboration of draft resolutions that would promote the qualitative improvement of the work of the Organization by informing the international community concerning the progressive orientation of its activities.

26. Mr. DASHDAVAA (Mongolia) said that the problems of international exchanges of information, reducing the communications gap between individual countries, combating imperialism and striving to establish a more just and more effective world information order continued to be at the centre of the international community's attention. The question was whether the mass media were serving the cause of peace, understanding and co-operation among nations or, on the contrary, promoting the arms race, inflating international conflicts and sowing mistrust and enmity among them. Unfortunately, there were mass media which deliberately spread information for the purpose of interfering in the affairs of other peoples. Psychological warfare was being waged against the socialist countries on the widest front and making use of the most varied weapons. Units of the West's psychological warfare apparatus, in the first instance subversive radio stations, were operating against every socialist and progressive developing country, causing great damage to inter-State relations and poisoning the political climate.

27. The activities of the imperialist mass media contradicted basic principles of the United Nations Charter and other international instruments regulating inter-State relations. In view of the principles adopted by the international community, psychological warfare which made use of the mass media could only be described as ideological aggression and therefore deserved general condemnation. His delegation considered that the current international situation required the international community to undertake joint efforts to create a climate of trust in inter-State relations. It was urgently necessary to eliminate psychological warfare and spiritual neo-colonialism from relations between States and nations.

28. Practically every State was interested in establishing a new world information order, in part because the consequences of the international activity of the mass media affected all States to one degree or another, especially the developing countries. However, the tremendous disproportion in the distribution of information media throughout the various continents and the related dependence of

(Mr. Dashdavaa, Mongolia)

the majority of Asian, African and Latin American countries on Western agencies and radio and television corporations still remained.

29. The material base of the information media in the developing countries was so weak that they were almost wholly dependent on information from the biggest Western telegraph agencies and radio and television corporations, some of which were used for ideological sabotage and to spread divisive and warmongering propaganda. The developing countries saw the creation of their own national information systems as a way out of the existing situation and were beginning to establish their own information organs. The participants in the seventh Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries had qualified the activities of information organizations as an inalienable part of the process of national development of member countries. The Mongolian People's Republic shared the concern of those countries at the current situation in the information field and supported their efforts to create their own mass information system. His delegation called upon UNESCO to continue its efforts to formulate a document on the principles of the new world information order. It believed that the fundamental principles contained in the Charter of the United Nations and other important international documents could provide a starting point for the elaboration of special norms for the development of relations in the international information field.

30. His delegation had noted that efforts were being made within the United Nations to analyse the existing state of the mass information and communications media at the international level and to assist the developing countries in that field. It welcomed co-operation between the United Nations and UNESCO to establish a new world information order and noted with satisfaction the constructive role and practical importance of UNESCO's International Programme for the Development of Communication.

31. As for the activities of the Department of Public Information, his delegation again advocated that the attitudes and opinions of the socialist and developing countries should be reflected in a more objective and balanced way in its publications. It considered the current distribution of posts in the Department, with its under-representation of the socialist and developing countries, to be impermissible. It also thought that, in view of the financial difficulties of the Organization, the Committee on Information should review the utility of a number of outdated projects and thus use available resources for those important measures which would contribute to the effective discharge of the tasks confronting the United Nations.

32. In conclusion, he expressed the hope that his observations would find reflection in the resolution to be adopted on the item under discussion.

33. Mr. BAALI (Algeria) said that the question of information was of major concern to his delegation, firstly because of the increasingly important role played by the mass media in relations between peoples and States, secondly because of the particularly unjust conditions which governed the flow of information and thirdly, because of the part which his country played in the struggle of the developing countries to establish a new, more just and more effective information order.

(Mr. Baali, Algeria)

34. While the development of the media had narrowed the gulf between peoples, had broken through geographical, cultural and political isolation and had created an awareness of the common destiny, the media could also generate misunderstanding and could exacerbate resentment and prejudices, thereby fueling confrontation. In the past two years, information had, more often than not, failed to serve the cause of understanding and had frequently been used for propaganda purposes. However, that was to be expected as long as information and communication were in the hands of a small number of countries which possessed prodigious means for the control and dissemination of information and as long as two thirds of the international community was subjected to cultural colonialism and to systematic overkill in all sectors of information.

35. For example, one industrialized country had a monopoly over two thirds of the information sector, and 80 per cent of the news was reported by developed countries. That monopoly was especially dangerous in that it insidiously affected all areas of the cultural, political and economic independence of the developing countries.

36. The cultural products of Western civilization, according to the theory of so-called free dissemination of information, were being consumed by the developing countries to the detriment of their own cultural identity and creativity. That situation offered eloquent proof of the increasingly strong control which the developed countries exerted over the culture, attitudes and even the frame of thought of people in the third world.

