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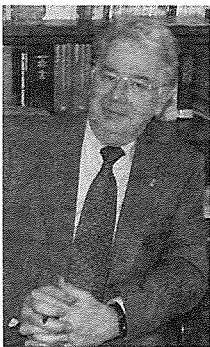
ORBICOM FORUM



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World Summit of the Information Society *"The Party under Constriction"*



The preparations for the World Summit of the Information Society have entered in a crucial phase that is going to determine, to a large extent, the venture's success or failure. It is the International Union of Telecommunications (ITU) that has put forward the idea of a Summit and the United Nations General Assembly has entrusted ITU with the task of organizing it: Switzerland and Tunisia will host the first and second phases of the Summit in 2003 and 2005, respectively.

The States, which are the principal entity involved in the preparation process, are in a position of strength compared with the other stakeholders, the private sector and civil society. At the first preparatory conference (PrepCom-1) in July 2002, the States, from the outset, have set the "rules of the game" adopting Rules of Procedure that guaranty control over the debates and the monopoly on decision making. The game is therefore "locked", and as it has been the case with previous summits, the non-State entities are condemned to play an observer role. It is true that an important consultation process has been put in place and has permitted to harvest hundreds of opinions and proposals, but the States remain totally in control.

The "regional preparatory conferences" which took place over the past weeks confirmed this reality. The five regional Declarations adopted on these occasions were the result of negotiations among the States, while other stakeholders had almost nothing to say! Indeed, a "rebellion" of the main professional associations of media occurred at Bucharest, during the pan-European conference. They finally were able to see the draft declaration amended to incorporate a reference to the role of the media in the information society. But this outstanding action has not really changed things. The hope entertained by many, on the occasion of the Summit, to witness the emergence of a new form of world governance where the political actors (the States) would closely associate with the economic and social actors in the making of decisions has, for the time being, been deceived, and there is little chance that the situation might change between now and the Summit.

More, what is striking, is the fact that the States came to agreement on draft declarations with relative easiness at the

regional conferences of Bamako, Bucharest, Tokyo, Punta Cana (Dominican Republic) and Beirut. If we set aside regional sensitivities and priorities, we can't miss to notice converging views among all the texts. A consensus has rapidly been reached over great principles such as universal access to information technologies, cultural diversity and multilingualism in cyberspace, the multiple applications of technologies to economic, social and cultural development, be it in education, health or commerce, or security in cyberspace.

But the States have refrained from venturing too far on sensitive and sometimes controversial issues of preoccupation to the civil society, in particular, the freedom of expression and information, the right balance between commercial and public interests, the complex and crucial question of intellectual property and copyright, just to enumerate a few.

In short, the States are giving the impression that they have agreed on the necessity to reduce the digital divide that exists not only between the North and the South, but also within countries of the North and the South, in facilitating the universal access to information technologies, or to speak bluntly, the access to the "pipes". But they seem to be setting aside, or neglecting, at least at this stage, the issues related to contents. In other words, the States are in agreement to discuss problems that technology can solve, but they are prudent with those that involve first and foremost political choices. However the latter are precisely those the civil society is mostly concerned with!

As for the private sector, it has not been very active so far, except through the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) which has set up over the past years a number of discussion groups to examine, in cooperation with some large corporations, the challenges of the information society. It is evident that the world political and economic environment is a major preoccupation to the business leaders of all continents. To this sluggish environment must be added the chronic skepticism of the business community about the UN mass gatherings. The costs incurred in money and time are perceived by many as converse to the results attained. We must hope that once the Summit fundamental texts are placed in orbit, the private sector will firmly engage in the debate and share its knowledge, experiences and resources. It is at that time, that it will be possible to develop concrete

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projects to bridge the digital divide. The game is not yet over. The States, but also the other stakeholders, mainly through their national delegations must continue to work and negotiate over the draft texts submitted to them. Although it is difficult to imagine that the convergence of views arrived at during the regional conferences could be put into question, the draft texts still offer sufficient space to incorporate innovative ideas, provided that they would not contradict the principles agreed upon by the States. The role of the media in the information society, for instance, warrants more development and should not cause problem. Switzerland in particular, as host country, is present in all Summit's governmental proceedings, including within task and drafting groups. The Swiss delegation is therefore well positioned to relay certain proposals put forward by the civil society and private sector, and thereafter promote and defend them in the proceedings. The delegation is also in a privileged position to initiate exchanges of ideas and to channel the numerous proposals that will be introduced to identify practical solutions to the real problems of the info-poor people who are excluded from the information society.

