



**Minutes of Orbicom's
2003 Annual General Meeting of Members
(AGM)
Held Online
22 September – 3 October 2003**

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Quorum
Orbicom Annual General Meeting
(22 September –3 October 2003)

List of participants:

Annerstedt, Jan
Archibald, James
AW-Ndiaye, Eugénie
Castellanos, Angela
Charron, Claude-Yves
Chin, Saik Yoon
Cogburn, Derrick L.
Dembele, Martial
Denis, Roch
Diez, Merce
Fusaro, Magda
Giguère, Pierre
Helmke, Reinhart
Joshi, Subash
Khan, Abdul Waheed
Koné, Mamadou
Lafrance, André
Lafrance, Jean-Paul
Lee, Paul S.N.
Maisonneuve, Danielle
Marques de Melo, José
Miège, Bernard
Modoux, Alain
Molnar, Helen
Okigbo, Charles
Paudyal, Chiranjibi S
Paquet-Sévigny, Thérèse
Perez, Gabriel Jaime
Rao, Mandanmohan
Rico de Sotelo, Carmen
Sciadas, George
Sinha, R.Mahesh K.
Stone, Martha
Sjöberg, Göran
Théorêt, Yves
Tolosa, Mauricio
Vartanova, Elena
Von Schilling, Rainer
Wartella, Ellen

IMPORTANT NOTICE

This year's minutes are presented in a different format.

Reference documents and individual verbatim interventions are not reproduced within the report but are stored and can be accessed in full on Orbicom's Web /Forum/AGM2003

I. Word of the President

Dear Orbicom Members,

We are once again united through Internet technology to carry out this annual meeting. You are not only invited to participate actively in the mandatory house keeping process, but more importantly for the future of the Network, to take part in a discussion of substance about Orbicom's action plan. As stated in the editorial article in Orbicom Forum's spring issue, Orbicom actively prepares for December 2003 and the World Summit of the Information Society (WSIS). It is my view that Orbicom is positioning itself as a respected player within the civil society component and as an arm of UNESCO for this important venue. By the time the Geneva part of the Summit takes place, Orbicom will have brought three important initiatives to maturity: the Digital Review of Asia Pacific published over the summer, Monitoring the Digital Divide project and the Platform of Content Professionals.

There are a number of still unsettled issues that need to be brought to the member's attention and for which I seek your advice. As mentioned a year ago, the more delicate one is the type of relationship that must be entertained with UNESCO and the relevance of the network as a tool to help UNESCO achieve its goals. The reflection has already started within UNESCO and the evaluation of Orbicom (commencing 1 October 2003) should help clarify the issue.

Also, after three years of hard work in implementing the Orbicom action plan conceived during the Mexico meeting of July 2000, it is now time to make an examination of it and develop options to be presented to the membership. Some colleagues of the Board of Directors met in New York on the 6th of August 2003. Ideas for new projects were put forward for further discussions. They are outlined in the Action Plan section (5.1). You may be aware that most funded projects have either been implemented or are coming to an end in the near future.

Of course the question of new Chairs, new Chair holders in certain cases, the UNITWIN Programme, and the recruitment of Associates are also on the agenda.

I look forward to fruitful exchanges,
Alain Modoux

Comments

Several members, particularly new ones, availed themselves of this section to send their greetings while some other members informed the Assembly that due to various circumstances they could not participate in AGM 2003.

The meeting started with a statement about the importance of renewing the action plan that has been implemented since the Mexico meeting of 2000. The UNESCO ADG / CI intervened in support of Orbicom's programme of activities and stressed the importance of partnership with specialised networks. He noted the expansion of the network and mentioned that he believed greater efforts would be needed to involve developing countries. He also explained that UNESCO's contribution to the World Summit of the Information Society would focus on four main themes well taken into account in Orbicom's programme: 1) agreeing on common principles for the construction of the knowledge society; 2) promoting the use of ICTs for capacity building, empowerment, governance and social participation; 3) strengthening capacities for research; 4) enhancing learning opportunities.

The Secretary General reported that as a follow up to the wish expressed by Orbicom members during AGM 2002, to the effect that the network should be involved in the preparation of WSIS, quite a few members were involved in different regional consultations and that he, and Orbicom President, participated in the PrepComs. He also reported that research initiatives on the digital divide are of special relevance to WSIS' action plan, specifically Section E 29, and invited members to consult document WSIS/PC-3/10-E.

II. Approval of the Agenda

Agenda : Assembly General of Members 2003

I. The President' Word of Welcome

II. Approval of the Agenda

III. Previous AGM Meeting / Approval of the Minutes of AGM 2002

IV. Report of the Board of Directors

4.1. The President's Report

4.2. The Treasurer's Report

4.3. Approval of the Certified Financial Statements (2002-2003)

4.4. Nomination of the Financial Controllers (2003-2004)

V. International Secretariat's Report

5.1. Status of the Action Plan

5.2. The Network's Expansion: New Chairs and New Associates

VI. The Chairs' Programme of Activities

6.1. World Forum of UNESCO Chairs: Report of Panel and Round Table V on Communication

6.2. World Forum of UNESCO Chairs: Strategy for the Development of the UNITWIN Programme

6.3. Communication Chairs' Activities (local and regional)

VII. Board of Directors: Endorsement of the New Board Members

VIII. Varia

Resolution AGM-03-1

Moved by Chiranjibi Paudyal and seconded by Madanmohan Rao that the agenda of the current AGM be approved. Resolution approved.

III. Approval of the minutes of AGM 2002

Resolution AGM-03-2

Moved by Pierre Giguère and seconded by Chin Saik Yoon that the minutes of the 2002 AGM be approved. Resolution approved.

