



**Minutes of Orbicom's
2004 Annual General Meeting of Members
(AGM)
Held Online
20 September – 4 October 2004**

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Quorum
Orbicom Annual General Meeting
(20 September –4 October 2004)

List of participants:

Annerstedt, Jan
Butt, Danny
Calmon Alves, Rosental
Carreño Carlón, José
Charron, Claude-Yves
Chin, Saik Yoon
Denis, Roch
Fusaro, Magda
Giguère, Pierre
Helmke, Reinhart
Jacquetin, Jean-Sébastien
Joshi, Subhash
Khan, Abdul Waheed
Koné, Mamadou Tadiou
Kuhlen, Rainer
Lafrance, André-A.
Lafrance, Jean-Paul
Maisonneuve, Danielle
Marques de Melo, José
Masiello-Riome, Charlotte
Mathien, Mathien
Miège, Bernard
Modoux, Alain
Naji, Jamal Eddine
Okigbo, Charles
Paquet-Sévigny, Thérèse
Rico de Sotelo, Carmen
Stone, Martha B.
Teer-Tomaselli, Ruth
Vartanova, Elena Leonidovna
Verhulst, Stefaan
von Schilling, Rainer
Warkentin de la Mora, Gabriela
Wartella, Ellen

Invitation to participate in the AGM 2004

The invitation is appended in Annex 1

IMPORTANT NOTICE

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/AGM2004

I. Word of the President

Dear friends of Orbicom Network,

We are once again united through Internet technology to hold our 2004 Annual General Assembly meeting (AGM), a task assigned to us by statutes. As to the Board of Directors, it will be held in Marrakech on 21 November, in the periphery of the Conference on the Media in Arabic and African countries, in which Orbicom members are cordially invited to take part if they can. On the occasion of the Board of Directors meeting, I plan to open an in-depth discussion about Orbicom's action plan and its future in the light of the Evaluation report mandated by UNESCO.

Orbicom has actively participated last December in the first phase of the World Summit of the Information Society (WSIS). Orbicom Forum made mention of it in its spring 2004 edition. In my opinion, our network has decisively positioned itself in Geneva as a respected player within the civil society and as an arm of UNESCO. Orbicom has taken advantage of this unique occasion to be better known and emphasize the range of its competences.

As you will notice in my report and in the Secretary General's report on the Orbicom action plan, things are moving swiftly with the 2nd phase of WSIS (Tunis, November 2005) as target date for delivery of major projects.

I look forward to fruitful exchanges with you,

Alain Modoux

Comments

Several members joined Chin Saik-Yoon in expressing a vote of thanks to Alain Modoux for his leadership, especially during WSIS Geneva which helped to advance the presence of Orbicom in the international debate.

II. Approval of the Agenda

Agenda

Assembly General of Members 2004

I. The President' Word of Welcome

II. Approval of the Agenda

III. Previous AGM Meeting / Approval of the Minutes of AGM 2003

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 (2004-2003)

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

VII. Board of Directors:

7.1 Board's Configuration

7.2 Endorsement of the New Board Members

7.3 Motion of Appreciation for the Outgoing Board Members

VIII. Varia

Resolution AGM-04-1

Moved by Roch Denis and seconded by Abdul W. Khan that the agenda of the current AGM be approved. Resolution approved.

III. Approval of the minutes of AGM 2003

Resolution AGM-04-2

Moved by Rainer von Shilling and seconded by Jamal Eddine Naji that the minutes of the AGM 2003 be approved. Resolution approved.

IV. Report of the Board of Directors

4.1 The President's Report

In the first column I wrote in the 2002 summer edition of Orbicom Forum as new President of Orbicom, I then stressed the following: " The next eighteen months will be crucial for Orbicom since our network will participate in the preparatory process of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) ..." At the time, I was basing my trust in Orbicom's capacity to contribute in a meaningful way to the WSIS venture on the results of the success of 1999 Montreal Conference on Connecting Knowledge in Communications: New Partnerships in Communications for the 21st Century . I also knew that Orbicom would be able to serve the international community by sharing the scientific expertise of its chairs and associate members with the stakeholders taking part in this World Summit.

Two years after, I must humbly confess that I was right. Not only our network took an active part in the preparatory process, but at the time the Geneva phase of the Summit was held last December, a good number of our members (35 in total) were actively participating in it under various incarnations. This shows how involved the Orbicom membership is in global issues. But over the expert participation of so many of our members, I must underline the high quality researches produced by Orbicom as contributions to the Summit and the international community at large: "Monitoring the Digital Divide and... beyond" edited in English and French, and "The 2003-2004 Digital Review of Asia Pacific". Both publications received very positive comments with the consequence that new editions will be produced in time for Tunis. I personally worked on the Platform of Content Professionals in close cooperation with leaders of international professional associations. The texts were exhibited on a number of panels (one for each of the six associations) within the kiosk of the Swiss Commission for UNESCO where Orbicom was offered hospitality.

But the next months will again be crucial to Orbicom. The Marrakech International Conference on the Media in the Arabic and African Countries jointly organized by Orbicom and the Kingdom of Morocco with the support of UNESCO will take place from 22 to 24 November. It is a follow up event to WSIS and should help clarify the media debate and find ways to implement the WSIS media action plan. I must insist that the task ahead is huge and Orbicom's secretarial and financial resources lean.

By the time we meet, the Evaluation Report of Orbicom should have been written by the evaluators and its content known. This should provide us with a base for substantial discussions about the future of Orbicom and the special relationship it entertains with UNESCO.

Alain Modoux, President

Comments

Several comments were triggered by the President's statement. Some members have expressed their satisfaction for Orbicom's work in the context of WSIS' media action plan which is leading to the Marrakech Conference. Also, while appreciating the short review of the past (Summit) and the immediate (Marrakech), a member suggested to focus on targets for ourselves over a longer period. One such suggestion is that Orbicom should develop a strategy to reduce the digital divide

within the emerging information society. In a late intervention, a member questioned Orbicom's specific place in the world debate (ce qui nous spécifie dans un débat mondial). He mentioned that members of Orbicom are, at the same time, positioned within their respective official governmental frameworks, and in the context of a strong and militant intervention of the civil society. The issue of financing was again raised this year with a suggestion that Orbicom membership be increased to 500 members and 40 chairs, and that new institutional members be recruited all around the world to help defray one third of Orbicom ordinary budget, the rest being provided by UNESCO and the country hosting the Secretariat.