37. The developing countries must therefore recognize the serious danger which that represented to their cultural heritage. They must join together in a common effort to combat the flagrant injustices that characterized the flow of information and, with persistence and courage, to establish a new, more just and more effective world information order.

38. Thanks to the efforts made thus far, many national press agencies had been established in the developing countries. Moreover, regional press agencies had been established in many parts of the world to ensure the flow of information both within member countries and between different regional agencies. A great deal of progress had also been made by the Pool of Non-Aligned News Agencies and fruitful co-operation had been established between the Pool and both the United Nations and UNESCO. Such co-operation should serve as an example for all the regional press agencies in the third world.

39. However, while the developing countries must do everything possible to change the current order, the industrialized countries must display a sense of responsibility. They must enable the countries of the third world to enjoy free access to information and must agree to change the existing rules of the game, which, far from promoting understanding and co-operation, increased the cultural and technological dependence of the developing countries and aggravated tensions between States.

/...

(Mr. Baali, Algeria)

40. The progress made in the establishment of a new world information order had been achieved through the tireless efforts of UNESCO. For example, several of the projects of the International Programme for the Development of Communication were already being implemented. Algeria considered the Programme to be a valuable achievement for the developing countries in their effort to acquire support for activities to develop national media. However, the Programme could not be carried out properly unless the necessary financial means were available.

41. Referring to the valuable United Nations publications which were threatened by financial difficulties, he explained that, in his delegation's opinion, the World Newspaper Supplement should be supported by all those who wished to continue to receive complete and objective information about the situation in the developing countries and about their efforts to establish a new, more just international economic order. By the same token, Development Forum was widely read and made a remarkable contribution to the developing countries' efforts to reshape the current economic system. If Member States and the specialized agencies increased their contributions, that publication could continue to play its important role.

42. After particularly difficult negotiations, in which the Group of 77 had once again displayed considerable flexibility and a true willingness to engage in dialogue and to seek compromise, the Committee on Information had succeeded in adopting a number of recommendations by consensus. His delegation fully supported those recommendations, although they fell short of expectations, and requested that they should be implemented in their entirety. Since his delegation attached special importance to the assistance which the United Nations and UNESCO provided to the regional press agencies and to the Pool of Non-Aligned News Agencies, it supported the recommendations on that question, in particular. It was also extremely important for the basic activities of the United Nations in the fields of decolonization, peace, disarmament and the establishment of a new international economic order to be given the widest possible publicity. Accordingly, the recommendations concerning the United Nations information centres and DPI should also be fully implemented. Moreover, his delegation hoped that the recommendations which had been listed separately because of their financial implications and those on which it had not been possible to reach agreement, particularly the paragraph concerning the dissemination of information on Israeli practices in the occupied Arab territories, would be incorporated in the omnibus resolution adopted by the General Assembly on the question of information.

43. Without an awareness of the need for solidarity in relations between peoples, the dialogue to be established between the industrialized and the developing worlds would remain not only a monologue but a veritable soliloquy, recited separately by the North in its cold indifference and the South in its tragic disarray. The United Nations must spare no effort in seeking to replace the terrifying nightmare brought on by human selfishness with the dream of harmony and brotherhood bequested by the founding fathers of the Organization.

44. Mr. DUARTE COSTA (Portugal) said that the need for communication and information was currently of particular importance because of the interdependence of the contemporary world, because of recent technological progress and because of the crisis in international political and economic relations. The existing information and communication system had been unable to meet the new challenges of a world characterized by rapid and profound change. In that context, his delegation supported the collective aspiration for the establishment of a new world information and communication order.

45. The new order depended on the quantitative and qualitative progress made in developing the human and technological infrastructures of the developing countries. Unfortunately, however, the concerns and criticism expressed in that regard were frequently related to the principles of freedom of opinion and freedom of expression, which his delegation considered to be the pillars of any democratic society, because they guaranteed respect for all the other fundamental human rights. Accordingly, Portugal could not endorse any new order based on measures aimed at restricting those freedoms. In addition to the development of infrastructures, the new order required open-mindedness and the elimination of any conduct which might obstruct the dissemination, exchange or accessibility of information.

46. His delegation therefore endorsed the chapter on information contained in the final document resulting from the Madrid Meeting of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, but he stressed that the commitments assumed in that context must be carried out in good faith.

47. With regard to the report submitted by the Director-General of UNESCO, his delegation welcomed the progress made in implementing the International Programme for the Development of Communication. By encouraging technical co-operation and expanding the communication infrastructures of the developing countries, the programme could serve as a special instrument for the establishment of a more effective information and communication order.

48. The round table on a new world information and communication order held in September in Austria was a commendable example of co-operation between the United Nations and UNESCO, and he welcomed the climate of understanding which had prevailed during those discussions.

