



**Orbicom**  
**Minutes of the Board of Directors' Meeting**  
**19– 27 May 2008**

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**21 – 28 May 2005**

**Quorum**

Fourteen (14) of the fifteen (15) Orbicom Directors participated:

The six members of the Executive Committee:

Alain Modoux, President,  
Tengku Azzman Shariffadeen, Vice-president  
Gabriela Warkentin de la Mora, Treasurer

including the 3 ex-officio members:

Aldul Waheed Khan, ADG/CI- UNESCO,  
Claude Corbo, Rector of UQAM  
Claude-Yves Charron, Secretary General of Orbicom

and eight Directors of the Board:

Minka Zlateva, Charlotte Masiello-Riome, Rosental Calmon Alves, Jamal Eddine Naji,  
Chin Saik Yoon, Jürgen Horlbeck, Matasebia Woldemariam, Fackson Banda

Absent: Eugénie Aw-Ndiaye

## **Report**

### **I. Word of Welcome**

*Dear Members of the Orbicom Board of Directors,*

*First, I want to welcome our new colleagues who have gracefully accepted to serve on Orbicom's Board of Directors:*

*Claude Corbo, Recteur, Université du Québec à Montréal,*

*Metasebia Woldemariam, Associate Professor,  
Communication and Media Studies Department  
Plymouth State University, USA, and*

*Fackson Banda, SAB Chair of Media and Democracy  
School of Journalism and Media Studies  
Rhodes University, SA.*

*I also wish to convey my sincere thanks to our other friends, Charles Okigbo and Ruth Teer-Tomaselli who have left the Board in October 2007 after having devoted years to Orbicom as Directors.*

*I now have the pleasure to open the 2008 virtual meeting of Orbicom's Board. We are united through the Web this year again to carry out the task assigned to us by the network statutes.*

*This 2008 Board meeting takes place in a period of transition between old and new network initiatives, as our organization just went through a very active period of preparation and delivery of 3 publications for the 3rd Global Knowledge Conference that took place in Kuala Lumpur last December. I am confident that Orbicom's recent publications will again contribute positively to the information society implementation.*

*After you have carried out the housekeeping parts of the agenda, I invite you to pay special attention to the reports submitted by the President, the Secretary General and the Treasurer. You will notice that much is in preparation. In my report to the Board, I make suggestions for possible inter-chair cooperation. I welcome your views.*

*Our network has positioned itself over the years as a respected player within the international community. Let's all work together to further Orbicom's development.*

*I look forward to fruitful exchanges with you,*

*Alain Modoux  
President*

### **Discussion**

Contrary to previous Board meetings where matters of substance were discussed in the reports sections, several members prefers to intervene immediately.

Responding to Alain Modoux, **Claude-Yves Charron**, agrees that it is indeed a time of transition for the Board and for the Network. He informs that two African colleagues, Charles Okigbo, from Nigeria, and Ruth Teer-Tomaselli, from South Africa, having completed their tour of duty, have been replaced by Metty Woldemariam, from Ethiopia, and Fackson, from South Africa. He adds that both out-going and in-coming members deserve a warm word of thanks.

He also notes that it is a time of transition within the Board itself as this meeting welcomes the co-founder of Orbicom, Rector Corbo of UQAM, who co-signed the agreement with Federico Mayor in 1994. He explains that being back after 14 years allows Rector Corbo to witness how the "ferment in the field in which he believed then has flourished over the different seasons".

He concludes that it is a time of transition for the Network itself with the following statement: "While each Chairholder has her or his own research agenda within her or his own University and country, we try to foster some joint research initiatives, on a regional or on an international basis, over time. Some of them with a life cycle of almost then years have come to an end, other are continuing, others are emerging".

**Fackson Banda** raises the issue of inter-chair collaboration in response to Alain Modoux and Claude-Yves Charron as he believes it is important for the sharing the problems' analysis that confront Orbicom members' sub-fields.

He explains that he is currently involved in the African Media Initiative (AMI), as a lead author of the programme and policy overview document for the programme. He adds that this requires some insights from other chairs, especially those in the developing world as the thrust of the project is to evolve a holistic media development plan that incorporates aspects of media practice and policy, media-institutional capacity-building and media markets in Africa. He hopes that he and his partners can convince the donor community and equity financiers to leverage their support to media development projects in Africa in a way that is coherent and comprehensive.

He informs that there are several bodies involved in supporting this initiative: DFID and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, among others; it is being coordinated by the BBC World Service Trust, in the meantime at least. He adds that UNESCO itself has now adopted a document on "Media Development Indicators". Fackson Banda further informs that he was recently in Maputo, during the World Press Freedom Day celebration, where he made a presentation on the African Media Initiative (AMI). He explains that for starters, he would be pleased to share this information with other chairs, with the view that they might seek to develop lines of synergy with him.

He concludes that there is much that is not known about media initiatives in Africa, which, hopefully through this project, might be remedied.

**Minka Zlateva** thanks Fackson Banda for his inter-chair collaboration proposal for media development in Africa and hopes that ORBICOM can contribute to communication initiatives in Africa in following fields:

First, in “Africa in the World of Journalism”. She explains that UNESCO chairs can collect the works of journalists who worked on African issues and wrote pages of history on Africa and communication. To illustrate her statement, she announces that she will present on 26 May 2008, in Sofia, Ryszard Kapuscinski’s most recent book "The travellers with Herodot" in which many pages are about Africa. She propose to collect the works of journalist such as Kapuscinski and prepare a book "Africa in the World Journalism ".

Second, “the Development of Communication, Media and PR in Africa”. With the collaboration with the World Association of Newspapers and IPRA she explains that we can collect papers about the development of communication, journalism and media in Africa and prepare in ORBICOM an "Encyclopaedia on Africa Media Development". She adds that the papers’articles can be prepared by African journalists - alumni of universities in Europe , USA and Asia. She informs that she had a group of students from Africa in the 90es and that she will be glad to have the possibility to work together with them to realise this project. In her view, there are some teachers in communication from the UK, Spain, France, Portugal who visit Africa regularly and help in the training of African journalist and PR experts.

Third, an "ORBICOM online Africa Forum" she proposes that Orbicom organizes with the African Virtual University, to discuss inter-chair collaboration in research and practice. She adds that the topics of these online meetings could be proposed by UNESCO chairs in Africa in January and the forums could take place in September /October . She concludes that the topics, proposed by Saik Yoon Chin (see below), could be part of the agenda-setting of future ORBICOM forums on Africa

**Chin Saik Yoon** thanks Fackson Banda, Alain Modoux and Claude-Yves for their thought-provoking postings and writes that the cycle that Claude-Yves refers to has in many ways brought us back to priorities that faced our predecessors who founded our field many decades ago: (1) food security, (2) pandemics, (3) natural disasters, (4) freedom and peace.