Comments

To a comment made by a Spanish speaking member to the effect that the minutes are drafted in English only, the Secretary General answered that limited means prevent costly translations in Spanish or French of the full report. He added that an effort may be made to translate a résumé, if there is to be one, but that deliberations in full and in the language of the participants are kept for record on the Web. He added that the reports of the previous years were long due to the request of a member who wanted her statements to be attributed. She did not participate in the AGM this year.

IV. Report of the Board of Directors

4.1 The President's Report

The existence of non-aligned and independent international NGOs at stake A few words from the president of Orbicom...

Being in a position to watch very closely the preparation process of the forthcoming World Summit on the Information Society (Geneva – December 10-12, 2003), I am witnessing the enthusiasm and dedication of dozens of international NGOs who really wish to play an active role in this venture. They plan on attending the Summit not only to voice their views, but also to organize parallel activities. Unfortunately, a cruel reality puts a damper on their enthusiasm: they can expect nearly no financial assistance to send representatives to Geneva and set up parallel events. This is another example of discrepancies affecting non-aligned and independent international voluntary organizations, by comparison with national NGOs which are very often largely supported by their national authorities to achieve programmes serving strategic or political national interests abroad. The situation is particularly serious for international NGOs whose membership is living mainly in developing countries and whose headquarters are situated in the North. The income generated by membership fees is almost inexistent and their demands for financial support are generally turned down by governmental and intergovernmental agencies under the pretext that they are Northern NGOs. This attitude is irrelevant and is creating a growing feeling of despondency and disillusion among international NGOs' members in the North as well as in the South, who are voluntarily devoting part of their time to build up bridges to foster intellectual cooperation between people at regional and international levels.

Orbicom is no exception. Apart from the invaluable support of the University of Quebec in Montreal (UQAM), which provides most - if not all - of the administrative facilities to run the Orbicom secretariat, the network of UNESCO Chairs in communication has no funds to contribute financially to its members' activities worldwide. This is an unbearable situation. A

few months ago, Orbicom received the UNESCO/UNITWIN Programme Award for its “excellent accomplishments since its creation in 1994”. A great part of the merit should go to the Orbicom secretariat which has made miracles to keep the organization on an even keel. Therefore, every member of Orbicom, in particular the representatives of the two founding organizations, that is UNESCO and UQAM, should realize that without a sound financial situation, our network won’t be in a position to continue achieving “excellent accomplishments”. Miracles may occur once or twice, but they are certainly not the solution in the long term!

Alain Modoux, President

Comments

Comments triggered by the President’s statement are twofold. One type addresses the involvement of Orbicom in the preparation of WSIS including researches brought to maturity, and another one addresses the crucial issue of funding of Orbicom and the chairs (and NGOs in general). All comments are supportive of Orbicom and its Secretariat.

Recollection was evoked of last year’s invitation from the President to actively participate in the preparatory process of WSIS. Some Orbicom executive members and several Orbicom members from around the world participated in regional consultations, in WSIS PrepComs and other meetings such as the UN ICT Task Force meeting in Geneva. They constitute a sizable group within the membership. Also a remark was made to the effect that Orbicom has reached a degree of maturity in research outputs whereby its contributions could be useful to the many stakeholders involved. The necessity to find “champions” to promote new research initiatives within a very competitive environment and through a multiplicity of other initiatives must be addressed seriously. The issue is to reflect together on “how to ride the wave of change”.

On the issue of the funding, several members while praising the Secretariat for the miracle it achieved in the past years, are worried that there could not be a more stable financing from UNESCO in particular. Some members ponder positively and have expressed the view that the current management at UNESCO is well disposed toward Orbicom and that the financing through providing paid consultancy service is one way to investigate. A member mentioned that the challenge ahead in designing workable strategies to improve Orbicom's financial situation is to find creative and innovative ways to capitalise on its strength which is communication research. Intervening members also noted that the financing of NGOs is truly an issue of concern and that they work under serious budgetary constraints. Some Chairholders intervened to recall that their financial situation is as difficult as the one of the Secretariat and despite modest funding from regional UNESCO offices, the lack of appropriate funding prevents the chairs from spreading abroad.

4.2 Report of the Treasurer (2002-2003)

(all figures in Canadian Dollars)

I am proud to report that Orbicom's financial situation is this year again almost in equilibrium reporting, after the external financial audit, only a small operation deficit of \$6 914. The financial situation has nonetheless allowed for very substantial operations in the course of the financial year that ended 31 May 2003.

This is due to the increased in kind contribution of UQAM (time of Orbicom's Secretary General and of his assistant Magda Fusaro devoted to Orbicom) and to the management of funded projects, especially "Monitoring the Digital Divide" (DDI) and "Digital Review of Asia Pacific" (DirAP), by international agencies (CIDA, World Bank/InfoDev, UNDP, IDRC and to a lesser extend by UNESCO).

You will have noticed in the certified statements a reduction of office expenses over last year (from \$95 092 to \$72 320), of hospitality/representation (from \$3 548 to \$485) and in overhead (from \$20 813 to \$10 000). The salary component has also decreased from \$145 613 to \$141 397 and includes the university share of Claude-Yves and Magda's salaries.

However, there are substantial increases in travel (\$103 901 this year compared to \$30 826 last year) due to the meeting in Kuala Lumpur, in November 2002, of the panel of 28 authors of the DirAP project at a cost of \$92 831, and in honorariums paid for the funded projects (from \$66 258 to \$113 727). These two substantial expenses are normal as they were imbedded in the project proposals submitted to the international funding institutions.