In this way, the Summit will not be solely a verbose event where words have the prominent place, but may provide the occasion for a collective understanding on the necessity to do things so that the information society really becomes a society of sharing of universal knowledge opened to all.



Alain Modoux, President

[Alain Modoux, President of ORBICOM, is former Assistant Director-General of UNESCO for Communication and Information. He is presently based in Geneva as an independent communication consultant and is very closely associated with the preparation of the World Summit of the Information Society, Geneva 2003.]

Comunidad iberoamericana intensifica su cooperación académica



La sociedad global que emerge de los rastros de la guerra fría y se nutre de los ingredientes aportados por la revolución digital, viene asumiendo una inequívoca identidad multicultural. Pese a la hegemonía estadounidense, acelerada por el derrocamiento del imperio soviético, existen señales muy claras de que nuevos bloques de intereses están siendo tejidos en el campo internacional.

Naciones y comunidades que poseen afinidades históricas o comparten territorios simbólicos dotados de raíces comunes, potencializan sus apoyos mutuos, construyen iniciativas promisorias. En el ámbito académico, esa tendencia se ha mostrado fructífera. Aunque el inglés permanezca firme como lengua ecuménica en el ámbito científico, se organizan conexiones sui géneris, cimentadas en el uso de idiomas mestizos, cual es el caso del portugués.

Conexiones euro-americanas

Las relaciones entre la Europa ibérica y sus antiguas colonias americanas murieron, significativamente, en el cernidor de la división internacional del trabajo generado por el armisticio que puso punto final a la Segunda Guerra Mundial. Los países iberoamericanos pasaron a gravitar en torno de la órbita de Estados Unidos como consecuencia de la doctrina panamericana.

La persistencia de los regímenes políticos dictatoriales y de las economías autárquicas comandadas por Franco y Salazar, levantaron una barrera a las relaciones políticas y a los intercambios intelectuales. Cuando ese cuadro mudó, en la década de los 70, coincidiendo también con el agotamiento de nuestro reciente ciclo autoritario, España y Portugal volvieron a mantener contactos intensos y permanentes con los países de América Latina.

Esta nueva conexión iberoamericana se fue forjando dinámicamente durante el último cuarto de siglo, en un ambiente de saludable cooperación bilateral. Las industrias latinoamericanas abastecieron las redes audiovisuales portuguesas y españolas de productos culturales capaces de satisfacer las demandas de consumo masivo de sus clases medias emergentes. Asimismo, los grupos financieros ibéricos exportaron capitales para América Latina, participando accionariamente en nuestras empresas de servicio público, privatizadas por los gobiernos nacionales que adoptaron la receta neoliberal del Fondo Monetario Internacional.

Como telón de fondo, vislumbramos una intensificación de la cooperación universitaria, sustentada en los programas estratégicos de la Comunidad Europea, y fomentada también por los proyectos de modernización académica financiados por el Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo.

Comunidad académica

La comunidad iberoamericana en el ámbito de las ciencias de la comunicación comenzó a ser construida en 1966, por iniciativa de la Escuela de Comunicación y Artes de la Universidad de Sao Paulo. Al celebrar 20 años de liderazgo nacional, esa institución inicia una ofensiva internacionalista capaz de sintonizarla con la vanguardia del área del conocimiento a que pertenece.

José Marques de Melo
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Continuación en el site de Orbicom

Orbicom's Online General Assembly of Members 22 September - 3 October 2003

Dear Orbicom Friends,

I have the pleasure to inform you that Orbicom's General Assembly of Members (AGM) is convened from 22 September to 3 October 2003 for two weeks. As for previous years, we have a substantial agenda to cover and I will need your full support and cooperation to make this year's exercise as productive as possible.

Again, the membership will be asked to endorse the recommendations for the appointment of new directors for a two-year term. This appointment exercise is a difficult one as great attention must be paid to a balanced representation on the Board, of genders, geographic locations, and chair holders vs associates.

