



Minutes of Orbicom's Online
Annual General Meeting of Members
(AGM)

23 October–3 November 2006

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Quorum/Participants
Orbicom Annual General Meeting (13-27February 2006)

Annerstedt, Jan
Aw, Eugénie R.
Banda, Fakson
Butt, Danny
Calmon Alves, Rosental
Charron, Claude-Yves
Chin, Saik-Yoon
Cudicio, Renato
Denis, Roch
Fusaro, Magda
Giguère, Pierre
Haebich, Anna
Helmke, Reinhart
Horlbeck, Jürgen
Jacquetin, Jean-Sébastien
Joshi, Subhash
Khan, Abdul Waheed
Kuhlen, Rainer
Lafrance, André-A.
Lafrance, Jean-Paul
Maisonneuve, Danielle
Marques de Melo, José
Masiello-Riome, Charlotte
Modoux, Alain
Naji, Jamal Eddine
Okigbo, Charles
Paquet-Sévigny, Thérèse
Rico de Sotelo, Carmen
Savaria, Jules
Sciadas, George
Shariffadeen, Tengku Mohd Azzman
Tiongson, Nocanor
Tolosa, Mauricio
Verhulst, Stefaan
Van Dusseldorp, Monique
von Schilling, Rainer
Wang, Jian Yan
Warkentin de la Mora, Gabriela
Zlateva, Minka

IMPORTANT NOTICE

Reference documents and verbatim interventions are not reproduced within the report but are stored and can be accessed in full on Orbicom's Web /2006-10-23 AGM in the Forum section

1. Word of the President

Dear Orbicom Members and Friends,

We are once again meeting through technology for this AGM and putting to usage the new trilingual forum of the revamped Orbicom's website. I am informed that the forum section of PHP type allows for better security, better reliability and better compatibility. Orbicom has designed this experimental Web under GNU/GPL Open Source licence with unprecedented interaction facilities. It is being put to test during this AGM. Members are invited to comment and offer suggestions in view of a definitive version to be introduced in January 2007.

Once you have accustomed yourself with the new navigation, I invite you to focus on the future of Orbicom, on its leadership, and its action plan, while not forgetting to the housekeeping aspects of the agenda.

As Orbicom's success has never been so real in recent years, I am of the opinion that we must keep the momentum.

I look forward to fruitful exchanges with you,

*Alain Modoux
President*

Comments

In this section, several members expressed their appreciation of Orbicom's new website and congratulated the Secretariat for its efforts. The easy and time saving navigation, and its multilingualism nature were noted although this feature only benefits those who understand the other language(s). A special invitation was addressed to Spanish speaking members to avail themselves of this medium. It has also been mentioned that the AGM online discussion is Orbicom's spearhead as not so many other NGOs have adopted this practice. One member noted that Orbicom has built the organizational structure (active members from different sectors), chairs in various regions, conferences, roundtables etc. over the last 12 years and has created a unique environment that bolster the many facets of communication.

Note. As several interventions/comments made in this section were misplaced, the rapporteur chose to report on them in the appropriate sections to facilitate the understanding. Readers are invited to consult the minutes in 4.1 (Report if the President) for UNESCO's intervention, and 5.1 (Status of the Action Plan) for comments on project proposals.

2. Approval of the Agenda

Agenda

I. Word of the President

II. Approval of the Agenda

III. Approval of the Minutes of Last AGM (Feb. 2006)

IV. Report of the Board of Directors

4.1. Report of the President

4.2. Report of the Treasurer

4.3. Approval of the Certified Financial Statements (2005-2006)

4.4. Nomination of the Financial Controllers (2006-2007)

V. The Secretary General's Report

5.1. Status Report of the Action Plan

5.2. New Chairs, New Associate Members

VI. The Chairs' Programmes and Activities

VII. Board of Directors

7.1. Motion of Appreciation for the Out-going Board Members

7.2. Endorsement of the New Board Members

VIII. Varia

Resolution # 1

Moved by Stefaan Verhulst and seconded by Pierre Giguère that the agenda of the current AGM be approved. Resolution approved.

3. Approval of the minutes of AGM 2006-02-13

Resolution # 2

Moved again by Stefaan Verhulst and seconded by Pierre Giguère that the minutes of the AGM 2006-02-13 be approved. Resolution approved.

4. Reports of the Board of Directors

4.2 The President's Report

Dear Orbicom Members and Friends,

The AGM of last February was a good occasion to assess the important accomplishments (publications, conferences and various other activities) that took place in the context of the World Summit on the Information Society (Tunis 2005). We should all read again the summary report of the AGM to rediscover how much has been accomplished and how many more activities we will do, or could be done, means permitting.

In the last seven months, the Secretary General, some Board Members and I took a number of significant actions to enhance Orbicom, solidify partnerships and build new ones. One of the more visible accomplishments was a meeting of Orbicom and the UNESCO Chairs of Canada with UNESCO Director-General Mr. Koïchiro Matsuura when he received an honorary doctorate from UQAM in June. In a private meeting with Dr. Roch Denis, UQAM Rector and Orbicom Ex-officio Member, the DG confirmed UNESCO's strong interest in Orbicom and advised to approach the UNESCO C/I Sector with his support to reinstate the type of partnership that prevailed when the network was established in 1994. As a follow-up, Dr. Denis has now suggested to Dr. Khan that they meet in a near future to investigate ways and means to make this support effective.

In March, three Orbicom Directors, Stefaan Verhulst, Jan Annerstedt and Gabriela Warkentin de la Mora, attended the Bellagio Conference on the theme "Collaborative and Networked Approaches to Global Communications Policy Research and Reform". They made new contacts and investigated some of the paths that could be followed by Orbicom to enlarge its network of friendly organisations to work together in a concerted effort towards mutually desired ends.

