Towards a new mandate of the General Information Programme.

Report on recent PGI activities

The document presents activities carried out within the framework of the General Information Programme since the twenty-fourth meeting of the Bureau of the Council for the General Information Programme (26-27 June 1997), in keeping with the recommendations of the eleventh session of the Intergovernmental Council of the General Information Programme (Paris, 2-3 December 1996) to “expand and develop the mandate of the General Information Programme” and to ensure an “appropriate balance between traditional and new areas of information and communication”.

PGI related activities are implemented principally by the Information and Informatics Division (CII/INF). However, the Library of Alexandria and the Reading for All projects as well as the World Communication and Information Report are the responsibility of the Unit for Special Projects (CII/UPS).

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1 Introduction

1. Following the recommendation of the eleventh session of the Intergovernmental Council of the General Information Programme (Paris, 2-3 December 1996) to “expand and develop the mandate of the General Information Programme in keeping with UNESCO’s catalytic role” and to ensure an “appropriate balance between traditional and new areas of information and communication”, the Information and Informatics Division has implemented, since the 24th meeting of the Bureau of the PGI Council, a variety of activities. Both the traditional and the new areas of actions related to the General Information Programme, are based on UNESCO’s strategy for facing the challenges of the Information Society. This strategy includes two main line of actions:

a) UNESCO’s intellectual and ethical mandate requires the Organization to concentrate on contents of the information circulating in the information society, including their access, and ethical issues;

b) UNESCO’s contribution to building the infrastructure of the information society (the “Infostructure”) which concentrates on training, the establishment of information policies and promotion of networking.

2 PGI in the Information Society

2.1 Content in the Information Society

2. For UNESCO, the content of information circulating on the global networks is of major importance. Therefore, the Organization in general and the General Information Programme in particular concentrate on ethical issues of the information society, the observation of national information policies, legal frameworks and codes of practice, fostering access to diversified content for the “info have-nots” by developing a strong public domain of information; promoting cultural and linguistic pluralism in the information society, fostering international and regional co-operation in information categorization, labeling and filtering, and enhancing the participation of all in the global cyber-culture.

3. CII/INF is participating to the intersectoral project on "Ethical and socio-cultural challenges of the new information society" by providing a forum for the international community to discuss issues of an ethical, social and legal nature arising in cyberspace. At its 29th session, after examining document 29 C/23, the General Conference adopted 29 C/Resolution 36 which recognises UNESCO to be the organization of the United Nations system to take the intellectual lead in this area.

2.1.1 Infoethics

4. INFOethics’98, the second International Congress on Ethical, Legal and Societal Challenges of Cyberspace, will be held from 1 to 3 October 1998 in Monte Carlo, Principality of Monaco. The Congress will cover three major themes: public domain and multilingualism in cyberspace; privacy, confidentiality and security in cyberspace, and the effects of globalization including the promotion of lifelong learning and the development of social, economic and multicultural responsibilities. The participants will be national and international governmental and non-governmental organizations, specialists and academics in telecommunications, information (libraries, archives, databases), computer sciences, mass media, audiovisual production, social sciences, philosophy and education.

5. In accordance with 29 C/Resolution 36, CII/INF is organizing the first Expert Meeting on Cyberspace Law to be held in Monte-Carlo (Principauté de Monaco) from 29 to 30 September 1998, immediately preceding INFOethics’98. The Expert Meeting is expected to clarify the international dimensions of cyberspace law and to contribute to the preparation of guidelines in this new and evolving domain, together with recommendations to be discussed at the international level. CII/INF is commissioning a publication on the "International Dimensions of Cyberspace Law". Interested international bodies, such as the Council of
Europe, ESA, EU, ITU, OECD, UNCITRAL, UNCPCJD and WIPO, have been invited to participate in this work. UNESCO has also been invited to participate in the work of the Council of Europe, OECD and UNCITRAL related to the information society.

6. In accordance with the request of the 29th General Conference, CII/INF started to establish an on-line observatory to keep the Member States abreast with the ethical, legal and societal challenges brought about by new technologies. It aims, in particular, at providing updated information on the developments of the following issues: access to information in public domain, electronic commerce, privacy and confidentiality in cyberspace and violence in cyberspace. The observatory aims at becoming a public service readily accessible to all providing information in the following areas: international, regional and national legislation, professional codes of conduct, the activities of other observatories and relevant organizations, planned conferences and on-line discussion and news groups.