New initiatives, not necessarily linked to ICTs, but fitting to more traditional streams of communications, could be introduced during the AGM in an effort to update the action plan approved in the Fall of 2000. Initiatives which could not be funded and for which there is no champion, should be abandoned.

I renew the information conveyed to you last year that the chairs might be subjected, at a date yet to be determined, to an evaluation by UNESCO as part of the network's assessment. I strongly invite the chairs to develop joint initiatives and to update their work plans as the evaluations may lead to the exclusion of "dormant" chairs and the loss of their UNESCO certification. Also, by the time we meet, I hope to be able to announce the formal admission of a few new chairs and to welcome on your behalf a good number of new associates.

In conclusion, I am pleased to underline that the Orbicom site has been revamped by the Secretariat. You may have noticed a striking change in Orbicom's look on the Web. I believe it shows a much more attractive image of our network. Efforts have also been made to improve the site's conviviality, the generic platform for forums, and to adapt to Orbicom's various needs while improving security. Also, in recent months, the Secretariat has introduced OrbInfo, Orbicom's electronic bulletin. This virtual publication is now online every second week. It has received, so far, a very positive response from the members.

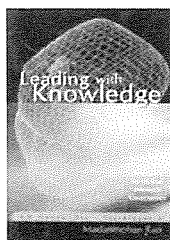
I look forward to engaging again in a very constructive dialogue with you all in September.

Claude-Yves Charron, Secretary General

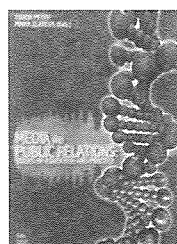
New Releases



Médias et journalistes:
Précis de déontologie
Jamal Eddine Naji
Chaire Orbicom-Maroc



Leading with Knowledge
Madanmohan Rao
Tata McGraw-Hill

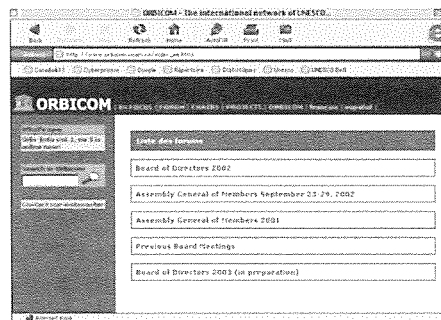


Media and Public Relations:
Issues of Education and Practice
Todor Petev
and Minka Zlateva (eds.)

Draft Agenda

- I. Word of the President
- II. Approval of the Agenda
- III. Approval of the Minutes of the Last AGM (Sept. 2002)
- 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 (2002-2003)
 - 4.4. Nomination of the Financial Controllers (2003-2004)
- V. The Secretary General's Report
 - 5.1. Status Report of the Action Plan
 - 5.2. The Network's Expansion: New Chairs and New Associates
- VI. The Chairs' Programme and Activities
 - 6.1. World Forum of UNESCO Chairs: Report of Panel and Round Table V on Communication
 - 6.2. World Forum of UNESCO Chairs: Strategy for the Development of the UNITWIN Programme
 - 6.3. Communication Chairs' Activities (local and regional)
- VII. Board of Directors
 - 7.1. Motion of Appreciation for the Out-going Board Members
 - 7.2. Endorsement of the New Board Members
- VIII. Varia

To Participate in the Virtual AGM



<http://www.orbicom.uqam.ca>
section "Forum"

N.B. Username and password will be circulated early September.

Contenus: un constat alarmant

Connectivité aléatoire, coûts des liaisons téléphoniques prohibitifs, accès aux données scientifiques en ligne hors de prix, possibilités de formation professionnelle quasi inexistantes, tels sont quelques-uns des nombreux obstacles que rencontrent les professionnels chargés, dans les pays en développement, en particulier dans les pays les moins avancés (PMA), de créer, traiter, diffuser ou conserver l'information en ligne.