4.2 Report of the Treasurer (2003-2004)

(all figures in Canadian Dollars)

I am happy to report that Orbicom's financial situation has continued to allow for substantial operations. This is due to last year's increased in kind contribution of UQAM (time of Orbicom's Secretary General and of his assistant Magda Fusaro) and to the management by the Secretariat of funded projects, especially Monitoring the Digital Divide and Digital Review of Asia Pacific.

You will have noticed a raise of office expenses over last year (from \$ 72 320 to 113 221), a slight increase of hospitality (from \$ 485 to \$ 1393) and a salary component that has decreased from \$ 141 397 to \$ 130 054. Despite trips necessitated by the preparation and attendance of WSIS Phase 1 in Geneva, there has been an actual decrease in travel from \$ 103 901 to \$74 892.

The explanation is found in the fact that the Secretary General travelled either under the umbrella of UQAM or as an official delegate representing the academics within the Canadian Delegation. Much of the travel expenses shown in the report are attributed to DirAP's meeting of experts from 28 countries that took place in February, in Jakarta.

Despite this apparent healthy situation, there is concern for the future for the funding of the Secretariat infrastructure. Montreal International has only disbursed \$ 20 000 to Orbicom this year instead of the usual \$ 40 000. A similar and final amount of \$ 20 000 was paid to Orbicom this summer. As mentioned last year, new rules are now excluding organizations of the size of Orbicom. Our hard work at convincing Montreal International to continue to fund a good part of the Secretariat's infrastructure costs has only been partly successful as you can notice.

I am pleased to report that DirAP is funded by IDRC.PANASIA and UNDP.APDIP to allow for its second edition (2005-2006). And discussions are underway with IDRC to fund a Phase 3 of DirAP.

But, concerning a Phase 3 of Monitoring the Digital Divide, this complex and multifaceted project is now necessitating more extensive negotiations with potential funders. Orbicom has received signs of interest from a number of contributors and some have been translated in grants date in view of the very favourable comments received from all sectors. CIDA has already contributed \$ 50 000 while we are expecting commitments from UNESCO, ITU, IDRC and La Francophonie.

In closing, I must attract the attention to the Marrakech Conference in November. Fund raising activities have taken place since Orbicom, which has entered into an agreement with the Government of Morocco, must find the means to defray some 15 international travels and some of the costs of the Conference's secretarial activities.

I thank you all for your support, and I would welcome any suggestion you might have to help consolidate the financial backing for the Secretariat's infrastructure costs.

Ellen Wartella, Treasurer

Comments

Members who intervened thanked 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. Praise was also addressed to UQAM for its constant support. One member outlined two aspects implicit in the Treasurer's report: Orbicom has again succeeded in providing value for money, and obtaining funding for the running of the Secretariat is much more difficult than raising money for specific projects. One member suggested that Orbicom being a global network of high calibre intellectual capital could be deployed "for a fee" to address pressing problems in communication education, training research, production, advocacy and evaluation.

4.3 Approval of the Certified financial Statements (2003-2004)

Statements in PDF can be accessed in AGM 2004 on the Web.

Resolution AGM- 04-3

Moved by Chin Saik-Yoon and seconded by Pierre Giguère. Resolution approved.

4.4 Appointment of the Financial Controllers for 2004-2005

Resolution AGM – 04-4

To appoint the accounting firm Bélair, Deloitte, Touche and Tomatsu as External Auditors for the period 2004-2005; moved by Chin Saik-Yoon and seconded by Carmen Rico. Resolution approved.

V. Report of the Secretary General

5.1 Status of the Action Plan

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.

Current Status:

During 2004, the Mexican Chair is planning to hold an international conference on "Digital Government". For this occasion, the participants will reconsider the conclusions from the seminar on equitable access to ICTs in order to monitor and to develop further steps to be taken (particularly, because the Mexican government drive to have e-Mexico going by the end of its current Administration). This seminar is to be held in October or November.

In direct relation to the equitable access project, the Mexican Chair is starting a major project with the COFETEL (Mexican Federal Commission on Telecommunications) in order to monitor diverse aspects of Mexico in the information society: infrastructure, content development, services provided, education expanded etc. The Mexican Chair is raising money for the project and hope to have it started by the end of summer 2004.

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. No plan for the second phase.

3) Monitoring the Digital Divide (Digital Divide Index – DDI)

Summary

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

There was existing 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 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 ICTs 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.

Phase II: "Monitoring Digital... and beyond", has been produced and published in English and French in November 2003 with the assistance of various funding agencies (CIDA, InfoDev of World Bank and UNESCO). The work that has targeted 192 countries has been complemented with country profiles and thematic studies (competitiveness and knowledge). It was officially launched at two special venues at the World Summit on Information society (WSIS) Geneva, December 2003. A pre-launching event took place at the Washington National Press Club on 25 November 2003.

Phase III: The initial application covered the period 1995-2001. Considering the speed of developments, there is need to continue monitor the evolution of the Digital Divide, especially following the Action Plan of WSIS, to gauge relative progress for Tunis and beyond. Therefore the empirical application and the ensuing basic analysis will be extended to the latest year for which new data become available. This will be the cornerstone of the new phase and will provide a valuable contribution to the discussions.

With results from the empirical application consolidated, and more resources, the analytical potential afforded by the model will be exploited more fully. Armed with the known coordinates of countries in terms of their Infostate levels, their relative positions and characteristic movements, it will be instructive to dig further into the 'whys'. Many valuable lessons wait to be learned by such detailed analyses.

1) One strand of such work involves detailed analytical linkages between the results of the empirical application and national/regional approaches to the Information Society, including specific e-policies.

