

**REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE  
TO REVIEW  
UNITED NATIONS PUBLIC INFORMATION  
POLICIES AND ACTIVITIES**

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

OFFICIAL RECORDS: THIRTY-FOURTH SESSION

SUPPLEMENT No. 21 (A/34/21)



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#### NOTE

Symbols of United Nations documents are composed of capital letters combined with figures. Mention of such a symbol indicates a reference to a United Nations document.

CONTENTS

|   | <u>Paragraphs</u> | <u>Page</u> |
|---|-------------------|-------------|
| I. INTRODUCTION . . . . .   | 1 - 5             | 1           |
| II. ORGANIZATIONAL SESSION . . . . .  | 6 - 15            | 3           |
| A. Opening of the session . . . . .   | 6 - 11            | 3           |
| B. Adoption of the agenda and organization of the<br>Committee's work . . . . . | 12 - 15           | 4           |
| III. FIRST SESSION . . . . .  | 16 - 44           | 4           |
| A. Organization of the session . . . . .  | 16 - 20           | 4           |
| B. General debate . . . . .   | 21 - 31           | 5           |
| C. Conclusions . . . . .  | 32 - 44           | 6           |
| IV. SECOND SESSION . . . . .  | 45 - 48           | 9           |

ANNEXES

|  |    |
|--|----|
| I. STATEMENT MADE BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE AT THE OPENING<br>MEETING OF THE ORGANIZATIONAL SESSION ON 19 APRIL 1979 . . . . .                          | 11 |
| II. SUMMARY OF THE GENERAL DEBATE PRESENTED BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE<br>COMMITTEE ON 1 JUNE 1979 AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE COMMITTEE'S FIRST<br>SESSION . . . . . | 18 |
| III. REPORT OF THE <u>AD HOC</u> WORKING GROUP . . . . .   | 23 |
| A. Organization of the session . . . . .   | 23 |
| B. Statements by the Chairman and by the Under-Secretary-General for<br>Public Information . . . . .   | 24 |
| C. Considerations and recommendations of the <u>Ad Hoc</u> Working Group . .   | 27 |
| D. Acknowledgements . . . . .  | 35 |
| Appendix to annex III. Officials who appeared before the <u>Ad Hoc</u><br>Working Group . . . . .  | 36 |
| IV. DOCUMENTS BEFORE THE ORGANIZATIONAL SESSION AND ITS FIRST SESSION . .  | 38 |

## I. INTRODUCTION

1. At its thirtieth session, in 1975, the General Assembly, in the course of its consideration of the item relating to the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1976-1977, requested the Secretary-General to make new efforts in the field of information activities of the Organization and convey to the general public comprehensive information regarding the political, economic, social, cultural and humanitarian achievements and undertakings of the United Nations system, including the principles and aims related to the new international economic order; called upon the Secretary-General to collaborate closely in that effort with the national information media, the United Nations associations and other non-governmental organizations concerned throughout the world; and requested the Secretary-General to submit to the Assembly at its thirty-third session a report on the activities of the Office of Public Information of the Secretariat.

2. In its resolution 33/115 C of 18 December 1978, the Assembly, inter alia, took note of the report of the Secretary-General (A/33/146) and requested the Secretary-General to take the necessary measures to ensure the close collaboration of Member States, the specialized agencies, non-governmental organizations and other information bodies in framing public information policies and programmes of the United Nations system.

3. The General Assembly also decided to establish a Committee to Review United Nations Public Information Policies and Activities consisting of 41 Member States; requested the President of the General Assembly, after having consulted the regional groups, to appoint the members of the Committee on the basis of equitable geographical distribution; and requested the Committee to submit a report to the Assembly, at its thirty-fourth session, on the policies and activities of the public information services of the United Nations system, giving particular attention to activities in the economic and social sphere.

4. The President of the General Assembly subsequently informed the Secretary-General (A/33/561 and Corr.1 and Add.1) that he had appointed the following 41 States as members of the Committee:

|                              |             |
|------------------------------|-------------|
| Argentina                    | Guinea      |
| Benin                        | India       |
| Chile                        | Italy       |
| Colombia                     | Ivory Coast |
| Congo                        | Japan       |
| Cyprus                       | Jordan      |
| Ecuador                      | Lebanon     |
| Egypt                        | Niger       |
| El Salvador                  | Nigeria     |
| Ethiopia                     | Peru        |
| Finland                      | Philippines |
| France                       | Romania     |
| German Democratic Republic   | Somalia     |
| Germany, Federal Republic of | Spain       |
| Guatemala                    | Sri Lanka   |

Syrian Arab Republic  
Togo  
Trinidad and Tobago  
Tunisia  
Turkey  
Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic

Union of Soviet Socialist Republics  
United Kingdom of Great Britain and  
Northern Ireland  
United States of America  
Yemen 1/  
Yugoslavia

5. The Committee held an organizational session on 19 April 1979. It held two substantive sessions, one from 29 May to 1 June and on 6 July, and the other on 17 and 20 September.

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1/ Replaced Indonesia from 29 June 1979 (see A/33/561/Add.1).

## II. ORGANIZATIONAL SESSION

### A. Opening of the session

6. The Committee held its organizational session at United Nations Headquarters on 19 April 1979. It consisted of two meetings.
7. The Secretary-General of the Organization, Mr. Kurt Waldheim, opened the session with a statement in which he stressed the key role which the Committee would be playing in the future in connexion with the information activities of the Organization.
8. The Secretary-General recalled that the General Assembly had requested the Committee to submit a report to it at its thirty-fourth session on the policies and activities of the public information services of the United Nations system, giving particular attention to activities in the economic and social sphere. He drew the attention of members of the Committee to the main points in the preambular part of General Assembly resolution 33/115 C concerning, in particular, the need to strengthen and co-ordinate the activities and programmes of the United Nations system in the field of information and mass communications; the need to have Member States participate more actively in framing United Nations policies and programmes in those fields; and the recognition of the essential role of information in the implementation of international decisions concerning economic and social development, especially those concerning the establishment of the new international economic order.
9. The Secretary-General noted that the Department of Public Information had to meet a growing number of requests from the General Assembly and other United Nations bodies for the elaboration and implementation of information programmes in increasingly varied fields. However, it was becoming more and more difficult to cope with that situation, especially as the Department had only a very limited budget with which to meet all those requests. One of the Committee's tasks would be to help the Department review the guidelines for its activities and establish priorities.
10. The Secretary-General also recalled that the discussion and debates on public information in the Special Political Committee centred largely on the introduction of the concept of establishing a new, more just and better balanced world information and communications order. This order is to be based on free circulation and wider and better balanced dissemination of information which should reflect the concerns and legitimate aspirations of the developing countries.
11. The Secretary-General presided over the election of the Chairman of the Committee. Mr. Mahmoud Mestiri (Tunisia) was elected. Immediately after his election the Chairman made a statement which, in view of its importance, the Committee decided to consider as a working document for the full text (see annex I of this report).

B. Adoption of the agenda and organization  
of the Committee's work

12. At its 2nd meeting, the Committee adopted the following agenda (A/AC.198/1):

1. Opening of the session.
2. Election of officers.
3. Adoption of agenda.
4. Organization of work.

13. At the same meeting, the Committee elected the following officers:

Vice-Chairmen: Mr. Sergio Diez (Chile)  
Mrs. Sigrid Schade (German Democratic Republic)  
Rapporteur: Mr. Giancarlo Danovi (Italy)

14. At the same meeting, the Committee decided that its first substantive session would be held at United Nations Headquarters from 29 May to 1 June 1979, and that at that session there would be a general debate on United Nations public information policies and activities.

15. The representative of Turkey raised the question of the representation of regional groups in the Committee and stated, on behalf of the Group of Western European and other States, that that Group was not satisfied with the representation of regional groups and that, since the question did not fall within the competence of the Committee, the Group would reserve its right to raise it again at the thirty-fourth session of the General Assembly. In the meantime the Committee decided that Member States of the United Nations which were not members of the Committee could in future participate in the work of the Committee as observers if they expressed the wish to do so.

III. FIRST SESSION

A. Organization of the session

16. The Committee's first session was held at United Nations Headquarters from 29 May to 1 June 1979. The Committee held six meetings (3rd to 8th meetings).

17. The following Member States participated as observers at the first session of the Committee:

|             |           |
|-------------|-----------|
| Austria     | Norway    |
| Belgium     | Portugal  |
| Canada      | Sweden    |
| Greece      | Venezuela |
| Honduras    | Viet Nam  |
| Netherlands |           |

The Holy See also participated as an observer at the session.

18. At its 3rd meeting, on 29 May, the Committee adopted the following agenda (A/AC.198/3):

1. Adoption of the agenda.
2. Election of a Vice-Chairman.
3. General debate on United Nations public information policies and activities.
4. Second session of the Committee, 1979.
5. Adoption of the Committee's report.

19. At the same meeting, the Committee elected Mr. Nicasio G. Valderrama (Philippines) as third Vice-Chairman of the Committee.

20. The list of documents before the Committee, and of the other documents made available to it during the first session, appears in annex IV to this report.

#### B. General debate

21. In his statement at the beginning of the general debate, the Under-Secretary-General for Public Information, Mr. Yasushi Akashi, said that the activities of the Department of Public Information were essential to enable the public to gain a better understanding of the role of the United Nations in international affairs, and were therefore essential to the success of the Organization. In that context, the Committee's assistance and expertise were particularly important, and the new dimension of the dialogue which was to be initiated between the members of the Committee and the Department could be regarded as a sign of vitality.

