

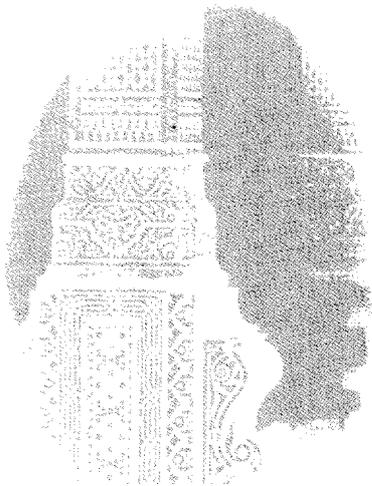


UNITED NATIONS



UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

Declaration of the Seminar on **PROMOTING INDEPENDENT AND PLURALISTIC ARAB MEDIA**



SANA'A, YEMEN
7-11 January 1996

With the financial support of the:

European Commission

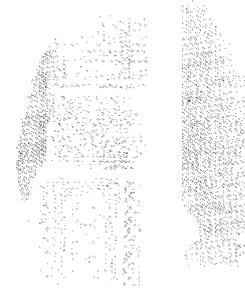
French Government

Ford Foundation (USA)

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Danish International Development Agency
(DANIDA)

International Programme for the
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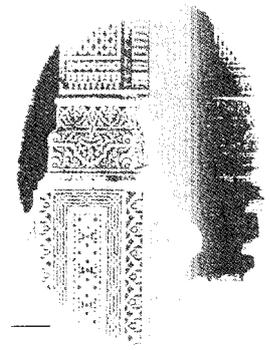


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Introduction

1. The Seminar on Promoting Independent and Pluralistic Arab Media held in Sana'a, Yemen, 7-11 January 1996, was organized jointly by the United Nations, through its Department of Public Information (UN-DPI), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) through its Communication Division, with the support of the Government of the Republic of Yemen, represented by its Permanent Delegation to UNESCO and the National Commission for UNESCO.
2. In order to guide the preparations, ensure a broad participation of professionals from the region and advise on operational details, a Consultative Committee met on three occasions at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris and once in Sana'a, on the eve of the Seminar. The Committee was composed of representatives from UN-DPI, UNESCO, the International Federation of Newspaper Publishers (FIEJ), the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), the International Organization of Journalists (IOJ), the International Press Institute (IPI), Reporters Sans Frontières, the World Press Freedom Committee (WPFC), Article XIX, the Committee to Protect Journalists; as well as representatives of donor partners: European Union, the French Government, the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA), the Rockefeller Foundation and the Ford Foundation. In addition, the International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC) provided financial support to the Seminar.
3. This Seminar is the fourth of a series of regional seminars. Previous ones were held in Windhoek, Namibia in 1991 for the African region; in Almaty, Kazakstan for the Asian Region in 1992; and in Santiago, Chile for the Latin American and Caribbean Region in 1994. As was the case with preceding ones, this Seminar is a follow-up to resolution 26 c/4.3 on promotion of press freedom in the world, approved by the General Conference of UNESCO at its twenty-sixth session in 1991,

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which referred to the Windhoek Seminar as a catalyst in the process of encouraging press freedom, independence and pluralism in Africa, and invited the Director-General of UNESCO to extend to other regions of the world the action taken so far in Africa to promote the independence and pluralism of the media.

4. The present Seminar also reflects the spirit of the United Nations General Assembly resolution 45/76A, "information in the service of humanity", adopted 11 December, 1990 and is in accord with UNESCO's new communication strategy adopted by the General Conference at its twenty-fifth session in 1989.
5. At the invitation of the Government of the Republic of Yemen, the Seminar was held at the Hotel Hadda, in Sana'a. The programme of the Seminar and list of background papers are included in Annexes 1 and 2 respectively. One hundred and eighteen participants from 17 countries (including 78 from Yemen), attended the Seminar in their personal capacity. There were also 39 observers from media organizations and Member States of the United Nations and UNESCO, representatives of media institutions, and members of the Consultative Committee (see Annex 3).

Organization of the Work

6. In addition to the opening and closing ceremonies, the Seminar was organized in four plenary sessions and four working groups.
7. The first plenary session focused on the issue of media independence and pluralism in the Arab world; the second discussed public service media; the third addressed the legal, cultural and political frameworks for free and pluralistic media, focusing in particular on the question of censorship and self-censorship; the fourth covered the training of media professionals. A final session reviewed the conclusions of the Seminar, including the outcome of the four working groups which focused on practical recommendations. At this session, the final report and the Declaration of Sana'a were adopted.

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Opening Ceremony

8. The Seminar was opened in Sana'a on 7 January 1996. The participants observed one minute of silence in memory of journalists killed in the exercise of their profession, many of them, both men and women, in the Arab region.
9. Mr Samir Sanbar, Assistant Secretary-General for Public Information, United Nations, opened the Seminar on behalf of the UN Secretary-General, Mr Boutros Boutros Ghali, who attaches the utmost importance to this regional seminar and to press freedom as a key determinant in political decision-making. The Seminar coincides with the 50th Anniversary of the United Nations and the beginning of a new era of its history in which it reaffirms its strong commitment and support to fundamental human rights and, in particular, to press freedom and pluralism and to the dignity of journalists and writers.
10. In today's information world, Mr Sanbar continued, the right to information and freedom of expression are basic prerequisites for socio-economic development and political freedom. Free and responsible media provide for effective dialogue among nations and people. Free thought and exchanges of ideas increase one's capability in the struggle against injustice and corruption. However, human rights and dignity cannot be guaranteed, he said, without freedom to publish through independent and pluralistic media.
11. Continuing his speech Mr Sanbar said that a close look at the situation of the press in the Arab region shows that there is an urgent need for a dialogue such as that furnished by the Seminar at which issues concerning press freedom could be openly discussed. The Arab region is going through a decisive period in its economic, social and cultural development to which the media contribute through courageous opinions and free thinking.
12. Referring to the assassination of more than seventy journalists in the exercise of their profession last year, of whom more than thirty were from Algeria, Mr Sanbar stressed that attacks on the media and the killing of journalists should not go unpunished.
13. Mr Henrikas Yushkiavitshus, Assistant Director-General for Communication, Information and Informatics, UNESCO, greeted the participants on behalf of the Director-General of UNESCO, Mr Federico Mayor, and conveyed his best wishes for the success of the Seminar.

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14. Referring to the long history of the Arab press, which saw the establishment of newspapers at a very early stage under private initiative, he highlighted its role as a principal vehicle for information and education. While this longstanding function gives cause for optimism, Mr Yushkiavitshus continued, it is disturbing to note that current practices tend to limit freedom of expression, a principle enshrined in most, if not all, constitutions of the Arab region. In this respect, he recalled that all Member States of UNESCO, including those of the Arab region, have approved the Organization's new communication strategy of 1989 which promotes the free flow of ideas by word and image, and the wider, better balanced dissemination of information without any obstacle to the freedom of expression. This strategy corresponds to UNESCO's ideals, to its commitment to universal principles of dignity freedom, justice, equality and solidarity as laid down in the Preamble of the UNESCO Constitution.
15. Similarly, all Member States have also unanimously endorsed the Declaration of Windhoek of 1991 and further supported the concept that "a free, pluralistic and independent press is an essential component of any democratic society". Strong, independent media in the Arab region is one of the preconditions of the socioeconomic development and political growth, Mr Yushkiavitshus concluded.
16. Speaking on behalf of the participating journalists, Mr Mahfuz Al Ansari (Editor-in-Chief *Al Jamhuriya*, Egypt) referred to the worldwide changes which occurred in the aftermath of the fall of the Berlin wall and the end of the Cold War. The collapse of communist societies through the sole power of words and the free expression of ideas, gave way to a new order based on democracy and free expression. In developing countries, the new situation requires and imposes an enlargement of the concept of independence to encompass the means of expression, the media.
17. A number of challenges, however, must be faced. Democracy is a process and cannot be established and anchored by mere will power. Democratic principles need to be instilled in the minds of people through education and evolving cultures, as well as through daily practice, learning to listen to and accept others' viewpoints and opinions.
18. Furthermore, Mr Al Ansari continued, how can independent media compete with government-supported institutions? This issue becomes more acute when seen together with the rapid development of Internet and information highways. In this context, governments should help equip all media with modern technologies and develop their human resources and technical capabilities through adequate

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training, without interfering in their editorial independence and freedom of thought and expression. In conclusion, Mr Al Ansari urged that International organizations and aid agencies should also play an important role in this respect by modernizing infrastructures for the media, so that they can truly play their educational, social and cultural roles.

19. Addressing the Seminar, His Excellency Mr Abdul-Aziz Abdul-Gani, Prime Minister of the Republic of Yemen, highlighted the efforts made by his country in the media field, based on' the belief that journalists play, a crucial role in mobilizing people's energies and potential in favour of the development process and a better future. The Republic of Yemen has opted for democracy, media pluralism and independence. He further said that freedom of expression is enshrined in the Constitution and national laws. More than 200 newspapers today operate under law, without censorship. The Government has supported the development of broadcasting and training of media specialists by setting up appropriate training institutions. The Prime Minister further stressed that professional ethics constitute the necessary counterpart to press freedom.
20. He added that the rapid expansion of communication technologies is widening the gap between developed and developing countries, which may well be left behind if the international community does not pay special attention to this matter. In this context, the Prime Minister paid tribute to the efforts undertaken within the framework of UNESCO's International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC) and reiterated the full support of his country to this programme.
21. Before closing, the Prime Minister referred to the dispute between his country and Eritrea in relation to the Great Huneish island. He stated that "Since its establishment, the Republic of Yemen has adopted a clear policy for solving border problems with its neighbors, based on dialogue and negotiation, on the refusal to resort to any type of violence and threats to use force, and on the respect for international law...". He continued: "the Republic of Yemen, conscious of its high responsibilities towards security and peace in the Red Sea and on the basis of its deep understanding of the interests of countries and people of the Horn of Africa, will remain committed to the policy defined by His Excellency the President of the Republic, to handle the emerging situation by keeping the door open to any initiative, mediation and to valued efforts to reach a peaceful solution of the problem, while preserving our country's legitimate rights and national sovereignty through all legitimate ways and means.. .".

