



General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/44 329
16 June 1989 .
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: FRENCH

Forty-fourth session
Items 80 and 129 of the preliminary list*

QUESTIONS RELATING TO INFORMATION

JOINT INSPECTION UNIT

Review of United Nations public information networks --
United Nations Information Centres

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the General Assembly the report of the Joint Inspection Unit entitled "Review of United Nations public information networks - United Nations Information Centres" (JIU/REP/89/6).

* A/44/50/Rev.1.

FOREWORD

This report has been prepared under conditions which should be brought to the attention of the decision-making bodies of the United Nations because the problems encountered are nothing new. In this case, a number of letters and telexes requesting information or clarifications were sent during the first half of 1988 to the Under-Secretary-General in charge of the Department of Public Information and to the Director of the Division for Committee Liaison and Administration Services (CLAS), but neither of them took the trouble to reply. The main DPI officials and the UNIC Directors who received on-site visits nevertheless enabled the Inspector to complete his work.

It should also be pointed out that the Joint Inspection Unit procedure of having comments transmitted by the departments concerned was not followed. Although draft reports were sent well enough in advance and a strict deadline was set, the Inspector was still waiting in vain for the replies from DPI and the Secretariat 25 days after the deadline had expired. It was in these conditions and in a context which does not reflect a true spirit of co-operation that the report was prepared. It is simply hoped that these observations will be fully taken into account in future.

REVIEW OF UNITED NATIONS PUBLIC INFORMATION NETWORKS

United Nations Information Centres

by Alain Gourdon
Joint Inspection Unit

CONTENTS

	<u>Paragraphs</u>	<u>Page</u>
INTRODUCTION	1 - 5	1
I. THE TASKS OF THE INFORMATION CENTRES	6 - 44	1
A. Overall machinery and regular tasks	6 - 20	1
B. Co-operation between the Centres and the system, and exogenous functions	21 - 34	4
C. Specific relationship between the UNICs and ORCI	35 - 44	7
II. THE WIDE VARIETY OF CONTEXTS	45 - 63	8
A. The diversity of administrative systems	45 - 50	8
B. Disparities in physical and media facilities	51 - 55	9
C. Differences in the circumstances of supporting bodies	56 - 64	11
III. ADAPTING THE CENTRES TO THEIR USERS	65 - 84	12
A. Defining expectations	64 - 75	12
B. Tailoring content	76 - 84	14
IV. THE DISPROPORTION BETWEEN MEANS AND ENDS	85 - 110	16
A. Ambitious goals and extensive tasks	85 - 89	16
B. The chronic inadequacy of resources	90 - 97	17
C. Scope for possible changes	98 - 110	18
V. THE PROBLEM OF REDEPLOYMENT AND CO-ORDINATION ...	111 - 161	20
A. The siting of Centres	111 - 124	20
B. Critical review of the relocation plan	125 - 132	23
C. Value and limits of co-ordination	133 - 142	25
D. Approach and purpose of co-ordination	143 - 161	26
CONCLUSION	162 - 166	30
RECOMMENDATIONS		31

INTRODUCTION

1. This report deals with the problems currently raised by the organization and management of the field offices of DPI. It also examines progress in the implementation of the recommendations made by JIU in two earlier reports, relating to UNICs in general (JIU/REP/79/10) and the question of their location (JIU/REP/85/12). The need for such an evaluation and analysis of the follow-up appears all the greater since the reform of DPI, which began in 1987, suspended the reorganization of its field offices and/or deferred it to a later stage, even though it was the subject of specific recommendations made by the Group of 18.

2. Recommendation 37, paragraph 3, which was endorsed by the General Assembly in resolution 41/213 of 19 December 1986, invited the Secretary-General to conduct a review of the functions and activities of the UNICs. He was asked to consolidate them with other United Nations offices, to the extent that the quality of their services would not suffer thereby. This recommendation 37 was complementary to recommendation 12, which provided that the cost effectiveness and efficiency of the field offices of the United Nations responsible for implementing the organization's programmes in the field should be reviewed by their governing bodies. The aim was to merge the field offices of the United Nations "whenever feasible", thereby permitting better co-ordination and the reduction of some administrative costs.

3. Recommendation 11 indicated the direction that efforts to co-ordinate operations and activities at the national level should follow, in conformity with the policies of the governments concerned. The central co-ordinating role of UNDP was to be reaffirmed, and the authority of the resident co-ordinators with respect to non-UNDP programmes clarified and confirmed, wherever possible.

4. The administrations concerned took special account of the reservations and restrictions contained in recommendations 11 and 12, in making their implementation subject to contextual and time constraints. As a result the Post Review Group was led to inquire in 1988 why no information had been supplied to it on the work accomplished in the consolidation of UNICs advocated in recommendation 37.

5. The answer is of course connected with the reform of DPI. This reform led to a dividing up of the tasks of its former External Relations Division and the creation of a new Information Centres Division alongside, not to say competing with, a new Dissemination Division. However, the 1987 reform did not embrace the problems connected with the definition of content and the wide variety of contexts, the inadequate resources available, or the establishment, redeployment and co-ordination of the Information Centres.

I. THE TASKS OF THE INFORMATION CENTRES

A. Overall machinery and regular tasks

6. A 1947 report by the Secretary-General (A/315), which has frequently been quoted, laid down that "the development of informed world opinion and intelligent support of the United Nations" depended as much on the establishment of a "wide and well-organized network of

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information-distributing offices at appropriate world centres" as on a central public information service at Headquarters. Without examining at the outset the appropriateness of establishing the Centres or the desirability of their proliferation, it must be noted that they have increased in number from the original 9 to just under 70 at present.

7. The reform of DPI no more affected the internal structure and tasks of the UNICs than it did their distribution or the forms of co-ordination between them and other United Nations field offices. Nevertheless, at Headquarters, it led to the establishment of relations placing them under the authority of the Centres Division and provided a framework for their activities and functions.

8. As far as the UNICs are concerned, the restructuring plan for DPI constitutes both a summary of the directions the new leadership wishes them to follow and a list of intentions which seem to have remained mere pious hopes. This situation stems from the shortage of financial resources, the delays which have occurred in solving certain personnel matters, and also the practical drawbacks of the reorganization and the splitting of the externally oriented DPI division.

9. The restructuring plan sought to improve the UNIC network through simplification. It indicated that the leadership of DPI had already embarked on negotiations with other United Nations bodies in order to carry out the rationalization required and enhance the operational effectiveness of the network. A further aim of the plan was to increase the mobility of the staff, who, it was to be decided, could no longer remain in the same Information Centre for more than four years. It opted for equipment modernization and improvement of techniques for distribution of information products to the many different audiences. It also emphasized the need to enhance the human quality of DPI's local representation and relations on the spot with the media, NGOs and other national bodies.

10. Document ST/SGB/Organization/DPI of November 1987 spells out the tasks of the UNICs, without greatly modifying the content of the former External Relations Division's information policy and operations manual. The UNICs and the UNISEs (in UNOG, UNOV and the regional commissions) must first and foremost maintain a close working relationship with governmental information services, local and national media, NGOs and educational establishments in order to promote the programmes and ideals of the United Nations.

11. They also have the following tasks:

- To operate reference libraries carrying written documentation and audio-visual materials from DPI, other Secretariat departments and the specialized agencies.
- To arrange for information material supplied by DPI to be translated into local languages and adapted, and distributed to the media, interested NGOs and the general public.
- To reply in writing or by telephone to requests for information from universities, the press, parliamentarians or ordinary citizens (900 to 1,200 on average per month through the London UNIC).

- To organize and conduct seminars, speeches and all other public relations activities capable of contributing to the promotion of the programmes and ideals of the United Nations.
12. In accordance with directives from Headquarters, the UNICs must also conduct activities for designated United Nations observances and organize guided tours of their premises, as far as is possible and appropriate. As an innovation, they must in future seek the financial and logistical support of national governments and all organizations concerned to increase their scope for action and diversify efforts to promote the objectives of the United Nations.
13. Within the framework of their ordinary activities, the UNICs must devote a substantial share of their work to operations relating to the fundamental priority topics referred to in General Assembly decisions. From time to time, the Director of a Centre may serve as a United Nations spokesman or represent the Secretary-General at an official function. He may be called upon to represent the Organization in negotiations with governments in his areas of competence. In the same role, he may attend symposia, conferences and meetings held in the country he covers.
14. The UNICs fall under the authority of the United Nations Information Centres Division, which serves as a control post as well as a clearing house for them. This Division is made up of three sections, including the operations section, which in turn is composed of four area offices (Africa, America, Asia and Pacific, Europe). Under the restructuring plan, these offices are responsible for oversight and supervision of activities and programmes, subject to the responsibilities entrusted to each UNIC.
15. The operations section undertakes all necessary surveys, analyses and information-compiling exercises. It plays a co-ordinating role vis-à-vis other divisions of DPI and appropriate Secretariat departments when campaigns are launched on special themes. It also organizes regional meetings of Centre Directors for purposes of providing guidance, information or further training. Lastly, it bears administrative responsibility for the Centres and their operations, "in co-operation and consultation with the Administrative Service" of CLAS.
16. UNIC Directors are appointed by the Secretary-General and in most cases accredited to the foreign ministries of the Member States to which they are assigned. Among the officials who assist them, the "National Information Officer" frequently plays a decisive role. This official, who stands in for the Director in his absence, ensures constant liaison with the media in the country, of which he is normally a national, and is the kingpin of the Centre. In cases where the UNDP Resident Representative assumes the title or performs the task of UNIC Director, the Centre will in fact be in the hands of the "National Information Officer", who will then bear effective responsibility for the success, failure or mixed outcome of its activities.
17. The Centres and their international staff are covered by article V of the Convention adopted by the General Assembly on 13 February 1946, which stipulates their privileges and immunities. However, governments of host countries frequently grant them the privileges, immunities and exemptions enjoyed by the diplomatic corps. As a general rule, a Centre Director cannot be appointed in his own country, but in practice there are a significant number of exceptions.

18. The management of some UNICs is entrusted to United Nations staff performing tasks in the host country which are connected with activities that differ from those covered by DPI. In this way various Information Centres are headed by UNDP Resident Representatives, either temporarily or permanently. This arrangement enables DPI to make provision for the running of all the Centres set up in pursuance of General Assembly resolutions, even if - and for as long as - it does not have sufficient management staff to meet requirements.

