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PUBLIC INFORMATION ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS:  
REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS ON UNITED NATIONS  
PUBLIC INFORMATION AND COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS  
OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

Report of the Fifth Committee

Rapporteur: Mr. Raul QUIJANO (Argentina)

1. Agenda item 55 on the Public Information Activities of the United Nations was considered at eleven meetings of the Fifth Committee<sup>1/</sup> on the basis of the report of the Committee of Experts on United Nations Public Information (A/3928) and the related comments and recommendations of the Secretary-General (A/3945).
2. At the 682nd meeting, the Secretary-General made an oral statement (A/C.5/L.764) in which he indicated to the Fifth Committee his approach to the basic problems facing the United Nations in the sphere of information. There were, he felt, two fundamental principles of which full agreement could be assumed: first, that the United Nations must be strictly objective in the presentation of information concerning the nature and treatment of problems with which it dealt; secondly, that the United Nations could be properly understood only if its information activities were attuned to the idiom of every region. Universality of information should be added as a third guiding principle: the United Nations should strive to reach every part of the world, as far as possible on an equal basis.
3. The Secretary-General felt that divergencies were likely to arise not so much on the general principles which he had outlined as on the methods of their

<sup>1/</sup> 682nd - 689th and 691st - 693rd meetings.

application. Accordingly, the General Assembly would perhaps prefer, for the time being, to rest satisfied with the principles embodied in the present terms of reference of the Office of Public Information, leaving the elaboration of those principles to practical experience. If so, any advisory body which might be established, and the Secretary-General might receive a mandate from the Assembly to develop the information activities of the United Nations on the basis which the present terms of reference afforded, and in the manner which they jointly deemed appropriate in the light of the Expert Committee's findings. At its next session the Assembly would be able, on the basis of a report which it would receive, to judge whether the terms of reference, as implemented in practice, accorded both with the basic principles and with actual needs.

4. On the subject of the organization of OPI, the Secretary-General observed that the views of the experts ran parallel to his own, with one or two exceptions. He in no way differed with them on the importance to be attached to field activities; but he did not believe that the development of those activities required a special planning bureau, nor did he feel that such development implied competition with Headquarters. A formal decision of the General Assembly was not called for on the internal organization of the Office, which, under the Charter, fell within the competence of the Secretary-General.

5. The representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland introduced the following draft resolution (A/C.5/L.529):

The General Assembly,

Recalling its previous consideration of the work and effectiveness of the information activities of the United Nations culminating in its resolution 1177 (XII) of 26 November 1957,

Noting with appreciation the report of the Expert Committee on United Nations Public Information (A/3928), and the comments of the Secretary-General thereon (A/3945),

Considering that the United Nations should, within its budgetary limitations, provide objective and factual information concerning the United Nations and its activities,



Believing that the Office of Public Information should concentrate on those media of information which ensure a maximum of effectiveness at the lowest possible cost,

Being of the opinion that, in the United Nations information programme, greater emphasis should be placed upon the operations and effectiveness of information centres in relation to the Office of Public Information at United Nations Headquarters,

Being further of the opinion that the Office of Public Information should place greater and increasing emphasis on co-operation with Governments, privately owned mass media of information, private institutions, non-governmental organizations, and educators, in its programme of informing the peoples of the world of the aims and activities of the United Nations,

1. Endorses, in the light of the considerations set out in the preambular paragraphs above, the general recommendations in paragraph 227 of the Expert Committee's report as guidance to the Office of Public Information in planning and organizing its work in accordance with the policy directives laid down from time to time by the General Assembly;

2. Requests the Secretary-General to reconsider, in the light of paragraphs 228 to 245 of the report, the organization of the Office of Public Information at Headquarters and in the field, the planning of information programmes, and the co-ordination between Headquarters, the information centres, and the specialized agencies;

3. Further requests the Secretary-General, in consultation with the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and having regard to the recommendation endorsed by the General Assembly in 1956 that over-all expenditure might be limited within a period of three years to a maximum annual figure of \$4.5 million, to implement in 1959 those recommendations in the report which will best ensure that media activities are employed with maximum effectiveness at the lowest possible cost;

4. Invites the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its fourteenth session a report on the progress made in implementing this resolution.