Despite the overall healthy financial situation, which will continue at least until the end of 2003, there is concern for the future. First, there is now confirmation that Montreal International will not renew its annual contribution of \$40 000 beyond the next financial year. The new rules exclude organisations of the size of Orbicom. UQAM's Rector and Orbicom's Secretary General are working hard to convince Montreal International to modify its position as this contribution in cash funds a good part of the Secretariat's infrastructure costs.

Also, the funded projects (DDI phase II and DirAP) are coming to an end within a year and there is no guaranty of further financing. After the reports are published, the funding agencies will decide whether there is a "demand" for assessment / measurement tools of this sort. Also the financing of phase II of "Trust in E-commerce" could not secured yet as negotiations with the Canadian Department of Industry and Bell Canada are have not produced positive results.

In closing, I renew my call to all to assist our Network in its fund raising activities.

Ellen Wartella, Treasurer

Comments

Members who intervened praised the Treasurer and the Secretariat for having developed and managed the funded activities on behalf of Orbicom and for having done a good job in financial management. One member came back with the suggestion that we should think of undertaking specific projects with funding and work with UNESCO for their continued if not increased funding on a regular basis. Another member mentioned that she has to come back to the recurring theme of last year: diversification of funding sources. She also wrote that the past year demonstrates that Orbicom can secure funding for extremely important initiatives.

4.3 Approval of the Certified financial Statements (2002-2003)

Statements in PDF can be accessed in AGM 2003 on the Web.

Resolution AGM- 03-3 moved by Ellen Wartella and seconded by Pierre Giguère. Resolution approved.

V. The secretary General's Report

5.1 Action Plan / Status report

A) ORBICOM PROJECTS (approved after the Mexico ExCom Meeting of July 2000)

1) Equitable Access to ICTs

Summary

This initiative focuses on the different Latin American national policies and experiences, the private sector's responsibilities and implications, and the role of regulating agencies to improve an equitable access to ICTs.

Partners

Latin American UNESCO chairs in communications, private sector, professionals and Latin American regulating agencies.

Outcome / impacts

A regional conference was held on Nov 28-29, 2000 in Mexico City, and focused on the participation and responsibilities of the private sector in relation with the access to NICTs, and the strategies of various Latin American governments to reduce the digital divide. A 9 point action plan was developed and approved. The action plan implementation is in direct preparation to the ITU World Summit on Communications and Society.

2) ICTs and TRUST-Building Mechanisms

Summary

This initiative intended to make a comparative research, concentrating on some trust-intensive issues, such as the usage of filtering/blocking/rating software, and the topics of access, authorship, and privacy, in order to find out to what extent trust-building mechanisms are universal or cultural-dependent.

Partners

Phase I has been undertaken in Canada and has focused exclusively on trust in e-commerce. The research was completed and a publication "Generating Trust in Online Business" published in March 2002. Phase II, should consist in a comparative study of trust indicators in e-commerce among the OECD countries. Orbicom is looking for new funding partners.

Phase I (completed): University of Quebec in Montreal, Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec and Bell Canada.

3) Development of a Digital Divide Index (DDI)

Summary

The aim is to design, build, test, maintain and publish periodically the results of a system for monitoring and forecasting the Digital Divide.

There exists no measurement instrument of some reliability that could be used to assist the stakeholders in their analysis of developing countries ICTs' needs.

In order to fill this information gap, ORBICOM, in collaboration with CIDA, has built, as a preliminary phase of a more global project, the methodology and a model to develop a measurement instrument of the digital divide in the world called the "Digital Divide Index" and tested it with nine countries. Phase I was completed in March 2002 and published as a monograph in May 2002.

The ultimate objective is to assist major stakeholders in focusing on access to NICTs in developing countries using the following data sets (not exclusive): state of infrastructures, public policies and regulations, industrial and managerial capacities, and human resources and training in ICTs.

A proposal for Phase II, "Monitoring Digital and Knowledge Divides", has been drafted and submitted to various funding agencies. The index will be targeting much over 100 countries and will be complemented by country studies and thematic studies (competitiveness and knowledge), and should be ready for publication and scientific communication in time for the World Summit on Information society (WSIS) Geneva, December 2003. CIDA, InfoDev Programme of the World Bank and UNESCO/CI have accepted to fund Phase II.

Partners

Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), InfoDev of the World Bank, and C/I Sector of UNESCO, MIMOS and ITU.

4) Human Resources and Training in ICTs (see "recent developments" at the end)

Summary

The 1999 Montreal Conference objectives were to both diagnose the challenges, and propose concrete solutions, to the growing gap between available human resources and training in the domain of communications in all economic regions of the world. Follow up initiatives has been undertaken in terms of electronic forums for information flow exchanges and regional training workshops.

Partners

GKP, UNESCO, CIDA, UNDP, IDRC, BCE, Bell Canada, CGI, France Telecom, The Freedom Forum, National Research Council of Canada

Outcome / impact

The Montreal Conference which convened Communications specialists from 55 countries, resulted in an Action Plan with two main orientations:

- a) An electronic forum for on-going assessment / exchange of information and communication trends, and training needs and opportunities, via Orbicom's web site;
- b) Organization of a series of regional workshops for the training and retraining of communication professionals for the new knowledge economy in Nairobi and Abuja, in association with the North Dakota State University, in 2001.

The Proceedings of the Conference have been published and distributed in 2000, in 3 languages, under the title:

"New Partnerships in Communications for the 21st Century: Strategies for Governance, Technology, Employment and Lifelong Learning", Charron, C.Y., Chica, M.C., S. Hamilton, editors, Montreal, Orbicom, 2000, 374 pages.

This book is also published on-line, available freely, in 3 languages, via Orbicom's web site:

Recent developments

Aside the workshops referred above (in b) which took place in 2001, the Secretary General continues to take part in various forums with training components. He has notably done so during his recent trip to Geneva (February 2003) at UQAM's expenses.