He adds that the return of these priorities calls to mind the unique attributes of Orbicom members. He expresses the opinion that Orbicom has in its membership many who have worked on these issues for numerous years, and across all regions, climatic zones, political regimes, and in various professional roles. He concludes that the time may be right to consolidate this wisdom resident in the membership and contribute (in our small but useful ways) to larger efforts around the world to address these priorities.

**Jürgen Horlbeck** intervenes in Spanish. With regard to Alain Modoux’ proposals (President’s report – in 3.1), he mentions, in the first instance, that the proposed researches would be an important contribution to assess the progress of measures adopted

by the States to protect and promote communication rights and their impact on societies. Concerning the comparative analysis, he believes that they would be particularly relevant in establishing the best practices in terms of legislative measures. He expresses the opinion that UNICEF and children dedicated foundations might be the appropriate sources of financing for such researches.

Commenting on Abdul Waheed Khan's interest in communication for development, he informs that he has himself a special interest in this field. He adds that, more precisely in 2007, his faculty held the "XIV UNESCO Forum in Communication 2007", and explains that this academic space focused on the study of the relationship between communication, development and social change. The forum has established that communication can qualify those processes of information, understanding, dialogue and participation of the citizens to create better ways of life either individually or collectively. It concluded that communication is a strategy that contributes to a better quality of life of the people and the public, private or civil society organizations' communities in different contexts, international, national, regional and local.

He then lists the principal themes of discussion and reflection at the event:

- Revision of the communication, development and social change concepts;
- Framework of communication and social change: communication and health, communication and education, communication and surrounding, communication and citizenship participation, communication and human rights, communication and gender, communication and ethnic minorities, communication, peace and reconciliation;
- Communication experiences for social change;
- Communication and social change: projections, competitions, and policies.

Jürgen Horbeck also provides the names of some reputable professors, researchers, members of social organizations and public entities who participated : Clementia Rodriguez from Oklahoma University, Jesus martib-Barbero, Rosa Maria Alfaro and German Rey.

He explains that the event contained various activities such as: four preparatory sessions on local experiences in communication and development; three major conferences on national experimentations and case studies, and a closing session to help establish action lines in relation with the country situation.

He informs, moreover, that the event constituted a showcase of his university's audiovisual production "Ventanas-2007", a collective work of 80 video people and 160 radio workers from the entire country. He mentions that the forum attracted the participation of 350 people, (students, teachers, researchers) and the participation of dedicated people from 20 universities of the country, in September and October, on the campus of Universidad Javeriana de Bogotá, consolidating the event as a reference space of reflection, learning and production of audiovisual communication in Colombia.

He informs that a publication is in preparation for release in May 2008 that will contain the reports, the articles and the comparative experimentations of this past event.

He concludes that his Chair's main event for 2008 is a forum, from 8 to 10 September, on the theme: "Communication Research in Colombia and Latin America: Doubts and Struggles" with the expected participation of ALAIC, AIERI and researchers and communication specialists from Brazil, Argentina, México and Colombia.

## **II. Approval of the Agenda**

**Resolution BD08-1  
Approval of the Agenda:  
adopted by consensus.**

## **III. Reports of the Board of Directors**

### **3.1 The President's Report and Statements of UNESCO ADG/CI and Rector of UQAM**

#### **The President's Report**

*Dear Board Members and Friends,*

*The 2008 Orbicom Directory distributed early April this year accounts for 31 UNESCO Chairs in Communication, a sign that the Network is expanding. I welcome these new chairs that have joined the network since the last AGM:*

*The UNESCO Chair in Communication for the Reinforcement of Cultural Diversity, Rafael Landivar University of Guatemala, with Prof. Anabella Giracca as Chairholder., and*

*The UNESCO Chair in Freedom of Expression (Journalism)*

*University of Malaga, with Prof. Bernardo Diaz Nosty as Chairholder.*

*We must rejoice to see the Orbicom Network being reinforced by such dynamic additions. I wish them good.*

*Also some chairholders have been replaced. It is the case of our Board colleague, Minka Zlateva, replaced by Prof. Milko Petrov (Bulgarian Chair), and Anna Heabich, replaced by Prof. Pat Hoffie (Australian Chair).*

*Among the network's accomplishments over the last months, I want to outline the publications of 3 researches launched and presented at the 3rd Global Knowledge Conference (Kuala Lumpur, Dec 2007). They are: 1). The 2007-2008 Edition of the Digital Review of Asia Pacific; 2). Emerging Development Opportunities/ The Making of Information Societies and ICT Markets; 3). Engendering the Knowledge Society/ Measuring Women's Participation.*

*The publications were distributed to all Board members and chair-holders, and also to the associate members who have paid their dues to the network.*

*In recent months, I was asked by the Secretariat to provide ideas for common initiatives that could involve inter-chair cooperation. I want to share these ideas with you. I would appreciate it if you could provide me with comments and proposals for further action.*

*Notwithstanding the initiatives outlined in the Secretary General's report, I submit to your attention the following suggestions for your consideration.*

*A comparative research, country by country, or region by region, of legislative measures adopted by States to protect children against media's harmful or dangerous contents (excessive violence, war propaganda, incitement to hatred, pornography, paedophilia, etc.) in traditional media (TV and film) or in new media (Internet, electronic games, cell phones with video capacity); to try to explain the reasons for the differences from a country to another (culture, religion, political regime, level of development, national taboos, or, in reverse, the laxity of the authorities, etc.). Are the restrictive measures sincere or are they an alibi for intrusive censorship? Possible financing: Scandinavian countries, child protection foundations, UNICEF, European Union?*

*A comparative research of texts (concepts, vocabulary, etc.) in use at the time of NWICO and of texts adopted at UNESCO and UN – New York (Information Committee) since the end of the cold war. We must remember that, at the time of NWICO, a number of concepts developed have profoundly divided the community of States and have fed the East / West / non aligned States confrontation. Which ones have disappeared, which ones have survived, which ones are new? Same for the vocabulary. Semantic has played a capital role during the NWICO time. Financing ?*

*Good governance by the media (watchdog role), for the media (legislative measures to secure the media's freedom, independence and pluralism) and within the media (respect for professional ethical standards, training, quality management, etc.) Financing: World Bank, Norway, European Union?*

*Examine over a period (lets say 2002-2007) in half a dozen developing countries, the implementation of a few major development programmes (WB, UNDP, EU, USAID, Canada, Germany, etc.) and identify the role played by communication in encouraging the dialogue between the development agencies and the populations concerned (this research goes along with Jules Savaria's reflections – see Orbicom's AGM 2007). Examine the communication strategies (if they were some), the means committed, the strengths and weaknesses, the results, etc. This work should allow for the establishment of a check-list of the many parameters that must be taken into consideration for the successful and well-matched integration of communication in development programmes. Financing: multilateral and bilateral agencies engaged in selected countries. A recent period must be chosen in order to meet and interview all the actors concerned.*