6. The United Kingdom representative, speaking at the 682nd and 685th meetings to the draft resolution submitted by his delegation (A/C.5/L.529), said that as it was to some extent complementary to the United States draft resolution (A/C.5/L.527)<sup>2/</sup>, his delegation hoped that the two texts might afford a basis for general agreement in the Committee. The United Kingdom draft resolution recorded both expressly and implicitly, the view that the Expert Committee had served the United Nations well. It did not invite the Fifth Committee to endorse every paragraph in the report (A/3928); the experts had offered many ideas for consideration without inserting them in their conclusions. His delegation had, for its part, concentrated attention on their formal recommendations, and in particular on those contained in paragraph 227 of the report. Accordingly, it was also asking, in operative paragraph 2, for a reconsideration of the organization and methods of OPI, and specifically for a shift of emphasis from Headquarters to the information centres. An improvement of the activities of OPI could be achieved by better organization, by a clearer understanding of what was practicable, and by a keener insight into the workings of the hearts and minds of all peoples. The draft resolution submitted by his delegation had those ends in view.

7. The representative of the United States of America introduced the following draft resolution (A/C.5/L.527):

The General Assembly,

Noting with appreciation the report of the Expert Committee on United Nations Public Information (A/3928) dated 20 September 1958, and the comment of the Secretary-General thereon (A/3945) dated 16 October 1958,

Recalling General Assembly resolution 13 (I) dated 13 February 1946, as modified by General Assembly resolution 595 (VI) dated 4 February 1952, setting forth the basic policy of the United Nations public information programme and the principles for the implementation thereof,

Considering that, pursuant to the above-mentioned resolutions, the Secretary-General should, within budgetary limitations imposed by the General Assembly, make available objective and factual information concerning the

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<sup>2/</sup> See paragraph 7 below.

United Nations and its activities to all the peoples of the world through any appropriate media,

Believing that, consistent with this policy, the Secretary-General should give priority to the use of all media of information which ensure a maximum of effectiveness at the lowest possible cost,

Considering that the Secretary-General should place greater emphasis than heretofore upon enlisting the co-operation of Governments, privately owned mass media of information, private institutions, non-governmental organizations, and educators in the programme of informing the peoples of the world of the United Nations and its activities,

Considering that greater emphasis should be placed upon the operations and the effectiveness of information centres,

Decides:

1. To request the Secretary-General to give careful consideration, in the light of the basic policy and principles of the United Nations Public Information, to the implementation during 1959 of specific recommendations in the report of the Expert Committee on Public Information, giving particular attention to the considerations and views mentioned in the preambular paragraphs above;

2. To request the Secretary-General to consult with the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions concerning the financial implications of such action as he proposes to take in implementing the recommendations mentioned in operative paragraph 1;

3. To request the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its fourteenth session concerning the progress he has made in implementing the recommendations mentioned in operative paragraph 1, and concerning savings achieved by such implementations.

8. The United States representative explained that his delegation had sought to deal in its draft resolution both with the Expert Committee's report and the Secretary-General's comments. The purpose of the second and third preambular paragraphs was to make clear that the basic policy and principles laid down in General Assembly resolutions 13 (I) and 595 (VI) still provided essential guidance for the Secretary-General in carrying out the United Nations information programme.



The Expert Committee's report appeared to contain a new interpretation of basic policy; the third preambular paragraph was therefore so phrased as to dispel any possible doubt on that score: the Secretary-General's objective would remain precisely as it had been under earlier resolutions. The fourth, fifth and sixth preambular paragraphs merely gave renewed and, in certain cases, greater emphasis to principles which had been formulated by the General Assembly and applied by the Secretary-General for many years. Two points were, however, worthy of special notice: first, his delegation was not suggesting that the authorities, institutions and individuals mentioned in the fifth paragraph should be considered the sole channels through which information about the United Nations would reach the peoples of the world. The Secretary-General should, when necessary, make information about United Nations activities directly available to the peoples of the world; and secondly, while the Secretary-General might well decide, in the interest of the programme as a whole, that certain functions and possibly certain posts should be transferred from Headquarters to the information centres, the sixth paragraph was not intended to suggest that the process of placing greater emphasis upon the operations of the centres could properly be undertaken at the expense of the central direction of the programme or other important Headquarters activities.