7. Upon direct instructions of the Director General, financial and technical assistance was given to the Government of Venezuela for the preparation and the realisation in Caracas (June/July 1997) of the Ibero-American Forum on Information and Communication for Democracy. This Forum formed part of the preparatory activities of the VII Ibero-American Summit of Heads of State and Governments on “Ethical Aspect of Democracy” which was held in November 1997, in Venezuela.

2.1.2 Promotion of information in the public domain (the ‘Global Cyber Commons’)

8. CII/INF is developing a strategy for the promotion of a strong ‘public domain’ information, accessible on-line and off-line (the ‘Global Cyber Commons’) and is creating a virtual focal point with links to the ever-growing number of repositories and servers providing access to information in the public domain and to the world’s cultural heritage, particularly through the web. In this context, support will also be reaffirmed for copyright, public access to information and fair use with a view to achieving a balance between the interests of copyright holders and the public interest.

2.1.3 The UNESCO Web Prize

9. As decided by the Executive Board at its 152nd session, CII/INF has launched the UNESCO Web Prize, as a part of the Prize for the Promotion of the Arts. The prize, which will be awarded for the first time in 1998, is to reflect contemporary cultural, artistic and technological tendencies, and to reach a younger generation directly involved in cyber-culture. The prize will be awarded in two categories: websites on a free theme related to international co-operation in education, science, culture and communication and websites on a given subject related to cultural heritage campaigns and to intercultural dialogue (1998: The Slave Route).

2.1.4 WebWorld, the website of the Communication, Information and Informatics Sector

10. The website of the Communication, Information and Informatics Sector, established under the responsibility of CII/INF, has been further developed to serve as an information tool for CII’s activities and as a means to enhance interactivity between the various Division of the Sector and their partners. Furthermore, strategies are being developed for the creation of a general repository for information of a public nature relevant to CII’s fields of competence. The site is also being used to increase the efficiency of programme administration by allowing access to key publications and documents.

2.2 Building the “Infostructure”

11. Activities of the renewed General Information Programme in view to establishing an “Infostructure” are being carried out in close co-operation with the Intergovernmental Informatics Programme (IIP). They include the promotion of training in information handling, with particular attention to the changing needs of information professionals (librarians, archivists and documentalists) and users; support to the development of national and/or regional information policies (in particular ‘universal access’ policies); promotion of
networking of people and institutions (with a view to sharing experience and knowledge and avoiding duplication of efforts); promotion of the establishment of virtual learning communities, virtual laboratories, virtual libraries, on-line governance services, and multi-purpose community telecentres in rural or disadvantaged areas; enhancement of information access for illiterates; improvement of infrastructures of public libraries, archives and documentation centres as gateways to information.

2.2.1 Training

12. In the reporting period, three main sets of activities were implemented: contribution to training workshops for specialists in informatics; establishment of new UNESCO Chairs in informatics; and the preparation of a computerized didactic software for teaching informatics in Portuguese-speaking African countries.

13. In Brazil, CII/INF launched the Portuguese version of "Informatics for Secondary Education, a Curriculum for Schools" on the occasion of the XXVII Congress of the Brazilian Computing Society (Brasilia, 2-8 August 1997). This publication was supported by the University of Brasilia and the Ministry of Education. A training pilot project with information and informatics components is planned for 1998 in co-operation with IBICT (National Institute for Information in Science and Technology, Ministry for Science and Technology) and RNP (National Research Network, the Brazilian Internet, Ministry for Science and Technology). IBICT and RNP will provide free-of-charge training to African institutions working in the field of information and informatics.

14. The IV Meeting of Teachers and Researchers of Library, Archives and Information Sciences was held from 20 to 24 April 1998 in Maracaibo, Venezuela, with the support of CII/INF (Caracas). A Regional University Centre for New Information Technology for training and the creation of information products and services for MERCOSUR, is planned to be established in Montevideo, Uruguay. The creation of this Centre, which will be using the experience of the University of Colima, Mexico, is supported through the Participation Programme, with technical assistance from CII/INF (Caracas).