22. The Under-Secretary-General went on to say that a critical review of the functioning of the Department would probably be necessary if a more active approach to information and mass communications policies was to be adopted in the future. It would also be desirable to clarify the situation regarding the activities of the Department involving services on the one hand, and those which were regarded more as creative and promotional activities which would help to establish a more direct link with the new dimension of information. Similarly, particular attention should be accorded to planning and programming, budget estimates and the system of evaluating results. Lastly, the Under-Secretary-General expressed the hope that it would be possible, through co-operation between the Committee and the Department of Public Information, to devise means of adapting information to the new realities of a constantly changing world.

23. During the general debate, 31 members of the Committee took the floor. Portugal spoke as an observer. The representatives of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the World Bank, and the United Nations International Children's Fund (UNICEF) made statements.

24. In the course of the session, the Chairman informed the Committee that he had received letters from the President of the United Nations Correspondents' Association, and from representatives of non-governmental organizations accredited with the United Nations, informing him of the interest of the Association and of those organizations in the work of the Committee and assuring him of their co-operation. At the proposal of the Chairman, the Committee decided to authorize the World Federation of United Nations Associations, which had made a request to that effect, to attend in its future deliberations.

25. During the general debate it was proposed that the text of resolution 33/73 entitled "Declaration on the Preparation of Societies for Life in Peace" should be included in the documentation made available to the Committee.



26. At the end of the general debate, the Under-Secretary-General for Public Information made a statement. In reply to certain specific questions which had been raised during the debate, the Under-Secretary-General assured the Committee that he had taken careful note of the comments concerning short-wave radio broadcasts. Those broadcasts were certainly still an extremely useful method of transmitting information which could not be done away with unless it was replaced by a more effective method. With regard to the use of the FM frequencies made available to the United Nations by the United States, the Department was at present actively considering the various implications of such a system.

27. With regard to United Nations films, the Under-Secretary-General noted that the services of the Department were being increasingly directed towards co-production. As to the use of new techniques and particularly of satellites, he emphasized that the Department's television services already made very frequent use of such technology. The question of acquiring the necessary equipment for conversion to various colour systems was being studied.

28. With regard to the UN Chronicle, the Under-Secretary-General welcomed the numerous statements that had been made in favour of publishing the Chronicle in English on a monthly basis again. He added that measures were under way to speed up its publication in the other languages.

29. The production of other publications in official and non-official languages was one of the Department's constant concerns. The United Nations Information Centres, which played an important role in such production, regularly requested additional funds for that purpose. However, the funds available within the Department for its publications programme had remained virtually unchanged for years.

30. The Under-Secretary-General assured the Committee of the importance attached by the Department to the essential role played by the United Nations Information Centres and noted that, with the co-operation of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Department would continue its efforts to strengthen the co-ordination of information activities in the field. He also assured the Committee that the Department would continue to make use, as extensively as possible, of the opportunities afforded by non-governmental organizations.

31. During the 8th meeting, on 1 June, the Chairman of the Committee, under his own responsibility, read out a summary of the general debate. Several delegations expressed satisfaction with that summary. During the Second Session, at its 11th meeting, on 20 September, the Committee decided that the Chairman's summary would be annexed to the Committee's report (see annex II).

### C. Conclusions

32. At the Committee's 8th meeting, when it became apparent that difficulties were being encountered in reaching agreement on the establishment of the working groups, the representative of Ecuador, on behalf of Benin, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guinea, India, Indonesia, Lebanon, Niger, Nigeria, Peru, Philippines, Romania, Syrian Arab Republic, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia and Yugoslavia, submitted the following draft resolution (A/AC.198/L.1):

"The Committee to review United Nations Public Information Policies and Activities,

"Recalling General Assembly resolution 33/115 of 18 December 1978 concerning questions relating to information,

"Recalling all relevant resolutions and decisions adopted by the General Assembly and other bodies of the United Nations system in the field of information and communication,

"Taking into account the views and proposals expressed during the debate of the Committee,

"Bearing in mind the urgent need to accomplish the task entrusted to the Committee by the General Assembly,

"1. Decides to establish an ad hoc working group which will undertake an analysis and evaluation of the proposals made by Member States during the discussions in the Special Political Committee of the thirty-third session of the General Assembly and the Committee to Review United Nations Public Information Policies and Activities with a view to improving the information services and activities of the Department of Public Information in the light of the evolution of international relations in the last two decades and the Department's own experience;

"2. Further decides to establish an ad hoc working group which, in the light of the principles laid down by the General Assembly for the establishment of a more just and more effective world information and communication order, shall:

"(a) Review and assess the results achieved and efforts undertaken by the United Nations system with regard to the establishment of a new, more just and more effective world information and communication order;

"(b) Identify methods which could lead to improved co-ordination within the United Nations system; and

"(c) Present practical proposals regarding the role which for these purposes should be played by the Committee."

33. The representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics submitted an amendment to the draft resolution to insert in the seventh line of operative paragraph 1, after the words "of Public Information" the words "and the other sectors of the Secretariat" (A/AC.198/L.2).

34. The representative of El Salvador submitted an amendment to add after operative paragraph 2 of the draft resolution the following paragraph:

"3. Also decides that the ad hoc working groups should report to the Committee at the earliest possible date." (A/AC.198/L.3)

35. A number of delegations expressed reservations concerning the draft resolution. Those reservations related not only to its late submission and to the fact that the text was available only in English, but also to the mandate of the second working group, the establishment of which was proposed in the draft resolution and which,

in the opinion of those delegations, went beyond the task entrusted to the Committee by resolution 33/115 C. Other delegations, however, did not share this view.

36. After a brief discussion, the Chairman proposed that the Committee should hold an additional meeting before the end of June to consider the question of the establishment of the working groups, to take a decision on its second session in 1979, and to decide on the format and on the procedure to be adopted for the preparation of its report to the General Assembly. That proposal was accepted by the Committee.

37. The Committee held its additional meeting on 6 July 1979. The Acting Chairman announced on that occasion that, as a result of informal consultations, a consensus had emerged among the various regional groups on the text of the following draft resolution (A/AC.198/L.4):

"The Committee to Review United Nations Public Information Policies and Activities,

"Recalling all relevant resolutions and decisions adopted by the General Assembly and other bodies of the United Nations system in the field of information and communication,

"Recalling further General Assembly resolutions 33/115 A, B and C of 18 December 1978 entitled "Questions relating to information",

"Bearing in mind the contribution that the public information services of the United Nations system could make to the achievement of the goals established in these resolutions,

"Taking into account the view and proposals expressed during the debate held by the Committee,

"1. Decides to establish an ad hoc working group:

"(a) To undertake an analysis and evaluation of the policies and activities of the Department of Public Information and other relevant information units of the Secretariat in the light of the evolution of international relations in the last two decades;

"(b) To formulate proposals to improve the public information activities and programmes of the United Nations system, with particular regard to the economic and social sphere, as well as to identify methods that could lead to a better co-ordination of the public information policies and activities of the United Nations system, in the light of the need, affirmed by the General Assembly, for the establishment of a new, more just and more effective world information and communication order, intended to strengthen international peace and understanding and based on the free circulation and wider and better-balanced dissemination of information;

"2. Requests the Ad Hoc Working Group to submit a report to the Committee at its resumed session in September 1979.'

38. The United States delegation, speaking on behalf of the Western European and other States, which had proposed the addition after the third preambular paragraph

of a new paragraph reading as follows: "Desirous to hasten the accomplishment of the task entrusted to the Committee by General Assembly resolution 33/115 C," (A/AC.198/L.5) withdrew its proposal, while maintaining its position that the Committee derived its mandate and its powers from the text of resolution 33/115 C.

39. The representative of Ecuador announced his delegation's support for the draft resolution proposed by the Acting Chairman.

40. The draft resolution was adopted.

41. After the adoption of the resolution, the Acting Chairman also indicated that, in the course of the informal consultations held among the regional groups, it had been agreed that:

(a) The Group would consist of 20 members, 4 from each regional group;

(b) The other members of the Committee and observers could participate in the meetings of the Group and express their views, in accordance with the procedure established by the Economic and Social Council for the methods of work of its Working Group on the Implementation of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights;

(c) The Group should try to take decisions by consensus, without prejudice to the rules of procedure;

(d) The Group would, as far as possible, use the conference services available, but would also meet even without such services.

42. The following members of the Committee were appointed as members of the Working Group:

|                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| Argentina                  | Japan  |
| Benin                      | Lebanon  |
| Colombia                   | Nigeria  |
| Cyprus                     | Romania  |
| Ecuador                    | Tunisia  |
| Egypt                      | Turkey   |
| Finland                    | Union of Soviet Socialist Republics                  |
| German Democratic Republic | United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland |
| Guatemala                  | United States of America                             |
| India                      | Yugoslavia   |

43. On 12 July the Working Group held an organizational meeting presided over by the Acting Chairman, at which it elected its Chairman, the Permanent Representative of Ecuador, Mr. Miguel A. Albornoz.

44. The Working Group met in New York from 30 July to 14 August 1979 and held 15 meetings. The Working Group's report is reproduced in annex III.

#### IV. SECOND SESSION

45. The second session of the Committee took place at Headquarters. The Committee held two meetings (10th and 11th) on 17 and 20 September.