2) Another area with considerable promise for added value is of a thematic nature. For example, ICTs in education are directly relevant to the Digital Divide; so are e-government initiatives, tele-medicine and community approaches to connectivity. These also relate closely to the MDGs. Throughout, issues of prices and affordability are crucial. Leveraging available information, and combining it with information sources outside the core model will be instrumental to assess impacts on a wider societal scale and offer a clearer sense of the meaning and direction of ICT-related developments.

Timeline

Phase III of the project will span the period from April 2004 to December 31, 2006. The updated application will be delivered in time for Tunis. All other projects will be delivered either by Tunis or by the end of the period, depending on the needs of the partners and the available resources.

Partners

In addition to the original partners, UNESCO, World Bank, CIDA and Orbicom, the project will be enlarged by new stakeholders. These include the IDRC and La Francophonie. Also, the Latin America study will be conducted in collaboration with OSILAC and ECLAC, the Asian study in collaboration with MIMOS and AMIC, and the African study in collaboration with IDRC. In addition, the collaboration with the ITU and Statistics Canada will continue.

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:

An electronic forum for on-going assessment / exchange of information and communication trends, and training needs and opportunities, via Orbicom's web site;

a) 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: <http://www.orbicom.uqam.ca>

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 last year's conference (5-6 May 2003) and could be used as partial support of the Marrakech Conference on the Media in Arabic and African Countries scheduled for 22-24 November 2004.

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 ([Dir@P](#))

First Edition (2003-2004):

Dir@P is an initiative that must be perceived as complementary to Monitoring the Digital Divide project. The first edition has been funded by a consortium of international partners: The Asia-Pacific Development Information Programme (APDIP) of UNDP, the Pan Asia Networking (PAN) of the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) and Orbicom. It constitutes 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 has resulted in a joint publication under the scientific direction of in the summer of 2003 under the scientific direction of Mr. Chin Saik Yoon, Orbicom Associate member of Penang Malaysia.

The first edition of the Digital Review of Asia Pacific has attracted positive comments among the international stakeholders, especially at the World Summit on the Information Society, held in Geneva from 10 – 12 December 2003, where several presentations of this pioneering work were made. The successful editorial process involving a panel of authors from within the region writing to a common template is a useful approach for reviewing and monitoring the information society.

Second Edition (2005-2006)

The second edition (2005-2006) will focus on Internet governance, digital inequalities, and economics of the services sector. This was decided during a three-day meeting of the panel of authors held in Jakarta from 27-29 February 2004. Two other crosscutting issues will also be addressed in depth by the next edition: the social and political impact of ICTs, and appropriate ICTs, open source, localisation, and internationalisation.

The second edition will also provide updated chapters on the 27 economies covered in the current publication. Iran and Maldives will be covered for the first time, bringing the total number of economies reviewed to 29. The special regional chapter for the Pacific Islands will be expanded to cover 20 states and territories from the 14 currently reviewed. The 2005/2006 edition is therefore expected to review a total of 49 economies and territories.

B) PROPOSALS FOR NEW PROJECTS

As a follow-up to the Board of Directors' meeting of May 2003 and the AGM of September 2003, a number of interesting initiatives have been suggested. However, these proposals 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, proposed by Eugénie R.AW, Angela Castellanos and Gabriel Perez.

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. James Archibald made a reference to UPN Research of ABC Europe. Madanmohan Rao made a similar proposal below.

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 pose to funders and NGO alike. Charles Okigbo interested in joining a work group on this topic.

4. *"How media and culture industries will be affected by the various globalized trade regimes being proposed and advocated by the different trading countries?" Proposed by Chin Saik Yoon.*

5. *'Mass Media and Coverage of ICTs: Agenda Setting and the Development Orientation', proposed by Madanmohan Rao.*

6. *'Organisational Knowledge Management: Harnessing ICTs in Knowledge-Based organisations', proposed by Madanmohan Rao.*

7. *'Global Debates, Local Relevance: Media Coverage of WTO and WSIS', , proposed by Madanmohan Rao.*

8. *'Telecommunications, Tele-work and the Knowledge Society: the Impact of Outsourcing and Offshoring'. Projects 5,6,7 and 8 proposed by Madanmohan Rao.*

9. *"Basic Education Reforms in French Speaking West Africa: Critical Analysis of Communication Strategies in the Implementation of Education for All Programmes (EFA)". Proposed by Martial Dembele.*

10. *"Comprehensive study of mobility due to new ICT applications for work, leisure, citizenship, etc." Proposed by Jan Annerstedt.*

11. *"The role of international conferences in this global governance: mobilizing knowledge resources to support those voices "excluded" in the process" Proposed by Derrick Cogburn.*

CONFERENCES:

Jakarta, 27-29 February 2004, an Editorial meeting bringing together Orbicom members from 30 countries in the region. This meeting took place under the leadership of Chin Saik-Yoon and has been devoted to the preparation of the 2005-2006 Edition (see Dir@P above)

Marrakech, 22-24 November 2004, Conference on Media as a follow up to the "World Summit on the Information Society". The event should attract some 100 experts from African and Arab States representing private and public media, as well as the academic community. The aim of the conference will be to examine the possible concrete measures which could be taken in this part of the world with a view to implementing the Plan of Action recommendations adopted in Geneva relating to media.

Comments

Making a resume of the interventions pertaining to the action plan is not an easy task. Readers are therefore invited to access Orbicom's Web / AGM 2004 Forum Section for complete statements. In this report, the comments are grouped in two categories: 1) information, 2) proposals/suggestions. They are reported according to topics, not in chronological order.