2.2.2 Regional co-operation for infostructure development

15. UNESCO, through CII/INF, has been active in the international debate concerning telematics and information highways and was a co-sponsor of the Global Knowledge '97 Conference organized by the World Bank and Canada (Toronto, June 1997). Following the GK '97 Conference, a Global Knowledge Partnership was established of which UNESCO is a member. Through CII/INF, UNESCO is involved with other concerned United Nations agencies in the planning of a Developing Countries Forum at the INET '98 Conference of the Internet Society (Geneva, July 1998).

16. CII/INF strong role in promoting the exploitation of information highways for development in Africa through the Regional Informatics Network for Africa (RINAF), within the United Nations System-Wide Special Initiative on Africa and the African Information Society Initiative (AISI), was affirmed at the second meeting of the international Partnership for Information and Communication Technologies in Africa (PICTA) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in October 1997. UNESCO is the lead agency in promoting the development of human resources for the information society in Africa through a training programme designed to reinforce centres of excellence at the subregional and national levels. Courses on telematics application development and network engineering were organized respectively in Bamako, Mali (August 1997) and Dakar, Senegal (December 1997). In the present biennium, the programme of training courses is continuing in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe (March 1998), Accra, Ghana (June 1998).

17. In the area of policies and strategies for telematics in Africa, UNESCO and international partners assisted the authorities of Niger and Rwanda in organizing national policy consultations in 1997, and participated in an inter-agency mission, to advise Gabon on the formulation of a national information and communication strategy. In Ghana, the Ghana National Committee on the Internet Connectivity, formed in 1996 with the encouragement of ITU and UNESCO, completed with UNESCO support a survey of
telematics use and organized in January 1998 the first national conference of public sector telematics users. In these activities, CII/INF contribution focuses on ethical, legal and societal aspects of information highways, on the role of the public sector, and on telematics content and applications for development. A study is being initiated with ITU and African telecommunication operators, information service providers and users on solutions to reducing economic obstacles to the Internet access in Africa.

18. In Asia and the Pacific, the Regional Informatics Networks for South and Central Asia (RINSCA) and South-East Asia and the Pacific (RINSEAP), and the ASTINFO programme for co-operation in the information field, will work in closer co-ordination, and a joint consultation is planned in late 1998. Networking activities are in particular being reinforced in Central Asia. A special effort in telematics will be initiated in the Pacific within the framework of Focus on the Pacific.

19. In Europe, telematics support has centred on the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States, in co-operation with the Commission of the European Communities. CII/INF proposed to co-operate with EU in promoting info-ethics issues; cyber law; access to information in the public domain; development of cost-efficient, robust technologies and methodologies for the public sector in developing countries such as virtual laboratory applications; preserving cultural and linguistic diversity on the Internet and promoting academic East-West exchange. CII/INF is implementing or is being subcontracted to implement the following projects for the Telematics Applications and Inco-Copernicus Programmes: Development of New Markets for Telematics Products in Central Asia (DENEMA), Support for Telematics Applications Co-operation with the Commonwealth of Independent States (STACCIS) and TeleInViVo. These projects sponsored by the European Commission cover the 12 countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States.

20. In Latin America and the Caribbean, a Latin American Symposium on Telematics for Development (LACSymp) is planned to be organized in the current biennium. The pilot project on ‘Access to Telematics Facilities in the Caribbean’, based in Barbados, Saint Lucia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, was successfully completed in December 1997. The project showed that public sector users could be effective in exploiting the Internet in their work if empowered by joint action and appropriate support by public authorities.

21. The Sub-Regional University Conference: “Informatics and Telecommunications: Platform for Transformation” (23 – 26 June 1998), is being organized with the co-operation of CII/INF (Caracas). The main objective of this event is to improve the use of new information technologies in universities in member states of the Association of Caribbean States. The specific objectives are: the creation of a sub-regional virtual academic community; the creation of the Caribbean University Libraries Network; the creation of Regional Virtual Laboratories for Scientific Research (VLSR); the creation of Virtual UNESCO Chairs; the integration of the high level university management using telecommunication tools; and establishing parameters for the strategic planning of the new information technologies.

