



Thirteenth session
Agenda item 35

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON
CONSULTATIONS CONCERNING THE DRAFT CONVENTION ON FREEDOM OF
INFORMATION

Report of the Third Committee

Rapporteur: Miss Florence ADDISON (Ghana)

1. At its 752nd plenary meeting, on 22 September 1958, the General Assembly allocated to the Third Committee item 35 of the agenda of its thirteenth session: "Freedom of Information: report of the Secretary-General on consultations concerning the draft Convention on freedom of information".
2. The Committee discussed the item at its 894th to 904th meetings, inclusive.
3. The Committee had before it:
 - (a) "Views and suggestions of Governments concerning the draft Convention on Freedom of Information" (A/3868 and Add.1-8), the Secretary-General's report on his consultations with Governments pursuant to General Assembly resolution 1189 A (XII) of 11 December 1957; and
 - (b) General Assembly resolution 1189 A (XII),
text of the preamble and nineteen articles of a draft Convention on Freedom of
ormation, as formulated by the Committee on the Draft Convention on Freedom
Information which the General Assembly established by resolution 426 (V) of
December 1950, is contained in the annex to document A/AC.42/7.^{1/}

I. PROCEDURAL PROPOSALS

4. At its 897th meeting, procedural proposals were submitted to the Committee as follows:

Liberia and the Philippines proposed (A/C.3/L.704) that the Third Committee decide:

"1. To embark upon a discussion of the draft Convention on Freedom of Information;

"2. That the delegations when making their statements may dwell on the whole text of the draft Convention, on any group of articles, on any single article or sub-paragraph."

Spain proposed (A/C.3/L.705) that the Third Committee decide:

"To examine the report of the Secretary-General, submitted to it in accordance with General Assembly resolution 1189 (XII), in order to determine, on the basis of that report, the measures best adapted to safeguard and to promote freedom of information."

5. At the Committee's 897th meeting the representative of the Dominican Republic suggested a compromise proposal embodying elements from the joint Liberian and Philippine and the Spanish proposals. The compromise proposal read as follows:

"The Third Committee decides:

"1. To examine the report of the Secretary-General submitted to it in accordance with General Assembly resolution 1189 A (XII);

"2. To embark upon a discussion of the draft Convention on Freedom of Information; and

"3. That delegations when making their statements may dwell on the whole text of the draft Convention or any other measures adequate to safeguard or promote freedom of information."

6. The representative of Liberia and the Philippines accepted the proposal of the Dominican Republic. The representative of Spain accepted it on the condition that a separate vote be taken on the first paragraph.

7. At the Committee's 898th meeting, following a procedural discussion, the representative of the Dominican Republic withdrew her compromise proposal. The Chairman thereupon put to the vote the original procedural proposals of Liberia and the Philippines (A/C.3/L.704) and Spain (A/C.3/L.705).

8. The Liberian-Philippine procedural proposal was put to the vote first, a roll-call vote being taken at the request of the representative of Lebanon. Thirty-two votes were cast in favour of the proposal, 32 votes against and there were 4 abstentions. The proposal was therefore not adopted. The voting was as follows:

In favour: Afghanistan, Albania, Bulgaria, Burma, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Cambodia, Ceylon, Czechoslovakia, Dominican Republic, Ethiopia, Federation of Malaya, Ghana, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Liberia, Libya, Morocco, Pakistan, Philippines, Poland, Romania, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Arab Republic, Yugoslavia.

Against: Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Cuba, Denmark, Finland, France, Guatemala, Honduras, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Peru, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, Union of South Africa, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

Abstaining: El Salvador, Thailand, Uruguay, Venezuela.

9. The Spanish procedural proposal (A/C.3/L.705) was then adopted by 34 votes to 29, with 5 abstentions.

II. DISCUSSION IN THE COMMITTEE

10. In the course of the debate, members of the Committee discussed the report of the Secretary-General (A/3868 and Add.1-8) and his consultations with Governments concerning the draft Convention; explained their votes on the joint Liberian-Philippine and Spanish procedural proposals; and considered various aspects of the problem of the draft Convention on Freedom of Information.