9. On the operative paragraphs of his delegation's draft resolution, the United States representative offered the following, among other, comments:

- (a) It was the function of the General Assembly to define the basic principles and policy to govern the information programme, but the task of administering the programme should be left to the Secretary-General;
- (b) Assuming that the Assembly made no change in the basic precepts of its earlier resolutions, it would be for the Secretary-General to judge how best to deal with specific recommendations of the Expert Committee for modifications in the method of giving effect to those precepts. That was the tenor of operative paragraph 1, in which the phrase "specific recommendations" had been used with deliberation: the Secretary-General should be free to weigh each of those recommendations on its intrinsic merit without reference to the reasons which had prompted the Expert Committee to put it forward. The criterion should be whether a "specific recommendation" was consistent with the basic principles and policy and conducive to a better service of

information. By that token, the Fifth Committee should not attempt in its draft resolution to sift the experts' recommendations or to distinguish between the good and the bad.

10. The Committee also had before it, at its 684th meeting, a draft resolution (A/C.5/L.530) submitted by France in the following terms:

The General Assembly,

Recalling

(a) Its resolutions 13 (I) of 13 February 1946, and 595 (VI) of 4 February 1952, setting forth the basic policy of the United Nations public information programme,

(b) The principles enunciated in General Assembly resolution 1086 (XI) of 21 December 1956, and the recognized need to extend the activities of the information centres,

(c) The recommendation of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, as contained in its report to the eleventh session of the General Assembly and approved by the Fifth Committee, to the effect that the over-all expenditure for information activities should be reduced in three years to \$4.5 million,

Expressing its appreciation to the Expert Committee on United Nations Public Information for the conscientious manner in which it accomplished its task;

Taking note of the Secretary-General's comments and observations on the need to provide effective, objective and complete information,

Believing therefore that the Office of Public Information should provide strictly objective and factual information and particulars concerning the United Nations and its activities, while not overlooking the opportunities offered by Governments and private or public institutions for the dissemination of information and documentation,

1. Endorses, in the light of the considerations set out in the preambular paragraphs above, the general recommendations in paragraph 227, and particularly in sub-paragraphs (c) and (e), of the Expert Committee's report;



2. Requests the Secretary-General, in consultation with the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and taking into account the comments and suggestions made in the Fifth Committee debates, to give effect in 1959 to those recommendations in the Expert Committee's report and to all other means designed to keep expenditure on information within reasonable bounds;

3. Invites the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its fourteenth session a report on the measures taken to implement the present resolution and on the results of those measures.

11. In introducing the draft resolution, the French representative noted that there was no serious difference of opinion in the Committee. For that reason, his delegation had decided to propose what was, to some extent, a compromise text, and one that was perhaps simpler and more concise than those presented by the United States of America and the United Kingdom. The preamble defined the task of OPI and the means by which that task should be performed. In the final preambular paragraph private institutions were deliberately listed before public institutions in order to emphasize that information on the United Nations should be received freely by those to whom it was addressed, without being distorted to suit the policy of any Government. His delegation had likewise omitted a reference to educators as a possible channel for the transmission of information as it wished to avoid any possible suggestion of propaganda. Operative paragraph 1 closely followed the United Kingdom text in endorsing the recommendations in paragraph 227 of the Expert Committee's report. It laid, however, special emphasis on sub-paragraphs (c) and (e), on which his delegation felt strongly, as it attached great importance to the human factor in public information work. However good might be the intentions of OPI and however excellent the facilities at its disposal, they would be of little use if those who did the work were not fully qualified. His delegation suggested, though without implying that the Office did not already have a good staff, that care should be taken to see that officers concerned with public information were chosen for their wide knowledge and understanding of the different cultural backgrounds of those whom they sought to serve. Operative paragraph 2 was predicated on a realistic assessment of the budgetary situation, and since time would be needed to carry into effect the recommended changes, his



delegation had preferred a supple formula. It had not, however, abandoned the hope that the cost of public information might be brought within the target figure of \$4.5 million.