In recent months, Orbicom has been successful in consolidating its partnership with its privileged funders. Funding of the Digital Review of Asia Pacific (DirAP) and of phase IV of the Digital Divide research has been secured, for four more years in the case of the DirAP, and the next year in the case of the DD. Both research publications are to be presented at the 3rd Global Knowledge Conference in Kuala Lumpur (11-13 December 2007). Also, as agreed between Orbicom and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the production of the next index (ICT Opportunity Index) will be done by the ITU which has adopted the methodology and the model developed by Orbicom for the Digital Divide Index. For this purpose, two ITU ICT analysts came to Orbicom for training in May.

The Orbicom Secretary General and the DirAP Co-ordinator within the secretariat, Wang Jian, travelled to Brisbane in July to participate in the DirAP Editorial Committee Meeting and also to take part in Jan Servaes' Conference on Communication, Globalization and Cultural Identities. Immediately after Brisbane, SG Claude-Yves Charron was invited to Washington to attend the preparatory consultation for the first

World Congress on Communication for Development to be held in Rome on October 25-27, 2006.

The China Chair is being explored. One chairholder candidate can be Professor Zhang Guoliang, Head of School of Media and Design, Shanghai Jiao Tong University (SJTU). Founded in 1896, SJTU is a key university in China and has nurtured large numbers of outstanding figures like Jiang Zemin.

Board Member Charles Okigbo, representing ORBICOM, joined a team of American journalists from the Economic Intelligence Review (EIR) magazine on a media tour of the Niger Delta in Nigeria from July 30 to August 5. He helped coordinate and associate Orbicom to the conference on Democracy, Security, and Development: Implications for the Oil and Gas Industry in the Niger Delta, which was held in Port Harcourt from July 31 to August 2. A second training, specifically targeting press secretaries, public information officers, and speech writers is scheduled to take place in Nigeria in December 2006.

For my part, I went to Grahamstown (SA) mid September to participate in the Highway Africa Conference with the participation of 500 African journalists, and to launch, on this occasion, the newly created UNESCO Chair in Media and Democracy, with a continental remit, at the School of Journalism and Media Studies at Rhodes University. I took part in the Chair's inauguration as President of Orbicom and also as Personal Representative of the UNESCO DG. I warmly welcome the Chairholder, Prof. Fackson Banda, a Zambian academic who is a well-respected figure in the national and international civil society movement.

The Chair's focus is on how the media are shaping, and are being reshaped, by the discourses of media, development and democratisation unfolding across the African continent. In motivating for this Chair, it is recognised that UNESCO and Orbicom have now clarified that it is possible for one country to host two or more chairs in related disciplines and sub-disciplines.

Also in order to solidify partnership and stimulate interaction among chairs and associates, Orbicom has organised a one day meeting with the Orbicom's Chairs and Associates of Latin America around the Conference of Faculties of Communication of Latin America (Felafacs) in Bogota, 25-28 September, an initiative of Carmen Rico, former Vice-president of Orbicom and now teacher and researcher at the UNESCO-Bell Chair in Montreal.

As you can witness, the Orbicom spreadsheet of the last seven months shows a period of intense activities in consolidation, investigation and bridge building for the future.

I invite you all of you to take part in the discussions of the various items of the agenda.

*Alain Modoux
President*

Discussion

NOTE. The attempt made by the rapporteur to outline the major points raised in the exchange may not satisfy all. The AGM verbatim is available on Orbicom's web for exact reference. Comments in this report section are, at times, interlinked with comments in the Secretary General Report section. Therefore, it is advisable to read them in conjunction.

Several members congratulated the President for Orbicom's most productive year and noted that Orbicom is more and more known and recognized. One member noted that the many activities reported by the President are indicative of "the beginning of an expansion at the regional and continental levels" but that actions are still missing in some part of the world, in Europe (East and West), M.E. and North America. She also noted that while Orbicom entertains relations with international governmental agencies, it is less evident in the case of professional or private sector groups. She concluded that playing a role at the policy level is highly symbolic.

On the Digital Divide, one member noted that the research is of special importance in developing countries like India while another one suggested that there be a Digital Review of Eurasia where populations are experiencing transformation in converging media and the telecommunication area.

One member found important that the Director-General of UNESCO reiterated his interest in Orbicom and added he saw Mr. Khan a couple of times during the last year who is also very supportive in his comments about the good work Orbicom has done. This chairholder also expressed his sadness for missing the Bogota meeting. As member of the Congress' steering committee, he invited Orbicom to participate in the First World Journalism Education Congress, in Singapore, next June 25-28.

The comments originating from the ADG C/I Sector of UNESCO (originally placed at item 1 of the Agenda) are summarized in the following paragraphs. They refer to the participatory arrangements as follow-up of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS).

The ADG reiterated the major achievements of WSIS: the high-level policy dialogue on the information society and the demonstration that the information society phenomenon is not merely about technology and has an impact in the social process and development, knowledge creation, sharing and acquisition, education, science and culture.

The ADG also noted that UNESCO was instrumental in assisting a strong mobilization of its traditional NGO partners and he extended special thanks to Orbicom for mobilizing the media professional circles for the Marrakech Conference in 2004 and for the adoption of the Marrakech Declaration.

Along with the ITU and UNDP, UNESCO is engaged in the "overall multi-stakeholder coordination of the Facilitators" and is responsible for 6 of the WSIS Action Lines:

Access to Information; E-learning, E-science, Cultural Diversity; media; Ethical Dimensions of the Information Society. Consultations were held in Geneva, Paris and Beijing to facilitate contacts and the sharing of information among all stakeholders. The ADG noted that it is expected that the stakeholders will agree on the working methods of the multi-stakeholders teams and will include their activities and expected outcomes.

The UNESCO ADG also noted that Orbicom's Action Plan provides a clear picture of the network's contribution and commitment to the WSIS principles and expressed the wish for greater collaboration with UNESCO field offices and UN Regional Commissions. "In conclusion, we are very much looking forward and counting on the long-standing and excellent partnership that we have enjoyed with Orbicom since its inception, to translate effectively the vision of WSIS into its research and training practices" he stated.