Information

On behalf of UNESCO, **Abdul Waheed Khan** made reference to the importance of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) to chart new course for humanity and insisted on the expression “Knowledge Societies” as a theme of particular interest to UNESCO in the light of the growing importance of different forms of knowledge in societies and the emergence of a new paradigm of knowledge-based societies. He indicated that UNESCO aspires to reassert the importance of distinction between knowledge and information. He made reference to the 9 point action plan of Orbicom as significantly contributing to fostering international dialogue and conducting research and analysis of ICT-related developments. He explained that the UNESCO concept of Knowledge Societies is based on principles and parameters such as: freedom of expression, universal access to information and knowledge, respect for human dignity and diversity, and quality of education for all. He detailed UNESCO’s strategy for the Tunis phase of WSIS. In view of its importance in relation to Orbicom’s own activities, the strategy is reported in full.

Capacity Building: by developing programmes to eradicate illiteracy using ICTs; promoting e-literacy skills for all; developing ICT-based alternative educational delivery systems, notably for achieving Education for All targets; by using ICTs to meet the educational needs of information professionals; developing distance learning, training and other forms of education as part of capacity-building programmes.

Sharing technological and scientific know-how: by promoting electronic publishing, differential pricing and open access initiatives; by promoting ICT use and networks to share scientific knowledge; by promoting the long-term systematic and efficient collection, dissemination and preservation of essential scientific digital data.

Access: by developing policy guidelines for public domain information; by establishing multi-purpose community access points; by supporting capacity-building for local authorities/local governance; by developing digital public library/archive services and facilitating access to periodicals and books.

Cultural Diversity: by promoting the production of cultural, educational and scientific content; by developing local cultural industries suited to the linguistic and cultural context of the users; by using ICTs for the preservation of natural and cultural heritage and creating policies that support cultural and linguistic diversity; promoting understanding of other cultures as a means of facilitating global dialogue.

Media: by encouraging the media - both traditional and new - to continue to play an important role in Knowledge Societies; by encouraging the development of domestic legislation that guarantees the independence and plurality of the media, by increasing their investigative capacity and by promoting balanced and diverse portrayals of women by the media.

UNESCO is **fostering multi-stakeholder approaches**, building on already adopted positions and is heavily involving the professional communities, including ORBICOM.

In response to Dr. Khan’s statement, **Roch Denis** wrote that the relationship between UNESCO and Orbicom has rarely been so good in the recent past. He thanked him for outlining so clearly the priorities and the strategy of UNESCO’s Communication and Information Sector. He recommended that they be taken into

account by the Chairs individually and the network collectively when making activity choices. He hoped that the Marrakech meeting in the company of Dr. Khan will focus on greater complementarities between Orbicom' work and UNESCO's priorities.

Equitable Access to ICT Project

Gabriela Warkentin de la Mora informed of the recent developments that have changed, somehow, the course of the project. The Mexican Chair was planning to hold a conference on e-government. Instead, the Chair organized a regional conference (Latin American) on the implications of the digitalization of radio in the countries of the area, in view of the political, economical and social implications of such technological transformation. Much was said about another digital divide (now a digital radio divide). She promised that the transcripts from these sessions will be posted on the website. She wrote that she is happy that the Equitable Access project is broadening its horizons. Considering these recent developments, Mexico decided to move the e-government conference to the first months of 2005.

In this regard, **Reinhart Helmke** commented that the e-government conference in Mexico looks very promising. He mentioned that he has seen a few years ago impressive work that has been done in this area in Brazil and Costa Rica (just to stay in the region) and that the conference will be an opportunity for feed-back from such experiences. "Brazil had even gone as far as organizing on-line reverse auctions for bulk purchases made by government agencies, apparently at astonishing savings". He concluded saying that José Marques de Melo is better placed to know what has become of these initiatives.

ComDev Project

Both Chin Saik-Yoon and **Claude-Yves Charron** intervened to inform about the current status of the "Core Literature on Development Communication" project that has been on the drafting board since the Orbicom Mexico meeting of July 2000. Chin mentioned that Prof Jan Servaes, scientific director for this initiative, presented the project proposal to the UN Roundtable on Development Communication held in Rome in September 2004. His presentation received support from a couple of UN agencies. To this info, Claude-Yves added that should this initiative receive "green light" quite a few of Orbicom members would be involved. He emphasized all the time and energy required in drafting different versions of the proposal, and in submitting them to different international granting agencies. He commented that the competition for research funding is already quite difficult on the national level, in each of our respective countries and that the degree of competition for research fund is even greater, in the international arena. He expressed his gratitude to Chin and to Jan Servaes for their expertise and contribution in redrafting the different versions of this research proposal, and presenting it to different potential funding agencies.

Suggestions/proposals

Several members intervened to express an interest in the ComDev project.

José Marques de Melo reaffirmed his interest in participating in the research with his Brazilian team indicating that he already possess a comprehensive documentation on this topic.

Reinhart Helmke concurred with José that this should be a high priority project and that this is an area where ORBICOM can exercise leadership. He added that it is disconcerting that no funding source has come forward so far. He suggested that a solution should be found on how the information is going to be kept up to date and how the on-going operations would be financed. He suggested a system of partial self-financing to be designed as part of the project and asked whether any of the UN agencies mentioned in Chin Saik Yoon's comments offered to support the operations at the Rome meeting.

Jean-Paul Lafrance has expressed the view that the project should take the form a comparative study and should deepen the analysis of the "communication for development" concept.

Camen Rico suggested a more contemporary approach focussing on countries which are "different" and with lower profiles.

Jamal Eddine Naji proposed that the interested chairs involved at the beginning and which has supported the idea of such project, should meet in Marrakech with Alain Modoux and Claude-Yves Charron to examine the real possibilities of doing it.

In response to the above, **Claude-Yves Charron** intervened to make it clear that Jan Servaes has assumed the role of Scientific Director for this initiative, that a financial proposal has been developed in close dialogue with Chin and the Secretariat, and that it was presented at a UN COMDEV Round Table earlier in September.

Suggestions, more general in nature, were made by other members.

Charles Okigbo referred to the impressive list of 11 projects that are at various levels of conception. He mentioned that in the absence of working committees, the Secretariat has the tedious burden of trying to coordinate all these 11 nascent projects (and more). If Orbicom had working committees, these projects could conveniently be grouped under specific categories, based on commonalities - and the committee chairs would be reporting directly to the Secretariat. He added that it is easier to deal with four or five committee chairs than 11 individual project leaders - all eager for some direction (on fundraising, partnership, design, and implementation ideas) from the Secretariat.

