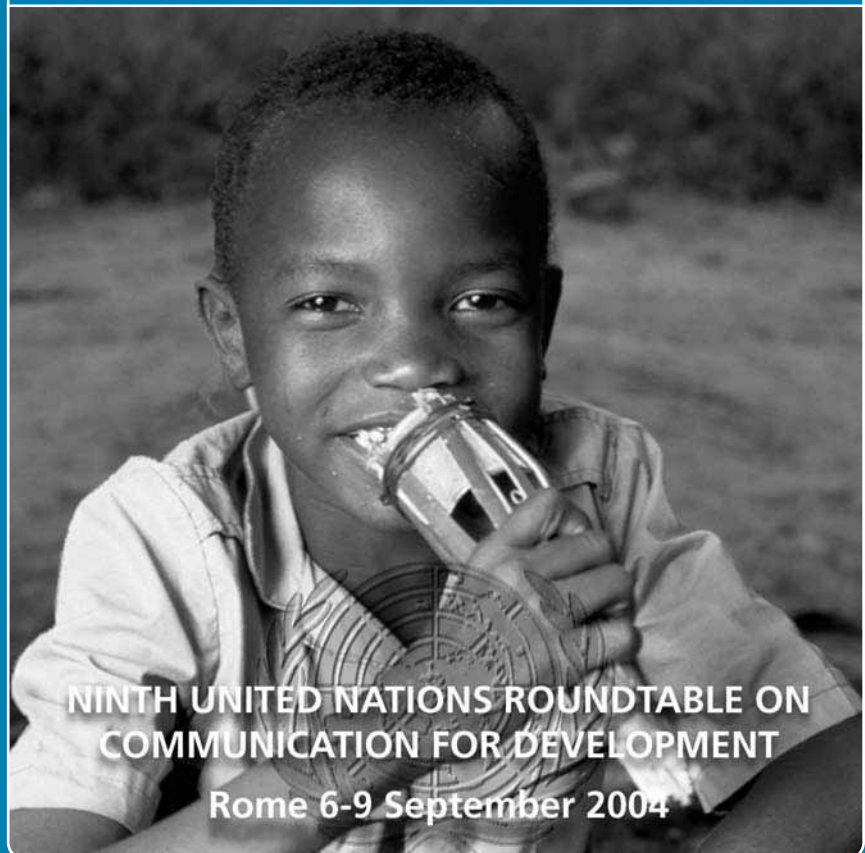


# Communication for Development Roundtable Report

Focus on  
Sustainable Development

Communication and  
Sustainable Development



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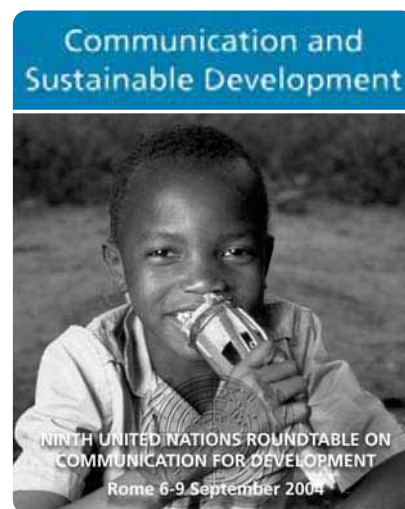
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# Communication for Development Roundtable Report

Focus on Sustainable Development



9th United Nations Communication for Development Roundtable  
6–9 September 2004, Rome, Italy  
Organized by FAO  
with the  
Government of Italy, UNESCO, World Bank, IDRC, CTA

## Acknowledgements

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FAO is indebted to the co-sponsors of the Ninth UN Interagency Roundtable on Communication for Development, namely, the Government of Italy, UNESCO, World Bank, International Development Research Centre (IDRC), and Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA). IDRC and CTA also provided resource persons. Additional funds were provided by the FAO's Sustainable Development Department through its Research, Extension and Training Division (SDR).

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The final report, background papers, presentations and Roundtable Declaration are found on FAO's Sustainable Development Website:

[http://www.fao.org/sd/dim\\_kn1/kn1\\_040701a\\_en.htm](http://www.fao.org/sd/dim_kn1/kn1_040701a_en.htm)

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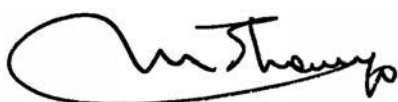
## Foreword

Communication for Development is about dialogue, participation and the sharing of knowledge and information. It takes into account the needs and capacities of all concerned. Throughout the years many UN agencies, institutions, NGOs and grassroots organizations have gained experience in implementing Communication for Development. Nevertheless, ‘a redefinition of Communication for Development is necessary within the context of the 21st century, bearing in mind the new political and media landscape’<sup>1</sup>, especially regarding the rural digital divide and other emerging issues related to development.

Since their inception, 15 years ago, United Nations Inter-Agency Roundtable on Communication for Development have provided an informal forum for UN agencies, donors and practitioners to share progress, harmonize approaches and develop partnership arrangements. Roundtables meet every two years under the leadership of UNESCO and are hosted by UN agencies on a rotational basis. The Ninth United Nations Inter-Agency Roundtable on Communication for Development was hosted by FAO and organized in collaboration with UNESCO, the World Bank and IDRC, with financial contribution of the Government of Italy and CTA. This Roundtable focused on ‘Communication and Sustainable Development’ and addressed three key themes: Communication for Natural Resource Management, Communication for Isolated and Marginalized Groups and Communication in Research, Extension and Education. After four days of presentations, working groups and intense discussion, the participants agreed on a declaration, recommendations and a Plan of Action to move forward in the three thematic areas. The Roundtable recognized the need for increased human and financial resources in Communication for Development; the need to harmonize approaches allowing for greater collaboration and networking; and the need to identify priorities and activities within the Plan of Action which will consolidate alliances and partnerships. The Roundtable affirmed that a Communication for Development approach is essential for bridging the rural ‘digital-divide’ and to provide universal information access to rural populations. This should support the creation of local content and ownership, taking full advantage of the convergence between ‘conventional’ media, such as rural radio and new information and communication technologies. The recommendations from the Roundtable clarify the contribution of Communication for Development in achieving the Millennium Development Goals, the goals defined by the World Summit on Sustainable Development (2002) and the World Summit on the Information Society (2003).

This report comprises a summary of the discussions and recommendations of the 2004 Roundtable as well as the proposed Plan of Action. A complete record of presentations is available on: [http://www.fao.org/sd/dim\\_kn1/kn1\\_040701a\\_en.htm](http://www.fao.org/sd/dim_kn1/kn1_040701a_en.htm)

The Ninth UN Roundtable marked a turning point in promoting partnerships and greater collaboration between UN agencies, Communication for Development organizations and practitioners, launching a new process to advance Communication for Development in the 21st century. Over the next two years, FAO will be honoured to act as a focal point to ensure that the recommendations and action plan are carried forward.



John H Monyo, Assistant Director-General  
Sustainable Development Department (SDD), FAO, Rome, Italy

## Executive Summary

This report is a summary of The Ninth United Nations Inter-Agency Roundtable on Communication for Development which took place in Rome, Italy, from 6–9 September 2004. The Roundtable is a biannual event bringing together United Nations agencies, bilateral and multilateral donors, foundations, development agencies, non-governmental organizations, scholars, and a number of practitioners in development communication throughout the world.

The last Roundtable, on HIV/AIDS communication and evaluation, marked a decisive recognition that success in achieving sustained behaviour change on a scale required to tackle the pandemic was fundamentally dependent on social change and that communication strategies needed to focus on both.

The Ninth Roundtable, attended by some 150 participants, focused on sustainable development, with three specific thematic areas: Communication for Natural Resource Management; Communication for Isolated and Marginalized Groups and Communication in Research, Extension and Education.

Communication for Development has existed for more than 30 years. Today, the importance of communication in development is generally acknowledged. It has moved from a focus on information dissemination to one on community participation. It is clear that the Millennium Development Goals cannot be achieved without good communication and there have been many national and international initiatives to acknowledge this. To this end, new strategies are needed and new tools must be developed.

There have been many global changes since the last Roundtable, and the event began by looking at the many challenges faced by the world today. These include the rapid spread of globalization and the spread of Information Communications Technologies (ICT), the increasing divide between rich and poor, the changing nature of the nation-state, the changing nature of the private sector, ecological pressure, the decentralization of services, the explosion of media – and the emergence of new social actors.

The Roundtable noted a number of principles shared and agreed on by all participants. These all start from the belief that communication for sustainable development is about people, who are the drivers of their own development. It must therefore contribute to sustainable change for the benefit of the isolated and the marginalized. Further, Communication for Development is a horizontal, two-way process that is about people coming together to identify problems, agree on visions for desirable futures, and empower the poorest. It is about the co-creation and sharing of knowledge. It respects the local context, values and culture. And finally, the approach of Participatory Communication for Development does not only apply to work with communities. It is an approach of equal importance to all stakeholders.

There was a general acknowledgement that the rapid expansion of ICTs has failed to bridge the gap between knowledge and information and that the poorest still have very limited participation in the development process. Throughout the past decade, a gradual shift can be observed away from technological and towards more socio-economic and cultural definitions of the Information Society. The term ‘knowledge societies’ better coins

this shift in emphasis from ICTs as ‘drivers’ of change to a perspective where these technologies are regarded as tools. These may provide a new potential for combining the information embedded in ICT systems with the creative potential and knowledge embodied in people.

The digital divide remains stark but its character is changing. It is beginning to be as much one between rural and urban and rich and poor within countries, as one between countries. The spread of mobile telephony has been extraordinarily rapid. Taking Africa as a whole, last year more than 13 million people were added to the mobile phone network, and this is probably an underestimate. Radio, however, and particularly community radio, remains the most widespread technology, though even this is not accessible to all.

The Roundtable came up with a series of recommendations. These included scaling up and better resourcing Communication for Development; building a communication component into development projects from inception; ensuring that national frameworks support free and pluralistic information systems and community media; improving both research and training for Communication for Development practitioners; developing new tools and skills for evaluation and impact assessments; building alliances, and fostering local, national and regional Communication for Development processes.

A number of new initiatives on communication for sustainable development were presented and noted, including the proposed 2005 World Congress on Communication for Development, and proposals from Onda Rural, the University of Queensland Clearing house and the UN Network on Rural Development. The Roundtable established the basis for a working group/network to foster global partnerships on Communication for Development and came up with a Plan of Action to be facilitated and monitored through the mechanism of the working group.

Finally, the Roundtable noted that communication is a means to sustainable development and not an end in itself. Communication can play an important role in reducing poverty, providing people are involved in the process of their own development. As Italian Minister Campo put in his opening address: “Without communication, there can be no democracy, and without democracy, there can be no liberation”.

*“Without communication, there can be no democracy, and without democracy, there can be no liberation.”*

Minister Eugenio Campo, Government of Italy

## Declaration

### United Nations Communication for Development Roundtable

The Ninth United Nations Inter-Agency Roundtable on Communication for Development, held in Rome 6–9 September 2004, brought together United Nations agencies, bilateral and multilateral donors, foundations, development agencies, non-governmental organizations, scholars, and a number of practitioners in development communication throughout the world.

The Roundtable meets every two years to examine, discuss and assess the current trends in Communication for Development and to set priorities for future direction in the fields for members of the Roundtable and the larger development community.

The 9th Roundtable focused on communication and sustainable development. The discussion addressed three thematic topics:

Communication for Natural Resource Management  
Communication in Research, Extension and Education  
Communication for Isolated and Marginalized Groups

#### The Ninth Roundtable asserts:

- Communication for Development is about people, who are the drivers of their own development.
- Communication for Development contributes to sustainable change for the benefit of the poorest.
- Communication for Development is a two-way process – it is about people coming together to identify problems, agree on visions for desirable futures, create solutions and empower the poorest.
- Participatory Communication for Development does not only apply to work with communities. It is an approach of equal importance to all stakeholders.
- Communication for Development is about the co-creation and sharing of knowledge.
- Communication for Development respects indigenous knowledge and culture; local context is key.
- Communication for Development is critical to the success of the Millennium Development Goals.

#### In 2004, Communication for Development faces a number of key challenges:

- A new and rapidly changing environment due to the challenge of globalization, privatization, ecological pressure, the decentralization of services, the explosion of media and the emergence of new social actors.
- The rapid expansion of ICTs but the continuing gap between knowledge and information and the limited participation of the poorest in the development process.
- Finding how communication fits into local/national development processes and policies.
- How to demonstrate the added value and impact of Communication for Development and how this can be included in government, international and donor policies.

- All the above have brought new opportunities but have also led to a marginalization of poverty-related issues. In order to counter this, collaboration and coordination among Communication for Development initiatives is a priority.

### **The Ninth Roundtable therefore calls for:**

- Scaling up – there are many successful examples of Communication for Development, but these are small-scale. The Roundtable recommends the scaling up of Communication for Development initiatives to improve practice and policy at every level.
- Policies and resources – Communication for Development initiatives need to be properly enabled by concerted actions, and adequate policies and resources, both human and material. These should consider longer timescales.
- National governments should implement a legal and supportive framework favouring the right to free expression and emergence of free and pluralistic information systems, including the recognition of the specific and crucial role of community media in providing access to communication for the isolated and marginalized.
- The Roundtable recommends research that addresses how to achieve and sustain the process and outcomes of Communication for Development. This requires a participatory approach, a shared framework between development agencies and local stakeholders and community involvement in design, implementation and dissemination.
- Evaluation and impact assessments should include participatory baseline and communication needs assessments. They should also include self-evaluation by the communities themselves and be socially useful. They should be used to feed back at policy level.
- Training initiatives should be focused on collaborative learning in Communication for Development, encouraging experiential, value-based, culturally sensitive training in Participatory Communication for Development and fostering a community of practice across the regions. The Isang Bagsak learning process provides good examples from across Asia and Africa.
- Building alliances. There is a need for effective linkages which give voices to the poorest and have the ability to engage with policy and influence decision-making on sustainable development. To this end, special attention should be given to fostering local, national and regional Communication for Development processes.
- Information and consultation mechanisms should be set up to ensure coordinated action among UN agencies and other stakeholders at international level.

### **Towards a Plan of Action, the Roundtable proposes:**

#### **General recommendations:**

- Communication for Development advocates and practitioners commit themselves to a deeper engagement with policy-makers to ensure that communications is recognized as a central component in all development initiatives. This will involve a systematic coordinated effort to establish a clear, accessible body of evidence drawn from current best practice.
- Donors and development agencies should set up well-resourced Communication for Development units to implement initiatives within their organization and to promote Communication for Development with other donors and agencies.

- Governments, donors and development agencies should require the incorporation of a communication needs assessment in any development initiative (and eventually devote a specific percentage of the budget for this purpose (e.g. 0.5–1 percent).
- Initiatives such as the World Congress on Communication for Development are encouraged, with the aim of building a concrete evidentiary base for decision-makers in donor, development agencies and governments.
- The United Nations should set up an interagency group to analyse communication experiences, suggest improvements and develop a common approach to Communication for Development.
- Training initiatives should be fostered in developing countries, building on existing experiences. Programs, materials and systems for Communication for Development should be developed and shared. Furthermore, Participatory Development Communication should be integrated into existing development curricula.

### **Specific recommendations to the Roundtable:**

- A working group/network to foster global partnerships on Communication for Development will be established.
- The Plan of Action established by the participants of the 9th UN Roundtable should be facilitated and monitored through the mechanism of the working group.
- FAO and UNESCO will accompany this follow up process, ensuring active participation of other partners.

## Introduction

### The Ninth UN Roundtable: structure and organization

This report is an account of the The Ninth UN Roundtable on Communication for Development, held in Rome at the FAO from 6–9 September 2004.

The Roundtable is a biannual event bringing together United Nations agencies, bilateral and multilateral donors, foundations, development agencies, non-governmental organizations, scholars, and a number of practitioners in development communication throughout the world.

The last Roundtable, on HIV/AIDS communication and evaluation, marked a decisive recognition that success in achieving sustained behaviour change on a scale required to tackle the pandemic was fundamentally dependent on social change, and that communication strategies needed to focus on both.

The Ninth Roundtable, attended by some 150 participants, focused on sustainable development. Within this broad theme, five main papers were presented:

- *The Context of Development Communication in 2004* by James Deane, Communication for Social Change Consortium (CFSCC).
- *Communication and Sustainable Development: Issues and Solutions* by Jan Servaes and Patchanee Malikhao, University of Queensland, Brisbane.
- *Communication and Natural Resource Management* by Guy Bessette, International Development Research Centre (IDRC).
- *Communication for Isolated and Marginalized Groups* by Silvia Balit, Communication Consultant.
- *Communication for Development in Research, Extension and Education* by Niels Röling, Emeritus Professor Agricultural Knowledge Systems, Wageningen, The Netherlands.

### Report structure

The report begins with the official Declaration from the Roundtable. It then continues with an introduction which contains summaries of the papers by James Deane, Jan Servaes and Patchanee Malikhao. Following these, there is a summary of the papers presented at the three thematic Working Groups in sections 2–5. Each of these came up with their own recommendations, which are summarized at the end of the relevant section but which can be seen in full in the appendixes.

There was also a plenary discussion on a Plan of Action to be taken as a result of the Roundtable, which can be seen in section 6.

At the same time as the main process was occurring, there were a number of side events, including a UN agencies meeting, and presentations by UN agencies and other organizations on their work in communication for sustainable development. These are briefly presented in the appendixes to this report.

## 1. The context of communication for sustainable development

“If development can be seen as a fabric woven out of the activities of millions of people, communication represents the essential thread that binds them together... A development strategy that uses communication approaches can reveal people’s underlying attitudes and traditional wisdom, help people to adapt their views and to acquire new knowledge and skills, and spread new social messages to large audiences. The planned use of communication techniques, activities and media gives people powerful tools both to experience change and actually to guide it. An intensified exchange of ideas among all sectors of society can lead to the greater involvement of people in a common cause. This is a fundamental requirement for appropriate and sustainable development.”

Colin Fraser and Jonathan Villet<sup>2</sup>

In his paper, James Deane notes that the importance of communication in the development process has been acknowledged for many years by the development community. FAO has spent at least 30 years pioneering and promoting – both in thinking and practice – the centrality of communication in development. The most essential ingredient of good communication – putting people at the centre of the communication process – has similarly been understood and documented for many years.

Despite this, James Deane notes that the 2004 Communication for Development Roundtable takes place against a background where resources for communication activities continue to be difficult to mobilize, where strategic thinking and implementation of communication in development are going through a period of some confusion, including within several bilateral and multilateral agencies, and where development organizations continue to find it difficult to put theory into practice in order to put people at the centre of the communication process. It also takes place at a time when the arguments for effective, professional and people-centred communication strategies have arguably never been as compelling.

He points out that one dominant global event since the last Roundtable has shaped almost everything else – the attack on the US on September 11 2001. Never before has communication across boundaries and between cultures been more important, and never before has global security depended on the existence of channels that promote such communication. Arguably those channels have rarely been more fragile. The prevailing context for much development discourse before September 11 was focused on globalization and the associated interdependence and interconnectedness of all peoples, a process fundamentally dependent on and shaped by increasingly rapid flows of information around the world. The events of and following September 11 heralded a marked shift in international political attention away from globalization, a shift accompanied by an increased parochialism in communication channels.

At a time when the international community is so divided, these trends might have been expected to prompt an increase in support for organizations seeking to foster informed public discourse and communication at national and international levels. Much evidence suggests that the contrary has happened. At the international level, many of the main international NGOs dedicated to generating perspectives from developing countries and broader information flows across boundaries and cultures have suffered substantial

uncertainty in funding. At the national level, decisions by many donor organizations to provide budget support to governments has often resulted in a shift of resources away from civil society organizations, many of them dedicated to fostering informed dialogue in society.

## **1.1 The central role of communication in the Millennium Development Goals**

The paper notes that the principal strategic reference points for the global development community are the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Nearly all bilateral funding agencies, most multilateral agencies and many NGOs have explicitly aligned their medium- and long-term priorities to meeting the MDGs (see box p.14).

The goal given the highest priority and around which many of the others are focused is to halve the proportion of people living on less than a dollar a day by 2015. The principal strategy adopted by the international community to achieve this goal is the development of poverty reduction strategy papers (PRSPs), a process initially promulgated by the World Bank and increasingly being used by most bilateral development agencies.

At the heart of the PRSP process, and indeed a founding principle informing all the MDGs and allied processes such as the New Economic Partnership for African Development (NEPAD), is the principle of ownership. The World Bank has repeatedly argued that unless there is a genuine process of ownership of these strategies within countries, and real participation and dialogue with all sections of society in drawing them up, they will fail.

Achieving such ownership requires, as the World Bank itself argues, a major focus on communication. “Participation, the keystone of PRSPs, relies on accurate, consistent and continuous communication that provokes response and encourages debate and dialogue leading to better understanding, the application of issues to one’s own circumstances, and participation in all phases of a PRSP”, argues the World Bank in its PRSP source book on communication.<sup>3</sup>

A frequent complaint made by the communication community over many years, says James Deane, is that communication strategies are designed as an afterthought (rather than integrated from the start into development strategies), are accorded too few resources and implemented with insufficiently trained personnel. Certainly the central development strategy designed to meet the primary development objective of our times – halving poverty by 2015 – appears to back up the complaint. The evidence of the last five years suggests that the level of ownership, participation and public discourse required for PRSPs to be successful requires a fundamental reassessment and reprioritization of the role of communication in meeting the MDGs.