Ce constat alarmant est celui de scientifiques, journalistes, enseignants, bibliothécaires et archivistes d'Afrique, d'Asie, d'Amérique latine et des Caraïbes réunis les 14, 15 et 16 mars à Lugano, dans le canton italo-phonique du Tessin, à l'invitation de la Commission suisse pour l'UNESCO. Cette rencontre a permis à quelque 70 experts du Nord et du Sud de prendre la mesure des effets désastreux de la fracture numérique sur ces catégories professionnelles, sans lesquelles la société de l'information n'aurait d'information que le nom. La difficulté que rencontrent les professionnels des contenus travaillant dans les PMA d'avoir accès à l'information et à la connaissance non seulement les empêche de participer activement à la coopération internationale dans leurs domaines de compétence respectifs, mais leur exclusion de la société de l'information constitue aussi un lourd handicap pour le développement social, économique et culturel de leurs pays déjà terriblement défavorisés, dans la mesure où l'information est désormais au cœur de la plupart des secteurs de l'activité humaine.

Tout en prenant note avec satisfaction que la fracture numérique figure en tête des préoccupations des diverses instances chargées de préparer le prochain Sommet mondial sur la l'information, les organisations professionnelles internationales représentatives des professionnels des contenus sont soucieuses que la Déclaration et le Plan d'action qui seront adoptés à Genève, en décembre prochain, ne se limitent pas à un énoncé de principes et de bonnes intentions restant sans lendemain, mais qu'ils se concrétisent rapidement sur le terrain, dans la vie de tous les jours. À cette fin, elles ont préparé, en étroite collaboration avec plusieurs de leurs membres dans les PMA, une série de projets nationaux et régionaux, dont la réalisation per-

mettrait, par des mesures très concrètes, de réduire la fracture numérique dans leurs domaines de compétence respectifs.

L'élaboration de ces projets s'est faite sur la base d'études approfondies qu'ont menées, au cours de l'année 2002, les associations professionnelles internationales, en collaboration, pour certaines d'entre elles, avec des professeurs de l'Université de la Suisse italienne de Lugano (USI). Ces études ont permis d'identifier quels sont les obstacles et difficultés auxquels les professionnels des PMA sont confrontés au niveau de leurs activités quotidiennes. Des propositions de mesures concrètes ont ensuite été développées, profession par profession, pour lever ces obstacles et remédier à ces insuffisances, et créer ainsi les conditions permettant aux professionnels des PMA d'acquiescer les moyens de participer au partage de l'information, d'accroître leurs compétences et d'être en mesure de prendre pleinement part à la coopération internationale dans les domaines professionnels qui sont les leurs. Une fois finalisés, ces projets seront soumis à la considération des participants au Sommet de Genève comme exemples concrets de ce qu'il est possible de faire pour réduire la fracture numérique dans les PMA.

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English text available on Orbicom's website,
in "Columns" section

Celebrating 5 years of Van Dusseldorp & Partners in May



Orbicom wishes to underline Monique Van Dusseldorp's successful business venture in communications consultancy and to extend its sincere congratulations to her and her partners. Five years in this very competitive area is in itself a remarkable achievement. Orbicom, is particularly proud to count Monique as a dedicated member. The kind of active participation she offers to Orbicom's activities and virtual forums is what makes a network relevant and alive. Orbicom wishes to Van Dusseldorp and Partners many more fruitful years ahead.

Conferences

GKP ESCOMM Meeting/GKP Annual Meeting
19-23 May 2003
Rome, Italy
www.globalknowledge.org

La médiatisation de l'Histoire, de l'utilisation du passé dans la construction de l'actualité
22-23 mai 2003
Grand amphithéâtre, Strasbourg
cerime@urs.u-strasbg.fr

Shaping Tomorrow's Media Systems
23-24 May 2003
Faculty of Journalism, Moscow, Russia
vorlova@journ.msu.ru

CELACOM'2003 VII Colóquio Internacional sobre a Escola Latino-Americana de Comunicação
26 a 28 maio de 2003
São Bernardo do Campo, SP, Brasil
<http://www.metodista.br/unesco>

Mídia Brasileira: 2 Séculos de História: Tema central do I Encontro nacional da rede alfredo de carvalho
1-3 de junho de 2003
Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
lislopes@unicarioca.edu.br

Digital Opportunities for Africa - Community Multimedia Centres
12-17 June 2003
Dakar, Senegal
www.unesco.org

CommunicAsia2003
17-20 June 2003
Singapour, Malaysia
www.communicasia.com

ACCE Annual Meeting
10-15 August 2003
Abuja, Nigeria
Agunga.1@osu.edu

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