46. At the opening of the second session, the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Working Group introduced the Group's report. The Committee then discussed the report and some delegations complained inter alia about the late distribution of the French text.

47. At its 11th meeting the Committee noted with satisfaction the report of the Ad Hoc Working Group and decided to attach it to this report (see annex III).

#### Recommendations of the Committee

48. The Committee recommends to the General Assembly that its mandate should be renewed. In this connexion, some delegations mentioned that the Committee should also be enlarged.

ANNEX I

Statement made by the Chairman of the Committee at the opening meeting of the organizational session on 19 April 1979

1. I am particularly honoured to have been elected Chairman of this Committee, the importance of which was emphasized by all those who took part in the most interesting debate in the Special Political Committee at the last session of the General Assembly; the Secretary-General himself has just referred to its significance.
2. I should therefore like to thank you for the honour you have bestowed on me and to express my gratitude to each of the delegations represented here and in particular, if you will allow me, to the delegations which are members of the African Group, whose Chairman, Ambassador Thiemele of the Ivory Coast, nominated me. I am also grateful to the Japanese delegation, which was kind enough to second the nomination by the Chairman of the African Group.
3. The Committee's task is certainly important, as we well know, but above all, it is difficult, and I should be very interested to hear whatever preliminary remarks the participating delegations might wish to make on this matter, so that we may together decide on the Committee's course of action.
4. While on the subject of procedure, I would express the hope that the Department of Public Information will be able to provide us with documentation on such matters as its organizational structure and budget, and that it will do so as soon as possible.
5. The problem which is our central concern today is the adaptation of United Nations public information to the new realities of a rapidly evolving world. In this respect, tribute is due to the Secretary-General of the United Nations for having been the first to draw the attention of the General Assembly to the complexity of the Organization's activities in this area. As early as August 1976, in his report to the thirty-first session of the Assembly, he said:

"Effective communication with the general public on the work of the Organization is /a/ difficult problem ... There is also the question of adequate coverage by the mass media, although we have to realize that coverage of the United Nations varies significantly from region to region. Although the representatives of the media accredited to the United Nations make great efforts ... the range of its activities is now so large and so complicated that only a very small part of them can be reported on any given day."

The Secretary-General then refers to the most important need:

"It is important to make use of new techniques and to search for new means to gain more widespread understanding and support both for the long-term objectives and for the day-to-day work of our Organization. A representative political institution cannot function effectively unless its aim, its work and

its problems are, at least to some extent, understood at all levels of the society for which it works. In the case of the United Nations this is a task of the greatest complexity."

And he concludes by emphasizing that "those concerned directly in the work of the Organization should do all that they can to supplement such efforts". a/

6. On your behalf, I should like to say how much I appreciate this keen perception on the part of the Secretary-General, which in a way established a mandate for our Committee before the event.

7. "New techniques", "search for new means", "more widespread understanding and support" - this opens up possibly distant but quite precise horizons for the work of our Committee, the establishment of which comes as a response to the appeal by the Secretary-General, who in this way had already expressed the desire for more active participation by the Members of the Organization themselves in the efforts which the Secretariat is making in the field of public information.

8. Resolution 33/115 C, adopted unanimously by the General Assembly, expresses the same idea in its sixth preambular paragraph, which refers to "the need to have Member States participate more actively in framing policies and programmes of the United Nations system in the field of information and mass communications".

9. The preamble of the resolution goes on, after pointing out the important role of United Nations public information services, to express the General Assembly's conviction of "the need to strengthen and co-ordinate the activities and programmes of the United Nations system in the field of information" and to emphasize the essential role of information in the implementation of United Nations decisions in all fields, especially those concerning the new international economic order.

10. In the operative part of the resolution the General Assembly stresses the fostering of "better knowledge of the aims and achievements of the United Nations, including the principles and purposes of the new international economic order".

11. It is with this end in view that in paragraph 4 of the resolution the Assembly established this Committee to review United Nations public information policies and activities.

12. Accordingly, paragraph 6 of the resolution requests us to submit a report to the General Assembly, giving particular attention to activities in the economic and social sphere.

13. This is not the first time that a committee of the General Assembly has been instructed to reassess the work of the information services, but this time our review is being made in a completely new context; for it should be noted that the General Assembly's debate on this important question took place for the first time in a political committee and that resolution 33/115 C was drawn up by a political organ of the General Assembly before being adopted by the Assembly.

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a/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-first Session, Supplement No. 1 A (A/31/1/Add.1), sect. XIII.

This certainly puts the study of the problem of public information in a new light. Nor should we overlook resolution 33/115 B, in which the General Assembly unanimously approves and endorses the promotion of a new world information order, thus making any effort by the Assembly in the sphere of information a part of the wider undertaking involving the general evolution of the question of a new world information order and of everything that has been done elsewhere, within the non-aligned movement and, more directly, by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

14. In brief, what is required now is an awareness of the need to decolonize information, following the achievement of political decolonization and the establishment of the necessary conditions for economic decolonization. This aspect - the decolonization of information - must necessarily be reflected in the design of United Nations public information policy.

15. So there we have a framework within which we can work; but first we must deal with the current "activities" of the United Nations in this field.

16. I do not think we have to evaluate 33 years of efforts which, taken as a whole, are by no means negligible, and yet one cannot help notice that everyone, or almost everyone, from the Secretariat of the United Nations to the representatives of the media to heads of delegations, is complaining of the state of affairs which prevails in the United Nations with regard to public information.

17. Let me say at the outset that it would have been a surprising achievement to be able to satisfy everyone at once, in view of the fact that requirements with regard to public information are so varied and even, at times, conflicting. The task assigned to the Department in accordance with the basic principles laid down in 1946 b/ is in itself a challenge because of its scope and its ambitiousness, and the public information services have never had either the budgetary or the human resources to implement those principles in full. I need only mention in this respect principle 2, which states that the activities of the Department should "promote to the greatest possible extent an informed understanding of the work and purposes of the United Nations among the peoples of the world".

18. As a further example, principle 10 states:

"The United Nations should also have its own radio broadcasting station or stations with the necessary wavelengths, both for communication with Members and with branch offices, and for the origination of United Nations programmes."

19. Principle 13 recommends that the Department and its branch offices should be directly responsible for analysing trends of opinion throughout the world about the activities of the United Nations and the extent to which an informed understanding of the work of the Organization is being secured.

20. Obviously, the Department of Public Information is not capable of performing these tasks; it may be that the Committee will have to review these basic principles and their relationship to the Department's present duties.

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b/ General Assembly resolution 13 (I), annex I.



21. Despite all this, and despite the fact that since 1946 the proportion of the total United Nations regular budget devoted to public information has decreased by more than half, a better job could and should have been done in adapting the Department to the new realities of the United Nations; for example, nearly seven years had passed since Mr. Akatani brought about an important innovation in the Department with the establishment of "thematic task forces".

22. Speaking of Mr. Akatani's innovative action, I should like to say, both personally and on behalf of the Committee, how sorry we are that he cannot be with us today to join in our discussions with the political skill and thorough grasp of public information issues that we all know so well. I take particular pleasure in sending him, on behalf of the Committee, our best wishes for a speedy and full recovery.

23. The main reason for establishing the thematic task forces which I mentioned a moment ago was to enable the experts in the different Divisions of the Department to adopt a "multimedia" approach to questions. That reason is still valid: there is an urgent need for information on questions such as decolonization, for example, not only through the press and printed publications but also through radio, cinema and television. Use must also be made of the United Nations Information Centres.

24. However, it is clear that, if the maximum impact which, in view of the amount of resources allocated, we are entitled to expect, is to be achieved, those resources must be co-ordinated under a coherent "multimedia" programme covering the Department as a whole.

25. Yet it cannot be denied that in recent years less and less has been heard of these "thematic task forces", and we should like to know now how they are carrying out the tasks assigned to them.

26. I am sure that it would be helpful if we could be given answers to such questions as the following. At what level are the different Divisions of the Department of Public Information represented in the task forces? How often does each task force meet? What impact, if any, do the views of the task forces have on the traditional decision-making process within the Department? What actual follow-up is there to the views expressed by the task forces, and at what level? It might be helpful if the Committee could have a report on this important matter at its next session.

27. Since we are discussing the structure of the Department of Public Information, we should also like some information on the nature of the links between the specialized Division for Economic and Social Information and the three other Divisions of the Department (Press and Publications, Radio and Visual Services, and External Relations). What is the precise role of the Division for Economic and Social Information in determining the activities of the other Divisions with respect to economic and social information? How much duplication is there between the activities of the Division for Economic and Social Information and those of what I might call the "media" Divisions - that is to say, the other three Divisions - in such matters as press releases, publications and editors' round tables? Finally, if we agree on the need for a unit within the Department to deal specifically with economic and social information, does not the same need exist with regard to political information?

28. I think that these questions are of some importance and I am not sure, unfortunately, that the Department of Public Information has a clear view of things or that the best use is being made of extremely limited resources. Once again, it seems to me that this Committee, at a future session, might usefully consider in greater depth the problems posed by this sector.

29. With regard to another area, it should also be recalled that the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination recently recommended that the United Nations radio service should discontinue its short-wave broadcasts.

30. However, a final decision was postponed so that our Committee might study the question more thoroughly. No doubt this was wise, since it is most unfortunate that, at a time when short-wave broadcasts are enjoying a new lease of life, attempts should be made to silence this voice of the United Nations.