19. This compromise solution helps in reconciling compliance with instructions and limited human and financial resources. The drawback is that temporary arrangements become institutionalized. If an interim solution is found to be workable in the short term, and then for longer, examination of the underlying problem tends to be put off. In this way efforts to increase the financial and human resources needed to set up a more solid system may not be pursued with all due vigour.

20. Coexistence and substitution problems between Resident Representatives and UNIC Directors will be discussed again subsequently. For the moment it will be noted that the tasks of these two kinds of United Nations official, while not incompatible, are neither complementary nor similar. As the Inspector responsible for this report was able to confirm during his missions in Latin America, Europe and Asia, a UNDP Resident Representative who is simultaneously a UNIC Director will always have difficulty in deciding between the tasks involved in the two jobs. He will in most cases tend to favour his prime responsibility and partially or completely sacrifice the second, relying on the "National Information Officer" for the effective management of the Centre.

B. Co-operation between the Centres and the system, and exogenous functions

21. In most cases co-operation between the UNICs and the UNDP offices will be as close as it is regular. It even acquires an organic nature whenever the Information Centre and the UNDP office are placed under the same authority. None the less, the intrinsic functions of the Information Centres must remain clearly distinct from those of UNDP, and their activities must not be confused, as the General Assembly stated more specifically in resolution 39/98 of 14 December 1984. What applies to UNDP applies equally to all the specialized agencies.

22. Since spheres are delimited and boundaries laid down, the co-operation which is recommended by all sides is not always very easy to achieve. There is no doubt that an Information Centre's success is often measured in terms of the co-operation it is able to promote and the knowledge it has of projects undertaken by UNDP or the specialized agencies, as well as the basic documentation relating to them. The head of the Centre, if warned ahead of time of visits or innovations, will be in a position to prepare the ground, alert the media or arrange press conferences or radio and television appearances. By ensuring that the communication process runs smoothly, he may correspondingly enhance the effect of a visit or the impact of a project launching.

23. Yet the scope and value of the services which the UNIC offers UNDP or the specialized agencies in the country it covers depend in large part on the extent and reliability of the information supplied concerning the aims and progress of projects. Too often UNIC Directors are not kept sufficiently informed of the development activities of those with whom they deal. They are thus placed in an embarrassing position when the press and public legitimately consider that it is the task of the Centre to provide them with the information they seek concerning the activities carried out by the United Nations system as a whole.

24. As the Inspector noted in certain Latin American countries, the point is sometimes reached where those in charge of Information Centres seem to be totally ignorant of UNDP development projects. In places where the Resident Representative is simultaneously the UNIC Director, the staff available to him in UNDP are sometimes a little reluctant to provide information on their activities to the staff of the neighbouring UNIC.

25. In some countries, representatives of the specialized agencies, UNDP and the UNIC can be put in contact with one another through regular meetings. This makes it possible to avoid errors and inconsistencies which particularly detract from the image of the United Nations and the impact of the operations carried out. Lack of co-ordination arising from a failure or a refusal to co-operate has a financial cost. It is the task of the Information Centre to help to reduce this cost. But it would also be useful, through institutionalization, to make more widespread what is but an optional convenience and an informal custom, where it exists at all.

26. As the field offices of DPI, UNICs perform a replacement or complementary function to the benefit of the specialized agencies when the latter have no member of their own information services on the spot. They also serve as relays for various Secretariat bodies, and provide them with assistance which goes beyond the bounds of information. They are used in this way by the Department of Disarmament Affairs and the Centre for Human Rights, the Council for Namibia and the Centre Against Apartheid, among others.

27. On behalf of the Office of Human Resources Management, the UNICs participate in work connected with language proficiency examinations and recruitment campaigns. In certain Centres - Moscow, for example - these tasks even constitute the bulk of their work. The Centres work together with the Dag Hammarskjöld Library in distributing documents in the countries they cover. They assist the sales section of the Department of Conferences, organize United Nations participation in book fairs, promote the sale of United Nations stamps and serve as liaison offices with the postal administrations of Member States.

28. In the industrialized countries, where there is no place for UNDP offices, the Information Centres assume various responsibilities on UNDP's behalf and their Directors are also the official representatives of the latter, for example in Paris or London. In the same way, they have conducted substantial information campaigns in the OECD countries to assist the United Nations Office for Emergency Operations in Africa.

29. To the benefit of higher-grade United Nations staff, the Centres also perform functions which are at the same time those of a public relations firm and a travel agent's, a press service, a translation service and a protocol service. Particularly in certain capitals of strategic importance, they prepare for, organize and follow up a wide variety of visits and missions (calendar of meetings, press conferences, dispatch of documents, press services, coverage of the event in liaison with the media). An exhaustive listing of those tasks will indicate how time-consuming they are for a staff which is by definition small. In this way the Centres are often led to sacrifice the demands of in-depth work to the inevitable fragmentation involved in visits and missions which are sometimes over-frequent, at least in some countries.

30. Occasionally the Centres also have to see to medical evacuations, in liaison with the local offices of United Nations bodies. Where necessary, they ensure payment of scholarships to students against United Nations funds. Finally - and in some cases, as in London, this is no small task - they administer the diplomatic pouch service and repack large amounts of media material from New York, Geneva or Nairobi, before it is sent out to other Centres.

31. In their report JIU/REP/79/10, the JIU Inspectors pointed out (paragraph 139) that the Information Centre staff generally complained about the time taken up by non-information activities in their daily work, to the detriment of their actual information activities. The Inspectors did not consider these complaints fully justified. They confined themselves to inviting DPI to study ways and means of rationalizing the use of working time that the Professional staff of the Centres devoted to tasks which to a greater or lesser extent fell outside the information field.

32. The missions by the Inspector responsible for this report to more than 15 UNICs and UNISes in three different geographical regions, together with analysis of questionnaires and documents relating to a score of other Centres, now lead to somewhat different conclusions. During the last decade, the volume of tasks which to a greater or lesser degree fall outside the information field seems to have increased appreciably, either as a result of the fact that the previously observed trend has become accentuated, or because budgetary constraints connected with the financial crisis have made it necessary to impose an increasingly wide range of functions on the Centres.

33. This observation is true first and foremost for the major Information Centres in the industrialized countries, where the press and NGO networks are very dense and governmental decisions in Member States have the greatest impact on the work of the United Nations and the specialized agencies. But it also applies in the third world, especially when the host countries are continental in scale or are the scene of a large number of development projects being pursued by the United Nations family.

34. In these circumstances it is clear that failure would await any reorganization or redeployment of the UNICs which did not take sufficient account of differences between the Centres, as well as outside tasks which may or must continue to be imposed on them. Identification of those tasks which they would still have to perform, without detracting from the accomplishment of the information tasks falling within their strict terms of reference,

should have as a corollary the clarification of the duties of the Centres, in order to grant more emphasis to the social, cultural and economic context in which their operations take place.

C. Specific relationship between the UNICs and ORCI

35. The Group of Experts, in recommendation 18, sought an end to duplication of efforts with regard to the dissemination of news and political analysis activities. It mentioned the spreading of tasks between DPI and two Secretariat departments (Political and Security Council Affairs, Political Affairs, Trusteeship and Decolonization). It urged co-ordination and rationalization to ensure the more efficient use of resources. In keeping with this recommendation and General Assembly resolution 41/213, an Office for Research and the Collection of Information (ORCI) was set up under the Secretary-General.

36. ORCI has the task of assisting the Secretary-General to discharge the responsibilities conferred on him under Article 99 of the Charter of the United Nations in the maintenance of peace and security, as well as specific tasks entrusted to him by the Security Council and the General Assembly. For these purposes, it has to gather all necessary information, and in the UNICs it finds the primary means of performing this role.

37. In a letter dated 17 March 1988 sent to all the UNIC Directors, the Assistant Secretary-General responsible for ORCI sets out guidelines which the Centres must follow in order to meet the requirements of the new office. The memorandum stipulates that they should supply ORCI with all relevant, new and reliable information relating to "political developments" in the region they cover. The reports to be provided must be extremely readable and based on official documents and comments, press analyses and reports available in the country or countries served by each Centre.

38. It is indicated that the collection of information should relate to issues of concern to the United Nations. A consistent and continuous reporting and analysis system is to be developed which will focus on international development, ongoing crises, potential conflict situations and areas of tension. There will also be a need to deal with political problems which have or are likely to have an impact on the work of the United Nations and on the accomplishment of the tasks entrusted to the Secretary-General under the Charter.

39. The Centres are expected to supply ORCI with a weekly report, which does not rule out ad hoc reports or notes to be sent as rapidly as possible when a critical situation develops. The expected report must consist of a "careful" summary of relevant official documents and press articles. It must deal with regional conflicts capable of affecting peace and security in the sector concerned, tensions of any kind, visits to the country by foreign dignitaries and visits abroad by local dignitaries. It must also indicate unusual occurrences, meaning movements of refugees and population shifts, natural disasters and their initial consequences.

40. The report must not fail to mention comments on the United Nations system, especially when the major activities of the principal organs or offices of the Secretariat are analysed or criticized. Where the members of the Security Council are concerned, the weekly report must concentrate on

governments' positions on problems involving the Secretary-General as well as those examined by the Council in the normal and regular way.

41. In this way, the Centres are transformed from distributors to collectors of information. They have two functions to fulfil which do not require the same skills or the same qualifications. It is possible to be an excellent political analyst without being an expert in public relations or contacts, and vice versa. If the outside tasks taken on by the UNICs detract from the performance of their essential functions, by contributing to a scattering of their efforts, the collection functions may from another viewpoint thwart the dissemination functions. The thought processes are different, but there has been no increase in Centre staff faced with extra work.

42. Furthermore, within the United Nations framework it is sometimes difficult to distinguish the fields of information dissemination or mobilization of public opinion from that of propaganda, especially in the case of priority topics, which, unlike the fundamental issues, are not the subject of unanimous agreement among Member States. But it would be even less easy to draw a line between the collection of relevant facts and sensitive news items and the gathering of information, which falls within the competence of the diplomatic missions of Member States. Given the existence of multilateral diplomacy, with the United Nations providing a framework and a means, the Centre Directors are not authorized even partially to perform the functions of ambassadors for an Organization which does not enjoy the status of a State.