The President of Orbicom intervened in French to report on his very recent participation in Paris (19 October), on behalf of Orbicom, in the one of the meetings mentioned above, more specifically in the media meeting. The encounter attracted about one hundred participants and was meant to designate UNESCO as "Facilitator" for 6 of the 18 Action Lines, (*see list in the AGM Forum, item 4.1*) by far the agency with the widest portfolio. He noted that this is the proof that WSIS was more a summit of content in opposition to a "pipe" summit. He stressed the importance for Orbicom to select a number of "Multi-stakeholders Teams" and to identify members who would be willing to devote some of their time on these themes. He also noted that aside these commitments towards the follow-up of WSIS, Orbicom will have to determine the level of participation in the Global Knowledge Partnership (GKP), the Global Alliance and the Internet Forum.

The President suggested that the new DD research introduce a series of indicators with regard to the freedom of expression (online) and respect of the cultural diversity in order to increase the public interest and eventually open the door to new financing.

4.2 Report of the Treasurer (2005-2006)

(all figures in Canadian Dollars)

Dear Orbicom Members,

I have the pleasure to introduce to you Orbicom's audited financial report for budget year 2005-2006 (1 June to 31 May).

You will notice that the Secretariat is not registering a deficit this time despite the fact that UNESCO and Montréal International have ceased to contribute to the Secretariat's infrastructure costs. In fact, a small surplus of \$3000 is reported. It is the new increment of \$ 12,000 in UQAM's subsidy that has allowed for such a positive result. Also, much of the travel and hospitality costs were covered either from the specific projects/events, or by other UQAM sources. Needless to say that the Secretariat's expenses were kept to an absolute minimum. The principal funders and partners of Orbicom should appreciate that

their contributions are administered with caution and that the books are balancing almost to the cent.

Although we can all rejoice that Orbicom has, once again, been able to operate in a responsible way and within the means available, the lack of sufficient infrastructure funding constitutes a straight jacket that handicaps further programming or implementation of a good number of worthwhile initiatives proposed by the membership as it is shown in the Secretary General's report. I am happy to report that some of the Board members, including myself, have made efforts to link Orbicom to new sources of income, but without success so far. I invite my colleagues of Orbicom to continue to look for funding opportunities.

I recommend that you approve Orbicom's 2005-2006 audited financial report in 4.3 of the agenda.

*Gabriela Warkentin de la Mora
Treasurer*

Discussion

The intervening participants thanked the Treasurer for her good work and Rector Denis of UQAM for his institution's crucial support. They also expressed the view that further financing should be sought.

Several suggestions to increase revenues were made: to take a percentage for the secretariat on the funded projects, to publish and sell a periodical publication, to take jobs or research assignments for a fee. One member remarked that no project should be accepted without a detailed budget and a sponsor identified. She suggested that 4 or 5 members get together to develop a model for institutional membership based on capitalization or annual fees, or a mix of both. She added that universities with chairs within the Orbicom network should contribute to Orbicom on an annual basis as they do for other memberships. A chairholder agreed with the proposal but suggested to have fees for different economic levels.

One of the European chairholders suggested that there should be more money made available within the network for research and experimental development. He explained that funding is increasing in Europe and other parts of the world for R&D for the information society and Infocom technologies, applications and solutions. He recommended that Orbicom members try to get a share of these to be used for Orbicom or Orbicom related projects. He suggested to those members who may have relatively easy access to such fundings to be more active in producing applications with a view of involving participants from the Orbicom network. He suggested that the Secretariat could help initiate or support such applications for R&D. He ended stating that he would try to do such work out of Northern Europe.

4.3 Approval of certified financial Statements 2005-2006

Resolution # 3

It is proposed that the statements be approved; moved by Stefaan Verhulst and seconded by Pierre Giguère. Approved

4.4 Appointment of the External Auditors

Resolution AGM #4

It is proposed that the accounting firm Bélair, Deloitte, Touche and Tomatsu be appointed as External Auditors for the period 2006-2007. Resolution moved by Stefaan Verhulst, seconded by Pierre Giguère. Approved.

5. The Secretary General's Report

5.1 Status of the Action Plan

A. Ongoing funded projects

1. Training of media professionals in Nigeria and in African countries (Okigbo):

In association with the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) and American Universities (Boston, Harvard and NDSU) to hold 4 training exercises on Sustainable Broadcasting Operations; News Training in the Age of New Technology; Public Journalism in Community Context; the Challenges of Political Reporting. In view of resource constraints, two elements of the programme exercise are being implemented for now;

2. Quality-Management in the media industry for African media professionals (Modoux):

Organization of a training course on Quality Management in the media industry for African senior media professionals took place in the context of the Highway Africa conference as a joint venture between the new UNESCO Chair in Media and Democracy (Rhodes University – Grahamstown S.A.), Orbicom, the Media and Society Foundation, and Highway Africa;

3. Digital Review of Asia Pacific (Secretariat):

IDRC has agreed to finance the next phase (2006-2009) involving about 70 authors of the region, some of them members of Orbicom. It is the written output of stakeholders who have ownership of the region, drawing together a large number of leading ICT players from both developed and developing countries of Asia to reflect on platforms they identify as important for engagement to influence change. It adds a major source of updated data and information to the ICT4D field that is growing into a discipline that has as yet,

relatively little research literature, especially relating to the Asia-Pacific territory. It permits a time series narrative macro view of how total project investments by all parties aggregate into national syntheses on both country-level performance and issues-based performance.

4. Follow-up of the WSIS Action Plan / Emerging Knowledge Opportunities 2006-2007 (Secretariat):

The other Orbicom flagship project “Digital Divide Index” has been merged with the former ITU “Digital Access Index” and is now called “ICT Opportunity Index”. The project is in direct response to the WSIS Action Plan (Article 29) that calls for the development of such an index. A new phase has been negotiated with IDRC with the objective to produce a new research entitled “Emerging Knowledge Opportunities/Monitoring Infostates for Development” to be communicated at the GK+3 Conference of Kuala Lumpur on “Emerging People, Emerging Markets, Emerging Technologies” (11-13 December 2007). The project goal is to document and understand the impacts of ICT products, industries and overall Infostates on the emergence and growth of new markets, including parallel evolution of labour markets, with particular emphasis on the role of women, across countries at different stages of development. Aside the ITU and IDRC, other traditional partners of Orbicom are being solicited.

