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

Comments of Governments and specialized agencies

1. In resolution 819 B (XXXI) the Economic and Social Council, inter alia requested the Secretary-General to circulate the report on developments in the field of freedom of information since 1954 (E/3443) to "States Members of United Nations, to the interested specialized agencies and to the non-governmental organizations in consultative status for their comments and any additional information which they may consider pertinent."
2. The Government of the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia by a note of 20 April 1962 submitted the following comment on the report:

"The report on the progress made since 1954 in the field of freedom of information, which was prepared in response to resolution 718 (XXVII), is a useful document that has provided data making possible a better evaluation of the present situation in the field of freedom of information. We should have a far more complete picture of the situation and of developments in this field if a larger number of countries had sent replies.

"The fact that the implementation of practical measures for promoting freedom of information has borne fruit will have a favourable effect on future work and on the recommendations which will in the future be adopted. The suggestions and conclusions concerning the development of information media in the under-developed countries and the search for ways of assisting these countries provide a real basis from which it will be possible likewise to seek solutions in regard to other aspects of freedom of information. More effort must be made to emerge from the position of stagnation obtaining in regard to the legal definition of freedom of information, and to find solutions best suited to the situation as it exists in connexion with this problem throughout the world.

"The efforts of the United Nations and of the specialized agencies concerned with this problem should be increasingly directed toward the granting of long-term technical assistance to the under-developed countries.

"In order to attain this goal and to cope with the ever-increasing requests in this field, the United Nations, and more particularly UNESCO, should draw up a plan of technical assistance for the development of national systems for the promotion of freedom of information. The essential ingredients of such a long-term plan (assistance in organizing national agencies, the establishment of national or regional institutions which would be responsible for research work and for the training of the necessary personnel) have been indicated at regional conferences, and particularly at the conference which dealt with the problems of freedom of information in the African countries.

"In this regard, the role of the Economic and Social Council, as a body co-ordinating concentrated action by all organs and organizations, should be strengthened."