



SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 17th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. RODRIGUEZ MEDINA (Colombia)

later: Mr. STARCEVIC (Yugoslavia)

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The meeting was called to order at 11 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 32: POLICIES OF APARTHEID OF THE GOVERNMENT OF SOUTH AFRICA
(continued) (A/SPC/38/L.4 and Add.1-18)

Requests for hearings

1. The CHAIRMAN said that the Committee had yet to consider requests for hearings in connection with agenda item 32, in accordance with the decision taken at its 14th meeting. While that item would be considered directly in plenary, the General Assembly had decided that individuals and organizations with a special interest in the question would be heard by the Special Political Committee. The Committee would therefore devote two meetings to such hearings, on 4 and 8 November 1983.
2. In accordance with the decision adopted at its 2nd meeting, 28 October had been set as the time-limit for the submission of requests for hearings. All of the requests received up to that time had been distributed to members of the Committee. In connection with the request contained in document A/SPC/38/L.4/Add.12, a letter had been received from the Permanent Mission of Chile directed against the person requesting the hearing. If he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to follow its usual practice and transmit both documents to the Legal Counsel for an opinion.
3. It was so agreed.
4. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to accept the requests for hearings contained in documents A/SPC/38/L.4/Add.1-11 and Add.13-18.
5. It was so decided.

AGENDA ITEM 72: QUESTIONS RELATING TO INFORMATION (continued) (A/SPC/38/L.3 and L.5)

- (a) REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION (A/38/21)
 - (b) REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/38/387 and Add.1)
 - (c) REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION (A/38/457)
6. Mr. IRUMBA (Uyanda) said that, while information and communication were important tools in the service of the goals of the United Nations, they could also be used to undermine those same goals, particularly in times of international tension. Moreover, information had an important part to play in the development process where it was a vehicle for imparting skills and for national mobilization.

(Mr. Irumba, Uganda)

7. The structure of present global communications was such that a small number of news agencies and news media in the developed countries enjoyed a near monopoly in the gathering and dissemination of news, while the developing countries were mere recipients of a one-way flow of information. Information about developing countries was often distorted, and the news agencies were guided by commercial considerations often more conducive to sensational and negative reporting than to objective analysis. The developing countries therefore felt a need to redress the present imbalance in the flow of information.

8. After long debate, there was now increasing awareness, in both developing and developed countries, of the need to establish a new world information and communication order. In that regard, the efforts made by UNESCO to mobilize support and resources for the International Programme for Development of Communication (IPDC) should be commended. While grateful to the countries contributing to IPDC, his delegation noted with regret that the amount of about \$US 2 million so far contributed or committed fell short of the amount required for the implementation of the projects in question. It therefore appealed to those in a position to do so to contribute generously to IPDC.

9. The desire for a new world information and communication order should not be misconstrued as being in contradiction with the principle of freedom of the press. Where the gathering and dissemination of information was the monopoly of a few, freedom of information could exist only for them. The new order was thus an attempt to universalize the principle of freedom of information.

10. For the developing countries, information was closely related to development and the new world information and communication order was an integral part of the new international economic order. Political, economic and cultural development was inevitably hampered by non-participation in the dissemination of information. The near monopoly of the industrialized countries in that field perpetuated an imbalance in the flow of information which denied the developing countries an adequate opportunity for self-expression. Given the rapid technological development in the communications field and the capital and technology-intensive use of computers and satellites, there was a danger that the North-South information gap would widen unless developing countries were helped to overcome financial and technical constraints.

11. His delegation noted with satisfaction that the Committee on Information had reached consensus on 62 recommendations, although it was a matter of regret that agreement had not been reached on seven important issues. It hoped that the Committee on Information would in future be able to reach agreement on those issues, in particular on the preparation of an international convention on principles governing the use by States of artificial earth-satellites for direct television-broadcasting. The Committee's report (A/38/21) also contained three recommendations which had been adopted but whose implementation was contingent on statements on their financial implications.

(Mr. Irumba, Uganda)

12. It was in the interest of all to ensure that available resources were efficiently utilized. Every effort had been made by DPI to increase efficiency and it had succeeded in reducing the growth of its programme budget to a minimum. However, as the Under-Secretary-General for Public Information had stated, where the Assembly took specific steps that added to the Department's activities, a commensurate allocation of resources could not be ignored.