B. Project Proposals

1. Intellectual Propriety Regimes, Inequality and Trade in the Asia Pacific (Chin):

The field of Intellectual Property (IP) has grown exponentially in scope and now constitutes one of the most significant areas of attention in bilateral and multilateral trade agreements. For example, the recently drafted Australia-United States Free Trade Agreement’s chapter on Intellectual Property runs to 31 pages, compared to seven pages for agriculture. However, the issues of intellectual property are not only of importance to highly developed economies. For example, the US company Thermo Trilog recently applied for a European patent for a fungicide based on the Neem, a tree indigenous to India. After a 10-year battle the EPO refused the patent, but had it succeeded, it would have prevented some uses of the plant within Europe by individuals despite hundreds of years of customary use within India for horticultural purposes.

While there are very significant economic, cultural and human rights issues within the emerging intellectual property regimes (IPRs), the range of agreements and organisations (many of which have conflicting agendas) makes it very difficult to develop a holistic view of the changes that are taking place. This project will build shared regional understandings of the issues at stake in both bilateral agreements, multilateral agreements such as GATS and TRIPS, and international organisations such as the WTO and WIPO. It will contain numerous case studies from a range of agreements in the region. Coverage will include:

- *The history of current IPRs*
- *Emerging trends and areas of conflict within the current systems*
- *IPRs and Creative Industries*
- *IP, Cultural Diversity and Human Rights*
- *Access to knowledge and the public domain*
- *IP & Traditional Knowledge*
- *Access to Medicines*

1.1 Intellectual Property Regimes (Kuhlen based on Chin's earlier proposal)

Referring to new copyright regulations in Europe and particularly in Germany, proposal to carry out an international study (at least in those countries where UNESCO Chairs in Communication could give some support) about what the situation in IPR regimes is and what is planned in the near future. No development over the last 7 months;

2. Introduction of an ICT culture in African schools in cooperation with the EC for Africa (Eugénie Aw)

Orbicom to join the Economic Commission for Africa Initiative towards French language schools of communication and journalism to work more systematically on the introduction of an ICT culture in these schools to favour the development of thematic networks around crucial issues such as media and security in Africa, media and governance, gender related issues etc. No development in the last 7 months;

3. Core Literature on Development Communications and the Impact of new ICTs in Developing Countries (Chin-Servaes)

Professor Jan Servaes, head of School of Journalism & Communication, University of Queensland, (Australia) had accepted to be the Scientific Director. Following the World Congress of Communication for Development (Rome, 25-27 Oct. 2006), it has to be decided to proceed with this project proposal or not;

C. The Marrakech Roadmap / Follow-up Actions

As Discussed during the Board of Director's Meeting of November 2004

1. Building Partnerships: Need for Synergy between Orbicom and Other Organisations

Status: This idea is implemented as Orbicom is managing its researches in partnership. For "DirAP 2005-2006", 4 institutional partners have grouped together (Orbicom, IDRC, UNDP/APDIP, Southbound); most of the 29 authors are associate members of Orbicom. For DDI Phase III "From the Digital Divide to Digital Opportunities: Measuring Infostates for Development", 13 institutional partners (Orbicom, ITU, IDRC, UNESCO, La Francophonie, UNCTAD, CIDA, UQAM, WIGSAT, MIMOS, research ICTAfrica.net, REDES, NRC) and dozen of teams (about 60 people) of all continents contributed to the bilingual publication.

2. The publication of an Expert Guide (with photographs and area of expertise) for consultation by the network members and external people.

Status: The Secretariat is updating members' CVs.

3. Review of Existing Deliverables

Status: Two major publications were released in December 2005 for WSIS Tunis. CDs and research abstracts, like the one on "Women in the Information Society", were also produced and disseminated. New editions of DirAP and DD are scheduled for the GK+3 Conference of December 2007 in KL.

4. Briefing Paper Strategy and Common Research Agenda (See PDF)

*Status: Comments of the President in relation to the Bellagio Conference:
"In March, three Orbicom Directors, Stefaan Verhulst, Jan Annerstedt and Gabriela Warkentin de la Mora, attended the Bellagio Conference on the theme "Collaborative and Networked Approaches to Global Communications Policy Research and Reform". They made new contacts and investigated some of the paths that could be followed by Orbicom to enlarge its network of friendly organisations to work together in a concerted effort towards mutually desired ends"*

5. Training:

Board Member Charles Okigbo, representing ORBICOM, joined a team of American journalists from the Economic Intelligence Review (EIR) magazine on a media tour of the Niger Delta in Nigeria from July 30 to August 5. He helped coordinate and associate Orbicom to the conference on Democracy, Security, and Development: Implications for the Oil and Gas Industry in the Niger Delta, which was held in Port Harcourt from July 31 to August 2. A second training, specifically targeting press secretaries, public information officers, and speech writers is scheduled to take place in Nigeria in December 2006.

6. Internships and Relations between Universities

Status: Participation in the Felafacs conference of 25-28 September in Bogota and the Orbicom meeting of the Latin American chairs and associates around the conference. (PDF)

7. Branding

Status Orbicom has produced a new logo and a new website.

8. Network Technologies

Status: Orbicom has designed an experimental Website under GNU/GPL Open Source licence with unprecedented interaction facilities. It is to be put to test during this AGM. Members are invited to comment and offer suggestions in view of a definitive version to be introduced in January 2007.

Discussion

1. On Communication, Governance and Development

Much of the discussion was centred around a new project proposal on “**Communication, Governance and Development**” submitted by associate member **Mauricio Tolosa** and summarized in the following sentences.

“During the last decades, institutions in developing countries have experienced strong political, cultural and social tensions.

Several of these tensions are the consequences of severe policy adjustments, budget controls, and new economic management practices that are in opposition to traditional institutional practices.

This state of affair is aggravated by a communication discourse (that accompany these process) that focuses on themes such as participation and the development of popular organizations.