## **1.2 Beyond Nicaragua: the continuing HIV/AIDS communication debate**

The paper continues by looking at the last Communication for Development Roundtable, held in Nicaragua in 2001. This focused explicitly on the theme of HIV/AIDS

*Communication is a pillar of development, not a side issue. It is as important as social and economic analysis.*

Paul Mitchell, Director, Development Communications Division, World Bank

## UN International Development Goals by 2015

1 Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger	Reduce by half the proportion of people living on less than a dollar a day
	Reduce by half the proportion of people who suffer from hunger
2 Achieve universal primary education	Ensure that all boys and girls complete a full course of primary schooling
3 Promote gender equality and empower women	Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005, and at all levels by 2015
4 Reduce child mortality	Reduce by two thirds the mortality rates for infants and children under five
5 Improve maternal health	Reduce by three quarters the maternal mortality ratio
6 Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases	Halt and begin to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS
	Halt and begin to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases
7 Ensure environmental sustainability	Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes reverse the loss of environmental resources
	Reduce by half the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water
	Achieve significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers, by 2020
8 Develop a global partnership for development	Open trading system, special needs of least developed countries (LDCs), debt, employment, access to medicines, ICTs

communication, the success of which is fundamental to meeting the MDG of halting the spread of HIV by 2015. The Roundtable welcomed the revitalized energy and funding being devoted to the HIV/AIDS pandemic and issued a declaration designed to capture the main conclusions of the meeting. Roundtable participants were both explicit and candid in their assessment that communication strategies had, for many various reasons, failed in preventing the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

Since the last Roundtable the response to HIV/AIDS has continued to develop rapidly and its influence is clearly discernible in several important developments. UNICEF has been pioneering a new communication for social change programme (also known as communication from a human rights perspective) in Eastern and Southern Africa, particularly in Ethiopia and Zambia. The Rockefeller Foundation decided in 2003 to take forward its work in this field by supporting the establishment of the Communication for

Social Change Consortium. The Panos Institute published a major appraisal of communication programming entitled *Missing the message: 20 years of learning from HIV/AIDS*. This has been downloaded more than 100,000 times from the Panos website, indicating a massive interest in the field. Dozens of other examples exist of a move towards more social change approaches to communication in relation to HIV by a broad spectrum of organizations.

Despite this, says James Deane, there remains a significant sense of strategic confusion related to HIV communication. Much of the debate at the last Roundtable focused on the need for long-term strategies which integrated both behaviour and social change approaches, and a shift towards developing communication strategies that provide people with a voice as well as sending them a message. While there are important statements and expressions of intention by funding agencies, there is only occasional evidence that funding patterns and expenditure of resources have decisively altered to reflect this shift.

Recent intense discussions at the XV International Conference on AIDS in Bangkok, on the US government's insistence that its funds be focused on promoting an ABC approach (abstinence, being faithful, using a condom), demonstrated the continued disagreement on the most effective prevention and communication approaches to HIV/AIDS.

There has nevertheless clearly been a significant change of emphasis in the discourse on communication strategies related to HIV/AIDS, a shift clearly reflected in a new DFID strategy on HIV/AIDS published in July 2004.

“Top-down information campaigns are rarely as effective as more interactive media such as soap opera and theatre, where complex issues and differing views and perspectives can be fully explored and public debate encouraged... Behaviour change, and other communication programmes, supported by a positive policy environment, can be an effective part of HIV control strategies and should be properly integrated into national HIV/AIDS control programmes. They need a coordinated approach to communication involving government, local and national media and civil society.”<sup>4</sup>

The paper notes that an increasingly urgent issue for communication practitioners and thinkers on HIV/AIDS, when change is so rapid and debate so intense around different communication and prevention approaches, is that there is so little coordination internationally of communication approaches. There has been very limited coordination capacity on communication within UNAIDS for several years, and coordination capacities of other UN bodies on HIV/AIDS have also been reduced at headquarters level. Many important lessons of communication have been learned over 20 years in the response to HIV/AIDS, but these lessons are arguably not being applied as well as they could because there exists so little focus on communication coordination.

### **1.3 Information and communication technologies**

James Deane continues by pointing out that the paper prepared for the 2001 Roundtable focused heavily on the increasing international attention being given to the potential of ICTs in development, highlighting in particular international reports, initiatives and meetings.

These included the UNDP Human Development Report of 2001, the Global Knowledge Conference in Kuala Lumpur in 2000 and subsequent action plan, the G8 DOT Force (Digital Opportunities Task Force) and the UN ICT Task Force. The Millennium Development Goals make a specific reference to ICTs, committing the international community “In cooperation with the private sector, [to] make available the benefits of new technologies – especially information and communication technologies”.

The most important event since the last Roundtable – and perhaps the largest meeting ever held on communication and development – was the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) held in December 2003. WSIS, and its preparatory committee meetings, created an opportunity for a major debate on the role of information and communication technologies in tackling poverty. The greatest challenge for the Summit, according to the official declaration, was to “harness the potential of information and communication technology to promote the development goals of the Millennium Declaration”.

WSIS was a major event bringing together more than 11,000 people. The preparatory process to the Summit was characterized by a strong engagement from developing countries, but the meeting suffered from two major constraints. The first was the credibility of the Summit process itself among important potential stakeholders, particularly donors and private sector organizations. The second was the debate over the engagement of civil society itself, with increasing frustration felt by civil society organizations at the lack of access to and interaction with the governmental process.

As a result, question marks surround the extent to which the declaration of the WSIS represents a fundamental breakthrough and clear multi-stakeholder consensus. The critical ingredients for the success and credibility of global policy processes, particularly a dynamic interplay between government, private and civil society sectors, is lacking, and limited concrete consensus exists among governments, particularly between Northern and Southern governments.

### **How wide is the divide?**

The digital divide, the main issue designed to be addressed by WSIS, remains stark but its character is changing. According to a recent report from the ITU,<sup>5</sup> “sub-Saharan Africa has about 10 percent of the world’s population (626 million) but 0.2 percent of the world’s one billion telephone lines. Comparing this to all low-income countries (home to 50 percent of the world’s population but only 10 percent of its telephone lines), the penetration of phone lines in sub-Saharan Africa is about five times less than in the average low-income countries... 50 percent of the available lines are concentrated in capital cities where only about 10 percent of the population lives”.

The spread of mobile telephony has been extraordinarily rapid. In Uganda, the number of mobile phone users has multiplied 131 times in six years – although most of this growth has been in urban areas.<sup>6</sup> Taking Africa as a whole, last year more than 13 million people were added to the mobile phone network. The ITU report also argues that existing statistics almost certainly underestimate access to both mobile telephony and Internet in developing countries.

The same report also argues that “radios increasingly fall into the category of having achieved universal service... Televisions too are on the way to being ubiquitous in many countries. The biggest stumbling block to penetration of these ICTs in the lowest income nations appears to be electricity.”<sup>7</sup>

However, there is a very long way to go for new ICTs to even begin to approach a level of universal service or access. Even the radio remains a minority medium in some countries. The Hoot website in India,<sup>8</sup> a respected and often irreverent commentator on media and communication issues in the country, claimed recently that: “India may be shining but 81 percent of rural households in our country still cannot afford to buy even a black and white television set. And 68 percent of rural households do not own a radio or transistor set. So while TV may give a lot of coverage at election time, millions of voters will not see any of it.”<sup>9</sup>

## WSIS and communication societies

“We aspire to build information and communication societies where development is framed by fundamental human rights and oriented to achieving a more equitable distribution of resources, leading to the elimination of poverty in a way that is non-exploitative and environmentally sustainable. To this end we believe technologies can be engaged as fundamental means, rather than becoming ends in themselves, thus recognising that bridging the Digital Divide is only one step on the road to achieving development for all. We recognise the tremendous potential of Information Communications Technologies (ICT) in overcoming the devastation of famine, natural catastrophes, new pandemics such as HIV/AIDS, as well as the proliferation of arms.

We reaffirm that communication is a fundamental social process, a basic human need and a foundation of all social organizations.

We envision an information and communication society in which technologies are designed in a participatory manner with and by their end-users so as to prevent or minimise their negative impacts.”

*Civil Society Declaration to the World Summit on the Information Society, unanimously adopted by the WSIS Civil Society Plenary on 8 December 2003*

## 1.4 ICTs: potential and strategic trends

The paper points out that considerable excitement and interest continues to surround the potential of ICTs. This large and complex field is the subject of many conferences and reports – strategic trends are accordingly difficult to summarize but a number have emerged:

The steady dissolution of the distinction between old and new technologies: increasingly the focus of debate on ICTs has moved towards assessing the importance of new technologies alongside existing communication technologies, particularly radio, and other communication channels.

*There is an important role for the big media – not just community media – which can help mobilize people to put issues on the policy agenda and pressure governments.*

Douglas Storey, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, Center for Communication Programs

Significant resources have been mobilized for deployment of ICTs and many donors have prioritized ICTs, but questions remain about the sustainability of many ICT projects, and the connection between action plans and action.

A growing focus on the broader policy and social environment, and creating a healthy environment for ICTs and other communications to flourish is apparent: this complements approaches to directly invest in specific projects such as telecentres etc.

The digital divide remains real but its character is perhaps beginning to become as much one between rural and urban, and rich and poor within countries, as between countries. The bottom line is that interpersonal communication, even in some of the poorest countries, is proliferating exponentially and both Internet and mobile telephony are contributing to profound social change within countries – perhaps even faster than anticipated.

## **1.5 Media in developing countries**

James Deane points out that while debates over the impact and potential of new communication technologies and the digital divide have dominated international discourse on communication in the international arena over recent years, another information revolution has been developing. For the almost three billion people on the planet who earn less than two dollars a day, it is the structure, ownership, content and reach of the media that is having the most profound impact. The most important trends shaping the media landscape over the last five years have been threefold.<sup>10</sup>

First, a thoroughgoing liberalization and commercialization of media over the last decade in many parts of the world has led to a much more democratic, dynamic, crowded and complex media landscape. This is opening up new spaces for public discourse and civic engagement, particularly in the field of radio; and to a more commercial, advertising-driven media where information and power divides within developing countries and between rich and poor, urban and rural are growing.

Second, growing concentration of media ownership – at the global, regional and national levels – is squeezing out independent media players and threatening to replace government-controlled concentration of media power with a commercial and political one.

Third, developing countries are increasingly reliant on powerful northern news providers, such as the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), Reuters and Cable News Network (CNN), for their international news and information, particularly on stories of globalization, trade and international politics. In newly democratic countries in the South, and particularly within civil society, there is growing frustration at the Southern media's dependence on what are perceived to be partial, biased or at least fundamentally Northern-centric news organizations for international coverage and the setting of news agendas.

When viewed from the perspective of Communication for Development, a growing crisis may be emerging, marked by a collapse of public-interest media. The new market-driven media has brought innovation, dynamism and often greatly enhanced democratic debate. But evidence is growing that, as competition intensifies, content is increasingly being

shaped by the demands of advertisers and sponsors, and an increasingly intense focus on profitability. The result is a more urban-biased, consumer-oriented media which has diminishing interest in or concern for people living in poverty.

## The Ugandan radio revolution

Uganda provides an example of the complexities of this revolution. Little more than a decade ago the country had two radio stations, both based in Kampala. Today it has almost 100, mostly commercial, FM radio stations across the country. Talk shows and particularly the *Ekimeeza* – hugely popular talk shows where as many as 400 people gather to take part in broadcast debates – have provided some of the most compelling programming. However, early enthusiasm for these developments is being tempered by growing fears of both political and economic interference. Newspaper editors have come under increasing pressure from the government when publishing unpopular stories, a draconian new anti-terrorism law was passed in the wake of September 11 making it a capital offence to publish material deemed to be promoting terrorism, and earlier this year several radio stations suspended broadcasting when the government clamped down on non-payment of license fees. Moreover, overall there is an increasing focus across the sector on profitability.

## Legal and regulatory framework

“The legal and regulatory framework remains the single most important obstacle to the establishment of community-based broadcasting. What is needed is the removal of legal and regulatory barriers where they exist. In Indonesia, the media were strongly controlled by the government until the fall of the Suharto regime. Then the centralized system was replaced by a system where the power was very diffuse, and the law ceased to be effectively enforced. So community-based stations mushroomed all over the country, sometimes without authorization, sometimes with quasi-authority. Today there are hundreds, and the government is recognizing this and introducing a law to establish community radio licenses.

Given the removal of barriers, people set up their own radio stations very quickly with very few resources. But a completely deregulated environment can produce media monopolization, as is the case in Italy.”

*Steve Buckley, President, AMARC*

The paper points out that Communication for Development organizations and practitioners are beginning to adjust to the new environment. DJs are becoming as important as journalists in bringing development issues to public attention. Indeed, journalism as a profession is dramatically changing and concepts such as “development journalism” are arguably under siege. Journalists themselves who want to explore and investigate development stories – particularly issues affecting those from outside the capital – are finding it more and more difficult to get either resources or attention from their editors.

*The legal and regulatory framework remains the single most important obstacle to the establishment of community-based broadcasting.*  
Steve Buckley, President, World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC)

*The bottom line is that interpersonal communication, even in some of the poorest countries, is proliferating exponentially and both Internet and mobile telephony are contributing to profound social change within countries – perhaps even faster than we thought.* James Deane, Communication for Social Change Consortium (CFSCC)

Communication strategies are changing in other ways too. A decade ago it was often possible to reach an entire population through a partnership with one monopoly government broadcaster, enabling the widespread dissemination of messages on development issues, as well as soap operas and agricultural extension programmes. An increasingly crowded and fragmented media environment, together with the cuts in budgets and other pressures facing many former monopoly broadcasters, mean that such dissemination is more difficult.

Many development agencies are responding to the new commercialized media market by actively entering it, and some of the most consistent customers for some radio stations are development organizations and donors.

### The Changing Communication Environment

#### Traditional

- Vertical communication – from government to people
- Unipolar communication systems
- Few information sources
- Easy to control – for good (generating accurate information to large numbers of people) and ill (government control and censorship)
- Send a message

#### New

- Horizontal communication – from people to people
- Communication networks
- Many information sources
- Difficult to control – for good (more debate, increased voice, increased trust) and ill (more complex, issues of accuracy)
- Ask a question

## 2. Communication and sustainable development

### 2.1 A history of Communication for Development

In their paper *Communication and Sustainable Development: Issues and Solutions* Jan Servaes and Patchanee Malikhao outline the main trends in Communication for Development since the 1950s. They trace the initial enthusiasm for development communication, which was seen as a social system that could transform individuals and societies from ‘traditional’ to ‘modern’. Development was seen as a unilinear, evolutionary process.

They note that in the mid-1960s, this perspective was challenged by Latin American social scientists, and a theory dealing with dependency and underdevelopment was born. Implicit in the analysis of the *dependistas* was the idea that development and underdevelopment must be understood in the context of the world system. This dependency paradigm played an important role in the movement for a New World Information and Communication Order. Emerging nations moved to form the Non-Aligned Movement, which defined development as political struggle.

Today, since the demarcation of First, Second and Third Worlds has broken down, there is a need for a new concept of development which emphasizes cultural identity and multidimensionality. As countries and communities become more interdependent, a new framework must be sought within which both the Centre and the Periphery can be studied separately and in their mutual relationship, at global, national and local levels. A new viewpoint on development and social change has come to the forefront. The common starting point here is the examination of the changes from “bottom-up”; from the self-development of the local community. More attention is also being paid to the content of development, which implies a more normative approach.

Another school of thought questions whether “developed” countries are in fact developed, and whether this genre of progress is sustainable or desirable. It favours a multiplicity of approaches based on context and basic, felt needs, and the empowerment of the most oppressed sectors of various societies.

### 2.2 The diffusion model

The paper notes that although development strategies in developing countries diverge widely, the usual pattern for broadcasting and the press has been predominantly the same: informing the population about projects, illustrating the advantages of these projects, and recommending that they be supported. A typical example of such a strategy is situated in the area of family planning, where communication means like posters, pamphlets, radio, and television attempt to persuade the public to accept birth control methods.

This model sees the communication process mainly as a message going from a sender to a receiver. Modernization is conceived as a process of diffusion whereby individuals move from a traditional way of life to a different, more technically developed and more

rapidly changing way of life. This approach is therefore concerned with the process of diffusion and adoption of innovations in a more systematic and planned way. Mass media are important in spreading awareness of new possibilities and practices, but at the stage where decisions are being made about whether to adopt or not to adopt, personal communication is far more likely to be influential. Therefore, the general conclusion of this line of thought is that mass communication is less likely than personal influence to have a direct effect on social behaviour.

Newer perspectives on development communication claim that this is a limited view. They argue that development will accelerate mainly through active involvement in the process of the communication itself. Research has shown that, while groups of the public can obtain information from impersonal sources like radio and television, this information has relatively little effect on behavioral changes.

### **2.3 The participatory model**

Jan Servaes and Patchanee Malikhao point out that the participatory model stresses the importance of cultural identity of local communities and of democratization and participation at all levels—international, national, local and individual. In order to share information, knowledge, trust, commitment, and a right attitude in development projects, participation is very important in any decision-making process for development. This model stresses reciprocal collaboration throughout all levels of participation.

Also, these newer approaches argue, the point of departure must be the community. It is at the community level that the problems of living conditions are discussed, and interactions with other communities are elicited. This principle implies the right to participation in the planning and production of media content. Participation is made possible in the decision-making regarding the subjects treated in the messages and the selection procedures.

One of the fundamental hindrances to the decision to adopt the participation strategy is that it threatens existing hierarchies. Nevertheless, participation does not imply that there is no longer a role for development specialists, planners, and institutional leaders. It only means that the viewpoint of the local groups of the public is considered before the resources for development projects are allocated and distributed, and that suggestions for changes in the policy are taken into consideration.

### **2.4 A question of power: cultural freedom**

The authors believe that more is at stake here than attitudes. It is also a question of power. Policy-makers cannot legislate respect, nor can they coerce people to behave respectfully. But they can enshrine cultural freedom as one of the pillars on which the state is founded. Cultural freedom differs from other forms of freedom in a number of ways.

First, most freedoms refer to the individual. Cultural freedom, in contrast, is a collective freedom. It is the condition for individual freedom to flourish. Second, cultural freedom, properly interpreted, is a guarantee of freedom as a whole. It protects not only the collectivity but also the rights of every individual within it. Third, cultural freedom, by

protecting alternative ways of living, encourages creativity, experimentation and diversity, the very essentials of human development. Finally, freedom is central to culture, and in particular the freedom to decide what to value, and what lives to seek. “One of the most basic needs is to be left free to define our own basic needs”, says De Cuéllar.

Therefore, in contrast to the more economic and politically-oriented approach in traditional perspectives on sustainable development, the central idea is that there is no universal development model which leads to sustainability at all levels of society and the world, that development is an integral and multidimensional process that can differ from society to society, community to community, context to context.

## **2.5 Trends, challenges and priorities**

The paper continues by pointing out a number of the main trends, challenges and priorities in Communication for Development.

### **2.5.1 The growth of a deeper understanding of the nature of communication itself**

The perspective on communication has changed. The emphasis now is more on the process of communication (that is, the exchange of meaning) and on the significance of this process (that is, the social relationships created by communication and the social institutions and context which result from such relationships). With this shift in focus, one is no longer attempting to create a need for the information disseminated, but rather disseminating information for which there is a need.

### **2.5.2 The trend towards participatory democracy and changes at national and international levels**

Democracy is honored in theory, but often ignored in practice. Governments and/or powerful private interests still largely control the world’s communication media, but they are more attuned to, and aware of, democratic ideals than before. At the same time, literacy levels have increased, and there has been a remarkable improvement in people’s ability to handle and use communication technology. As a consequence, more and more people can use communications media. They can no longer be denied access to, and participation in, communication processes due to a lack of communication and technical skills.

And yet the disparity in communication resources between different parts of the world is increasingly recognized as a cause of concern. The plea for a more balanced and equal distribution of communication resources can only be discussed in terms of power at local, national and international levels.

“Internal” and “external” factors inhibiting development do not exist independently of each other. In order to understand and develop a proper strategy one must have an understanding of the class relationships of any particular peripheral social formation and the ways in which these structures articulate with the Centre on the one hand, and the producing classes in the

*The perspective on communication has changed. The emphasis now is more on the process of communication (that is, the exchange of meaning) and on the significance of this process (that is, the social relationships created by communication and the social institutions and context which result from such relationships).*  
Jan Servaes and Patchanee Malikhao, University of Queensland, Australia

Third World on the other. The very unevenness and contradictory nature of the capitalist development process necessarily produces a constantly changing relationship.

### 2.5.3 Recognition of the impact of communications technology

Some communication systems have become cheap and so simple that the rationale for regulating and controlling them centrally, as well as the ability to do so, is no longer relevant. However, other systems (for instance, satellites, remote sensing, transborder data flows) remain very expensive. They are beyond the means of smaller countries and may not be “suitable” to local environments.

Information has been seen as the leading growth sector in society, especially in advanced industrial economies. Its three strands – computing, telecommunications and broadcasting – have evolved historically as three separate sectors, and by means of digitization these sectors are now converging.

Throughout the past decade a gradual shift can be observed away from a technological in favour of more socio-economic and cultural definitions of the Information Society. The term “knowledge society” better coins this shift in emphasis from ICTs as “drivers” of change to a perspective where these technologies are regarded as tools. These may provide a new potential for combining the information embedded in ICT systems with the creative potential and knowledge embodied in people: meaning is not something that is delivered to people, people create and interpret it for themselves.

### 2.5.4 Globalization and/or localization: thinking outside the media box

Discussions on globalization and localization have challenged old ways of thinking about sustainable development. In Lie and Servaes (2000) a convergent and integrated approach was adopted in studying the complex and intricate relations between globalization, social change, consumption and identity. Such an approach would allow problems to converge at key crossings or nodal points. Researchers then are rid of the burden of studying linear processes in totality, eg, production and consumption of global products and their relevance from a sustainable perspective, and instead are allowed to focus on the nodal points where processes intersect.

#### The Thai concept of community development

The TERMS model of Rural Community Self-Reliance is an integrated framework. TERMS stands for **T**echnology, **E**conomic, **N**atural **R**esource, **M**ental and **S**ocio-cultural. It is the result of extensive research, which the Thai National Research Council commissioned from the Science and Technology Institute. More than 50 academics, from government bureaus, universities, the private sector, and community leaders from five villages were involved. It took them more than seven years to arrive at what now is being called the Thai concept of community development. It views self-reliance of a community as a goal of community development. Self-reliance of a community can be established if in addition to TERMS, the following dimensions are taken into account:

A development and self-reliant process based on Balance, Ability, and Networking (BAN). These three factors run together with the balance of each element in TERMS and community management. Participatory Action Research (PAR) as the process in which the facilitators and villagers collaborate through discussion, planning, evaluation or research at all times. A re-socialization and conscientization process (in Thai: *Khit pen*) which makes the people value Thai identities, Thai culture and folk wisdom to benefit the Thai style of living.

## 2.6 *Priority areas for communication organizations and practitioners in relation to sustainable development*

Jan Servaes and Patchanee Malikhao point out that communication has become an important aspect of development initiatives in health, nutrition, agriculture, family planning, education, and community economics. They believe there are three general perspectives on Communication for Development:

1. A first perspective could be of **communication as a process**, often seen in metaphor as the fabric of society. It is not confined to the media or to messages, but to their interaction in a network of social relationships. By extension, the reception, evaluation and use of media messages, from whatever source, are as important as their means of production and transmission.
2. A second perspective is of **communications media as a mixed system of mass communication and interpersonal channels**, with mutual impact and reinforcement. In other words, the mass media should not be seen in isolation from other conduits.