13. In the context of the useful work done by the United Nations information centres, he drew attention to Uganda's pending request that an Information Officer should be stationed in Kampala. The importance of DPI in making the public in the developed countries aware of the true role of the United Nations had been emphasized and the desire to cut costs should not lead to the abandonment of otherwise desirable and urgent programmes.

14. DPI had the formidable task of educating international opinion on the activities of the United Nations. The Organization had been the object of a campaign, orchestrated by countries like South Africa, whose policies of racism and oppression it had condemned, to discredit it. Other groups, which had never reconciled themselves to the positions taken by the newly independent and non-aligned countries, had joined the vendetta and had influenced Western news media coverage of United Nations activities. All Member States should assist DPI in giving a correct perspective to the Organization's role, and Uganda would play its modest role in that regard.

15. His delegation welcomed the growing co-operation between DPI and the Pool of Non-Aligned News Agencies and hoped that the training programme for broadcasters and journalists from developing countries would be continued and expanded.

16. Mr. NGUYEN LUONG (Viet Nam) said that the Western monopoly of the information media had been strengthened by technological innovations, a situation which had only increased the manipulation of information in the service of imperialist, colonialist and neo-colonialist interests and the dependence of the developing countries in the information field. The information media of the largest imperialist Power had redoubled their efforts to create a war psychosis and to propagandize in favour of the arms race and even of the possibility of a "limited" nuclear war whose only outcome could be the destruction of all life on earth.

17. On the pretext of the free circulation of information, the high-powered broadcasting media of the West, financed and controlled by the military-industrial complex, were inundating the world with material aimed at stirring up international tension, distorting reality, interfering in the internal affairs of sovereign States and inciting reactionary elements to disorder and subversion. In a similar manner, the information media of a certain large country in Asia, pursuing a campaign of denigration and calumny in order to undermine the countries which refused to accept the diktat of the expansionist hegemonists, were engaged in sowing dissension among States, especially those situated close by, in order to fish in troubled waters.

(Mr. Nguyen Luong, Viet Nam)

18. In that context, the role played by so-called free radio stations was obvious. In Europe, it was Radio Liberty and Radio Free Europe, directed against the Socialist countries; in Asia, the Voice of Free Asia, directed against the countries of Indo-China; and in Latin America, Radio Martí, established and financed by the CIA and directed against Cuba and the other countries of Central America and the Caribbean. The role of the latter and of reactionary United States mass media in stirring up tension in the region, in preparing and inexcusably attempting to justify the armed invasion by the United States of the sovereign State of Grenada, in their provocative campaign of defamation motivated by war psychosis against Nicaragua, Cuba and the other peoples of the region which have chosen their own way of development, was the very expression of the so-called "free" character of information in the service of the imperialists. Given that situation, the international community had no more pressing task than that of struggling for an information ethic in the service of peace, independence, democracy, social progress and international co-operation.

19. There was no need to demonstrate the negative effects of the present economic crisis on the economic and social development efforts of the developing countries. However, in the field of information, the Western monopolies always sought to distort reality and to evade the fundamental causes of the crisis while promoting ideas and measures which did no more than preserve anachronistic international economic relations based on exploitation, oppression and inequality. Information on the great development efforts made by the developing countries was relegated to the background, extremely limited or presented from the point of view of the transnational corporations while the sensational was stressed to the detriment of the true image of the social order of the countries concerned. The international community should struggle to remedy that situation and to use information as a powerful lever to promote the establishment of a new, more just and more equitable international economic order.

20. It was strange that the Western information media, which were always hostile to national liberation movements and often defended imperialist and colonialist interests and those of the racist apartheid and Zionist régimes, should arrogate to themselves the right to speak of and even to defend human rights. Given that situation, the establishment of a new world information and communication order had become even more pressing. In that connection, his delegation wished to express its support for UNESCO and its efforts to change the dependence of the developing countries in the field of information and to promote international co-operation to make information a powerful force in the service of peace, independence and social progress.

21. His delegation welcomed the work of the Committee on Information and was pleased with the co-operation between DPI and the Pool of Non-Aligned News Agencies. The Seventh Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries had commended the work undertaken by the Pool of Non-Aligned News Agencies and the Broadcasting Organization of the Non-Aligned Countries and had urged those agencies to implement their respective programmes of action so as to further develop and diversify the signal contribution they were making to the

(Mr. Nguyen Luong, Viet Nam)

decolonization of information and to countering tendentious reporting and mass-media campaigns against non-aligned countries and national liberation movements. For the developing countries, the decolonization of information was at the core of the new world information and communication order and intrinsically linked with the establishment of a new international economic order.