*I wish that the above will enrich our reflection and that these ideas I consider doable could emerge as common inter-chairs initiatives when proposed to the membership during the next AGM.*

*Alain Modoux,*

*President*

## **Statement of Mr. Khan, UNESCO ADG/CI**

*Dear colleagues and friends,*

*Let me begin by acknowledging some of the significant achievements of ORBICOM's network during the period in review, namely the preparation and launch at the 3rd Global Knowledge Conference (Kuala Lumpur, December 2007) of three important research publications: the Digital Review of Asia Pacific 2007/2008, Engendering the Knowledge Societies: Measuring Women's Participation and the Emerging Development Opportunities: the Making of Information Societies and ICT Markets. There are many ways to increase the network's visibility, outreach and networking opportunities and ORBICOM offered a dynamic and efficient strategy in implementing its programme activities.*

*Regarding the proposed new concepts for research activities, I welcome the proposed communication for development research which fits within a wider process in which UNESCO has been actively involved and which aims at providing empirical evidence of communication's impacts within development programmes.*

*Over the last few years, the United Nations systematically underscored key issues connecting development to freedom or right to information; the achievement of the MDGs; the importance of national ownership in formulating and implementing national development strategies; the necessity for good governance, particularly the capacity of citizens to hold governments to account for delivery of services; recognizing the importance of globalization; the importance of coherence, alignment and harmonization of development policy; and managing for results. Key to the work of development and freedom has been the development economist, Amartya Kumar Sen, whose teaching and research has focused on establishing sustainable solutions to challenges of poverty, famine and underdevelopment.*

*Drawing in part upon Sen's conceptualization of human development, the last C4D Interagency round table has adopted a concept of communication for development that addresses development as freedom, through highlighting the role of communication in meeting the Millennium Development Goals. The issues are crosscutting and relate to each other; and the UN observes that communication for development is largely about citizen's empowerment and is linked to questions of freedom of expression, media independence and the creation of a healthy public sphere.*

*The challenges we face today as the field of media and communication studies grows are how to develop new theoretical frameworks and conceptual models, acknowledging and giving space to distinctive approaches that embrace local as well as global developments. Communication for Development can only be completely understood and appreciated through observation and practice. However, academic research and thinking is vital for the credibility and growth of this discipline. I trust that ORBICOM's research project will infuse new ideas into the rapidly growing body of Communication for Development knowledge and practice.*

*In my last intervention in October 2007 I have emphasized the importance of media and information literacy, which unfortunately are not widely recognized as an essential element of civic education. Lack of critical thinking combined with media and information literacy makes it*

*particularly difficult for young people to assess the quality of information they can access. In this context media and information literacy are essential for people's active participation in the knowledge societies.*

*I have also stressed the importance of science communication and science literacy. Given the importance of access to cutting edge scientific knowledge and information, which are crucial to development, it is particularly important that we work to popularize scientific knowledge for well-informed policy decisions for sustainable development. Therefore, UNESCO is closely engaged in supporting and strengthening local capability in science reporting in developing countries through collaborative partnerships. Yet we have an important research gap in this area to determine what important measures we should take to bring scientific knowledge to masses in an assimilative way and current status of science communication through vernacular language media in the developing countries.*

*In the era of knowledge-based economy, education must reflect the diversity of learning needs, expectations, interests, languages and cultural contexts. We may refer to this as the need for "learning diversity". This need faces particular challenges from the forces of globalization that drive towards uniformity. The challenge is to define the best use of ICT for improving the quality of teaching and learning, sharing knowledge and information, introducing a higher degree of flexibility in response to societal needs, lowering the cost of education and improving internal and external efficiencies of the education system.*

*UNESCO assigns a high priority to the use of ICT for more equitable and pluralistic development in education, aiming to expand the knowledge base about these issues. The broad questions at the core of UNESCO's efforts are:*

- How can one use ICT to accelerate progress towards education for all and throughout life?*
- How can ICT bring about a better balance between equity and excellence in education?*
- How can ICT help reconcile university and local specificity of knowledge? , and*
- How can education prepare individuals and society to benefit from ICT that increasingly permeate all realms of life?*

*Day after day we become more aware of the central role that information and communication technologies play in harnessing "Education for All" goals at an affordable cost. They present a great potential for knowledge creation, dissemination, effective learning and the development of novel education services. Such potential will not be realized unless these technologies serve rather than drive the implementation of education strategies. To be effective, especially in developing countries, ICT should be combined, when appropriate, with other communication technologies such as radio, television, satellite broadcasting and others, particularly when it comes to the training of teachers.*

*Those who work in the field of open and distance learning continue to face ongoing systematic challenges. The design and development of new courseware, the ability to hire and train ICT competent instructors, the lack of indicators to measure student learning, the efficient use of ever-evolving computer-related technologies, to name a few.*

*We have to acknowledge these new opportunities for learning, which are expanding through a myriad of emerging distance technologies. From online content in the form of e-books, podcasts, streamed videos, and satellite maps to participatory environments such as social networking, Wikis, and alternate reality worlds, technology-based learning continues to open new learning pathways.*

*I take this opportunity to inform you about the recent development and adoption by the IPDC Intergovernmental Council session in April 2008 of the UNESCO Media Development Indicators based on a broad consultative process. The initiative is primarily designed to provide a tool to*

*media professionals, policy makers, development agencies, implementers and project proponents to determine the level of media development in a given country and identify the areas on which national efforts and development assistance should focus. We believe that the establishment of such indicators will facilitate the assessment of the long-term impact of media development efforts and programmes. I would strongly encourage you to use the media development indicators in your work as a guiding and analytical tool.*

*I wish you every success in your deliberations.*

*Abdul Waheed Khan*

## **Statement of UQAM Rector Claude Corbo**

*Dear Board Members and Friends,*

*It is with pleasure that I take part for the first time in this Board of Directors' meeting since I took office, in January 2008, as Rector of Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM). The Orbicom Network is familiar to me since I had the honour to sign the Conventions that created Orbicom and the UNESCO-Bell Chair in Communication and International Development at UQAM with Frederico Mayor in 1994. From what I see, the Network has grown beyond expectations since it now accounts for 31 chairs and 250 associate members in 70 countries.*

*This meeting also allows me, after 14 years, to meet up with Alain Modoux who was instrumental in the creation of the Network on UNESCO's side. I take this occasion to congratulate him for the good standing of Orbicom and for the future common initiative projects he is proposing in his report. It is a sign of vitality and commitment to the Network. I assure him of my cooperation.*