31. Another recent development with regard to radio was that a station in the New York area discontinued its United Nations news programme. Similarly, broadcasts of United Nations meetings by other radio stations in the New York area are now a thing of the past, and this at a time when the Department of Public Information is being asked to make the voice of the United Nations more widely heard, particularly in the developed world.

32. The time has come to give thorough consideration to the question of broadcasts originated by the United Nations. Should we, for example, request the next Administrative Radio Conference to allocate frequencies to the United Nations? The problem merits consideration. In the meantime, efforts should be made to enable the United Nations radio service to use the FM frequencies assigned to it by the United States Federal Communications Commission.

33. Among the new realities of the United Nations to which the Department of Public Information has not adapted, there is one which we should now consider at greater length, since it is certainly the most important. It is the break-through of the third world onto the international scene, already perceptible before 1960, with all that that implies in terms of profound changes in international relations in every field. In this connexion, it is interesting to note, for our guidance, that the senior staff of the Department of Public Information at the D-1 level includes only two nationals of third-world countries.

34. One of the visible consequences has been the disaffection of the Western mass media towards an Organization which was at first perceived as providing positive support in the rivalry between East and West and which has instead become, for the very same media, a negative factor in the new North-South division since the accession to international sovereignty of the countries of Africa and Asia. That is the only possible explanation for the fierce attacks on the new world information order and on this Committee itself. And it is to this decisive problem, created by the structural changes that have taken place in the world, that the Department of Public Information has not, in our opinion, been able to respond. Inhibited by a laudable desire not to propagandize, the Department was unable to counter the propaganda directed against the United Nations by many media which used the slogan "automatic majority", thus shamelessly discrediting the very democratic principle on which the Organization is founded.

35. In the face of this anti-United Nations propaganda, what is to be done?

36. The temptation to engage in counter-propaganda must be resisted. Instead, we must promote the purposes and ideals of the United Nations, which have never been better served than since the arrival of the third world on the international scene.

37. In this context, one of the new realities which must be emphasized and brought to public attention is that the United Nations has never before resorted so much to unanimity and consensus. There is no doubt that fewer votes are taken in the United Nations today than, say, 20 years ago.

38. I mentioned the North-South division which has appeared in international relations; the truth is that the media are not completely at ease in the face of this new reality, particularly since it does not lend itself to the tragic confrontations which are likely to arouse interest. Perhaps it also causes a certain guilty conscience, which is fundamentally salutary. This explains, at least in part, the difficulties encountered in promoting the purposes and principles relating to the new international economic order which is referred to in this Committee's mandate.

39. The new international economic order is not perceived by the Northern media as a venture in international co-operation aimed at bringing all of us together, out of the long and interminable economic crisis which has resulted in unemployment, inflation and even recession.

40. Instead, the new international economic order is presented as being in some way the cause of the crisis, which Western public opinion still perceives as consisting of the energy crisis, or more specifically the oil crisis, forgetting that that energy crisis preceded the events of 1973 and that it was itself preceded by a monetary crisis which arose in the 1960s and reached the breaking point as early as 1971, when the parity between the dollar and gold was suspended.

41. Simply recounting the chronology of events serves to disprove the arguments put forward by the media of the developed countries, which seem to believe in the adage that a lie, if repeated often enough, becomes a truth. It is for the United Nations to defend itself and defend the international community against what must indeed be called propaganda.

42. The attitude described here is common but certainly not general, and many respected Western newspapers have pointed out that, while the effort to establish a new international economic order is of course a matter of fraternal international co-operation, it also serves the true interests of the entire international community. Many such newspapers have actually denounced the injustice done to the third world. For example, Le Monde published an interesting article by the French Minister for Co-operation, Mr. Robert Galley, who said that the Western mass media were depicting the third world countries:

"... as beggars when they seek our financial assistance, as the ones responsible for the high cost of living when oil or coffee prices soar, and increasingly as the harbingers of unemployment when they develop their own industries".

The distortion of the new economic realities and of the interdependence which must inevitably result could not have been better exposed.

43. It may not be easy to reverse these trends, particularly since, as those who wield the real power in the media claim with some justification, the new international economic order involves complicated concepts and hardly lends itself to popularization among the general public, even in the developed world. These decision-makers also note that they cannot "cover" negotiations which take place out of public view and the results of which are only partially known. "We should like", said a journalist at the international symposium on information organized in Tunis by the United Nations in October 1977, "what happened in the discussions to be known, we should like to know who said what and how it was expressed", and he added: "United Nations information should be more concise, more dynamic and less diplomatic." He concluded: "Openness seems to me to be rather a good policy." Perhaps we should review our methods of work with a view to permitting greater participation by the press in these often arduous and lively negotiations, which might well appeal to the sporting side of any journalist's nature. Nevertheless, it will still be difficult to persuade the mass-circulation press and the popular media to play a more educational role in order to be truly informative. Present press structures are such that, unfortunately, commercial considerations always ultimately prevail.

44. It is this situation and this black-out, to all intents and purposes, of third-world problems that prompted the developing countries to seek a new world information order, which is simply a corollary of the desired new economic order. We must rethink the present concept of information so that, instead of a mere commodity, it will once again become what it should never have ceased to be: a social need. With that end in view, a series of actions must be undertaken in developing countries, developed countries and international agencies to promote the introduction of less alienating reporting by making the public more aware of the interdependence of the interests of all nations, helping to establish or strengthen mass communication media in developing countries, implementing the decolonization of information and establishing a constant news exchange flow between the different regions of the world. The new world information order is inseparable from what we are trying to do to promote the new international economic order and the work of the United Nations in general, in all fields, such as disarmament, decolonization and the Middle East. Redressing the balance in the flow of information is bound to influence a press which is very much alive to its financial interests, and will contribute to inducing it to rethink its responsibilities in international affairs.

45. With this in mind, we must spare no effort to ensure that the United Nations Department of Public Information is capable of helping men and women of goodwill - of whom, after all, there are very many in the international press - to promote the purposes pursued by our Organization, the principles of the United Nations and the determination of the great majority of its Members to build a more open and more fraternal world.

46. As for this Committee, we should be performing not only a useful task but also, and above all, an uplifting one if we could show all the players in the great planetary game which now more than ever affects the destiny of all, whether those players be journalists, nations, international agencies or anyone else, that, in spite of the cultural, ideological and other differences of every kind which divide us, we are fated to reach agreement in the fullest sense of the term, that is to say, both to communicate and to understand one another and to agree on a road to salvation. We say this to the Member States, to our friends in the press, to those in charge of the Department of Public Information, to the decision-makers in the specialized agencies of the United Nations system, particularly UNESCO, and to all the others. To all of them, I should like to say in conclusion: let us co-ordinate our efforts and harmonize our activities for the common good. This Committee, I am sure, will work towards no other end.

## ANNEX II

### Summary of the general debate presented by the Chairman of the Committee on 1 June 1979 at the conclusion of the Committee's first session

1. I think that we have had a very interesting general debate, full of ideas. We have heard 31 delegations which, I believe, is a very good proportion and which demonstrates the interest of delegations in the problem of information and the work of the Committee.
2. I shall do my best to set forth the salient points of this debate on the issues which seemed the most important in the various statements. Of course, there may be some points which might seem important to others and which might not be mentioned in this summing up and for that I take full responsibility.
3. During the debate, many delegations noted that the United Nations could not accomplish its task unless all the peoples of the whole world were fully informed about its objectives and activities. In that context, it was observed that information played a vital role in ensuring the success of the Organization's substantive activities and that the adoption by the General Assembly, at its thirty-third session, of resolution 33/115, and the establishment of the Committee were a clear indication of the increased importance which Member States attached to the information activities of the United Nations. Those two developments also demonstrated the renewed interest of Member States in participating in the formulation of the policies and activities of the United Nations system in the field of information and mass communications.
4. In general, a number of delegations referred to the importance for any international dialogue of freedom of opinion and freedom of information, and also of the free circulation of ideas and news. Other delegations, while recognizing the validity of those principles, emphasized the existence of an imbalance between North and South in the circulation and dissemination of information. It was essential to reduce that imbalance, and the task of the international community in that respect was to help the developing countries to improve and build up their information structures so that they could participate more actively, and on an equal footing in the world-wide exchange of information. Some delegations also expressed the conviction that the main object of information activities should be to promote understanding and co-operation among peoples so as to consolidate international peace and security.
5. It was thus generally recognized that the developing countries should be helped to overcome their current dependence in the sphere of information and communications, without detriment to the free circulation, and a broader and more equitable dissemination, of information.
6. The delegations of the developing countries also stressed the need to institute a new world information order, and emphasized the role which the General Assembly should play in the context of international efforts to establish that new order.

7. Several delegations expressed the view that, as provided in General Assembly resolution 33/115 C, the information services of the United Nations system should give particular attention to the activities of the system in the economic and social sphere, and particularly to the efforts to establish a new international economic order. Since the importance attached by world public opinion and the information media to problems of human and social development, and of economic development, had recently considerably increased, renewed efforts would need to be made to disseminate information on the constructive work of the United Nations in those spheres.

8. Many delegations stressed the importance of impartial information, and emphasized the need to ensure that United Nations services were not used for propaganda activities but served to promote the image of the Organization and its achievements.

9. Some delegations expressed the view that it would be appropriate to maintain a balance in the sphere of the dissemination of information between the political activities of the Organization and its economic activities.