Subhash Joshi stressed the very comprehensive nature of the action plan status report. He recommended to prioritise them and prepare an action plan for fulfilment.

Bernard Miège commented that the list of accomplishments is substantial and at the level of current issues. He went on to say that the difficulty for the membership is to appraise itself of these projects while focusing on their own individual projects.

Danny Butt made reference to "Media, Culture and Trade Regimes" a proposal put forward by Chin last year. He mentioned that the issues of cultural self-determination have certainly been present in Asia Pacific, both in reference to the Australia-US Free Trade Agreement as well as in relation to indigenous media production in Aotearoa New Zealand. He stressed that there is an urgent need to improve the level of policy advice in this area toward the long term effects of trade agreements - and also Intellectual Property generally. He indicated that he would like to join with any other members interested in this issue toward action in this field.

Reinhart Helmke stated that Chin Saik Yoon is right when he assumes that this is an area with enormous potential impact, in both economic and social terms. He suggested, if it is decided that this project goes ahead, to explore whether it makes sense joining forces with WIPO.

In response to **Charles Okigbo, Dany Butt** suggested that he would support project development and management for new projects to be held with a person rather than in a standing committee structure, as this improves focus. Under such circumstances, there may not be as much need to "prioritise" projects - rather any projects that can attract a critical mass of members to work on it can move forward.

Reinhart Helmke made two additional comments. He associated himself with José Marques de Melo recognizing that the list of new projects is a sign of ORBICOM's vitality and added that the list of accomplishments bears witness to ORBICOM's relevance. He wrote that the Digital Divide Index, the Digital Review of Asia Pacific, and information on training opportunities on our website come to mind as areas where ORBICOM has taken leadership. Like Roch Denis, he applauded the present good relationship between UNESCO and Orbicom. He concluded saying that the achievements reported by Claude-Yves and the comments made by Abdul Waheed Khan indicate that this relationship is nothing short of symbiotic and certainly productive for end users.

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

New Chair

Orbicom is still expecting the official confirmation from UNESCO regarding the following new Chair:

- South Africa

New Members

The International Secretariat is proud to inform the Board of Directors of the following new additions to its membership (see list below). The new members joined the Network since the AGM 2003. 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.

*Derrick L. Cogburn
Assistant Professor of Information and African Studies
The University of Michigan
USA*

Martial Dembele
Directeur adjoint du Centre interuniversitaire Paul-Gérin-Lajoie de développement international en éducation
Université du Québec à Montréal
Canada

Thérèse Gastaut
Directrice, Division de la communication stratégique
Nations Unies
USA

Wijayananda Jayaweera
Director of the Communication Development Division
UNESCO
France

Mamadou Tadiou Koné
Professeur adjoint
Université Laval
Canada

José Miguel Pereira
Director
Pontificia Universidad Javeriana
Colombia

Nicanor G. Tiongson
Dean
University of the Philippines
Philippines

Minka Zlateva
Chair Holder of UNESCO Chair "Communication and Public Relations"
University of Sofia "St Kliment Ottridski"
Bulgaria

Anna Haebich
Unesco Chair and Director
Centre for Public Culture and Ideas, Griffith University
Australia

Reem Obeidat
Director
UNESCO Chair for Communications Technology and Journalism for Women, Dubai
Women's College
United Arab Emirates

Brian Byrd
Assistant Director
The Rockefeller Foundation
United States of America

Rosental Calmon Alves
Unesco Chair and Knight Chair in Journalism
University of Texas, Austin
United States of America

Jürgen Horlbeck
Decano Académico de la Facultad de Comunicación
Director Titular de la Cátedra UNESCO
Pontificia Universidad Javeriana
Columbia

Comments

Several participants wrote a few words of welcome to the new members. There was a suggestion that that it might be useful to find out from new members what could have been the motivation to join while having some feed-back from those who have left the network.

Charles Okigbo introduced the exchange on Orbicom's membership. He expressed the views on the need for more vigorous recruitment effort in sub-Saharan Africa, where the needs for Orbicom programming are most acute. He recommended that Orbicom focuses more on practising communication professionals in the private sector and in government service as these categories can afford to pay their way to Orbicom meetings and events. He concluded mentioning that it is not too late to invite some professional communication associations and ministers of information in sub-Saharan African countries - especially Ghana, Nigeria, South Africa and Kenya.

Jamal Eddine Naji added his voice to Charles' and expressed the wish to see more representation from francophone Sahel.

Jean-Sébastien Jacquetin intervened to stress that it is not only necessary to reinforce the network geographically but equally important is the partnering with the public and private sectors. He concluded that, in his opinion, Orbicom strategic orientations are perfectly pertinent.

Claude-Yves Charron intervened in favour of a stronger presence of members in Africa. He concurred with Charles and Jamal's wishes, for a stronger membership from African countries. He then wrote a few words in relation with Orbicom's two main categories of members. On the chairholders, he mentioned that the chair in Ivory Coast has been vacant, since the departure of Mrs Regina Traore, a few years ago. The instability in the country has reduced the degree of interactivity and exchanges with colleagues there.

He announced that the chair in emergence in South Africa should be confirmed within a few days or weeks, by the UNESCO Headquarters. He mentioned that during the teleconference of Ex-Officio members to discuss appointments to the Board of Director, Dr. Khan was confident that the process of creation of this chair was indeed advanced enough to recommend Chairholder-to-be, Dr. Ruth Teer -Tomaselli, as a new Board member, within the chairholders' category.

With regard to the associate members, Claude-Yves Charron indicated that the Marrakech Conference, in November, should provide Orbicom with an important

window of opportunity in terms of recruitment of new associate members from different countries in the region. He then took note of Charles' invitation to adopt, in our recruitment, a focus on the government and private sectors for the associate members, concluding on the need for complementarities of perspectives between the different stakeholders involved.