#### General discussion

2. Much of the general discussion in the Committee had to do with paragraphs 214 and 226 (C) of the report, in which the Expert Committee, after defining the immediate target for United Nations information activities, explained that its definition involved "a shift of emphasis in the method of dissemination of information from 'mass approach through media of mass communication' to the selective approach of public relations, and working through existing organizations, governmental and non-governmental, and through individuals who are disseminators of information and exercise influence, or occupy positions involving exercise of influence, in the formation of public opinion".

3. Widely differing views were heard both on the recommended definition and on the related question whether the Expert Committee was competent to speak on the issue which it had thus raised.

4. Delegations agreeing with the Expert Committee's position considered that in recommending a "shift of emphasis" the Committee had not contemplated any radical change in basic principles or in present practice. Far from questioning the established principle that the United Nations could not achieve its purposes unless the peoples of the world were informed of its aims and activities, the Expert Committee had been at pains to reaffirm that principle, in paragraphs 213 and 227. Under the basic directives of 1952, it was the task of OPI not simply to disseminate information, but to promote an informed understanding of the work of the United Nations. It must accordingly stimulate public interest in the intricate activities of the United Nations, and also give to the peoples of the world a sense of identity with the Organization. To that end, information material should be produced by OPI in a form that could be readily assimilated by those for whom it was intended - a highly complex process calling for the services of intermediaries able to adapt the material to their audience. That concept had been embodied in the basic principles of 1952, and the Expert Committee had merely laid stress on its importance. For compelling budgetary reasons, the United Nations could not attempt direct mass publicity among the peoples of the world, but must work through

the services, institutions and private persons mentioned in paragraph 214 of the report. The Committee had in no way dissuaded OPI from taking, of its own initiative, positive action to supplement the information provided by existing agencies; it had merely emphasized that the production of information material was not an end in itself; that the most vital aspect of OPI's activities was so to arrange for the distribution of information that it reached all the peoples of the world.

15. It was also pointed out in support of the Expert Committee's main thesis - that, in the modern context of public information, any direct mass approach automatically entailed a degree of selection: it was not possible, without intermediary agencies, to inform everybody of every fact. Hence, the practical question was not one of choice between the mass approach and the selective approach, but rather to determine which among various selective approaches might realistically be recommended. The Expert Committee had rightly concluded that a shift of emphasis to "public relations techniques" was wholly consistent with the basic principles of 1952, and with the budgetary limitations that were an integral element of those principles. It was true that both the Secretary-General (A/3945, paras. 8-10) and a number of delegations taking part in the discussion had raised the question whether the Expert Committee had not gone beyond its terms of reference. But the Secretary-General's own memorandum of March 1958 to that Committee (A/3928, Annex I) appeared to corroborate the contrary view: in indicating the range of problems encompassed by the review, the Secretary-General had suggested (*ibid.*, para. 5) that the Expert Committee might wish to relate its review to the guiding lines laid down in the basic principles, in the light of the current world situation and the experience of the past twelve years; and further (*ibid.*, para. 14) that the Committee might study the balance to be observed between the initiative expected of outside information agencies and "the positive information activities" supplementing those services which the Assembly had enjoined on the Secretariat in the basic principles, and consider what would be the most effective channels and procedures for encouraging the distribution of information through outside agencies.

16. A few delegations cited other and additional reasons for concurring in the Expert Committee's findings. The report offered the means whereby to reconcile the information activities of the United Nations with the principles and purposes



which the General Assembly had laid down. Paragraph 227 (a) and (b) merited special approval; the principles which it stated had not always been respected in practice: the Secretariat attached undue importance to controversial issues in preference to activities that were designed to promote international co-operation and the peaceful settlement of disputes. Great care should on that account be exercised to ensure that the staff of OPI was recruited on an equitable geographical basis: that requirement was the more pressing since the Office had not only demonstrated a lack of objectiveness in the work of the Radio and Visual Services Division and the Press and Publications Division, but engaged in propaganda. The General Assembly had given the Secretary-General explicit instructions: OPI should refrain from propaganda; it should stimulate the dissemination of information concerning United Nations activities through existing media of information, and act in close co-operation with Governments and with the competent agencies of Member States. The Secretariat had, however, established a parallel network of public information which, instead of merely supplementing other services, even entered into competition with them. It sought to address itself directly to the peoples of the world, ignoring, in the process, the Governments of Member States and losing contact with the situation in the various countries. Thus, although existing media of information were available in the Member States, OPI appeared to fear, without reason, that Governments would distort information concerning United Nations activities. Certain delegations expressed their opinion that the use of the facilities of the "Voice of America" for the broadcasting of United Nations programmes was unsuitable.