2.2.3 Multi-purpose community telecentres

22. The concept of a sustainable multi-purpose community telecentre (MCT) for rural or disadvantaged areas is being promoted and tested in co-operation with ITU. CII/INF completed in April 1997, along with ITU and the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) as principal international partners, a generic study on the implementation of a series of multi-purpose community telecentre (MCT) pilot projects in Africa. The study identified five countries to host pilot projects - Benin, Mali, Mozambique, United Republic of Tanzania and Uganda - in which CII/INF and the Education Sector (ED) are collaborating closely in implementing UNESCO’s component.

2.2.4 Learning networks and virtual learning communities

23. The joint ED-CII/INF project on ‘Creating learning networks for African teachers’ aims to enhance the capacity of teachers and their institutions to promote educational reform by networking teacher-training
colleges in African countries and their partners through the Internet. At the same time the project will provide teachers with basic skills to use such new technologies and reinforce the libraries of the colleges as educational resource centres. Negotiations with donors are under way to supplement modest resources available under the regular programme.

24. In Mozambique, an extensive project is under preparation to facilitate the creation of new modalities of education and learning, making appropriate use of information and communication technologies in replacing the destroyed educational infrastructure. A report to the Minister of Education was finalized in November 1997, and the organization of a national workshop and follow-up activities are foreseen in early 1998.

2.2.5 Virtual laboratories: telematics in support of scientific collaboration

25. Intersectoral and inter-agency co-operation is being developed along with the projects related to telematics training of various professional groups. Establishment of the telemedical network in the framework of DENEMA projects is closely co-ordinated with the World Health Organization.

26. For the virtual laboratory on migration of radionuclides in biological chains which was established between Los Alamos (United States) and Kazakhstan, CII/INF made use of the expertise of the International Atomic Energy Agency. Data on nuclear contamination of the Semi-Palatinsk nuclear test-site was sent over the Internet from the Kazakh Nuclear Centre to the Los Alamos National Laboratory. There it was plotted on GIS maps, the risk calculations were performed, and the conclusions having been drawn by scientists on both sides; the results are available on the Internet. CII/INF is presently looking at groupware and methodologies to further extend research in virtual space.

2.2.6 Telematics for cultural preservation and development

27. CII/INF participated in the round table on the use of the Internet in promotion of national heritage and cultural tourism in Central Asia, in Almaty (Republic of Kazakhstan), September 1997. The HeritageNet computer network of cultural institutions, and the School of Young Web Designers, are the two initiatives which were developed at the round table and are now being gradually implemented in Central Asia. Parallel to the digitization process which is being initiated at museums, cultural foundations and libraries in the region, a consortium of non-profit Internet users is being formed to lower the Internet tariffs in the region.

28. In Africa, CII/INF and ACCT assisted Burkina Faso to develop websites for the regional cultural festivals on African films (FESPACO) and artisan work (SIAO); these sites will serve as models in a programme to promote African content on the Internet.

3 PGI and traditional areas of its activities

3.1 Libraries

3.1.1 Library of Alexandria

29. Phase 1 of the construction of the Alexandria Library building (foundations and ground engineering works) has been completed, and Phase 2 (superstructures and finishings) is well underway. The Library is scheduled to be completed in the Spring of 1999 with its official opening in the fall of that year.

30. A feasibility study for the design and prototype of the Library Information System has been carried out by a French firm. UNESCO has provided an Internet Server and funds to develop the final format of the Internet homepage for the Library. The conservation and restoration laboratory has been expanded by a microfilm laboratory and digital laboratory to treat rare manuscripts; the training of librarians is proceeding through the organization of seminars and courses, as well as scholarships for librarians. Acquisitions for the Library are running at about 30,000 items per year, resulting in about 300,000 volumes to date. These have
been catalogued and stored. The German Government agreed in 1997 to provide the book transportation system for the Library.