VI. The Chairs' Programme of Activities

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

- *Brazil*
- *Bulgaria*
- *Columbia*
- *Denmark*
- *France*
- *Mexico*
- *Morocco*
- *Russia*
- *South Africa*
- *Spain, Barcelona*
- *United States*
- *United Arab Emirates*
- *Uruguay*

Comments

Reports from the Russian and the Danish chairs were received at the time the AGM 2004 forum was about to close. We invite the membership to consult the documents in annex or on Orbicom's Web/Chairs.

VII. Board of Directors

7.1 Configuration

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.

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 On-Going Members (mandate ending Sept. 2005)
(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 Fondation
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*

** Charles Okigbo (A) (Nigeria)
Professor
Department of Communication
North Dakota State University, USA*

** Elena Vartanova (A) (Russia)
Associate Professor
Moscow State University
Moscow, Russian Federation*

7.2 Appointment of New Board Members

In the telephone conference of 20 September 2004 the Ex-officio members agreed to renew for a second term the mandate of two of the out-going members:

*Jan Annerstedt (C) Danish Chair,
Reinhart Helmke (A) Former Executive Director, United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS).
The decision was made because these two directors have been particularly active.*

The other members whose second mandate is ending this September, plus Gabriel Perez (C) of Colombia, who has left for a new assignment before termination of his mandate in 2005, are being replaced by:

*Gabriela Warkentin de la Mora (C) Mexican Chair
Mohd Tengku Shariffadeen (A) President of Mimos, Malaysia
Rosental Calmon Alves (C) USA Chair
Jamal Eddine Naji (C) Moroccan Chair
Ruth Teer-Tomasselli (C) South African Chair
Their mandate will terminate in September 2006.*

Resolution AGM / 04-5

It is proposed, by the Ex-officio members who consulted each other on 20 September 2004, that the AGM endorses the recommendation to renew for a second term the mandates of Jan Annerstedt and Reinhart Helmke and to proceed with the appointment of:

Gabriela Warkentin de la Mora (C) Mexican Chair;
 Mohd Tengku Shariffadeen (A) President of Mimos, Malaysia
 Rosental Calmon Alves (C) USA Chair
 Jamal Eddine Naji (C) Moroccan Chair
 Ruth Teer-Tomaselli (C) South African Chair

Resolution adopted

Comments

All comments were in support of the recommendation with words of encouragement for the new directors. One member, **Martha Stone**, made the following interesting comment: "I would like to pick up one of the threads from the last AGM. It would greatly appreciated if the members of the Board, new and continuing, could give a few words about their vision of the ORBICOM Network, and what they see as the priority areas and critical issues that the Network should address. This would certainly help me understand the various positions of this important management and oversight group. I also appreciate the words of Roch Denis. Choosing an effective Board of Directors is indeed a complex and multi-faceted process".

7.3 Outgoing Board Members / Motion of Appreciation

Roch Denis posted the following text as a motion of appreciation for the outgoing Board members.

"Dear Friends of Orbicom,

As we are proceeding with the appointment and reappointment of directors of Orbicom, I want to propose to you to join me in expressing, to our friends who are leaving Orbicom's Board, our gratitude for the constant and voluntary support they gratified our network with during their two mandates.

Many thanks to our out-going vice-president José Carreno-Carlon who has represented so well the network and who made a point in associating Orbicom in his Chair's projects; many thanks also to our Treasurer Ellen Wartella who has never hesitated financing personally the promotion of Orbicom and its projects in Austin, New-York and Washington; our thanks to Yasuhiko Kawasumi for his discreet efforts in support of Orbicom in Japan, at ITU and elsewhere; thanks to Kyunsook Lee for her help in Asian forums; and thanks to Gabriel-Jaime Perez-Montoya who has left his Chair in Bogota to become Vice-rector in Cali for his amicable and serious participation in many Orbicom forums".

This text received support by a number of members. **Claude-Yves Charron** paid a special tribute inspired by Confucius. He essentially wrote: "... I know even when

working together to build virtual networks, that they cannot come to life, and they can't be sustainable, without the feeling of trust progressively built over time , through joint initiative, in one thread, linking us with others..."

VIII. Varia

Comments

Jamal Eddine Naji has intervened to signal the difficulty he has experienced in posting messages. The Webmaster indicated that the University network had been attacked by a virus and that the slowing down has been temporary. Jamal also intervened with two messages of substance, one on the situation of the press in Tunisia and one reporting an article on censorship in South Africa. They can be accessed on the Web in the AGM 2004 Varia section. They are not reproduced nor commented in this report as Orbicom is not an advocacy group.

The President closed the AGM 2004 on 4 October 2004 by stating the following:

From: Orbicom Webmestre <webmaster.orbicom@uqam.ca>
 Date: Mon, 04 Oct 2004 13:28:45 -0400
 To: <orbicom-anglophones@uqam.ca>, <orbicom-francophones@uqam.ca>, <orbicom-hispanophones@uqam.ca>
 Subject: Orbicom / Closure of AGM 2004

Dear Orbicom Members and Friends,

Once again we have managed to successfully hold the mandatory Assembly General of Members of Orbicom (AGM 2004) despite our respective heavy schedules.

Many useful comments were made regarding the action plan and its list of projects, and ways to seek a better footing for the recurrent infrastructure costs of the Secretariat. The AGM 2004 report will be examined by the Board members who will meet in situ in Marrakech on 21 November, just before the "Conference on the Role and Place of Media in the Information Society in Africa and the Arab States" (22 to 24 November 2004). Needless to say that Orbicom members who can manage to travel to Marrakech on their own in order to participate are very welcome.

Some ideas proposed are great, like an in situ AGM next year, but it would necessitate the kind of financing Orbicom does not have. Some other ideas are very doable, like the suggestion made by one member, that project development and management for new projects to be held with a person rather than in a standing committee structure, as this improves focus. Under such circumstances, there may not be as much need to "prioritise" projects - rather any projects that can attract a critical mass of members to work on it can move forward. However, it is unfortunate that some of the project proponents of AGM 2003 did not participate this year. The purpose of a forum of this kind is to build alliances on specific projects or issues.