49. In view of the crucial role played by information in the process of economic development, his delegation awaited with interest the publication of the study on the relationship between the new international economic order and the new world information and communication order.

50. As to the report of the Committee on Information, his delegation had devoted particular attention to the recommendations which had been adopted by consensus, after lengthy and arduous negotiations. In that connection, his delegation supported the appeal made by the representative of Greece, on behalf of the European Community, that the consensus procedure within the Committee of Information should be maintained and that its work should not become politicized.

(Mr. Duarte Costa, Portugal)

51. Although the activities of DPI had been greatly expanded in recent years, his delegation felt that its primary purpose was still to provide world public opinion with an accurate perception of the goals, activities and achievements of the United Nations. Despite the results obtained in that regard, the public image of the Organization continued to be eroded. Accordingly, the main challenge facing the United Nations information system was to correct that image and to ensure a better understanding of the Organization's work, not only in the political fields but also in the economic, social and cultural fields.

52. Mr. HAMADNEH (Jordan) said that his country's interest in the item stemmed from its awareness of the importance of the information media for promoting international understanding and co-operation and consolidating peace and security. It therefore supported all efforts to establish a new world information and communication order, in particular within the framework of the Non-Aligned Movement. The establishment of such an order would help to remedy the existing imbalance between developed and developing countries, which had negative consequences for international relations and for a true understanding of the various challenges confronting the world and of the solutions proposed for them.

53. His country was in favour of consolidating and strengthening the Department of Public Information as a way of helping the United Nations to tackle the challenges facing the international community and to propagate the principles of its Charter. The Department was impartial in disseminating the truth about such matters as disarmament, human rights and colonialism in all its aspects, including zionism in particular. It must continue to expose countries such as Israel which were opposing the will of the international community.

54. His delegation hoped that all countries would unite in supporting the efforts of the United Nations in the information field and in making the Department of Public Information more effective and flexible from a technical point of view. He stressed, in particular, the need for the Department to publicize those Israeli practices which violated the human rights of the Arab population in the territories occupied since 1967, and especially those which prevented the Palestinian people from exercising their right to self-determination within Palestine.

55. His delegation also wished the Middle East and Arabic Radio Unit to be expanded and reinforced by the reallocation of existing resources so that it could undertake its duties more effectively. Freedom of information was a sacred principle which was often abused by Western information media relaying information in ways which served the West's particular interests. The Arab world suffered from the lies and myths which these media deliberately fabricated about the Palestinian question and about the Arab-Israeli conflict and from their distortions of Arab initiatives to achieve a just and lasting peace in the region. The most recent example of their lack of objectivity had been their coverage of the international conference on Palestine in Geneva.

56. The peoples of the Middle East would continue to give resolute support to the noble aims and principles of the United Nations and, in particular, to the work of

(Mr. Hamadneh, Jordan)

the Committee on Information. He hoped that all countries would take part in implementing the Committee's recommendations, for the good of all peoples and in the service of peace, security and justice.

57. Mr. LEVIN (Israel), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said it was regrettable that some representatives of Arab countries appeared to think that they had not done their duty if they had not dragged the Arab-Israeli conflict into every discussion. If Jordan was really interested in freedom of information and in promoting understanding and co-operation, it would do well to repeal the state of martial law which it had imposed in 1967, under which constitutional guarantees were still suspended, the authorities were invested with wide powers of arrest and detention, political parties were banned and there was a consequent lack of freedom of information.

58. As for the rights of the Palestinian Arab people, Jordan would do well to recall the newspaper closures and arrests of editors carried out when it ruled the territories in question from 1948 to 1967. He believed that the international community was far too interested in the matters before the Committee for it to be required to consider the crisis precipitated by the Arab countries in 1948. The representative of Jordan in particular would do well to remember the responsibility of his Government for the complete lack of freedom of information in his own country and in the area over which it ruled before 1967.

59. Mr. HAMADNEH (Jordan) said that the statement by the representative of Israel contained lies to which he reserved his right to reply.

60. The CHAIRMAN said that, both in his capacity as Chairman and as the representative of a developing country, he had to echo and emphasize the most important appeal which had been made during the debate in the context of the discussion of a new world information order. There was an urgent need for the information media and news agencies of developed countries to provide more and better information on the interests and needs of developing countries and to avoid distorting their national images. It was most important to take account of that need because that would provide one of the pillars of the new world information order which would make it possible to promote harmony, understanding and co-operation among the nations of the world.

61. In the same context, he hoped that the open-ended Working Group on Information which was about to hold its first meeting would begin its work in a spirit of seeking consensus for the good of all and would go on to achieve the best possible results. For the sake of genuine international co-operation, the urgent need to take account of the developing countries' interests and concerns had to be recognized.

The meeting rose at 12.40 p.m.