43. At all events, it does not seem appropriate that the dispatch of a report from a UNIC to ORCI should be a weekly event. If an event occurs whose suddenness and magnitude are of particular interest to the Secretariat, it will be enough for ORCI to be notified by telex. But in most cases, the preparation of a monthly report, accompanied by a complete set of press excerpts and comments required, should meet the Secretariat's information requirements all the better as its processing would be more properly guaranteed.

44. The proliferation of weekly reports of varying interest from almost 70 Information Centres is not likely to meet ORCI's request efficiently. It would be an error for ORCI to encumber itself with an excess of rapidly outdated facts and data when less frequent but better planned analysis would be much more useful.

II. THE WIDE VARIETY OF CONTEXTS

A. The diversity of administrative systems

45. All the UNICs must comply with the guidelines laid down in the administration manual for field offices and in the as yet unrevised manual prepared by the External Relations Division of DPI before 1987. In principle, the Centres pursue identical missions and discharge similar tasks. While working towards the same goals and following the same terms of reference, they draw on machinery which differs greatly from one case to another.

46. De facto and de jure, the Centres follow highly differentiated management methods, and there is a very wide variety of possible administrative configurations. One Information Centre Director will occupy his post officially and fulltime, another will not only enjoy full independence, but

will also perform the tasks of UNDP representative. A Centre's jurisdiction may extend outside the host country on grounds of regional homogeneity (London and Ireland, Belgrade and Albania, Port of Spain and the Caribbean), necessity or historical accident (Geneva for Hungary and Bulgaria). Similarly, the Information Services in Geneva, Vienna or the regional commissions will function simultaneously as UNICs for that location and Information Services for the body which they serve.

47. In one place the UNDP Resident Representative will at the same time possess the title and duties of a UNIC Director (Paraguay, Bolivia) or an official acting as Director. Elsewhere, the UNDP Resident Representative and the UNIC Director will perform totally distinct and separate functions. In country A, the UNDP Resident Representative and UNIC Director will be backed up by a nationally recruited press attaché. In country B, he will perform the duties of UNIC Director without enjoying the services of a press attaché. In the temporary or longer absence of a UNIC Director (leave, post vacant), the press attache or administrative assistant will stand in for what may sometimes be a rather long period.

48. Centre Directors discharge their duties at various levels of responsibility - exceptionally at D.2 level (Paris), less infrequently at D.1 (Beijing, Beirut, Geneva, London, Moscow, Nairobi, New Delhi, Tokyo, Vienna and Washington). The grade of most Centre heads is P.5 or P.4, less often P.3. "Objective" and "equitable" criteria for correspondence between grades and responsibilities have been laid down by the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination (CPC). They take into account the Director's ability to establish and maintain contacts with officials in the host country, balance among geographical regions and the number or size of the countries served, complexity of work, the number of staff supervised and United Nations meetings to be covered, and relationships with NGOs and the media (A/C.5/43/1/Rev.1).

49. In 1988 the Post Review Group confirmed this approach and proposed that, depending on the degree of complexity of their tasks, UNIC and UNIS Directors should be graded between P.3 and D.1. In this context, when relations with the government authorities in the host country are so important and the personality of the Centre Director plays such a major role, it would seem dangerous to limit the presence of a UNIC head in the same post to four years.

50. It is of course necessary to avoid the ossification resulting from an excessively long stay by a Director in one country. The concern for mobility displayed by the new management is perfectly understandable. But it is also necessary to take advantage of certain psychological and moral commitments that only time allows. Limiting a Director's stay in one country to four years does not seem relevant. The head of DPI will therefore be urged to reverse a decision which, while based on good intentions, would have harmful effects.

B. Disparities in physical and media facilities

51. There are so many social, economic and cultural factors, and such a diversity of contexts and media networks which interface with the field offices of DPI, that each Information Centre is unique. The geopolitical situation of the host country and the role it plays within the United Nations affect the Centre's activities one way or another. The educational infrastructure and level of literacy, the languages used and the degree of

freedom of expression accepted in practice, determine how receptive segments of public opinion and more specialized audiences are. They have implications for the operation and organization of the Centres, the relative importance of ordinary and outside functions and the balance to be established between written and audio-visual information - matters of interest to DPI, ORCI and the other organs and departments of the United Nations.

52. The solidity and density of the media networks in the host country therefore shape the Information Centre's disseminating role. In 40 or so Member States, the literacy rate is below 8 per cent and the print media reach only a minimal percentage of the population. Nor should one underestimate the fact that the industrialized countries print ten times as many dailies and produce 15 times as many radio programmes and television broadcasts as the developing countries. Furthermore, some 20 Member States have no national radio and television system, and the industrialized countries control and supply more than 70 per cent of the developing countries' television broadcasts and over 65 per cent of their radio programmes.

53. Depending on whether countries are host to the operations of a world-wide press agency (AFP, Associated Press, Reuter) or have press agencies whose influence extends well beyond their borders (CANA in the Caribbean, the Non-Aligned Pool, DNB, Tanjug, Tass), the disseminating role of the Information Centres will be of greater or lesser importance. As the General Assembly emphasized in resolution 1405 (XIV), UNICs should be established "particularly in those regions where mass information media are the least well-developed". It goes without saying that a rudimentary press with poor content and limited distribution cannot offer an efficient vehicle for United Nations information.

54. The UNICs in the industrialized countries will need to favour the distribution of publications and brochures, the gathering of information for ORCI and the canvassing of university and academic circles. Audio-visual clips and spots should not be neglected, but it must be remembered that one cannot reach the airwaves at just any time in these States, in contrast to what can and must occur in the developing countries, where the audio-visual network is less dense. The developing countries, for their part, will have to promote the use of audio-visual media and radio. Video cassettes will have a major role to play, even in cases where, as in India, the press has a pre-eminent position.

55. Consequently, a somewhat discriminatory use of the media would appear to be vital. Yet it should not be forgotten that, both in industrialized and in developing countries, written documentation, or at least part of it, is aimed first and foremost at official circles as much as at specialized journalists and commentators. The dissemination of information concerning the United Nations is a matter of direct interest to delegates from Member States and their representatives in the specialized agencies. Such information constitutes a product which DPI stamps with the validity and continuity of a kind of Official Gazette. It serves simultaneously as argumentation and documentation concerning the ideals and plans of the Organization, which they are expected to report on to their governments.

C. Differences in the circumstances of supporting bodies

56. The role of the Information Centres does not depend only on the quality of the physical facilities and the relays offered by the existing media network in the host country. It also depends on the size and vigour of the United Nations Associations (UNAs), NGOs and organizations of every kind which, in principal or secondary roles, directly or indirectly, contribute to supporting United Nations information activities.

57. The practical manual on the operation of UNICs and UNISes emphasizes, in paragraphs 140-145, the auxiliary and supporting role that NGOs can play in carrying out United Nations public information programmes, whether they be women's or young people's associations, trade union or employers' organizations, civic associations or religious communities. It also stipulates that where no UNA exists, every step should be taken to establish one, in liaison with the governments concerned, and following the model articles of association provided by the World Federation of United Nations Associations (WFUNA).

58. The NGO section within DPI should assist in establishing NGO committees or groups of various types, make model statutes available to them and provide proper advice to them on this subject. To that end, the Centre Directors are invited to maintain a file of the most important NGOs in the area they cover and to keep it up to date. They should also keep Headquarters informed of contacts maintained with such NGOs, in a regular section in their progress reports to Headquarters.

59. These guidelines are followed by the Information Centre Directors with widely varying degrees of willingness and enthusiasm. Added to them are recommendations made by the JIU Inspectors, whose impact is not at all clear. In their report JIU/REP/79/10, the Inspectors suggested that the General Assembly should invite Member States to facilitate or strengthen the establishment of UNAs. Indeed, where "United Nations" and "UNESCO" clubs or UNAs with a strong structure already existed, the Inspectors' recommendation 24 proposed an interesting practical solution. They invited the Secretary-General, on an experimental basis and under contractual arrangements, to allow such organizations to participate in the Centres' information dissemination efforts, thus becoming their regular associates.

60. Even if this recommendation 24 did not have the hoped-for effect, there has been a constant need to strengthen relations between UNICs and NGOs in the field. In this regard, the reorganized DPI's decision to separate the UNIC issue from the NGO issue and entrust them to two separate divisions seems to be severely lacking in foundation. The problems faced by Centres and NGOs in pursuing their common objectives are too closely related to have to suffer from dual treatment, even within the same Department.

61. The guidelines in the manual and the JIU recommendations are still of great importance. In particular, recommendation 24, which has not begun to be implemented, should be taken up again. Not only does it meet a need, but in a period of budgetary austerity, it would seem appropriate to transform UNA-type supporting associations into relays or even substitutes, or sub-contractors to the UNICs, especially in the educational field and in dealing with school curricula.

62. Because of their sphere of action, their geographical locations within a single country, the nature and type of the dominant communities, the UNAs are organizations whose outlook and impact differ greatly from one nation to another, even if they are governed by identical statutes. Where they exist, they will manifest greater or lesser vitality or will rely on foundations of greater or lesser affluence. Some will have a tendency to become converted into offshoots of a university movement, or to become politicized. Others, in contrast, will lack the coverage or weight to place their stamp on the political milieu and discourse. Some UNAs will have local sections whose vitality is greater in the provinces than in the capital.

63. In this context, the Assistant Secretary-General responsible for DPI might reach agreements with groups of NGOs, and preferably UNAs, to hive off certain operations to them or involve them in various information activities. This would prove all the more acceptable since the UNICs now have the responsibility for seeking financial and logistical support from governments and NGOs for the purpose of promoting United Nations programmes and ideals.

64. The Jamaican UNA might be cited as an example. This Association, which is firmly established in the country's capital, is spreading its activities through the establishment of provincial "chapters". In a country which has no UNIC, it genuinely plays the role and operates as a private field office of DPI. In the discussion which has recently begun on whether the UNIC currently located in Port of Spain should be transferred to Kingston, one of the weightiest arguments in favour of the status quo might perhaps be the existence of this UNA, which is already functioning so effectively on behalf of the United Nations. In another context, the Canadian UNA is playing a similar role, and it would certainly be both pointless and wasteful to seek to modify the situation.