Introduction

Election of Officers

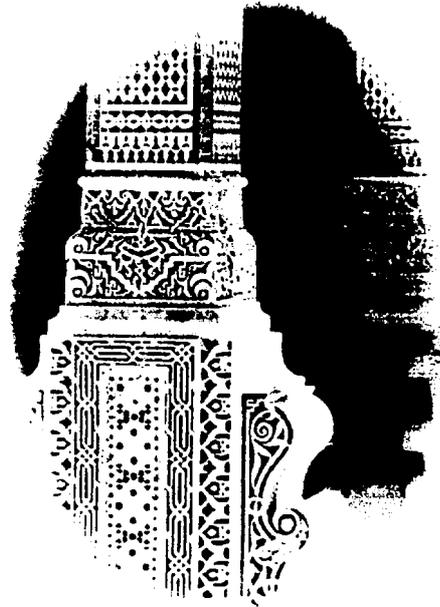
22. The participants accepted by acclamation the proposal of the Consultative Committee for the nomination of officers of the Seminar. The elected officers were:

Chairperson: Ms Raufa Hassan Al Sharqi (Yemen)

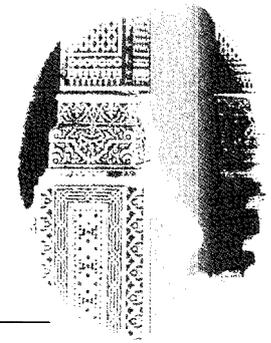
Vice Chairpersons: Mr Ben Salah (Tunisia)
Mr Obeid Sultan (United Arab Emirates)
Mr George Hawatmeh (Jordan)
Mr Mohammed A.M. Abdul-Rahman (Sudan)

Rapporteur: Mr Mohammed Sid Ahmed (Egypt)

Drafting Committee: Mr Abdelaziz Saqqaf (Yemen)
Mr Ibrahim Bashmi (Bahrein)
Mr George Hawatmeh (Jordan)
Mr Ben Salah (Tunisia)
Mr Mohammed Sid Ahmed (Egypt)
Mr Mustapha Tlili (UN-DPI)
Mr Vladimir Gai (UNESCO)



PLENARY SESSIONS



II. PLENARY SESSION 1

The situation of the media in the Arab world: the issue of independence and pluralism

23. At the beginning of the session, the meeting was informed by Mr Alain Modoux, Director, Communication Division of UNESCO that one of the panelists, Mr Kamel Labidi, a journalist from Tunisia, had sent a fax informing him that he was refused a passport by his national authorities. The Chairperson of the Seminar proposed that a message be addressed by the participants to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and to the Director-General of UNESCO, requesting them to undertake the necessary contacts with the Tunisian authorities in order to permit Mr Labidi to participate in the Seminar. A suggestion was made from the floor that, in addition, participants could address directly the Tunisian authorities at the highest level. A participant from Tunisia suggested that contact first be established with the Ambassador of Tunisia in Yemen. Before the end of the session a draft message was proposed by one of the participants. In the ensuing debate, participants were divided as to whether the time was opportune for sending this message. After a vote (65 votes for, two against and one abstention), the participants decided that the message to the Tunisian authorities should be sent out without delay.
24. The Seminar then commenced with, the keynote speaker, Mr Gebran Tueni, publisher of An Nahar, who pointed to the problem of the media in the Middle East as a problem of freedom. Governments in the Arab world are not inclined to democracy, and free media are seen as a threat to their power. However, this bleak picture of the state of media may change in the near future. The historic reconciliation between the Palestinians and Israel, as well as the necessary restructuring of the Arab societies induced by technological advancements in the mass media, will force upon the Arab world a new media reality.

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25. He continued by saying that Arab States can no longer use the Israelis as an excuse for their poor economies, lack of democracy and censorship of the media. Governments will be forced to concentrate on their domestic problems and to become answerable to the people they represent, as the 'bunker mentality' which dominated Arab politics for the past 50 years is no longer viable. New attitudes towards historic enemies, but also towards politics and freedom, will have to be instilled in Arab societies and this can only be done in conjunction with independent media.
26. The censorship of domestic or international news no longer has any meaning in a changing world where this information can be obtained through radio, television, or information highways thanks to satellite and other technologies. Censorship under such conditions would result in the loss of credibility for governments and for the local media.
27. He concluded by saying that foreseeable changes will also affect Arab journalists. They will have to tackle the problems facing their society and to modify their ways of thinking, gathering information and reporting. As regards print media, modernization is also required: use of new technologies; synergies with television and radio by sponsoring or co-producing programmes; sponsoring events; targeting audiences through diversified supplements; playing an increased educational role by bringing developments in science and technologies within the reach of readers; developing sound marketing and distribution policies. Modernization will enable competition with foreign media, thus preserving and sustaining culture, history and identity.
28. The Moderator, Mr Abdelaziz Saqqaf, Publisher of the Yemen *Times* concurred with the keynote speaker on the unsatisfactory situation of Arab media. He, however, differentiated three main groups of Arab states. First, the totalitarian regimes (Libya, Iraq and Sudan), who believe they are entrusted with a specific mission and where governments exercise full control over the media who are denied, by law, any right to express opinions contrary to official viewpoints. The second, a conservative group (Gulf States – with the exclusion of Yemen and, to a certain extent, Kuwait, Tunisia and Syria) with different political regimes, sharing, however, a common attitude towards the media which have to follow their governments' orientations. Private, legally independent newspapers exist in these countries but promote their owners' objectives and interests without seriously contributing to increasing the participation of society in decision-making. The third group is composed of countries benefiting from relative free-

The situation of the media in the Arab world

dom, including freedom of the press (Lebanon, Jordan, Yemen, Egypt and, to lesser extent Kuwait, Morocco and Algeria).

29. Mr Ahmed Derradji, author of the UNESCO background paper *The Juridical Organization of the Press in the Arab States*, focused on the principles underlying press freedom and pluralism and on their application in Arab society today. He stressed the role of the citizen in civil society and the various pressures that affect both citizens and civil societies in relation to these principles. Pressures are exercised by governments as the source of authority and power, by financial interest groups, and by groups that have recourse to violence, whether they relate to drug trafficking, to religious or ideological extremism or simply to terrorism. In this context, therefore, laws and regulations which contradict the spirit of press freedom and the principles of independence as enshrined in Arab constitutions are often enacted; for example, administrative authorization to obtain a professional press card and prior authorization for printing of newspapers. Concentration of the press is not as marked in the Arab region as elsewhere, but the great number of titles does not necessarily mean pluralism when many are owned either by government, government-related interest groups or political parties. In the view of the panellists, it would seem that the priority for development of the media in the region should favour public service media and freedom of the press.
30. After an extensive analysis of the relation between state, civil society democracy and independent press in the Arab World, and after highlighting that large parts of the population, the illiterates, are excluded from the benefits of the emerging independent media since radio and television remain under government control, Ms Raufa Hassan Al Sharqi concluded that truly free and independent media cannot exist on the mere basis of good will and conducive legislation. The necessary prerequisite is the existence of independent and free journalists. Similarly, democracy cannot be achieved merely by declarations and through the creation of political parties; there must first be a full grasp of democratic principles by the people. In her view, while democracies could be said to exist in the Arab world, there are no democrats. For how could democrats exist with illiterate mothers, with schools incapable of addressing the minds and the creative capabilities of pupils? How could a free and independent press exist when journalists have to struggle to survive and are obliged to take up government jobs and salaries? All these issues, Ms Al Sharqi insisted, need to be discussed if the press is to play an independent and leading role.

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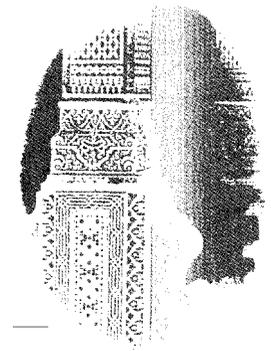
31. In a spirit of self-criticism, she stated that most Arab media play a negative role as regards women's issues and rights, although governments support women's causes, at least in words.
32. Mr Bah Ould Saleck, of *Mauritanie Nouvelles* stated that pluralism of the press is simply nonexistent in the majority of the Arab States as there is no legally codified institutional pluralism. The same applies to media independence which is intimately linked to institutional pluralism. Such a conducive framework is recent in a minority of Arab States, but does not yet provide the independence called for by journalists.
33. He continued to say that pluralism does not exist in most Arab societies because of political blockages by governments. A multitude of newspapers do not denote pluralism, since Arab States and associated financial groups dominate and guide the majority of Arab media including those based in Europe – Saudi Arabia being a clear example of the latter.
34. Some governments have authorized multiparty systems and freedom of the press, and have established related legislation based on the main existing international conventions, without affecting, however, State monopoly of audiovisual media. In spite of this, the independent press in these countries is only tolerated by the authorities, which still exercise various forms of pressure. The independence of this press will remain relative as long as it is not provided with the necessary financial, human and technical resources within the framework of national budgets. Professional solidarity throughout the Arab world and the assistance of politically neutral organizations such as UNESCO could contribute to establishing effective media pluralism and independence in the region, Mr Saleck concluded.
35. Mr Saad Lounes Editor-in-Chief of *Al Ouma* presented an overview of the independent press in Algeria since its inception in 1990. Contrary to other Arab experiences, the government was at the origin of the creation of a private press thanks to a series of administrative initiatives and subventions, in particular for printing and in the form of advertisements. According to the panellist, the hidden government agenda at that time was to invest in a tractable and docile press. As these hopes did not materialize, it was finally decided to divert an important part of the subventions originally earmarked for private press, to the benefit of government-controlled newspapers.
36. While pluralism and independence of the press are a reality in Algeria, a number of restrictions exist, such as security censorship. Furthermore high tariffs of printing facilities and the control of adver-

tising sources by the State may ultimately affect the existence of many independent newspapers. In the view of the panellist, press pluralism and independence can be consolidated only through the acquisition of printing facilities for the private press.