11. Discussion also centred on a draft resolution by the United States of America, submitted at the Committee's 897th meeting, a revised version of which (A/C.3/L.706/Rev.1) was introduced at the Committee's 902nd meeting. The Committee also had before it a joint draft resolution (A/C.3/L.707) submitted at its 899th meeting by India, Iran, Pakistan, the Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Sudan and the United Arab Republic, relating to future discussion of the draft Convention on Freedom of Information. Afghanistan subsequently joined the sponsors of this proposal.

12. The discussion referred to many aspects of the problem of safeguarding and promoting freedom of information as a fundamental human right, with particular reference to the value of the draft Convention in this respect. Various opinions were expressed as to the utility of proceeding with further work on the draft Convention. Some members of the Committee, whose views were reflected in the decision to discuss the text of the draft Convention at the Assembly's fourteenth session, considered it essential that the United Nations should draw up an international instrument establishing basic rules in this important field. Other members felt that the history of the project, together with the serious differences of opinion which obviously existed concerning it, had demonstrated that there was no possibility of arriving at a text which would be satisfactory to a substantial number of States. Yet another point of view was that, since the present time appeared unpropitious, work on the draft Convention should simply be postponed until a more favourable political climate prevailed. Among other things touched upon were the history of the debates in various United Nations bodies on the draft Convention, the replies received to the most recent consultations with Governments concerning it, and over-all problems of the rights and responsibilities of the media of information. No attempt is made in this respect to summarize the varying opinions expressed; it is considered that the General Assembly, when discussing the draft Convention at its fourteenth session, should it so decide at the current session, will find more adequate guidance in the summary records of the Third Committee's debates and in the comments, observations, suggestions and proposals of Governments forwarded pursuant to the resolutions of the twelfth and thirteenth sessions of the Assembly on this matter. A more detailed account of the discussions will be found in the summary records of the meetings of the Committee (A/C.3/SR.894-904).

III. UNITED STATES DRAFT RESOLUTION

13. The revised United States proposal (A/C.3/L.706/Rev.1) was divided into two parts. By the first paragraph of the preamble to part A, the General Assembly would note that the Commission on Human Rights, at its fourteenth session, had requested the Economic and Social Council and through it the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and other specialized agencies to initiate action to consider and implement a suggestion of the Committee on Freedom

of Information concerning less developed countries wherever possible and as expeditiously as possible, with the object of assisting them to build up adequate media of information which could facilitate a free flow of news and information within these countries and throughout the membership of the United Nations. In the second paragraph of the preamble, the Assembly would note that the Commission on Human Rights would give further consideration at its fifteenth session to the suggestions of its Committee on Freedom of Information and that the Economic and Social Council had requested the Commission to complete its recommendations on freedom of information.

14. The operative paragraphs of part A read as follows:

"The General Assembly ...

"1. Expresses the hope that the Economic and Social Council on the basis of the analysis to be prepared by the Secretary-General in response to Council resolutions 574 D (XIX) and 643 (XXIII), and taking into account recommendations of the Commission on Human Rights to be submitted in response to Council resolution 683 (XXVI), will at its twenty-eighth session formulate a programme of concrete action and measures on the international plane which could be undertaken for the development of information enterprises in under-developed countries, with an evaluation of the material, financial and professional requirements and resources for implementation of this programmes;

"2. Invites the Economic and Social Council to request the Commission on Human Rights to give particular attention to procedures by which constant review of problems of freedom of information may be assured and to report annually to the Council on progress in this field;

"3. Invites the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and other specialized agencies as appropriate to formulate concrete proposals to assist in meeting the needs of less developed countries in building up adequate media of information, and to include an account of their efforts on this and other aspects of freedom of information in their annual reports to the Economic and Social Council."