III. ADAPTING THE CENTRES TO THEIR USERS

A. Defining expectations

65. It is obvious that expectations and requirements, constraints and difficulties in regions and countries are not identical where information is concerned, and that a degree of diversification in language and style must be adopted. The UNIC is the "public face" of the United Nations. Consequently, the message cannot change when latitude or time zone changes. But the existence of a single face does not rule out the use of a variety of facial expressions. The heterogeneity of historical traditions which have shaped minds, political régimes and media networks cannot be ignored. In order for it to be passed on, the message of the United Nations must seek universality, while avoiding uniformity, with which it is too often confused.

66. The need for a single, homogeneous message does not eliminate the major problem of differentiation of audiences and targets. It is necessary to give priority to the problem of adapting and adjusting the message for segments of public opinion, the media and government representatives, whose requirements, capabilities and functions vis-à-vis the dissemination and reception of the United Nations message differ from one to another.

67. Any communication system is governed by a few elementary rules, which must never be forgotten by Directors of UNICs and UNISEs, nor by the Directors of DPI Divisions who supervise them. There is no more an average profile of a

listener or reader than there is a citizen of the world. World opinion is but a juxtaposition of regional and/or national opinions, which can only be restrained from adopting an excessively local viewpoint by means of a very progressive educational approach to information. Nor should it be forgotten that it is difficult to make a simple message precise or a precise message simple, and that while the same message may be transmitted through the written word and by means of images, it is transmitted differently in either case.

68. The dominant interests and major concerns of regions and nations define a framework in which United Nations issues must fit and adapt. The significance of information, the impact it may have on daily life, the changes it implies in the longer term - these differ in importance and weight for different individuals and vary between peoples, segments of society and collective memories.

69. A comprehensive study published in 1983 (A/AC.198/61) showed that the Directors of Information Centres would like information material to be better attuned to local expectations. There is no such thing as global expectations, any more than there are general expectations, and the image of the United Nations will be all the more blurred if an attempt is made to respond to expectations which are both vague and confused.

70. The impact of United Nations operations in a wide variety of fields does not increase as a result of the fact that an Information Centre may seek to cover exhaustively all the topics which it is responsible for reporting on to the country it covers, and concerning which it is supposed to mobilize public opinion. The hoped-for efficiency of the Centre is more likely to stem from the fact that it is capable of aligning the dissemination of information with internal demand in the countries concerned and, in the light of the political and socio-cultural environment, identifying the channels by which the United Nations message may best be spread.

71. A common ideal of safeguarding and promoting human dignity informs all the priority or fundamental themes highlighted by the General Assembly. Yet it may be the subject of different approaches and different treatments. The media process information concerning the United Nations to a greater or lesser extent, but always bearing in mind the requirements and expectations of a given population group, which is usually not reached by the written word and only intermittently reached by audio-visual means. Rather than asking the UNICs to provide information on the whole range of issues, at the risk of prompting only indifference, it would be better to invite them to consolidate past achievements, to emphasize the issues which are of the greatest importance and stimulate the greatest interest in the countries in which they operate.

72. If good use is to be made of the UNICs, there must be differentiation. In one place the struggle for human dignity will be best understood and best appreciated if approached from the viewpoint of efforts to combat hard drug abuse. Elsewhere, it will be better to lay stress on the issue of apartheid or the rights of the Palestinian people. Consequently it is pointless and expensive to dispatch indiscriminately to all Information Centres equivalent amounts of media material concerning all the topics covered by the United Nations. It would be more appropriate to find out what evokes the greatest response in the various segments of public opinion, and how they may best be mobilized, in order to be able to gauge and modify dispatches of publications and cassettes.

73. In 1987 all the UNICs received a questionnaire in which their Directors were asked in particular to indicate the strengths and weaknesses of the offices they headed. The responses received provided DPI with a mass of data and figures which varied in value and usability. But this questionnaire did not ask the UNICs which United Nations issues evoked the greatest and the least response in the host country. This is a gap which must be filled, since only by improving knowledge of the issues bearing in mind their real audience is it possible to organize more selective and better targeted dissemination of media material.

74. It is necessary to produce only what will be absorbed, and the output of information must be brought into line with the use made of it. This fact is too often forgotten at Headquarters, but is palpable in the field. Too much media material, especially printed material, is cluttering up Centre premises, and is neither asked for nor taken, however zealous the staff might be.

75. Those at whom United Nations information is aimed must also possess the basic documentation which will enable them to know what they may ask for. Those in the field are not necessarily in a position to know what is accessible or what is available. In some particularly deprived countries - the Maldives, for example - it was noted that there was too often a lack of references, without which legitimate requests for information could not be dealt with.

B. Tailoring content

76. It would seem that within DPI the question "For whom is the department to work?" is not posed with sufficient clarity and care. Yet it is only in the light of the reply received that the fare can be varied, the content shaped and adapted. It is not possible to satisfy in the same way the requirements of the press and the audio-visual media, the needs of NGOs, parliamentarians or representatives and delegates of governments of Member States. Nor can an identical product be sent to those who see themselves as final consumers, intermediaries, relays or auxiliary bodies.

77. Leader writers and reporters encountered in Latin America, India and the surrounding area most often complain that DPI does not provide them with sufficiently well-developed final products. They find that the style and the heavy and awkward form of expression frequently leave much to be desired. Too often, they point out, there is a lack of salient extracts and sound summaries of major symposia or debates.

78. Journalists particularly welcome brochures and newsletters for their information value, especially those emanating from UNESCO, UNICEF or UNCTAD, and in that context make comparisons which are not always flattering to DPI. Of course, the limited financial resources available to the Department may be cited to excuse the poor quality or unsuitability of printed documents. One may also observe that it is better to do nothing than to pay for something which is of little use.

79. In their 1979 report, the JIU Inspectors wondered whether DPI should subject information to a degree of selection. They were of the view that senior staff at Headquarters could and should select information in the light of what the Centres felt might interest their country and area. It was not

part of the role of DPI to duplicate the work of the major news agencies, at the risk of disseminating too late what the agencies had already transmitted, since a single day can be crucial in such areas.

80. Where documents are concerned, the UNICs should receive and distribute all publications dealing with United Nations activities as a whole that are of special interest to NGOs and the education sector, since both have a greater need for documentation than for up-to-the-minute news. In the field of current events, the UNICs, and through them DPI, will have a complementary role to play - that of transmitting what the news agencies have not particularly commented upon, while providing it with more substance.

81. Leader writers and specialist commentators require semi-processed products and not raw material. They need summaries, and texts written in a light style, monthly newsletters and well-designed brochures, news which is selected and presented, with the stamp of and from the viewpoint of the United Nations. News agencies impose different requirements. First and foremost they want to have facts, quotations and dates. They complain when the Centres fail to provide them with dated references for decisions and supporting texts. Neither news agencies nor journalists need to be provided with communiqués which merely repeat after a delay what is already out of date or known through the efforts of media correspondents who are employed precisely to find such matters out and pass them on as rapidly as possible.

82. Information for government delegates and representatives is governed by different principles. The print media emphasize the imperatives of speed, novelty and regularity. Diplomats and experts have to inform their governments of what they themselves or their colleagues have said on one subject or another. The imperative of reliability will then be paramount, and the technique of producing meeting records will necessarily differ from that applying to press summaries. Their preparation will take more time, but it is also important that it should not result in reports which are too brief and lacking in sharpness.

83. It is of cardinal importance to know at whom DPI and the Centres aim their information, bearing in mind that it is not possible to work simultaneously for NGOs, news agencies, the press and government representatives. The same content requires different shapes and packages. It is not possible or desirable to substitute brochures for summaries, nor summaries for meeting records. Services must correspond to the use made of them by the ultimate recipient, and a diplomat will have no more use for a press summary than a journalist for a meeting record.

84. Once these distinctions have been made, the use of audio-visual media will only indirectly be of relevance to governments, diplomats and news agencies. They will be of greatest relevance to public opinion, often illiterate, in the form of documentary dramas or radio broadcasts, clips or spots. They will be of relevance to NGOs and university circles through films, whether documentary or otherwise. Since they involve visual and sound images which are intended to persuade through the emotions rather than through argument, awareness of contexts will be of special importance. But in the case of either audio-visual or written media, DPI and the Information Centres must address with care the problem of the place and the person at which the message is aimed, its audience and the channels by which it is transmitted, so that there is a constant improvement in adapting it to expectations and needs.

IV. THE DISPROPORTION BETWEEN MEANS AND ENDS

A. Ambitious goals and extensive tasks

85. The 1987 reform, rather than redefining tasks in the context of resources available, restated the terms of reference of DPI, without worrying about the broadening of their scope or the intensification of the activities they involve. There was no question of bringing terms of reference and ambitions into line with the logistics, but none the less human and financial resources are so modest as almost to reach the point where terms of reference are pointless and ambitions lack foundation.

86. The DPI programme budget for 1988-1989 includes among its tasks that of "enhancement of the work of the information centres, ensuring a dynamic presence in as many countries as possible". This is viewed as "a basic element" in efforts to "revitalize" the work of DPI and enable it "to meet the varying information needs of the peoples around the world about the United Nations". The question then arises of how work can be enhanced in the context of an extremely limited budgetary allocation and staff resources.

87. The programme of work is an extensive one. It has steadily expanded as the network of Information Centres has grown, from 59 to 68 between 1979 and 1989. The present head of DPI does not appear to expect that this growth will need to be curbed. And foremost among the decisions which the new Centres Division will have to take, he placed the introduction of new communication and transmission techniques, the broadening of sectors covered by the dissemination of media products and supplementary dispatches of information material to the 85 countries which have no UNIC.

88. The head of DPI is seeking to stimulate a more sustained effort in the field of school curricula and penetration of academic circles. He proposes to enhance access to national media, in liaison with UNDP, and, in co-operation with the specialized agencies, to explore possibilities of joint initiatives. He attaches particular importance to matters of translation and adaptation. He wishes to encourage horizontal links between UNICs and ensure that all of them apply the instructions laid down by the General Assembly and comply uniformly with Secretariat guidelines.

89. In order to accomplish these tasks through the Centres, the revised biennial budget for 1988-1989 was set at around \$21 million, including \$16 million for staff costs. Assigned staff on 1 January 1988 totalled 55 Professionals and 385 General Service staff; by 31 December 1989 these figures are scheduled to decline by 11 and 81 respectively. Given this situation as regards financial and human resources, the Information Centres have increasing difficulty in performing the tasks which have become more demanding as their number and scope has increased. The disproportion between means and ends therefore raises the question of a redeployment of activities and location, simultaneously with a review and differentiation of their functions.