The digital divide is not about technology, it is about the widening gaps between the developed and developing worlds and the info-rich and the info-poor.

While the benefits offered by the Internet are many, its dependence on a telecom infrastructure means that they are only available to a few. Radio is much more pervasive, accessible and affordable. Blending the two could be an ideal way of ensuring that the benefits accruing from the Internet have wider reach.

3. A third perspective of communication in the development process is from an **inter-sectoral and interagency concern**. This view is not confined to information or broadcasting organizations and ministries, but extends to all sectors, and its success in influencing and sustaining development depends to a large extent on the adequacy of mechanisms for integration and coordination.

## 2.7 *Different approaches and strategies at UN agency, governmental and NGO levels*

The paper continues by pointing out that distinct development communication approaches and communication means used can be identified within UN agencies, governmental and non-governmental organizations. Some of these approaches can be

grouped together under the heading of the diffusion model, others under the participatory model. The major ones could be identified as follows:

- Extension/Diffusion of Innovations
- Network development and documentation
- ICTs for development
- Social marketing
- Edutainment (EE)
- Health communication
- Social mobilization
- Information, Education and Communication (IEC)
- Institution building
- Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices (KAP)
- Development Support Communication (DSC)
- HIV/AIDS community approach
- Community participation

In an extensive annex, the paper gives examples of many of these approaches in different countries. Three of these are briefly explained in the box below.

### **ICTs for development; Ambassador of Knowledge in India**

*Gyandoot* (Hindi for ‘Ambassador of Knowledge’) is an internet-based network linking villages in the Dhar district of Madhya Pradesh, India. Established in 2000, the project had a high level of community participation in the planning process. Young, previously unemployed high school graduates were selected and trained by each village council to run Internet kiosks for their own income. They pay a service charge to the council, which uses the money to fund more kiosks. New private institutions opened for computer and IT training. The network has helped the farmers with information on potato crops, and to voice their problems in the community. More money was allocated to set up kiosks in more than 3,000 schools for e-education.

### **Social marketing in Honduras and the Gambia**

Social marketing is the application of commercial marketing techniques to solve social problems. It involves a multi-disciplinary approach. To fight infant deaths caused by diarrhoea, one of the social marketing “products” in Honduras was a package of Oral Rehydration Solution (ORS) powder which is meant to be dissolved with one-half or one litre of clean water. In Gambia, due to the problematic distribution system and no capacity to manufacture ORS, the concept of “home-made mixture” became one of the products. The other products are the concept of taking fluids while having diarrhoea, good feeding practices for sick children, the importance of breastfeeding, the importance of feeding solid foods during and after diarrhoea, and keeping the family compound free from faeces. Comprehensive mediated campaigns were launched. Radio and pictorial print media were carefully planned to reach illiterate target groups. Interpersonal communication in the form of community volunteers, traditional birth attendants, community health workers, and midwives was also effective.

## Development Support Communication

The Development Support Communication (DSC) is the systematic utilization of appropriate communication channels and techniques to increase people's participation in development and to inform, motivate and train rural populations. In the late 1980s, FAO started the CATs (Community Audio Towers) and UNICEF, the ComPAS (Community Public Address System), in the late 1990s. Both are similar communication strategies based on community audio towers. At the heart of both projects is the support for rural communities to use this narrowcasting technology for community communication and social development. The local communication system aims to raise and discuss local issues and mobilize community members on children's rights, health and nutrition, child protection, education, livelihood, agriculture, etc. A Community Media Council may vary from one place to another, but generally includes equal representation from farmers, women, elderly people, youth, health workers, educators, local authorities, religious leaders and so on. It is important to note that women make up half of the representatives at the CMC, and are very active as broadcasters.

## 2.8 Communication strategies for the implementation of sustainable development

The paper picks up the three main strategies for Communication for Development that were discussed during the 8th Roundtable on Communication for Development. These can be identified at three levels: behaviour change communication; advocacy communication and communication for social change (sometimes called communication for structural and sustainable change).

### 1. Behaviour change communication

This category can be further subdivided in perspectives that explain:

**a. Individual behaviour** The *Health Belief Model* (HBM) is based on the premise that one's personal thoughts and feelings control one's actions. It proposes that health behaviour is therefore determined by internal cues (perceptions or beliefs), or external cues (e.g. reactions of friends, mass media campaigns, etc.) that trigger the need to act. This model further explains that before deciding to act, individuals consider whether or not the benefits (positive aspects) outweigh the barriers (negative aspects) of a particular behaviour.

**b.** Some theoretical frameworks that explain **interpersonal behaviour** are the Social Cognitive Theory (SCT), the Social Experience Model (SEM), the Social Network and the Social Support Theory. The Social Network theory explains the mechanisms by which social interactions can promote or inhibit individual and collective behaviour. An understanding of network theory enables programmers to better analyse how friends, families and other significant people might impact on the same individuals and groups that they are trying to influence. The Social Support Theory, on the other hand, refers to the content of these

relationships – ie. what is actually being shared or transmitted during different interactions. As such, assistance provided or exchanged through interpersonal and other social relationships can be characterized into four types of supportive action: Emotional support, instrumental support such as tangible aid or services, appraisal support such as feedback and constructive criticism, and informational support in the form of advice or suggestions etc.

c. The best-known theoretical framework that explains **community or societal behaviour** is the Diffusion of Innovations (DOI) approach. There are others as well, such as the Conceptual Model of Community Empowerment.

## 2. Advocacy communication

Advocacy communication is primarily targeted at policy-makers or decision-makers at national and international levels. The emphasis is on seeking the support of decision-makers in the hope that if they are properly “enlightened” or “pressured”, they will be more responsive to societal change. A general definition of advocacy is:

“Advocacy for development is a combination of social actions designed to gain political commitment, policy support, social acceptance and systems support for a particular goal or programme. It involves collecting and structuring information into a persuasive case; communicating the case to decision-makers and other potential supporters, including the public, through various interpersonal and media channels; and stimulating actions by social institutions, stakeholders and policy-makers in support of the goal or programme.” (Servaes, 1993)

Advocacy is most effective when individuals, groups and all sectors of society are involved. Therefore, three main interrelated strategies for action can be identified:

- Advocacy – generating political commitment for supportive policies and heightening public interest and demand for development issues;
- Social support – developing alliances and social support systems that legitimize and encourage development-related actions as a social norm;
- Empowerment – Equipping individuals and groups with the knowledge, values and skills that encourage effective action for development.

## 3. Communication for structural and sustainable change

Behavioural change communication and advocacy communication, though useful in itself, will not be able to create sustainable development. This can only be achieved in combination with, and incorporating, aspects of the wider environment that influence (and constrain) structural and sustainable change.

In sum, the paper says, there are a variety of theoretical models that can be used to devise communication strategies for sustainable development. However, as each case and context is different, none of these have proven completely satisfactory in the field of international development. Therefore, many practitioners find that they can achieve the greatest understanding by combining more than one theory or developing their own conceptual framework.

### 3. Working Group 1: Facilitating dialogue, learning and participation in Natural Resource Management

Guy Bessette's paper draws on a collection of papers that focus on Participatory Development Communication (PDC) and Natural Resource Management (NRM), particularly in Asia and Africa. He notes that there are many approaches and practices in development communication and that most of them have been implemented in the field of environment and NRM. The focus in his paper is on PDC because of its potential to influence communication practices at the community level in NRM.

PDC facilitates participation in a development initiative identified and selected by a community, with or without the external assistance of other stakeholders. The terminology has been used in the past by a number of scholars to stress the participatory approach of communication in contrast with its more traditional diffusion approach. Others refer to similar approaches as Participatory Communication for Development, participatory communication or communication for social change.

PDC is a planned activity based on participatory processes and on media and interpersonal communication. This communication facilitates dialogue among different stakeholders around a common development problem or goal. The objective is to develop and implement a set of activities that contribute to a solution to the problem, or the realization of the goal, and which support and accompany this initiative.

#### The PDC process

The paper notes that PDC supports a participatory development or research for development process, used in particular by Isang Bagsak (see 3.10 below). There are four main phases, which flow into one another – problem identification, planning, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation. At the end there is a decision to either return to the beginning of the process (problem identification) and start another cycle, or move to a revision of the planning phase, or to scale up efforts, starting another planning, implementation and evaluation cycle. In an NRM context the process looks like this: <sup>11</sup>

- Step 1: Establishing a relationship with a local community and understanding the local setting;
- Step 2: Involving the community in the identification of a problem, potential solutions, and in a decision to carry out an initiative;
- Step 3: Identifying the different community groups and other stakeholders concerned by the identified problem (or goal) and initiative;
- Step 4: Identifying communication needs, objectives and activities;
- Step 5: Identifying appropriate communication tools;
- Step 6: Preparing and pre-testing communication content and materials;
- Step 7: Facilitating the building of partnerships;
- Step 8: Producing an implementation plan;

Step 9: Monitoring and evaluating the communication strategy and documenting the development or research process;

Step 10: Planning the sharing and utilization of results.

This process however is not sequential. Some of those steps can be done in parallel or in a different order. They can also be defined differently depending on the context. But they can guide the NRM researcher or practitioner in supporting participatory development or research through the use of communication.

### **3.1 Poverty alleviation, food security and environmental sustainability: the contribution of participatory communication**

Guy Bessette goes on to say that strategies to address the three interlinked development challenges of poverty alleviation, food security and environmental sustainability must be designed and implemented with the active participation of those families and communities who are struggling to ensure their livelihoods in changing and unfavourable environments. But they must also include other stakeholders such as government technical services, NGOs, development projects, rural media, community organizations and research teams. Local and national authorities, policy-makers, and service providers must also be involved in shaping the regulatory environment in which the required changes will take place.

Best practices in NRM research and development point to situations in which community members, research or development team members and other stakeholders jointly identify research or development parameters and participate in decision-making. This process goes beyond community consultation or participation in activities identified by researchers or programme managers. In the best scenarios, the research or development process itself generates a situation of empowerment in which participants transform their vision of reality and are able to take effective action.

PDC reinforces this process. It empowers local communities to discuss and address NRM practices and problems, and to engage other stakeholders in the building of an improved policy environment.

### **3.2 Moving from information dissemination to community participation**

The paper notes that traditionally, in the context of environment and natural resources management, many communication efforts focused on the dissemination of technical packages and their adoption by end users. Researchers wanted to “push” their products to communities and development practitioners to receive “buy-in”. Not only did these practices have little impact, but they also ignored the need to address conflicts or policies.

PDC takes a different approach. It suggests a shift from informing people to try to change their behaviour or attitudes, to focusing instead on facilitating exchanges between various stakeholders. The focus is not on the information to be transmitted by experts, but

on horizontal communication that both enables local communities to identify their development needs and establishes a dialogue with all stakeholders. The main objective is to ensure that the end users gather enough information and knowledge to carry out their own development initiatives and evaluate their actions.

Such a communication process includes objectives related to increasing the community knowledge-base (both indigenous and modern); modifying or reinforcing common practices related to Natural Resource Management; building and reinforcing community assets; and approaching local and national authorities, policy-makers, and service providers. Appropriate communication approaches should also be set up to implement the required initiatives, monitor and evaluate their impact, and plan for future action.

This, says Bessette, requires a change of attitude. Acting as a facilitator does not come automatically. One must learn to listen to people, to help them express their views and to assist them in building consensus for action. For many NRM researchers and practitioners, this is a new role for which they have not been prepared. How can they initiate the process of using communication to facilitate participation and the sharing of knowledge?

### **3.3 *The NRM practitioner as a communication actor and facilitator***

The paper points out that when a researcher or NRM practitioner first contacts a local community to establish a working relationship, that person becomes a communication actor. The way the researcher or NRM practitioner approaches the local community, understands and discusses the issues, and collects and shares information, involves communication. The way in which that communication is established and nurtured affects the way in which people will feel involved and participate in the research or development initiatives.

Within this framework, it seems important to promote a multi-directional communication process. The research team or the development workers approach the community through the community leaders and community groups. The community groups define their relationship with the new resource people, other associated stakeholders and other community groups.

Researchers come to a community with their own mandate and agenda. At the same time, communities also want their needs and problems addressed. They will not distinguish between NRM problems, difficulties in obtaining credit, or health issues, because these are all part of their reality.

Researchers and practitioners should explain and discuss the scope and limitations of their mandate with community members at the outset. In some cases, compromises can be found. For example, it may be possible to involve other resource organizations that could contribute to the resolution of problems that are outside the mandate of the researchers or practitioners. This can often be the case with the issue of credit facilities.

The management of natural resources is clearly linked to the distribution of power in a community and to its socio-political environment. It is also closely associated with gender roles. This is why social and gender analyses are useful tools for examining the dynamics

of power in a community. Failure to use these tools may turn the participatory process into a manipulation process or make it selective of only a few individuals or groups.

### **3.4 Understanding the local setting: collecting data or co-producing knowledge?**

The paper notes that participatory research appraisal (PRA) and related techniques have been widely adopted in the field of Environmental NRM to assemble baseline information in record time and to facilitate the participation of community members. However, there are situations in which techniques such as collective mapping of the area, transect walks, problem ranking and development of a timeline are still used in an extractive mode. The information is principally used for the researcher's or the project designer's benefit, and little consideration is given to the information needs of the community or to any sharing of results. In these cases, even with the "participatory" label, these techniques can reinforce a process guided from the outside. PDC stresses the need to adapt attitudes as well as techniques. Co-producing knowledge is different from simply collecting data, and it can play an essential role in facilitating participation in the decision-making process that is involved in a research or development project.

### **3.5 Understanding the communication context**

Guy Bessette believes that there are a number of questions that need to be asked when working on Natural Resource Management using PDC tools. For example, who are the different groups that comprise the local community? What are the main customs and beliefs regarding the management of natural resources, and how do people communicate among themselves on these issues? What are the effective interpersonal channels of communication? What views are expressed by different stakeholders in specific places? What local associations and institutions do people use to exchange information and points of view. What modern and traditional media does the community use?

Here again, there is value in integrating the biophysical, social, and communication aspects in an integrated effort to understand the local setting. In the same way that they collect general information and conduct PRA activities to gather more specific information, researchers and development practitioners should seek to understand, with the help of the community, its communication channels, tools and contexts.

### **3.6 Identifying and using local knowledge**

The paper says that identification of the local knowledge associated with NRM practices is part of the process of co-producing knowledge. It should also be linked with two other issues: the validation of that knowledge, and the identification of modern and scientific knowledge that could reinforce local knowledge.

Specific local knowledge or practices may be well suited to certain contexts. In other contexts, it may be incomplete or have little real value. Sometimes, specific practices may have been appropriate for previous conditions, but these conditions may have changed.

This emphasizes the importance of validating common local knowledge against scientific evidence through discussions with local experts or elders as well as community members. It may also prove useful to combine modern knowledge with local practices to render the latter more effective, or more suited to local needs.

A modern solution to a given problem will also have more chance of being adopted if a similar practice already exists in the community. For example, in the Sahel, the use of rocks to protect fields against erosion found easy acceptance because the people already used dead branches to stop water from invading their fields.

### Sparrows and rain

In Mali, ancient knowledge was used to improve agricultural production and the well-being of the community. An old woman in the village could predict years of good rain and years of drought, and direct farmers to cultivate either on higher ground or by the side of the river according to her forecasts. For this reason each family had two plots of land, one by the side of the river and the other in the tablelands. Her well-protected secret was that she could make these predictions by observing the height at which sparrows built their nests in the trees near the river.

After her death, and with the permission of the village authorities, her story was told to motivate the community to protect the river from erosion. The villagers agreed to participate in such activities to protect the birds and the knowledge they brought with them each year. Ngolo Diarra *La vieille femme et les hirondelles*.

## 3.7 Involving the local community in diagnosis and planning

Guy Bessette points out that PDC also requires that the local community is involved in identifying a development problem (or a common goal), discovering its many dimensions, identifying potential solutions, and taking a decision on a concrete set of actions to experiment with or implement. It also means facilitating interaction and collaborative action with other stakeholders. The communication process should help people to identify a specific problem; discuss and understand its causes; outline possible solutions; and decide on a set of activities with which to experiment. It is useful to stress that this does not happen during the course of a single meeting – time must be allowed for this process to mature.

In some cases, the point of departure is not a specific problem but a common goal that a community gives itself. As with the problem-oriented process, the community will decide on a set of actions to achieve that goal.

The concept of partnership between all development stakeholders involved with local communities is central to PDC. There are situations in which a research or development initiative is conducted with a local community, but without consideration for other initiatives that may be trying to engage the same community in other participatory processes. This situation can lead to participation fatigue in the communities. Identifying other ongoing initiatives, communicating with them, and looking for opportunities for collaboration should be part of the methodology.

*“PDC in Southeast Asia today... aligns itself with those who would reduce, and possibly eliminate, hunger and poverty in the world... its ultimate goals are equality and social justice for all and freedom for everyone to help develop their potential.”*

Nora Quebral, Emeritus Professor, University of the Philippines, Los Baños

These activities with a local community also allow researchers and practitioners to identify possible partners that could be involved in the research or development process. It could be a rural radio, a theatre group or an NGO working with the same community. By establishing contacts at the onset of the project, these groups will feel they can play a useful role in the design of the research project instead of perceiving themselves as mere service providers.

### **3.8 Constraints and challenges**

The paper points out a number of constraints and challenges to PDC which can sometimes be overwhelming. One example is a project in Egypt (El Dabi) which aimed to identify and modify barriers to community participation in a development project in the south of the country. Local authorities were to be trained in participatory planning and PDC, a communication audit was planned to cover all stakeholders, and support was to be given in designing community-level PDC strategies.

However, several obstacles hindered the implementation of this plan. First, participation was perceived as a process to allow stakeholders to voice grievances, not as a mechanism for them to look for ways to overcome these problems. Second, the project did not allow sufficient time for a communication audit or to conduct the training in a participatory way. Third, insufficient resources were allocated for the institutionalization of participatory approaches. As a result, participatory communication could not be introduced.

### **3.9 Supporting NRM through communication strategies and tools**

After community members have gone through the process of identifying a concrete initiative they want to carry out, the next step is to identify both the various categories of people who are most affected by this NRM problem, and the groups that might be able to contribute to the solution. Communication needs will vary considerably within each specific community group or stakeholder category. In all cases, however, it is important to pay particular attention to the questions of gender and of age. These variables are usually critical in determining rights and responsibilities, access to resources and participation in decision-making.

Any given development problem, and the attempt to resolve it, will present needs related to material resources. However, there are complementary needs that involve communication – for sharing information; influencing policies; mediating conflicts; raising awareness; facilitating learning; and supporting decision-making and collaborative action. Clearly, these material and communication aspects should be addressed in a systematic way by any research or development effort. PDC puts a greater focus on the second category of needs as identified by all stakeholders, which are then addressed by a series of actions. In the context of NRM, these actions are linked to one or another of the following communication activities: raising awareness; sharing information; facilitating learning; supporting participation, decision-making, and collaborative action; mediating conflicts; and influencing the policy environment.

Guy Bessette points out three criteria that seem particularly useful in selecting communication tools – their actual use by the community, the cost and constraints of their use, and the versatility of their use. Whenever possible, the communication tools already used by the local community should be considered, although issues of cost and sustainability and of different kinds of use should also be examined before taking a decision.

The papers he draws from place specific attention on community discussions, participatory theatre, radio, farmer field schools, videos, photography, posters and brochures.

### **Disguised as men – participatory theatre in Burkina Faso**

Women farmers in Burkina Faso used participatory theatre to address both the issue of soil fertility and their own status within the community. There is a traditional ceremony performed in time of drought, when women are allowed to disguise themselves as men to call for rain and the men are not allowed to take offence at the parodying of their gendered behaviour. The women wanted to refer to that ceremony, so that they could bring forward topics that could be addressed directly by the men of the community.

By expressing themselves as (male) actors in a play the women not only articulated the issue of the unequal soil fertility of women's plots, they also gained confidence in themselves and became more assertive. The impact on the community was also stronger because community members were addressing other community members about common issues, rather than development actors from the outside introducing a debate and promoting solutions.

At the same time, such involvement from community members, in this case women farmers, raised expectations that could not be met after the completion of the intervention. There was no direct follow-up, and although the experience was empowering for the participants, there was little impact at a broader level.

Thiamobiga, Jacques. *Récit des femmes paysannes qui apprennent aux populations à entretenir leurs terres.*

### **3.10 Influencing policy and building capacity – Isang Bagsak**

The paper notes that PDC can help influence policy and help in its implementation. It can also help to build capacity, as the case of the Isang Bagsak methodology shows. The expression “Isang Bagsak” comes from the Philippines and means: arriving at a consensus, an agreement. Because it refers to communication as a participatory process, it has become the working title for this initiative which began with support from the International Development Research Centre (IDRC). Initially, three teams from Uganda, Vietnam and Cambodia participated in the pilot phase for 15 months; Hue University of Agriculture and Forestry, Vietnam; Ratanakiri NRM Research Action Project, Cambodia; and the National Agricultural Research Organization (NARO), Uganda.

The programme seeks to increase the capacity of development practitioners and researchers active in the field of environment and natural resources management to use PDC to work more effectively with local communities and stakeholders. It pursues the objectives of improving the capacities of practitioners and researchers to communicate with local communities and other stakeholders and to enable them to plan communication strategies that support community-development initiatives.

It combines face-to-face activities with a distance-learning strategy and web-based technology. With the distance component, it can answer the needs of researchers and practitioners who cannot easily leave work. It is presently implemented in Southeast Asia and Eastern and Southern Africa, and is being planned for the African Sahel. In Southeast Asia, Isang Bagsak is implemented by the College of Development Communication, the University of the Philippines at Los Baños. It works in the Philippines, Cambodia and Vietnam. In Southern and Eastern Africa, the programme is implemented in Zimbabwe, Malawi and Uganda by the SADC Centre of Communication for Development (SADC-CCD). Another programme is being prepared for an agroforestry network in Senegal, Burkina Faso and Mali, which will be led by The International Centre for Research in Agroforestry (ICRAF) Sahel Programme.