17. A number of delegations dissented from the Expert Committee's recommendations for a shift of emphasis to the "selective approach of public relations". Paragraphs 214, 217 and 226 (b) of the experts' report, though doubtless dictated by considerations of efficiency and economy, provided for a fundamental change in United Nations information policy. Such a change was, in the view of some of these delegations, basically unacceptable, and, in that of others, called for a much fuller study. OPI was not a public relations service; its task was to ensure that objective information, complete and unadorned, reached the peoples of the world. There was no assurance that, under the recommendations of the Expert Committee, that would be accomplished in every case. While it was entirely proper for OPI to rely on the assistance of Member Governments - and reciprocally for those Governments to seek the assistance of the United Nations - in the task of

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keeping the peoples informed, the concept of "working through the Governments of Member States" marked a radical departure from established policy. If the Office was to preserve its independence and objectivity, that concept could not be accepted as a guiding principle. So far from modifying - in the sense recommended by the Expert Committee - the principles adopted in 1946 and 1952, the General Assembly should, by reaffirming those principles, remove any possible doubt regarding the exclusively international and impartial character of the information services. That was the only way of ensuring that the world at large understood the work and purposes of the United Nations - an objective that could best be achieved if the job were left, in the main, to a skilled staff acting under the dual control of the Secretary-General and the General Assembly.

18. It was also argued by some delegations that, as regards the Expert Committee's terms of reference, the General Assembly had merely sought its views on how best to attain, in the information activities of the United Nations, a maximum of effectiveness at the lowest possible cost. The Committee had not been asked to review the general principles that should govern those activities, and nothing in resolution 1177 (XII) or in the discussions at the twelfth session indicated that the Assembly had remitted such a task to the Committee.

19. General agreement was expressed in the Committee for the experts' recommendations for strengthening the information centres, and their proposals relating to local production of public information material received much support. It was also suggested that, apart from exercising the greatest care in the selection of officers for service in the information centres, OPI should should also study the present geographical situation of the centres with special reference to the problems and needs of those areas where information media were less fully developed. Some delegations were of the opinion that much remained to be done on that score: an excessive share of the total expenditure continued to be devoted to areas where the channels of information, and especially mass media, were already well developed. Policy in regard to the establishment of additional information centres should be shaped with due regard for the emergence of new sovereign States as participants in United Nations activities and for the still unfulfilled needs of other Member States. Account should likewise be taken of the unfavourable position of some States which were served by a centre functioning in another country having a



different language and different traditions: a possible solution in such cases was to open a new centre or, at least, a branch office under an existing centre. A further factor to be considered was whether substantive offices of the United Nations or the specialized agencies were already established in a particular country and thus providing a source of information on the United Nations family of organizations.

20. Some delegations sounded a note of warning on the financial consequences that would flow from the experts' recommendations and from the suggestions advanced by representatives. An increase in the Professional staff of the information centres, though desirable in principle, was costly: high qualifications were demanded of such staff, and it would not be wise to effect the increase at the expense of services to the Press at Headquarters. The financial implications of "decentralization", including the higher costs of production in the field, should be weighed with care.

21. There was, in addition, much discussion in the Committee of the Expert Committee's recommendations in regard to unrelayed broadcasts (paras. 260, 261). On the one hand, the view was expressed that, while it was clearly desirable for people in every part of the world to obtain independent information on important United Nations activities, a situation of fact could not be entirely overlooked if it were disclosed that certain language broadcasts were not reaching those to whom they were addressed, it was surely the part of wisdom and of financial realism to discontinue their transmission. There could be no justification for involving the United Nations in heavy expenditure that did not serve its purpose. At most, some token broadcasts might be retained.

