

D. Communication, Information and Informatics

Our experts feel that over the next few years, UNESCO should promote the development of global information policies based on the growing interaction between activities previously considered distinct: education and training; learning and recreation; telecommunications and broadcasting; informatics and communication networks; book and periodical publishing and the provision of educational software programmes; intellectual standards and property. An information policy must also deal with such questions as the protection of private life, discriminatory content, the harmonization of standards, copyright.

An information policy framework would help define the rights and responsibilities of citizens and the various public and private sector stakeholders with respect to access to information. Such a policy would also recognize the abundant growth of computerized information and its crucial role in any economic development strategy, for both developed and developing countries.

An information policy would also be based on developing policies with respect to the electronic highway in Canada, the United States, Japan and Europe, and on government projects such as Canada's CANARIE project (Canadian Network for the Advancement of Research, Industry and Education).

Last, an information policy should be jointly developed with a learning policy, given the intersectoral links it has with information: the mastery of different types of information, various forms of access to information; different technologies for storage, transmission or dissemination, and the use of information; the need for continuing education for adding via information to the value of social, cultural and economic activities.

We would like to underscore the importance for UNESCO to develop a global information policy suited to the global phenomenon of the information society. This policy would recognize the importance of all stakeholders in the sphere of information -- whether they are involved in the production or creation of information, storage, location or processing of information, its dissemination, transmission or use.

The C/4 could consider giving the Organization this general perspective, and the C/5, as of the first biennium, could propose concrete activities to this end.

The promotion of freedom of expression, the free circulation of information and the pluralism of the media, and the development of human resources and infrastructures in information and communication should continue to be UNESCO action priorities. Activities in this field should be included in the C/5.