### **An Asian perspective**

In Asia, Nora Quebral, who was the first to use the term “development communication” more than 30 years ago, retraces the evolution of participatory approaches to development communication. She situates this evolution in the context of the communication units, departments and colleges in Asian universities and from the perspective of a fight against poverty and hunger. She notes that development communication does not identify itself with technology per se, but with people, particularly the disadvantaged in rural areas. PDC uses the tools and methods of communication to give people the capacity and information they need to make their own decisions.

She outlines the beginnings of development communication and confirms the need to build on what has been done. Older models retain their validity in certain situations and can still be used when appropriate.

In the context of NRM, Quebral insists on the importance of a balance between technology and the empowerment of people, and on how PDC can help people zero in on their problems and choose the technologies with which they wish to experiment.

“PDC, in its several variations across countries, is a young but dynamic field that is nurtured by many disciplines. At the same time its unique window to human development allows it to pioneer new concepts and practices that other fields can emulate. It has come quite a way in the span of 30 odd years. As science and art, it can contribute much more as long as its advocates... hold fast to their vision of equality and social justice for all and freedom for everyone to develop their potential.”

## **PDC in the Arab world; needing space**

For Arab practitioners, space is needed to reflect on experience, develop insights, document stories and share with others. In a workshop held in Jordan in 1997 participants from nine countries in the Middle East reflected on the lack of documentation of local participatory practice, and indicated their enthusiasm for a forum that brings them together to discuss their experiences in the field.<sup>12</sup> Few attempts have yet been made, and none were sustained, probably because discussions were too formal and abstract, and ended up as a series of sporadic and detached topics.

Waad El Hadidy, Programme Manager,  
Learning Resources and Development Communication, Cairo, Egypt

### ***3.11 Summary of recommendations from the Working Group on Communication and Natural Resource Management***

The recommendations begin with the fact that Participatory Development Communication (PDC) needs to be taken in a holistic context. The working group recommends sustaining the Isang Bagsak community of practice as an avenue for continued exchange and collaboration in PDC training, research and evaluation. It sets out a number of preconditions for effective PDC. It has recommendations for PDC training of decision-makers, media specialists, communication, training and education institutions and communities; for research to address how to achieve and sustain both the process of participation and the outcomes/impact of participation; and for a scaling up of PDC in general.

Finally, it comes up with an action plan which includes the recommendation to: “Form an international working group to compile and refine tools for the research and evaluation of the PDC process and impact, and develop training programmes, materials and systems for participatory research and evaluation.” The action plan also includes recommendations on impact assessment, training, research, the development and refining of PDC tools, methods and materials, the integration of PDC into existing communication, NRM and other technical curricula, the alignment of PDC and donor requirements and the inclusion of PDC in project formulation.

## 4. Working Group 2: Communication for isolated and marginalized groups: blending the old and the new

### 4.1 Challenges and opportunities

Silvia Balit, in her paper, notes that we are living in an era of radical transformation, which presents a number of new challenges as well as opportunities for Communication for Development practitioners.

International development goals place priority on addressing the needs of the poorest. There is more emphasis on the cultural and local dimensions of development. It is also more widely accepted that human development requires dialogue, interaction and sharing of ideas for social change and innovation to occur.

Information, knowledge and communication are essential for empowering isolated and marginal communities. But how much of the potential of the new information age is directed towards improving the quality of lives of the poorest? Vulnerable groups in the rural areas of developing countries are on the wrong side of the digital divide, and risk further marginalization.

Horizontal people-to-people processes are emerging alongside dominant structures and vertical lines of communication. But global media markets are now dominated by a mere handful of multinationals, and the globalization of communication is threatening cultural diversity and the traditional values of minorities. Modern mass media and alternate or parallel networks of folk media or interpersonal communication channels are not mutually exclusive by definition.

Poverty cannot be divorced from uneven power structures, and communication cannot substitute for structural change.

### 4.2 Marginalized groups and communication systems

The paper points out that the communication systems of isolated and marginalized groups include alternative and small media such as video and audio visuals, popular theatre, local and community radio, poetry, proverbs, storytellers, popular songs and music, loudspeakers, in addition to informal meetings in the street, in the market place and at ritual celebrations. They belong primarily to oral cultures.

At the same time, globalization and new information technologies have created new identities, which go beyond the boundaries of the state or geographical communities and traditional institutions. Thus, social movements representing minority and disadvantaged groups make use of new communication networks and information flows to express their concerns, share common interests, and promote social change and action for collective rights. They have created transnational public spheres. These movements are usually based on common issues and interests such as human rights, the environment, labour standards and gender. Examples include women's associations, human rights groups, ethnic minorities, indigenous groups, migrant workers, diasporas, religious movements, victims of AIDS, environmental activists, and Dalits. For example, transnational networks

linking small grass root groups were fundamental in coordinating actions to dispute water policies in Bolivia, in challenging Brazilian deforestation policies and drug prices in Africa.

### **4.3 Information, knowledge and communication**

Silvia Balit says that knowledge and communication are essential but not sufficient elements to address poverty. Marginal communities do not exist in isolation from wider contexts of social, political, economic forces and unequal power structures that are barriers to social change. These constraints need to be taken into account. Information and communication can never substitute for structural changes. For example, the extent to which subsistence farmers can benefit from information will vary according to other factors such as ownership of land, proximity of markets, available means of transportation, and their productive resources to respond to the opportunities information sources might provide.

### **4.4 Some lessons from experience**

Silvia Balit believes there have been many changes since the discipline of Communication for Development began some 30 years ago. There is need for new directions to respond to a changing environment and new social actors. There is need to create an alternative framework for communication interventions, that is truly people and participation oriented, and not only on paper.

The Challenge for Change Program's work with the fisherpeople of the Fogo Islands off Newfoundland in Canada in the 1960s has often been seen as a turning point in the development of participatory communication processes. The Government wanted to move the fishermen and families onto the mainland. Film footage was used to spark debate among the fishermen and policy-makers. After much dialogue and planning, the resettlement plan was scrapped and a fishing cooperative and other community initiatives were founded.

The Fogo Process was one of the first examples of filmmaking and video as a process to obtain social change in a disadvantaged community. It included a series of working practices that have influenced many participatory communication programmes throughout the world and are still very valid. Key ingredients included:

- Communication as a process for empowerment, for conflict resolution, and to negotiate with decision-makers to modify policy.
- Communication technology and media only as tools to facilitate the process.
- Programmes planned and produced with and by the poor themselves, about their social problems, and not just produced by outsiders.
- The professional quality of the product becomes secondary to content and process.
- The importance of interpersonal communication and the role of a facilitator, a community worker or a social animator.
- Community input into the editing of the material, and dialogue with decision-makers.

## Starting with people

The paper points out that listening to people, learning about their perceived needs and taking into account their knowledge and culture is another essential prerequisite for successful communication with marginal groups. Listening, the capacity to read reality through the ear is an important skill developed by oral cultures. Listening goes beyond a simple appraisal of needs. It involves listening to what people already know, what they aspire to, what they perceive as possible and desirable and what they feel they can sustain.

Today, compared to many years ago, there are several participatory research methods which have been developed to enable outsiders and communities rapidly to share experiences and learn together about their realities.

## Preserving indigenous knowledge and culture

Silvia Balit notes that another basic concept underlying participatory communication is respect for the knowledge, values and culture of indigenous people. Far away from global information highways, marginal communities in rural areas contain a wealth of indigenous knowledge and traditional cultural resources, a rich but fragile heritage which risks being lost with the advent of modern technology.

### Mayan values

The Proderith rural communication system in Mexico has often been cited as an example of communication approaches for participatory planning, peasant empowerment and sharing of knowledge with indigenous people.

Proderith staff had little idea of how to spark a dialogue among and with the indigenous, Mayan-speaking people. The ingenious solution proved to be video recordings with Don Clotilde Cob, an 82-year-old man who could talk about the problems. He was a proud, ex-revolutionary, who had learned Spanish and taught himself how to read and write as an adult. He was articulate and lucid in both Mayan and Spanish. This charismatic old man, with his white hair and neat beard, sat cross-legged in front of a video camera for hours on end. He held forth about the past, about the revolution, about the greatness of Mayan culture, and about life today. He deplored the decline of such Mayan traditions as the family vegetable plot, explained how he cultivated his own maize, and complained that today's young people did not even know to do that properly. He accused the young of abandoning all that had been good in Mayan culture; they would sell eggs to buy cigarettes and soft drinks, and so it was no wonder that diets were worse than they were in his youth.

Scores of people sat in attentive silence in the villages as these tapes were played. In the evening, under a tree, the words in Mayan flowed from the screen, and the old man's eloquent voice and emphatic gestures spread their spell. For many, it was the first time they had ever heard anyone talk about the practical values of their culture. It was also the first time they had seen themselves on "television", and talking their

own language. The desired effect was achieved: the people began to take stock of their situation and think seriously about their values, and so the ground was prepared for when Proderith began to discuss development plans to eradicate malnutrition and promote food security”.

Colin Fraser and Sonia Restrepo-Estrada “*Communication for Rural Development in Mexico: in Good Times and in Bad*” in *Communicating for Development*, 1998

## Communication and culture

Silvia Balit’s paper points out that communication and culture are closely interwoven. Communication is a product of culture and culture determines the code, structure, meaning and context of the communication that takes place. Culture and history also play an important role in the social development of a community.

New information and communication technologies may be used to enhance cultural self-expression or stifle it through what has been variously labeled as cultural imperialism, cultural invasion, cultural synchronization or cultural homogenization.

To be successful, communication efforts must take into account the cultural values of marginal groups as an avenue for their participation, rather than borrowing communication strategies from outside that promote change without due consideration for culture. Preserving cultural diversity, local languages and traditional systems of communication in the face of globalization is one of the major challenges for communication practitioners in this Information Age.

### 4.5 Media and approaches

Silvia Balit says that the advent of new technologies and their convergence now means that new mixes and matches can be made for more effective communication programmes with disadvantaged groups. Communication initiatives should make use of all media channels available, both modern and traditional, and there is merit in combining electronic media with other media that people already like, use and know how to control (Ramirez 2003). These include:

#### 4.5.1 Traditional communication systems

The preservation of traditional forms of communication and social change are not mutually exclusive. Traditional communication systems can be important channels for facilitating learning, people’s participation and dialogue for development purposes. Traditional forms of communication can also be integrated with other media such as radio, television, video and audiocassettes. What is important is that they should not be produced only by outsiders. The participation of local artists, storytellers, performers and musicians in the production and use of traditional media ensures respect for traditional values, symbols and realities and, at the same time, ensures that such media productions appeal to

*To be successful, communication efforts must take into account the cultural values of marginal groups as an avenue for their participation, rather than borrowing communication strategies from outside that promote change without due consideration for culture.*

Silvia Balit, Consultant

communities. It also increases the credibility of media programmes and thus their effectiveness as vehicles to share knowledge and bring about social change. (Balit 1999)

The experience of Soul City in South Africa is a well-known successful example of this approach, which among other themes, has focused on HIV/AIDS. The radio and television series have been complemented with interpersonal communication, printed materials and educational training packages.

### **Communicating with nature**

“Our experience is that when we are talking about communication processes with indigenous native people, such as the Guarani people in Bolivia and Paraguay, they don’t have the same concept of communication – why should they? Ours starts with the sender (media or messenger) and ends with a recipient. We consider the receivers of our message are going to be people like us. But for the indigenous people, the receiver of the message can also be nature, not only human beings. It breaks a lot of concepts of Western communication. We consider the best dialogue is when human beings are in equal contact. However, their idea of communication processes in a broad sense is not just a one-to-one process. They can send and receive messages from nature. They believe they can send messages to past time, to people not yet born, to those who have died. You can understand how deep is their concept of sustainability – it is much stronger than ours. We need to realise this is happening if we want to communicate in rural scenarios, because our methods can be very aggressive to the people.”

José Luis Aguirre Alvis, Director, Service of Training in Radio and Television for Development (SECRAD), Bolivian Catholic University

### **4.5.2 Video**

Video has for many years been successfully used for participatory planning, empowerment and sharing of knowledge with disadvantaged individuals and communities. Visual images are powerful tools for communicating with illiterate audiences. Cheaper, easy to use video and audio equipment has enabled communities to master production skills thus giving them access to and control over the tools for information and communication generation and exchange. Video Sewa in Ahmedabad, India is a classic example of the use of participatory video for the empowerment of illiterate rural women. Video-based approaches can now take advantage of the digitalization of video coupled with Internet to facilitate production processes and improve networking and sharing of knowledge and information.

### **4.5.3 Radio**

Radio remains the most widely available and affordable mass medium for disadvantaged groups. In rural areas, it is often the only mass medium available. It can reach large numbers of isolated populations over widespread and geographical areas. In some rural areas it is the only source of information about agricultural innovations, weather and

market prices. It is oral and thus corresponds to the culture of poverty, making it more adaptable to many indigenous cultures. Because of low production and distribution costs it can be local. Community radio enables neglected communities, such as women, to be heard and to participate in democratic processes within societies. It reflects their interests, and plays an important role in reinforcing cultural expressions and identity as well as local languages. It can provide timely and relevant information on development issues, opportunities, experiences, skills and public interests. It thus has the ability to involve rural communities, indigenous people and underprivileged sectors of urban societies in an interactive social communication process.

### **Training community radio workers for empowerment**

A training approach developed in Ghana for community radio workers takes its name from the Kente traditional hand-woven cloth of the Ashanti people. The Kente approach is based on the belief that community radio is a different kind of radio and represents a different theoretical and operational model from public and commercial radio. This implies that community radio requires a new kind of “professional” – a community worker with a specific set of values, skills and standards that are focused on community empowerment. Thus, the training of community workers is woven into the culture of the community and the process of empowerment. It is a practical hands-on approach that integrates theory (development communication, communication and culture, management, etc.) with experience and the practice of broadcasting as it applies to community radio, but context-based. The four elements/modules of the course include: Knowing self; Knowing the community; Knowing development and Knowing media. The empowerment of the trainees is seen as part of the process of community empowerment, which is itself the end-goal of the training. The approach was initially developed for Radio Ada, the first fully-fledged radio station in Ghana, but presently has been extended to other member stations of the Ghana Community Radio Network and to Ethiopia.

Wilna W. Quarmyne, “A Kente Approach to Community Radio Training: Weaving Training into the Community Empowerment Process.”

One of the most interesting developments for communication with marginalized people in recent years, says Silvia Balit, has been the convergence of local radio with the Internet, creating new models with potential for providing relevant information and knowledge to the poor. The merging of the two technologies presents many opportunities: Radio can deliver information to many listeners, but the Internet enables them to send back information, to ask questions, to request and seek information, and to communicate with specialists. The Internet enables access to information from both national and international sources, while radio can localize, repackage and translate that knowledge to local audiences. Experiments have been carried out in Asia, Latin America and Africa.

Migrant communities are on the increase, and their financial remittances as well as the experience gained abroad are an important contribution to the development of their native communities. Radio can play an important role in linking the migrant communities with their native communities, language and cultures.

*Women's groups have been moving so fast in the way they communicate, it's so big and powerful, we should use their work as an example. Women have understood that if they really share and help each other then they will all benefit from it.*

Eliane Najros, Dimitra

## Women's groups in Senegal: moving fast

Rural women in Senegal realized they were producing the food, caring for children and the old and running small businesses. They also make up 80 percent of farmers' unions, but all the leaders are men. The women had no political representation in Parliament, or at the village and district levels.

So they created the National Rural Women's Network to represent themselves. They needed training on writing by-laws, capacity, and rules for how to organize themselves. They then held a workshop on women's access to land. They got the media, the prefect and sub-prefect on land tenure, traditional chiefs, elders, and academics and included some of them in the work team so that they had to endorse the final document of the meeting. The workshop received national media coverage and the result was a huge impact on the ministries and public administration. They filmed a movie of religious leaders, men and women and what they thought of land tenure problems.

In the end they got a seat on the presidential commission looking at land, attended by the President. It was an institutional result of networking and sharing experiences. It happened because the women made so much noise and pushed each other.

Women's groups have been moving so fast in the way they communicate, it's so big and powerful, we should use their work as an example. Everyone comes out of meetings feeling strong, because there is no sense of competition and no hidden agendas. Women have understood that if they really share and help each other then they will all benefit from it.

Eliane Najros, Project Coordinator, Dimitra

## 4.6 ICTs: potential and limitations

The paper points out that people engaged in development work have mixed feelings about the impact of ICTs on the alleviation of poverty. It is clear that poverty cannot be divorced from the underlying social, economic and political issues as well as existing power structures. The emphasis on access to the technologies, though important, must be shifted to the more important issues of meaningful use and social appropriation. Deploying these technologies in ways that benefit the poor requires regulatory frameworks and enabling policy environments, which reflect the needs of all sectors of society. In some areas the ICT revolution has served only to widen existing economic and social gaps, as new information gaps threaten to further marginalize the poor, especially in rural areas.

### ICTs and hammocks

The use of ICTs has the potential to transform the local power structures within communities. For instance, in Guyana, indigenous women were so successful trading their hammocks on the Web, that the power structures were transformed providing

women economic independence from their husbands. The impact on the community was so strong that the indigenous women were forced by the male community members to end the trading of the hammocks through the Web. This case demonstrates clearly that ICTs can also have negative impacts on communities if their use is not managed properly and the key stakeholders are not supporting their use.

Bjorn-Soren Giger, World Bank, 2004

## Barriers to ICTs for the poor

The paper asks: What are the barriers for poor rural people to access new technologies, and the Internet in particular?

The rural poor lack infrastructure (electricity, telecommunications). ICTs depend on national policies and regulation for telecommunications and broadcasting licences. ICTs require initial capital investment for hardware and software. ICTs also depend on the skills and capacity necessary to use, manage and maintain the technology effectively.

The rural poor are probably illiterate or semi-literate, with low levels of education. They would not find much in their local language on the Internet.

They would not find much information relevant to their daily lives.

They are not usually offered the opportunity to input their own local knowledge. The Web offers them almost no opportunities for local wealth creation.

They cannot afford the cost of Internet access, and they cannot afford their own computer.

## Public access points

There is a movement in the development community pushing for the widespread rollout of public access points as a means of extending access to the Internet and bringing it closer to disadvantaged communities and the intermediary organizations that provide services to these communities.

Multimedia community centres, or telecentres are a typical example. Among the problems faced by telecentres for alleviation of poverty has been their lack of sustainability. Often they have been parachuted from outside and not adopted from within. Research on the needs of the communities has not been carried out and they do not provide relevant and useful local content. Often information is not translated into local dialects. Sociocultural issues have been ignored. Training in communication and management skills has not always been provided to local personnel, who must act as information intermediaries. Participation on the part of marginalized sectors of the communities has been lacking. And finally, financial sustainability has not been achieved. According to Charles Kenny, “while there is a continued (perhaps growing) role for donors to improve access to a range of ICTs in developing countries, that role probably should not extend to the widespread provision of Internet access – at least in the poorer regions of the least developed countries.” (Kenny, 2002)

*It can be a very transforming experience for local people to hear their views expressed through mainstream media to policy-makers and it can be a very validating experience to have their thoughts and their priorities included in policy dialogue. It can also reshape the policy dialogue... That's a way of doing social change communication at scale.*

Neil Ford, UNICEF Kenya

## The mobile phone

The development of the mobile phone as a relatively cheap and powerful tool has enabled communities, even in remote rural areas to spontaneously and locally appropriate it for use. Mobile and satellite telephony are bringing telecommunications within reach not only of the small entrepreneur in developing countries but also of the rural farmer. The Village Pay Phone sponsored by the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh is a classical example of a scheme promoting income-generating activities for the rural poor. It enables illiterate rural women to earn income by renting out mobile phones to members of the community for a fee. A Canadian evaluation of the programme showed that the income derived by operators was on average 24 percent of their household income – and in some cases it was as high as 40 percent of household income.<sup>13</sup>

### Local appropriation and impact

FAO compiled two studies to identify whether poor communities and groups had taken ownership of ICTs for their own use: (“Discovering the Magic Box: Local Appropriation of ICTs” and “Revisiting the Magic Box”). The basis for both papers was to identify examples of community-driven and local appropriation of ICTs, to identify what worked and what didn’t work, and to contribute to the on-going debate on impact. The studies identify some analytical tools and guiding principles to foster local appropriation of ICTs:

1. Despite an increase in case studies there is still a need for more empirical evidence to demonstrate impact and understand more about how communities make use of ICTs. Few projects have paid attention to monitoring and evaluation of outcomes, with the result that there is little data to assess the actual impact of these technologies on the poor and therefore little sound evidence to merit further project investment. Donors have failed to devote resources to research outcomes in any depth. And, more qualitative indicators are required.

However,

2. In the rush to “wire” developing countries, little attention has been paid to an ICT conceptual framework or guidelines for ICT utilization. The design of ICT programs for the poor must take into account the lessons learned over the years by Communication for Development efforts.
3. There needs to be a focus on the needs of communities and the benefits of the new technologies rather than the quantity of technologies available. The emphasis must be on the use of new technologies as a means of improving the living conditions of the poor, rather than becoming an end in themselves.
4. Local content and languages are critical to enable the poor to have access to the benefits of the information revolution. The creation of local content requires building on existing and trusted traditional communication systems and methods for collecting and sharing information. There is therefore a growing need also to develop the capacity for locally-based professionals to download and transform global content for local consumption.

## **4.7 Summary of recommendations from the Working Group on Communication for Isolated and Marginalized Groups**

The working group defined the common characteristics of isolated and marginalized groups and identified a number of obstacles and constraints to communication for isolated and marginalized groups.

In the government context, it noted that communication with the poor is key to meeting the MDGs and yet current government policies and trends are making the voices of the isolated and marginalized even more isolated and marginalized.

Recommendations to governments include ways of creating a plural information society, such as creating space for debate, supporting the transition from state to public broadcasting and creating a supportive regulatory environment, and ways of supporting and including the voices of isolated and marginalized groups in the media.

There is a range of recommendations to communication practitioners, among which are building capacity for community-owned media, in partnership with local media, NGO, professionals and local authorities; building an evidentiary base for decision-makers in donor, development agencies and governments; and setting up a task force to carry out this work by the time of the World Bank meeting in September 2005 and WSIS 2.

Recommendations to donors and development agencies include the need to establish specialist Communication for Development units and to ensure adequate monitoring and evaluation funding (both for programmes and general good practice).