37. Mr Riyadh Habib Ben Fadhl, Editor-in-Chief of *Le Monde Diplomatique en Arabe* concurred with previous panellists that the multitude of Arab media, notably those directed by powerful financial groups, should not be interpreted as a sign of pluralism. In societies where basic political freedoms are nonexistent, the focus should not be placed on pluralism. Furthermore the nature of censorship in the Arab world is changing and is increasingly linked to financial means and distribution mechanisms concentrated in the hands of government or government-related groups. There is no opposition press in the true sense of the word as in each country specific 'red lines' exist that should not be crossed. The study of these taboos would give a clearer picture of the situation of the media in the Arab World, Mr Fadhl suggested.
38. In the ensuing discussion, one participant underlined that the dictatorial nature of Arab regimes is linked to economic, cultural, scientific and technological underdevelopment accumulated over several decades. These regimes are embarrassed by the present democratic wave: while being sensitive to Western criticism, they hesitate to relinquish absolute power. Their policy is therefore characterized by a mixture of coercion and openness. Statements on freedom of expression and press freedom abound, but are contradicted by practice. While they continue to strongly control the army and security forces, Arab regimes are only relatively flexible on media, allowing limited pluralism to alleviate somewhat the social frustration. A true democratic process requires mental changes, education and practice.
39. Another participant felt that it was not possible to transpose concepts arising from other contexts to the Arab environment, where democratic principles have as yet no roots. In this sense, what type of press freedom could exist in the Arab world if journalists receive subsidies from the government? Along the same line of thought, a participant underscored that countries allowing limited freedom should be supported and practical ways and means should be devised to improve the situation of their emerging independent media since it is not possible to make a qualitative jump and achieve full media independence too rapidly. Another participant considered that political and cultural pluralism is the prerequisite for independent media and that press laws in the Arab region, all dating back to the 19th century should be revised.

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40. Problems, in the view of one participant related more to self-censorship than to legislation; intellectuals and journalists should be bolder and more courageous. Expanding on this idea, another participant stressed that a number of journalists have not yet reached a full understanding of the democratic changes occurring in their countries, and do not know yet how to operate in the new pluralistic environment. This also applies to journalists of the electronic media who should find ways to gradually adapt their working methods. Attention should also be paid to the question of professional ethics.
41. Finally one participant said that contrary to what was indicated in the paper presented by the Moderator, Mr Abdelaziz Saqqaf, the 1993 Press law in Sudan does not condemn journalists who oppose government viewpoints. He was contradicted by another participant who affirmed that press freedom does not exist in Sudan and that the 1993 press law was only 'a veil' covering important violations of journalists' rights.



III. PLENARY SESSION 2

Public Service Media

42. The keynote speech prepared by Mr Daoud Kuttab, President of Al Qods Cinema and Television Organization, who could not attend the Seminar because of the elections in the Palestine territories, was read on his behalf by Ms Lamis Andoni, a Journalist from Jordan.
43. After recalling that radio and television in the Arab world are under tight government control, the keynote speaker stressed that in view of the increased consciousness of Arab citizens and the availability of modern communication means, it has become important and vital to change the mentality of Arab officials, and to introduce new methods of work respecting the needs and the culture of the audience.
44. Ms Andoni continued by saying that current thinking is divided between those who believe that the solution lies in privatizing radio and television, a solution strongly opposed by Arab governments as they fear losing part of their power, and those who refuse this stance which seems to hold political and cultural dangers at a time when the geopolitical situation in the region is not yet stabilized. The middle solution is to adopt the public service approach which implies that funding would continue to be ensured by governments with, however, a mechanism ensuring some kind of autonomy. It also implies a commitment to involve society at large in defining programming policies and to ensure that official authorities do not interfere in the work of professionals. This approach requires highly responsible media professionals respecting two equally important and complementary principles: the citizen's right to access information and the general national interest.
45. In the view of the Moderator, Mr Mustapha Al Fakir, Editor-in-Chief of *Tashreen* (Syria) the bleak picture of Arab media drawn up during the preceding plenary session was exaggerated. Private ownership of media should not be set as the criteria by which media independence

Plenary Session 2

is measured. Changes have occurred over the years as governments increasingly realize the important social role of media and that they should not be used only to further their viewpoints. As is the case in other parts of the world, democracy is a long journey and an ideal to be reached. In the Arab region, in particular, a long tribal tradition has to be overcome.

46. In this context, Mr Al Fakir continued, Arab media can and should strengthen their credibility by assuming their social role [as is the case in Syria where media professionals are involved in the planning of some social programmes] by covering all aspects of life in society, from culture to education, health, family planning, environment, agriculture, development projects, etc.
47. Mr Camille Menassa, Director-General of *L'Orient le Jour*, emphasized that *media pluralism* is, generally, the outcome of media independence and freedom of expression although in some developing countries, pluralist media are subordinated to a single authority in which case media are not an offspring of freedom and do not contribute to reaching this goal. In a number of Arab countries freedom as well as its corollary, democracy, which constitutes a condition for the existence of media since there are no media without freedom and no freedom without discussion, dialogue and competition are limited.
48. Official (governmental) media in the Arab region play a 'tutelage' role pretending to guide people, as if they were immature, along the lines considered suitable by those in power, with media seeming to benefit the people, but without really paying attention to their opinions. This distortion of the concept of media has affected the mentalities of journalists, including some working in the private sector. As a consequence, journalists consider they are accountable to the authorities and not to the public for whom they write and produce.
49. While this situation prevails and governments maintain pressure on media, the world has entered the global village era predicted by McLuhan and there is no technological means to prevent satellite broadcasts and Internet from reaching Arab societies. In this context, media that respect people's judgement and provide correct information are required. If this happens, Mr Menassa concluded, an important step on the road to democracy and freedom would have been taken.
50. Ms Amat Al Alim Al Suswa of the Yemen Ministry of Information called for greater attention and responsibility on the part of Arab mass media towards children and women in the field of education. Regarding children, Arab television broadcasts foreign materials that

Public Service Media

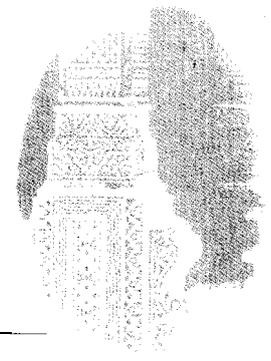
feature, violence and present cultures alien to the Arab child. This could have an adverse affect on children's development and could lead to their marginalization. Though there are 133 million women in the Arab world, with a high illiteracy rate, programmes beamed to this audience transmit non-realistic messages and present distorted images of women. It is also frustrating to see that television and computers are not used in the formal education system or in distance education and open university schemes. Regarding communication and information technologies, the panellist also referred to their numerous uses (e.g. voting services, surveys) which reinforce democratic processes.

51. Mr Radwan Abu Ayash, Palestinian Broadcasting Corporation, stressed that governmental media reflecting the viewpoints only of the government cannot contribute to creating a society. Public service media paying due attention to development needs, education, health, etc. is the only solution. Regional cooperation and a common framework could concretely contribute to promoting public service media in the region.
52. The panellist, therefore, suggested that an Arab seminar be organized on the principles and working methods of public service media. This seminar should result in a permanent coordinating mechanism and in a common position regarding media in the service of society. It could also examine the idea of an Arab technical institute for the setting up of common services, whether on Internet or within the broadcasting area.
53. In the animated discussion that ensued, participants referred to the necessity of defending public service media as they benefit society at large. Public service institutions financed under the national budget should not be managed by a political party. The level of freedom of expression provided should, through interaction with the authorities, be used to enhance public service media and ensure a proper coverage of educational, social and cultural issues, and of the pluralistic aspects of society, including minorities. One participant emphasized the responsibility of public service media in educating future generations, and in particular, instilling in children's programmes fundamental values such as open-mindedness, respect of others and tolerance. Another participant stressed that public service media institutions, even though financed by the government, should seek to achieve financial, administrative and editorial independence.
54. Turning to the proposal made by Mr Radwan Abu Ayash to examine the possibility of establishing common Arab media services, a participant referred to the failure of regional intergovernmental organiza-

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tions to create an Arab news agency newspaper or radio. He felt that this should be done, by Arab media themselves before such initiatives are taken over by others from outside the region. Another participant also endorsed this idea which would offer citizens in the Arab world the possibility of accessing diversified information sources. Independent media would also benefit from such a project as they are in dire need of being able to access reliable databases.