31. A librarian in residence from France is presently working as an assistant to the Project Manager in Alexandria. He will establish the layouts of the Audio-Visual/Multimedia Section of the Library, and help to plan equipment and staffing needs. Two international Bibliotheca Alexandrina seminars (Bibliotheca Alexandrina and European libraries; technical aspects of the Library) are planned to be held in 1998 in Alexandria, under UNESCO auspices. Two "Friends" groups of the Alexandria Library have recently been established in France and Bulgaria. The Third International Meeting of the Friends groups will be organized in September, 1998 in Athens, Greece.

3.1.2 National and University Library of Bosnia and Herzegovina

32. The overall reconstruction programme of Bosnia and Herzegovina has produced significant, positive results according to World Bank reports. The encouraging development of the Library's activities reflects this situation. The Library has increased its staff, accelerated its operations and has moved to the premises allocated to the Library in the former Tito Barracks which have been refurbished under UNESCO and World Bank funding. Presently, the Library has at its disposal 750 m2 for stock areas, user areas and office space. The Slovenian Institute for Information Sciences (IZUM) provides its Co-operative Online Bibliographic System and Services (COBISS) to the Library. CII/INF will continue its assistance programme, particularly through assisting in the creation of an Internet Room in the Library for providing free Internet access to Library users, the provision of fellowships, the continuation of the "Bosniaca" research programme, the refurbishment of additional space and the creation of a website for the National and University Library.

33. The use of the former building of the National and University Library ("Vijecnica"), which was destroyed in August 1992, has not yet be determined by the national authorities. The symbolic value of the historical building has generated various discussions and proposals which could be made fruitful for a wide national debate on its future use. At present, the international community is hesitating to fund the restoration of the Vijecnica before the competent authorities have clearly defined its future use.

3.1.3 UNESCO Network of Associated Libraries (UNAL)

34. A regional workshop was organized in Sofia, by the National Library of Bulgaria from 12 to 14 December 1997 on the theme "Internet and the Balkan Libraries". Participants came from the national libraries of Albania, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Rumania and Serbia as well as from regional and central libraries in Bulgaria. The workshop covered basic Internet concepts and services, Internet applications in libraries, virtual libraries and the library profession and Internet. The II Ibero-American UNAL Seminar was held from 23 to 27 May 1998, in Cienfuegos, Cuba, with the support of CII/INF (Caracas).

3.1.4 Library buses in the Dominican Republic

35. The assistance provided by CII/INF (Caracas) to the Dominican Republic in support of the Library Buses Programme, consists in establishing networking tools in this special library service. The project takes advantage of the modern mobile telephone system available in the Dominican Republic for interconnecting the library buses and giving them access to the Internet. The experiences of this a pilot project will used in other countries.

3.1.5 UNESCO School Library Manifesto

36. On the initiative of UNESCO, the National Library of Canada, on behalf of IFLA, has drafted a "School Library Manifesto" the purpose of which is to ensure that the role of the school library in the new information environment is understood and agreed upon worldwide. More particularly, the Manifesto's
objective is "to define and advance the role of school libraries and resource centres in enabling students to acquire the learning tools and learning content that allow them to survive; to develop their full capacities; to continue to learn throughout their lives; and to make informed decisions" (School Library Manifesto, Fourth Draft, March 1998, p. 3). A workshop to be held in August 1998 in Amsterdam will be finalizing the text which could subsequently be discussed by the 11th session of the Intergovernmental Council for the General Information Programme (Ref. PGI-98/COUNCIL/BUR.XXV/INF.6).

3.2 Reading for All

37. The First Meeting of the International Panel on Reading for All was hosted by the Egyptian authorities in Aswan, Arab Republic of Egypt, from 24 to 25 November 1997. In their recommendations, the Members of the International Panel recognized that the international community and UNESCO in particular have a long and proud history of promoting reading as a crucial element for development. They underlined that it was timely and appropriate that the Organization, in keeping with its Constitution and within the context of international efforts to eradicate illiteracy and develop and promote reading habits takes up the Egyptian initiative.

38. The experts reviewed the Egyptian Reading for All Programme appreciating the offer made by Egypt to share it with the international community. They agreed to report the findings of the meeting to institutions and authorities in their countries. Furthermore, the experts recommended that governments and non-governmental organizations evaluate past and present national reading promotion activities with the aim of carrying out an assessment of needs in this field and that they consider the possibilities of applying the experiences of the Egyptian Reading for All Programme.