B. The chronic inadequacy of resources

90. The JIU report of 1979 noted a number of gaps and shortcomings which could only partially be remedied for lack of financial and human resources. Similarly, document A/AC.198/61 of 1983 mentioned that many Centres complained of having insufficient funds for their general activities. A 1987 report (ACC/1987/CRP) indicates that, to judge by various case studies, the functioning of the United Nations information system is rather poor. It points to serious shortcomings in information on development, but confines itself to diagnosing the problem without proposing solutions.

91. These assessments are confirmed by an analysis of the replies provided by Centre Directors to the 1987 DPI questionnaire, as well as by observations made on the spot during 1988 by the Inspector responsible for this report. Taken individually, the main weaknesses of the UNICs may seem rather minor, but taken together their widespread common features give grounds for concern. Complaints relating to the lack of available staff and inadequate budgetary resources are the most common. But beyond these everyday considerations, which it is a simple matter to relate to the constraints of a financial crisis, study of the detail reveals a somewhat more worrying picture.

92. Heads of Centres are prevented from carrying out their duties properly by inadequate financial resources. The very small or non-existent budgets granted for travel have a particularly harmful impact. In a country the size of a subcontinent, such as India, the UNIC Director will find it impossible to participate in conferences or symposia held in Bombay or Madras, Calcutta or Bangalore. Even if the United Nations possesses solid means of extending its influence through the national press and the federal television network, personal links with the major provincial capitals are not possible, threatening to wipe out the principal effects of the activities pursued from New Delhi.

93. The same is true in a wide variety of circumstances. The head of the information services in Madagascar points out that, in the absence of tours outside the capital, his activities are limited to a city containing no more than a tenth of the country's population. The Director of the UNIC in Port of Spain, who has a subregional responsibility covering nearly 15 countries in the Caribbean, is obliged to limit his sphere of activity to Trinidad and Tobago. The Head of the UNIS in Vienna is forced to minimize his trips to the Federal Republic of Germany, which is also under his jurisdiction. Similar apprehensions were expressed by the Director of the Washington Centre, who, in a country which remains the Organization's major contributor, is unable to establish personal contacts with university communities and interested NGOs in the States.

94. In some cases a Centre will not be in a position to subscribe to a regional news agency, and runs the risk of having to learn from others what it ought to have transmitted already. In other cases, rises in postal tariffs and increases in the volume of United Nations documentation will prevent media products from being forwarded, so that the information material rapidly becomes unusable. Elsewhere, the UNIC will be financially unable to pursue a joint information effort by facilitating access to the data banks and institutional memories of various United Nations bodies (IRIS, UNISIS, AGRIS, INFOCLIMA).

95. The lack of continuous training, or the fact that it is impossible to recruit temporary staff, vie in seriousness with the sparseness or obsolescence of electronic equipment. Compared with the specialized agencies, which are often better equipped with information resources, but also national cultural centres, especially in the industrialized countries, the UNICs are condemned to cut a sorry figure. The attraction effect sought will not be achieved, and may even give way to a dissuasive effect.

96. In some countries local problems will arise, especially where the choice of location is limited or where premises are made available to the UNIC, free of charge or not, by the government of the host country. Second-rate circumstances such as premises that are too small will create working conditions which are all the more unfavourable as it will be more difficult to organize lectures, show films, hold seminars, organize exhibitions or guarantee a normal readership for the attached library. The location of a Centre plays a decisive role in the achievement of its objectives, and is never completely free of financial considerations which often determine where it is to be placed.

97. Problems of translation too run up against obstacles, particularly of a budgetary nature. In 1983, document A/AC.198/61 underlined the need for translation of documents for the use of Centres serving countries in which the official United Nations languages are not spoken or are used to a limited extent only. Considerations which apply to the reproduction of texts in Japanese apply equally to their dissemination in German or Arabic. No provision is made for translators in the Centres' manning tables. A special effort should be made in this area for the simple reason that it is more costly to continue to produce and distribute unusable information material than to plan for the recruitment of temporary translators and interpreters.

C. Scope for possible changes

98. The incipient distortion between the resources applied and the objectives pursued within the UNICs may be explained, and in some cases justified, in terms of the financial crisis. However, it is possible to embark on changes which, without raising outgoings, or by enabling them to be better spread, would markedly improve the operation of the Centres. Changes and corrections would affect three types of issue in particular: irregular distribution of information, and sometimes duplication, excessive reporting requirements to Headquarters and an overloaded calendar of observances.

99. Where news communiqués are concerned, the common delays on the part of DPI vis-à-vis news agencies lead to costly duplication. It is pointless for the Department to embark on the dissemination of news when the most interesting part of it is known through the media 24 or 48 hours before the UNICs begin to distribute it on the basis of cables received. On occasion publications connected with a special observance will reach the Centre too late, and any large-scale distribution will be ruled out. In many cases - especially when the Centre has no electronic mail system - insufficient account will be taken of time differences.

100. The flow of information between United Nations organs and bodies, or even between divisions of DPI, reveals a variety of anomalies. The lack of co-ordination hampers both regular dispatches and timely receipt. The UNICs are not always kept informed of all communications between DPI or

United Nations agencies and the governments of the countries in which they serve. It may also happen that, on a topic of interest to the Information Centres, the government of the host country will notify or consult UNDP alone.

101. The progressive introduction of electronic mail, now available in 24 Centres, will help to make communications more rapid and to overcome the problem of time zones. However, the extension of this system to all UNICs should be accompanied by stricter selection of the information sent to them. If greater account is taken of the existence and density of the media network, especially in the industrialized countries, it will be possible to avoid both duplication and the waste of resources and information material.

102. The rationalization of information flows, which would make dissemination more efficient, should be combined with simplification of the system of Centre reporting to Headquarters. Greater amounts of time should be freed and Centre heads should be enabled to devote proportionally more time to the activities they must pursue than to reporting on them. Here too document A/AC.198/61 advocated a reduction in reporting requirements, the streamlining of reporting procedures and the combining of reports on similar activities. Though they are of long standing, these 1983 recommendations have lost none of their topicality.

103. The Centre Directors submitted useful suggestions on the subject in response to the 1987 questionnaire. Most of them considered that the current system is too cumbersome and leads to unnecessary duplication. Many of them observed that increasingly active participation by the Information Centre in the life of the country in which it operates should not have the result that the time of the most competent staff is taken up in barely worthwhile drafting functions at the expense of the most efficient operations.

104. A progress report prepared every six months would amply suffice for reporting to DPI headquarters. This report would include data, costed or not, but first and foremost it should grant greater space to concrete proposals and less diplomatic or more critical assessments. It would include all the elements of a self-evaluation. It would cover all information on the dissemination of media products, as well as on operations related to United Nations special observances. This system would involve the elimination of all special reports on special observances, the content of which is often rather meagre. It would not rule out the dispatch of appropriate press cuttings or brief notes on an important meeting or event in individual cases.

105. Once the focus had been shifted to the six-monthly report from the UNICs to DPI headquarters, it would be appropriate to eliminate the Weekly News Summary, or rather to merge it with the summary hitherto sent to ORCI each week, but which should become fortnightly or even monthly. In order for these documents to be truly useable, they must be more substantial than frequent.

106. Lastly, an overall annual report prepared at the request of the Information Centres Division would provide an opportunity to review the outstanding activities of the UNICs, examining problems raised and possible solutions. Such an annual report, which is notable for its absence, would be completely different from the explanatory commentary which accompanies the programme budget and which to date has wrongly been considered sufficient.

107. In addition to the areas of regularization of communications and simplification of the reporting system, there is a need to rationalize the system of United Nations observances. It was pointed out in 1983, in a document mentioned above, that the Centres should enjoy "flexibility" in timing and in "combining" United Nations observances. Addressing the JUNIC at the beginning of 1988, the head of DPI expressed his concern on this subject. Without taking a decision, he invited the Committee to discuss the matter, identify drawbacks and advantages and better define activities related to these observances. He also suggested a re-grouping by major topics in view of the fact that the United Nations system constitutes an interrelated whole.

108. The net effect on the public of the proliferation of United Nations observances is one of saturation. Consequently they run counter to the desired goal of mobilizing opinion. In the developing countries, these celebrations are not granted the attention they deserve because of problems of survival or the day-to-day satisfaction of the most basic needs. In the industrialized countries, the media networks are so dense and the messages so numerous that it is always difficult - except in the case of an urgent news item - to add to the mass of events which demand and swamp the public's attention.

109. The ideal solution would combine a grouping of topics with a new division of labour. The major observances would continue to be the responsibility of the UNICs. The others, placed under the auspices of the United Nations, would be hived off to interested or specialized NGOs, educational establishments or UNAs, which, depending on the national context, would be more attuned to one or other of them.

110. A degree of re-grouping would be carried out. The Week of Solidarity with the Colonial Peoples of Southern Africa, the Week of Solidarity with the People of Namibia and Namibia Day would not be merged, but would be celebrated together. The same might be done for Children's Day and UNICEF Day. The question of "technical" days with a limited mobilization effect (meteorology, telecommunications, shipping, health, posts) should also be re-examined. Indeed, in such cases the symposium approach would seem to be more appropriate than that of observance. Finally, United Nations Day, with its character of an international celebration, should benefit from special preparation and emphasis on the part of the Centres.

V. THE PROBLEM OF REDEPLOYMENT AND CO-ORDINATION

A. The siting of Centres

111. Generally speaking, the establishment of a UNIC derives from a request by a member State that sees some specific advantage in becoming a host country. Subject to the consent of the member States concerned, Centres may also be set up at the request of the General Assembly. From the practical point of view, the establishment of a Centre entails the conclusion with the host country of an agreement concerning the facilities and services that the State is able to provide (buildings, means of transport and communication, staff) pursuant to General Assembly resolution 1405 (XIV).

112. The effect of the financial crisis has been to slow, if not to halt, the tendency towards the multiplication of Centres. While it is understood that, pursuant to the General Assembly's recommendations of 1986, the strengthening

of Information Centres in developing countries should be completed by 1990, there has been no indication whether what is meant is the consolidation of the Centres themselves or the consolidation of a network that could continue to expand to some degree.

113. According to document A/42/234, the United Nations should have a presence "that is able to reach every part of the world". The Secretary-General also stated in this document, however, that the closing or merger of existing field offices should not be precluded where it "can be justified on grounds of cost effectiveness without having a negative impact on programme delivery". He also stated that "the creation of new field offices will be avoided". The implicit objective was to avoid accentuating the disproportion between the ambitions proclaimed and the resources available. It was also better to adapt the constantly shrinking resources to ever-expanding needs.

