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REPORT ON DEVELOPMENTS IN THE FIELD OF FREEDOM
OF INFORMATION SINCE 1954

Comments of Governments and Specialized Agencies

1. At its thirty-first session the Economic and Social Council adopted resolution 819 B (XXXI) concerning the report on developments in the field of freedom of information since 1954 (E/3443). In this resolution the Council, inter alia, requested Member States and specialized agencies to submit comments on the report and any additional information which they might consider pertinent; and requested the Commission on Human Rights, at its eighteenth session, to consider the report with the comments of Governments.
2. The Secretary-General forwarded the text of the resolution to Governments by a note of 1 June 1961 and to specialized agencies by a letter of 17 May 1961.
3. The Governments of Burma and of the United States of America stated that they had no comments or additional information to offer. The Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics stated that its comments would be offered by its representative on the Commission on Human Rights.
4. The Government of Cambodia, by note of 19 October 1961, submitted the following information:

"There is a national press agency, the Khmer Press Agency, which is affiliated to Reuter and A.F.P. An agreement concerning the exchange of information free of charge and on the basis of reciprocity and the equality of the parties was concluded between this national agency and the Telegraph Agency of the Soviet Union (TASS) in August 1961."

5. The Government of the Netherlands, by note of 3 January 1962, submitted the following observations:

"It would seem appropriate to include the Netherlands among the countries where there was a marked expansion in frequency modulation broadcasting (document E/3443, paragraph 97, first sentence). Further

it would be appreciated if the following correction could be made on page 47 of the English text of document E/3443: in paragraph 105, sub-paragraph 'South America', delete 'Surinam' from the list of 'television' countries and insert 'the Netherlands Antilles'."

6. The Government of Pakistan, by note of 28 December 1961, submitted the following information:

"Press in Pakistan is gradually developing into a sound industry. Indeed it cannot be compared at the moment with the Press in highly advanced countries of the West. However the Government is conscious of the desirability of introducing modern techniques of production and management to the industry.

"Press in Pakistan is free. It is however no exception to the rule of punishing individual pressmen and newspapers if they violate the law of the land or indulge in activities likely to endanger the security of the State.

"(i) The nation is kept well-informed about day-to-day events in the country and abroad. There are a large number of papers in the country published in the national languages, namely Urdu and Bengali, the State language English and regional languages. Similarly, there are news bulletins broadcast every day in foreign, national and regional languages. Prominent news agencies of the world like U.P.I., A.P.A., A.F.P., Reuter, Tass, Hsinhua, Star News Agency, etc., have their offices in the country. Some of them work in co-operation with local news agencies. They are provided with all facilities. Some prominent papers of the world have their representatives who are assisted in obtaining information. A number of foreign papers are freely circulated with a view to giving the people information in detail from foreign lands. The U.P.I. and A.F.P. are provided with wireless links.

"(ii) Days of special significance like the United Nations Day, Human Rights Day, Children's Day, etc., are observed throughout the country. Special programmes on such occasions are arranged on radio and much space is devoted to them. Messages of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the President of Pakistan and other advocates of peace are given widest possible publicity. Recordings from the United Nations are fully utilized in radio programmes. As a whole the activities of the great Organization and its specialized agencies and their work for peace are given due prominence in the Press and radio. Close contact is also kept with the Voice of America.

"(iii) Government fully co-operates with the representatives of the Press, both national and foreign. They are provided with all possible facilities and are assisted in obtaining information covering all spheres of activities in the country. The Press Information Department, Government of Pakistan, regularly supplies information based on accurate facts. This Department promptly attends to pressmen and quickly provides answers to their queries.

"Import and export licences are provided freely to foreign or Pakistani correspondents and cameramen representing foreign newspapers and news agencies to enable them to send exposed film and import raw film with the minimum delay. Pakistan is probably the only country in the world which provides this facility. These licences are granted on yearly basis.

"Besides the President, all Ministers and Secretaries to the Government hold regular press conferences. The President recently briefed newspaper editors on economic development in the country, and other current Exclusive interviews with the President are also arranged for Pakistani and foreign correspondents.

"All facilities are also provided to news media representatives on special occasions like the visits of Heads of States and personnel. Arrangements made during President Eisenhower's and Prime Minister Nehru's recent visits to Pakistan were described by visiting Indian and other foreign journalists as the most efficient they had ever known."

7. By a letter of 12 January 1962 the Secretary-General of the International Telecommunication Union submitted the following comments concerning paragraphs 166 and 167 of the report on developments in the field of freedom of information since 1954:

"The International Telecommunication Union, in its International Radio Consultative Committee (CCIR), is treating the question of the specifications for efficient low-cost broadcasting receivers, for use in under-developed countries, as an urgent matter, and it forms the subject of CCIR Study Programme No. 170 (XII). It should be noted that the ITU is not concerned with their production.

"This Study Programme has been referred to CCIR Study Group XII (Tropical Broadcasting), of which the Chairman is Deputy Director-General and Chief Engineer of a broadcasting organization which has already had experience over many years in this subject. Several contributions to the study have already been received and the Study Group plans to hold an interim meeting in June 1962, at which it is hoped to formulate the specifications.

"The specifications will cover frequency modulation transmissions in the very high frequency band, as well as amplitude modulation transmissions in the low, medium and/or high frequency bands. It is thus confidently hoped that a CCIR Recommendation, for submission to UNESCO, will be accepted at the next Plenary Assembly of the CCIR, scheduled to take place in New Delhi, in January and February, 1963."