55. In the course of the debate, participants also referred to the main theme of the Seminar. One participant felt that a specific definition of press freedom and independence in the Arab world should be devised, as these concepts are unequally applied worldwide. Another cautioned that while the principle of pluralism is laudable, it could be exploited for the purposes of destabilizing societies and dividing the Arab World.
56. A participant stressed that ways should be found to ensure that laws and regulations do not distort the principles of freedom of expression and media independence consecrated in constitutions. He called for direct links between media and the judiciary. Opinions were also voiced in favour of alleviating taxes on newsprint and printing materials in order to sustain independent media and of forbidding government subsidies to independent media unless they are accorded by law through parliament.
57. Finally- one participant summed up the main issues related to promoting independent and pluralist media as follows: the right to publish newspapers, and their independence, as part of human rights; the relation between media and government; ownership and financing of media; training of journalists, both at the intellectual and technical levels; access to and free flow of information ending government monopoly over information.
58. In reply to the debate, the panellists expanded on some aspects of their presentations. In addition, Mr Radwan Abu Ayash answered specific questions relating to the coverage of the electoral campaign in the Palestinian territories by the Palestine Broadcasting Corporation.



IV. PLENARY SESSION 3

Legal, Cultural and Political Frameworks for a Free and Pluralistic Media: The Issue of Censorship and Self-censorship

59. Before starting the session, the Chairperson of the Seminar informed the assembly that another participant from Tunisia, invited by the United Nations-DPI and UNESCO to attend the Seminar, was refused permission to go to Sana'a. Upon a proposal from the floor, participants unanimously decided to address another message of protest to the Tunisian authorities, to be signed by the Chairperson and by each of the journalists present as a gesture of solidarity and personal commitment.
60. Two participants suggested that the Seminar should also issue a general declaration denouncing all types of attacks on journalists and media as similar cases often occur in other Arab countries.
61. The keynote speaker, Mr Soubhi H. Zaiyter, journalist of *As Safir*, stated that in the exercise of his profession, he is guided only by his own criteria and convictions, whether they differ or coincide with those of his employer. This is made possible thanks to the freedom and independence of the press now prevailing in Lebanon. In the worst case, a journalist can easily move from one newspaper to another to remain faithful to his beliefs and professional conscience.
62. The margin of press freedom provided in Lebanon, Mr Zaiyter continued, may disappear due to current attempts to concentrate media in the hands of a specific group closely connected with government. These moves are linked to the peace process in the Middle East and are related to economic consequences and interest groups. In this con-

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text, the question of censorship and self-censorship becomes meaningless as the censor is the one to be censored. Should this happen, freedom of expression would be subordinated to economic powers and personal interests, and democracy would gradually vanish.

63. The keynote speaker then gave a brief retrospective view of the evolution of this issue in Lebanon, from generalized self-censorship before the civil war, to violence as a 'de facto' censor during the war, and the courage of some journalists during that period who opposed free speech to bullets that, finally, provoked the change towards freedom of expression.
64. The Moderator, Mr Khaled Al Mubarak, a journalist based in London, called upon the first speaker, Mr Mohammed Sid Ahmed of *Al Ahrām* (Egypt).
65. Mr Sid Ahmed underscored that total objectivity does not exist in the media as facts are viewed subjectively by the journalist. Self-censorship occurs when the journalists adjust their perceptions to the vision of the state, thus imposing upon themselves a security task. Censorship could be justified only in exceptional circumstances, but is unacceptable when it becomes the rule within a permanent state of martial law. In such a context, and as evidenced by the reactions to the recent press law in Egypt, it is only when journalists join forces and openly express dissatisfaction that a change may occur. The existence of investigative journalism is the true sign of press independence and the absence of censorship.
66. When radio and television are subjected to full censorship under tight government control, Mr Sid Ahmed continued, and the written press, whose readers remain limited is partially censored, the government is totally isolated from society. Such an environment generates an alternative press characterized by its opposition to, and its attacks on the government and a form of 'satanisation of the enemy'. With this lack of social dialogue, the press is transformed into feudal groupings and the door is open to social violence.
67. He went on to say that censorship and self-censorship are mere continuations of totalitarian regimes but that this process is suicidal. With the expansion of electronic media in all their forms it is impossible to prohibit or control their flow, as it is for the written press.
68. In the view of the panellist the Arab world is entering a critical phase, trying to ignore – through censorship and self-censorship – the internal contradictions linked to the peace process in the Middle East,

which, in turn, leads to the revival of religious ideology and other forms of extremism resulting from a feeling of wounded identity.

69. In addition to being unable to fully reflect this situation, media, as users and providers of information, are faced with another frustration linked to the difficulties in accessing Internet and information high-ways. The panellist wished that UNESCO could pay special attention to this matter.
70. Mr Noureddine Boutar, a journalist of *Eschourouk* (Tunisia) pointed out that an environment conducive to media independence and pluralism is not necessarily guaranteed by legislation, since constitutions and laws could also be applied in a most restrictive manner. Similarly, a democratic and liberal regime may not always succeed in generating a free press since censorship is not related merely to legal, political or cultural considerations.
71. Nowadays, censorship has become multiform, Mr Boutar continued, and some of its manifestations do not require any law. Even in the most oppressive regimes, the censor, the person designated by government for this task, is gradually being replaced by censorship exercised by politicians themselves, directly contacting editors and journalists to define lists of taboos. Some extremist groups, added Mr Boutar, not understanding the intrinsically tolerant nature of Islam, build personal relations with journalists and editors and provide 'advice' on issues to be overlooked as well as services in the interest of the newspapers. Some of these groups, as seen in Algeria, do not hesitate to resort to pure terrorist censorship.
72. Other forms of censorship include the control of political parties over their press and the control of financing sources, including advertisers, over the independent press. With all these factors, and in order to ensure their viability, press enterprises impose on themselves 'red lines' not to be crossed. Journalists, in turn, exercise self-censorship also based on intellectual, cultural, religious and other ideological beliefs or simply on economic needs. This, Mr Boutar concluded, is the most dangerous type of censorship, though it often derives from a feeling of self responsibility or fear.
73. Mr Ibrahim Bashmi, Managing Editor of *Al Ayyam* (Bahrain) shared his doubts with the audience, questioning whether it was realistic to transfer to the Arab world, where basic freedoms are not guaranteed, concepts of press freedom and independence bred in societies that have deeply rooted political, economic, intellectual and social foundations. These ideal concepts are frustrating in societies where the only existing rights are those to be poor, to be deprived of education, of

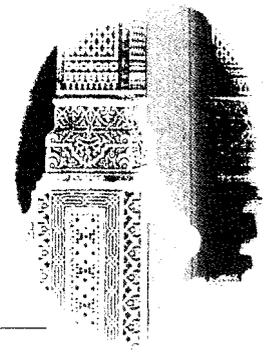
Plenary Session 3

employment, and of the possibility of reaching a minimum standard of living. In the view of the panellist, Arab media, most of which would not survive if they were denied access to foreign news agencies, are not the 'heroes of the day' and cannot alone change their societies.

74. In this context, he suggested a number of activities that could contribute to promoting media in the Arab region. These included comprehensive studies on the situation of the press in each Arab country; setting up of a regional journalism training institute; creation of an observatory of press freedom in the region; establishment of unions of journalists in countries where they do not exist; elaboration of guidelines to help the Arab journalist understand his rights and professional obligations.
75. During the general debate that followed, some participants referred to the "censorship of peace" produced by the peace process in the Middle East. In the name of high political interests and national sovereignty, some governments in the Arab world restrict the journalists' right to report freely and professionally on related events and their impact on society. Similarly, foreign media turn down analytical articles prepared by Arab journalists on this subject, as well as on two other taboo subjects: Islam and the situation in Iraq.
76. One participant stated that journalists themselves were partly responsible for the censorship exercised upon them, as they do not profit from the rights accorded by legislation and do not struggle to enforce their adequate application. It was, however, pointed out that through fear of oppressive regimes, and in the absence of legal protection, journalists and editors are forced to turn to self-censorship. The latter feel hopeless when, for example, their newspapers are printed with blank pages or with text different from their own. Censorship exercised sometimes by some civil institutions was also mentioned.
77. Various proposals were put forward concerning measures that could contribute to improving the situation. It was suggested that UNESCO invite countries to draw up legislation that guarantees the protection of journalists who would then be encouraged to tackle social problems professionally, thus channeling people's aspirations and needs. One of the panellists proposed that the situation of the press in each Arab country be evaluated, focusing in particular on successes and failures with respect to freedom of expression, censorship and self-censorship, media independence and pluralism. This proposal was widely supported.