114. The course thus mapped out represents an appreciable departure from the proposals made by JIU in 1979. Their aim was the establishment of regional information centres with substantial responsibility for programming, co-ordination and the adaptation of documentation. The standard structures then envisaged by the Inspectors in charge of the report juxtaposed with small national centres managed by locally-recruited Professionals far more heavily manned regional centres (seven Professionals, of whom three would be internationally recruited, and six General Service staff) and subregional centres (four Professionals and five General Service staff).

115. Even 10 years ago, such proposals would, it seems, have required impossibly, and perhaps even unnecessarily high levels of financial and human resources. Furthermore, the regional and subregional structures in question could have constituted intermediate tiers which, far from enhancing the efficiency of the dissemination system, would have functioned less as relays than as screens. In the current situation, those recommendations are, in any event, no longer appropriate. It is, therefore, pointless to dwell on the proposals they entailed and the implementation of which, even in the long term, seems undesirable.

116. An outline plan for a simplified and strengthened network of Information Centres was prepared in 1988 within the framework of the new Information Centres Division of DPI. This revised network would operate on a regional and subregional basis, but nothing was said about the problem of possible increase in staff. We shall confine ourselves therefore to speaking of Information Centres exercising regional or subregional competence from a particular country without saying with what means their heads could fulfil that task. It will simply be assumed that the establishment of any new centre would require an in-depth preliminary study and could be made dependent on the provision of premises free of charge and the sharing by the host country (in the proportion of one third) of the operating expenses.

117. If adopted, the plan will result in quite substantial remodelling of the map of UNICs and of their zones of authority. It will entail the closure of eight Centres (Asunción and Managua, Ankara and Bucharest, Antananarivo and Harare, Rangoon and Teheran) and the conversion of 13 others (Algiers, Tripoli, Bujumbura, Dar-es-Salaam and Monrovia in Africa; La Paz and Panama, Port of Spain and San Salvador in America; Colombo and Dhaka, Kabul and Kathmandu in Asia) into outposts.

118. The plan does not challenge the status or the location of either the Information Services in Geneva and Vienna or the UNIS of the regional commissions. Other than for the balanced closures of the Centres in Ankara and Bucharest, it would modify only very slightly the system in force in the industrialized countries. It maintains the Centres in Belgrade, Rabat, Rio de Janeiro and Lagos, for reasons having to do with the size of the population serviced, the involvement of the countries concerned in matters within the competence of the United Nations, or the role and profile those countries have acquired within the Organization.

119. As regards the developing countries of Asia, the Pacific and America, the changes proposed are not of major importance. That is not the case as regards Africa and the Caribbean, where the modifications would be a little more substantial. In Asia, while the Centres in Rangoon and Teheran would be closed, those in Dhaka, Kathmandu and Colombo would become outposts of the New Delhi Centre. In Africa, while there is some uncertainty as to the respective roles of Kinshasa and Yaoundé, the Tripoli and Algiers Centres would become outposts of that in Tunis, while the Harare Centre would be closed. In the Caribbean, the Centre in Port of Spain would be transferred to Kingston.

120. With respect to the People's Republic of China, the proposal is that, pending the establishment there of a Centre, a junior Professional should be assigned to Beijing by DPI. That staff member would be attached for administrative purposes to the Resident Co-ordinator in Beijing, but would report directly to DPI. In the case of Canada, the UNA has so far played the role of a UNIC, but it is hardly conceivable that a country of this size, which is so much involved in United Nations affairs, could continue to do without an Information Centre.

121. The reorganization would entail a substantial change in the Caribbean, because of the transfer from Trinidad and Tobago to Jamaica of the subregional Centre covering the zone. Siting the Centre in Kingston would have the following advantages: an obviously central location in the Caribbean zone; a favourable intellectual environment and good local recruitment possibilities for national staff; the country's and the Government's interest in the United Nations, as illustrated by the existence of a strong, well-structured UNA; the availability of free space in the premises of the Centre for the Law of the Sea. Furthermore, the density and convenience of the air services from the Port of Spain and Kingston are roughly equivalent.

122. That does not mean that there would be only disadvantages to maintaining a subregional Centre in Port of Spain. Culturally, ethnically and socially, Trinidad and Tobago is more representative of the diversity of the Caribbean than the less heterogeneous Jamaica. Its Centre has the benefits of long-standing and established local connections. In addition, Kingston is the site of a UNESCO office and the current distribution of competence in the zone implies a balance that it might be embarrassing to change.

123. There is an argument in favour of the status quo that is only apparently paradoxical. This is that the Jamaican UNA is one of the most active. Thanks to its chapters, officials and numerous connections, it is, with the devotion and the voluntary efforts of an NGO, already playing in practice the role of a UNIC and passing on United Nations documents and disseminating the information supplied by DPI as well as can be. In these circumstances, the establishment at Kingston of an outpost having a locally-recruited press officer should be

sufficient to ensure the necessary supervision, without any transfer or establishment of a new Centre. The press officer would function both as a technical adviser to the UNA and as a means of liaison with DPI.

124. An identical solution should be applied in Canada, where the UNA plays a similar substitute role. In a period of budgetary stringency, when the Information Centres are being asked to seek logistical and financial support not to extend, but often merely to carry out some of their tasks, it is hard to see why an experienced, well-structured UNA should not, in effect, become a sort of DPI field service and take on the full functions of a substitute and a relay point. As in the case of Jamaica, an agreement could be concluded with the Canadian UNA. It could be accompanied by written terms of reference and, once again, a press officer could be recruited locally to ensure liaison and co-ordination with Headquarters.

B. Critical review of the relocation plan

125. This plan drawn up by DPI for redefining and regionalizing the Information Centres constitutes an excellent point of departure. It is hard to argue with its concern for reducing the numbers and locations of UNICs and establishing outposts. The effort at concentration should, however, be augmented and recourse to UNAs should be more frequent. The roles of the Centres should, in addition, be more clearly differentiated, depending on whether the Centres are in industrialized or developing countries. Finally, it would be expedient to model the regional zones, taking greater account of affinities, circumstances and contexts, whenever that would not give rise to insuperable problems.

126. As regards the African developing countries, the siting of UNICs in Dakar, Nairobi, Lagos, Cairo and Rabat are beyond question. It is, however, debatable whether there are any decisive reasons for establishing a Centre at Lusaka rather than Harare, when Zimbabwe is better situated and has better air links and a more stable socio-cultural and economic environment. Since the Rabat Centre will be maintained, it seems unnecessary to maintain a Centre at Tunis, where an outpost would suffice. In the latter event, the Algiers, Tripoli and Tunis facilities would be outposts of the Rabat Centre.

127. In Asia and the Pacific, there would seem to be no need for any substantial change in the DPI remodelling plan. China is a problem to be left pending; the proposed temporary solution could do for the time being. The disappearance from the scene of the Teheran and Rangoon UNICs would be a response to exceptional constraints. Sydney (for the Pacific), Tokyo (because of its role and influence in the region) and Bangkok (as the headquarters of a regional commission) must naturally have a Centre. Perhaps provision should also be made for an outpost in Manila and, for the Middle East subregion between Beirut and Teheran, for a "roving director" based in Jordan.

128. As a country that is a continent and an eminent member of the United Nations, India should be given special treatment that takes account of its federal structure and its population, the multiplicity of its peoples and the diversity of its cultures. In addition to the new outposts in Dhaka, Colombo and Kathmandu, there should be outposts at Bombay, Madras and, if possible, Bangalore and Calcutta. Not to make this special effort would be seriously to diminish the impact of the New Delhi Centre. It would also be

advisable to see whether it would be possible to expand and diversify the activities of the Indian Federation of United Nations Associations (IFUNA) so that it could exercise its multiplier effect to the full in the main cities where it already operates.

129. In the Americas, it is questionable whether there is a need for two Centres in Lima and Bogota when one would suffice and the Centre that was closed could be replaced by an outpost. As in India, it would not be superfluous to have in Brazil, in addition to the Rio de Janeiro Centre, a number of outposts - for example, in Sao Paulo and Porto Alegre. The Buenos Aires Centre, which would rightly be maintained, should be one of the anchor points of DPI's information policy. Its prime urban setting, its connection with the La Recoleta Cultural Centre, its busy library and its relations with a very dynamic NGO whose headquarters is in the same premises are advantages that must not be overlooked. As regards the Caribbean subregion, it would be better for the reasons set out in paragraphs 117 to 119, to maintain the status quo rather than to make a switch from Port of Spain to Kingston.

130. In the case of the industrialized countries, the proposals by the Inspector in charge of this report differ substantially from those in the remodelling plan. While there is no need for the moment to reconsider the situation of the UNISEs in Geneva and Vienna, their role and their spheres of competence within UNOG and UNOV should be the subject of in-depth analysis and a special study. In addition, the effort to cut back the system could be more intensive. To the closure of the Ankara and Bucharest Centres could be added that of the Centres in Athens, Prague and, above all, Lisbon, where an outpost should be sufficient after the establishment of a Centre in Madrid.

131. Maintenance of Information Centres in London, Copenhagen and Moscow is essential for obvious geopolitical reasons. That would not seem to be the case, however, for Paris and Rome: where specialized agencies such as UNESCO or FAO have a very high profile, the host-country UNICs can only function as the poor relation or the forgotten ally. However serious they may be, their efforts are doomed to remain vain - when, in fact, they do not confuse the United Nations image. If an Information Centre with regional competence is one day to play a worthwhile role within the European Economic Community, Brussels would provide a sounder base than Paris or Rome. With the establishment of a Centre at Brussels, the Paris and Rome Centres would be converted into outposts and a further outpost affiliated not with Vienna but with the Centre in Belgium could be set up in Bonn.

132. There remains the problem of the Washington UNIC, which the Inspector feels has an important role to play. Far from fulfilling missions that would overlap with those of DPI and its Headquarters in New York, the Washington Centre has advantages and opportunities that have perhaps been too much underestimated until now. Relations with the Congress and Government of the United States, whose decisions as the United Nations main contributor are of such importance, can only be developed and pursued within the context of the federal capital. As in the cases of India and Brazil, it would be desirable to create outposts of the Centre in a number of states. It would also be good not to neglect the opportunities offered by the development of a UNA or of other NGOs capable of assisting in propagating the United Nations ideals and still more in improving and correcting its public image.