In the preamble to part B of the United States revised draft resolution (E/3/L.706/Rev.1), the General Assembly would reiterate its belief in the free flow of news and information within countries and across national frontiers as an essential basis for an accurate and undistorted understanding of events and international relations. The Assembly would recognize however that the development of media of information constituted only a partial measure in ensuring freedom of information

and would recognize further that greater freedom of communications would lessen international tension and promote mutual understanding and confidence, thereby allowing countries and peoples more easily to understand and compose their differences.

16. The operative paragraph of part B read as follows:

"Recommends that all Member States, as a contribution to building peace and confidence, encourage better mutual understanding by taking practical measures in co-operation with the programmes of the United Nations and its specialized agencies to open their countries to greater freedom of communications by:

- (a) Facilitating access to United Nations information programmes;
- (b) Supporting the activities of United Nations information centres;
- (c) Facilitating the free flow of information through all media."

17. At the Committee's 902nd meeting, the representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics proposed orally the deletion of the word "annually" in the second operative paragraph of part A of the United States revised draft resolution. Subsequently, the United States representative replaced this word by "regularly".

18. The USSR representative, at the Committee's 903rd meeting proposed the following oral amendments to part A of the revised draft resolution:

- (a) In the first preambular paragraph (see para. 13 above), to insert the words "accurate and undistorted" between "the free flow of" and "news and information".
- (b) To amend the latter part of the second operative paragraph (see para. 14 above) to read "... by which constant review of problems of providing technical assistance to under-developed countries in the field of information may be assured one ..." etc.

19. The representative of the Dominican Republic, at the Committee's 903rd meeting proposed the following oral amendments to part B of the revised draft resolution:

- (a) In the first preambular paragraph (see para. 15 above), to insert the word "undistorted" between "free flow of" and "news and information".
- (b) In sub-paragraph (c) of the operative paragraph (see para. 16 above) to insert the word "accurate" between "free flow of" and "information".

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Voting on revised United States draft resolution and oral amendments thereto

20. The Committee voted at its 903rd meeting on the revised United States draft resolution (A/C.3/L.706/Rev.1) and the oral amendments referred to above.

21. At the request of the USSR representative, the Committee voted by roll-call on the first Soviet oral amendment (see para. 18 (a) above). The amendment was adopted by 43 votes to 9, with 22 abstentions, as follows:

In favour: Afghanistan, Albania, Bulgaria, Burma, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Cambodia, Ceylon, Chile, Czechoslovakia, Dominican Republic, Ethiopia, Federation of Malaya, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Haiti, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Ireland, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Nepal, Pakistan, Panama, Philippines, Poland, Romania, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Thailand, Tunisia, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Union of South Africa, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Arab Republic, Venezuela, Yemen, Yugoslavia.

Against: Belgium, China, Denmark, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Turkey, United States of America, Uruguay.

Abstaining: Argentina, Australia, Austria, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Finland, France, Honduras, Israel, Italy, Japan, Laos, Liberia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Spain, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

22. At the request of the USSR representative, the Committee also voted by roll-call on the second Soviet oral amendment (see para. 18 (b) above). The amendment was adopted by 30 votes to 21, with 24 abstentions, as follows:

In favour: Afghanistan, Albania, Bulgaria, Burma, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Cambodia, Ceylon, Chile, Czechoslovakia, Ethiopia, Ghana, Greece, Hungary, India, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Nepal, Poland, Romania, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Tunisia, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Arab Republic, Yemen, Yugoslavia.

Against: Argentina, Brazil, Canada, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Denmark, Ecuador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Ireland, Israel, Mexico, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, Turkey, United States of America, Uruguay.

Abstaining: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Federation of Malaya, Finland, France, Indonesia, Iran, Italy, Japan, Laos, Liberia, Netherlands, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Spain, Thailand, Union of South Africa, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Venezuela.