22. At the national level, it was important to stress the role of the State in the implementation of a judicious national information policy which included the development of the necessary physical and technical infrastructure and human resources as well as protection against distorted, tendentious or malicious information. In that context, any gratuitous references to the so-called non-interference of the State in the field of information was tantamount to disarming the developing countries in the face of manoeuvres aimed at maintaining those countries in a state of dependence and exploiting their vulnerability. The developing countries were sufficiently clear-minded to take such an obstacle into account in their efforts for the establishment of a new world information and communication order.

23. Mr. WEEDY (Afghanistan) said that, while the objective and balanced dissemination of information could play an important role in promoting understanding and international co-operation, its misuse could threaten world security. That such misuse had come about was due to the monopoly of a handful of imperialist companies in the field of information. The fact that a small number of western agencies were responsible for the dissemination of over 80 per cent of information in all its forms was a clear indication of a one-sided flow of information. The Western information monopolies were a powerful presence in the political, social and economic arena of developing countries and, in that context, the call for a free flow of information was used only to perpetuate their grip on the political and economic affairs of those countries. Imperialist circles were using their monopoly of the dissemination of information to destabilize progressive governments and, in order to achieve that objective, they had launched malicious propaganda campaigns against sovereign States whose political systems were not to their liking. Contrary to all the norms of international law, they were interfering in the internal affairs of peace-loving countries, and such acts had dangerous repercussions for the peace and security of the world.

24. Recently, humanity had witnessed with shock and horror the way in which United States imperialism had used the media to justify its acts of piracy in the Caribbean. The invasion of a small, peace-loving country, Grenada, in defiance of all the norms of international law, had opened a new chapter in the already long history of aggression against the people of Latin America. The fate of the people of Grenada was of great concern to the international community, and the episode had provided a vivid example of how the media were used in favour of war, chauvinism and aggression.

25. The Western media had been a tool of war-mongering circles, had sown seeds of discord and had created war hysteria. The Western countries had gone to great lengths in their war propaganda against progressive Governments. The activities of

(Mr. Weedy, Afghanistan)

Radio Free Europe, Radio Liberty and Radio Martí were contrary to international law, played a negative role in relations between States and constituted flagrant interference in the internal affairs of sovereign States. The Voice of America and a number of other Western media were engaged solely in psychological warfare against progressive countries.

26. Since the revolution of April 1978, his country has been the target of Western propaganda. The psychological war unleashed by the Western media had been multifaceted and a large number of radio networks had begun broadcasting in the two official languages of Afghanistan with the aim of distorting the reality of the revolution and creating discontent among the people. Such propaganda constituted open interference in the internal affairs of Afghanistan and was an integral part of an undeclared imperialist and reactionary war.

27. The one-sided flow of information to the developing countries had negative repercussions on their social structures, since the West imposed its culture and decadent values on them. Through the use of stereotypes, the Western media gave a distorted picture of the peoples of the developing countries and of different aspects of their existence. That imbalance was a result of the backwardness of the mass media in the developing countries, which was caused, in turn, by the domination of colonialism and neo-colonialism. Lacking adequate facilities and trained personnel to establish their own information infrastructures, the developing countries had remained vulnerable to the influence of the Western media. They would ultimately have to break the grip of cultural imperialism.

28. The creation of a new world information and communication order would lead to a better, more just and wider dissemination of information, promote better understanding among peoples and safeguard peace and security. Together with the establishment of the new international economic order, it would enable the developing countries to achieve self-reliance. An equitable world information and communication order would better enable the international community to continue the struggle against hunger, disease, racial discrimination, apartheid, war and the threat of nuclear catastrophe.

29. His delegation noted with satisfaction that DPI was making efforts to improve the balance of the geographical composition of its staff, but it would like to see greater representation of the developing countries in the Department. It commended the close co-operation between DPI and the Pool of Non-Aligned News Agencies and the training programme for journalists and broadcasters from developing countries.

30. His delegation strongly believed that liberation movements and decolonization should be among the priority issues handled by the Department, and considered that efforts should be made to promote public awareness of the plight of the Palestinian people. The question of Palestine had been treated in a very distorted manner in the press of some Western countries and, in order to do justice to that cause, DPI should play a more active role.