## 5. Working Group 3: Communication for Development in Research, Extension and Education

*“Our yields were 0.8 tons of wheat, now they are 2.6. But those early sources of growth are no longer available. We now face problems of salinity, shortage of micronutrients, the lesser availability of water, pest resistance and resurgence, and expensive fertilisers. Our task has become complex. We need to address these challenges and farmers must come along”.*

Dr Naeem Hashimi, Pakistani wheat breeder and member of Pakistan Agricultural Research Council, interview August 20, 2004

Niels Röling notes in his paper that farmers everywhere face new challenges. Climate change, competing claims on natural resources, globalization, price squeeze and competition, loss of resilience of (agro-) ecosystems, advance of technology, increasing livelihood needs, and increasing exploitative pressure are making their lives and livelihoods increasingly difficult.

And yet we need farmers to produce sufficient and safe food and fibre, to restore biodiversity and hydrological systems, to create markets for our goods and to participate in building a stable civil society.

For this to happen, he believes, an enormous transformation is required. There needs to be a shift from the push on technology and expert knowledge to the co-creation of knowledge and empowerment. Farmers need to be allowed to become partners in making choices. And there needs to be a recognition that developing farmers’ countervailing power is the fastest route to rural development.

### 5.1 Different views of Research, Extension and Education

Niels Röling points out that the words “Research, Extension and Education” mean many different things to different people. To a student in a US Land Grant University, they reflect the Land Grant ideology that regards the integration of these tasks, coupled to independence from policy, as the source of success and power, if not superiority of American universities, and the secret behind the efficiency of American agriculture. For the average agriculturalist in Europe, “Research and Extension” refer to services that have been the responsibility of the state but are now increasingly privatized. They have been widely used as policy tools to bolster agricultural productivity and the competitive position of national agricultural industries. The word “Education” invokes qualification and competence-building especially of farmers and their children.

Finally, in most developing countries, the words “Research, Extension and Education” are not necessarily linked. Research and Extension usually are the responsibilities of different directorates of the Ministry of Agriculture, while Education is the responsibility of another Ministry. Thoughts would not immediately turn to *agricultural* education. What the three have in common is not immediately clear.

The paper defines development communication as a process which “seeks to understand, foment, facilitate and monitor the process by which a set of actors moves towards synergy. It focuses on the participatory definition of the contours of the theatre,

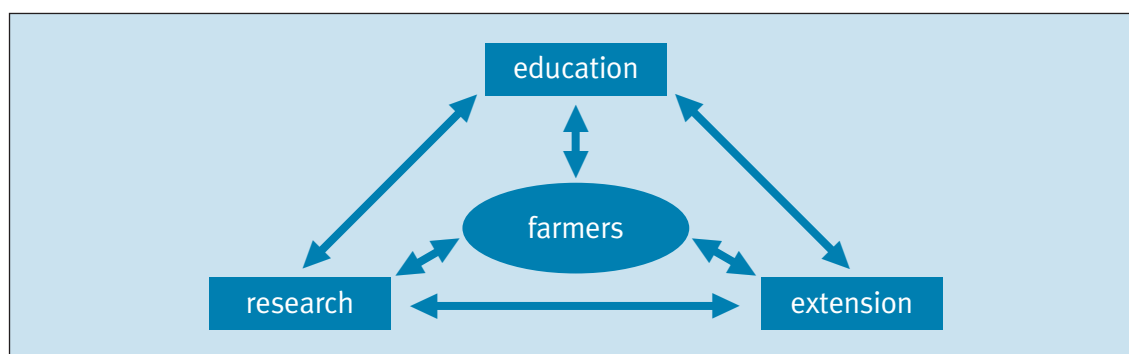
the composition of the actors in it, their understanding of their complementarity and interdependence, their linkages, interaction, conflicts, negotiated agreements and collaboration.”

Niels Röling believes it is not useful to consider innovation the outcome of transfer or delivery of results of scientific research to “ultimate users” or farmers. Hence it is not useful to consider development communication as the tool to improve the delivery mechanism.

## AKIS – the Agricultural Knowledge and Information System

The paper goes on to explain the concept of an AKIS, which is, first of all, a way of looking at the world. It is not a predefined construct. It has to do with networks of multiple stakeholders, with learning and with interaction. It has to do with the way people make sense of the future and of the opportunities that are available. An AKIS is not a predefined construct, it emerges from interaction (usually temporary) between actors who mutually complement one another’s contributions. The actors are aware of the fact that they form a system and do their best to maintain it.

An AKIS links people and institutions to promote mutual learning and generate, share and utilize agriculture-related technology, knowledge and information. The system integrates farmers, agricultural educators, researchers and extensionists to harness knowledge and information from various sources for better farming and improved livelihoods. This integration is suggested by the “knowledge triangle” displayed below. Rural people, especially farmers, are at the heart of the knowledge triangle. Education, research and extension are services – public or private – designed to respond to their needs for knowledge with which to improve their productivity, incomes and welfare, and manage the natural resources on which they depend in a sustainable way. A shared responsiveness to rural people and an orientation towards their goals ensures synergies in the activities of agricultural educators, researchers and extensionists. Farmers and other rural people are partners within the knowledge system, not simply recipients.



## 5.2 Three interlocking narratives

Niels Röling continues by explaining the three narratives that have emerged from the experience of the mid-Western states of the US since the early 1940s. These underpin the discourse about research, extension and education. They are:

- The diffusion of innovations
- The agricultural treadmill

- Technology transfer based on an effective knowledge system.

Any discussion about development communication must start with reflection on these three narratives. They are the product of certain historical conditions and a phase of agricultural development that is not necessarily ubiquitous or very relevant from a development communication perspective.

### **a) The diffusion of innovations**

This is perhaps the best-known narrative. The basic notion is that innovations, novel ideas, autonomously diffuse among members of a relatively homogeneous population after their introduction from outside, either through a change agent, through people who straddle the local and external worlds, or through other media. This diffusion process usually starts slowly and then gathers steam, so that the “diffusion” curve marking the rate of adoption of the innovation by individuals over time typically has the shape of a growth curve. One can distinguish people who adopt fast and people who are slow to follow. Many studies have been carried out to identify the discriminating characteristics. This has led to a rather circular argument: research shows that “progressive” farmers (i.e. those with large farms, education, access to outside agencies, etc.) are the ones who are early to adopt. Therefore, extension efforts should focus on these farmers to achieve rapid diffusion. But these farmers were early to adopt partly because extension agents already pay a lot of attention to them. Diffusion studies often have provided the rationale for what can be called “the progressive farmers” strategy.

The popularity of the diffusion of innovations narrative can be explained by the fact that empirical studies of cases where an innovation diffused to a large proportion of the farmers in a population in a very short time has created an expectation that technologies, once introduced to few farmers through extension and research efforts, will diffuse rapidly on their own and multiply the public sector effort. “Diffusion works while you sleep.”

### **b) The agricultural treadmill**

The agricultural treadmill model has the following key elements:

- Many small farms all produce the same product.
- Because not one of them can affect the price, all will produce as much as possible against the going price.
- A new technology enables innovators to capture a windfall profit.
- After some time, others follow (diffusion of innovations).
- Increasing production and/or efficiency drives down prices.
- Those who have not yet adopted the new technology must now do so lest they lose income (price squeeze).
- Those who are too old, sick, poor or indebted to innovate eventually have to leave the scene. Their resources are absorbed by those who make the windfall profits (“scale enlargement”).

Röling believes that policy based on the treadmill can have positive outcomes. For one, the advantages of technological innovation in agriculture are passed on to the customer in

the form of cheap food. For example, in the Netherlands an egg still has the same nominal value as in the 1960s. The very structure of agriculture makes it impossible for farmers to hold on to rewards for greater efficiency. Meanwhile, labour is released for work elsewhere. One farmer can now easily feed a hundred people. When the treadmill runs well at the national level in comparison with neighboring countries, the national agricultural sector improves its competitive position. Furthermore, farmers do not protest against the treadmill if they profit from it. And finally, the treadmill will continue to work on the basis of relatively small investments in research and extension. These have a high rate of return.

But there are also disadvantages. It is not consumers but input suppliers, food industries, and supermarkets who capture the added value from greater efficiency. Large corporations are well on their way to obliterate competition in agriculture. Only farmers are squeezed. The advantages of the treadmill diminish rapidly as the number of farmers decreases and the homogeneity of the survivors increases. The treadmill has a limited life cycle as a policy instrument. Eventually, the treadmill is unable to provide farmers with a parity income. That becomes clear from the subsidies farmers need. That flow of subsidies should be reorientated, but does not as yet have a good alternative.

The competition among farmers promotes non-sustainable forms of agriculture (use of pesticides and hormones, loss of bio-diversity, unsafe foods, etc.). The treadmill leads to loss of local knowledge and cultural diversity.

A global treadmill unfairly confronts farmers with each other who are in very different stages of technological development, and have very different access to resources. This effect is only exacerbated by export subsidies paid to farmers in the North to overproduce. It leads to short-term adaptations that can be dangerous for long-term global food security.

### c) Transfer of technology

The third narrative is the transfer of technology. Science is the growth point of human civilization. Science ensures progress. Extension *delivers* these ideas to *users*. Transfer of technology assumes a one-way and uninterrupted flow of technologies from fundamental scientists, to ultimate users via various intermediaries and delivery mechanisms. It therefore is also called the linear model.

#### Transfer of technology – linear model

- Fundamental Research ▼
- Applied Research ▼
- Adaptive Research ▼
- Subject Matter Specialists ▼
- Frontline Extension Workers ▼
- Progressive Farmers (diffusion) ▼
- End Users ▼

There is a difference between the transfer of knowledge, and the co-creation of knowledge. In the first situation, an expert, such as an agricultural extension agent or a medical specialist, seeks acceptance of, or compliance with, his way of looking at the world or of solving a problem. In the second situation, a group of stakeholders with different and often complementary experiences or knowledges agree on ways forward to improve their shared problem.

<b>Key Factor</b>	<b>Transfer of Knowledge</b>	<b>Co-creation of knowledge</b>
<b>Nature of problem</b>	Lack of productivity or efficiency	Lack of concerted action
<b>Key actors involved</b>	Expert and target audience	Interdependent stakeholders in a contested resource or shared problem
<b>Desirable practices</b>	Target audience uses improved component technologies	Stakeholders agree on concerted action (e.g., integrated catchment management)
<b>Desirable learning</b>	Target audience adopts technologies developed by expert. In best situation: diffusion of innovations among members of target audience. Learning of expert is not relevant in this situation.	Through interaction, stakeholders learn from and about each other. They try out ways forward in joint experimental action that allows discovery learning. They become able to reflect on their situation and empowered to deal with it.
<b>Facilitation</b>	Expert demonstrates, persuades, explains, promotes.	Trained facilitator brings together stakeholders so as to allow interaction. He/she creates spaces for learning and interaction (platforms). He/she manages the process, not the content.

### **5.3 Agricultural innovation in West Africa**

Röling points out that West African farmers are among the most innovative in the world. Their indigenous systems represent sustainable, resilient and intelligent forms of agriculture that have supported expanding communities over the centuries. They took up maize, Phaseolus beans, cassava, tomatoes and many other current staple crops that originate from Latin America in fairly recent times. West African farmers have coped with the rapid population increase during the last 20 years and have adapted their farming systems to deal with new problems such as declining soil fertility, declining rainfall and weed emergence. Gold Coast tribes of old have made cocoa Ghana's major export crop without any government assistance, a development that only came to a halt when excessive taxation virtually killed the goose that laid the golden eggs.

The lack of impact of agricultural research in West Africa cannot be blamed on lack of innovativeness on the part of the farmers.

## Linear thinking and mucuna beans

However poor some West African farmers might be, all have *veto power* when it comes to accepting the results of agricultural research: there is no way that one can force autonomous farmers to adopt technologies.

A typical example is an important and highly regarded international agricultural research agency in West Africa. Its concern is with soil fertility management. After excellent research, it had come to the conclusion that improving soil fertility in West Africa is a question of soil organic matter first and nutrients second. This research showed that planting, and ploughing under, the luxurious growth of the velvet bean (*Mucuna spec.*) is the most efficient way to increase soil organic matter. When this thinking was made public, it predictably drew some criticism. After all, *mucuna* has been tried time and again. Invariably farmers complain that one cannot eat the beans, that it is hard and painful to incorporate the vegetative matter into the soil, that the bean occupies the land for two seasons during which food production is impossible, etc. Nowhere in West Africa has *mucuna* been taken up as a green manure.

Undaunted, the representative of the agency proclaimed that this was not his but the farmers' problem and that if they wanted to escape from the vicious circle of land degradation and poverty they should plant *mucuna*. As a scientist he knew what worked, acceptability by farmers was not his problem. This approach is a typical example of linear thinking. The scientist thinks he is right and his lack of impact is the farmers' problem.

## 5.4 Missing factors

Niels Röling asks: Why has it not been possible for agricultural research to link into this rich lode of innovativeness? He gives three main reasons:

### a) Farmers' lack of countervailing power

Farmers in West Africa have no control over commodity prices, input-selling companies, government produce buying schemes and marketing boards, policies to import cheap foodstuffs that undercut local farmers and so forth. If one compares this situation with industrial countries, the sharp contrast stands out. In most industrial countries, farmers have power that is disproportionate to their numbers, but reflects the fact that they collectively own most of the land of the country. They are extremely well organized.

Based on the experience in industrial countries, one could say that the fastest way to develop West African agriculture is not to strengthen what in French-speaking countries are called *les organismes d'intervention*, but farmers' countervailing power *vis-à-vis* those *organismes*.

### b) The lack of markets and service delivery institutions at the middle level

The absence of a network of service institutions in which agriculture is embedded in West Africa severely constrains agricultural development. Time and again, pilot projects are mounted that

artificially create the conditions for a rapid productivity growth. Then, when it comes to scaling up their indeed impressive effects from the pilot level and to replicate the project on a larger scale through existing institutions, the effects collapse. The existing institutions are simply incapable of creating the conditions in which small-scale West African farmers can apply their innovativeness to the benefit of the public cause. As it is, in the absence of a decent monetary income, they focus on subsistence production and are “organic by default”. Inputs are too expensive to apply, and producing a surplus is irrational.

The situation described has important implications for agricultural research. It is irrelevant to assume goals for technology development, such as productivity increase. It is equally irrelevant to implicitly assume that conditions can be created that will allow large-scale adoption of a technology, if those conditions are not available at present. Further, it is irrelevant to develop technologies that can only be adopted as long as special conditions can be created through small-scale projects.

### **c) The changing scenario: the challenge for development communicators**

At present, things have begun to improve in the region. Urban development creates markets for food commodities that cannot be imported cheaply, such as cassava and various vegetables. The fact that farmers increasingly have alternative sources of income (e.g. through urban wage employment, emigration, etc.) means that they no longer have to accept any monetary income they can make from export crops. Governments are forced to offer farmers better deals. In other words, new opportunities seem to be emerging, but these are by no means automatic or obvious.

Niels Röling notes : “Our (superficial) survey of the West African context shows that it is very different from the one in which the three interlocking dominant narratives emerged. But in a situation where farmers do not have clout, it is all too easy for people, explicitly including Africans educated in the ‘Western tradition’, to, often implicitly, make decisions that are based on an industrial country context. The most glaring example of this is the tacit assumption that agricultural research serves productivity increase in terms of tonnes per hectare. One scheme after another tries to achieve this. The predictable result is overproduction, a rapid fall in prices, yet another wrong prediction of the internal rate of return of a project, and disillusioned farmers. There must be another way. That is the challenge for development communicators.”

## **5.5 The next steps**

Niels Röling then outlines the main components of the way forward:

### **5.5.1 Listen to farmers**

According to Sir Albert Howard, that great pioneer of organic agriculture who designed large-scale agricultural production systems that did not depend on chemical fertilizers, “the approach to the problems of farming must be made from the field, not from the laboratory. The discovery of things that matter is three-quarters of the battle. In this the observant farmer or labourer, who have spent their lives in close contact with Nature, can be of the greatest help to the investigator”.

Farmers have veto power when it comes to participating in induced innovation. There is no way one can force them to innovate. Therefore, one must listen to them, take them seriously, and involve them in one's work. There seems no other way. Development communicators in Research, Extension and Education, especially if they subscribe to the Millennium Goals, must ensure that farmers are given a voice in the development process.

### Questions for effective research

In Cochabamba, Bolivia, a development project sought to regenerate ancient degraded mountain lands in the High Andes using cactus pear for human, cattle and cochineal feed and for revegetating the barren slopes. Out of this experience, A. Tekelenburg, who worked for eight years in Cochabamba, drew conclusions for the types of "agricultural research" that were required for a development project that is effective in reaching the rural poor. He suggests the following fundamental questions that must *all* be answered to achieve "development" outcomes.

- What are the useful abiotic and biotic relationships that can be construed?
- What can technically make a difference?
- What can work in the context?
- What can work in the farming system?
- What will be acceptable to farmers?
- How can the outcomes be scaled up?

### 5.5.2 Give farmers negotiating power

One of the principles of Integrated Pest Management (IPM) is that "the farmer is an expert". This principle is increasingly recognized all over the world. Farmers may be experts, but they lack a collective voice, at least in many developing countries. This lack of influence of farmers is beginning to be a handicap. In the early days of the Green Revolution, farmers were more or less considered as the lowest rank in the hierarchy. Scientists and administrators determined what needed to happen and farmers were told what to do. In many countries, if farmers did not like the new "high yield variety" and continued to plant their old varieties, the authorities would not hesitate to call in the army or police to destroy the old crop. Prices were set at the national level, uniform technical packages of varieties, fertilizers and pesticides were recommended across huge domains assumed to be homogeneous. It worked for a while. Now that second generation problems are beginning to be felt (such as pest resistance and emergence), and now that the next advance must come from capturing diversity, a powerless peasantry is no longer the right partner for agricultural development. Farmers must have a voice, and they must be given full opportunity to help make development work.

### 5.5.3 Innovation is the emergent property of interaction among multiple stakeholders

A key to finding alternatives to the deadly mantra of the three narratives that emanates from the cutting-edge scientists, the market fundamentalists, and the top managers, is experimentation. A great number of very important lessons are being learned every day in

*Development communicators in research, extension and education, especially if they subscribe to the Millennium Goals, must ensure that farmers are given a voice in the development process.*  
Niels Röling, Wageningen University, The Netherlands

most countries in experiments with different approaches. Niels Röling notes that: “It is time to shake off our complacency and dare to accept that we have not done very well in terms of development and therefore that we need to accept that the only thing we know is that we don’t know. We need to make a greater effort to learn together around concrete field experiments that pioneer new approaches.”

#### ***5.5.4 Involve those who have the power to determine the framework for the agriculture and rural development sector***

It is an all too common experience to see good initiatives thwarted by those who see the world as a set of variables to be manipulated, ie, the people who set the conditions in which you must work. It is impossible to achieve goals without involving these “higher” levels. I believe that development communicators in research, extension and education have an important task in bringing about transformational learning at these higher levels.

### ***5.6 Recommendations from the Working Group on Development Communication in Research, Extension and Education***

The working group gives a number of definitions for development communication in Research, Extension and Education. It identifies key challenges, particularly the fact that dominant models do not provide desired outcomes in the longer term. It gives a number of successful examples of Communication for Development in this area in different parts of the world.

It then goes on to make recommendations when scaling up, which include knowledge and understanding of Development Communication at all levels and the fact that political context is key. Recommendations to practitioners and donors include a need for participatory baseline formulations, a multidisciplinary approach in communication from beginning, and flexibility.

Recommendations to the UN include recognizing that Development Communication is essential to achieve impact in rural development; a call for governments to implement a legal and supportive framework favouring the emergence of a pluralistic information system; and the setting up of an interagency group to analyse communication experiences in Research, Extension and Education, and develop a framework and a common approach to indicators of success.

## 6. The way forward: towards a Plan of Action

### 6.1 Building alliances and collaboration

A plenary session entitled “Building Alliances and Collaboration on Communication for Development” was held at the end of the Roundtable to define the elements of a joint Plan of Action in Communication for Development. A preliminary Plan of Action was discussed based on the outcomes of the Roundtable: the results of the Working Groups; the general recommendations of the Declaration and the presentations of ongoing initiatives. The discussion focused on identifying priority lines of action, concrete initiatives and mechanisms for improving dialogue and cooperation in Communication for Development among the participants. A general consensus was also reached about the need to further discuss, enrich and build effective partnerships around the proposed plan.

To this end, the first priority is to ensure consultative process and synergies around the proposed issues by establishing a working group (or task force) as well as an information sharing mechanism to further develop and operationalize the Plan of Action.

### 6.2 Towards a Plan of Action

Prior to the session on “Building alliances”, the conclusions of the Working Groups and a draft final Declaration were discussed. The Declaration itself emanated from the emerging themes put forward by the groups. Within this framework, recommendations about how to proceed towards a Plan of Action were also agreed. Guiding points from the declaration were:

- Communication for Development advocates and practitioners commit themselves to a deeper engagement with policy-makers to ensure that communication is recognized as a central component in all development initiatives. Of importance in this effort is having concrete examples of the role and impact of communication. This will involve a systematic coordinated effort to establish a clear, accessible body of evidence drawn from current best practice.
- Donors and development agencies should set up well-resourced Communication for Development units to implement initiatives within their organizations and to promote Communication for Development with other donors and agencies.
- Governments, donors and development agencies should require the incorporation of a communication needs assessment in any development initiative (and eventually devote a specific percentage of the budget for this purpose (e.g. 0.5–1 percent of the overall budget of large programmes and between 5–10 percent of smaller projects)).
- Initiatives such as the World Congress on Communication for Development are encouraged with the aim of building a concrete evidentiary base for decision-makers in donor organizations, development agencies and governments.
- The United Nations should set up an interagency group to analyse communication experiences, suggest improvements and develop a common approach to Communication for Development.

*Communication for Development seems to be on a roll here. The World Bank, NGOs, donors and other key institutional players are offering to take a lead role, this has never happened before!*

Colin Fraser, consultant

- Training initiatives should be fostered in developing countries, building on existing experiences. Programmes, materials and systems for Communication for Development should be developed and shared. Furthermore, Participatory Development Communication should be integrated into existing development curricula.

### 6.3 The Plan of Action

Five cross-cutting issues emerged as priorities for collaboration for the Plan of Action. These were:

- Advocacy
- Learning and Capacity Building
- Building Alliances
- Research, Monitoring and Evaluation
- Information Sharing

Under each topic the participants were asked to provide information about their ongoing initiatives in order to identify potential partners. The following sections outline the beginnings of a Plan of Action for the five cross-cutting themes. The task now is to further develop these through discussions following the Roundtable.