Some funds remaining from the 1999 Conference have been used to help Mexico with the organization of a training session during its recent conference (5-6 May).

5) Core Literature on Development Communications and the Impact of new ICTs in Developing Countries (No development)

Summary

During the Orbicom Board of Directors' virtual meeting of November 2000, it was decided that the proposal made by four chairs, to study "the Impact and Use of New Information and Communications Technologies in Developing Countries" was to be merged with the proposal on "Core Literature for Development Communication" submitted by an associate member. This is an interesting development as some chairs and associate members have decided to

combine their research activities in a real partnership between the academics and the professionals.

The objective is to collect, review and select landmark publications, papers, articles and audiovisual material that have shaped the field of development Communications since its beginning: this collection of Spanish, French and English material will form the core literature for the discipline; it will span the early application of mass media in development programs to current initiatives aimed at introducing Internet-based technologies to developing communities; it will be designed to support research, training and practice in the developing countries.

Partners

The promoters of this initiative are the chairs of Morocco, France, Australia and Canada in association with the President of Orbicom Research Committee, Mr. Chin Saik Yoon, Associate Member from Malaysia.

Professor Jan Servaes of the University of Queensland (Australia) has accepted in principle to be the Scientific Director. As there is no funding for this initiative, it remains dormant.

6) The Digital Review of Asia Pacific

A new initiative that must be perceived as complementary to the Digital Divide Index project has been submitted to international partners. The Digital Review of Asia Pacific, to be undertaken jointly by the Asia-Pacific Development Information Programme (APDIP) of UNDP, the Pan Asia Networking (PAN) of the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) and Orbicom, will constitute a comprehensive review of the state of diffusion, adoption and application of new information and communication technologies in 28 countries of the Asia-Pacific region and will result in joint publication. This project is funded by IDRC and the APDIP Programme of UNDP, and is currently under way under the scientific direction of Mr. Chin Saik Yoon, Editor in Penang, Malaysia. The first edition 2003-2004 has been published in July 2003.

7) The Platform of Content Professionals

In addition to the Action Plan submitted to the AGM last September, a new initiative is taking place at the suggestion of our President Alain Modoux: the Platform of Contents Professionals. Its purpose is to give a voice to those professionals who create, process, preserve and diffuse contents in the context of WSIS 2003. This project is conducted in cooperation with international professional associations. It aims at drafting a text, proposing it to the associations, getting supportive signatures of prominent personalities including Nobel Prizes, and diffusing the 'manifest' in leading national and international newspapers.

Alain Modoux launched this initiative at the end of the Round Table of the international associations of content professionals held in Lugano from 14 to 16 March 2003 at the invitation of the Swiss Commission for UNESCO. Drafts of the platform/manifest have been circulated to the international associations concerned. A combined effort of all parties interested will be necessary in order to assure the greatest diffusion.

B) FOLLOW UP TO CURRENT INITIATIVES AND ADDED VISIBILITY IN THE CONTEXT OF THE WORLD SUMMIT OF THE INFORMATION SOCIETY (WSIS) IN GENEVA, DECEMBER 2003

Orbicom's two major current projects and publications «Monitoring the Digital Divide and Beyond» (DDI), and «Digital Review of Asia Pacific» (DirAP) reflect the strength of the Orbicom network towards aggregation and comparison of various data-points and regional and global developments. Both deliverables will be promoted at a special kiosk within the ICT4D Market Place of the World Summit, and the DDI will be presented at side events organized by OECD and INFODEV of the World Bank. Alain Modoux's initiative «The Platform of Content Professionals» will also be highlighted.

The DirAP 2003/2004 Edition has been published with Southbound, Malaysia, and has been distributed to Orbicom members who have paid their 2003 membership contribution to

Orbicom. Others can purchase it for US \$ 60. A pre-publication of 300 copies was released in July at a special UNDP and IDRC think tank meeting in Ottawa. Preparations for the 2004/2005 Edition are on train.

In addition, "Monitoring the Digital Divide and Beyond..." (DDI) special briefings for major stakeholders will be organized in Ottawa, and at the suggestion of the brainstorming participants, targeted briefings could be held in Washington and New York to explore financing of next phase.

C) PROPOSALS FOR NEW PROJECTS

In continuity with the Board of Directors' meeting of May 2003, a number of interesting initiatives were discussed around two streams of financing: overhead on projects, and infrastructure financing. However, they need Orbicom champions to be further developed and funded.

1. Media and War, Media and Peace Building and Media and Ethics of Communication Content could be redefined with a specific focus on the role and the ethics of mediators (journalists, new gatekeepers, professional and social mediators such as religious leaders, etc) during conflict and in post conflict social reconstruction with, under the title: Role and responsibilities of Mediators in Conflict and Post-Conflict Social Reconstruction.

2. Knowledge Workers and the Globalization of ICTs: this project would focus on the flow of e-knowledge workers, with special reference to out-sourcing and the role of the diasporas.

3. Using ICT for Fund Raising: A Pilot Project aiming at developing an IT based funding strategy that would sustain a network's life in the long run. The lessons learned through this project could add to NGO capacity building, and help solve the issue of challenges and opportunities that networking poses to funders and NGO alike.

D) REGIONAL CONFERENCES

Various regional conferences, most of them announced during our virtual AGM of September 2002, are listed in chronological order:

1) Mexico, 5-6 May, on 'Media and Terrorism / Media and War'. This initiative conducted by Jose Carreno Carlon and Gabriela Warkentin de la Mora was proposed at the Orbicom's ExCom of April 2002 in Paris and has received the endorsement of our regretted friend Claude Ondobo on behalf of the CI Sector. The conference took place as scheduled. The report can be accessed below.