In addition, the State is subjected to a double pressure in term of mass communication: a discredited discourse of the public sector to the benefit of the private sector, and the usual journalistic practice that shed suspicion on all things originating from the government or the politicians.

The State is therefore weaker in its daily communications as it must articulate tough modern tensions while promoting the citizens’ participation. This generates an explosive blend likely to end up in governance crisis.

I propose to develop a global work axis around the topic of communication, governance and development while identifying communicational practices that would reinforce the public institutions’ political capacities and practices to communicate with the citizens with regard to development. This means to reinforce the governments’ capacities to deal with their citizens, to propose and execute state projects that involve change, and to promote transparency and participation in a climate of confidence”.

Fakson Banda was the first to comment. He supported the “generality of Tolosa’s idea”. He informed of the ongoing work by the World Bank Economic Institute on capacity strengthening of public /state broadcasters with the focus on “strategic communication”.

He noted that there is a need to go beyond and to engage in “some re-invigoration of the debate about development communication”, focusing on “participatory communication” and its potential for empowering both state/public broadcasters and the citizenry. He suggested to start with some research on the WB project to establish its efficacy and then design some relevant interventions.

In a brief intervention **Carmen Rico** invited Mauricio Tolosa to develop the point raised by Fakson Banda, while **Alain Modoux** noted that the topic is vast and complex and about democracy anywhere. He stressed that many are worried about the decreasing importance of the state in a global world, in particular, its weakness in communication capacity in an environment in which the power to influence is more and more in the hands of trans-national media groups he noted that the private media are in a position to influence more the political choices than the elected representatives themselves.

Jamal Naji recalled that he has been doing work on this topic for sometime. He informed that the WB Institute, together with McGill University in Montreal and University of Pennsylvania will produce a guide on media and development entitled “Media Voice and Development”, a “how to do book” for use North and South, to help the media and the citizens to dialogue through associations and citizens’ groups. He informed that UNESCO has sponsored, in 2005, a guide entitled “Citizens Media” written by Javed Abbar (www.wiredet.com/cmd). A similar guide for Francophone Africa that can be downloaded from the Orbicom’s Web was produced by him (Jamal Naji) in 2006. He concluded his first intervention with 3 key words: proximity, participation and appropriation. In a second comment, Jamal Naji explained the meanings of the 3 key words. “Proximity” is about content (in the context of cultural and linguistic diversity), community media, public interest in the public media services, connectivity, and universal access to cyberspace. “Participation” is about consultation with the citizens, the confident dialogue between the media and the citizens, the concept of citizens media enterprises, transparency, empowerment, ethics etc. “Appropriation” is about media good governance, imputability, concerted planning, shared assessments, democratization of the media. All these notions could be benchmarks for reflection and for the construction of a research framework in connection with Mauricio Tolosa’s proposal.

Jürgen Horlbeck commented about Orbicom’s intervention axes and his commitment. From his perspective, ORBICOM axes of action are of two levels. First, the projects already financed or as follow-up of the WSIS plan of action. The proposal raised by Chin Saik-Yoon on the emergent regimes of intellectual property is one such example. This uneasiness about intellectual property regimes has to do with the new technologies that allow a claim for access to universal knowledge. He recalled that in 2001, 2002 and 2003 his chair in Colombia has reflected on the “digital culture” more specifically on the ethical challenges and their cultural, aesthetic, political and social effects. The second level relates to Mauricio Tolosa’s proposal. Jürgen Horlbeck informed that, in 2004, his chair did work on the issue of communication as instrument of strategic construction of the contemporary society. The “cultural axis” is the approach favoured by the chair in Colombia. It offers another angle to tackle the proposal “Communication, Governance and Development” as proposed at the meeting in Bogota. His approach also implies that

popular music and the way publics take it over is an essential element of citizenship construction.

Mauricio Tolosa reported after the Rome Conference on Communication for Development that he attended along with other Orbicom members (Claude-Yves Charron, Charlotte Massiello-Riome, Indrajitt Banerjee...) at the end of September 2006, that he believes the general approach “donors and civil society” with regard to “communication for development”, and more specifically the World Bank approach, leaves aside the capacity strengthening of governments in communication. One key force of Orbicom is its capacity to integrate different public, private and academic actors. He concluded that it is from this perspective that the “Communication, Governance and Development” proposal could constitute a rich contribution of Orbicom.

Thérèse Paquet-Sévigny agreed that this is a very pertinent project. She wished that the World Bank Institute would join Mauricio Tolosa’s efforts and stated that it would be interesting to identify a few states where, in parallel to the proposal above, another team of professionals could develop a framework for training governmental communicators. She added that at the end of the experimentation, with only a few countries, it would then be possible to regroup the participants of the two projects to discuss the lessons learned with political leaders, media management and interested NGOs. She concluded that publications could follow.

In response to the previous interventions and referring to “fruitful discussions” with Claude-Yves Charron and Mauricio Tolosa in Rome, **Charlotte Masiello-Riome** asked whether it would be possible to open up a discussion on the Tolosa proposal on the Orbicom website.

Gabriela Warkentin de la Mora introduced her comment regretting that she could not attend the Orbicom Bogota meeting because she was doing work on “communication for consensus” which also implies the right to disagree. She explained that she brought together the most senior Mexican communication officials of the last five decades to begin to understand the role of governmental communication from the people who made it. She wanted to know whether other chairs would be interested in an encounter that she could organize around this topic in order to study possible research projects. She ended her comment in relation with Jürgen Horlbeck’s intervention. She informed that, next year, her University will be receiving the world meeting of the International Association for the Study of Popular Music. She invited the Colombia Chairholder to participate as this is a topic of interest to him. She concluded that communication flows through culture, especially in Latin America where the communication theories look into all forms of popular expressions.

Jean-Paul Lafrance intervened on the communication for development theme to inform the AGM of his recent publication of a book in French, written in association with Carmen Rico and Jian Wang among others, and entitled “Place et rôle de la communication dans le développement”. The work presents the different models of communication for development of the last 50 years and examines how they were applied

in health, education, environment and governance. He stressed that in this era around WSIS there is more emphasis put on participatory communication than on top down communication. He also informed that the idea behind this publication originated at the Douala congress organised by Missé Missé a Cameroonian academic. He concluded his comment stating that Africa counts many good universities that focus on communication for development.