C. Value and limits of co-ordination

133. The implementation of any plan for the relocation and redeployment of Information Centres is indissociable from the application of recommendations 11, 12 and 37/3 of the Group of Experts, which aim at better co-ordination of the Centres' activities in the host countries. These recommendations call for the "reaffirmation" and, hence, the confirmation of the authority of the "resident co-ordinators", for the strengthening in this regard of the central co-ordinating role of UNDP and for the merging of field offices.

134. Imperative though they may be, the recommendations in question are accompanied by numerous restrictions. Action is to be taken "wherever possible" and "whenever feasible". That implies that, in many cases, it will be neither feasible nor possible. It is further stated that it should be undertaken "to the extent that the quality of public information activities would not be hampered". It would thus seem that, the proclaimed concern for clarification notwithstanding, the desired and already initiated co-ordination is still some way from culmination.

135. The Experts' recommendations, which were endorsed by the General Assembly, are an incitement less to boldness and rigour than to flexibility and prudence. Consolidation of Information Centres with the offices of the local UNDP Resident Co-ordinators/Resident Representatives is to be undertaken wherever it can be shown that a joint arrangement will be at once more cost-effective and efficient without hindering the delivery of information programmes (A/42/234). The Secretary General's appointee, the United Nations Resident Co-ordinator (UNRC), will represent the United Nations in the country of assignment and will have overall authority for local management of the United Nations offices "except in those situations where other arrangements are more appropriate".

136. DPI is supposed gradually to effect the above-mentioned consolidation following an in-depth study co-ordinated with the review by the Joint Consultative Group of Programmes. UNICs will have at their heads directors appointed by the Secretary-General on the proposal of the head of DPI. But, despite being granted complete functional autonomy, each Centre head will be subordinate to a UNRC who, in the name of the consolidation of services, will have the de facto status of a veritable ambassador of the United Nations.

137. Like the directors of UNICs, UNRCs are appointed by the Secretary-General; in the first case, the appointments are made on the proposal of DPI. DPI prepares the personal evaluation reports of directors of UNICs, but does so in consultation with the relevant UNRC. Planning and local development-information programmes in individual host countries will not be the exclusive responsibility of the UNIC, but will be jointly undertaken by the Centre's Director, the UNRC and other representatives of the United Nations agencies concerned. In the sphere of celebrations and United Nations conferences, the Director of the UNIC will be able to act only after consulting representatives of agencies in the United Nations system and the co-ordination of these tasks will be the responsibility of the UNRC.

138. The Director of a UNIC is described as being directly responsible for the execution in the host country of the annual information programme as prepared by DPI in conjunction with the other members of the United Nations system

concerned. But it is stipulated that, in the event of the raising between the UNRC and the Director of the Centre of a problem that cannot be resolved at the local level or even at the divisional level at UNDP and DPI headquarters, that problem will be submitted to a Committee chaired by the Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management and having as its members the Administrator of UNDP and the USG of DPI.

139. The job description for the post of UNRC further accentuates the subordination of directors of UNICs, since the latter can entertain external relations in host countries only through the UNRC, if not under his control or with his assent. A UNRC does not merely facilitate the information activities of the UNIC by putting its Director in regular contact with the project leaders and officials who are the local representatives of the various United Nations agencies. He does not merely keep the Director informed of the United Nations organs' activities in the field. He is supposed to assist him, whenever necessary, in establishing and maintaining working contacts with government circles, the media, NGOs, educational institutions and other disseminators of information.

140. The UNRC would also have to "assist" the Director of the Information Centre in co-financing and co-producing media material to be made on the spot. He would provide the logistical base for his services and monitor his financial operations. The accounts being kept separate, the UNRC would, within the limit of the allotments made by DPI, have to approve expenditure and provide for the co-ordination of administrative and technical support. The UNRC would represent the United Nations at official ceremonies, to the exclusion of the Director of the UNIC. On 24 October, United Nations Day, he would represent the Secretary-General "in conjunction" with the Director of the Information Centre.

141. The supervision of the establishment of outposts of UNICs would be the responsibility not of the Director of the relevant Centre but of the UNRC. He would select the staff and arrange for the provision of operational and administrative support. The UNRC, and not the Director of the Centre, would be responsible for informing DPI of the repercussions and impact of outposts' information activities.

142. Henceforward, therefore, the job description for a Centre Director fits in closely with that of the UNRC, who serves him both as a support and an intermediary without having hierarchical superiority, but with all the attributes of actual pre-eminence. The Director of a Centre cannot enter into contact with prominent persons, the authorities or the media of the host country otherwise than through the UNRC. In outposts, he shares his power with the UNRC. In ceremonies he yields to him. Whether as regards logistical support or the co-financing or co-production of operations, he must expect the other's constant involvement. He remains master of his correspondence with governments, the media, NGOs and the usual interlocutors in the host country, but provides copies of it to the UNRC, whom he keeps informed of the reports he submits to DPI.

D. Approach and purpose of co-ordination

143. The Secretariat hopes that the generalization of this system of consolidation - which, with some modifications, has already been applied in a number of countries - will benefit it in two ways. On the one hand, it could

serve as a model for the specialized agencies and, by thus stimulating the reduction of the number of field offices, help to improve the image and impact of the system as a whole. On the other hand, it would release resources and, thereby make possible intensification of the effort and modernization of the facilities of DPI in the field.

144. As of the beginning of 1989, the Information Centres are still operating under differing systems, without the consolidation having advanced very far. Some UNICs (36 in the developing countries) have a full-time Director and are discharging their tasks, in accordance with the mandates from the General Assembly. In the countries that are in principle host to a Centre but where the latter does not function as such, UNDP is providing its framework and support for public information activities. But it is agreed that, where that seems appropriate, DPI and UNDP will co-operate by undertaking joint activities or pooling premises and administrative services, without that being describable as consolidation to the advantage of the UNRC.

145. Consolidation is therefore still more at the orientation and policy stage than it is a practice that is regularly gaining ground. It is true that the Secretary-General's decision was initially hedged about with numerous precautions that are delaying development. Consolidation is only to be considered on a case-by-case basis and effecting it is necessarily a gradual business. Consolidation can be undertaken only when the joint arrangement would meet the twofold requirement of better cost-effectiveness and proper delivery of information programmes. It is also a fact that a great many Centres have already pooled their premises and their administrative, financial and pouching services with UNDP. From this point of view, there is, therefore, no reason to expect any substantial savings from more thorough consolidation.

146. Consolidation of the kind in question will be applicable more to the developing countries than to the industrialized States, where there is sometimes neither any UNDP representative nor any UNDP activity and where the Director of the local UNIC serves as UNDP's correspondent and chargé d'affaires. In addition, it will be applicable only where there is an Information Centre with a full-time Director. Where the UNDP Resident Representative also holds the title of Director of the UNIC, the consolidation has already occurred. The effect of any consolidation will, moreover, be limited: many Centres, because they cover several States, have difficulty in catering for their needs, since they are able in practice to provide adequate service only to the country of assignment, which is also the host country.

147. As indicated by the USG of DPI in his response to the requests to follow up the recommendations in the 1979 JIU report, DPI has entered into discussions with UNDP and those talks are still in progress. Closer involvement of UNDP field offices in the efforts at consolidation would result in the intensification of contacts with the Centres concerned, the local media and the general public and in logistical support that would make possible useful ad hoc arrangements. However, the Centres, being more or less subordinate to the UNDP offices, would have to avoid placing too much emphasis on information concerning development to the detriment of activities relating to the priority or fundamental topics.

148. Depending on the system that is adopted, the UNRC might be entitled to be consulted about every one of the Information Centre's activities. It would,

however, be undesirable for his legitimate interest in development issues and his necessarily limited knowledge of problems outside his sphere of competence (disarmament, human rights, Namibia, etc.) to lead the UNRC to promote the deflection, not to say the warping of the Centre's information functions by giving precedence to economic and social issues over humanitarian and political affairs.

149. There is no intention of calling in question the framework marked out by the preparatory plans for the reorganization and regionalization of the Information Centres and by the decisions for phased implementation that the Secretary-General adopted in conformity with the recommendations of the Group of Experts and the subsequent resolutions of the General Assembly. However, the missions undertaken in very diverse areas have enabled the Inspector charged with this report to identify a number of weaknesses, to weigh up the suggestions and complaints and, as a result, to delimit the scope of the feasible solutions.

150. Where there exists a UNDP Office with its Resident Representative together with an Information Centre with its Director, and even if they are in the same premises and pool their administrative and financial services, the effort at co-ordination will have to be intensified. The course taken by the Secretary-General unquestionably responds to a need that has not yet been fully met. The flow of information, whether towards the outside or the various levels of the overall United Nations system, is neither sufficiently fluid nor sufficiently regular. This can and must be corrected by a little more co-ordination.

151. Various procedures need some elementary changes. Information cables from DPI to the Director of a Centre should automatically be transmitted for information to his colleague in UNDP. It would be normal for the latter to be kept informed of data, events or decisions relevant to the host country but also capable of affecting his own work on behalf of UNDP. Conversely, reports or information notes from the Director of a UNIC to DPI headquarters could, without inconveniencing anyone, go through the office of the Resident Representative.

152. Such a relationship between these two types of administrative officer is not a matter of supervision, but of constant adjustment. On the most delicate topics, the Resident Representative could ask the Director of the UNIC to agree to revise a particular portion of his text or to include complementary information or a number of corrections. Without bringing in third parties and in order to avoid pointless delay, the Resident Representative would, in the event of disagreement, simply ask the Centre Director to depend, as a matter of exception, a dissenting opinion that would help to clarify the picture.

153. The exchange of opinions would replace the reciprocal ignorance that is a source of misunderstanding, friction and possible conflicts that could thus be avoided. It would be supplemented by the institution of consultations and the provision of informal advice. The practical co-ordination thus achieved would ensure due regard for the responsibilities and, above all, the susceptibilities of the two station chiefs.

154. Questions of precedence and prerogatives may seem secondary. They take on a great deal of importance in everyday life and are thus detrimental to the quality of work. They should be solved by the system for permanent dialogue

outlined above. Furthermore, acknowledgement of the fact that the Director of UNIC is rarely a D-1, and more often a P-5 or P-4, should make the Resident Representative's precedence easier to bear, since he will in most cases occupy a higher place in the hierarchy.