2) Moscow, 23-24 May, on 'Shaping Tomorrow's Media Systems'. This conference was organized by Yassen Zassoursky and Elena Vartanova and has received supportive comments from UNESCO / CI Sector and has taken place as scheduled. The report can be accessed below.

3) Abuja, 10-15 August, on the theme 'Communication and the Culture of Peace in Africa' hosted by the African Council for Communication Education (ACCE). A special training session has taking place on 12 August. The topics: 'Applying Information Technology to Communication Development Programs: Lessons from the Orbicom - Asia Project'. This initiative is championed by Charles Okigbo.

4) Rabat, (date to be confirmed) a three day colloquium focusing on the theme 'Ethics of Communications Contents' to be organized by Jamal Eddine Naji.

5) Jakarta, 27-29 February 2004 an editorial meeting bringing together authors from 28 countries in the region, for the Digital Review of Asia Pacific initiative, co-sponsored by IDRC, UNDP/APDIP, and Orbicom. This meeting, taking place under the leadership of Chin Saik-Yoon, will be devoted to the preparation of the 2004/2005 Edition.

Conference - Mexico (en español) (PDF)

Conference - Moscou (en français) (PDF)

Comments

Note: As mentioned before, complete interventions can be accessed on Orbicom's Web / AGM 2003 Forum Section.

1. This section of the agenda attracted three types of reactions. A first group commented on potential new projects listed in 'section C' above, a second group proposed new initiatives not listed above, and a third one expressed some alienation about the lack of inclusiveness of the current Orbicom's projects or offered comments on the action plan including regional initiatives. Names of initiators of potential research projects are mentioned here to facilitate interaction by interested members outside the AGM Forum.

2. With regard to the proposals put forward in continuity with the Board of Directors' meeting of May 2003, the first one listed, 'Media and War, Media and Peace Building and Media and Ethics of Communication' received support from three members who seem to be willing to exercise some leadership in the development of such a project (Eugénie R. AW , Angela Catellanos and Gabriel Perez). Concerning A.1 of the action plan (Equitable access to ICTS) and B (Added Visibility towards WSIS) Gabriel Perez invited the membership to consult the programme of activities of the Colombian Chair on Orbicom's Web.

3. With regard to a second proposal, 'Using ICT for Fund Raising', one member showed interest in joining a group (Charles Okigbo) and enquired whether there is a road map to guide such a group.

4. As for a third one entitled 'Knowledge Workers and the Globalization of ICTs', James Archibald informed the group that the Association for Business Communication (ABC Europe) has addressed the impact of ICTs on knowledge workers. A question (unanswered) was raised as to where the information may be available. A proposal similar to this one was made by Madanmohan Rao (see #4 on his list of initiatives in para 6 below).

5. However several new suggestions for projects were put forward for consideration by the membership. Chin Saik Yoon proposed that Orbicom members initiate policy studies with regard to how media and culture industries will be affected by the various globalized trade regimes being proposed and advocated by the different trading countries. He invited the participants to indicate their interest in addressing and participating, and suggested to continue the discussions on action programmes after the AGM.

6. Madanmohan Rao, while wishing a greater participation of his 'Orbicompanions', proposed a research agenda that would include the formation of research teams, online/offline meetings, publications and web site. They are:

- (1) 'Mass Media and Coverage of ICTs: Agenda Setting and the Development Orientation'.
- (2) 'Organisational Knowledge Management: Harnessing ICTs in Knowledge-Based organisations'.
- (3) 'Global Debates, Local Relevance: Media Coverage of WTO and WSIS'.
- (4) 'Telecommunications, Tele-work and the Knowledge Society: the Impact of Outsourcing and Offshoring'.

7. Martial Dembele, intervened to propose an African project that involves education and communication expertise: Basic Education Reforms in French Speaking West Africa: Critical Analysis of Communication Strategies in the Implementation of Education for All Programmes (EFA). He indicated that an investigation to secure financing for a feasibility study is being conducted with the World Bank.

8. Jan Annerstedt reported about a project in the making in section 6.3 of the agenda. The rapporteur has elected to make mention of it in this section together with other proposals for easier reference, the project's proposal appears in full in the AGM 2003(6.3) forum itself. Jan informed that he is currently involved in the preparations for a comprehensive study of mobility due to new ICT applications for work, leisure, citizenship, etc. The overall objective of this pan-European project is to look into ways and means that do enable individuals as well as their workplaces and related organizations in the context of mobile work, while focusing on individual productivity, quality of life and work/life balance.

Members interested in expanding this possible project outside Europe and developing further the research objectives to fit other circumstances as well, should inform Jan so that he could alert his European colleagues about such options. He added that this project is still on the drawing board, but could hopefully be funded from early 2004.

8. Derrick Cogburn proposed, as another member has also suggested, using some form of sub-networks (e.g., special interest groups, committees, etc.) to work on specific areas or projects. The idea is to capitalise on individual strengths, ongoing projects, and overall research interests. He also wanted to share his research interests and make two concrete proposals. He mentioned that he has been exploring the role of international conferences in this global governance, or "regime formation" process for information and communications technologies. He said that he has developed a study to explore the impact of distributed collaboration tools on mobilizing knowledge resources to support those voices "excluded" in the process (e.g., some developing countries, community organizations, and broader civil society interests). For more information, please consult the website <http://www.cotelco.net>. Derrick Cogburn also invited interested Orbicom members to join for an advanced seminar on "Globalization and the Information Society: Information, Communication Policy and Development," together with members of his research lab located at six universities (three in the United States and three in South Africa).

He added that he believes that these tools and approaches would perhaps make an important contribution to the work of Orbicom and could perhaps augment this wonderful asynchronous tool that is used for the AGM, to support some synchronous collaborative work as well, including plenary meetings and break-out/working groups. He concluded by saying that he would be delighted to pursue this discussion with Orbicom's leadership or other interested colleagues.