2. On Communication for Development

Also on the theme of “development”, **Chin Saik-Yoon** proposed that Orbicom and Southbound co-publish a special communications’ monograph for launching at The 10th UN Interagency Roundtable on Communication for Development to be held from 12 to 14 February in Addis. The theme is “Communication for Development: Achieving the Millennium Development Goals”. He informed that Jan Servaes, associate member of Orbicom, led a group in preparing a manuscript which addresses policy practice issues relating to the above theme which will be helpful to the discussion in Addis. Noting that UNESCO has played a leadership role in this series of roundtables, Chin Saik-Yoon states that Orbicom’s contribution to this “historic 10th roundtable” would be very meaningful. He then informed the AGM of the objectives of the roundtables process: increase UN interagency collaboration, share and show good practices, increase awareness within and among UN agencies about communication for development, introduce mechanism to harmonize communication for development programming approaches internationally.

3. On ICT for Development

Tenku Shariffadeen reported on his involvement in the Global Alliance for ICT and Development (GAID), which is the UN-sponsored initiative to follow through on the recommendations of WSIS. He mentioned that prior to the Inaugural Meeting of GAID in Kuala Lumpur in June, he was asked to serve as a member of the Group of High-Level Advisers.

For the KL meeting, he was asked to chair the workshop on "Entrepreneurship, ICT and Poverty Eradication". He reported that he fulfilled the duty as a member of Orbicom. The workshop was very well attended and the discussion was very passionate and focused. He reported that not only was the role of entrepreneurship well accepted, it was also agreed that more entrepreneurial approaches are needed to development, sometimes not necessarily involving entrepreneurs in the usual business sense. It was also accepted that social entrepreneurship should be included under this category of activities, whereby the profit motive is secondary to the achievement of social goals.

What has happened since the KL meeting? Tenku Shariffadeen reported that the GAID secretariat has produced a business plan for 2006-2007 which has been commented on by its various constituencies. This business plan was also discussed at the Second Meeting of the Strategy Council held at the UN HQ on 27 September. The Council made some very sharp observations and decisions.

He mentioned that what is more important is to appreciate the deliverables declared in the business plan. Basically GAID seeks to establish Regional Networks, Communities of Expertise and Stakeholder Networks. For its first year of operation, GAID undertakes to set up Flagship Partnership Initiatives (FPIs) and the Communities of Expertise (CoEs). It appears that the FPIs are top-down interventions, while the COEs are bottom-up. He noted that he is aware of only one FPI, the Cyber Dev Corps which was proposed by Malaysia. He explained that this is a corps of volunteers to be funded by donor countries to help lift the development of needy countries by effective use of ICT. Many CoEs are being proposed, as noted before, in bottom-up fashion. He cautioned that this is a cause of concern. He explained that the UN branding has some value and should be carefully used and safeguarded. At the moment he does not see any mechanism put in place to perform a minimum level of due diligence to qualify the offers made or the status of the offerors.

While he agreed that GAID should not be in the operating mode, but should be a catalyst to action, the network approach, especially of the virtual kind, requires a certain degree of control at the initiation phase. He suggested that perhaps the better words to use are to enable and to facilitate. He cautioned that without proper initiation, things can work out well, purely by accident, but the other kind of accident, which we want to avoid, may also happen.

He concluded that there is much for Orbicom to contribute to GAID as communication is key to all of these initiatives. In his view, Orbicom's work in measuring the Digital Divide is fundamental, for how should we know what to prescribe unless we have an idea of where people are? He ended his comment by encouraging Orbicom members to consider participating in GAID networks or even take the lead where appropriate.

4. On the Theme of Development

Returning from Athens where she attended the 2006 Internet Governance Forum, **Jian Yan Wang** commented that the common thread through the conference was the recognition that the Internet is now the backbone infrastructure of the global information and knowledge society. She further informed that the importance of multi-stakeholder cooperation was highlighted and, most importantly, the theme of development was emphasized.

5. On the Action Plan and Marrakech Roadmap

Charles Okigbo commented that the new-look logo and website complement Orbicom's various activities and move the ORBICOM brand forward and make the organization more well known in various world regions.

On training, he reported that in addition to the successful conference in Nigeria, ORBICOM was an associated partner with the North Dakota State University in holding a one-week training workshop on Fundraising and Capital Campaigns for Colleges,

Universities, and Non-profit Organizations. This was held in Fargo, ND from Oct 16 to 20, and was so well attended it may turn out to be an annual event.

He informed that the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) and the African Independent Television (AIT), - both in Nigeria - are willing to collaborate with ORBICOM to hold a one-day leadership workshop in December 2006, for women aspiring for political careers and leadership positions in public service. He reported that the two television organizations are interested in exploring other areas of common interest with ORBICOM members from all world regions. Two possible areas are television program exchange and satellite leadership training.

He also stressed that the Africa Caucus and the Africa Policy Journal at the Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, are keen to collaborate with ORBICOM in hosting a conference and workshop on “The Challenges of Nigerian Development and Leadership” to be held in February 2007, three months before the national elections.

He concluded his intervention noting that ORBICOM is becoming more well known, and that we should work at establishing a reputation as a reliable ally in communication education and training - not only in the West, but also in developing regions.

Also on training, Charlotte Masiello-Riome informed that she could offer a number of resources (since FAO she belongs to is focussing on rural radio in particular) that could benefit the work of training of media professionals in Nigeria and African countries. She also informed that FAO has completed an online module on “building electronic communities and networks” that may benefit Orbicom members’ projects. She wrote that she was part of a study group using the module (facilitating the training of facilitators). She invited to readers to update themselves on the latest approaches:
www.imarkgroup.org/moduledescrC_en.asp

Jan Annerstedt introduced his comment noting that the Secretariat has done a lot of efforts to realize ideas put forward at Marrakech. He commented that many if not all the initiatives taken by the Secretariat, by chair holders and by others are excellent.