#### a) Advocacy

The Roundtable agreed on the need to scale up Communication for Development initiatives ensuring that adequate attention and resources are devoted at the policy as well as at the field level. Communication for Development policies, resources and initiatives need to be properly promoted through advocacy. These should consider longer timescales.

Communication for Development advocates and practitioners should commit themselves to a deeper engagement with policy-makers to ensure that communications for development is recognized as a central component in all development initiatives. This will involve a systematic coordinated effort to establish a clear, accessible body of evidence drawn from current best practices and systematic research, monitoring and evaluation. Effective advocacy has to be done in order to promote and in other ways advance the field of Communication for Development at the policy and at the field level. Communication for Development policies should be promoted as part of the national development policies. Governments should implement a legal and supportive framework favouring the right to free expression and emergence of free and pluralistic information systems, including the recognition of the role of community media in facilitating communication for the rural population and especially for the isolated and marginalized groups.

Communication for Development is also an approach for advocacy that can be used for advocating the rights of the poorest to an equitable development. Within this framework, Participatory Development Communication approaches are relevant to advocacy work, and it is important to identify constraints that may limit its application.

## Areas for collaboration/initiatives

We need a coordinated approach to Advocacy. Priority has been given to the establishment of a body of evidence to demonstrate the impact of communication. Advocacy initiatives are directly linked to the other components of the Plan of Action, especially the monitoring and evaluation, and information-sharing and networking. DFID is willing to work at the advocacy level in coordination with multilateral agencies. An important opportunity for advocacy at the policy level will be the World Congress on Communication for Development (WCCD) promoted by the World Bank. Other opportunities for joint advocacy work among UN and development agencies, universities and practitioners may be considered.

Potential partners: DFID; FAO; IDRC; World Bank

### b) Learning and capacity-building

Learning and capacity-building initiatives should be promoted primarily in developing countries and build on existing experiences. Programs, materials and systems for learning in Communication for Development should be developed and shared. Furthermore, Participatory Development Communication should be integrated into existing curricula of development disciplines.

Training initiatives should focus on collaborative learning, encouraging experiential, value-based, and culturally sensitive training in Participatory Communication for Development, and fostering a community of practice across the regions. Experience such as the Isang Bagsak learning processes provide good examples from across Asia and Africa.

Emphasis needs to be placed on effective capacity-building and support to communication programme development at the field level. This may also imply establishing and or strengthening national communication and multimedia centres as well as establishing mechanisms which allow for the sharing of field experiences and resources.

## Areas for collaboration/initiatives

There are several initiatives related to curriculum development, resource centres and the assembly of an anthology and training material inventories and Clearing House in Communication for Development at different level (universities, training centres and programmes, NGOs, etc.) which can be shared. Learning networks among developing countries (e.g. Isang Bagsak) are very promising.

- Communication for Social Change is developing a curricula at the masters level as well as an anthology of Communication for Development resources.
- A proposal by the University of Queensland for a clearing house mechanism on Communication for Development.
- Isang Bagsak constitutes a valuable model and a potential platform to establish learning networks in developing countries.
- USAID(GreenComm) pulled out lessons learned for scaling up into a framework that USAID will apply and promote as a training programme for practitioners. USAID is

*The role of communication in the development process is to make people conscious of the reality of their situation and to make them aware that they have the power to change their social realities.*  
Wijayananda Jayaweera, Communication Development Division, UNESCO

willing to share experiences and materials with other agencies and to build alliances on these initiatives.

- Panos is working to build media capacity to cover development issues in PRSPs and HIV/AIDS. It is willing to collaborate especially on developing methodologies to audit media environment and identify conditions conducive to communication; research in radio environment and most effective types of broadcasting; be a link to other consortia e.g. Building Digital Opportunities (BDO), Catalysing Access to ICT in Africa (CATIA).
- Radio Ada is happy to share materials; link to the Africa network for forestry issues and others; they are keen to integrate PDC into capacity building.
- FAO is working on curricula on Communication for Development at the university level based on regional experiences and is willing to partner with other institutions.

Potential partners: AMARC; AMIC; CFSC; CTA; FAO; Isang Bagsak; IDRC; PANOS; Radio Ada; UNESCO; USAID.

### **c) Building alliances**

Strategic alliances and partnerships have to be established to advance Communication for Development at the policy as well as the field level, overcoming differences and specificities. Alliances and partnerships can promote the scaling-up of Communication for Development practices at the policy level as well as enhanced opportunities for capacity building and investments.

There is a need for effective linkages and joint communication initiatives to give voices to the poorest and which have the ability to influence decision-making on sustainable development. To this end, special attention needs to be given to fostering national and regional Communication for Development strategies and initiatives.

There is a need to invite and involve major strategic partners that were not represented at the Roundtable, including especially the European Union, but also representatives from China, Japan and others. Separate proposals were also made to form an association of Communication for Development professionals, and to sustain the Isang Bagsak initiative.

### **Areas for collaboration/initiatives**

CTA is willing to establish partnerships in the following areas: resource materials and communication tools; training; partnerships and funding initiatives.

- Participating institutions strongly underlined the need to sustain the Isang Bagsak as a Community of Practice.
- AMARC emphasized more country level consultation and consultative mechanisms, especially to support community broadcasting.
- The Asian Media Centre proposes to promote an ICT for Development initiative through a small grants programme.
- DFID seeks to build alliances in Communication for Development with multilateral agencies.

- UNICEF is willing to partner its work to support communication with children, as well as school-based experiences and initiatives related to polio and HIV/AIDS prevention.
- The DFID/WB/FAO Information and Communication for Development in Support of Rural Livelihoods (ICD) programme seeks to work with multilateral organizations and governments on developing ICD policy.
- Regional initiatives defined in consultation with local/regional stakeholders may be the basis for active partnerships and alliances based on local needs. The “Onda Rural” initiative is an example of a consultative process in the Latin American context.
- The WCCD will be a good opportunity to develop a strategy to build alliances and partnerships.

Potential partners: AMARC; AMIC; CTA; DFID; FAO; IDRC; Isang Bagsak; UNICEF; World Bank.

#### d) Research, monitoring and evaluation

Applied research needs to be fostered, as do Communication for Development monitoring and evaluation (M&E) methodologies. New tools and skills for evaluation and impact assessments have to be developed to build an evidentiary base to demonstrate how to achieve and sustain Communication for Development policies and projects. Evaluations and impact assessments should include participatory methods and communication needs assessments. They should involve national development agencies, local stakeholders and communities. The results should be used to provide feedback at policy level. Within this framework, the UN agencies agreed to work on evidence that demonstrates the value of Communication for Development in relation to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and to promote case studies that demonstrate how Communication for Development is pivotal to achieve specific MDGs. Research, monitoring and evaluation require a very well-defined and intense collaboration by the Roundtable participants.

#### Areas for collaboration/initiatives

Possible areas for collaboration are: compilation of research, monitoring and evaluation tools; collaborative mapping and data collection on of impact and evidences; and identification of best practices and beneficiaries in Communication for Development.

- The Consortium for Communication for Social Change proposes a joint initiative for compiling evidence of Communication for Development results and impacts.
- JHU is preparing a compilation of communication development research tools.
- Some early offers from Consortium for Communication for Social Change, USAID. Previously also UNICEF, Panos, Consortium, and USAID expressed interest in working on M&E issues.
- USAID, UNICEF, WB and FAO also expressed their interest in working on research and M&E issues.

Potential partners: CFSC; DFID; FAO; JHU; Panos; UNICEF; USAID; World Bank.

*“Renewed global commitment provides communicators with the mandate and opportunity to play an increasingly effective role.”*

Mario Acha, UNFPA Country Support Team, Mexico

## e) Information Sharing

Information sharing is a strategic element to achieve advocacy, building alliances, and supporting capacity building both at the global and field level. Many agencies and participating institutions recognized that they did not have time during the Roundtable to share the full range of activities that they are implementing and are happy to share them in future. An information mechanism focusing on the priority topics identified in the Plan of Action needs to be set up to facilitate consultation and concerted action in Communication for Development among UN agencies, as well as institutions, NGOs and other stakeholders. The mechanism should facilitate partnerships, and contribute to the definition of a common agenda in Communication for Development and implementation of joint initiatives at the global, regional and national level.

### Areas for collaboration/initiatives

An open access web-based information mechanism utilizing already existing resources or mechanisms for sharing should be established.

- Communication Initiative offers its network to maintain momentum.
- FAO offers to develop a mechanism to facilitate the information sharing process on the Plan of Action.

Potential partners: Communication Initiative; FAO; UNESCO.

## 6.4 The way forward

### A collaborative framework

The Roundtable expressed the need to ensure follow-up to the Declaration and to foster partnerships in Communication for Development. To this end, specific recommendations towards the implementation of the Plan of Action were included in the final Declaration, as follows:

A working group/network to foster global partnerships on Communication for Development will be established.

The Plan of Action, to be further developed by the participants of the 9th UN Roundtable, should be facilitated and monitored through the mechanism of the working group.

FAO and UNESCO will accompany this follow-up process ensuring active participation of other partners.

Within this framework, a task force will be established by FAO and UNESCO to continue the dialogue among the participants. The UN agencies had already agreed that each would appoint focal points for continuity between Roundtables. At the same time, a proposal will be made to develop an information sharing mechanism in order to facilitate consultation and coordination regarding the suggested themes and initiatives. FAO will provide direct follow-up to these initiatives until the next Roundtable.

## **A road map for implementation**

This proposal is a first step towards a concrete Plan of Action. Many participants and agencies are willing to continue the consultation process to refine it and to launch joint initiatives. The emerging challenge is to ensure ownership over the themes and recommendations and stimulate synergies through multiple means. One possible scenario is that, based on the expressions of interest and the initiatives identified under the five themes, five thematic Working Groups would emerge, consolidating a framework for collaboration. Each group could be facilitated by one or more leading institution/s. Other scenarios are possible, whereby the discussion and concrete proposals would redefine the boundaries of the work in ways that integrate more than one theme. In order to allow consultation and coordination, practical and participatory mechanisms and a clear road map have to be defined and agreed upon by all the interested parties.

Beginning in January 2005, information sharing will be facilitated by FAO in collaboration with other interested parties to define the road map and to launch the Plan of Action.

## 7. Conclusions

The The Ninth United Nations Inter-Agency Roundtable on Communication for Development brought together a wide variety of experts in the field from the four corners of the world. As well as the official presentations, working groups and discussions, there were many side events and group and individual meetings. Alliances were built or strengthened, tactics discussed and futures planned.

In his closing speech, UNESCO’s Director of Communication Development, Wijayananda Jayaweera, said: “I believe that the debate, discussion, and discourse that we have shared during the past few days serve as a very important reminder that our work is crucial for:

- Accelerating grassroots participation in democratic governance
- Advocating the creation of an enabling environment for a free and pluralistic media
- Meeting the challenges of the Millennium Development Goals

There is no doubt that there are many challenges if the Millennium Development Goals are to be met. It is also clear that they cannot be met without communication, which has become increasingly important in our globalized and conflict-ridden world. James Deane notes in his paper: “Never before has communication across boundaries and between cultures been more important, and never before has global security depended on the existence of channels that promote such communication.”

And yet the beginning of the 21st century saw increased parochialism in communication channels. The changing nature of the media has made it more difficult to get the voices of the poor into public discourse, at precisely the time when they are most needed. The fast-moving nature of ICTs has made the digital divide an increasing problem. The increasingly complex and horizontal communication environments in which development strategies are currently deployed, the ever-increasing focus on the importance of ownership, as well as the failures of mainly vertical and top-down communication strategies – particularly in substantially mitigating the HIV/AIDS pandemic – all remain substantial challenges.

At the same time, there is increasing willingness of all levels, including UN agencies, to take communication seriously. As the Communication Initiative website demonstrates, there are also an extraordinary range and number of high quality and innovative communication interventions being implemented across the world by thousands of organizations. Jan Servaes and Patchanee Malikhao note that: “This is one of the most dynamic fields in the development arena... a complex mosaic of diverse local interventions.”

But in order to adapt to our changing world, Communication for Development also needs to learn from the past, to build alliances and to find new ways of working. John Monyo of FAO, in his opening address, noted that: “There is an urgent need to refine existing strategies or find new ones to implement communication for sustainable development programmes at community and local levels; to measure the impact of communication for sustainable development; and to formulate appropriate policy options in support of communication for sustainable development.”

To put this into practice, Communication for Development practitioners need to listen to marginalized peoples and learn from them. They need to show respect, to work on local

content in local languages; to develop ways and means of communicating that are owned by communities and integrated into existing traditional communication systems.

The Roundtable Declaration and the recommendations from each of the three Working Groups have a number of practical suggestions for ways forward which are being implemented through the Plan of Action. There were many suggestions – on capacity building, measuring impact and developing better evaluation mechanisms and tools, building community media, up scaling small programmes, examining the nature of funding and how it needs to change, mixing new and traditional approaches, and building communication into programmes and projects from the start.

It is now time to put these into action.

## Footnotes

- 1 Report of the International Expert Meeting on Communication for Development, organized by UNESCO in Delhi, September 2003.
- 2 *Communication: a key to human development*, Colin Fraser and Jonathan Villet, FAO, 1994.
- 3 *Strategic Communication in PRSP*, Masud Mozammel and Barbara Zatloual, World Bank, 2003.
- 4 Taking Action: the UK's strategy for tackling HIV/AIDS in the developing world, Dfid, July 2004 ([www.dfid.gov.uk](http://www.dfid.gov.uk)).
- 5 World Telecommunication Development Report, ITU, 2003.
- 6 *Completing the revolution: the challenge of rural telephony in Africa*, by Murali Shanmugevelan and Kitty Warnock, Panos, 2004.
- 7 World Telecommunication Development Report, ITU, 2003.
- 8 [www.thehoot.org](http://www.thehoot.org)
- 9 *The media and the verdict of the election of 2004*, Hoot Editorial, May 2004.
- 10 These arguments have been substantially expanded by this author and others in the Global Civil Society Yearbook 2002 published by the London School of Economics ([www.lse.ac.uk/Depts/global/Yearbook](http://www.lse.ac.uk/Depts/global/Yearbook)) and updated more recently in *The other information revolution: media and empowerment in developing countries*, by James Deane with Fackson Banda, Kunda Dixit, Njonjo Mue and Silvio Waisbord in *Communicating in the Information Society*, by Ed Bruce Girard and Sean O'Siochru, UNRISD, 2003.
- 11 *Involving the Community: A Facilitator's Guide to Participatory Development Communication*, IDRC, Ottawa, and Southbound, Penang, by Guy Bessette, 2004.
- 12 Arabization for PRA Materials in the Documentation of the PRA Exchange Meeting: Challenging Practice Attitudes, NEF and CDS, 1997, Amman.
- 13 Richardson D., Ramirez R. and Haq M., 2000. "Grameen Telecom's Village Pay Phone Programme: A Multimedia Case Study", CIDA.

## **Appendix 1: Recommendations from the three Working Groups**

### ***Recommendations from Working Group 1: Communication and Natural Resource Management***

#### **Introduction**

The Isang Bagsak (IB) experience, in enabling people to become drivers of their development through Participatory Development Communication (PDC) and Natural Resource Management (NRM), presents evidence of the importance of PDC in development taken in a holistic context.

#### **General recommendation**

We recommend sustaining the IB community of practice as an avenue for continued exchange and collaboration in PDC training, research and evaluation and other PDC initiatives. PDC is a process that is used for developing local involvement, resolving issues, identifying problems and solutions, and sharing knowledge and information

#### **Preconditions**

- Human resources – implementers with knowledge of the local culture, expertise in PDC, and content, commitment and motivation.
- Physical resources – interactive tools, both indigenous and introduced; minimum physical resources to facilitate the process.
- Sociocultural preconditions – there is a mandate and clear expectations of implementers, the community and other stakeholders and an enabling environment that allows the PDC process to unfold.
- Time – needs to be considered from the perspectives of implementers, donors and local participants.

#### **Recommendations for training**

We recommend instituting experiential, value based, culturally sensitive, collaborative/interactive, inclusive and empowering training in PDC based on the IB principles for the following stakeholders: decision-makers, media specialists, communication, training and education institutions and communities.

#### **Recommendations for research**

We recommend research must address how to achieve and sustain both the process of participation and the outcomes/impact of participation. This requires:

- A shared framework describing PDC processes and effects
- Community involvement in design, implementation and dissemination

We recommend PDC research utilization and dissemination must address:

- What is generalizable and what is unique
- How access to publication outlets can be increased
- Who owns the rights to publish.

## **Recommendations for scaling-up**

We recommend PDC should seek to maximize involvement and collaboration of a multi-stakeholder environment to support local development.

We recommend scaling up the process with drivers of development based on impact assessment and improve methodology to influence practice and policy at every level.

## **Action Plan**

- Support power and stakeholder analysis, conflict management and provide a forum to bring stakeholders together.
- Share impact assessment results with government and approach government through PDC.
- Form an international working group to compile and refine tools for the research and evaluation of the PDC process and impact, and develop training programs, materials and systems for participatory research and evaluation.
- Engage the support of donors and policy-makers for research, research training, research dissemination and publication.
- Train PDC trainers/facilitators, people at the grassroots level, media specialists and decision-makers.
- Develop and refine PDC tools, methods and materials advocating PDC.
- Integrate PDC into existing communication, NRM and other technical curricula.
- Align PDC and donor requirements.
- Include PDC in project formulation.

## ***Recommendations from Working Group 2: Communication for Isolated and Marginalized Groups***

### **Common characteristics of isolated and marginalized groups:**

- Poor, lacking economic resources
- Live in isolated areas (remote rural areas, urban slums, mountains etc.)
- Unemployed or self-employed
- Illiterate or semi-illiterate
- From minority ethno-linguistic groups
- Possess different customs and practices
- Powerless to participate in the decision-making that affects their lives
- Victims of violence, war, drugs, HIV/AIDS and diseases
- Speak minority languages
- Possess other characteristics (disabled, women, youth, aged etc.)

## **Obstacles and constraints**

- Lack of public awareness
- Lack of indicators, evidence and measurements of impact
- Lack of “scaling-up”
- Issues related to Participatory Development Communication practice (PDC)
- Training needs for PDC practitioners
- Institutional obstacles (UN, donors, governments etc.)
- Lack of funding
- Structural obstacles
- Sustainability issues

## **Governments: context**

Governments have committed themselves to the MDGs. We are not going to meet the MDGs unless all actors recognize that communication with the poor is key to meeting them. More importantly, this is the principle identified by poor people themselves.

Current government policies and trends are making the voices of the isolated and marginalized even more isolated and marginalized.

## **Recommendations to Governments:**

### **1. Create a plural information society**

- Create space for debate – shaped by civil society, private sector and media – on how to open up channels for the poor and marginalized and not ignore – or attempt to control – their voices.
- Support transition from state to public broadcasting as an urgent priority.
- Define the role of the national broadcaster.
- Set up independent media regulators.
- Remove barriers to self-expression in the media, so that linguistic and cultural diversity can be expressed in a freer media.
- Create a supportive regulatory environment.

### **2. Support the voices of isolated and marginalized groups**

- Provide a platform for their voices to be heard e.g. support community radio.
- Encourage media to reflect the voices of the poor and marginalized so they can be heard by the government and publics.
- Initiate consultative processes that include marginalized groups.
- Support community-based organizations that can be vehicles for community self-expression.
- Recognize different tools for cultural self-expression.

## **Recommendations to communication practitioners:**

- Recognize that people are partners not objects.
- Create opportunities for people to generate and distribute their own materials.
- Raise awareness of people's rights to express themselves.
- Build capacity for community-owned media, in partnership with local media, NGO, professionals and local authorities.
- Increase knowledge-sharing among all practitioners using ICT tools.
- Train to become better communicators and facilitators.
- Improve advocacy with decision-makers.
- Get feedback from the ground on projects using detailed surveys and thorough evaluation.
- Improve sustainability of projects.
- Build evidentiary base for decision-makers in donor, development agencies and governments: this should include general principles, case studies and generic indicators – especially in relation to scale.
- Set up a task force to carry out this work by the World Bank meeting September 2005 (Rome) and WSIS 2 (Tunis).

## **Recommendations to donors and development agencies:**

- Make Communication for Development a critical component in meeting MDGs.
- Set up specialist Communication for Development units.
- Promote the importance of this work within their organizations.
- Promote Communication for Development with other donors/agencies.
- Provide adequate M&E funding (both for programs and general good practice).
- Establish a “good development donor” initiative.
- Donors pressure governments to help build national policies, e.g. deregulation of media. Greater coordination and development of coalitions will help apply this pressure.

## ***Recommendations from Working Group 3: Communication for Development in Research, Extension and Education***

### **Development communication in Research, Extension and Education is:**

- A two way process – is about people coming together to identify problems, create solutions, the poorest being empowered.
- About the co-creation and sharing of knowledge.
- Involves all stakeholders, identified by mapping the local context from the beginning.
- Indigenous knowledge plays a key role and should be given profile.
- Local context is key.
- Communication which contributes to sustainable change for the benefit of the poorest.
- Focus on agriculture, central for rural development, as part of livelihoods approach.
- Success is dependent on having an enabling environment.
- DevComm in Research, Extension and Education uses money and time in the short term but pays off in the longer term.

## Key challenges

Dominant models do not provide desired outcomes in the longer term

Challenges are old but environment is new with key changes being active role of private sector, decentralization of many services, new opportunities for application of ICTs, agricultural services reform, farmer organization development, social pro-poor extension, non-production-oriented extension

A number of successful examples exist including AKIS but these are small-scale

## Making the links between:

- Research, extension, education.
- Local- national-international in globalized world.
- Organizations/institutions also at local to international levels.
- Effective linkages which give voice to the poorest and ability to engage with policy, influence decision-making.

## Successful examples

- Communication radio for mobilization in southern Africa.
- Ghana – Agricultural knowledge centres at district level.
- Participatory approaches linked to GIS.
- Romania – stakeholder meeting at the beginning of the process.
- Uganda – competitive grants with assessment criteria including demonstrated involvement of all stakeholders, including farmers, govt., private sector, NGOs
- Burkina Faso.
- Bangladesh “Communications Fair” and district level policy engagement group.

## Recommendations when scaling up

- Bring field successes to the attention of policy-makers and donors.
- Pay attention to changing attitudes and profiles at all levels of the system – links with education systems.
- Subject matter specialists should understand DevComm and have communication skills.
- Communication specialists (e.g. media) should understand DevComm and their potential role.
- Pay attention and catalyse organizational/institutional changes.
- Political context key, needs political will, seek opportunities.