9. The Russian Chair (Elena Vartanova) made reference to well focused and well targeted regional conference of the type that took place in Moscow last May (Shaping Tomorrow's Media System) and mentioned the financial contribution of Orbicom which helped to enlist some scholars for the training component of the conference.

10. In her intervention, Martha Stone while noting how impressive the last year was for Orbicom as we are beginning to see very positive results of the research projects, she questioned the ability of Orbicom to involve the membership in the evolving dynamic program of the network: "The question is how to participate and have individual voices heard?" She made reference to some instruments which should encourage full membership participation but have turned out weak or non-functioning. The committee structure is one such. She referred to past discussions on implementing strategies for resource mobilisation

and asked where we are on these initiatives. She invited others to enter in a dialogue about her concern following the AGM.

11. The Secretary General made the point that the AGM forum has been rich in proposals for new initiatives and informed that time will be needed to assess the degree of feasibility for each of them, their drafting and financing. (A task the Secretariat cannot do alone). He made reference to a member who invested almost two years to prepare different drafts and get the proper sponsors committed to the initiative (DirAP). He added that looking at the total process, the life cycle of each joint initiative, via virtual platforms, in an international network, takes time and that we have a lot to learn in the experimentation of these new modes of interaction via a virtual network such as ours. Again the invitation was made to see the members who are proposing initiatives to become “champions” of their initiatives. It takes time but it is worthwhile.

12. In his closing remarks, the President stressed that remarks and suggestions deserve very thorough examination and that he will need time to go through them and consult the Secretariat about their feasibility.

5.2 The Network’s Expansion: New Chairs and New Associates

CHAIRS

NEW CHAIR HOLDERS

I would like to welcome the new chair holder, Dr. Jan Annerstedt, from the Copenhagen Business School in Denmark and Gabriela Warkentin de la Mora of Iberoamericana Universidad. Jan came to visit Orbicom International Secretariat in May in Montreal, following a meeting with some of his research colleagues at the MIT.

Australian Chairholder, Dr. Tom O'Regan, from Griffith University, who took part last November at a meeting of the UNESCO Institute of Statistics, in Montreal.

CANDIDATURES

The following candidature has been forwarded, with a strong positive recommendation from Orbicom's pre-selection of chairs Committee, to the UNESCO Headquarters in Paris:

Dr. Ruth Teer-Tomaselli,
University of Natal, South Africa.

VACANCIES and EMERGING CHAIRS

1. Ivory Coast

The Chair in Ivory Coast is still vacant, since the end of the tour of duty of Mrs Regina Traore (who also served on our Board of Directors). Dr. Traore has left the University to work as Communication and Development Senior Programme Manager for USAID.

2. United Kingdom

The emerging chair in Oxford has not yet been finalized. We are waiting for a resolution of an open question between the Legal Affairs Services of both Oxford and UNESCO Headquarters on one issue in the draft protocol of agreement: who has jurisdiction over a conflict situation, should it arise?

3. Japan

Upon the retirement of its chair holder, Bunkyo University in Tokyo has informed us of its intention of not renewing its protocol of agreement upon the expiration of its first 3 year cycle, coming to an end in June 2002, because it wanted to submit to UNESCO a candidature for a chair in another sector.

4. Chile

As Lucia Castellon has moved to another University, we are expecting confirmation from the Director of the Diego Portales University that the Chair still exists and that a new incumbent has been appointed.

As an informal candidature, still within the selection process, for consideration by Japan National Commission for UNESCO, Osaka University of Arts, very famous for its Communications and Multimedia Departments, has submitted an application. We have to see what will be the recommendation of the National Commission both to Orbicom and to UNESCO Headquarters.

In conclusion

Our Network Development plan previously discussed by the Board remains stable. We should, once the current candidatures are approved, turn to countries with an important demographic weight, and within regions less well represented in our network.

NEW ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

The International Secretariat is proud to inform of the following new additions to its membership (see list below). The new members joined the Network since the September 2002 AGM. The membership remains at 250 due to the deletion of an equivalent number of people who have left Orbicom. However, this influx of new members allows Orbicom to now span over 71 countries compared to 62 last year.

- Abdullah Zainol Abidin, ICT Manager, IT Training Center, UNDP DILI POUCH UNIT, National University of East Timor
- Izumi Aizu, Principal, Asia Network Research; Executive Research Fellow, GLOCOM (Center for Global Communications); Manager, Research & Planning, Institute for HyperNetwork Society, Japan
- James Archibald, Director, Translation Studies, Centre for Continuing Education, McGill University, Canada
- Alan Bernardi, Directeur général, Innovations technologiques, Bell Canada, Canada
- Danny Butt, Director, Media Arts Creative Industries Research Centre, Department of Media Arts, Waikato Institute of Technology, New Zealand
- Magda Fusaro, Adjointe au vice-rectorat, Services académiques et développement technologique, Université du Québec à Montréal, Canada
- Seow Hiong Goh, Senior Associate, iTec (Intellectual Property, Technology, Entertainment, Communications), Rajah & Tann, Singapore
- Robert L. Guild, Economic Infrastructure Adviser, Development and Economic Planning Division, Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, Fiji
- Stella Hughes, Chief, Media and Society Section, Communication and Information Sector, UNESCO
- Jong-Sung Hwang, Vice-president, Information Policy Division, National Computerization Agency, Korea (Republic of)
- Huixin Ke, President of China Marketing Research Association, Director of Survey & Statistics Institute, Beijing Broadcasting Institute, China
- Norbert Klein, Consultant, Open Forum of Cambodia, Cambodia
- Ching-Yi Liu, Associate Professor of Law, Graduate Institute of Industrial Economic, National Central University, Taiwan
- Jacques Lyrette, Vice-président, Direction technologique, ADGA Group Consultants Inc., Canada
- Koné Mamadou Tadiou, Professeur adjoint, Faculté des sciences et de génie, Université Laval, Canada
- Muhammad Aimal Marjan, National IT Policy Adviser, Advisory Department, Ministry of Communications, Afghanistan
- Marcel Messier, Vice-président, Technologies de l'information, Bell Canada, Canada
- Zaharom Nain, Associate Professor, School of Communication, Universiti Sains Malaysia
- Baljin Narantsetseg, General Director, Infocon (IT Consulting) Co., Ltd., Mongolia