He recalled **that internships and exchange** agreements in the Orbicom network was listed and discussed as a special feature, when the issue was to develop the Orbicom community of specialists further. He believes that this remains a good idea and would like to contribute in finding such exchange opportunities and access to the Nordic area and to other parts of Europe. He invited the Orbicom community to let him know if there will be candidates.

Regarding **research cooperation** more generally, he added that in Europe, they are at a stage when the European Union is just starting a new funding phase (Framework Program 7), which formally will start funding in early 2007. He explained that many initiatives have been taken to announce 'calls' for applications from European universities, research institutions, companies, etc. He added that some of this funding, which is in the order of many hundreds of million EUR only for the first of the five years,

will be accessible also to researchers and other specialists in other countries on other continents.

He continued his comment on **work undertaken by him**. He informed that beginning this year (linked to Framework Program 6), he is coordinating a joint 2-year project in Asia (China, India and Vietnam) with three European partner countries focusing on research and training of specialists in measuring and managing “intangibles” in companies and institutions. He explained that “intangibles” includes also communications infrastructure and procedures, database handling, customer and client support systems, education and training schemes, branding efforts, etc. The project is to depict the hidden values and capabilities, which are seldom made explicit, measured and compared. The project engages specialists at Fudan University in Shanghai, NISTPAS, a national R&D centre in Hanoi, and the Indian Institute of Management in Bangalore.

He underlined that such highly specialized, **comparative projects in new, emerging areas of expertise** are typically given priority by EU-funding initiatives. He noted that this particular project may seem to be on the borderline of traditional communications studies, but that this is also the point. He concluded inviting Orbicom colleagues with other project ideas that go beyond what is currently being funded, to let him know and that he will check if the European Commission's new program or other European funding options can be available.

On the property rights, Thérèse Paquet-Sévigny noted that it is a very vast and complex project. She has doubt that an international agency would support entirely such endeavour without a strong and well-known legal team specialized on this matter. She informed that most countries rely like in North America, Great Britain and Germany upon jurisprudence. He believes that France seems to support another level of discourse. She ended her comment noting that the contribution of communicators would be of much value if they ere to coordinate stakeholders’ different points of view i.e. artists, software developers etc. and groups of consumers and services distributors.

5.2 New Chairs, New Associates

Morocco

With the agreement of the Moroccan Commission for UNESCO, UNESCO Headquarters and Orbicom, the Moroccan chair, now called “UNESCO Chair in Public and Community Communication” has been relocated in the spring of 2006 from Mohammed V University (Casablanca) to the Superior Institute for Information and Communication (ISIC) in Rabat. Professor Jamal Eddine Naji has been confirmed has Chairholder. Orbicom President, Alain Modoux, presided the inauguration ceremony. You are invited to acquaint yourself with the new chair’s activities in section VI of the AGM forum.

South Africa

With the strong support of UNESCO C/I Sector and the South African Commission for UNESCO, President Modoux inaugurated on 11 September 2006 a second chair in South Africa with regional focus. The establishment of a UNESCO Chair in Media and Democracy at Rhodes University (Grahamstown, SA) is a response to key continental initiatives around development such as NEPAD. The Chair's objective is to pull together emerging ideas, discourses and projects about how the media can promote democracy and good governance by contributing to harnessing a process of critical thinking, reflection and comparative research in the area of participatory communication and media. The Chairholder is Professor Fackson Banda. (More in section VI of the AGM)

China

The China Chair is being explored. One chairholder candidate can be Professor Zhang Guoliang, Head of School of Media and Design, Shanghai Jiao Tong University (SJTU). Founded in 1896, SJTU is a key university in China and has nurtured large numbers of outstanding figures like Jiang Zemin.

New Associate Members:

Carolina A. Freire
Communications Officer
UNDP, Panama

Mignone Vega Sanchez
Representante ante el Comité técnico y e interinstitucional para la Elaboration de la
Politica de Participacion CiudadanaNicaragua

Sandra Virginia Rojas Barlaro
Consultora en proyectos de comunicología,
Ministerio de Defensa, Chile

Jules Savaria
Diplomate en résidence, Canada

Discussion

Several members intervened to welcome the new chairs. **Charles Okigbo** noted that the sub-Saharan Africa addition of Rhodes makes an increase of 100% for the region. He also stated that he looks forward to work with the 3 African chairs to give Orbicom its rightful place among reputable global communication networks that operate in Africa.

Chairholder **Fackson Banda** commented that he is deeply indebted to Orbicom for its support for the establishment of the UNESCO Chair of Media & Democracy at Rhodes University.

He informed that his Chair has already started entering into discussions with the Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa (OSISA) for them to support research work on the ongoing debates on WIPO's Protection of Broadcasting Organisations Treaty. He noted that UNESCO has already become engaged in this process of dialogue, and hoped that our Chair will critically contribute towards the unfolding negotiations by, firstly, conducting a study to assess the extent to which the media have covered this issue and, secondly, by organising a workshop during which time relevant experts, organisations and other actors will input into the process of critical engagement.

He also emphasized that the Chair believes strongly in the importance of generating well-researched dialogue on such global processes.

He also informed that the Chair also continues to be fully engaged in the consultation processes around initiatives designed to strengthen media institutions across the continent. He was in Nairobi overseeing the eastern African regional consultation process as well as participating in the unveiling of the findings of a BBC World Service Trust research on media development.

Alain Modoux intervened to comment that the Chair's programme is very promising. He commended the leadership at Rhodes University, in particular the leadership of professor Guy Berger, Director of the Scholl of Journalism and Media Study, for their wholehearted support. He noted the many expectations, one being the consolidation of cooperation between the African academic community and the professional media practitioners through Highway Africa. He also wished Fackson Banda every success in his endeavours.

Chin Saik-Yoon expressed his satisfaction that a new chair is being explored in China and stressed that this important development is welcome by the Asia-Pacific Region colleagues. He stated that "as an Associate member I look forward to supporting the leadership work in the region by our Asian Chairs. A very unique attribute of Orbicom is the networking of senior researchers and members of the academe with those of us from the civil society and public sectors. I look forward to collaborating and interacting with my senior colleagues during the year ahead".