While Orbicom is sailing "full steam" towards Marrakech and the Tunis phase of the World Summit on the Information Society (November 2005) with two of its flagship projects being reengineered and updated (Monitoring the Digital Divide and the

Digital Review of Asia Pacific) there are some chances that the Comdev project, under the scientific direction of Jan Servaes, could take off.

In closing I wish to join my sincere thanks to those expressed by Rector Roch Denis to the out-going Board members. There is not much to add to his eloquent trilingual statement. I also thank the new Board members for having responded so enthusiastically to the call of the Ex-officio members who nominated them. And to the numerous new Orbicom members, both chairholders and associate members, I wish that you will find in Orbicom the kind of stimulating network you are expecting.

Again thank you to all of you who participated for your dedication to our network.

I declare the 2004 virtual AGM session closed.

Alain Modoux

Annexe 1 Invitation for AGM

From: Orbicom Webmestre <webmaster.orbicom@uqam.ca>
 Date: Tue, 07 Sep 2004 12:16:16 -0400
 To: <orbicom-anglophones@uqam.ca>
 Subject: ORBICOM / GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MEMBERS (AGM) / 20 September- 1 October 2004

Dear Orbicom Members and Friends,

As announced in the summer edition of Orbicom Forum, the AGM 2004 will be held online as of Monday 20 September and will last for two weeks.

I urge you to consider sparing a few moments of your busy schedule to interact with your colleagues during this annual statutory meeting of Orbicom. Needless to say that your participation is important to the life of the Network.

I am looking forward to exchanging ideas with you.

A few days before the AGM, I will communicate the instructions to help with the navigation.

Thank you and best regards,

Claude-Yves Charron
 Secretary General of Orbicom

From: Orbicom Webmestre <webmaster.orbicom@uqam.ca>
 Date: Tue, 07 Sep 2004 12:16:18 -0400
 To: <orbicom-hispanophones@uqam.ca>
 Subject: ORBICOM/ ASAMBLEA GENERAL DE MIEMBROS (AGM)/ 20 de setiembre – 1 de octubre 2004

Estimados miembros de Orbicom y amigos:

Tal como les anunciamos en el número de verano de Orbicom, la AGM se desarrollará en línea, durante dos semanas, a partir del 20 de setiembre.

Les ruego encarecidamente que dediquen algunos espacios de su agenda, que sabemos recargada, para interactuar con los colegas de la red en el curso de esta reunión anual estatutaria de Orbicom. Damos por descontado la importancia de su participación para la vida de la red.

Tendré el mayor gusto de intercambiar ideas con ustedes.

Días antes de la conferencia, ustedes reciban las instrucciones las cuales le permitan acceder al foro.

Cordiales saludos y muchas gracias.

Claude-Yves Charron
Secretario General

From: Orbicom Webmestre <webmaster.orbicom@uqam.ca>
Date: Tue, 07 Sep 2004 12:16:10 -0400
To: <orbicom-francophones@uqam.ca>
Subject: ORBICOM / ASSEMBLÉE GÉNÉRALE DES MEMBRES (AGM) / 20 septembre
– 1er octobre 2004

Chers membres d'Orbicom et amis,

Tel qu'annoncé dans le numéro d'été d'Orbicom Forum, l'AGM 2004 aura lieu en ligne à compter du 20 septembre pour une période de deux semaines.

Je vous prie instamment de penser à consacrer quelques moments de votre horaire chargé pour interagir avec vos collègues du réseau au cours de cette réunion annuelle statutaire d'Orbicom. Il va sans dire que votre participation est importante pour la vie du réseau.

Je serai heureux d'échanger des idées avec vous.

Vous recevrez quelques jours avant la conférence, la marche à suivre pour accéder au forum.

Merci et mes salutations les meilleures,

Claude-Yves Charron
Secrétaire général

Annexe 2

Chair Activities : Denmark / Russia

A new book available

2:36:37 AM 10/2/2004

A new book has been published by the Moscow based UNESCO Chair in Journalism and Mass Communication. It is based on the materials of the conference which was organised by the Faculty of Journalism, Moscow State University, in cooperation with ORBICOM and financed by the UNESCO Moscow Office. Requests for the book should be sent to me (eva@journ.msu.ru)(book is free, expenses for mail delivery might be negotiated)

SHAPING TOMORROW'S MEDIA SYSTEM

Edited by Elena L. Vartanova and Yassen N. Zassoursky

Changes in traditional media systems seem to be really profound. Economic and business models of mass media are losing traditional contours. Professional norms and ethical standards are put under pressures. Print media are facing new challenges resulted from visible changes of audience attitudes and multiplying distribution channels. Analogue broadcasting is losing ground in competition with growing in number digital TV and radio channels while educational and cultural role of television broadcasting is questioned by global commercially driven entertainment audiovisual industries.

One of the key driving forces for change is certainly a progress of information and communication technologies, and the growth of new media happens to become the most evident outcome of current shifts, but not the only one. Commercialization, fragmentation of audiences, decrease in responsible and socially oriented journalism are further consequences of evolving changes. All these issues have been reflected in articles of the volume in various ways and from different angles - globalization and glocalization, public service and access to the media, especially to the new media, technology as a force of change.

Among the authors are Yassen N. Zassoursky. Factors Shaping Media Systems of the 21st Century; Bernard Miège. From Cultural Industries to Content Industries; Elena Vartanova. Public Service in Old and New Media; Werner D'Inka. Journalism Between Public Mission and Market Orientation; Irina Nechaeva. Community Media: The Third Way?; Richard C. Vincent. Transnational Media and the Survival of Democracy; Reinhart Ricker. Restrictions to the Internet According to the German Law; Jan Ekercrantz. Visual Determinism and the Immediacy Effect: Media and the New World Order; Jukka Pietilainen. Russian Media System: Prospects for the Future; Katja Koikkalainen. Russian Financial Press in a Global Context; Alla Shesterina. Information Phantomness of the International Reports in the Regional Media; Ivan Zassoursky. Internet in the Russia: Moving into the 21st Century; Ilya Kiriya. ICT and the Difference between North and South; Janusz Adamowski. Polish Electronic Media in the Globalized and Glocalized Environment; Tatiana Dobrosklonskaya. Media Ecology as an Effective Means of Public Regulation of the Media Content; Jean-Paul Lafrance, Pierre Brouillard. Uses and Practices of New Information and Communication Technologies; Marianna Seferova. Internet – the Medium of the New Japanese Information Society.