*I have also read Mr. Kahn's positive intervention. His recognition of Orbicom's "significant achievements during the period in review", especially the research works and launching of three important publications at the 3rd Global Knowledge Conference last December is a good testimony that Orbicom is successful in implementing its programmes activities in line with UNESCO's mission. I have also noted UNESCO's keen interest in communication for development project proposals that are outlined in the President's report and in the plan of action of the Secretary General's report. I hope that the necessary financing will be found and that the projects will be put in motion soon.*

*In closing these brief remarks, I wish to convey my commitment, and that of my University, to the Orbicom International Secretariat, in form of an operation budget, office spaces and administrative services until the end of the Secretary General's tenure in December 2010. This decision was motivated by Orbicom's record of accomplishments and in respect for UQAM's commitment towards UNESCO in 1994.*

*I wish that this meeting will allow for insightful orientations.*

*Claude Corbo, Rector*

## Discussion

**Alain Modoux** intervenes to thank Rector Corbo and Abdul Khan for their very encouraging comments. He states that UQAM's commitment to ORBICOM is crucial and stresses not only the material, financial and moral support, but also the fairness regarding Claude-Yves Charron's position whose availability would not be possible without a great deal of understanding and tolerance from the UQAM leadership. He explains that fulfilling simultaneously the functions of ORBICOM Secretary-General, UQAM Vice-Rector and member of IDRC's Board of Governors is absolutely exceptional. With regard to Abdul Khan's remarks, he wants to congratulate UNESCO, in particular the International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC) and its Director Jayaweera, on the Media Development Indicators. He informs that he has actively participated on behalf of ORBICOM in the various expert meetings held in Paris to set up and finalize the project. He concludes writing that these indicators represent unquestionably an important step forward with regard to both communication development and communication's contribution to democracy.

### 3.2 The Treasurer's Report

(all figures in Canadian dollars)

*Dear Board Members and Colleagues,*

*I have the pleasure to introduce to you Orbicom's preliminary financial report in term of cash flow for budget year 2007-2008 (1 June to 31 May).*

*Despite the fact that UNESCO and Montréal International have ceased to contribute to the Secretariat's infrastructure costs in the last years, it is thanks to the UQAM's subsidy of \$ 50 000 in cash over and above all the other services provided in kind by the University that we can report this positive result.*

*I am also very happy to report that Rector Claude Corbo has committed UQAM to support the Orbicom Secretariat (in cash, in kind and in services) until the end of our Secretary General's mandate in December 2010.*

*As for last year, the travel and hospitality costs were covered either by specific projects, or by UQAM sources. Needless to say that the Secretariat's expenses were kept to an absolute minimum.*

*You will notice that the Secretariat is registering an operational surplus of CAN\$ 8 271 which should help replenish the deficit of the last budget exercise mainly caused by the expenses related to the creation of Orbicom's new Website. This year's surplus originates from the indirect fees received for the management of IDRC funded project (Emerging Knowledge Opportunities). However, it is not expected that a surplus will be*

*registered in budget year 2008-2009 as the new IDRC funded project (yet to be signed) will be in its initial phase.*

*Although we can all rejoice that Orbicom has, once again, been able to operate in a responsible way, the lack of more meaningful infrastructure funding constitutes a straight jacket that handicaps the programming and the implementation of a number of worthwhile initiatives proposed by the membership. I invite my colleagues of the Orbicom Board to continue to look for funding opportunities.*

*I recommend that you approve Orbicom's 2007-2008 preliminary financial statements in 3.3 of the agenda.*

*Gabriela Warkentin de la Mora  
Treasurer*

## **Discussion**

**Saik Yoon Chin** proposes a vote of thanks to UQAM for remaining consistently the champion of the network and the field. He explains that the generous financial contributions, and equally generous contributions in kind as the host of the international secretariat, has gone a long way in making Orbicom's work possible.

**Tengku Azzman Shariffadeen** intervenes to second Chin's and proposes to record the Directors' grateful thanks to UQAM for the solid financial and moral support. He further states : « At the same time perhaps we should plan to have a discussion on alternative funding and business models that can enable Orbicom to do more ».

## **3.3 Approval of the Preliminary Financial Statements of 2007-2008**

**Resolution BD08-2  
Approval of Financial Statements 2007-2008:  
Adopted by consensus.**

## **IV. The Secretary General's Report**

### **4.1 A communication for Development Approach to Scientific Training and Research : Statistical Compilation of the ICT Sector and Policy Analysis**

*Building on past researches that lead to the publications on the digital divide/opportunities launched in Geneva in 2003 and in Tunis in 2005, and on the ICT sector launched in Kuala Lumpur in 2007, Orbicom presented to the International Development Research Centre a proposal for the application of the Comdev approach to the transfer of knowledge and training in developing countries. The new project will be of 36 month duration, starting this summer, and will involved teams in 6 countries, yet to be determined, in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Orbicom will work in good part with specialists and partner organizations associated with its past researches on ICTs. The overarching and ultimate objective of the project is to produce high-level, policy-oriented*

*analyses of the state and evolution of the ICT sector that would assist the strategic design of national policies, as well as their implementation and monitoring in a comprehensive and systematic way. This objective cannot be achieved, however, without the prior and proper quantification of the ICT sector. Thus, sequentially, the first step to be accomplished is the compilation of statistical data for the sector, both aggregate and detailed, cross-industry and time-series as per the internationally agreed-upon definition. Considering that the above can only be accomplished through the close collaboration between researchers/analysts and the countries' statistical authorities, the project includes capacity building through the forging of long-lasting and mutually beneficial research ties between those segments of the research communities in their countries.*

*The Orbicom Secretariat is awaiting IDRC's acceptance and funding.*

## **Discussion**

**Claude Corbo** introduces the discussion mentioning that if this emerging initiative were to be accepted and funded, it would provide for an interesting follow up to the previous research initiatives on the digital divide and digital opportunities, with an important added value from his perspective: the training component, of senior actors in the field, allowing for an on-going dialogue between different types of stakeholders: policy makers, researchers, and public servants within national statistical agencies. He further comments that these dialogues are needed, with this complementarity of perspectives as it is difficult to bring change without bringing a commitment and a dialogue between the different types of stakeholders involved.

**Metasebia Woldemariam** intervenes to state that if this initiative receives funding, it will continue to add to a very important mandate. Additionally, and as she notes, it will require a level of cooperation between researchers, government authorities. She mentions that in recent years, she has seen some very interesting collaborations develop, and this is certainly one that fulfils a lot of needs. She concludes that she looks forward to hearing about IDRC's decision.

**Tengku Azzman Shariffadeen** brings his support this proposal but adds that focusing on the ICT sector may produce only a partial solution to the bigger question of development. He explains that we are aware, ICT as an economic sector, is only one dimension to the development equation as ICT as an enabler of development is often seen as an equally important dimension, if not more so. He believes that to do both of them actually enable development. He mentions that one key emerging picture is that value creation through the use of information and knowledge is manifested through innovation and this is where the use or combination of ideas in a fresh way produces value, whether economic or social. He concludes suggesting that the study looks at the possibility of incorporating innovation for development as its overarching objective.