While congratulating the new chairs, **Jean-Paul Lafrance** suggested the creation of a new chair at the Swiss University of Lugano.

6. The Chairs' Programmes and Activities

The Chairs' activities are outlined on Orbicom's website, section "UNESCO Chairs". Readers can also access the update received from the Danish Chair during this AGM in the same UNESCO Chairs section of Orbicom's website.

Comments

Claude-Yves Charron, extended a special word of thanks to the Chair in Colombia, and more specifically to the Chairholder Jürgen Horlbeck and his team, for hosting in September 2006 the Felafacs Conference on the occasion of its 25th anniversary, and also for hosting the meeting of ORBICOM chairs and associates from the 3 Americas. He made it known that the hospitality was impressive, and the two events most successful.

Noting that the chairs' activities are the core of Orbicom and the chairs Orbicom's "raison d'être", **Alain Modoux** thanked all the chairholders who have prepared their reports and invited those who didn't to do it as soon as possible.

Intervening from the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki in Greece where she has jointly organized with a Greek colleague a PhD workshop on the topic "Balkans: History and Communication", **Minka Zlateva** informed that she proposes to create a network of chairs in communication, PR, and media for the Balkan countries named BALKANCOM. This idea was first communicated at the 9th International Scientific Conference she organized in Sofia (19-20 May 2006). She noted that the Balkans are a part of Europe and the cross point between West and East. The Balkans still have the image of a region of conflicts and war. She stressed that there is a need to change this image in a more positive direction, the Balkans being the cradle of European civilization.

Referring to Orbicom's international experience and good connections in communication and PR, she believes that there is a good basis to build the BALKANCOM network and to make it strong and useful. She informed that she will organize BALKANCOM using online communications and some of ORBICOM ideas and worldwide experiences for the development of Balkan's new chairs of communication, PR and media, which could join ORBICOM in the future.

7. Board of Directors

7.1 Motion of Appreciation for the Outgoing Board Members

I wish to propose that we register our deepest appreciation towards the Board members leaving their director's tenure this fall. Our friends Jan Annerstedt, Reinhart Helmke, Subash Joshi, Elena Vartanova and Stefaan Verhulst who have served two consecutive mandates must be thanked for their dedication and outstanding support of the network.

Claude-Yves Charron

Comments

In support of this motion, many members joined the Secretary General and expressed their warm appreciation. One member added the following: “They have given exemplary service, for which we are all very grateful. Although they are stepping aside, we will continue to need their wise counsel now and in the future, as we collectively work to build a virile and viable global network. Our strength is in the quality and commitment of our members, especially those privileged to have served at higher levels”.

7.2 Endorsement of the New Board Members

Resolution AGM #5

In a private exchange (7 June 2006) between Rector Roch Denis of UQAM and UNESCO Director-General H.E. Koïchiro Matsuura, the two Ex-officio members agreed to renew for a third term the mandate of President Alain Modoux.

Following the concerted dialogue between ADG/CI for UNESCO, Rector Denis and Secretary General Claude-Yves Charron, it is recommended to the AGM to endorse the following appointments of Orbicom members as Directors of the Board for two years, their mandate ending in the fall of 2008.

(C) for Chairholder

(A) for Associate

Jürgen Horlbeck (C) Colombia Chair

Minka Zlateva (C) Bulgaria Chair

Eugénie AW (A) Consultant from Senegal

Chin Saik Yoon (A) Publisher Southbound, Malaysia

Charlotte Masiello-Riome (A) FAO Communication/Promotion Officer, Italy

The other members whose mandate will be ending in the fall of 2007 are:

Charles Okigbo (A) Professor, North Dakota State University, USA

Gabriela Warkentin de la Mora (C) Mexican Chair

Mohd Tengku Shariffadeen (A) Vice-president of Orbicom, Malaysia

Rosental Calmon Alves (C) USA Chair

Jamal Eddine Naji (C) Moroccan Chair

Ruth Teer-Tomasselli (C) South African Chair (Durban)

The 3 Ex-officio institutional members are:

the Director-General of UNESCO, H.E. Koïchiro Matsuura,

the Rector of UQAM, Dr. Roch Denis,

the Secretary General of Orbicom, Vice-rector Claude-Yves Charron.

Board Configuration

Note: The Board Configuration is outlined in the 2006-10-13 AGM Forum (7.2)

Resolution AGM #5

Those who intervened in this section of the AGM unanimously endorsed the new Board members.

8. Varia

Chin Saik-Yoon thanked the friends at the Secretariat who designed and developed these new online facilities. He noted that they work very well for him located exactly half way round the world from the secretariat. As the navigation is easy and efficient, he was able to download reference documents quickly, and his postings have been processed promptly. He concluded with thanks for your hard work and for the splendid design.

Many other members who intervened echoed this expression of satisfaction.

Closure of AGM 2006-10-23

Dear Orbicom Members and Friends,

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

Many positive comments were registered with regard to the introduction of the new Orbicom's portal that will be fully implemented in the next few months. We must consider that this introduction that coincided with this busy AGM, was a success, with more than 200 entries.

Many useful comments and realistic proposals were made in the AGM discussion halls. Orbicom has now a good choice of realistic initiatives that could be implemented with the help of champions. Another challenge for Orbicom is to take an active part in the follow-up of WSIS in cooperation with the WSIS Action Lines Facilitators: UNESCO, ITU and UNDP... The same must be said about Orbicom's participation in the Global Alliance.

This AGM forum and its report will be examined by the Board members in order to take the necessary steps (means permitting) to convert ideas into action.

Also, this AGM has certainly been one of the most active and productive. I have noticed a lot of good will, and if properly channelled, and provided that champions come forward in greater number, Orbicom will continue to be meaningful and expand.

In closing, I wish to thank my colleagues of the Board for their acceptance to serve, the Chairs for their outstanding work not enough publicised, and the associate members for their insights and assistance.

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

I declare this virtual AGM meeting closed.

Alain Modoux
President of Orbicom