- Sushil Pandey, System Officer, International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), Nepal
- Iskra Panevska, Program Specialist, Communication's Division, UNESCO
- José Miguel Pereira, Directeur du Bac. en Communication sociale, Pontificia Universidad Javeriana
- Phonpasit Phissamay, Director, Information Technology Centre, Science Technology and Environment Agency, Prime Minister's Office, Lao People's Democratic Republic
- Gopi Pradhan, ICT policy specialist, APDIP/UNDP (Malaysia), Bhutan
- Onno W. Purbo, Independent Information Technology Writer, Indonesia
- Nguyen Trung Quynh, General Director Assistant, Ministry of Science and Technology, Information Technology Office, Vietnam
- Madanmohan Rao, Adjunct Faculty, InfoComm Observatory, Indian Institute of Information Technology, India
- Basanta Shrestha, Division Head (MENRIS), International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), Nepal
- Gabriela Warkentin de la Mora, Coordinadora de Investigación y Multimedia, Universidad Iberoamericana
- Pindar Wong, Chairman, VeriFi (Hong Kong) Limited, Hong Kong
- Chee Tuan Yong, Director, ICT Centre, Universiti Brunei Darussalam, Brunei

Comments

Several comments were expressed by the AGM participants. There was general recognition that the Network is expanding (now present in 71 countries), more particularly in developing countries and that this is very good to bridge the digital divide. Some members intervened to welcome the new comers. A remark was made to the effect that a solution must be found to the financial difficulties most chairs are encountering, a common situation in Latin America. A member questioned why the Indian subcontinent is not represented at the chair level within Orbicom. A response was made by an associate member and former chairholder to the effect that there is a need for UNESCO to support the creation of chairs, not only in India but also in Egypt, the Netherlands and Italy as the Network also misses associates and chairs in Western Europe. She reminded the assembly that there is a cost attached to the membership.

The Secretary General mentioned that following last year's AGM, and at the request of the membership who wanted a news bulletin to increase the information flow among members, (with a proactive approach and direct link with individual e-mail addresses) OrbInfo was launched in March 2003 offering a series of news items and URL links with the circulation limited to the membership and contacts. He provided figures that demonstrate the success of this initiative.

VI. The Chairs' Programme and Activities

6.1 World Forum of UNESCO Chairs: Report of Panel and Round Table V on Communication

(reports are accessible on Orbicom's Web/ Agm 2003-10-27

Comments

The Secretary General made reference to the fact that eleven Chairs were able to participate in November 2002 in the World Forum of UNESCO Chairs and take part in different workshops organised by UNESCO. He noted that such events are important because they allow face-to-face meeting and are good occasions to re-establish solidarity and conviviality within the network. He continued stressing that 'there are challenges inherent to the time required for the appropriation or for the habitus of working mainly via virtual platforms that we do not understand as of yet, but challenges that we are experimenting probably in much more advance degree than other networks'.

A remark was made to the effect that there is no reference in the reports to the Brazilian Chair having participated in the WFUC workshops. The omission by UNESCO of the Brazilian Chair was explained and regretted by the Secretariat, essentially a clerical error.

6.2 World Forum of UNESCO Chairs: Strategy for the Development of the UNITWIN programme.

No comment made on this topic

6.3 Communication Chairs' Activities (local and regional)

Chairs Activities can be consulted on Orbicom's website, section "Chairs". We are grateful to the following Chairs for their recent updates:

- Brazil
- Bulgaria
- Colombia
- Denmark
- France
- Morocco
- Spain, Barcelona
- South Africa
- United States

We wish to underline the appointment of Mtra. Gabriela Warkentin de la Mora as the new chair holder for Mexico.

Comments

Several members availed themselves of this section to invite members to consult their Web sites or the Orbicom Web site dedicated to chairs (Colombia). In the case of Barcelona, an invitation has been addressed to participate in a dialogue on cultural diversity 24-27 May 2004 and to consult their site: <http://portalcommunication.com/dialeg> for more information. Congratulations were extended to Gabriela Warkentin de la Mora for her

nomination as Mexican new Chairholder. Congratulations were also extended to Moscow and Mexico for their successful regional conferences of May 2003.

Jan Annerstedt's proposal on mobility as new communication tools is outlined in section 5.1 which deals with the action plan and new initiatives presented by several members. His full text can be read in 6.3 of AGM 2003 kept for record.

VII. Board of Directors: Endorsement of New Board Members

The Ex-officio members from UNESCO and UQAM recommend to the current AGM the appointment of new Board members:

A) Board Configuration and Nomination Process

1. Board of Directors' Configuration

Orbicom's Board includes 15 members:

- * 6 Chair holders
- * 6 Associate members
- * 3 Ex-Officio members.