10. A number of delegations observed that, inevitably, the resources of the Organization in the sphere of information would never be sufficient to meet the needs of world public opinion, and that Member States had an important role to play in that respect. The private and public information media of Member States could give wider publicity to information from the United Nations and could design their programmes in such a way as to stress the positive side of the Organization's activities. Although the traditional communications media continued to be the major means of relaying information, the existing and potential role of non-governmental organizations and teaching establishments was also stressed.

11. Some delegations mentioned, by way of example, the activities undertaken by their Governments to disseminate information about the activities of the United Nations.

12. A number of comments were made concerning the Committee's mandate. It was generally recognized that the Committee should have a certain amount of flexibility and that, far from acting as censor, it should help in a dynamic way to improve the services which the United Nations Department of Public Information and the information services of the system could render to the international community.

13. The Committee should consider the various aspects of the programmes and activities of the Department of Public Information and should assist the General Assembly in defining the broad priorities of the Department. In doing so, the Committee could identify the information topics which were most appropriate for presenting a positive image of the Organization. In that work of establishing priorities and, if possible, formulating practical suggestions which could help the Department to improve its work, a certain degree of flexibility would be necessary in order to leave the Department the necessary latitude for the performance of its tasks.

14. The Committee should also study the questions of the production and dissemination of information from the United Nations in the light of available feed-back data on the reception, interpretation and dissemination of that information in the countries which received it.

15. Some delegations stressed the need for a restructuring of the Department of Information.

16. Several delegations felt that the Committee's proceedings should be public and open to participation by all interested Member States. Accordingly, they expressed the hope that the General Assembly would decide either to expand the composition of the Committee, or to make it an open-ended body.

17. Several delegations considered that the Committee should work in a somewhat flexible manner, and should issue invitations to information experts, organize consultations with representatives of the press and non-governmental organizations, and establish relations with other intergovernmental bodies at the international or regional level, specializing in information questions.

18. Several delegations noted that, although the workload of the Department of Public Information had increased considerably, neither the financial nor the human resources made available to it over the same period had proportionally increased. The Committee should study that question in depth both from the standpoint of the additional resources needed and from the standpoint of the rationalization of expenditure so as to ensure that the Department of Public Information had adequate resources, and the possibility of making more extensive use of new communication technologies. Detailed documentation on the structure of the Department and the expenditure by the various divisions was requested.

19. Several delegations stressed the need to make further efforts to ensure the rapid and more diversified production of information material in the official languages of the Organization, particularly Arabic and Spanish, and also in other languages. The Department should have the services of qualified staff capable of working directly in those languages. The Department would not gain meaningful support from the media unless it could work in all the major languages used in communications. Language diversification would seem to be one way of ensuring that the Department reached a broader public.

20. Several delegations noted with appreciation the role played by the Department in co-ordinating the information activities of the United Nations system. They remarked that the work of the Joint United Nations Information Committee, designed to ensure a common approach in the field of information, was a step in the right direction and should be pursued in greater depth. It was recognized, however, that co-ordination should not become an end in itself and that care should be taken to avoid over-structuring at the expense of originality and innovation. While duplication of effort and unnecessary overlapping were to be avoided, the many different types of expertise available within the United Nations system should be recognized and put to good use.

21. Several delegations mentioned the usefulness of the UN Chronicle and said that they were in favour of publishing it on a monthly basis. It was emphasized that it was an important working instrument which should not, however, lose its quality and that a special effort should be made to speed up its publication in

languages other than English. Mention was also made of the value, as a reference work, of the Yearbook of the United Nations and it was felt that it should appear more regularly.

22. Many delegations emphasized that it was necessary for the Organization to have available an effective radio-broadcasting system and expressed the wish that the short-wave broadcasts should not only be maintained but increased. Also in the field of audio-visual information, some delegations stressed the advantages of decentralizing production to the regional level.

23. The importance of the United Nations Information Centres was underscored and several delegations expressed the wish to see their activities reinforced. If they had a greater degree of autonomy, took more initiatives and tried to identify new national media for the dissemination of documentation and information received not only from the United Nations but from the entire system, the Information Centres could play an even more effective role. In that respect, the proposals contained in the report of the Joint Inspection Unit on the United Nations Information Centres were awaited with keen anticipation.

24. Some delegations mentioned the importance to the developing countries of vocational training programmes for journalists and proposed that the Department should play a more dynamic role in that field.

25. With regard to the Department's publications, it was remarked that they were sometimes too descriptive and not sufficiently factual and that the media could therefore not use them as extensively as they wished. One delegation expressed reservations about the accuracy of the contents of material whose unofficial nature was not necessarily apparent.

26. It was proposed that the text of resolution 33/73 should be included in the documentation made available to the Committee.

27. A number of delegations proposed that the work of the Committee's next session should be prepared by the establishment of intersessional working groups. It was also suggested that, in the future, the Committee's work should be organized on the basis of subject-oriented sessions.

28. The Permanent Representative of Lebanon proposed that the Committee establish three working groups:

A working group to draw up the general principles concerning the new information order and the North-South dialogue;

A working group to evaluate the activities of the Department of Public Information and the proposals put forward by members of the Committee;

A working group to study the practical measures already taken in the field of mass communications and to make recommendations in that field to the Committee.

29. The representative of the Federal Republic of Germany proposed the establishment of a working group to review the different information activities of international organizations, with a view to assisting the Committee in preparing its report and for the purpose of establishing a basis for reciprocal information and co-operation in the future, and a second working group to define the practical means of organizing training programmes for journalists and technicians.



30. The representative of the Soviet Union proposed the establishment of a group to study the output of the various services and, in particular, that of the Radio and Visual Services; however, he added that the establishment of any working group should be studied carefully, particularly by the General Assembly.

31. The representative of Colombia proposed the establishment of two other working groups: one to assemble the various proposals which might be of help in formulating United Nations information policy, and the other to study the restructuring of the Department of Public Information.

32. It seemed to me that there was a consensus on these different proposals and I myself, with the advice of the Rapporteur and members of the Secretariat, had believed we could agree to have at least two committees and two informal working groups which, composed of 8 or 10 members, could work between sessions and produce some result for this year's work of the Committee.

33. After more intensive consultations, it seemed to me that there was no possibility of consensus and in that connexion I have been informed by the Group of 77 that a number of member countries of that Group intend to submit a draft resolution on this subject.

ANNEX III

Report of the Ad Hoc Working Group

A. Organization of the session

1. The Ad Hoc Working Group met in New York from 30 July to 14 August 1979, under the chairmanship of Mr. Miguel A. Albornoz, Permanent Representative of Ecuador to the United Nations.

2. The representatives of the following Member States took part in the work of the Working Group:

|                            |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| Argentina                  | Lebanon   |
| Benin                      | Nigeria   |
| Colombia                   | Romania   |
| Cyprus                     | Tunisia   |
| Ecuador                    | Turkey  |
| Egypt                      | Union of Soviet Socialist Republics                     |
| Finland                    | United Kingdom of Great Britain<br>and Northern Ireland |
| German Democratic Republic | United States of America                                |
| Guatemala                  | Yugoslavia  |
| India                      |   |
| Japan                      |   |

The representatives of the following Member States attended as observers:

|                              |             |
|------------------------------|-------------|
| Chile                        | Greece      |
| Germany, Federal Republic of | Philippines |

A representative of the Holy See also attended the session.

3. The following agenda, as amended by the Working Group, was adopted:

1. Election of a Rapporteur.
2. Policies and activities of the Department of Public Information and other relevant information units of the Secretariat.
3. Public information activities and programmes of the United Nations system.
4. Establishment of a new world information and communication order.
5. Adoption of the report of the Ad Hoc Working Group.

4. The Working Group decided to entrust its Chairman with the preparation of the report of the Working Group. In his task, the Chairman was assisted by a small drafting group, composed of the representatives of the following Member States:

Colombia, the German Democratic Republic, India, Nigeria and Turkey, and by the Assistant Secretary of the Committee.

5. The mandate of the Working Group, it was recalled, was to undertake an analysis and evaluation of the policies and activities of the Department of Public Information and other relevant information units of the Secretariat in the light of the evolution of international relations in the last two decades; to formulate proposals to improve the public information activities and programmes of the United Nations system, with particular regard to the economic and social sphere, as well as to identify methods that could lead to a better co-ordination of the public information policies and activities of the United Nations system, in the light of the need, affirmed by the General Assembly, for the establishment of a new, more just and more effective world information and communication order, intended to strengthen international peace and understanding and based on the free circulation and wider and better-balanced dissemination of information; and to submit a report to the Committee at its resumed session in September 1979. (See para. 37 of the present report.)

6. In accordance with its mandate, and within the framework of the agenda, the Working Group held a general debate on the activities of the Department of Public Information (DPI), as well as special debates on political, economic and social information, press and publication, radio and visual services, external relations and field offices. The Group further held special debates on the information activities of a number of other units of the Secretariat. The Group also held a general debate on public information activities of the United Nations system, and heard representatives of the information services of a number of organizations of the United Nations system. The Group held brief debates on the media and the United Nations, and heard representatives of the United Nations Correspondents Association (UNCA) and a representative of the World Federation of United Nations Associations (WFUNA) (see appendix below). The Group held a debate on the establishment of a new world information and communication order. Finally, the Group adopted a report containing its recommendations to the Committee to Review United Nations Public Information Policies and Activities.

7. The Working Group noted that it had not been possible to obtain interpretation facilities for most of the meetings of its session and decided to draw this question to the attention of the Committee to Review Public Information Policies and Activities.