39. A series of regional Reading for All meetings are planned to be held in the 1998/99 biennium, particularly in the Arab States and Eastern European countries. Egypt and Bulgaria have agreed to host the meetings, tentatively scheduled for late 1998 (cf. PGI-98/COUNCIL/BUR.XXV/INF.7).

3.3 Archives

40. CII/INF continued to provide technical support and administrative and organization services for the establishment of the National Archives Centre in Sana'a, Yemen (project YEM/92/041 - Records and Archives Management). The main activities of the project, which was initiated by UNESCO and which is funded by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), was completed at the end of 1997.

41. An emergency programme for the safeguarding of vital records in case of armed conflicts has been established by the International Council on Archives (ICA) within the framework of a contract established with UNESCO.

42. The revised edition of the "Guide to the Archives of International Organization" was prepared by the ICA, upon a CII/INF initiative. This guide has been published on the Internet through UNESCO's website.

43. An ambitious digitization programme of studies published under the Records and Archives Management Programme (RAMP studies) has been carried out. The e-texts of the studies will be made available on-line (through the CII website) and off-line (through CD-ROMs).

44. An application of WINISIS for archives automation was developed by the Latin American Association of Archives, in close co-operation with the National Archives of Colombia and the Colombian Association of CDS/ISIS users (ASOISIS). This project is presently in its final phase and the application will shortly be distributed in the region.

45. In the reporting period, the Information and Informatics Division organized two expert missions in the area of archives (Sudan: Records and Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) and South Africa (Archives of the South African Liberation movement at Fort Hare).
46. A consultation meeting was organized on 23 April 1998 by UNESCO between the manufacturers of analogue tape machines and members of IASA to discuss the problems arising from the gradual phasing out of analogue carriers and equipment. This presents an obstacle for institutions with large collections of analogue tapes because the mass of information to be transferred demands enormous amounts of time and human resources. The meeting examined the lack of digital standards for preservation purposes, the commercial needs of manufacturers and the long-term prospects for the production of analogue machines and spare parts. It concluded there was a need for closer collaboration between the two groups since both are ultimately responsible for preserving the world's recorded heritage.

3.4 Memory of the World Programme

3.4.1 The Memory of the World Register

47. In order to establish the Memory of the World Register, detailed nomination forms have been sent out to all UNESCO's Member States and international professional associations, inviting them to identify documentary heritage to be nominated for the "Memory of the World" Register. The International Advisory Committee (IAC) at its third meeting in Tashkent in September 1997 began its role of evaluating nominations for the Register. There were a total of 71 nominations from 33 countries. Of these nominations, 38 from 22 countries were considered to be of great significance and have been recommended for inclusion on the World Register. A further 18 nominations were recommended for inclusion on National or Regional Registers and the remaining 15 nominations have been referred to the Bureau for further investigation.

48. The selection criteria used according to the guidelines set by the Memory of the World Programme require testing in actual practice as the Programme evolves. Experience may lead to modifications. Three Working Groups were set up to examine different aspects of the criteria and their application to specific circumstances.

3.4.2 Central Asia Regional Consultation

49. A Regional Consultation on Conservation, Preservation and Promotion of the documentary heritage of Central Asia was held in Tashkent in September 1997, immediately before the meeting of the IAC. Representatives of the five Central Asian States - Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan - discussed ways of improving their links with the Memory of the World Programme and possible schemes of regional co-operation.

3.4.3 External evaluation

50. The external evaluation of the Memory of the World Programme assessed the relevance of the Memory of the World Programme, its results and impact on promoting documentary heritage, raising awareness of its importance and the need to preserve it and enhance access to it. It provided in particular the analysis of the methodological and technical framework of the Programme, of its general guidelines, pilot projects and technical standards as well as of its institutional set-up, and of the work of the IAC and its Sub-Committees together with the existing National Committees. A set of action-orientated recommendations with regard to future implementation of the Programme was developed. (Ref PGI-98/COUNCIL/BUR.XXV/INF.8).