Within the Board, the Executive Committee includes 6 members:

The 3 Executive Officers:

- the President
- the Vice-President
- the Treasurer

And the 3 Ex-Officio members:

- UNESCO's Director General (or the ADG /communications)
- UQAM's Rector
- Orbicom's Secretary General
-

2. Nomination Process

Since Orbicom's creation, the nomination process is the following:

- * the 3 Ex-Officio members serve and rotate according to their function within UNESCO (DG or ADG) UQAM (Rector) and UQAM (Orbicom's Secretary General);
- * the 12 members serving on the Board of Directors (6 Chair holders and 6 Associate members) are nominated by the two founding and Institutional Ex-Officio members of Orbicom (UNESCO and UQAM), and their nomination is ratified by the Assembly General of Members
- * once their nomination is ratified, the Board members elect among themselves the 3 Executive Officers: the President, the Vice-President and the Treasurer.

According to an amendment adopted at the 1999 AGM, each incoming Board member serves a 2 year mandate renewable only once, and there is a rotation of 6 Board members each year, providing both continuity and change over each 2 year cycle.

B) The six Orbicom members whose mandate will end in September 2004 are:

(A) for Associate and (C) or Chair holder

- * José Carreno-Carlon (C)

Vice-president of Orbicom and Mexican Chair Holder (Iberoamericana)

- * Yasuhiko Kawasumi (A)

Senior Policy Advisor, Japan Telecom and Chair of the 7th Committee of ITU

- * Ellen Wartella (C)

Treasurer of Orbicom, President of the Finance Committee and Chair Holder of the USA Chair (Texas)

* Reinhart Helmke (A)

Executive Director, United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS)

* Jan Annerstedt (C)

Danish Chair Holder (Copenhagen Business School)

* Mrs Kyungsook Lee (C)

Korean Chair Holder (Sookmyung Women's University)

C) The 6 Out-Going Members (mandate ending Sept. 2003)

(A) for Associate and (C) or Chair holder

* Gabriel-Jaime Perez Montoya (C) (Colombia)

Dean of Faculty Social Communication Javeriana University

Bogota, Colombia

* Stefaan Verhulst (A) (USA)

Director, Internet Policy

The Markle Foundation

New-York, USA

* Subhash Joshi (A) (India)

Group Director

Social Research Group Development & Educational Communication Unit

Indian Space research Centre

Ahmedabad, India

* Alain Modoux (A) (Switzerland)

Communication Consultant,

Geneva, Switzerland

* Pius Njawé (A) (Cameroon)

General Director

Groupe Multimédia Le Messenger

Douala, Cameroon

* Elena Vartanova (A) (Russia)

Associate Professor

Moscow State University

Moscow, Russian Federation

D. New Appointments:

In a telephone conference, on 21 August, the Ex-officio members decided to renew for a second term the mandate of 5 of the 6 out-going members. The decision was made for the sake of continuity and because these five officers have been particularly active.

It is also recommended to appoint **Charles Okigbo of Nigeria, in replacement of Pius Njawé of Cameroon.**

Resolution AGM / 03-04

It is proposed, by the Ex-officio members who consulted each other on 21 August 2003, that the AGM endorses the recommendation to renew for a second term 5 of the 6 out-going Board members and appoint Charles Okigbo of Nigeria in replacement of Pius Njawé of Cameroon. Resolution adopted.

Comments

Several members thanked the outgoing Board member and offered congratulations and support to Charles Okigbo, the new Director replacing Pius Njawé.

One Board member (Gabriel Perez) intervened to extend his congratulations and offered his good services. He also informed that he is leaving on a sabbatical year as Academic Dean of Javeriana University in Bogota. Professor José Miguel Pereira (jmpereira@javeriana.edu.co) will act as Chairholder in the interim.

VIII. Varia

Comments

The Secretary General opened this section of the Agenda paying tribute to Orbicom's friend, Tony Zeitoun, who died of cancer in May 2003. Tony who was doing the interface with Orbicom on behalf of CIDA was the first person to believe, three years ago, in the DDI initiative and in Orbicom's capacity to produce it. The Secretary General added that he personally received the help of Tony who introduced him in various circles (UNICT Task Force and PrepCom 2) last February, in Geneva. Several AGM participants echoed his statement.

In a separate intervention, the Secretary General proposed to members that they should devote an hour a week on Orbicom business. This received some favourable responses. One member proposed to have an Internet discussion on planning for communication programs in Africa and developing regions. Those interested were invited to write to him directly: charles.okigbo@ndsu.nodak.edu

Another member stressed the importance on agreeing on themes before devoting an hour a week to Orbicom's work.

An announcement was made by Jose Marques de Melo. Like many members of Orbicom, it will not be possible for him to participate in the Geneva Summit. He nonetheless wants his Chair to take part in the global debate on the information society. The Brazilian Chair's contribution, in association with VALOR newspaper, will consist of a focus on the intellectual property aspect of the information society. An event in the context of Celacom 2004 will take place in March and will involve the Latin American Chairs. All members of Orbicom are invited.

Derrick L. Cogburn who joined Orbicom during the AGM has invited the membership to focus on some of his initiatives. By decision of the rapporteur, his proposals have been placed in the section of this report dealing with the action plan (5.1). His intervention can be read in full on Orbicom's Web, AGM. 2003, VIII- Varia.

The President closed the AGM by stating the following:

"As you can witness, this 2003 virtual AGM has been a success. We have reached quorum without difficulty, endorsed the list of new (or renewed) Board Members, voted where necessary, but above all that, we have received many proposals for new initiatives. This is an indication that the Orbicom Network is well and alive.

The Secretariat will make an effort to organize the proposals and to present options to the Board of Directors in order to get a clearer direction for a renewed Action Plan.

I thank those who have volunteered to work in small groups on specific topics as this may be the way of the future.

And I thank all of you who took the time and invested efforts in order to make this AGM a success.

I therefore declare this AGM closed".

Alain Modoux, President