22. In the opinion of other delegations, however, the interruption of unrelayed broadcasts might be construed as a weakening of one of the basic principles. It would moreover be inadvisable, in spite of the budgetary consequences, to deprive individuals of the present opportunity of receiving, without the aid of intermediaries, direct and objective information about the United Nations. Furthermore, if the recommendation in paragraphs 260 and 261 meant that United Nations radio programmes should not be beamed to any country without a request from, or the consent of, the Government concerned, it was clearly unacceptable. All information concerning the United Nations and its activities, including information on statements by delegations should be available to the

peoples of all countries. The General Assembly could not admit a veto by Government upon the transmission to their peoples of objective and factual information about the United Nations, its proceedings, its decisions and its other activities. In resolutions 137 (II) and 290 (IV) the Assembly had already recorded its views on the responsibility of Member Governments for giving their citizens access to information essential to international understanding and peace and, particularly, to information concerning the United Nations and its activities.

23. The experts' recommendation concerning the monthly Reviews in English, French and Spanish was likewise the subject of discussion in the Committee, with the balance of opinion inclining in favour of the existing arrangements, at least as regards the frequency of publication. The point was made by several representatives that there was an urgent need for current information - provided in as many languages as possible - on the activities both of the United Nations and the specialized agencies. Most delegations felt that attention should be concentrated on making of the Reviews a vehicle of adequate factual information for those who had a special interest in the activities of the Organization. Subject to that consideration, the matter might best be left to the Secretary-General's judgement.

24. Opinion was divided in the Committee on the Expert Committee's recommendation (paragraph 280) for the possible establishment of an advisory group to assist the Secretary-General in his consideration of the information programme and of projects and plans of work covered by that programme. While noting that the Secretary-General had agreed in principle to an advisory group of the same general character as the Advisory Committees for the Peaceful Uses of Atomic Energy and for UNEF matters, some delegations considered that, unless compelling reasons could be adduced, no further additions, involving increases in expenditure and documentation, should be made to the administrative machinery of the United Nations. Other delegations suggested that a six-member group (as recommended by the Expert Committee) might not be sufficiently representative of the main cultural groups and languages represented in the Organization; a group of nine to twelve members would be more satisfactory.



Final stage

25. Guatemala submitted, at the 688th meeting of the Committee, the following draft resolution (A/C.5/L.533):

The General Assembly,

In conformity with the decisions taken in its resolutions 13 (I) of 13 February 1946 and 595 (VI) of 4 February 1952, relating to the basic policy of the United Nations public information programme and the principles laid down for the objective implementation thereof,

Taking note with appreciation of the report of the Expert Committee on United Nations Public Information in document A/3928 of 20 September 1958, and the comments and recommendations of the Secretary-General in document A/3945 of 16 October 1958,

Considering that, in compliance with the provisions on this subject, the Secretary-General, within the budgetary limitations set by this session of the General Assembly, should provide all the peoples of the civilized world, through the appropriate media, with objective, practical and specific information on the United Nations and its activities,

Considering further that, in conformity with this guiding policy, he should make the fullest possible use of all information media at his disposal on the principle of maximum effectiveness at the lowest possible cost, without prejudice to an increased effort to obtain for the United Nations information programme the co-operation of Governments, private services and agencies, cultural centres and other non-governmental organizations, in order to provide information for the countries of the international community and other social communities of the civilized world,

Bearing in mind the recommendations of the Expert Committee on United Nations Public Information, the request of the Secretary-General contained in document A/3945, and the urgent needs of the Organization in regard to the development of its information policy,

Decides:

1. To request the Secretary-General to give careful consideration, in the light of the United Nations public information policy and Basic Principles, to the implementation during 1959 of all the specific recommendations made in

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the report of the Expert Committee on United Nations Public Information, paying particular attention to the factors and principles mentioned in the preamble to this resolution; and, in consultation with the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions in regard to the budgetary implications of the measures which he proposes to take in compliance with the recommendations of the Expert Committee, to do his utmost to ensure that the costs of the information programme do not exceed the budgetary limits prescribed by this session of the General Assembly; and,

2. To request the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its fourteenth session a full report on the measures adopted, the progress achieved and the savings effected in compliance with this resolution.