(Mr. Weedy, Afghanistan)

31. His delegation supported the efforts of DPI to project a positive image of the United Nations. That the peoples of the world should be made to realize fully the important role of the United Nations was especially important at a time when United States imperialist circles were engaged in an unprecedented propaganda war against the Organization.

32. Mr. LICHENSTEIN (United States of America) said that his delegation wished to reaffirm that it was of central importance, both for his country and for an effective international community, to have the maximum number of autonomous vehicles of authoritative, accurate, balanced and objective information - gathered, analysed and disseminated with the utmost professional skill.

33. The representatives of many press associations from all over the world had met in France from 30 September to 2 October 1983, and had issued a significant declaration entitled "Voices of Freedom '83: Report from Talloires". The declaration illustrated the principles on which the United States based its approach to the question of information, for example the right to know, to inform and to be informed as a fundamental human right which could not be subject to any restriction either by the government or by international bodies. The declaration further stated that a free press served the nation by promoting open discussion on the issues facing its people. To curtail such reporting for whatever purpose was tantamount to refusing to allow the people to participate in decisions that affected their destiny. The final paragraph of the declaration referred to the need to allow the communications revolution to proceed, while recognizing that where the press was free, people were free. He added that, conversely, where people were free, the press tended to operate freely as an autonomous organization of professionals dedicated to the facts and to the search for truth.

34. Unfortunately, draft resolution A/SPC/38/L.5 reflected little understanding of such fundamental principles. Its requests were visibly inflated, without any concern for the limited resources available both to governments and to intergovernmental bodies. It sought to capitalize on major developments in the field of communications, without dealing with the difficult question of how best to report on United Nations activities in an accurate, balanced and objective manner and to ensure that DPI directed the use of its resources towards intelligent priority objectives.

35. with reference to operative paragraph 1 of the draft resolution, he observed that the entire programme budget of the United Nations would not be sufficient to ensure full implementation of all the recommendations mentioned. Similarly, operative paragraph 8 was an open-ended invitation to any United Nations body to spend resources that were not available. That paragraph also reflected a problem to which his delegation had referred repeatedly, namely, the failure to programme priorities and to eliminate services that no longer provided essential support to the international community. By the same token, although his delegation did not in any way oppose the measures called for in operative paragraphs 10, 11, 12 and 13, the necessary resources simply would not be available, unless a critical analysis was made of current activities, an overall list of priorities was established, and other, less useful, programmes were curtailed.

(Mr. Lichenstein, United States)

36. Although he did not wish to be understood as making any deprecatory reference to the very real problems of the Palestinian people, he drew attention to the selective tendentiousness exemplified by operative paragraph 15. For instance, he asked why DPI should not also "cover adequately the policies and practices" which enhanced the economic and educational opportunities of the populations in the occupied Arab territories and which helped the Palestinian people to solve their problems and to fulfil their legitimate needs.

37. In that connection, he wondered why DPI did not cover issues related to the deliberate use of biological agents in South-East Asia and Afghanistan or the deprivation of human rights in Central and South America, throughout the Soviet empire, in Kampuchea, Viet Nam, Afghanistan and Poland, to mention only a few areas. The selective coverage of subjects which the transitory majority in the United Nations held in high esteem did not constitute an appropriate use of a professional department of public information and did not enhance the reputation of the United Nations for being even-handed and objective in dealing with a wide range of problems, in accordance with its Charter.

38. Referring to the question of the acquisition by the United Nations of its own communications satellite (A/SPC/38/L.3), he pointed out that such an undertaking would involve the United Nations in space shots and in extremely expensive monitoring, repair and replacement programmes. Accordingly, he suggested that the United Nations should rent whatever satellite services it needed.

39. In conclusion, he reaffirmed the total dedication of the United States Government and people to the United Nations as well as his delegation's determination to co-operate with other delegations, the Secretariat and the competent Under-Secretary-General in finding ways of making the best possible use of the Organization's limited resources and of creating and perpetuating a genuinely professional Department of Public Information operating in the service of the great principles on which the Charter was based and which must be brought to prevail in the current particularly troubled world.

40. Mr. Starčević (Yugoslavia) took the Chair.

41. Mr. RODRIGUEZ MEDINA (Colombia) pointed out that the statements made on behalf of the developing countries were aimed simply at creating a climate in which the great Powers could understand their needs, interests, desires and hopes. The developing world viewed the United Nations as a multinational structure which should be of benefit, first and foremost, to the weak countries. However, unless the great Powers shared that view, the United Nations would be unable to change the existing international situation. Accordingly, he called upon the industrialized countries to help the developing countries by negotiating resolutions that would enhance true international co-operation and would genuinely benefit the developing world.