B. Statements by the Chairman and by the Under-Secretary-General for Public Information

8. In his opening remarks, the Chairman recalled that the first mandate of the United Nations on public information had been adopted 33 years ago. This mandate had been followed by a great number of other mandates laid down by the General Assembly and by other legislative bodies of the United Nations. The time had come, it appeared, to consider the task of updating or co-ordinating the various mandates, in the light of the almost universal membership and, more particularly, of the extraordinary and far-reaching changes in the media scene.

9. Co-ordination of the information services of the United Nations system and the pursuance of a common information policy were also among the priorities of DPI. The United Nations system had developed considerably, and it had become more and

more imperative to explain clearly and with a united approach to the public that the United Nations system covers practically all aspects of life in the political, economic, social and cultural fields. New steps should therefore be taken to develop effective over-all machinery not only to disseminate positive and realistic information about the United Nations system and of its achievements as a whole but also to streamline and make better and more effective use of the information structures of this system. It seemed necessary to prepare and develop an over-all strategy for public information, thus realizing the concept of a united group of nations working together, in the spirit of the Charter, for the benefit of mankind. The United Nations should and could become a unique source of information and inspiration for the world and about the world in which we lived in all its variety. In particular, adequate information about the developing countries should be made available at the United Nations information services.

10. In that connexion, the role played by opinion-makers and opinion-leaders, the media, non-governmental organizations and others should be given a new and increased importance, and the necessary improvements should be made within the United Nations Secretariat in order to establish even closer contacts and regular collaboration with them.

11. To reach the various peoples of the world and to keep them informed, the use of different languages was of primary importance. Information about the activities of the United Nations could not be reserved to those who spoke a few selected languages, nor the activities, unfortunately, concentrated in one language only, and the Working Group should pay special attention to the improvement of the existing language system in order to establish a better balance.

12. The Chairman stressed the view that any action related to information activities within the United Nations should be considered with total respect for freedom of the press as a prerequisite and that, in the course of its meetings, the Working Group should seek the advice of those with most experience in the information field about the Organization or its related activities. Therefore, contact should be made and the views of members of UNCA, information officers of DPI and of the other United Nations information units and information offices of the organizations of the United Nations system should be requested. The views of non-governmental organizations should also be requested. In that regard, significant steps would be needed to create effective over-all machinery which would not only be in a position to project the United Nations system and its tasks and operations as a whole but would also help to economize, streamline and make more cost-effective the information sectors of the United Nations.

13. Finally, the Chairman paid tribute to the work of the United Nations information officers, at Headquarters and in the field, underlining that their task was important and difficult and not often well understood. He pointed out the urgent need of entering into practical arrangements among the main United Nations field services, like the network of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), with all its supporting facilities throughout 110 offices in countries and territories, in order to have a consolidated and mutually beneficial service about the United Nations and its programmes in the field. In that connexion, he wanted to stress that the meetings of the Working Group should be conducted in a frank, open and positive way, in order to lead to an improvement of the situation and therefore benefit the cause of information in the United Nations system.

14. The Under-Secretary-General for Public Information stated that the Ad Hoc Working Group would continue and even deepen the useful debate and dialogue which began with the first substantive session of the Committee to Review United Nations Public Information Policies and Activities and which was characterized by a frank, open and constructive atmosphere. He very much hoped that the analysis and evaluation which would be undertaken through the Working Group and through the Committee would help DPI to adjust itself to the important new changes which had occurred in the world since 1946, taking into particular account the concerns and needs of the developing countries. He stressed the fact that DPI was well aware of the need for its activities to become more creative, more dynamic and more persuasive without, at the same time, losing its objectivity and faithfulness to facts. DPI should also establish a clearer priority in its work, shifting resources as necessary from obsolete, marginal or ineffective areas to where they were most needed. Much improvement could be obtained and the operations of DPI would become more effective and more efficient with careful targeting of audiences and constant evaluation of the impact made as a result of those activities.

15. The Under-Secretary-General then drew the attention of the Working Group to the two major functions of DPI. One might be called "coverage function", which dealt with covering and reporting on meetings, conferences and events; the other function might be called "information in depth". They were attempts to provide in somewhat greater depth and background the meaning and significance of the United Nations activities, and might also be described as educational and promotional aspects. There was, of course, competition for a greater share of the limited resources of DPI between these two different functions. In recent years and months, because of the multiplicity of major conferences, special years and events, many of which had been unanticipated or certainly unprogrammed, the standard functions of DPI in publications and in producing feature films have suffered. Those considerations might highlight the need in the future for conference budgets to include always the information component as an indispensable part of the United Nations conference activities.

16. There was clearly a need also for a better planning, programming and evaluation system for DPI. Some thinking had already been devoted to the possible organizational implications of a better system of planning. However, some of the programmes and activities of DPI could simply not be programmed on a long-term basis. That implied recognition of the need for flexibility and constant shifting of resources on an ad hoc basis, even at the risk of departing from a pre-existing and pre-established plan.

17. The Under-Secretary-General for Public Information underlined the fact that DPI was also aware of the need for better co-ordination in the field. DPI was actively in pursuit of strengthened co-operation between the United Nations information centres and offices of UNDP. A joint Task Force had been established to find concrete modalities to this co-operation, and the Working Group would be informed in the future of the progress of the discussions held under the auspices of the Task Force.

18. Another question which was of great importance was how to meet regional, subregional and national requirements in information better. Here, more balanced linguistic production of information material should be the aim. It would be of help to the Working Group, and, subsequently, to the Committee to Review United Nations Public Information Policies and Activities as a whole, to consider what the resource consequences of strengthening linguistic balance in the information activities of DPI might be.

19. There was also a need to strengthen economic and social information without, however, ignoring important political and security matters, decolonization, racial questions and human rights. In that connexion, DPI wished to bring to the attention of the Working Group the question of Development Forum, which had been financed up to now by the Trust Fund for Economic and Social Information and which faced a serious financial crisis. The Working Group might wish to go into the question of how to ensure the future stability of the publication if it considered that continuing to publish it was worth while.

20. Mechanisms for co-ordination existed both at the United Nations level and within the United Nations system. On an interagency basis, the Joint United Nations Information Committee (JUNIC) had already done some important work, and more could be done to extend closer co-operation which went beyond mere avoidance of duplication and which focuses more on the need to co-ordinate the strategy and policy. In that field, while respecting the administrative autonomy and independence of the various agencies, it should be possible to aim at a more unified approach in the area of information, so that the total effort of the United Nations system might be made effective.

21. Clearly the image of the United Nations was inseparable from its performance. It was also related to the divergent expectations about the Organization. Some of the recent studies indicated that support for the United Nations might not necessarily be a function of the amount of information about its work. The aim of DPI should be to foster informed understanding and support for the Organization among wider circles of population everywhere in the world.

22. In that connexion, in view of the rather limited resources at the disposal of DPI, the role of redisseminators of information had to be stressed. Thus, DPI depended upon Governments, the press, international and national non-governmental organizations and also upon educational institutions and leaders. There was incontestably urgent need for clearer, more realistic and more effective information strategy and tactics, and the Working Group could give DPI valuable guidance regarding these important questions.

### C. Considerations and recommendations of the Ad Hoc Working Group

23. Taking into account its mandate and the exchange of views during both the general debate and the debates on specific matters which took place during its session, the Ad Hoc Working Group agreed upon the following considerations:

#### Considerations

1. The debates of the Working Group took place in a frank and positive atmosphere. The exchange of views among the members of the Working Group, the representatives of DPI and of other information units of the Secretariat, the representatives of the information services of a number of organizations of the United Nations system, as well as the working media, and a representative of the non-governmental organizations was as wide as possible and proved to be constructive and stimulating. The circulation among the members of the Working Group of samples of the information output of various information units and the screening of films was extremely useful.

2. Discussions and hearings held during the session, as well as the research and analysis which resulted, provided a good factual basis on which to base recommendations.

3. However, the task of the Working Group as expressed in the mandate given by the Committee to Review United Nations Public Information Policies and Activities has proved to be vast, and the valuable work done so far was obviously only preliminary and should be continued.

4. An integral aspect of the discussions of the Working Group was the universally accepted and affirmed need for the establishment of a new, more just and more effective world information and communication order. Everyone agreed that the establishment of the new information order required constant efforts and that it should be achieved in the spirit of compromise and understanding.

5. In keeping with its mandate, the Working Group had the thoughts expressed above very much in mind, as well as the need to stress the importance of information with particular regard to the economic and social sphere of the work of the United Nations. The members of the Working Group also affirmed that the United Nations, through its information system, should play a key role in support of the establishment of a new information order through the free circulation and wider and better-balanced dissemination of information.

6. In that peace-oriented process of information, DPI services should be strengthened, taking into account the technical development and the growing universality of the United Nations, mainly through a world-wide effort to disseminate the purposes and principles of the United Nations as defined in the Charter.

7. Information about the United Nations should reflect the fact that the world Organization itself was a historical achievement of mankind through which the international community was seeking a world of peace and justice. Therefore, information on its functions and achievements should be continuously disseminated in order to increase the awareness of the peoples of the world who have put their faith in the United Nations.

8. An appeal should be made to Member States, in keeping with their commitments to the United Nations Charter, to further disseminate information about the United Nations, its principles, structure and objectives through their own channels, with full use of material provided by DPI and other sources. Such continuous support of all Member States is essential for the strengthening of the United Nations and to serve international public opinion and keep it fully informed.