## Recommendations to practitioners and donors

There is a need for:

- Participatory baseline formulations, including communication needs assessments.
- Multidisciplinary approach in communication from beginning.
- Include and allow flexibility for participatory planning and decision-making.

## Recommendations to the UN

- Recognize that DevComm is essential to achieve impact in rural development.
- Call for National Governments to implement a legal and supportive framework favouring the emergence of a pluralistic information system.
- Set up an interagency group to:
  - Analyse communication experiences (success and failure) in RExE.
  - Develop a framework and a process which can and is implemented in all contexts.
  - Develop a common approach to identify indicators of success linked to existing indicators (MDGs, PRSPs).
  - Verify present status of rural education, linking hard and soft sciences (including higher education).

## Appendix 2: Agenda

### Monday, 6 September

- 09:00–10:00 Official Opening  
Chairperson: Dietrich E. Leihner , FAO  
Rapporteur: Nikki van der Gaag, Panos Institute  
John H. Monyo, FAO  
Representative from the Government of Italy  
Wijayananda Jayaweera, UNESCO  
Paul Mitchell, the World Bank  
Oumy N'Diaye, Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA)
- 10:30–12:30 Introduction to the Roundtable and Keynote Papers  
Chairperson: Rina Gill, UNICEF  
Current trends in the field of development communication will be presented for discussion, including relationships between communication and development, challenges and priorities as defined during the World Summit on Sustainable Development, the World Summit of the Information Society and the Millennium Development Goals.  
Programme, Methodology and Organization of the Roundtable (15 minutes)  
Jean-Pierre Ilboudo, FAO  
The Context of Development Communication in 2004 (30 minutes)  
James Deane, Communication for Social Change Consortium (CFSCC)  
Communication and Sustainable Development: Issues and Solutions (30 minutes)  
Jan Servaes, University of Queensland, Brisbane  
Questions/Issues (30 minutes)
- 14:00–17:15 Background Papers  
Lessons learnt, issues and constraints in the use of development communication practices and approaches will be highlighted in relation to Natural Resource Management; research, extension and education and isolated and marginalized groups.
- 14:00 Communication and Natural Resource Management (20 minutes presentation, 25 minutes questions and issues)  
Guy Bessette, International Development Research Centre (IDRC)
- 14:45 Communication for Isolated and Marginalized Groups  
Silvia Balit, Communication Consultant

- 16:00            Communication in Research, Extension and Education  
Niels Röling, University of Wageningen
- 16:45            Summary of deliberations on Keynote and Background Papers  
Nikki van der Gaag, General Rapporteur
- 17:15            The UN System Network on Food Security and Rural Development  
Presenter: Stéphane Jost, FAO  
Rapporteur: Carine Rouah, Consultant, FAO

## Tuesday, 7 September

- 09:00–11:00    Debate on the Background Papers  
Chairperson: Eve Crowley, FAO  
  
The session will provide an opportunity for participants to (i) contribute to the concepts and ideas presented in the papers, (ii) share examples and lessons learned from their own experiences at the field level, (iii) identify issues and challenges related to the appropriation of action at the community level, and (iv) identify areas for potential collaboration at local, national, regional or international levels. Papers will be discussed in the same order of presentation  
  
I. Communication and Natural Resource Management  
II. Communication for Isolated and Marginalized Groups  
III. Communication in Research, Extension and Education
- 11:30–12:30    Highlights of activities on Communication for Development by UN Agencies  
Chairpersons: Jean Fabre, UNDP/Paul Mitchell, World Bank  
  
Briefs will focus on significant progress made since the 8th UN Roundtable held in 2001 in Nicaragua.  
UNESCO, UNICEF, UNDP, WFP, IFAD, WORLD BANK, FAO, WHO/UNAIDS, UNEP
- 14:00–17:30    Working Groups  
Terms of reference and organization of the Working Groups (WG)  
Jean-Pierre Ilboudo, FAO  
  
WG<sub>1</sub> – Communication and Natural Resource Management  
WG<sub>2</sub> – Communication for Isolated and Marginalized Groups  
WG<sub>3</sub> – Communication in Research, Extension and Education
- 15:00–17:30    Working Groups

## Wednesday, 8 September

- 09:00–12:30 Working Groups Continue
- 14:00–17:30 Parallel sessions
- A. Preparation of final reports by WG facilitators and rapporteurs  
B. New Initiatives in the UN  
Chairperson: Sandra McGuire, IFAD
- This session will provide a forum for sharing information on new projects and proposals and explore opportunities for partnerships.
- 14:00 University of Queensland Clearing House on Development Communication  
Presenter: Jan Servaes, University of Queensland  
Rapporteur: Kwamé Boafo or Venus Jennings, UNESCO
- 15:30 The World Bank – Building Partnerships on Communication for Development  
Presenter: Lucia Grenna, Development Communication Division at the World Bank  
Rapporteur: Paolo Mefalopoulos, World Bank
- 16:30 FAO – La Ond@ Rural: A Latin American Initiative  
Presenter: Bruce Girard, Comunica  
Rapporteur: José Luis Aguirre, AMARC

## Thursday, 9 September

- 09:00 Chairperson: Guy Bessette, IDRC  
Reporting by the Working Groups
- 11:00–12:30 Discussion on the Working Groups' reports and final recommendations
- 14:00 Chairperson: Ricardo Ramirez, University of Guelph  
Information and Communication for Development in Support of Rural Livelihoods: A Collaborative FAO/DFID/World Bank Programme  
Presenters: Stephen Rudgard/Clare O'Farrell, FAO  
Rapporteur: Sophie Treinen, FAO

14:45

### Building Alliances and Collaboration on Communication for Development – The Way Forward

Discussion will aim at developing a preliminary action plan for collaboration on Communication for Development based on recommendations from the Working Groups and presentations. Projects or activities will be identified where two or more partners either share strong interests or are ready to agree to joining efforts and resources for implementation. The tentative plan will hopefully include information on who will do what, with whom, where, when and with what resources.

17:00

### Closing ceremony

Chairperson: K. Kwame Boafo, UNESCO

Conclusions, recommendations and final declaration  
Nikki van der Gaag, General Roundtable Rapporteur

Word of thanks  
Jean Pierre Ilboudo, FAO

Closing speech  
Wijayananda Jayaweera, UNESCO

## Appendix 3: Opening and closing statements

### Opening speech by John H Monyo, FAO

First of all, let me welcome you to the The Ninth UN Roundtable on Communication for Development on behalf of Mr. Jacques Diouf, Director General of FAO.

This United Nations Roundtable represents an excellent example of interagency collaboration and of partnership between the UN and other institutions.

When FAO accepted the responsibility for organizing and hosting this event, it was determined right from the outset that the 2004 Rome Roundtable would be an open forum to include institutions and groups which are not part of the United Nations system.

We firmly believe that today, more than ever, the UN must strengthen its relationship with civil society and the private sector. This approach is also in line with initiatives by the UN Secretary General who recently launched the Global Compact Leaders Summit and the UN Fund for International Partnerships to promote new UN partnerships and alliances with companies and foundations as well as bilateral and multilateral donors.

Since they started 15 years ago, Communication for Development Roundtables were conceived as informal fora to bring together UN agencies, donors and practitioners to share progress, harmonize approaches and develop partnership arrangements. The same spirit prevails today because the common theme of Communication for Development lies at the heart of the challenge: *To involve people in the process of their own development.*

Roundtables meet every two years under the leadership of a United Nations agency selected by rotation. The present Roundtable was originally scheduled for 2003 but was shifted to 2004 in order to accommodate three key events that took place in 2003 – the Executive Council and General Conferences of UNESCO and FAO, and the World Summit on the Information Society. They have in various ways contributed to shaping the agenda of today's meeting.

At the 8th Roundtable coordinated by UNFPA with the Rockefeller Foundation, UNESCO and the Panos Institute and held in Nicaragua, participants identified the main theme for the 9th Roundtable to be on "Communication and Sustainable Development".

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), and the Sustainable Development Department in particular, is honoured by the responsibility to organize this meeting as communication is a key component to sustainable agricultural and rural development. We believe that sustainable development goals can only be achieved if knowledge and information are effectively shared by rural people and supporting local organizations.

FAO has over thirty years of experience in the field of communication in support of agriculture and rural development. In fact, in 1969 FAO became a pioneer in the United Nations system when it established a unit dedicated to Communication for Development.

Throughout our experience in the field worldwide, we have learnt that Communication for Development approaches and methods can effectively contribute to fostering people's

participation in identifying and articulating needs and decision-making processes affecting their lives. We have also learnt that by giving a voice to rural people, development workers, local authorities and national decision-makers, we can also help in policy acceptance processes, in mobilizing people for participation and action and in disseminating new ideas, practices and technology. Most importantly, communication methods and tools can help overcome barriers of literacy, language, cultural differences and physical isolation.

We hope that this forum will provide a fertile environment for debate and reflection on world trends, priorities and challenges related to Communication for Development which currently impact sustainable development. There is an urgent need to refine existing strategies or find new ones to implement communication for sustainable development programmes at community and local levels; to measure the impact of communication for sustainable development; and to formulate appropriate policy options in support of communication for sustainable development.

This meeting can also have an impact in clarifying the potential of Communication for Development in reaching the Millennium Development Goals, particularly those goals defined by the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development and the 2003 World Summit on the Information Society.

During the next three days your work will focus on three key themes – Communication for Natural Resource Management, Communication for Isolated and Marginalized Groups and Communication in Research, Extension and Education. We look forward to your recommendations and guidance on how to move forward in those three areas to achieve sustainable development.

In concluding my intervention I would like to thank those partners who joined FAO in the organization of the Roundtable and whose support enabled many participants from the South to attend. Our deepest gratitude goes to UNESCO, the World Bank, the Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA), the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), the Panos Institute and the Italian Government.

### **Opening speech by Minister Eugenio Campo, Government of Italy**

It is a very special pleasure for me, as a representative of the Directorate General for Development Cooperation of the Government of Italy, to open this Ninth UN Roundtable on Communication for Development, which is being hosted by FAO, and address a very warm welcome in Rome to all the participants to this important event.

I would like to express my satisfaction in acknowledging that the growing interest for this subject within the United Nations is in line with the importance that our Government attaches to the role of communication in general. In this respect I would like to recall that the Italian Government has reserved a session on “The role of Communication in the Development Cooperation” during a one-week Meeting illustrating the different aspects of the Italian Government, which recently took place in Rimini.

In the framework of the FAO-Italy Cooperative Programme, one of the main sectors has traditionally been Communication for Development. In recent years we have financed a number of projects, among which I would like to recall here the project “Development

Support Communication for Southern Africa”, benefiting the countries of the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC), which was instrumental in establishing the Regional Centre of Communication for Development; and a similar regional project in Latin America called “Comunicación para el Desarrollo en América Latina”.

I would also like to make a specific reference to an ongoing project in Bolivia, which is capitalizing on the experience gained in previous international projects, because it represents for us a sign of a renewed interest in this sector. The project, which is contributing to the establishment of a Centre for Natural Resources Management in Bolivia, counts on the participation of Italian Universities and NGOs.

We are very pleased to have contributed to the financing of the present Roundtable, as a confirmation of the interest of the Italian Government in the crucial and innovative role that the United Nations and specialized agencies can play in this sector. This vision of Communication for Development as a process which facilitates information, training and participation is now shared by different UN and bilateral agencies.

This is the occasion for me to reiterate the interest and commitment of the Government of Italy to the decisive role of Communication in promoting human development and its importance to implement successful development initiatives.

In recent years, it has become evident that investments in scientific and material inputs for food security and rural development, bear little fruit without parallel investments in communicating the knowledge and information needed by farmers to put production inputs to best use. In poor rural areas, where agricultural productivity is low and unreliable and there is food insecurity, better information and knowledge exchange can play an important role in reducing poverty, but these have to be adequately shared among the end users according to their needs, values and languages through Communication for Development activities.

The systematic use of Communication can support development initiatives by giving a voice to relevant stakeholders such as rural people, development workers, local authorities and national decision-makers. Communication methods and media help to overcome barriers of literacy, language, cultural differences and physical isolation, enabling sustainable development.

Furthermore, in recent years it has also been demonstrated that a Communication for Development approach, based on the definition of local contents and the use of conventional media such as rural radio, is essential to bridge the rural “digital divide” and to provide universal information access to rural population.

We consider that Communication for Development initiatives need to be strengthened through a more active collaboration within the UN agencies and an improved coordination among donors.

We hope that this 9th UN Roundtable will be a milestone to establish alliances and partnerships to build capacities in developing countries and enhance the results at the field level. On our side, we will look forward to the conclusions and recommendations of the Roundtable.

Thank you very much.

## Summary of opening speech by Mr. Wijayananda Jayaweera, Director, Communication Development Division, UNESCO

I cannot emphasize enough the importance of the UN Communication Roundtable and the significant role it has to play in bringing together UN agencies and international non-UN partners to discuss and debate the very broad, challenging, and crucial role and practice of communication in development.

Allow me to provide you with a brief history of the UN Communication Roundtable and why it is so significant to our work.

When it was first introduced, in the late 1980s as a UN interagency collaboration mechanism, there was no common definition or understanding of Communication for Development. This raised the need for coordination among each of the UN agencies. At the time UN agencies themselves were rarely aware of each others objectives largely due to their focus on the individual policies that reflected their work and guided their operational programmes and projects.

Many attempts were made to harmonize the situation and by 1994, a Joint Inspection Unit was designated to consult with the agencies and provide recommendations on how communication could better integrate in the work of the agencies and programmes and what future direction it could realistically take. The Joint Inspection Unit was careful not to confuse the technical means of communication, such as telecommunications and informatics, with the conceptual category of communication. It studied the relevance and importance of Communication for Development. Its recommendations allowed the evolution of an informal Roundtable to grow into a better organized system of coordination. I quote from the original recommendation "...the existing Informal Roundtable process should be regularized. It should include all United Nations agencies, the regional economic commissions of the United Nations and take into account the mandate of UNESCO on communication."

In support of the recommendations, the United Nations General Assembly passed resolution 50/171 in 1995 (and subsequently resolution 51/172 to which FAO provided its input), requesting the UN Secretary General in consultation with the Director General of UNESCO to report to the General Assembly on the implementation of the UN Communication Roundtable on a biennial basis. Later, the agencies agreed amongst themselves that the chairmanship of the Roundtable would be implemented on a rotational basis.

In 1996, on the initiative of UNESCO, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution on "Communication for Development", which, inter alia, "stresses the need to support two-way communication systems that enable dialogue and that allow communities to speak out, express their aspirations and concerns and participate in the decisions that relate to their development". The General Assembly "recognized the relevance for concerned actors, ...policy-makers and decision-makers to attribute increased importance to Communication for Development and encouraged them to include it ...as an integral component in the development of projects and programmes".

Each Roundtable has somewhat followed a theme in order to limit discussions and to avoid inflating the agenda.

In 1996 the 6th Roundtable met in Harare to discuss Communication for Development. Its recommendations – that communication should no longer be seen as an isolated issue but rather as an integral component in every development project or programme that should provide people with the skills and techniques that allow them to communicate and to voice their opinions and aspirations – had an impact on the way we work and on the direction many of us have taken.

In 1998 in Brazil, the 7th Roundtable recommended the establishment of a Task Force on Communication for Social Change and Development.

The 8th Roundtable, in 2001, took place in Nicaragua against a backdrop of a rapidly transforming international response to HIV/AIDS.

In a nutshell, the UN Communication Roundtable has succeeded in bringing recognition to grassroots needs, justifying the need for resource mobilization, and emphasizing the importance of human rights and has achieved recognition for its purpose – mobilizing the participation of the international community at large; supporting increased human capacity in communication; and securing resources that contribute towards the growth of Communication for Development.

I will rapidly conclude by emphasising a few key points which I would like us all to keep in mind during the next few days as we brainstorm solutions to the challenges we must meet.

I would like to remind you that communication is a means to sustainable development, not an end in itself. The role of communication in the development process is to make people conscious of the reality of their situation and to make them aware that they have the power to change their social realities. It assumes that people are equal, that they have a right to knowledge and culture, and that they can criticize their situation and act on it. It also implies having faith in the capacity of all people, including the illiterates, to discuss intelligently about social issues.

I would also like to draw to your attention that the right to freedom of expression is a prerequisite for grassroots communities to enjoy their other rights. To participate in their own development, people must be free to “seek, receive and impart information and ideas”, as stated in article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. I cannot emphasize enough that without the guarantee of freedom of expression, vital processes such as participatory communication will be hindered from effectively pursuing social dialogue, securing ownership of development efforts. These liberties can only lead to the adoption of new attitudes and behaviours that can gradually empower people in strengthening the democratic process.

Hand in hand with the freedom of expression is the need for an independent and pluralistic media. This means that media should be free of any political or commercial influence and should serve a public service to citizens with the aim of informing, educating and entertaining.

I trust that this gathering will make an extra effort to contribute one more step into the future by producing innovative ideas, recommending creative solutions and putting into perspective that our world can most certainly be a better place – like you, I hope, I am happy to be here to continue this process.

## **Summary of opening speech by Oumy Khaïry Ndiaye, Head of Communication Channels and Services Department, Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA), The Netherlands**

Ms Ndiaye thanked FAO for inviting CTA to the Roundtable. She emphasized the longstanding cooperation between CTA and the institutions of the UN system and in particular the FAO which has enabled CTA to carry out its many communication activities. The ACP members account for 12 percent of the world's population and 25 percent of those living in poverty!

The CTA works to support and build capacities within ACP governments, organizations, training institutes and NGOs, amongst others, to generate information and communications in support of agriculture. A good reason for CTA to participate in the 9th UN Roundtable on Communication for Development is that the institution is in the process of revisiting its communication strategy with a contribution from some participants at the Roundtable. CTA expects from the debates an update on the evolution of concepts and practices in Communication for Development and how this can influence its future strategies. Ms Ndiaye also mentioned that on the occasion of its 20th anniversary celebrated last June, CTA has adopted the motto "Sharing knowledge, improving livelihoods".

In addition, CTA aims to strengthen the capacity to generate information and communication in ACP organizations in the field of agriculture and rural development, and to support these organizations in order to conceive and carry out agricultural policies necessary for the autonomy of the ACP states. This means looking at poverty reduction, promotion of sustainable food security and the preservation of natural resources.

In practice, this involves the creation of a substantial database of donors and contacts; the use of both ICTs and traditional means of communication to bring together those involved in this areas in the ACP countries and to facilitate contact with third parties such as multilateral and bilateral agencies, including the EU; the creation of the role of reliable intermediary between the ACP states and those of the EU; the creation of the capacity to reach the grassroots with tools that are flexible and with well targeted interventions.

Strategies include: programmes responding to demand; promotion of innovations e.g. the use of CDs; integration of the different tools of communication; giving priority to ACP actors and institutions; research into equalizing geographical differences. As well as an extensive website, CTA offers print publications, rural radio packs, thematic portals, Question and Answer papers, sponsoring for seminars and study visits etc.

## **Opening speech by Paul Mitchell, Director, Development Communications Division, World Bank**

The World Bank's first formal partnership on Communication for Development was with the FAO so I am very pleased to be here today.

The World Bank is about change; and change cannot happen without communication. Communication is very important to the Bank, which has expanded the ways it is doing communication and the places where it is doing it – currently in 70 LDCs and 10 developing

countries. The Bank does not implement projects itself but runs operational support for developing countries. We are clear that a project can't achieve success without communication; that money and advice alone are not enough.

There are four pillars of the World Bank's policy on Communication for Development:

1. Communication is a pillar of development, not a side issue. It is as important as social and economic analysis. Mainstreaming Communication for Development is part of the Bank's programme. Every project must have a communication aspect.
2. Strong political support. Italy has been a leader here; the Bank needs political support to do what it is doing in communication.
3. Every new World Bank policy now contains a large communication component.
4. Partnership outreach – development communication is becoming increasingly important here. The Bank has established a separate division for Communication for Development which is one of the few new divisions in the Bank. It was started in 1998 and now has 40–45 people and bilateral support from SIDA, DANIDA, DFID, the Inter American Development Bank, and now the African Development Bank.

### **Closing speech by Mr. Wijayananda Jayaweera, Director, Communication Development Division, UNESCO**

I think the past few days have reaffirmed the need to continue using the UN Communication Roundtable as an opportunity for bringing together partners and stakeholders of the UN specialised agencies and programmes. The discussions that were generated around the background papers and the resulting recommendations are a valuable asset to our thinking and will serve as a guiding tool that may help us, the UN agencies, to improve our performance in Communication for Development both collectively and through our individual mandates.

In relation to this, I would like to thank FAO once again for having taken a lead in organizing this year's Roundtable. I especially appreciate the way the team, led by Esther Zulberti and Jean Pierre Ilboudo, have carried out their task – professionally, charismatically, and patiently – the logistics has been run so smoothly that it is almost easy to forget that so much time and hard work has been invested in the organizing process. The report on the proceedings of this Roundtable will be prepared and distributed by FAO. Please do join me in giving the FAO team a round of applause!

The UN agencies present at this meeting have already agreed to confirm their participation in the 10th UN Communication Roundtable which will take place in 2006, possibly under another specific development related theme that will no doubt invite the participation of international and grassroots partners and stakeholders. The numbers will of course depend on the amount of funding that the agencies are able to mobilize and pool together. In the meantime, it will be useful to have a regular and somewhat consistent collaboration among the UN agencies and programmes using the mandate of our individual organizations to address specific areas of focus.

A UN interagency meeting took place yesterday to discuss some of these issues and we have reached an agreement that FAO, in close collaboration with UNESCO and others, will closely follow up on the recommendations that have been generated from this meeting.

We hope that UNESCO will host the 10th Roundtable which is tentatively scheduled for September 2006. The next meeting will no doubt be organized in close consultation with UN agencies, programmes and partner organizations. We shall make an extra effort to bring out the perspective of our respective agencies so that we can address Communication for Development issues from a well-rounded and holistic view point. Funds permitting, we hope to engage a similar level of participation from the academic, NGO and civil society sectors.

On behalf of UNESCO, I would like to welcome the World Bank to join the UN agencies in maintaining a dialogue, so that our efforts can be constructively complemented by the Bank's approach and thinking in response to development and possibly in the organizing of the proposed Congress.