42. The first step to that end would be to examine the manner in which the mass media of the great Powers dealt with information about the developing countries.

(Mr. Rodriguez Medina, Colombia)

In general, either no information was reported at all or that which was reported did not promote their interests. That situation was particularly serious in the light of the comments made about freedom of information and the free flow of information. Such freedom must not be used to undermine the interests or the national image of the developing countries.

43. For several years, the developing countries had drawn attention to the need to enhance the role of DPI as a channel for information about the constructive activities of the United Nations, and in particular about the progress the developing countries had achieved as a result of those activities. For that reason, the developing countries had called for the broadcasting of regional programmes by satellite, and the results of a brief evaluation of that project had been positive. Regional programmes provided a good picture of the work of the United Nations and of the developing countries and such activities should therefore be emphasized.

44. Referring to the United States suggestion that the United Nations should rent satellite services, he pointed out that precisely what the United Nations did not want was a business situation in which either transnational corporations or various intergovernmental organizations were transmitting broadcasts. The purpose of having a United Nations satellite would be to unify and strengthen the entire United Nations system and, by reflecting its great achievements, to enhance the image of the Organization. Another purpose would be to ensure the total independence of the United Nations vis-à-vis situations outside its control, especially as, in future, it would surely be commonplace for corporations and organizations to own their own satellites. Moreover, because of rising travel and subsistence costs, fewer delegates were attending sessions of the General Assembly. Therefore, teleconferences would no doubt become the only way to ensure full representation in the United Nations in future. The reports designed to discourage that project were tendentious and, while financial implications were one aspect of the question, the threats of withdrawal of funds from the United Nations for "pragmatic" but selfish reasons constituted a dangerous trend. He therefore appealed to the great Powers and to the developed countries to seek consensus on the draft resolution with a view to strengthening solidarity within the United Nations for the good of all.

45. Mr. KAZAKOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, observed that, if he were to reply to the standardized comments made by the representative of the United States concerning the Soviet Union, the socialist countries and the United Nations, it would undermine constructive discussion and lead to confrontation. Therefore, he would merely reiterate the hope that the United States would eventually make a genuine contribution to the new world communication and information order.

46. Mr. HAMADNEH (Jordan), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, disagreed with the comments made by the representative of the United States in connection with paragraph 15 of draft resolution A/SPC/38/L.5. The Palestinian problem must not be forgotten or given secondary importance. It represented a grave threat to

(Mr. Hamadneh, Jordan)

world peace and security and must therefore be dealt with by the United Nations information services in an appropriate manner, especially as the United Nations was historically responsible for the Palestinian people. Paragraph 15 must not be amended or deleted, for such a move would constitute the beginning of the relinquishment of the international community's responsibility in that regard.

47. Mrs. TADROS KHALAF (Observer, Palestine Liberation Organization), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, noted that the same theme was to be found both in the Israeli statement at the Committee's 16th meeting with regard to the "Arab propaganda campaign against Israel" and in the United States representative's comments at the current meeting with regard to "selective tendentiousness". A great Power such as the United States should devote its attention to the dissemination of information about the crimes committed against the Palestinian people. That people still could not exercise its right to self-determination or to a homeland and was still being subjected to a murderous war which, in the summer of 1982, had resulted in the killing of women and children in two refugee camps in Lebanon. The first step towards halting the "Arab propaganda campaign" and the pro-Palestinian "bias" in DPI was for Israel to halt its aggression and to withdraw from the territories occupied in 1967.

48. The United Nations information services must reflect the facts and, in that connection, the real question lay in determining who attacked whom and who suppressed information about the rights of others, who had the most murderous army and who defied United Nations resolutions most frequently. Israel refused to permit access to factual information about events in the Middle East and was thereby flouting the very concept of freedom of information.

49. Mr. AKASHI (Under-Secretary-General for Public Information) expressed satisfaction at the understanding showed by representatives from developing countries with regard to the constraints within which the Department had to operate. The ever increasing number of tasks which the Secretariat was requested to carry out in the field of information threatened to impair the quality of its work. The Department would do its utmost to improve its performance through a more rational utilization of its limited resources. DPI's monitoring and evaluation methods were under constant review and the absolute need for accuracy and objectivity in its work would always be kept in mind.

