

RECOMMENDATION

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**INCLUDE VISIBLE MINORITIES AND OTHER MINORITY GROUPS IN BROADCASTING TECHNOLOGY PLANNING**

**Access:** The mass media are the most important means by which a society communicates. In a democratic system, equality of access to the media should be guaranteed. This would in great measure ameliorate on a social level the divisions based on class, religion, culture and race. However, private and public media institutions do not at present ensure suitable access by all social groups in the society, notably by ethnic and visible minorities. We commend the Department of Communications for planning broadcast facilities, separate from the CBC, to be operated primarily by aboriginal people in the far North. However, urban minorities do not have sufficient access to the media.

**Mainstream Presence:** In addition visible minorities do not have a presence in mainstream programming. Apart from the ethnic press, ethnic broadcasting on a commercial basis has emerged in our largest cities, where programs are conducted in various languages. However, there has been very little programming in English or French that would attract a multicultural or even mainstream audience. One of the few examples is the CBC's attempt to produce programs on behalf of aboriginal people, such as the radio series "Our Native Land", and on behalf of other ethnic and racial minorities, such as the radio series "Identities".

**Programming:** The Committee believes broadcast programming concerning ethnic and racial minorities needs to be co-ordinated along the following lines:

programming dedicated to the development of the minority communities;

programming dedicated to the integration of the minority communities, especially new immigrants;

programming dedicated to the understanding of the minority communities by the mainstream community.

**Marginal:** Canada is recognized as a world leader in many areas of telecommunications. The new broadcasting technology has the potential to extend minority access to the media by facilitating the decentralization of broadcasting systems. However, the financing and regulation of the new technology could exclude minorities more than before or render their participation marginal and innocuous. For example, minorities have taken advantage of the requirement that cable stations devote some time to programs sponsored by community groups, but the budgeting and scheduling of these programs permit only a miniscule audience for them.

**Telidon:** One area in which Canada has taken the lead is the new technology of interactive television. Telidon is the Canadian name given to both the technology and the service. It is available in two forms, videotex and teletext, and offers a wide-range of services. Telidon videotex is a two-way interactive system whereby the user can send or receive information via a telephone line, coaxial cable, satellite or fibre optics. The information is displayed on a modified television set, a videotex terminal or a home computer. Telidon teletext is a one-way system which broadcasts information and graphics over an ordinary television set equipped with a decoder. Telidon can provide such services as home learning, banking and shop-