## 4.2 Digital Review of Asia Pacific (DirAP) 2009-1010

*Information and communication technologies (ICT) have enabled education to cross over into a new paradigm that has also at the same time, brought to the fore new problems and new issues, for example, the increasing overlaps between ICT uses for education and training in formal and non-formal contexts, the impact of transnational education, the emergence of oligopolies in e-learning. On the other side, human capital development through education is the key to ICT development.*

*The overall theme of the fourth edition of the biennial series – Digital Review of Asia Pacific (DirAP) - will be devoted to ICT and education; six chapters are expected to cover its different dimensions (Millennium Development Goals, distance education, ICT and non-formal education, capacity building, private-public partnership in ICT for education, knowledge and innovation) .*

*This 2009/2010 edition, to be released in the first quarter of 2009, will also include 31 updated country reports, chapters on ASEAN, APEC and SAARC, as well as two overview chapters – one on emerging technologies and their relationships to markets and communities, and the other, on regulatory approaches to ICT and best practices.*

*DirAP harnesses the intellectual contribution of a sizable community of policymakers, practitioners and researchers from a multitude of disciplines from most of developing countries of the Asia-Pacific region while trying to reach a global audience.*

### **Discussion**

**Claude-Yves Charron** introduces the discussion by expressing a special word of appreciation to Chin Saik Yoon, for proposing both this regional research initiative and also the international one on the Digital Divide, to the Board of Directors and AGM over 10 years ago. He explains that in the case of the Digital Review of Asia Pacific, Chin Saik Yoon has served as Editor-in-Chief for the first 2 Editions, 2003-2004 and 2005-2006, and that they were jointly published by Southbound and Orbicom; both editions were launched at the UN World Summit on the Information Society at Geneva and Tunis respectively. He mentions that Chin Saik Yoon proposed to introduce a bit of change at the editorship level, and Felix Librero, then Chancellor of University of Philippines Open University was invited as Guest Editor-in-Chief for the 2007-2008 Edition, which was launched at the GKP +10 Conference in KL last December. He also writes that another type of partnership was experimented in terms of publisher, Orbicom joining more formally with IDRC and with an editing firm, Sage India.

He informs that Orbicom is in the process of preparing the 4th Edition ( 2009/2010) with researchers from 32 economies of the region, and that Shahid Akhtar, the outgoing program manager of the UNDP APDIP Program, has been invited as Guest Editor-in-Chief. He adds that the authors gathered in Singapore last March for a peer review process of their draft papers.

Since this initiative's early beginning, he mentions, the International Development Research Centre of Canada (IDRC) has been the major sponsor. He then informs that, since the peer review meeting, he has been appointed by the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Trade of Canada on IDRC's Board of Governors with the consequence that he had to explore an alternative to his stepping down as the DirAP project manager.

He explains that after consultation with two members of Orbicom's Board from the region, Tengku Shariffadeen and Chin saik Yoon, it was proposed that Alain Modoux replaces him as project manager to complete the 4th Edition, to conduct the evaluation of the research initiative, and to prepare a research proposal for a new cycle, beyond the current deadline of Dec 2010. He expresses his appreciation to Alain Modoux for having have accepted this recommendation.

He concludes by formally acknowledging the indefectible support of IDRC and by stressing the importance of Orbicom's commitment for longitudinal regional research initiatives even though they are expensive, take time, and are real challenges in getting researchers from 32 countries of a region to work together over time. He adds that for each of our regional or international research initiatives a champion is needed, and thanks Chin Saik Yoon for having been Orbicom's champion at the origin.

**Alain Modoux** thanks Claude-Yves Charron for his kind words and assures him that he will do his best to replace him in this challenging position.

#### **4.3 Communication and Governance Conference, Mexico 3-8 October 2008**

*A special Orbicom forum on Communication and Governance took place last year, from 27 March to 8 May 2007, as a follow up to the Americas' Chairs meeting of last September in Bogota.*

*A text developed by Associate member Mauricio Tolosa of Chile introduced the difficulties experienced by governments in communicating with their citizens. Many participants filed comments under the leadership of Carmen Rico who acted as facilitator. They are: Jürgen Horlbeck (C ) Colombia, Gabriela Warkentin (C ) Mexico, Javier Protzel ( C ) Peru, P. Onguny (A) researcher from Kenya, Rosental Calmon Alves (C) USA- Austin, Claude-Yves Charron, Secretary General of Orbicom, and others.*

*The participants agreed to organise a conference in Mexico (3 -8 October 2008) with the participation of political, media, civil society and private sector actors.*

*The topics of discussion could be:*

- 1. To construct community*
- 2. To mediate, to intercede, to resolve conflicts of interest between different communities*
- 3. To fortify our legitimacy, our presence, our image*
- 4. To explain how new services, opportunities or programs contribute to development*

5. *To transform and mobilize the public administration system*
6. *To ensure transparency in public management.*

*As it was done at the Montreal Conference of 1999, a number of avenues could be explored and general recommendations about the communication role in good governance in Latin America as pilot region could be developed. The experience could be repeated at a more global level within the network, and focus again on local and global governance perspectives.*

*In a second phase, key findings could be reproduced in an Orbicom publication with the participation of the key actors from Chile, Mexico, Panama, Uruguay, Colombia.*

*Carmen Rico and Gabriela Warkentin are coordinating the conference's preparation*

## **Discussion**

**Jamal Eddine Naji** regrets the fact that he is not informed enough about the Mexico meeting. He explains that, since the 1999 Montreal Conference, he has been working on communication and governance mentioning that his chair is even named 'The Moroccan's Chair; "Public & Communities com'. Consequently, he hopes to be involved in this event as he expects good impact in his region.

**Claude-Yves Charron** thanks you Jamal for his comment and takes good note of his expertise in the field. He explains that this is an emerging initiative in line with the discussion that took place during AGM 2007, initiated and animated by the Latin America colleagues, and started with a concept paper drafted by Mauricio Tolosa (it is reproduced in PDF in this Board forum). He informs that since then, Gabriela Warkentin has offered to host this Latin America regional meeting in Spanish at her University in Mexico.

**Gabriela Warkentin de la Mora** intervenes to say that what we want to achieve with this conference is not only an academic meeting, but also an array of workshops with members from federal and local governments, party leaders, media professionals, and so on. She informs that she is still working on the final program and would appreciate any input or suggestions Jamal Eddine Naji might have. She informs that Mexico is going through a very rough period of violence related to organized crime and that the President recently asked the media to join him in the battle against this violence. She adds that things are getting worse day by day this is why there is a need to figure out a comprehensive program that addresses these challenges, as well as communication and governance issues. She concludes by writing that considering Jamal Naji's expertise and suggestions on good practices could be shared.