Legal, Cultural and Political Framework for a Free and Pluralistic Media

78. Since self-censorship is generated by various types of pressures, including economic ones, it was also proposed that journalists be trained in handling information with broad discernment and that measures be devised to decrease the cost of newsprint and related printing materials. Furthermore, the self-esteem of journalists should be enhanced by strengthening and modernizing media enterprises.
79. A proposal was also made to establish a network of centres in the Arab region for monitoring attacks on journalists. Journalists' unions would operate these centres and where unions do not exist, they should be created.
80. Some participants agreed with the panellist that these questions should be addressed with realism and pragmatism in the Arab world. The limited margin of freedom currently afforded should be preserved and gradually enlarged in a creative manner



V. PLENARY SESSION 4

Training of Media Professionals

81. The keynote speaker, Ms Bettina Peters, representing the International Federation of Journalists, highlighted the importance of professional training in the process of promoting independent and pluralistic media. She focused her intervention on: the type of training needed; those who should provide it and those who should be involved in developing training schemes and curricula.
82. In her view, journalism institutes, where they exist, should revise their curricula in order to offer more practical courses (on research skills, writing skills, finding and sourcing new materials etc.). They should also introduce journalists' ethics. Further training schemes should be developed through short-term courses focusing on specific areas of expertise such as financial reporting and interview techniques. Training in new technologies is needed, as well as management training for managers of independent media.
83. Publishers have a responsibility to provide further training for their journalists. Given limited resources, Ms Peters continued, cooperative models where the country's publishers contribute towards a training centre could be a solution. Governments should allocate sufficient funding for journalism departments, but they should not be involved in curricula development or interfere with the actual running of the department. Media practitioners should be responsible for curricula development; panels of trainers, publishers and journalists' associations could jointly prepare training schemes.
84. Specific training aimed at promoting independent and pluralist media on themes such as investigative reporting and balance in election coverage could be devised, in cooperation with UNESCO and other international organizations.

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85. She concluded by stating that women journalists should have equal access to initial and further training to overcome the numerous obstacles that prevent them from reaching their full potential in the profession (stereotypes; employment conditions; social and personal obstacles; etc.). The Toronto Platform of Action could be used as a guideline in this respect.
86. The Moderator, Mr Larbi Chouika, Professor of journalism (Tunisia) strongly emphasized that an overall framework regarding training should be devised, taking due account of the reality of the Arab world. Questions to be posed are: what training? For what kind of journalist? In which socioeconomic conditions?
87. In the panellist's view it is striking to note that the concept of an autonomous sphere for the press apart from politics is almost nonexistent in the Arab world. This concept of autonomy is also almost non-existent in journalists' training programmes. Journalists' training institutes should revise their curricula, introducing more training in technical skills and technologies, but less so than is happening in Europe and the USA, where a great part of their programmes concentrate on socioeconomic issues and on inculcating the concept and spirit of press autonomy in the minds of future journalists.
88. Mr Hassan Rajab, Editor of *Akhbar Al Yawn* and President of the Press College of the American University (Egypt) started his presentation with a brief overview of the situation of media independence and pluralism in the Arab world and on the measures that could be taken by journalists to improve it. These included a political aspect through continued efforts to make governments aware of democratization through strengthening journalists' associations and training.
89. As regards training, the panellist defined three main orientations: enhancing professional skills through further training programmes, which contribute to building up self-confidence and esteem, both essential for journalists working in independent media; training in specific skills that enable journalists to handle information in a way acceptable to media owners while keeping a minimum level of independence; familiarizing journalists with legislation so that they avoid being legally pursued.
90. He continued by saying that initial basic training constitutes the main pillar for rooting in the minds of journalists the concepts of independence, objectivity, reliability and the social role of the media. Advanced training is also needed to keep journalists abreast of technical and intellectual developments closely linked with independence and pluralism. As to specialized training, it should focus on enhanc-

Training of Media Professionals

ing journalists' technical and cultural levels and on various skills, including the knowledge of law.

91. University training should be more practically oriented; hence on-the-job training is required. Training at a regional level enlarges the perspectives of journalists and allows a better understanding of the issues and challenges in the Arab world. International study tours, organized with the cooperation of foreign professional organizations, are also beneficial in exposing journalists to democratic and pluralistic environments.
92. Mr Ali Rahnema focused on the importance of management training and exchange of information on strategies for developing and strengthening print industry and newspapers as viable enterprises. His presentation was based on the philosophy of the International Federation of Newspaper Publishers (FIEJ) which he was representing.
93. The economic independence of newspapers, Mr Rahnema said, is an essential condition for press freedom. This means that if the press cannot become economically viable that is profitable – then no amount of theoretical freedom of expression is sufficient for it to play its fundamental role as a cornerstone of democratic society. It should be made clear that freedom of the press does not simply mean letting anyone write what they want; it also implies the existence of an economic framework which gives the press the opportunity to flourish on a commercial basis.
94. Managers of an emerging independent press, with scarce resources, therefore need to develop management and marketing skills for the survival of their enterprises. Exchange of experience and information on the latest management strategies and technologies would also be beneficial. FIEJ offers a framework for such exchanges, as well as for training and advice, Mr Rahnema concluded.
95. Mr Ali Mahbub, representing the International Organization of Journalists, stressed that journalists' training and further training constitute a major means for developing and strengthening Arab media. Human resources development, in particular further and specialized training carried out by journalists' associations and unions, directly contributes to promoting independent and pluralistic media. In this context, the panellist suggested that the Seminar propose some recommendations addressed to international organizations: to promote the training activities of national and regional specialized professional organizations; to support the creation of a new regional centre for journalists' training; to invite Arab governments to authorize journalists' trade unions in countries where they do not yet exist.

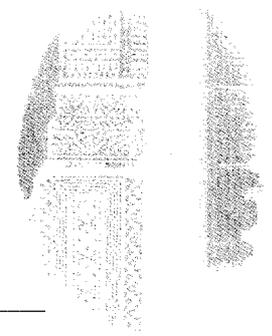
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96. At the beginning of the discussion that followed, Mr Robert Perseil, of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, referring to his thirty-three years of experience as a French expert in international cooperation in the field of journalists' training, stated that training efforts, as well as strengthening media enterprises, do not *per se* contribute to advancing media independence and pluralism. It is the personal courage of journalists facing abuses of power that counts; and this is not taught in schools.
97. What is needed from the outset is a sound training strategy based, in his view, on three principles: to work with young people, providing them with initial journalism training; to ensure that this initial training covers a sufficient period of time (1 to 2 years); and to entrust professional media organizations with the task of providing the necessary trainers. It is this latter principle which serves the cause of media pluralism and independence as these organizations also struggle for many other principles linked to this cause. The strategy outlined by the panellist called for efforts to establish and mobilize journalists' and editors' associations and unions; the recognition of diplomas; and the identification of professional trainers not influenced by government, ideologies or market rules.
98. One participant stressed the vital importance of journalism training which enhances the image of the profession and promotes media independence in the sense that trained journalists have increased self-assurance and are therefore better prepared to resist pressure. He also emphasized the need for more training for women.
99. As regards fields of training, another participant agreed that more practical training should be introduced in Arab curricula. Two participants suggested training in the exercise of freedom of expression, in media economics and cultivating a sense of responsibility towards readers and society, since responsibility is a means for protecting freedom of expression. One participant stressed that issues of interest to developing countries (e.g. environment, illiteracy etc.) should also be covered.
100. It was generally agreed that professional media organizations should be involved in curriculum development and training, and further stressed that there were already some professional trainers at the national level in the Arab region.
101. While training at a regional level was seen by one participant as effective, since it allows journalists to widen their perspectives, he indicated that training at a national level was more practical and cost-effective. Referring more particularly to the proposed creation of

Training of Media Professionals

a regional Arab journalism training centre, one participant insisted that training should essentially be carried out at the national level, within the future working environment of the journalist. In this respect, he called for the establishment of training institutes in each of the Arab countries where none exist at present. As to the proposed regional centre, he viewed it as having some sort of coordinating role among national training institutes.

102. A number of participants regretted that the background papers presented by IFJ on the situation of the media in the Arab World, including those on training, were incomplete and contained inaccurate data. Two participants indicated that IFJ used the information available to them, often emanating from various contradictory sources; one adding that this shows the necessity, for Arab journalists to work closely with international organizations. Furthermore, it clearly demonstrates the urgent need for case studies on the Arab media landscape.
103. One participant also regretted that, in the course of the Seminar, there was no mention of news agencies. Stressing the importance of these institutions which are all government-owned, he called for measures to strengthen them by easing government control and opening up these important information sources to the independent press, as well as for the training of their personnel.



IV. PLENARY SESSION 5

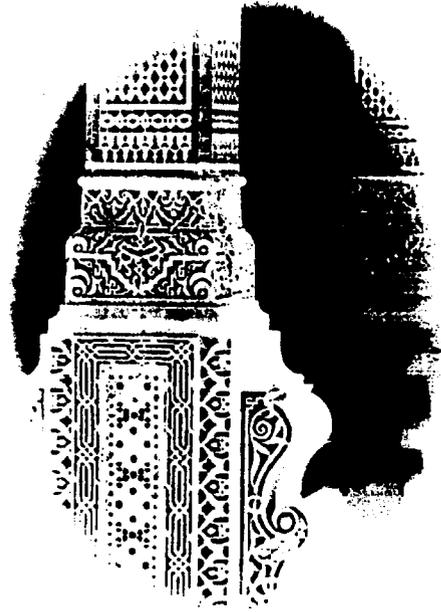
Conclusion

104. The Chairperson gave the floor to the Rapporteur, Mr Mohammed Sid Ahmed to present the draft report to the Seminar. After he read it and stated that the Secretariat would finalize the style and correct any errors, the participants adopted it unanimously.
- ¶ The Chairperson then requested Mr Abdelaziz Saqqat to react the proposed Declaration of Sana'a prepared by the five-person committee designated earlier and assisted by UN-DPI and UNESCO. The committee comprised Mr Mohammed Sid Ahmed, Rapporteur; Mr George Hawatmeh, Vice-Chairperson; Mr Ben Salah, Vice-Chairperson; Mr Abdelaziz Saqqaf; Mr Ibrahim Bashmi; Mr Mustapha Tlili, for UN-DPI and Mr Vladimir Gaï for UNESCO. The Rapporteur then explained to the participants that the Declaration was composed as a synthetic statement aimed at presenting all views expressed in the seminar, even dissenting views, but in a way that was not divisive. Some participants then took the floor to propose amendments in an effort to strengthen the wording of the Declaration or in some cases to make the formulation more broadly acceptable. Upon completion of these discussions, the Declaration was adopted by acclamation.
106. The Chairperson, Ms Raufa Hassan Al Sharqi then took the floor to thank the participants, observers, NGOs and all who contributed to the deliberations and the preparation of the Report and the Declaration. She expressed her gratitude for the honour of being elected to such an important post of responsibility in the series of seminars on media independence and pluralism and hoped that other women could achieve the same and more.
107. The Minister of Information, H.E. Mr Abdul-Rahman Al Kwa then spoke to emphasize that freedom of thought, freedom of expression, press freedom and the right to publish are explicitly guaranteed by

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the Constitution of the Republic of Yemen. He stressed that the basic policy has been to promote peaceful dialogue between the press and the government, and urged professional training for journalists and media practitioners. "Freedom," he said "is fundamental and we cannot allow any definition of human rights which goes against the will of God, freedom and peace".

