

I am pleased to note that the General Assembly may soon have to pronounce itself on a declaration of this nature. I am now referring to the Declaration that was adopted by the Economic and Social Council on July 30, 1959, and has now been referred to governments for their comments.

Madam Chairman, I am aware of the fact that many growing countries are anxious to facilitate the establishment on their soil of information media which would correspond more adequately to their needs and their particular conditions. I am in full sympathy with their efforts in this domain. Responsible media of information and opinion can contribute most significantly to national life and culture. They do also tend to reduce the possibility of outside interference. It is therefore a matter of gratification for me to note that attention is now being given at the international level to the practical problem of assisting less-developed countries in their task of promoting the development of independent, responsible and efficient information media of their own. I regard this as a positive and fruitful approach towards the solution of the problem of new countries that want to stop depending exclusively on outside sources for news and related services. I oppose this approach to a negative process of fence-building behind which misunderstanding might perhaps too easily grow.

Every right may be abused. There is no reason to concentrate ourselves in connection with the right of freedom of information more on the abuses than on the right itself. Let us be careful not to replace one kind of abuse by another which might perhaps be worse because it could assume a character of authority.

I do not object to the idea of legitimate reservations. These are required to ensure that the right that is safeguarded in a convention cannot be abused. However, I doubt the advisability of giving complete prominence to reservations, especially if they are based on very broad and ill-defined grounds.

Madam Chairman, many areas of our world are now going through a period of transition. May I express the hope that an international instrument concerning a fundamental human right will not be used to serve a temporary purpose.

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