3.4.3.1 Main results

51. The evaluation revealed a general consensus that the Programme is a most relevant and timely initiative of major international significance. The Memory of the World Register has the potential to serve a similar and complementary function to the World Heritage list, constituting a tool to draw attention to the Programme, to its aims, to stimulate funding and to multiply endeavours towards the safeguarding of the documentary heritage. The evaluators pointed out that the Memory of the World Programme is moving to
the realisation of its objectives. They underlined the commonality of opinion amongst the Programme's stakeholders as to its relevance and its uniqueness and its potential critical international role in awareness raising among public and decision makers.

3.4.3.2 Lessons learnt and their future implications

52. The evaluators noted a significant and ongoing dilemma in resolving competing demands of preservation and access, the two principal and complementary objectives of the programme, in its implementation, particularly as a consequence of the emphasis on new technologies as a means of enhancing access and as a hoped-for means of generating funds through the sale of digital products.

53. The IAC is actively addressing the complex problems related to the selection criteria of collections to be included in the Memory of the World Register. It is also necessary to reconcile concerns amongst the archival community that all archival materials have inherent "Memory of the World" status, with other perspectives which accept holdings to have a special or symbolic significance that entitles them to the bestowal of a Memory of the Word label.

54. The evaluation considers that the most important step to ensure that the Memory of the World Programme reaches a 'critical mass' to grow exponentially and be seen as a truly global endeavour, would be to establish effective partnership with key stakeholders, particularly the associated NGOs, and those national, regional and international programmes which are already contributing (officially or unofficially) to the Programme's overall objectives.

3.4.4 Memory of the World Exhibition

55. The Austrian National Commission for UNESCO and the Austrian National Committee for the Memory of the World Programme have initiated and supported the preparation, by CII/INF, of an itinerant exhibition on the safeguarding of the documentary heritage which was first presented during UNESCO's 29th General Conference, in December 1997. The exhibition consisting of 12 panels with large format images explained by short texts in English and French can be lent to interested institutions at no costs (except transportation costs). The exhibition can also be visited on the CII's Website at the following address: http://www.unesco.org/webworld/virtual_exhibit/safeguarding/expo00.html.

3.5 World Report on Communication and Information 1999

56. The *World Report on Communication and Information 1999* will present for the first time a coherent state of the art of the situation of communication, information and informatics throughout the world. Based on its experience with the publication, in 1997, of two documents, the World Communication Report and the World Information Report, UNESCO will publish in 1999 a trans-disciplinary work which will cover several fields in one volume: communication (press, radio, TV and other media), informatics (computers and networks) and information services (archives, libraries and information services) as well as the whole range of new information and communication technologies which are of utmost importance for the communication and information professions. The Report will be made up of a series of papers prepared by different authors from all regions of the world and will combine analyses of the situation region by region with thematic papers.

57. An Advisory Committee composed of twelve experts representing all regions of the world and the various disciplines covered by the Report has been set-up to assist UNESCO in this respect. The Committee advises UNESCO on the design of the report, the selection of authors and the evaluation of the papers. The Committee met on 14 and 15 May 1998. The *World Report on Communication and Information 1999* will be published in English and French. Other language versions will be made available subject to the identification of extra-budgetary resources.
3.6 Software development and distribution

58. The international training seminar *Introduction to IDAMS* took place from 24 to 28 November 1997 at UNESCO Headquarters, gathering 8 participants from 6 countries and 4 participants from the International Labour Organisation. The extended course (five days instead of three) provided better conditions for individual and group-wise consultations on national and international projects.

59. The 1st Regional Meeting of CDS/ISIS and IDAMS distributors in Africa was organized from 15 to 19 December 1997 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. It was hosted by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), with the financial support of CII/INF. The meeting was attended by 30 participants from 13 countries and from 5 international/regional organizations. The discussions centered on the latest and planned developments of CDS/ISIS and IDAMS, on the level of utilization of the two packages and distribution policies adopted as well as on problems encountered in distributing and/or using the packages. The urgent need for training in both CDS/ISIS and IDAMS, and particularly for the training of trainers, was expressed by all speakers. The increasing role of the Internet has been recognized, but it was agreed that old ways of ISIS and IDAMS distribution should not be abandoned.