- 108 The Chairperson then called upon Mr Mohammed Ben Salah. Speaking on behalf of the journalists and participants of the seminar, Mr Salah expressed his gratitude for the seminar's solidarity with and support for Tunisian journalists. He informed the meeting that despite the difficulties, Tunisian journalists were advancing towards full press freedom and democratic processes. He thanked the United Nations and UNESCO for organizing this seminar which brought Arab journalists together to discuss press freedom issues and how to strengthen media independence and pluralism.
- 109 To close the seminar, the Chairperson called upon Mr Torben Krogh, President of the International Programme for the Development of Communication. Expressing his satisfaction with the discussions and the presentation of the real state of the press in the Arab region, Mr Krogh urged that the participants also bear in mind the role of public service broadcasting as the principal means of ensuring both editorial independence and providing comprehensive information to the population as this also strengthens the general framework for the citizens' right to information. On behalf of the United Nations Department of Public Information and UNESCO, Mr Krogh expressed his gratitude to all who contributed to the preparation, organization and holding of the seminar, in particular the Yemen National Commission for UNESCO and the host country staff.



REPORTS OF THE WORKING GROUPS



REPORT OF WORKING GROUP A

Women and the Media in the Arab States

After the Moderator of the Group, Mr Radwan Abu Ayash, gave a brief expose on the theme of the role of women and their image in Arab media, the participants discussed the following issues:

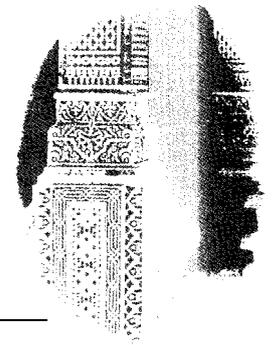
1. The need to focus on the literacy of women in rural areas and their participation in agricultural work, teaching and all domains of activity. It is therefore necessary to affirm the importance of functional literacy of women and the use of mass media to sensitize them to the importance of their role in society. Training opportunities should be made more available for women, in order to increase their participation in all activities, as they constitute half the population.
2. In Arab audiovisual programmes on women, elimination of the traditional stereotypes that characterize and limit the role of women to marginal activities. Efforts should be reinforced to correct the inaccurate images of women, to counter those created by social education through the media, which always assigns the 'better' roles to men and marginalizes women.
3. Actions should be taken to sensitize the underprivileged sectors of society so that they do not seek to limit the role of women and thereby deprive them of their right to higher learning; opportunities should be made available in the Arab press to accentuate the role of women as journalists and facilitate their promotion to positions of management.
4. The need to encourage women to gain full realization of their rights so they can defend them.
5. Give encouragement to women to fulfil all their aspirations with the same determination as men, without however abandoning their natural role to bear and raise children.

Recommendations

1. To organize in the Arab region under the auspices of UNESCO and competent regional Arab Organizations, a seminar to study the situation of women and the media in the Arab world.
2. In the effort to avoid all discrimination between men and women, on the basis of the principle of equality of the sexes in all domains, undertake a study on this subject, to be co-financed by UNESCO and competent Arab organizations.
3. To prepare and launch projects to provide more training for women in the fields of information and communication.
4. To invite Arab media to undertake efforts to improve the image of women, especially in television programmes, by avoiding the exploitation of women in commercials and publicity.
5. To encourage the women's press as well as the press in general, to express the women's point of view in society.

Members of the Working Group

1. Mr Radwan Abu Ayash, *President*
2. Mr Abdallah Kahlaoui, *Rapporteur*
3. Mr Khaled Al Mubarak Mustafa
4. Ms Nadia Ibrahim Hanwalbit
5. Ms Rachida Al Qabli
6. Mr Abdallah Al Marwani
7. Mr Khaled Al Qabati
8. Mr Mohammed Hassan Al Burai
9. Mr Muhamed Ali Nasser
10. Mr Mustafa Al Fakir
11. Mr Mohammed Larbi Chouika
12. Mr Imad Zaki



REPORT OF WORKING GROUP B

Press Freedom Monitoring

Legislation

- Undertake efforts to abrogate any legal formulations that limit the freedom of information; such as the prior authorization for publication of newspapers; prior authorization for the dissemination of certain kinds of information; to amend press codes and penal codes that treat of sanctions thought to be severe for infractions by the press; to suppress any monopoly of distribution and prior financial deposit before publication of a newspaper.
- Guidelines for journalistic standards are the concern of the news media professional and should be worked out and implemented by these professionals.
- Organize professional associations to defend freedom of expression.
- Revise legal formulations in order to render the relations between press and government less independent administratively.
- Liberate printing enterprises from administrative constraints especially from prior authorization.
- Liberate public media from the stranglehold of the political party in power. Public media should be transformed into national, private organizations under the direction of a national council whose members should be elected.

Facilities and Human Resources

- Establish at national and regional levels, cooperatives for the acquisition of newsprint and technical equipment.
- Support the training and continuous education of journalists through the creation of an Inter-Arab Centre.

Financing

- Develop state assistance to press enterprises through subventions, but also through reduction or suppression of certain taxes: on custom charges, postal services, public transport, etc.
- Ensure equal access to commercial advertising, especially public-sponsored advertisements such as legal announcements.
- Create a fund to assist newspapers facing economic difficulties.

Newspaper Statutes

- Improve and adapt the rules for the creation and financing of newspapers in order to strengthen pluralism and private enterprise.
- Examine the incidence of trade agreements (GATT) on foreign participation, especially of multinational organizations, in the formation of national press enterprises, and particularly as concerns financial investment.

Free Flow of Information

- Work out ways to create, organize and operate data banks at national and regional levels.
- Repeal all legislation that seeks to control the free flow of information.

Protection of Journalists

- Constitute committees for the legal defence of journalists, as well as for ensuring assistance to their families.
- Lobby for the reduction of severe sanctions for offences by the press.

Publication

- Undertake actions to favour the creation of mixed (private or private /public) enterprises, in order to reduce monopolies.

Distribution

- Undertake action to favour the creation of cooperatives for independent newspaper distribution, and this with the cooperation of UNESCO.

Reports of the Working Groups B

Follow-up

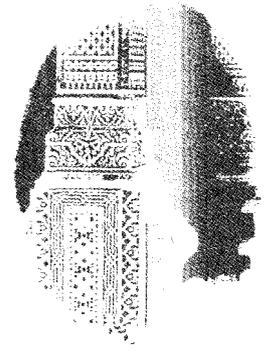
- Organize a system of contact and control for the implementation of the actions presented at this seminar and establish a calendar of objectives to attain.

Members of the Working Group

1. Ms Raufa Hassan Al Sharqi, *President*
2. Mr Carlos A. Arnaldo, *Rapporteur*
3. Mr Abas Ghaleb
4. Mr Ali Naji Ghaleb
5. Mr Mohammed Ali Saad
6. Mr Madji Hussein
7. Mr Mohammed Sharif
8. Mr Mohameed Mohammed Khair
9. Mr Abdelslam Reddam
10. Mr Abdo Al Salam Al Athwami
11. Mr Abdo Mohammed Al Gandi
12. Mr Abdo Al Wahab Al Rowhanie
13. Mr Ali Ibrahim Al Sayed
14. Mr Ben Fadhl Riyadh
15. Mr Nourredine Boutar
16. Prof Larbi Chouika
17. Mr Malti Djellal
18. Mr Ronald Koven
19. Mr Ahmed Naji Ahmed
20. Mr Saad Lounes
21. Mr Avner Gridon
22. Mr Camille Menassa
23. Mr Issa Goraieb
24. Mr Bah Ould Saleck
25. Mr Saad Rami
26. Mr Daher Ahmed Farah
27. Mr Ahmed Kamal El-Din
28. Mr Robert Perseil

Reports of the Working Groups B

29. Mr Hassan Rajab
30. Mr Mohammed Sid Ahmed
31. Mr Ahmed Bassundah
32. Mr Hisham Bashraheel
33. Mr Rahman Khubara
34. Mr John H. Schmidt
35. Mr Ahmad Soufi
36. Ms Lamis Andoni
37. Mr Khaled Al Mubarak
38. Mr Mohammed Al Makrani
39. Mr Khabet Al Said
40. Mr Said Essoulami
41. Mr Ibrahim Ahmad
42. Mr Ibrahim Bashmi
43. Mr Saad Selah Khalis
44. Mr Bounaiza Mohammed
45. Mr Ahmad Al Ahsab
46. Mr Mohammed Abdel Malak
47. Mr Jemal Mohammed
48. Mr Mohammed Al Ahrazi
49. Mr Mohammed Salah Thabet
50. Mr Obeid Sultan
51. Mr Raid Abdel Wathah
52. Ms Sophie K. Ly
53. Mr Mohammed Al Barii
54. Mr Mohammed Hassan Al Bourie



REPORT OF WORKING GROUP C

Professional Organizations

The Working Group met under the chairmanship of Mr Mohammed Abdulhamid Abdulrahman. After the Chairperson briefly introduced the theme of professional organizations, the participants proposed the following recommendations.