In response to Gabriela Warkentin and Claude-Yves Charron, **Jamal Eddine Naji** stated that the Arab world and Sub-Saharan Africa are facing violence continually and many deficits in terms of democracy and good governance. He questions what is asked from the media:

- Is there a moral and social role of media?
- Is there a new concept of "Citizen's journalism"? What about the curriculums of journalism?
- Is there a need for Community Media? Role? Legislation? Regulation?
- Is there a new (4th) generation of human rights including a media mission?

**Gabriela Warkentin de la Mora** intervenes to say to Jamal Eddine Naji that in the last days, the Mexican President has called on the media to help him fight the battle, he actually said war, against organized crime. She adds that the tone was unfortunate, but the discussion that came out of it is interesting. She informs that what is really wanted is an extended discussion on this, and concludes that it would be great to have Jamal Naji on board somehow.

And in response, **Jamal Eddine Naji** writes that governments are asking and urging media to follow them on some battles like terrorism, ethnic conflicts. He indicates that the real intellectual challenge will be to clarify the media position about that. He believes that it would be interesting to engage discussion with some international organisations like International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), IFEX, Art 19 to invite them to participate in order to make the debate richer and with a larger diversity. He asks Gabriela Warkentin what she thinks. *(At time of closure there was no answer to this question).*

#### **4.4 Communication for Development Research Initiative**

*Among the best ways to bring communication for development to play the major role it should play is to tie it in more closely with the MDGs' operational counterpart, i.e. the International Aid Effectiveness Agenda (IAEA) and the Paris Declaration (2005). And vice versa, among the best way to achieve the MDGs is to bring to their operational counterpart, the International Aid Effectiveness Agenda, what is missing: a systematic strategy of communication integration. (i.e. the missing link)*

*The Orbicom research initiative is being developed on the basis of this statement of fact that there is insufficient linkage of the contemporary communication for development research to the International Aid Effectiveness Agenda, notwithstanding that a solid base of theoretical and practical knowledge already exists and that this knowledge could contribute to the partnership principles' effective implementation. The project's backbone is thus a quest to effectively connect current communication for development research to this Agenda as reflected in the partnership commitments of the Paris Declaration under the auspices of OECD/DAC. Our research hypothesis is as follows: No effective implementation of the Paris Declaration without better integration of communication for development...*

*Proposal:*

*Examine over a period (lets say 2002-2007) in half a dozen developing countries, the implementation of a few major development programmes (WB, UNDP, EU, USAID,*

Canada, Germany, etc.) and identify the role played by communication in encouraging the dialogue between the development agencies and the populations concerned (this research goes along with Jules Savaria's reflections – see Orbicom's AGM 2007). Examine the communication strategies (if they were some), the means committed, the strengths and weaknesses, the results, etc. This work should allow for the establishment of a check-list of the many parameters that must be taken into consideration for the successful and well-matched integration of communication in development programmes. Financing: multilateral and bilateral agencies engaged in selected countries. A recent period must be chosen in order to meet and interview all the actors concerned.

–

## **Discussion**

**Metasebia Woldemariam** is the sole Director who intervenes. She hopes that Orbicom finds a way to move forward with this proposal shortly. She recalls that some members, Claude-Yves in particular, know that this was the focus of her research for quite a while. Shee thinks research that also helps to provide some sort of solutions, especially in the context of aid, is valuable. She would be happy to help contribute to this initiative once the parameters are set and it is decided to go forward.

## **V. The Network's Expansion**

As there has been no new chair added since last fall, the text developed for the last AGM (October 2007) is reproduced below :

*The UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs Programme is now 15- years old and has proven its relevance and importance throughout the years, particularly in facilitating the transfer, exchange and sharing of knowledge between academic institutions worldwide thus bridging the knowledge divide. It has helped to strengthen international and interuniversity cooperation which is of crucial importance to improving the quality of higher education in developing countries, especially the least developed countries. During the last Executive Board session, the Director-General of UNESCO presented a new strategic approach to the UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs Programme which seeks, before everything else, to align the Programme with UNESCO's priorities and to strengthen further international cooperation in the field of higher education. The ultimate objective is to optimize the full potential of the UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs Programme in all UNESCO's fields of competence by regrouping the Chairs into dynamic networks which will help to increase North-South and South-South cooperation and form regional poles of excellence.*

*One of the overarching objectives in the forthcoming UNESCO's biennial programme is "building inclusive knowledge societies through information and communication" to which universities could clearly contribute significantly. Central to higher education institutions in the knowledge economy, is to explore resources (especially ICT) for bringing people together since ICT reduce constraints of distance and time and can offer*

*new possibilities for creating learning communities to build, explore and apply knowledge in pioneering ways to meet changing social needs and realities.*

*New Chairs:*

*Boulder Colorado, United States of America, Marguerite Moritz (Chairholder)*

*Beijing, China, Liu Liqun (Chairholder)*

*Strasbourg, France, Michel Mathien (Chairholder)*

*Tbilissi, Georgia, Gotcha Tchogovadze (Chairholder)*

*Malaga, Spain, Berbarido Diaz Nosty (Chairholder)*

*Guatemala, Guatemala, Anabella Landivar (Chairholder)*

*New Associate Members:*

*Francesca Gemnetti,*

*Daniel Stauffacher,*

*Jérôme Koechlin,*

*Irina Bibina,*

*Vassili Klokoy,*

## **Comment**

**Claude Corbo** comments that it is impressive to note Orbicom's degree of development since he was the one who co-signed with Federico Mayor the convention that created it fourteen years ago. He joins his voice to the President's one (in his report) and stresses that Orbicom needs the right balance of continuity and change to ensure its sustainability.

## **VI. The Chairs' Programmes and Activities**

*The following Chairs sent recent updates:*

- United States of America (Colorado)*
- Canada (Montreal)*
- Europe (Strasbourg)*
- Bulgaria (Sophia)*
- Colombia (Bogota)*
- Morocco (Rabat)*
- France (Grenoble)*
- China (Beijing)*
- Georgia (Tbilissi) \_*

## **Comment from UNESCO C/I Sector**

Examples of Cooperation with some UNESCO Chairs in Communication /  
UNESCO CI Sector / May 2008

The UNESCO Office in Rabat continued its relationship with the UNESCO Chair in Public and Community Communication at the Institut Supérieur de l'Information et de la Communication (Rabat) and more particularly in research and sensitization on:

The role and place of women journalists in the Maghreb:

Publication of study entitled: « Profession: Journalisme maghrébin au féminin, vécu professionnel de la femme journaliste dans les cinq pays du Maghreb »

Community Media in the Arab Region:

Co-organization of the First Conference of Community Radios from Africa the Middle East and North Africa, invited by the Chair of ORBICOM/UNESCO of Rabat (22 – 24 October 2008)

Since its establishment in 2005, the UNESCO Chair on Media and Gender at the Communication University of China (CUC) participated in 21 surveys, comparative studies and research projects commissioned by Chinese and international institutions. Drawing on support of UNESCO Beijing Office and the CUC, it produced 23 publications and organized a number of events such as the Media and Gender Conference in January 2006 which was attended by seven UNESCO Chair-holders from Europe, Asia and Arab States and reinforced the cooperation within the Chair network.