23. The Committee adopted part A of the revised United States proposal (A/C.3/L.706/Rev.1) as thus amended, by 70 votes to none, with 4 abstentions.

24. At the request of the representative of the Dominican Republic, a roll-call vote was taken on her first oral amendment (see para. 19 (a) above). The amendment was adopted by 32 votes to 8, with 35 abstentions, as follows:

In favour: Afghanistan, Albania, Bulgaria, Burma, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Ceylon, Colombia, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Greece, Haiti, India, Iraq, Nepal, Panama, Philippines, Poland, Romania, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Sudan, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Union of South Africa, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Arab Republic, Venezuela, Yemen, Yugoslavia.

Against: Belgium, Denmark, Ecuador, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, United States of America, Uruguay.

Abstaining: Argentina, Australia, Austria, Brazil, Cambodia, Canada, Chile, China, Costa Rica, Ethiopia, Federation of Malaya, Finland, France, Ghana, Guatemala, Honduras, Hungary, Indonesia, Iran, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Laos, Lebanon, Liberia, Libya, Mexico, Morocco, New Zealand, Pakistan, Peru, Thailand, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

25. At the request of the representative of the Dominican Republic, a roll-call vote was also taken on her second oral amendment (see para. 19 (b) above). The amendment was adopted by 48 votes to 7, with 19 abstentions, as follows:

In favour: Afghanistan, Albania, Bulgaria, Burma, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Cambodia, Ceylon, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Federation of Malaya, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, India, Iran, Iraq, Ireland, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Nepal, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Romania, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Sudan, Thailand, Tunisia, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Union of South Africa, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Arab Republic, Venezuela, Yugoslavia.

Against: Belgium, Denmark, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, United States America, Uruguay.

Abstaining: Argentina, Australia, Austria, Brazil, Canada, China, Ecuador, Finland, France, Indonesia, Israel, Italy, Japan, Laos, Liberia, Mexico, New Zealand, Turkey, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

26. The Committee adopted part B of the revised United States proposal (A/C.3/L.706/Rev.1), as thus amended, by 55 votes to 6, with 11 abstentions.

27. As a result of the above decisions, the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the resolutions, the texts of which are given in parts A and B of the annex to this report.

IV. FUTURE DISCUSSION OF THE DRAFT CONVENTION ON FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

28. The joint draft resolution (A/C.3/L.707) submitted by Afghanistan, India, Iran, Pakistan, the Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Sudan and the United Arab Republic, referred to in paragraph 11 above, read as follows:

"The General Assembly,

"Taking note of the Secretary-General's report (A/3868 and Add.1 to 8) on the consultation he held with Governments pursuant to General Assembly resolution 1189 A (XII) concerning the draft Convention on Freedom of Information,

"Bearing in mind the lengthy and heretofore inconclusive discussions which have taken place in various bodies of the United Nations on the draft Convention,

"Believing that a convention on Freedom of Information can play an important role in guaranteeing to the peoples of States Parties to it their fundamental right to freedom of expression and of opinion, as enunciated in article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,

"Realizing that in view of the importance of the draft Convention it is desirable that additional time be given Member States to crystallize further their views thereon,

"Desirous, however, of formulating a final text of the draft Convention with a view of opening it for signature as soon as possible,

"Decides:

"1. To proceed, at the fourteenth session of the General Assembly, to a detailed discussion of the text of the draft Convention as formulated by the Committee on the Draft Convention on Freedom of Information, established by the General Assembly in its resolution 426 (V); and

"2. To request the Secretary-General, in the light of the discussion in the Third Committee on this matter, to invite the Governments of States with whom he communicated pursuant to resolution 1189 A (XII) to transmit to him any comments, observations, suggestions, proposals or amendments, concerning the text of the draft Convention on Freedom of Information and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its fourteenth session."