1. Attention should be paid to professional journalists' organizations as the vital means for protecting the rights of journalists; efforts should be made to ensure the independence of professional organizations with respect to governments. Reciprocal relations among journalists' associations should be strengthened.
2. Laws guaranteeing the freedom of journalists to meet and organize are indispensable. Similarly, it is indispensable to have laws which guarantee the procurement of credits from the state budget.
3. It is proposed to create a specific organization to monitor the freedom of the press.
4. Organizations dealing with human rights should cooperate with journalists associations in the following:
 - journalists' unions should seek to ensure their members respect professional ethics;
 - professional organizations should aim to ensure the efficient management of personnel devoted to their tasks;
 - they should enjoy autonomy, professionalism and financial support so as to guarantee their independence, and hold themselves apart from politics, as they represent the profession and those who comprise it – regardless of their ideas..
 - international organizations, UNESCO and national authorities should support financially actions seeking to develop associations

Reports of the working Groups C

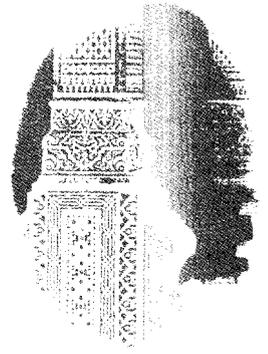
and their work, as this will help assure financial and administrative independence of professional associations;

- it is especially necessary to reinforce the organization and work of journalists' associations in those countries currently undergoing severe, inhuman situations;
- measures should be taken to avoid state interference in the work of the associations, whether this be through administrative power or agreement to authorize the operation of the associations, or by making financial and administrative control a task that is shared by the state and the association; nonetheless, a special law should regulate professional journalists' associations;
- it is furthermore indispensable to protect journalists through a communication commission elected by the seminar, and mandated to observe the violations of human rights, to present a monthly and annual reports to international organizations, and to cooperate with international and national journalists' associations and with UNESCO, so as to contribute to reducing these violations and ending them;
- it is indispensable that international organizations be neutral and avoid involvement in the political hegemony of states when the issue concerns people;
- Arab States and those charged with the task should be invited to authorize the constitution of journalists' associations;
- efforts should be taken to make the Arab journalists' associations dynamic through the creation of the communication commission to be elected by this seminar.

Reports of the Working Groups C

Members of the Working Group

1. Mr Mohammed Abdulhamid Abdulrahman, *President*
2. Mr Abdallah Kahlaoui, *Rapporteur*
3. Mr Ahmed Naji Ahmed, *Assistant Rapporteur*
4. Mr Ahmed Al Hasab
5. Mr Ahmed Mohammed Al Dilmi
6. Mr Najib Abdallah Ghallab
7. Mr Mohammed Hassan Al Bouraie
8. Mr Saad Salah Khalis
9. Mr Mohammed Ben Salah
10. Mr Sultan Al Maqrani
11. Mr Suleiman Al Qudah
11. Ms Lamis Andoni
12. Mr Mohammed Al Bariii
13. Ms Rufa Hassan
14. Mr Mohammed Salah Thabet
15. Mr Raid Abdelwahid Ahmed Salah
16. Mr Avner Gridon
17. Mr Abdelmumin Al Hazabi
18. Mr Mussaid Al Wathaqi
19. Mr Jar Allah Ali Mohammed
20. Mr Abdallah Al Marwani
21. Mr Khaled Al Qaiati



REPORT OF WORKING GROUP D

Strengthening Professional Journalists' Training

1. In view of the changing social, economic and political context of journalism in the Arab region, together with the often dysfunctional milieu the well-meaning journalist has to work in and the need to seek a balance between theoretical knowledge and cultural richness on the one hand and technical craftsmanship and journalistic skills on the other, serious thought should be given to determining the kind of journalists to be trained and the kind of role they should play in Arab society.
2. To this end, a workshop should be organized in cooperation with relevant international organizations to examine these issues and publish a compendium of viewpoints to guide the development of educational and training centres in the region, and particularly in view of the training of trainers. Many valuable lessons can be learned from communication institutions of Europe and the Arab region.
3. Priority consideration should be given to the planning and launching of an Arab Journalism Centre, one that not only prepares future journalists for the new communication technology but also teaches journalism in real-life situations where high illiteracy rates and developing country situations may still prevail; where free, independent and pluralistic media are still to be established and reinforced; and where in some countries professional journalists still face difficult working and security conditions. A few members, however, argued that some countries of the region are not yet ready to support a regional centre and that, given the difficult conditions in some countries, the proposal for a regional centre should be seriously studied before action is taken.
4. Development and training projects should also take account of the infrastructure needs of many training and educational centres in the Arab region and seek to provide ways of acquiring technical equip-

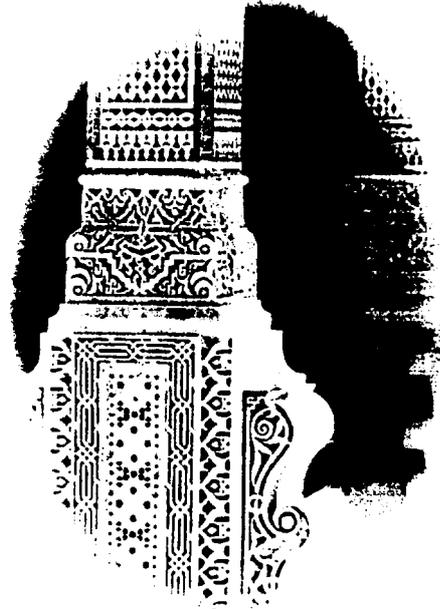
Reports of the Working Groups 2D

ment and facilities to ensure training of journalists in all technical aspects of their craft.

5. Efforts should be made by Arab journalists and communication specialists to reflect on communication and journalism needs, prioritize and prepare projects for the development of communication and training, and in this way provide solid preparation for the IPDC experts' meeting in the Arab region in 1997.
6. Recognizing that young people under 15 are more than half the population in the Arab region, efforts should be made to increase the training of journalists on the issues of children and youth; efforts should be strengthened to print more children's books in Arabic. Training should also take into account the social, cultural and educational environment with which the working journalist must deal.
7. Women media practitioners should be given priority in training.

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DECLARATION OF
SANKA
ON PROMOTING
INDEPENDENT
AND PLURALISTIC
ARAB MEDIA

We, the participants in the United Nations/United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization Seminar on Promoting Independent and Pluralistic Arab Media, held in Sana'a, Yemen, from 7 to 11 January 1996;

Bearing in mind Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states that “Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media, and regardless of frontiers”;

Recalling United Nations General Assembly Resolution 59 (I) of 14 December 1946, which states that freedom of information is a fundamental human right, and General Assembly Resolution 45/76 A of 11 December 1990 on information in the service of humanity;

Recalling Resolution 104 adopted by the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) at its twenty-fifth session in 1989, focusing on the promotion of “the free flow of ideas by word and image at international as well as national levels”;

Recalling also resolution 4.3 adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO at its twenty-sixth session “recognizing that a free, pluralistic and independent press is an essential component of any democratic society”, and inviting the Director-General “to extend to other regions of the world the action . . . to encourage press freedom and to promote the independence and pluralism of the media”;

Further recalling United Nations General Assembly decision of 20 December 1993 on the observance of World Press Freedom Day on 3 May;

Noting with satisfaction resolution 4.6 of the twenty-eighth session of the General Conference of UNESCO (1995), which stressed “the outstanding importance of”, and endorsed, the Declarations

Declaration of Sana'a

adopted by the participants of the Seminars, held in Windhoek, Namibia (29 April – 3 May 1991), in Almaty, Kazakstan (5-9 October 1992), and in Santiago, Chile (2-6 May 1994), and which expressed its conviction that “the joint UNESCO/United Nations . . . regional Seminar on Promoting Independent and Pluralistic Arab Media to be held in Sana'a, Yemen in early 1996 will contribute to creating conditions that will enable pluralistic media to develop and participate effectively in the democratization and development processes in the Arab region;”

Stressing the growing role of the International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC) of UNESCO, whose Intergovernmental Council decided, at its February 1992 session, to give priority to projects which seek to reinforce independent and pluralistic media;

Noting the vital need and the importance of access by women to free expression and decision-making in the field of media;

Noting with appreciation the statements made at the opening of the Seminar by the United Nations Assistant Secretary General for Public Information on behalf of the Secretary General and the Assistant Director-General for Communication, Information and Informatics of UNESCO on behalf of the Director General;

Expressing our sincere appreciation to the United Nations and UNESCO for organizing the Seminar;

Expressing also our sincere appreciation to all the inter-governmental, governmental and non-governmental bodies, organizations, agencies and foundations which contributed to the United Nations /UNESCO effort to organize the Seminar;

Expressing our gratitude to the Government, people, and media Organizations and professionals of the Republic of Yemen for their kind hospitality which facilitated the success of the Seminar.