The UNESCO Office in San José, Costa Rica has developed different activities with the cooperation of the UNESCO Chairs in Guatemala, Dominican Republic, Mexico and Panama. The actions were oriented to strengthening freedom of expression, free flow of information, opinion and knowledge as well as free access to public information and the citizen's right to dissent as important factors for democratization of information and effective right to information.

A better comprehension of freedom of expression and press freedom as fundamental rights was achieved through the development of more than 15 workshops, seminars and meetings (national and regional level) for communication and information professionals, specialists, academic institutions and national and international organizations related.

In 2007, a Regional Commemoration of the World Press Freedom Day was organized by the UNESCO Chairs of Guatemala, Panama, Dominican Republic and Mexico. This Regional Meeting “Las Jornadas Latinoamericanas sobre Tecnologías de la Información y la comunicación: Nuevas Posibilidades y Desafíos para la Libertad de Expresión” was held in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic.

The following activities were developed with the UNESCO Communication Chair of the Faculty of Journalism of the Kazakh National University al-Faraby:

- Dissemination of open distance learning journalism courses in: Contemporary Journalism and Reporting, TV and Radio Journalism, Freedom of Expression, Freedom of Information, Safety of Journalists:
- Translation into Kazakh language ODL courses: Contemporary Journalism and Reporting, TV and Radio Journalism
- Joint collaboration /training activities with Media NGOs Internews / Adyl-Soz on media development.

- On 29 May 2008, the Journalism Faculty will organize the Scientific Conference on Journalism Education in a Contemporary World: Ideas, concepts, new ICTs.
- International relation and students exchange assistance with Communication Chairs at Oklahoma University and Virginia University

## **VII. Board of Directors**

### **Board of Directors' Configuration**

The Orbicom's Board includes 15 members:

- \* 6 Chairholders
- \* 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/communication and information)
- UQAM's Rector
- Orbicom's Secretary General

### **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) Orbicom's Secretary General;
- \* the 12 members serving on the Board of Directors (6 Chairholders and 6 Associate members) are nominated by the two founding and Institutional Ex-Officio members of Orbicom (UNESCO and UQAM), and their nominations are ratified by the Assembly General of Members
- \* once their nominations are 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 once.

### **Directors who will terminate their mandate in the fall of 2008**

Alain Modoux (A) President of Orbicom, Switzerland  
 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

**Directors who will terminate their mandate in the fall of 2009**

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  
Fackson Banda (C) South Africa Chair (Rhodes)  
Metasebia Woldemariam (A) Professor, Ethiopia

**The 3 Ex-officio institutional members are:**

The Director-General of UNESCO, H.E. Koïchiro Matsuura,  
The Rector of UQAM, Claude Corbo,  
The Secretary General of Orbicom, UQAM Vice-rector Claude-Yves Charron.

**VIII. Varia**

**Rainer Kuhlen**, although not a Board member, was encouraged to post a comment in this Board meeting given the importance of his proposal which fits with previous AGM concerns regarding « Intellectual Property Rights », more specifically, copyright. His intervention/invitation is reproduced here.

*“Dear colleagues*

*More and more people (scientists but also economists) are concerned about the negative side-effects of strong copyright regulations - "strong" in the meaning that copyright heavily protects exploitation interests rather than the interests both of the creators and the public (a2k).*

*In Germany we have experienced these negative effects of copyright, in particular with respect to education and science, but also to the free flow of information in general. A so called Aktionsbuendnis (a coalition of science organizations and scientist for a better copyright in education and science in Germany - <http://www.urheberrechtsbuendnis.de/index.html.en>) had tried very hard to improve the new "strong" copyright regulation in Germany - predominantly in vain. There are many reasons for this - but mainly it is the EU specifications (in this case the EU Copyright Guideline from 2001 which, of course, is in the international mainstream of TRIPS and WIPO) which forces our politicians (or at least, they feel to be forced) to do what Brussel thinks (or thought around 2000) need to be done to reach the Lisbon objectives making Europe the strongest economy in the world ....*

*Rethinking the chances for an improvement of the copyright situation for education and science we believe that it necessary to bundle the activities in the European arena in order to influence the European policy towards copyright which should be an instrument for development not for stagnation by defending the interests of yesterday. Therefore there are plans to establish a European network "Copyright in support of Education and Science" (ENCES) which is supposed to bring together science organizations and scientists from many, if not all EU countries in order to "lobby" for a better future-oriented copyright which mainly should consider knowledge and information public goods. This, of course, will not exclude the commercial usage of these goods, but only if access to knowledge and information is guaranteed for all (in accordance with the*

UNESCO IFAP Intergovernmental Programme). The free use of knowledge and information should be rule and the commercial exploitation the exception (therefore the three-step-test, the holy cow of copyright, needs to be reversed).

*Why and how can ORBICOM get involved in this plan?*

*In preparation for the formation of ENCES which is still in its early stages we plan to organize a European-wide conference in November 14-15, 2008 in Berlin. This conference will have 4 main sections:*

- 1. Copyright and science – Demands and objectives*
- 2. Exceptions and limitations or a copyright blanket clause for science*
- 3. Science communication and collaboration*
- 4. Open Access – An alternative to or a replacement for copyright*

*It is section 3 where I think ORBICOM, in particular the European Chairs in Communication, could come into play. Communication, also in science, is our field. The plans are that, in addition to some papers (such as from Michael Nentwick: Collaboration in e-science – a challenge for copyright regulation), there is a slot for a 90 mins panel discussion (chaired preferably by Alain Modoux) among our European Chairs (Prof. Sánchez-Bravo, Spain, Prof. Mathien, France, Prof. Nyárády, Hungary, Dr. Telksnyssa, Lithuania, Prof. Annerstedt, Denmark, Prof. Zlateva, Bulgaria, and Claude-Yves Charron). As topic for the panel we suggest: Science communication – Practice and demands in electronic environments.*

*Again, these are plans. So far I have contacted our Chairs and Claude-Yves via email a couple of weeks ago but didn't get any answer so far. Of course, I will renew my invitation (hopefully we will have some financial support from the German Research Society -DFG, but this is not yet confirmed; therefore some UNESCO support could be helpful). But backing from the ORBICOM Board would be highly welcome and would definitely have a positive effect.*