26. The representative of Guatemala explained that the draft resolution (A/C.5/L.533) which his delegation had proposed as a compromise text afforded to the Secretary-General the necessary discretion in carrying out the public information programme of the United Nations. Emergency situations that could not be foreseen by the General Assembly might add heavily to the demands made upon OPI. Furthermore, too strict a financial limitation might seriously affect both the quantity and quality of the information services.

27. In a further oral statement made at the 689th meeting, the Secretary-General said that the discussion held in the Committee would greatly assist the United Nations in developing an increasingly effective information programme in the future. There had been a wide measure of support for the basic principles enunciated by the General Assembly in 1946 and 1952, and he had also noted with satisfaction the general agreement on the desirability of strengthening the work of the information centres as a means of giving fuller effect to those principles, for the benefit of all parts of the world. He fully agreed with the strong wish to see the Organization give more assistance in all parts of the world to efforts by Governments and private organizations to increase knowledge and understanding of the United Nations and of its programmes. It was his understanding that, in general the Member States did not wish that development to impair in any way the quality of the information services at Headquarters; and further that they appreciated that activities in the field could not be strengthened without alert and efficient support from Headquarters. Doubtless, the Members would also recognize that, however prudent and economical the method of carrying out that policy - at



Headquarters and in the field - the financial implications would have to be viewed realistically: a sharp reduction of the over-all budget for public information could not be expected.

28. The Secretary-General added that while paragraph 227 of the Expert Committee's report contained a number of helpful ideas and recommendations which should, of course, be taken into account, there had been divergent interpretations of that paragraph. The divergencies had not been resolved, and for that reason the mere endorsement of paragraph 227 by the Fifth Committee, as suggested by some delegations, would leave the Secretariat without adequate guidance regarding the Assembly's intentions. It was his intention to act upon the many excellent recommendations which were to be found in that section of the report in the light of the basic principles as he had interpreted them in his opening statement, and he felt that it might be helpful for the Committee to have that indication of his intentions, in view of the difficulties in which it had found itself in the matter. More generally, the Secretary-General assured the Committee that, as chief administrative officer of the Organization, and in conformity with the basic principles governing the public information activities, he would give careful consideration to the many useful suggestions in the Expert Committee's report and to the ideas that had emerged from the debate.

29. The representative of Guatemala having withdrawn, at the 691st meeting, the draft resolution (A/C.5/L.533) proposed by his delegation, the Committee had before it, at its 692nd meeting, a revised draft resolution (A/C.5/L.527/Rev.2) submitted by the United States of America, as well as amendments thereto submitted by France (A/C.5/L.537) and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (A/C.5/L.538).

30. The French amendment provided for the insertion between operative paragraphs 1 and 2 of the revised United States draft resolution of the following text:

"To request the Secretary-General, in the light of the opinions expressed on the subject in the Fifth Committee, to improve the quality of the United Nations Review;"

The French representative withdrew his delegation's amendment upon receiving from the Secretary-General's representative an assurance that the Secretary-General would give the closest attention not only to the text of the resolution to be adopted by the Committee but to the related discussion as a whole.

31. In the course of the 692nd meeting a joint draft resolution was proposed by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America (A/C.5/L.539).<sup>3/</sup>

32. The following amendments were proposed to the joint draft resolution (A/C.5/L.539):

(a) Romania (A/C.5/L.540): To substitute for the fifth preambular paragraph the following text:

"Bearing in mind the past recommendations by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and the Fifth Committee of the Assembly for the imposition of a limitation of \$4.5 million upon expenditures for public information activities,".

(b) Bulgaria (A/C.5/L.541):

(i) To delete, in the fourth preambular paragraph, the words "through any appropriate media";

(ii) To delete, in the sixth preambular paragraph, the words "upon enlisting the co-operation of Member Governments, privately-owned mass media of information, private institutions, non-governmental organizations, and educators" and to substitute the words "on assisting and relying upon the services of existing official and private agencies of information, educational institutions and non-governmental organizations".

33. The representative of Bulgaria explained that, as regards the first of the amendments proposed by his delegation (A/C.5/L.541), the words "through any appropriate media" appeared superfluous. The second amendment was based on the actual wording of General Assembly resolution 595 (VI) of 1952; it seemed preferable to retain the text of principles which no one had then opposed.