Promoting Independent and Pluralistic Arab Media



Fully support and express our commitment to the principles of the Declaration of Windhoek, acknowledging its crucial importance for promoting free, independent and pluralistic print and broadcast media in all regions of the world and seek practical application of the principles enshrined in this Declaration;

Welcome the worldwide trend towards democracy freedom of expression and press freedom, recognize efforts by a number of Arab countries in this direction and urge all Arab states to participate in this historic process;

Believe that the advent of new information and communication technologies contributes to genuine cooperation, development, democracy and peace; acknowledge, however, that these technologies can be used to manipulate public opinion; and note that some governments do exploit the perceived threat of such technologies to justify curtailing of press freedom;

Deplore that, in the Arab World, journalists, publishers and other media practitioners continue to be victims of harassment, physical assault, threats, arrest, detention, torture, abduction, exile and murder. They are also subject to economic and political pressures, including dismissal, censorship, curbs on travel as well as passport withdrawals or visa denials. In addition to limitations on the free flow of news and information, and on the circulation of periodicals within countries and across national borders, the media is also” subject to restrictions in the use of newsprint and other professional equipment and material. Licensing systems and abusive controls limit the opportunity to publish or broadcast;

Believe that arrest and detention of journalists because of their professional activities are a grave violation of human rights and urge Arab governments that have jailed journalists for these reasons to release them immediately and unconditionally. Journalists who have had to leave their countries should be free to return and to resume their professional activities. Those who have been dismissed abusively should be allowed to regain their positions.

Declare that

Arab States should provide, and reinforce where they exist, constitutional and legal guarantees of freedom of expression and of press freedom and should abolish those laws and measures that limit the freedom of the press; government tendencies to draw limits/ 'red lines' outside the purview of the law restrict these freedoms and are unacceptable;

The establishment of truly independent, representative associations, syndicates or trade unions of journalists, and associations of editors and publishers, is a matter of priority in those Arab countries where such bodies do not now exist. Any legal and administrative obstacles to the establishment of independent journalists' organizations should be removed. Where necessary, labour relations laws should be elaborated in accordance with international standards;

Sound journalistic practices are the most effective safeguard against governmental restrictions and pressures by special interest groups. Guidelines for journalistic standards are the concern of the news media professionals. Any attempt to set down standards and guidelines should come from the journalists themselves. Disputes involving the media and /or the media professionals in the exercise of their profession are a matter for the courts to decide, and such cases should be tried under civil and not criminal codes and procedures;

Journalists should be encouraged to create independent media enterprises owned, run and funded by the journalists themselves and supported, if necessary, by transparent endowments with guarantees that donors do not intervene in editorial policies;

International assistance in Arab countries should aim to develop print and electronic media, independent of governments in order to encourage pluralism as well as editorial independence. Public media should be supported and funded only when they are editorially independent and where a constitutional, effective freedom of information and expression and the independence of the press are guaranteed;

State-owned broadcasting and news agencies should be granted statutes of journalistic and editorial independence as open public service institutions. Creation of independent news agencies and

Promoting Independent and Pluralistic Arab Media

private and /or community ownership of broadcasting media, including in rural areas, should also be encouraged;

Arab governments should cooperate with the United Nations and UNESCO, other governmental and non-governmental development agencies, organizations and professional associations, in order to:

- i) enact and/or revise laws with a view to: enforcing the rights to freedom of expression and press freedom and legally enforceable free access to information; eliminating monopoly controls over news and advertising; putting an end to all forms of social, economic or political discrimination in broadcasting, in the allocation of frequencies, in printing, in newspaper and magazine distribution and in newsprint production and allocation; abolishing all barriers to launching new publications and any form of discriminatory taxation;
- ii) initiate action to remove economic barriers to the establishment and operation of news media outlets, including restrictive import duties, tariffs and quotas for such things as newsprint, printing equipment, type-setting and word processing machinery and telecommunication equipment, and taxes on the sale of newspapers or other restrictions on the public's access to news media;
- iii) improve and expand training of journalists and managers, and other 'media practitioners, without discrimination, with a view to upgrading their professional standards, also by the establishment of new training centres in the countries where there are none, including Yemen.

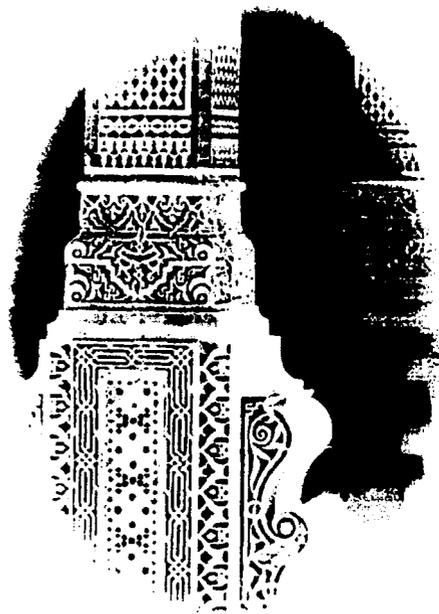
Seek the assistance of national, regional and international press freedom and media professional organizations and other relevant NGOs to establish national and regional networks aimed at monitoring and acting against violations of free expression, to create data banks and to provide advice and technical assistance in computerisation as well as in new information and communication technologies with the understanding that UNDP, IPDC and other development partners would consider these needs to be a major priority;

Request UNESCO National Commissions of the Arab States to help in organizing national and regional meetings to enhance press freedom and to encourage creation of independent media institutions.

Declaration of Sana'a

The international community should contribute to the achievement and implementation of this Declaration.

This Declaration should be presented by the Secretary-General of the United Nations to the General Assembly, and by the Director-General of UNESCO to the General Conference, for follow-up and implementation.



ANNEXES

ANNEX 1

Programme of the seminar

Sunday 7 January 1996

9.30	OPENING CEREMONY Mr Henrikas Yushkiavitshus Assistant Director-General for Communication, Information and Informatics UNESCO, Paris Mr Samir Sanbar Assistant Secretary-General for Public information, United Nations, New York. Mr Mahfuz Al Ansari on behalf of the participating journalists, Egypt H.E. Abdul-Aziz Abdul-Gani Prime Minister of Yemen
1200	ELECTION OF THE PRESIDENT, THE VICE-PRESIDENTS AND THE RAPPORTEUR OF THE SEMINAR
15.30	FIRST PLENARY SESSION <i>The Situation of the Media in the Arab World: the Issue of Independence and Pluralism</i> <i>Keynote address:</i> Mr Gebran Tueni (Lebanon) <i>Moderator:</i> Mr Ahmed Derradji (Algeria) <i>Panelists:</i> Mr Abdelaziz Saqqaf (Yemen) Mr Saad Lounes (Algeria) Prof. Raufa Hassan Al Sharqi (Yemen) Mr Bah Ould Saleck (Mauritania)
19.00	Reception by the Minister of Information at the Taj Sheba Hotel

PROGRAMME

Monday 8 January 1996

- 9.30 SECOND PLENARY SESSION
Public Service Media
- Keynote address:* Ms Lamis Andoni (Jordan) reading a paper prepared by
Mr David Kuttab (Palestine)
- Moderator:* Mr Moustapha Al Fakir (Syria)
- Panellists:* Mr Camille Menassa (Lebanon)
Mr Mohammed Abu Ayash (Palestine)
Mrs Amat Al Alim Al Suswa (Yemen)
Mr Ali Khella (Morocco)
- 15.50 WORKING GROUPS' SESSIONS
(a) Women and the media in the Arab States
(b) Press Freedom Monitoring
- 19.30 Reception by the Yemen Times at the Taj Sheba Hotel.

Tuesday 9 January 1996

- Morning THIRD PLENARY SESSION
*Legal, Cultural and Political Frameworks
for a Free and Pluralistic Media:
the Issue of Censorship and Self-Censorship*
- Keynote address:* Mr Soubhi Zaiyter (Lebanon)
- Moderator:* Mr Khaled Al Mubarak (Sudan)
- Panellists:* Mr Mohammed Sid Ahmed (Egypt)
Mr Nourredine Boutar (Tunisia)
Mr Ibrahim Bashmi (Bahrein)
- 15.30 WORKING GROUPS
(a) Strengthening professional organizations
(b) Strengthening professional training
- 19.30 Cultural Evening hosted by the Ministry of Culture
-

PROGRAMME

Wednesday 10 January 1996

9.30: **FOURTH PLENARY SESSION**
Training of Media Professionals

Keynote speaker: Ms Bettina Peters (IFJ) Belgium

Moderator: Prof. Larbi Chouika (Tunisia)

Panellists: Mr Hassan Rajab (Egypt)
Mr Ali Rahnema (FIEJ) France
Mr Mahbub Ali (IOJ) Yemen

United Nations UNESCO Reception at the Sheraton Hotel

Thursday 11 January 1996

12.00 **ADOPTION OF THE FINAL REPORT AND THE SANA'A DECLARATION**

16.30 **CLOSING REMARKS**
Prof. Raufa Hassan Al Sharqi, President of the Seminar
H.E. Abdul Rahman Al Kwa, Minister of Information
Mr Ben Salah (Tunisia), on behalf of all the participants
Mr Torben Krogh, President of the International Programme
for the Development of Communication

ANNEX 2

UNESCO Background papers

1. *Juridical Organization of the Press in the Arab Countries*
by Ahmed Derradji
2. *The World Situation of Public Service Broadcasting:
Overview and Analysis* by Marc Raboy

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