9. With the above objectives in view, efforts should be made to seek the co-operation of the media and educational institutions of all nations, to which DPI should extend all appropriate support. At the same time, in co-operation with non-governmental organizations, publicity, including lectures, seminars and the use of the methods of model United Nations meetings, reflecting the aims and principles of the United Nations, should be disseminated throughout the world. Those actions should be taken in keeping with the principles of sovereign rights of States and of freedom of information.

24. The Ad Hoc Working Group also agreed upon the following general recommendations:

General recommendations

1. The information work of DPI and of the United Nations system should reflect the unity of the United Nations and emphasize the fact that all the organizations in the system are working towards the same objectives. Their information activities should complement one another and should coherently interpret and promote the continuous striving for peace and justice in every field and, especially, the concept of a new international economic order. The time has come to prepare and develop an over-all strategy for public information, thus promoting the concept of a united group of nations working together, in the spirit of the Charter, for the benefit of mankind. The United Nations should and could become an essential source of information and inspiration for the world and about the world. In particular, the United Nations should be able to provide information about the developing countries, and promote co-operation on information among them.
2. DPI should continue to orient its work, both in regard to general information about the United Nations (Charter, structure, functions, resolutions, achievements, services and perspectives), as well as the key issues of the General Assembly, Security Council and other main bodies of the United Nations, with particular reference to such issues as international peace and security, disarmament, peace-keeping operations, decolonization, human rights, apartheid, and the establishment of a new economic order etc.
3. While the original mandate for the establishment of DPI, contained in General Assembly resolution 13 (I) of 13 February 1946, provides basic and comprehensive terms of reference for the activities and policies of DPI and for the information activities of the United Nations system, the Committee should consider the question of reviewing, co-ordinating and further studying this and other mandates contained in resolutions of the General Assembly and of other United Nations organs concerning public information. This review should take into account the most recent developments, trends and requirements, especially in the light of the need for the establishment of a new information order.
4. DPI should play a major role in disseminating the new information order. In any discussion of this subject in the General Assembly, it is important that due account be taken of declarations and resolutions which have already been adopted in earlier meetings. Governments should be asked to submit their views on this question to the General Assembly.
5. Special efforts should be made to explain through various media the aims and principles of the new international economic order and the new information order, as well as United Nations activities and efforts in the field of peace and disarmament, including the Final Document of the Tenth Special Session of the General Assembly (resolution S-10/2).
6. DPI should strive to balance its activities between economic and social matters on the one hand and political matters on the other. DPI should also improve objective and equal presentation of the positions of all Member States



as made known in statements of their delegations and in United Nations official documents.

7. DPI, in particular, and the information services of the United Nations system in general, should constantly explore new avenues and new technologies, especially in the field of electronic media, for wider and cost-effective impact. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 33/7 of 3 November 1978, special efforts should be made to attract the imagination of youth and to meet the hopes of young generations who have faith in the ideals of the United Nations.

8. The programme budget of DPI should meet the additional requirements related to new priorities and activities as recommended by the Working Group.

### Feedback and evaluation

9. DPI, and other United Nations information units, as well as non-governmental organizations, should evaluate the feedback of their activities and assess public opinion trends about the United Nations and its activities, in order to review and readjust its policies and programmes accordingly. Co-operation from the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) and other services could be valuable in this field.

### Guidelines

10. DPI, in particular, and the information services of the United Nations system, in general, should take measures to balance their "coverage function" with a strong and continuous "information-in-depth", which also involves educational and promotional activities.

11. In the future, there should be separate provision in the budgets of all the United Nations conferences and meetings held away from Headquarters for the DPI Press Section to meet the expenses for coverage beyond and above the usual information functions of DPI.

12. The cardinal principles should be economy and effectiveness, in other words, the most effective utilization of resources for maximum impact. Substantial economies can be made, in the first instance, by better planning, programming and evaluation and by setting up priorities and choosing the most cost-effective methods and tools and with the purpose of making the maximum impact on larger audiences. Demands for new resources can only be convincingly made after such an exercise. However, it is obvious that resources currently allocated to DPI are not adequate to meet the ever-expanding work, the constant demands, the new requirements and the growing need for modern equipment, especially if the United Nations is to fulfil the expectations of the new information order of being in the forefront as a user of modern communication methods and technologies.

13. Long-term planning is a prerequisite of effective information work and could produce economies in resources. However, it should be noted that in view of developments in the United Nations, some of the information programmes and activities cannot be programmed on a long-term basis and that flexibility and constant shifting of resources according to new demands and priorities would be necessary.

### Languages and geographical balance

14. Balance in the use of official languages and in the geographical composition of the DPI staff should be a prerequisite of information activities of the United Nations.

15. High professional standards, as well as a better balance in the geographical distribution of personnel, especially in higher grades, should be achieved within the context of Article 101 of the Charter. The need for language balance should be particularly taken into account.

16. Information material, both printed and audio-visual, should be adapted to national and regional languages as much as possible. The assistance of Governments should be sought in this respect.

17. In view of the growing demand for language versions and for meeting regional, subregional and national programmes, new resources should be sought, especially for the setting-up in DPI of facilities for adaptation and translation.

### Co-operation and co-ordination

18. It is evident that all the organizations of the United Nations system have their specific functions and responsibilities. Therefore, they should keep their special identity and should, consequently, have their own specific information programmes and activities tailored to their needs and targets. There is, however, the overriding need for preserving a United Nations unity and identity concept while striving for better co-operation and co-ordination, in order to avoid duplication and contradictions, and also to achieve a better impact. All publications originating in the United Nations system should make adequate reference to the United Nations.

19. The collaboration between the information services of the organizations of the United Nations system and DPI should certainly have practical limits in the natural diversity of the subject-matter with which they deal; yet there is place for co-operation and co-ordination. DPI should be the focal point of co-ordination on the information activities of the United Nations system. While other information units in the Secretariat and in the United Nations system should play their special parts on specific issues, DPI should contribute, as much as possible, to this co-ordination.

20. In this context, JUNIC should continue its function of co-ordination of information activities within the United Nations system. The central role of DPI and the role of the Division for Economic and Social Information (DESI) within the JUNIC structure should be emphasized. JUNIC should constantly strive to find a common denominator, as well as more practical trends, towards combined specific activities for joint action by members of the United Nations system.

21. The DPI task forces on disarmament, international security, human rights, apartheid and decolonization, as well as DESI, perform a valuable function, and consideration should be given as to whether they should be reinforced and whether improvements can be made to render them more efficient.

22. The Non-Governmental Liaison Services set up under the auspices of JUNIC should continue to respond to the needs and demands of non-governmental organizations, especially as far as disarmament, the new international economic order and the new information order are concerned.

23. JUNIC should, in co-operation with the UNDP, further study the question of distribution of information materials, with a view to finding better and more cost-effective methods.

#### Non-governmental organizations

24. The importance of non-governmental organizations in opinion-making, with their direct links with the public world wide, should be recognized, and their role in the public information work of the United Nations should be encouraged and emphasized, while close co-operation should be maintained in the information and evaluation tasks recommended above. The non-governmental organizations sections of DPI in New York and Geneva should be strengthened to reflect their important role.

#### Publications

25. Publications, including periodicals, should be topical, timely, designed with specific targets in mind and distributed widely and effectively. DPI and other information services of the United Nations system should regularly review the utility of their publications in the light of the above-mentioned guidelines.

26. Publication of the Yearbook of the United Nations within 18 months, at least, of the close of the calendar year covered should be arranged and the assignment of an additional staff member for the Yearbook should be favoured.

27. The idea of computerizing the printing operations of the Yearbook should be endorsed and the concept put into practice at an early date.

28. The UN Chronicle, which provides in a form accessible to the public wide dissemination of basic decisions of United Nations bodies and of the positions of Governments on which those decisions are based, should be issued again on a monthly basis. To ensure that the French and Spanish editions of the Chronicle are issued simultaneously with the English edition, a special unit should be set up within the Publications Service of the Press and Publications Division to adapt and prepare the French and Spanish editions, with an Arabic edition to be published as scheduled. The unit should also prepare the translations in these languages of the periodical Objective: Justice and other DPI publications.

29. Emphasis should be put on the promotion of additional sales and distribution of United Nations publications, including the Yearbook and the UN Chronicle.

30. There should be an improved allocation of funds in the 1980-1981 budget of the Publications Service so that language versions of publications can be provided in larger quantity to meet requests from the information centres - requests that must now be denied for lack of funds - and so that inexpensive

four-page leaflets on major topics, written in popular form and adapted as necessary for different regions, can be published.

31. In addition, experimental issues of a weekly publication, possibly in the nature of a "fact sheet" which would have free distribution in developing countries and be sold by subscription in developed countries, should be encouraged. This publication would cover the entire range of United Nations activities.

32. Development Forum and its business edition have proved to be useful publications of the United Nations system, illustrating the value of co-ordination and co-operation within it. It is therefore important that adequate resources be sought for this publication.

33. The publication United Nations Today (suggestions for speakers) has proved to be a principal source of up-to-date information about current United Nations activities and is widely used by speakers on United Nations and as a reference by schools, universities and non-governmental organizations throughout the world. It is important to further expand this publication.

#### Radio, television and films

34. The importance of the whole audio-visual field as a medium of information for the United Nations system should be emphasized and constantly explored for communicating the United Nations message to the masses of the world.