155. It goes without saying that it would not be good if, in his (legitimate) concern for improved external relations, the Director of the Centre spread himself over too many representational and showcase activities, which are of little use to the United Nations. But he should not have too narrow a conception of his role nor find himself, humiliatingly and counter-productively, a de facto or de jure subordinate of the UNDP Resident Representative, obliged to obtain the latter's approval every time he wants to make a move towards his interlocutors in the host country.

156. Nor should a UNDP Resident Representative who is at the same time the Director of a Centre overly neglect his second function in favour of the first or give development objectives precedence over information, at the risk of sacrificing the duties entrusted to him by DPI.

157. The Secretary-General may choose to issue a commission only to the Resident Representative, in his capacity as UNRC, or he may prefer to confer this distinction upon the Director of the UNIC as well. In any event, the question of the precedence of the UNDP official should not arise, since he will be, in most cases, the highest-ranking United Nations official at the duty station. By reason of the financial and human resources at his disposal in the developing country where he operates, by reason of the projects he monitors throughout the country and his constant negotiations with the authorities, his administrative importance will always give him first place. This leaves intact the question of co-ordination that the Secretary-General is trying to resolve through the consolidation scheme.

158. Rather than a legal framework that would be too restrictive because it was too precise, and rather than job descriptions, tables of prescribed tasks of which the complementary aspects would have to be verified, it would be helpful if, in agreement with UNDP, DPI drew up a sort of code of conduct. The purpose of this code would be to facilitate the circulation of rising and descending information between DPI's and UNDP's field services. The code would govern the detail of the respective contributions to the pooling of premises and support facilities and the procedure for the co-financing and co-production of media materials.

159. The code would serve to organize the system of consultations and dialogue so as to avoid as far as possible the delicate business of final recourse to a conciliation committee. It would spell out the mission and the sphere of competence of the Director of the UNIC, who would retain independent control of the activities under his responsibility and who could neither be treated nor behave as the Resident Representative's press officer. It would clarify his position and his relationship with the Deputy Resident Representative.

160. Outposting, the establishment of DPI branch offices attached to Information Centres, poses in new terms the question of relations with the UNRC and of the consolidation those relations imply. The respective positions of heads of outposts and Directors of UNICs vis-à-vis a UNDP Resident Representative serving as UNRC will have to be spelled out. Without becoming the Resident Representative's press officer, the information officer

responsible for an outpost will be supervised by the UNRC. He will report to DPI through the Director of the Information Centre to which he is attached, but will receive administrative and logistical support from the UNRC.

16. In such cases, the requisite co-ordination will be relatively easy to achieve. None the less, the code of conduct must provide a clear definition of the points of convergence, the relations and the administrative links between the three partners, namely the UNRC, the Director of the UNIC and the head of the outpost.

CONCLUSION

162. The reorganization of the United Nations Information Centres is indissociable from the revision of the reform of DPI dealt with earlier. This is because any change in the UNIC system is contingent upon the merging of the Dissemination Division and the Centres Division and upon the attachment of the Institutional Relations and NGO Section to the sole remaining division. Any improvement in their functioning is conditional upon progress in the making of media products, which entails taking greater account of destinations and recipients, of means of communication and of contexts.

163. The DPI plan for the redefinition and regionalization of the Information Centres outlines a course and puts forward options that are very acceptable. Its proposals for the maintenance, transfer or closure of Centres and for the accompanying establishment of outposts comply with financial, geopolitical and technical imperatives whose importance is not underestimated. However, some of the recommendations that close this report alter the system slightly, without disturbing its overall structure.

164. Various measures should tend to prolong the beneficial effect expected from the current reorganization. The recommendation that more importance should be given to local United Nations Associations and that, in certain circumstances, they should perhaps replace UNICs would help to increase the efficiency of the DPI dissemination network. It would reconcile the constraints of a limited budget and the requirements of the steadily more necessary flexibility. It would, furthermore, encourage the now acceptable practice of subcontracting, co-financing and co-production.

165. Similarly, the adoption of a code of conduct between DPI and UNDP would contribute to more efficient co-ordination of their field organs and to flexibility in their relations. Requesting the reappraisal of the travel budgets of Directors of UNICs, a reappraisal that could be accompanied by a substantial diminution of documentation missions, would give full meaning to the establishment of outposts.

166. The changes and amendments that are thus being recommended would have to be accompanied by the broadening of the Centres' operating margins and the boosting of their productivity. In this respect, increased rationalization of information flows and of their interactivity, simplification of the system for drafting and transmitting reports, and sensible grouping of commemorative events would seem essential complements and the most capable of dynamizing the United Nations information system.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Secretary-General should:

Recommendation I

Promote media production which, whatever the communication channel employed, takes increasingly into account the distinctions between types of audience and targets and between press intermediaries and final recipients or consumers (NGOs, universities, Governments, the general public' (paras. 75-84):

(a) By addressing to the Directors of United Nations Information Centres and Services or of outposts thereof a questionnaire emphasizing less the weaknesses and strengths of the structures concerned than the mobilizing effect and the impact within their sphere of competence of the topics highlighted in the resolutions of the General Assembly (paras. 70-72);

(b) By requesting the aforementioned officials to draw up succinct periodic tables showing the locally-available media resources and the proportion provided by national inputs, print runs and numbers of readers, expectations and needs. To these should be added, if appropriate, summaries of the studies carried out on the subject within their sphere of competence (paras. 70-71);

(c) By taking care to obtain detailed statistics for, and to regulate shipments of documents from DPI and other Secretariat bodies so as to ensure dissemination that is more selective, more economical and more mindful of the reality of the intake structures in the receiving countries (paras. 73, 79 and 82).

Recommendation II

Implement the recommendation put forward by JIU in its report JIU/REP/79 whereby he was invited to allow United Nations Associations (UNAs), UNESCO and United Nations clubs to participate, on an experimental basis and under contractual agreements, in the information work of United Nations Information Centres (UNICs) (paras. 59-60):

(a) By helping to strengthen UNAs already endowed with coherent structures and by drawing up a map of the United Nations Information Centres and their outposts, bearing in mind the dynamism of the said UNAs, in order, in certain cases and certain countries, either to have them play to the full the role of relays or to substitute them for United Nations Information Centres (paras. 61-64);

(b) By setting up, as a pilot experiment, in Jamaica and in Canada DPI outposts having a locally-recruited information officer to serve as liaison officer and technical adviser to the United Nations Associations in Kingston and Ottawa (paras. 123-124);

(c) By, where appropriate, extending to the UNICEF National Committees the recommendation that JIU limited, in 1979, to UNAs and UNESCO and United Nations clubs (para. 59).

Recommendation III

To undertake an overall review of the plan for the redefinition and distribution of the United Nations Information Centres and to delimit more clearly the functions and spheres of competence of the Services, Centres and outposts with a view to adapting them more closely to national contexts, and to redraw their map accordingly:

(a) By siting at Harare rather than Lusaka the Information Centre with regional competence for southern Africa (para. 126);

(b) By establishing at Tunis an outpost rather than a Centre, in the light of the measures taken regarding the maintenance of the Rabat Centre (para. 126);

(c) By maintaining at Port of Spain the UNIC with subregional competence for the Caribbean (para. 129);

(d) By establishing outposts of the Rio de Janeiro UNIC in the Brazilian context, at Sao Paulo and Porto Alegre (para. 129);

(e) By establishing outposts of the New Delhi UNIC not only at Dhaka, Colombo and Kathmandu, but also in India, at Bombay, Madras, Bangalore and/or Calcutta (para. 128);

(f) By closing the UNICs at Athens, Prague and Lisbon (para. 130);

(g) By closing the United Nations Information Centres in Paris and Rome while establishing at Brussels a United Nations Information Centre with European competence (para. 131);

(h) By undertaking a special study of the situation of the Information Services at Geneva and Vienna in the light of the specific nature of the structures of UNOG and UNOV (para. 130).

Recommendation IV

Organize closer co-operation and more sustained dialogue among the field offices of DPI, those of UNDP, if appropriate, those of specialized agencies:

(a) By establishing the detail and type of descending and rising information of which communication from one field service to another would be declared mandatory (para. 158);

(b) By drawing up a framework agreement to govern the apportionment of the contributions necessary for the pooling of premises and equipment (para. 158);

(c) By spelling out the set of administrative and hierarchical relations that should govern the dealings between the Director of an Information Centre and the UNDP Deputy Resident Representative and between the head of a DPI outpost, his UNIC Director and the UNDP Resident Representative (para. 159-160);

(d) By institutionalizing the unofficial or optional system of regular on-the-spot meetings between the UNDP Resident Representative, the UNIC Director and the representatives of specialized agencies.

Recommendation V

Improve the operation and management of United Nations Information Centres and Services;

(a) By abandoning the mandatory limit of four years on a Director's stay in the same Information Centre (paras. 49-50);

(b) By accelerating the generalization of the electronic mail system (para. 101);

(c) By pursuing the effort to persuade the Governments of host countries to take responsibility for the rents of the premises of Information Centres or to make buildings available to them free of charge (paras. 111-116);

(d) By, in the context of an unaltered budgetary allotment, making savings on posts for documentation and the shipment of written publications while strengthening the means of financing travel by the heads of Information Services and Centres (paras. 92-93);

(e) By grouping obligatory commemorations as indicated in paragraphs 107-110 of the report.

Recommendation VI

Simplify and supplement the system for drafting and despatching the reports that Information Centres submit to DPI headquarters and ORCI;

(a) By adopting a six-monthly rhythm for the submission of the traditional progress reports and by placing the emphasis in these reports on the aspect of self-evaluation (para. 104);

(b) By doing away with separate reports on each United Nations commemoration and by including the comments on such commemorations in the above-mentioned six-monthly report (para. 104);

(c) By converting what is now a weekly report to ORCI into a monthly report, subject to the notification of ORCI by telex on the occurrence of an event of vital interest for the United Nations (para. 43);

(d) By doing away with the summary of weekly news by basing it on the above-mentioned report, which would become a monthly document and be transmitted in two copies to DPI and ORCI (paras. 43-44);

(e) By establishing at DPI headquarters and within the framework of the Information Centres a consolidated annual report that would summarize all the activities of the Services, Centres and outposts while highlighting the salient events, the most important developments and the most significant figures (para. 106).