*May I ask you to consider this topic during your meeting. In case this sounds interesting I am willing to send some background information about the formation of ENCES and about the preliminary programme. I personally embrace the idea to have the voice of UNESCO Chairs and ORBICOM heard in such a EU-wide conference, and I am also sure that all of our Chairs have important things to say about "Science communication – Practice and demands in electronic environments".*

*Any comments and also proposals how to make the event a success are welcome. Also the best for your discussion and for ORBICOM*

*Cordially*

*Rainer Kuhlen*

*UNESCO Chair in Communication in Germany (and speaker of the above mentioned "Aktionsbuendnis")*

## **Comments**

**Metasebia Woldemariam** intervenes to say that this is a fascinating area that is certainly of interest to ORICOM. She explains that countries such as Ethiopia are facing innumerable challenges as they step up efforts to join the WTO. She informs that she knows one researcher who ended up teaching (at the graduate school of journalism of

Addis Ababa University) training sessions to Ethiopian journalists about what conforming to WTO standards would mean to them. She writes that they were all quite shocked to find out (and these were journalists that worked with both state-owned as well as private media) that most of their reporting would be in violation of WTO regulations. She concludes noting that as she was also conducting training sessions with these journalists, it was remarkable how much of what they were confronted to in the copyright training session impacted them. She hopes this is an area Orbicom continues to be active in.

In response to Matasebia Woldemariam, **Claude-Yves Charron** thanks Rainer Khulen for the info about the Berlin Conference of 14-15 November, and for proposing a panel of European Chairholders, chaired by Alain Modoux. He recalls that Rainer Khulen has devoted time and energy to this type of issue and proposes that he be the keynote speaker so if we can put this panel together.

He also mentions that Magda Fusaro, the Canadian Chairholder, has chaired a task force of the Conference of Principals and Rectors of Quebec Universities, and has done researches in the field.

He proposes to see how the individual Chairholders to whom your invitation was relayed will respond. He also mentions that Chin Saik Yoon asked, two years ago, that Orbicom tries to develop a common regional or international research initiative on IPRs in the field of communication and indicates that the proposal was submitted to the AGM, but with not much response; the call for a champion remained unanswered probably because the subject in itself is extremely sensitive and difficult to handle.

Claude-Yves Charron understands that Rainer Khulen's proposal adopts a different angle at least from Track 3 of the ENCES Conference, while other tracks, especially no. 4, may relate more to Chin's intuition and preliminary invitation.

He suggests that since this informal business meeting is coming to a close, the best way to proceed would be for Rainer Khulen to take the phone, or to write a personal e-mail point to point to the Chairholders he would like to see joining his panel for Track 3: ( 4 or 5 people, Alain Modoux as Moderator and Rainer Khulen as keynote speaker).

He concludes requesting more information on the preliminary program.

**Alain Modoux** intervenes to state that Rainer Khulen's concern is fundamental. He explains that The World Summit of the Information Society (WSIS) didn't give (or didn't want to give) enough importance to this topic; too many people, interest groups and State representatives had good reasons to keep it under the counter. As far as he is concerned, he considers the absence of a real debate on intellectual property in the information society (that would have unavoidably been controversial) as the main intellectual deficiency of the WSIS. He further states that WIPO's satisfaction with the manner the Summit dealt with the intellectual property issues speaks for itself! He concludes informing that he will be glad to take part in the panel should Rainer Khulen go forward with his plan.

**Rainer Khulen** responds to say that the comments to his preliminary proposal were all very encouraging and thanks those who intervened. He mentions that he will contact you directly and will provide you with some more details about the programme. I am convinced that we can work out something interesting and challenging that will foster our common goal of an open and development-oriented society rather than making knowledge a private good.

**Tengku Shariffadeen** supports both Alain Modoux and Rainer Kuhlen on the subject of copyright and notes that it is a touchy subject that will have great implications for the future development of the less-developed countries. He adds that we know the playing field is not a level one, and TRIPS under WTO has just made it even less level. He suggests that a group under Orbicom develops a position paper.

**Saik Yoon Chin** concludes this part of the agenda by thanking the many colleagues and friends who work silently in the international secretariat doing the important things that keeps the network active and vibrant. He specifically refers to those who research, write and edit the excellent newsletters and publications, and to those who patiently compile our most useful membership directory, to the webmaster who keeps our website interesting and virus-free, to the project staff who facilitate the many impressive projects that have won our network much recognition around the world, to those who keep our accounts precise and our finances in the black, and to everyone else who keeps Orbicom operating in such fine form.

**Claude-Yves Charron** answers the kind words addressed by Chin Saik Yoon to the colleagues working in the "back office". He explains that, by its very nature, the virtual dimension imposes certain constraints and when we do not meet on a regular annual basis, for a conference, like in other associations, one might feel that there is a feeling of "distance" coming in. He writes that in terms of Yin and Yang, there is another dimension though on the other side of the coin: the degree of interactivity, once we get familiar with virtual platforms, could become quite impressive. He stresses the need for a balance between virtual and in situ meetings for trust building and conviviality among Board members. He regrets that Orbicom's modest financial situation does not allow for more regular opportunities for face to face meetings. He states that we have learned a lot since the creation of this virtual network in 1994 and writes that Some people talk about virtual networks, other practice them. He concludes joining Chin Saik Yoon in thanking the key colleagues here in the Secretariat: Pierre and Jian, who coordinate joint initiatives, Bronja the admin officer, and Samy the webmaster.

## **Board Closure**

*Dear Board Members and Friends,*

*Once again we have managed to successfully hold this annual on-line Board meeting despite our respective heavy schedules.*

*Useful comments and proposals were made in the discussion halls particularly in relation to the Communication and Governance meeting of Mexico (3-8 October 2008), the leadership change in the renewed DiraAP initiative, the quest for inter-chair cooperation in relation to African media and the Intellectual property rights' issues etc. Orbicom has now a number of initiatives that are being implemented.*

*Board members also learned from Rector Corbo about UQAM's renewed commitment toward Orbicom and UNESCO until December 2010. We are all very grateful to him and to UQAM. Without this substantial contribution, the Network could not operate.*

*It is also important to note that Orbicom and the Chairs' cooperation with UNESCO is in a positive mood as stated in Dr. Khan's report in 3.1 and in the examples of cooperation with UNESCO outlined in section 6 "Chairs' Activities".*

*In closing, I wish to thank you all Board members for your active participation in this statutory meeting, and the International Secretariat team for preparing the documentation and for the management of the forum.*

*I declare this 2008 virtual Board meeting closed.*

*Alain Modoux  
President*

NOTE: The detailed minutes will be circulated to all in the next few weeks.

**The Board meeting was closed on 27 May 2008**