29. At the Committee's 902nd meeting, Australia and Ireland proposed four amendments (A/C.3/L.708) to the joint draft resolution.
30. The first of these amendments was to insert the words "generally acceptable" before "convention" in the third preambular paragraph, and to replace the word "can" by "could" in this paragraph.
31. The second amendment was to replace the words following the word "desirable" in the fourth preambular paragraph by the words "that its text should, in fact, be generally acceptable to Member States".
32. The third amendment was to replace the word "final" in the fifth preambular paragraph by the words "generally acceptable".
33. The fourth amendment of Australia and Ireland was to delete the words "at the fourteenth session of the General Assembly" in the first operative paragraph of the joint draft resolution and to insert after the words "resolution 426 (V)" the words "at such time as there is a substantial prospect of the early conclusion of a useful instrument commending general support".
34. Chile, at the Committee's 902nd meeting, proposed an amendment (A/C.3/L.710) to the joint draft resolution to delete the word "detailed" from the first operative paragraph and insert after the words "in its resolution 426 (V)" the words "giving special consideration to any new proposals that may be made".
35. At the Committee's 902nd meeting, Chile also submitted three sub-amendments (A/C.3/L.709) to the amendments of Australia and Ireland (A/C.3/L.708). These provided that (1) the word "can" would not be replaced by the word "could" in the first preambular paragraph of the joint draft resolution; (2) no change would be made in the fourth preambular paragraph of the joint draft resolution other than replacing the word "time" by the word "opportunity", and deleting the word "further"; (3) the words "of formulating a final text of the ..." in the fifth preambular paragraph of the joint draft resolution would be replaced by the words "of formulating promptly a widely acceptable text of the ...".

Voting on joint draft resolution (A/C.3/L.707) and amendments and sub-amendment

36. The representatives of Australia and Ireland withdrew their third amendment to the fifth preambular paragraph of the joint draft resolution (see para. 32 above).

37. They further accepted the first and third sub-amendments of Chile.

38. The representative of the Philippines, on behalf of the sponsors of the joint draft resolution, stated that the Chilean sub-amendments (A/C.3/L.709) which referred to their text were acceptable, although the sponsors were not competent to accept those which referred specifically to the amendments of Australia and Ireland (A/C.3/L.708). On behalf of his co-sponsors, the representative of the Philippines also accepted the Chilean amendment (A/C.3/L.710) (see para. 34 above), stating that it was understood that the word "proposals" referred to amendments in the nature of additions, deletions and substitutions and other proposals regarding the text of the draft Convention.

Voting on joint draft resolution (A/C.3/L.707) and amendments thereto

39. The Committee voted as follows on the joint draft resolution (A/C.3/L.707) and the amendments of Australia and Ireland (A/C.3/L.708):

(a) The first amendment of Australia and Ireland (see paras. 30 and 37) to the third preambular paragraph of the joint draft resolution was rejected by 36 votes to 30, with 6 abstentions.

(b) The second amendment of Australia and Ireland (see para. 31) to the fourth preambular paragraph was rejected by 36 votes to 29, with 9 abstentions.

(c) At the request of the representative of Australia, a roll-call vote was taken on the fourth amendment of Australia and Ireland (see para. 33 above) to the first operative paragraph. It was rejected by 37 votes to 24, with 14 abstentions, as follows:

In favour: Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, China, Denmark, Ecuador, Finland, France, Guatemala, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Union of South Africa, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

Against: Afghanistan, Albania, Bulgaria, Burma, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Cambodia, Ceylon, Czechoslovakia, Ethiopia, Federation of Malaya, Ghana, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Liberia, Libya, Morocco, Nepal, Pakistan, Panama, Philippines, Poland, Romania, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Thailand, Tunisia, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Arab Republic, Venezuela, Yemen, Yugoslavia.

Abstaining: Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Greece, Haiti, Honduras, Laos, Mexico, Peru, Turkey, Uruguay.

(d) The joint draft resolution (A/C.3/L.707), as amended, was adopted by 49 votes to 14, with 10 abstentions.