50. The discussion had shown that all countries accepted the cardinal importance of information and communication for the promotion of world peace, development and better understanding among nations. The phenomenal advances in communications technology had made that task all the more imperative. In that connection, it was gratifying to note that there was an expanding area of common agreement and that Member States were seriously searching for an appropriate balance between freedom of information and responsibility, and between the universality of objectives and the diversity of approaches.

51. Although the role of the Department was clearly supplementary to the activities of national, regional and international organizations, DPI was ready to

(Mr. Akashi)

do its part in promoting progress towards the establishment of a new world information and communication order. The Department had found that one of the most effective ways of participating in that process was to promote the exchange of views and to organize round tables for leaders in the field of the mass media.

52. All United Nations agencies would continue to promote system-wide co-operation in the field of information. In that context, the Joint United Nations Information Committee (JUNIC) would play a pivotal role in strengthening inter-agency co-operation, and the Department would continue its fruitful co-operation with UNESCO. Within the Organization, DPI would continue to function as the focal point for the co-ordination and implementation of the public information tasks of the United Nations.

53. A number of delegations had called for a better geographical balance in the Department. He noted with satisfaction that Africa and the Middle East were currently well represented in DPI and that Latin America, Asia and the Pacific region were above their desirable mid-point at senior levels of the Department. Nevertheless, there were still under-represented regions in DPI. The task of rectifying that situation would be carried out in accordance with the provisions of Article 101, paragraph 3, of the Charter. In that regard, he stressed his firm belief in the possibility of reconciling geographical considerations with the most rigorous professional requirements.

54. Much progress had been made in bringing about a better linguistic balance in DPI's productions. Further progress, however, depended on the availability of additional resources. It was for the Member States to enunciate general guidelines and relative priorities to be implemented by the Secretariat. At the same time, the Department would not fail to carry out its executing responsibility.

55. The representative of Denmark had stated that only 20 per cent of the total information activities of the United Nations system related to economic and social issues. In his own opinion, however, that ratio must be much higher since in DPI alone it was estimated at approximately 40 to 45 per cent. He fully agreed with the view that the tasks of DPI should be selected on the basis of their relevance to the objectives pursued and that greater selectivity should be exercised. Nevertheless, the intergovernmental bodies ultimately had to define DPI's priorities. The Department's mandate was broad and its final objective was to raise global consciousness with regard to urgent matters of concern to the entire Organization. It was to be hoped that DPI would be given sufficient leeway to define its information methods and approaches within the parameter delineated by Member States. He expressed concern that, unless additional funds were forthcoming, the Department's resources would be spread over too many priority areas.

56. It was extremely gratifying to note the widespread agreement on the urgent need to improve the dependent status of developing countries in the field of information and communication. DPI's training programme for broadcasters and journalists from developing countries had proved to be effective. The Department

(Mr. Akashi)

would expand its co-operation with the Pool of Non-Aligned News Agencies and continue its participation in other international and regional efforts to improve communication in developing countries.

57. He fully shared the concern voiced by a number of delegations at the public perception of the United Nations in the developed and potential major donor countries. DPI would give greater attention to the need to enhance the image of the United Nations in those countries. It was particularly important to promote a better public understanding of the basic characteristics of the United Nations, its undeniable achievements as well as its shortcomings and the reasons for them. In that regard, it was necessary to be candid about the shortcomings of the Organization, many of which resulted from divisions within the international community, rather than defects in the structure of the United Nations itself.

58. The global network of United Nations information centres continued to play a vital role in informing governmental and non-governmental organizations of the efforts of the United Nations to promote international co-operation. At the same time, the information centres kept the Secretary-General informed of relevant developments in Member States. In response to the concern expressed by the representative of Morocco at that additional responsibility given to the information centres, he pointed out that under General Assembly resolution XII (I) the Department and its branch offices should be equipped to analyse 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 United Nations was being secured. Although dissemination of information from the United Nations continued to be one of the major tasks of the information centres, the additional work of sending relevant information to Headquarters would be based exclusively on published material. Lastly, he pointed out that the recommendations made by the Committee on Information concerning the administrative and organizational responsibilities of the Secretary-General would be interpreted in the light of the statement made by the Secretary-General in the Fifth Committee on 7 October 1983 and the responsibilities of the Secretariat in the field of administration.