35. Short-wave broadcasting, at present, constitutes one of the useful ways of doing this, and DPI should have the flexibility and the prerogative to decide when to use short-wave or other means of transmission.

36. In planning and programming radio transmissions and production of audio-visual material and films, language and geographical balance should be a prominent concern, together with the identification of priorities.

37. More efforts should be made for co-production on films, especially with television organizations, and support should be given to private or national efforts to organize television programmes about the United Nations.

38. Public information services of the United Nations system should seek ways and means to provide language versions of United Nations films to non-governmental organizations and education systems of member countries. A regular service system should be established and made known to all those who are in need of films in national languages.

39. The question of establishing an FM station, with the purpose of communicating the aims, purposes and activities of the United Nations, especially to younger generations in programmes attractive to them, should be studied from the point of view of financial implications and feasibility. An alternative would be to broadcast such programmes using the facilities available at present.

40. As radio, television and films are the most effective means of reaching larger audiences, provisions should be made for increasing and updating the present equipment.

## Press relations/press liaison

41. The media and members of the media constitute the best and most effective disseminators and multipliers of United Nations information, and services to them, be it in the form of coverage, provision of research material, background or promotion material, should be the highest priority of the United Nations information services.

42. Wider and better facilities should be given to the members of the working media, with adequate space for coverage, both at United Nations Headquarters, and in all areas where United Nations functions are conducted, at United Nations field offices, regional commissions and wherever United Nations meetings take place. This should include closer contacts with the members of the press, giving them access to both general matters and more specialized questions among United Nations activities. There should be more opportunities for correspondents coming from developing countries to come to United Nations Headquarters.

43. Daily briefings for delegation officers by the spokesman for the Secretary-General, in addition to the daily briefings held for the press, supplemented by special mini-briefings whenever news developments warrant, are welcome. It is noted that the daily press briefings have become an even more important function of the Press and Publications Division, bringing together information from many sources in order to provide a co-ordinated picture of United Nations activities throughout the world.

44. The increasing number of conferences and meetings is noted, and continuation of the present practice of their extensive coverage by the Press Section is favoured. It is also noted that, for budgetary reasons, some of these conferences and meetings are not provided with summary records and that press releases thus become the only source of information available, in good time, for the information media and the participants. The implications of such a situation should be further studied.

45. The adaptation to changing conditions in the organization of the Editors' Roundtables, held each year by DPI, which bring together top-level officials from newspapers, news agencies and broadcast media in various countries for briefings by high United Nations officials and informal discussions on political and economic issues of vital concern to the United Nations and the international community, is welcome.

46. It is noted, in particular, that this year a number of journalists are being invited from countries belonging to the non-aligned agencies' pool and that the DPI is co-operating with the non-aligned agencies' pool and assisting in a training programme for young journalists from the developing countries. It is also noted with satisfaction that UNCA, within its limited resources, undertakes the provision of fellowships for visiting journalists from developing countries.

## United Nations information centres

47. Information centres play a vital role in the carrying out of the public information mandates. A thorough review of the information centres should be undertaken, with a view to providing adequate resources and tailoring their

functions in the light of new trends and developments and to giving due consideration to the differences in the requirements of the information centres in the developing countries. Extra requirements needed by the information centres which have to operate with non-official languages should be given due consideration.

48. The co-operation which has started between DPI and UNDP is welcome, and concrete measures should be undertaken for the consolidation of offices and services in the field. Physical and functional co-operation of these offices under the effective control of DPI could be promoted so that DPI could benefit from the UNDP field facilities and the use of local information personnel, particularly in developing countries, in a unified function of services, while United Nations information centres in developed countries should be strengthened and should perform services in support of UNDP or other United Nations programmes.

#### Training of journalists

49. DPI should give priority to the training of journalists and enter into contact with Member States which have facilities for such training. It could, in particular, enlarge existing training programmes for media personnel from developing countries, with the co-operation of UNITAR and other agencies, in order to better serve the purposes of objective and adequate information about the United Nations throughout the world. It should also institute at Headquarters a practice-oriented training programme for radio and television producers from developing countries.

50. The DPI Graduate Student Programme has continued to be an effective information programme to attract and interest young people in the aims and principles of the Charter. This programme responds to the resolutions of the General Assembly about the involvement of the young generation in the activities of the United Nations. It is desirable to further expand the number of participants and to broaden the geographical distribution to include more participants from developing countries.

#### D. Acknowledgements

25. The Ad Hoc Working Group wishes to place on record the spirit of co-operation and the desire for achievement which have been the constant characteristics of all the meetings of its session on the part of both the representatives of Member States, the representatives of DPI and of other information units of the Secretariat, the representatives of the information services of the United Nations system, of UNCA and WFUNA, and all those who have taken part in its debates. Such a spirit has been a source of inspiration and strength for the Working Group in the accomplishment of its tasks. The Working Group also wishes to express its gratitude to members of the Drafting Group and, in particular, to its Chairman, for the special efforts they have made in providing their assistance to the Working Group regarding the preparation of this report, to the Under-Secretary-General for Public Information for his most useful and whole-hearted co-operation, to DPI, and in particular, to the Secretary and the Assistant Secretary of the Committee to Review United Nations Public Information Policies and Activities for their efficient and comprehensive services to the Working Group in the discharge of its functions.

APPENDIX TO ANNEX III

Officials who appeared before the Ad Hoc Working Group

Director, Division for Economic and Social Information (DPI)

Officer-in-charge, Press and Publications Division (DPI)

Director, Radio and Visual Services Division (DPI)

Acting Director, External Relations Division (DPI)

Director, Centre against Apartheid

Officer-in-charge, Centre for Disarmament

Deputy Director, Policy Analysis Division, United Nations Centre on Transnational Corporations

Principal Officer, Office of the Under-Secretary-General for Political and General Assembly Affairs

Representative, Office of the Under-Secretaries-General for Special Political Affairs

Deputy Director, Division of Human Rights

Secretary, Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

Officer-in-charge, Department of Political Affairs, Trusteeship and Decolonization

Acting Chief, Interorganizational Co-operation Section of the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs

Executive Officer, Division of Information, UNDP

Director, Information Division, UNICEF

Officer-in-charge, UNITAR

Regional Representative, New York Liaison Office, UNHCR

Director, Information and Public Affairs Division, UNFPA

Director, Information and Public Affairs, World Bank

Director, Public Information Division, WHO

Representative, FAO Liaison Office

Chief, Public Information, UNFSCO Liaison Office with the United Nations

President of UNCA and a member of the Executive Committee of UNCA

Associate Director at United Nations Headquarters, World Federation of United Nations Associations



## ANNEX IV

Documents before the organizational session  
and its first session

| <u>Symbol</u>          | <u>Title</u>  | <u>Observations<br/>and references</u>  |
|------------------------|---|---|
| A/33/6/Fev.1, chap. 12 | Proposed medium-term plan for the period 1980-1983  | <u>Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-third Session, Supplement No. 6</u> |
| A/33/146               | Report of the Secretary-General on United Nations public information policies and activities  |   |
| A/C.5/31/14            | Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations information centres system  |   |
| A/AC.198/2             | Statement made by the Chairman of the Committee at the opening meeting of the organizational session on 19 April 1979   | Agenda item 3   |
| A/AC.198/3             | Annotated provisional agenda  | <u>Idem</u>   |
| A/AC.198/4             | Note by the Secretariat:<br>Current programmes and activities of the Department of Public Information   | <u>Idem</u>   |
| A/AC.198/4/Add.1       | Note by the Secretariat:<br>Current programmes and activities of the Department of Public Information (annex I) - Thematic task forces in the Department of Public Information    | <u>Idem</u>   |
| A/AC.198/4/Add.2       | Note by the Secretariat:<br>Current programmes and activities of the Department of Public Information (annex II) - The <u>UN Chronicle</u>  | <u>Idem</u>   |
| A/AC.198/4/Add.3       | Note by the Secretariat:<br>Current programmes and activities of the Department of Public Information (annex III) - Feedback report on free telecasts in developing nations, 1978 | <u>Idem</u>   |

| <u>Symbol</u>    | <u>Title</u>  | <u>Observations<br/>and references</u> |
|------------------|---|--|
| A/AC.198/4/Add.4 | Note by the Secretariat:<br>Current programmes and activities<br>of the Department of Public<br>Information (annex IV) - United<br>Nations short-wave broadcast   | <u>Idem</u>                            |
| A/AC.198/4/Add.5 | Note by the Secretariat:<br>Current programmes and activities<br>of the Department of Public<br>Information (annex V) - United<br>Nations information centres<br>system   | <u>Idem</u>                            |
| A/AC.198/4/Add.6 | Note by the Secretariat:<br>Current programmes and activities<br>of the Department of Public<br>Information (annex VI) -<br>Development Forum   | <u>Idem</u>                            |
| A/AC.198/5       | Note by the Secretariat:<br>Public information activities<br>in the United Nations system   | <u>Idem</u>                            |
| A/AC.198/5/Add.1 | Note by the Secretariat:<br>Public information activities in<br>the United Nations system<br>(annex I) - Information provided<br>by organizations of the United<br>Nations system and their public<br>information mandates, policies,<br>orientations and audiences | <u>Idem</u>                            |
| A/AC.198/5/Add.2 | Note by the Secretariat:<br>Public information activities<br>in the United Nations system<br>(annex III) - Charts of the<br>public information activities<br>of the United Nations system<br>for 1979   | <u>Idem</u>                            |

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