40. The Third Committee accordingly recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following resolutions:

ANNEX

Freedom of Information

A

The General Assembly,

Noting that the Commission on Human Rights, at its fourteenth session requested the Economic and Social Council and through it the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and other specialized agencies to initiate action to consider and implement the suggestions of the Committee on Freedom of Information concerning less developed countries wherever possible and as expeditiously as possible, with the object of assisting them to build up adequate media of information which can facilitate the free flow of accurate and undistorted news and information within these countries and throughout the membership of the United Nations,

Noting that the Commission on Human Rights will give further consideration at its fifteenth session to the suggestions of its Committee on Freedom of Information and that the Economic and Social Council has requested the Commission on Human Rights to complete its recommendations on freedom of information,

1. Expresses the hope that the Economic and Social Council on the basis of the analysis to be prepared by the Secretary-General in response to Council resolutions 574 D (XIX) of 26 May 1955 and 643 (XXIII) of 25 April 1957, and taking into account recommendations of the Commission on Human Rights to be submitted in response to Council resolution 683 C (XXVI) of 21 July 1958, will at its twenty-eighth session formulate a programme of concrete action and measures on the international plane which could be undertaken for the development of information enterprises in under-developed countries, with an evaluation of the material, financial and professional requirements and resources for implementation of this programme;

2. Invites the Economic and Social Council to request the Commission on Human Rights to give particular attention to procedures by which constant review of problems of providing technical assistance to under-developed countries in the field of information may be assured and to report regularly to the Council on progress in this field;

3. Invites the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and other specialized agencies as appropriate to formulate concrete proposals to assist in meeting the needs of less developed countries in building up adequate media of information, and to include an account of their efforts on this and other aspects of freedom of information in their annual reports to the Economic and Social Council.

B

The General Assembly,

Reiterating its belief in the free flow of undistorted news and information within countries and across national frontiers as the essential basis for an accurate and undistorted understanding of events and situations,

Recognizing, however, that development of media of information constitutes only a partial measure in ensuring freedom of information,

Recognizing further that greater freedom of communications would lessen international tension and promote mutual understanding and confidence, thereby allowing countries and peoples more easily to understand and compose their differences,

Recommends that all Member States, as a contribution to building peace and confidence, encourage better mutual understanding by taking practical measures in co-operation with the programmes of the United Nations and its specialized agencies to open their countries to greater freedom of communications by:

- (a) Facilitating access to United Nations information programmes;
- (b) Supporting the activities of United Nations information centres;
- (c) Facilitating the free flow of accurate information through all media.

C

The General Assembly,

Taking note of the Secretary-General's report^{1/} on the consultation he held with Governments pursuant to General Assembly resolution 1189 A (XII) of 11 December 1957 concerning the draft Convention on Freedom of Information,

Bearing in mind the lengthy and heretofore inconclusive discussions which have taken place in various bodies of the United Nations on the draft Convention,

Believing that a convention on freedom of information can play an important role in guaranteeing to the peoples of States Parties to it their fundamental right to freedom of expression and of opinion, as enunciated in article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,

Realizing that in view of the importance of the draft Convention it is desirable that additional opportunity be given Member States to crystallize their views thereon,

Desirous, however, of formulating promptly a widely acceptable final text of the draft Convention with a view to opening it for signature as soon as possible,

Decides:

1. To proceed, at the fourteenth session of the General Assembly, to a discussion of the text of the draft Convention as formulated by the Committee on the draft Convention on Freedom of Information, established by the General Assembly in its resolution 426 (V) of 14 December 1950, giving special consideration to any new proposals that may be made;

2. To request the Secretary-General, in the light of the discussion in the third Committee on this matter, to invite the Governments of States with whom he communicated pursuant to resolution 1189 A (XII) to transmit to him any comments, observations, suggestions, proposals or amendments, concerning the text of the draft Convention on Freedom of Information and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its fourteenth session.