59. Mr. HAMADNEH (Jordan) drew attention to paragraph 15 of General Assembly resolution 37/94 B and requested information on the status of the documented factual summary account of the coverage by widely represented world media, reviewing developments affecting the Palestinian people from June to December 1982.

60. Mr. AKASHI (Under Secretary-General for Public Information) said that the summary account in question had been submitted to the Committee on Information at its summer session but had been withdrawn because the document required considerable revision. Unless additional resources were provided, the Secretariat would be unable to undertake the work of revision, which required enormous preparation and research.

61. Mr. HAMADNEH (Jordan) said that his delegation had taken note of the statement made by the Under-Secretary-General and intended to give further consideration to the matter in consultations on the relevant draft resolution.

AGENDA ITEM 74: INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION TO AVERT NEW FLOWS OF REFUGEES
(continued) (A/SPC/38/L.6)

62. Mr. KA (Senegal), introducing draft resolution A/SPC/38/L.6, said that Comoros, Costa Rica, Egypt, Gambia, Honduras, Indonesia, Jordan, Lebanon, Luxembourg, Mali, Pakistan, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan and Zaire should be added to the list of co-sponsors. The purpose of the draft resolution was to reaffirm and extend the mandate of the Group of Governmental Experts as defined in General Assembly resolutions 36/148 and 37/121.

63. In view of the complexity of the refugee problem, the diverse legal instruments to be considered, and the different approaches to the question of co-operation with regard to refugees, it was necessary to allow the Group more time to carry out its task properly. Paragraph 6 therefore called upon the Group to continue its work in two sessions of two weeks duration each during 1984. In that regard, he drew attention to a change in operative paragraph 6: the phrase "earliest possible" should be deleted.

64. With reference to paragraph 4, he said that it was designed to ensure that experts from all geographical regions were able to participate fully in the work of the Group of Experts. It was the understanding of the sponsors that the financing of experts would not constitute a precedent for any other group of governmental experts within the United Nations system. He wished to draw the attention of the Committee to a change in paragraph 4: the phrase "without prejudice to the mandate contained in resolution 36/148" should be inserted after the word "Secretary-General". Lastly, he expressed the hope that the Committee would adopt the draft resolution by consensus.

65. The CHAIRMAN took note of the understanding of the sponsors of draft resolution A/SPC/38/L.6 that the provision concerning the financing of experts would not constitute a precedent.

66. Mr. ADAN (Somalia) said that the phrase "including returning refugees" in paragraph 4 of the draft resolution under consideration was not in accordance with the mandate of the Group of Governmental Experts. Nevertheless, it was the understanding of his delegation that the inclusion of that phrase was intended merely to permit the Secretary-General to assist the experts of the least developed countries in question to fully participate in the work of the Group and would in no way change the mandate of the Group.

67. Mr. CABALLERO RODRIGUEZ (Cuba) said that his delegation had taken part in consultations with the sponsors of the draft resolution concerning paragraph 4. His delegation had serious difficulties with the qualification concerning the least developed countries contained in that paragraph. That qualification would introduce a divisive element by establishing a sub-category within the category of least developed countries and would run counter to the efforts of the Group of 77 to promote unity. Nevertheless, his delegation was prepared to continue consultations with the sponsors in order to formulate a text on which consensus could be achieved.

68. Mr. NGUYEN LUONG (Viet Nam) supported the statement made by the representative of Cuba with regard to paragraph 4 of the draft resolution under consideration.

69. Mr. ADAN (Somalia) said that the least developed countries referred to in paragraph 4 were those countries which provided asylum to large numbers of refugees in their territory. As such they differed from other least developed countries and constituted a distinct group.

70. Mr. TADESSE (Ethiopia) said that, although draft resolution A/SPC/38/L.6 was primarily of a procedural nature, it had been the subject of lengthy consultations, particularly with regard to paragraph 4. The original idea had been to devise a means of promoting maximum participation by the experts of the least developed countries in the work of the Group. His delegation therefore had difficulty with the wording of paragraph 4. The way in which the expenses for the experts from the least developed countries were to be paid was vague. Furthermore, paragraph 4 seemed to discriminate among the least developed countries. The words "other significant services to refugees" implied that there were some services which were not significant, which was not true. His delegation was prepared to take part in consultations with the sponsors of the draft resolution in order to resolve that difficulty.

The meeting rose at 1.20 p.m.