#### Decisions of the Committee

34. The Bulgarian amendments (A/C.5/L.541) were withdrawn at the 693rd meeting on the understanding that, in interpreting the considerations stated in the fourth and sixth preambular paragraphs of the joint draft resolution, full account would be taken of the basic principles contained in the Assembly's resolutions of 1946 and

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<sup>3/</sup> The text is reproduced in paragraph 35 below.



1952. The Committee then voted on the joint draft resolution (A/C.5/L.539) and on the Romanian amendment thereto (A/C.5/L.540). The amendment (A/C.5/L.540) proposed by Romania to the joint draft resolution (A/C.5/L.539) was rejected, on a roll-call vote, by 27 votes to 14, with 28 abstentions. At the request of the representative of India a separate vote was taken on the words "in the opinion of the Secretary-General" in the first operative paragraph of the joint draft resolution. The retention of the phrase was approved by 34 votes to 16, with 17 abstentions. The representative of Honduras requested a separate vote on the retention of the words "with the maximum of effectiveness at the lowest possible cost" in the first operative paragraph of the joint draft resolution. The retention of the phrase was approved, on a roll-call vote, by 49 votes to 10, with 10 abstentions. At the request of the representative of Albania, the joint draft resolution (A/C.5/L.539) was voted on, paragraph by paragraph. The result of the vote was as follows:

	<u>In favour</u>	<u>Against</u>	<u>Abstentions</u>
Preambular paragraph 1	58	0	10
Preambular paragraph 2	57	0	12
Preambular paragraph 3	66	0	2
Preambular paragraph 4	57	0	12
Preambular paragraph 5	51	0	15
Preambular paragraph 6	57	0	11
Preambular paragraph 7	58	0	11
Operative paragraph 1	50	0	17
Operative paragraph 2	68	0	1
Operative paragraph 3	68	0	1
Draft resolution as a whole	57	0	11

Recommendation of the Committee

5. The Fifth Committee accordingly recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

PUBLIC INFORMATION ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS

The General Assembly,

Noting with appreciation the report of the Expert Committee on United Nations Public Information (A/3928) and the comments of the Secretary-General thereon (A/3945),

Noting further the statements made by the Secretary-General, at the 682nd and 689th meetings of the Fifth Committee, concerning the public

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information activities of the United Nations, in particular his statement that it is his "intention to act upon the many excellent recommendations" included in paragraph 227 of the report of the Expert Committee in the light of the basic principles as interpreted in his statement made at the 682nd meeting,

Recalling General Assembly resolution 13 (I) of 13 February 1946, as modified by General Assembly resolution 595 (VI) of 4 February 1952, setting forth the basic policy of the United Nations public information programme and the principles for the implementation thereof,

Considering that, pursuant to the above-mentioned resolutions, the Secretary-General should, within budgetary limitations imposed by the General Assembly, make available objective and factual information concerning the United Nations and its activities to all the peoples of the world through any appropriate media,

Believing that, consistent with this policy, the Secretary-General should give priority to the use of all media of information which ensure a maximum of effectiveness at the lowest possible cost,

Considering that the Secretary-General should place greater emphasis than heretofore upon enlisting the co-operation of Member Governments, privately-owned mass media of information, private institutions, non-governmental organizations, and educators in the programme of informing the peoples of the world of the United Nations and its activities,

Considering that greater emphasis should be placed upon the operations and the effectiveness of Information Centres in relation to the Office of Public Information at Headquarters without impairing the over-all central direction of the United Nations information programme or the present facilities for the representatives of media of mass communication,

Decides:

1. To request the Secretary-General to give effect in 1959 to the extent practicable to those recommendations made by the Expert Committee and to any other means which, in the opinion of the Secretary-General, will further the objectives set out in the preambular paragraphs of the present resolution with the maximum of effectiveness at the lowest possible cost;



2. To request the Secretary-General to consult the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions concerning the financial implications of the action consequent upon his implementing the recommendations in operative paragraph 1 above;

3. To request the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its fourteenth session concerning the progress he has made in implementing this resolution.

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