Elena Vartanova

mWatch Europe: Fostering Mobile Readiness by pioneering new applications in Europe

5:16:49 PM 10/1/2004

In 2003 and, again, in 2004, the Copenhagen chair has facilitated a review and assessment of pioneering attempts to further mobility in Northern Europe's emerging information society, using ICT applications.

Now, the chair has initiated (encouraged by the European Commission) a project that will enlarge the study to include not only the Baltic Sea Region (in focus for the 2003 and 204 studies), but the whole of the European Union. With partners across Europe, all 25 countries of the Union will be screened for such pioneering new applications of ICT and assessing user-producer relationships that may foster new such applications to the benefit of Europe's citizens.

Contacts have been taken in the Middle East to include also the Arab countries in an mWatch Mediterranean. Similarly, deliberations have recently taken place in southern Africa to assess also the options for an mWatch Africa, using similar methodologies as in Europe, across the countries in Africa south of the Sahara.

The current project -- called mWatch Europe -- is to start formally at the end of 2004 and address systematically the strategic issue of mobility on the basis of new information and communications technology (ICT). The focus is strictly put on pioneering, user-driven mobile applications designed and developed for business firms as well as for public agencies, for professionals as well as for ordinary citizens. Seamless connectivity opens up for qualitative changes in mobility at work, in education and training, for entertainment and leisure, in public health, etc. Seamless connectivity or true mobility in the emerging Information Society may actually come to represent a major shift in the evolution towards a more digitized economy and society in Europe. By identifying, analysing and exposing pioneering mobile applications, the project should improve networking among the designers, developers and early users of inventive mobile applications. By benchmarking such new applications with regard also to actual user needs, the project should help diffuse and implement novel mobile applications at a very early stage in a product cycle.

To address systematically the evolution of mobile applications of ICT all over Europe, and to approach also the regional clustering of ICT-competencies, the project's objectives include the creation of insights into how new mobile applications are unfolding in Europe. Emphasis will be put on:

1. Benchmarking of pioneering mobile applications, developed by European-based firms and institutions in order to expose good entrepreneurship, to understand superior framework conditions for invention, and to stimulate innovation and related diffusion of novel products and services.
2. Functional interactions among the public and private players that develop and diffuse new mobile applications in Europe, including the involvement of various professional groups and ordinary citizens in the actual development and implementation of mobile applications.
3. Creation and support of a pan-European network of communication and interaction to exchange ideas for new mobile applications, and to foster their further

development in the private sector, among public institutions and in civil society at large.

4. The scope and particular strengths of the economic and other forces driving various modes of developing and using new mobile applications among business firms and public institutions across Europe.

The project overall goal is to identify and expose broadly Europe's most forward-looking and promising developments with regard to new mobile applications across sectors. This should be a real-time activity by focusing on innovative examples of mobile applications as they are being developed and/or just being launched in Europe.

Cooperation is invited. Further details are available by contacting ja.int@cbs.dk

Jan Annerstedt, Copenhagen

Closing the Digital Divide: New project in the making

4:50:25 PM 10/1/2004

In line with the Orbicom work program and in accordance with my earlier proposals to address also the efforts to close the Digital Divide, the Copenhagen Chair has supported a set of attempts in Africa to share information, create new ideas for community user information systems and develop these systems into viable and visible projects to be used by citizens in various countries of Africa as a platform for information sharing, intelligence gathering, and knowledge development. This should be in line of what UNESCO is already attempting by supporting projects and networks in various countries of West Africa.

Most recently, we have supported (from the Copenhagen Business School) a project (to be partially funded also by the European Commission in Brussels) that aims at establishing a regional (Southern African) forum to exploit policy complementarities in the application of ICTs to enhance rural (community level) development and service delivery. The forum will develop activities that would promote mutual benefits and increase access to market opportunities between Southern African rural communities and Europe.

The specific objectives would be:

- a. To map Southern African research, development and implementation (RDI) resources and capabilities within the area of ICT;
- b. To identify the challenges hindering the achievement of standards, sustainability and interoperability of ICTs for community development, not only in Southern African rural communities but also between them and Europe;
- c. To define a regional program that would support the sustainable participation of Southern African countries in IST during FP6; and
- d. To benchmark, validate and disseminate research, development and implementation results of ICTs for community development among participating countries and international partners.

In order to achieve the above objectives, it is planned to establish cooperation with other international endeavours in the field of ICTs for development. These include the biennial conference of the International Federation of Information Processing (IFIP) referred to as the World Information Technology Forum (WITFOR). WITFOR focuses on the formation of the ICT-enabled development agenda and aims at assisting developing nations to implement sustainable strategies for the application of ICT. WITFOR 2005 is planned to take place in Botswana in August 2005.

The early results of this project will serve as a major input into the WITFOR agenda.

It is also expected that the work of this forum will benefit from experiences of European partners involved in various activities in eRural, and eEurope as well as similar initiatives by UNESCO, the World Bank and UNDP's InfoDev programme.

The project is called: Closing the Digital Divide. Information and Communications Technologies for Community Development in Southern Africa.

The coordinating person is Moses Mengu of the Botswana Technology Centre. Email: mmengu@botec.bw. The partners include institutions in Namibia, South Africa, Italy and Denmark. The work will take place all across southern Africa and involve institutions, firms and individuals across sectors. There will be a set of country studies and a series of workshop.

Jan Annerstedt, Copenhagen