I would like to briefly take a moment to remind you about something that you already know – Communication for Development is a profession that is vast and multilayered and it is expected to respond to complex and specific issues that range from interpersonal communications at the grassroots level, to a diverse and pluralistic media at the national level. While many of our frustrations are well founded because we cannot adequately measure the richness we can offer the world in terms of knowledge and experience in communication theory and practice. I hope we have all enjoyed during the past few days, the presence and experience of long-standing academics, creative and vibrant practitioners, motivated donors, dedicated research partners, project managers and implementers. I hope that together we can celebrate the belief that Communication for Development is a way of obtaining democracy, peace and justice in this rapidly changing world.

I thank you all very much for sharing your time and knowledge so capably and am honoured to have had the opportunity to meet many of you as part of this Roundtable!

I believe that the debate, discussion and discourse that we have shared during the past few days serves as a very important reminder that our work is crucial for:

- accelerating grassroots participation in democratic governance
- advocating the creation of an enabling environment for a free and pluralistic media
- meeting the challenges of the MDGs.

I very much hope that this year's Roundtable has introduced some kind of momentum that is common in our approach to development and that will allow us to network amongst each other almost immediately after this event so that some joint action can take place. Of course, no miracle solutions have been introduced, rather, this is a process that will remain fuelled by our own enthusiasm to serve a collective purpose that can have a direct impact on the lives of the people who need us most.

On behalf of UNESCO, I would like to thank the Italian Government, the World Bank, IDRC, and CTA for the financial contribution they have made to this meeting without which it would have been impossible to envisage the level of participation we have enjoyed during the past few days.

## Appendix 4: Highlights from the UN agencies on the work in Communication for Development

During this session the UN organizations provided a brief overview of their ongoing activities on Communication for Development since the last Roundtable in Nicaragua.

### FAO

FAO has over thirty years of experience in the field of communication to support agriculture and rural development. In 1969 FAO pioneered the first UN Development Support Communications Unit, now called the Communication for Development Group within the Extension, Education and Communication Service. The priorities of the Group are to assist the FAO member countries to develop and implement effective communication policies, strategies and approaches using a variety of media, from traditional media to ICTs in the area of agriculture and sustainable rural development.

Since the 8th UN Roundtable on Communication for Development, FAOs Communication for Development Group has implemented projects and project components in the Near East, Asia, Africa and Latin America providing communication strategies and policies on rural development; and on how to mitigate HIV/AIDS in the agriculture sector. They have established a priority sector on Communication and Natural Resource management (NRM); and developed a new programme, Bridging the Rural Digital Divide (BRDD) which is a joint partnership between the Communication for Development Group (SDRE) and the Library and information Systems division (GILF). Through this programme FAO provides technical assistance, resulting in greater synergies and improved efficiency, using ICTs and traditional media such as Rural Radio and lastly; Building New Partnerships in the field of development Communication WB, CTA, IDRC, DFID, GTZ, the Italian Government, AIF Universities, CI, URTNA.

### IFAD

This is the first time the organization has been represented at one of these Roundtables. IFAD is a specialized UN agency dedicated to fighting rural poverty. It provides financing in the form of loans to governments, and works to upscale lessons learned through projects and programmes to influence policy-makers.

IFAD's work is crucial to achieving the Millennium Development Goals, because more than two-thirds of the world's extremely poor people live in rural areas of developing countries.

IFAD is demand driven and participatory. Everything IFAD does must ultimately strengthen the ability of rural poor people to lead their own development.

It is therefore looking at how Communication for Development can help to achieve that goal. The aim over the next two years is to develop an IFAD strategy for Communication for Development, which will be presented for comment at the next Roundtable. The process to develop the strategy will include piloting Communication for Development in IFAD projects, and promoting learning on Communication for Development in the organization.

## UNDP

UNDP have dedicated project resources to communication and there has been a rethinking of technical cooperation. There has been training of representatives in communication. There was a recent meeting organized in Dakar called “Young Leaders” which helped participants to communicate among themselves but also through the Internet. UNDP hope to do the same in Asia, Europe and Latin America. UNDP has been part of “Africa 2015”; an initiative to complement and intensify the efforts made by UN agencies, groups in civil society and governmental organizations to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in Africa. People from the music world have been part of this initiative and the famous Senegalese singer Baaba Maal has been raising awareness of the fight against HIV/AIDS.

UNDP has a new project “Eco for the World” for which it is seeking partnership. This would link up with the NGO sector as a form of “edutainment”. The project would be using the Web, SMS focusing on MDG Goal seven. There is a TV series starting in January featuring eco-heroes highlighting how people can make a difference in terms of the environment.

## UNEP

The Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002 was a pivotal event and the environmental voice of the UN system. UNEP’s work with CSP has meant it is a lot more development oriented and Agenda 21, the Millennium Development Goals have been integrated into all its activities. The environmental pillar should not be forgotten in the question of sustainable development; issues such as the growth of agriculture and its development impact on the environment are not tackled enough. The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment will be addressing such issues (an international work program designed to meet the needs of decision-makers and the public for scientific information concerning the consequences of ecosystem change for human well-being, and options for responding to those changes).

The issue of urban community development has not really been addressed in the papers tabled at the Roundtable in Rome; however this should be reflected in deliberations. Also, people should not underestimate the role of mass media. UNEP is doing more and more audiovisual work, working with TVE getting outputs on national and global channels.

## UNESCO

UNESCO’s approach to the implementation of Communication for Development projects is based on its unique mandate on communication and the guiding principle of Article 19 in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Freedom of expression and a free flow of information are necessary preconditions for people to participate in their own development. For this purpose, UNESCO supports various advisory groups and networks and promotes freedom of expression. The celebration of World Press Freedom Day (May 3) and the award of the UNESCO/Guillermo prize are two global activities that UNESCO implements. In addition, it supports national level efforts to develop an enabling environment for a free and pluralistic media. UNESCO

made a significant contribution during the WSIS to retain the freedom of expression as a core value in using ICTs.

Capacity building is the pillar of freedom of expression and forms the backbone of all of UNESCO's actions in Communication for Development. The key focus strategy is based on priorities that seek to promote, advocate, train and support an enabling environment for media development. Communication for Development is obtained by nurturing an enabling environment and providing access to various traditional and new information and communication technologies.

This includes promoting a pluralistic media, advocacy, legislation and policy formulation, journalistic training for developing countries and supporting local production and programme exchange initiatives to ensure that the voice of local people is reflected through the media.

The International Programme for the Development of Communication is the only multilateral forum in the UN system designed to mobilize media development support. This grant facility supports projects that promote freedom of expression with a focus on community media and human resource development. The programme has disbursed US\$ 90 million since its inception in 1980 to more than 1000 media projects in 135 developing countries worldwide and has been instrumental in promoting community radio in Africa and Asia.

As part of the follow up to 8th Communication Roundtable and response to HIV/AIDS, a compendium offering different perspectives and approaches to development communication has been published under the title "Approaches to Development Communication". A similar publication has been produced under the title "Research on ICT and Poverty Reduction in South Asia". A broader emphasis on HIV/AIDS has been introduced to UNESCO's regular programme in the Communication and Information Sector both at headquarter and field office levels. In addition to regional and sub-regional training programmes on improving journalistic knowledge and research skills on the science of HIV/AIDS, UNESCO is mobilizing a worldwide network of young television producers as a capacity building exercise against stigma and discrimination. Other initiatives include a resource mapping activity on HIV/AIDS communication.

## **UNICEF**

At global, regional and country levels, in the area of Communication for Development, UNICEF worked across the five organizational Medium Term Strategic Plan priorities. In particular, there is a stronger focus on the participatory dimension of communication. Specific achievements in the policy area are the development of community engagement and advocacy components of the WHO/UNICEF/UNAIDS Guidelines on Infant Feeding and HIV, UNICEF/WHO Prevention of Mother-to-Child (PMTCT) Scale Up Strategy, UNICEF Nutrition of People Living with HIV/AIDS and UNICEF's contribution to the revision of Communication for Development guidelines (with UNESCO and other UN agencies).

In house, the technical programme developed guidelines on how to work with faith-based leaders on immunization, and developed communication strategies for girls' education, ECD and FGM.

In terms of its programmes, UNICEF developed a strategy for a human rights approach to Communication and Community Capacity Development for Social Change, in the context of HIV/AIDS (East and Southern Africa); worked on social mobilization for accelerated polio initiatives in Nigeria and India; on communication for a post-war Afghanistan Immunization Programme. In the area of HIV/AIDS, as part of the PMTCT Communication (UNAIDS funds for community level initiatives) UNICEF developed tools for baseline assessment, initiating and sustaining community dialogue and local planning, facilitated development of 12 national PMTCT communication strategies, development and global field testing of support materials for infant feeding and PMTCT related information and counselling. It also initiated community Dialogue in support of Integrated Management of Childhood Illnesses, Early Childhood Development in Malawi, IMCI/Uganda, Young People Programmes in Ethiopia and supported TOSTAN community involvement project on FGM in Senegal.

Finally, as part of the “Right to Know Initiative” UNICEF conducted working groups on participatory assessment and communication strategy planning methodologies for HIV/AIDS prevention among adolescents and young people in 14 countries.

In-house capacity building included communication capacity assessments in four regions and the development of a communication capacity-building strategy in the Eastern and Southern Africa Region (ESAR).

A number of partnerships were formed, including an MOU with Johns Hopkins and The Communication Initiative; a JHU SCOPE strategic communication planning model adapted to UNICEF and WHO needs for HIV/AIDS Communication in the context of the 3 x 5 Treatment Access Initiative; and finally, JHU-UNICEF joint development of indicators for facility-based interpersonal communication linked with immunization in India.

## **World Bank**

The World Bank has tried to mainstream development communication by setting up units and incorporating it onto programmes. There has been substantial public polling by sector and country. Corruption keeps coming up as the number one impediment to development.

The WB has helped put a chapter in a resource book on PRSPs. Its work on communication in community development is soon to be published. In HIV/AIDS there is agreement that all programmes should have a communication component. The WB has been working on global distance learning (teleconferences) utilizing it for working groups, learning events and bringing people together.

## **WFP**

WFP has reshaped and streamlined their communication programmes. There is improved communication to beneficiaries, donors, local workers and other UN agencies. They have moved to develop a new approach to local and new media e.g. Internet with a better website. They have also been developing partnerships with other UN agencies. WFP believe that schools are the key places in the field where partnerships could be developed. They have been working with UNICEF and UNAIDS on a new programme on guidance and coordination on HIV/AIDS matters. They are also working with FAO on a school garden project.

One case study can serve as an example. WFP have developed a programme in Latin America called the “Latin American School Feeding Network” which is a good example of Communication for Development. Together with the American School Food Service Association and the government of Chile, a network has been set up to strengthen and expand Latin American school feeding and child nutrition programs by connecting parents, teachers, government officials, the food industry and nutrition and education groups. The network enables members to share best practices, health and education information, relevant research through the Internet and conferences. WFP would like to expand this model and have just started a similar network in Asia and have plans to do the same in Africa.

## WHO

In terms of Communication for Development WHO have hundreds of messages to communicate. They have mostly been communicating ‘to’ rather than ‘with’.

HIV/AIDS – in conjunction with the 3 x 5 programme, there is a huge communication component but the progress is slower than anticipated. WHO acknowledges the importance of Communication for Development on a community level. They have a network of country offices (120) whose size and capacity differs greatly. They have one full time (short term) staff member dedicated to Communication for Development. It was acknowledged that this was not sustainable. There is supposed to be a report going out to the Secretary General put together by UNESCO.

## UN System Agencies meeting

In a separate short meeting representatives from FAO, IFAD, UNDP, UNEP, UNESCO, UNICEF, WHO, and the World Bank met to organize the next Roundtable and to discuss mechanisms for coordination and follow-up.

UNESCO proposed that UN agencies would collaborate in one major project to be implemented between now and the next Roundtable. It was agreed that one or two of the MDGs would be selected as a focus for the development of a joint communication proposal. It was agreed that UNESCO and UNICEF would provide an outline of this proposal.

UNESCO is willing to host the 10th UN Roundtable in September 2006 and will consult with other agencies regarding the theme of the meeting. Follow-up on the recommendations of the 9th Roundtable will be made jointly by FAO and UNESCO. As in the past, the reports of all Roundtables will be compiled by UNESCO and presented to the Secretary General of the UN.

## Appendix 5: Proposed new initiatives and side events

### Clearing House on Development Communication

University of Queensland presented an idea for a Clearing House on development communication. The overall objective of the project is to collect, review, and select landmark publications, papers, articles and audiovisual material that have shaped the field of Development Communication since its beginning. This collection of Spanish, French and English material will form the core literature for the discipline. It will span the early application of mass media in development programmes to current initiatives aimed at introducing Internet-based technologies to developing communities. The core literature collection will be designed to support research, training and practice of Development Communication within the academic community, public and private sectors, and non-governmental organizations of developing and developed countries.

### La Ond@Rural

*La Ond@Rural: Radio, New ICTs and Rural Development* was a regional working group held in Quito, Ecuador from 20–22 April 2004 organized by the FAO, in cooperation with the Latin American Association for Radio Education (ALER – Asociación Latinoamericana de Educación Radiofónica) and the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC).

In the workshop's final document, the 89 participants from 20 countries recognized the expanding role of information and communication in rural development initiatives. However, they emphasized that: "in order to be really useful, information has to be available in appropriate languages and formats and to be distributed via channels and media that are appropriate for and available to rural people". Broadcast radio was singled out as a particularly powerful tool for closing the digital divide, especially in rural areas.

The workshop focused on three main themes: i) public policy and practices in rural broadcasting and telecommunication; ii) content for rural development, and iii) training, including both the training needs of rural communities in ICT use and the use of ICTs as a support for more traditional training initiatives.

In addition to a number of specific recommendations related to the above themes, the declaration calls for the creation of the Latin American Initiative on Communication for Rural Development, to be known as *La Ond@Rural*. Envisaged as an inter-institutional platform, this initiative will work with existing regional and national networks, training centres, research institutes and governments to focus attention on the specific information and communication needs of rural communities in the region. [www.ond@rural.net](http://www.ond@rural.net)

## World Congress on Communication for Development

The World Bank, FAO and the Communication Initiative presented a proposal for the organization of the First World Congress on Communication for Development (WCCD), an event made possible through the financial support of the Italian Government.

The rationale for such an initiative, which intends to provide a forum where practitioners (from UN agencies, NGOs and other development organizations), academicians (including universities, training institutions, research centres) and decision-makers (intended in its broadest sense, i.e. policy-makers, donors, highest level of development organizations, UN and bilateral) would meet to “demonstrate and promote the centrality of Communication for Development in meeting today’s development challenges”. Among the main objectives of the Congress are the exchange of knowledge and experiences, proving the effectiveness of Communication for Development (i.e. its value-added) and create a common platform to build a broader alliance.

## UN System Network on rural development and food security

The UN System Network on Rural Development and Food Security is a global partnership approach towards tackling rural development challenges at the country level. Established in 1997 by the UN Administrative Committee on Coordination (today UN System Chief Executives Board for Coordination), it brings together key actors for the achievement of the shared goals of “food for all” and rural poverty reduction.

Comprising 20 UN organizations, the UN System Network is an interagency mechanism for follow-up to the World Food Summit (1996) and World Food Summit (2002) and supports the International Land Coalition. The Network Secretariat is managed by FAO, in close collaboration with IFAD and WFP.

The UN System Network aims to:

- support efforts by governments and its partners to implement the World Food Summit Plan of Action and rural development and food security programmes;
- reinforce ties between UN System organizations and other stakeholders, notably NGOs and civil society organizations;
- foster synergies between Network members;
- exchange and disseminate information, experiences and best practices.

The dynamic core of the UN System Network consists of national thematic groups working on rural development and food security issues. Each group defines its themes and agenda according to the different needs and priorities at the national level. By the end of 2002, more than 80 such groups had been established around the world.

[http://www.rdfs.net/news/news\\_en.htm](http://www.rdfs.net/news/news_en.htm)

Information and Communication for Development (ICD) in support of Rural Livelihoods is a five-year collaborative Programme between DFID, FAO and the World Bank with the objective of improving rural livelihoods through policy and practice for information and communication systems, in developing and transitional countries and international development agencies. The programme will begin in early 2005.

## Appendix 6: List of participants

### GOVERNMENTS

#### Italian Government

Min. Pier Eugenio Campo  
Ministro Plenipotenziario  
Direzione Generale – Cooperazione allo sviluppo  
Ministero degli Affari Esteri, Italy  
Eugenio.Campo@esteri.it

Vincenza Russo  
Expert  
Direzione Generale – Cooperazione allo sviluppo  
Ministero degli Affari Esteri, Italy  
Vincenza.Russo@esteri.it

#### UK Department for International Development (DFID)

Dylan Winder  
Communications Team Leader,  
Central Research Department, London  
df-winder@dfid.gov.uk

Fiona Power  
Knowledge and Communication Specialist  
F-Power@dfid.gov.uk

#### USAID

Roberta Hilbruner  
Environmental Communication Specialist  
rhilbruner@usaid.gov

### INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

#### African Development Bank

Martin Kakra-Kouame  
Senior Communication Officer, Tunisia  
m.kakra-kouame@afdb.org

#### Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)

Tania Abdirizzak  
Fish Code Program Assistant, Fishery Planning  
and Policy (FIPD)  
Tania.Abdirizzak@fao.org

Mario Acunzo  
Communication for Development Officer,  
Extension, Education and Communication Service  
(SDRE)  
Mario.Acunzo@fao.org

Jaime Almenara  
Officer, Extension, Education and Communication  
Service, FAO Regional Office in Africa  
Jaime.almenararmerel@fao.org

Ashira Assih  
Consultant, Gender and Development Service  
(SDWW)  
Ashira.Assih@fao.org

Vera Boerger  
Extension, Education and Communication Officer  
Regional Office for Latin America and the  
Caribbean  
Vera.Boerger@fao.org

William Clay  
Chief, Nutrition Programmes Service (ESNP)  
William.Clay@fao.org

Michael Connolly  
Extension, Education and Communication Officer  
(SDRE), Sub-regional Office for Southern and East  
Africa (SAFR)  
Mike.Connolly@fao.org

Tito Contado  
Former Chief, SDRE  
tcontado@laguna.net

Eve L Crowley  
Senior Officer, Rural Livelihood Strategies and  
Poverty Alleviation (SDAR)  
Eve.Crowley@fao.org

Riccardo Del Castello  
Communication for Development Officer, SDRE  
Riccardo.DelCastello@fao.org

José Luis Fernandez  
Liaison Officer, Unit for Relations with the UN  
System (SADN)  
JoseLuis.Fernandez@fao.org

Kevin Gallagher  
Senior Programme Development Officer, Special  
Programme for Food Security (SPFS)  
Kevin.Gallagher@fao.org

Lavinia Gasperini  
Senior Officer, Education  
Lavinia.Gasperini@fao.org

Peter Glasauer  
Nutrition Officer, Nutrition Education and  
Communication Group, Nutrition Programmes  
Service  
Peter.Glasauer@fao.org

May Hani  
Extension, Education and Communication Officer  
(SDRE), Regional Office for the Near East  
May.Hani@fao.org

Günter Heidrich  
Information/Communication Officer  
FAO Project GCP/INT/735/UK, Benin  
Gunter.Heidrich@sflp.org

Jean Pierre Ilboudo  
Officer-in-Charge, Communication for  
Development Group, SDRE  
JeanPierre.Ilboudo@fao.org

Stéphane Jost  
Liaison Officer, UN System Network on Food  
Security and Rural Development  
Rural Institutions and Participation Service (SDAR)  
Stephane.Jost@fao.org

David Kahan  
Agricultural Management Economist, Agricultural  
Management, Marketing, and Rural Finance  
Service (AGSF)  
David.Kahan@fao.org

Lilian Kambirigi  
Information Officer, News and Multimedia Service,  
GIIM  
Lilian.Kambirigi@fao.org

Cheemin Kown  
Information and Communication Officer (FONL)  
Cheemin.Kown@fao.org

Dietrich Leihner  
Director, Research, Extension and Training  
Division (SDR)  
Dietrich.Leihner@fao.org

Dr Cheick Omar Maïga  
Chief Technical Officer,  
Reproductive Health in Rural Areas Project  
(UNFPA/FAO), Cameroon  
OmarMaigacm@yahoo.fr

Wendy Mann  
Senior Liaison Officer (SADN)  
Special Adviser to the Director General (SAD)  
Wendy.Mann@fao.org

John H Monyo  
Assistant Director General, Sustainable  
Development Department (SDD)  
John.Monyo@fao.org

Ester Zulberti  
Chief, SDRE  
Ester.Zulberti@fao.org

Eliane Najros  
Project Coordinator, Dimitra – FAO, Gender and  
Development Service (SDWW)  
Dimitra@dimitra.org

Karin Nichterlein  
Research and Technology Officer  
Regional Office for Europe (REUS)  
Karin.Nichterlein@fao.org

Jennifer Nyberg  
Communications Adviser, Office of the Assistant  
Director-General (ESD)  
Jennifer.Nyberg@fao.org

Clare O'Farrell  
Communication for Development Officer, SDRE  
Clare.OFarrell@fao.org

Laouali Oumarou  
Research Fellow, SDRE  
Laouali.Oumarou@fao.org

Nicholas Parsons  
Chief, News and Multimedia Service (GIIM)  
Nicholas.Parsons@fao.org

Thomas Price  
Resources and Strategic Partnerships Unit (TCDS)  
Thomas.Price@fao.org

Francisco J. Proenza  
Economist, Investment Centre, Latin America and  
the Caribbean Service (TCIL)  
Francisco.Proenza@fao.org

Kalim Qamar  
Senior Officer (Agricultural Training and  
Ttextension), SDRE  
Kalim.Qamar@fao.org

MariaGrazia Quietì  
Agricultural Policy Support Service (TCAS)  
MariaGrazia.Qietì@fao.org

Jenny Riches  
Documentation Officer,  
Food Insecurity and Vulnerability Information and  
Mapping Systems (FIVIMS)  
Jenny.Riches@fao.org

German Rojas  
Information Officer, News and Multimedia Service  
(GIIM)  
German.Rojas@fao.org

Stephen Rudgard  
Chief, WAICENT, Capacity Building and Outreach  
Branch (GILF)  
Stephen.Rudgard@fao.org

William Seiders  
Senior Officer, SDRE, Subregion for the Caribbean,  
Barbados  
William.Seiders@fao.org

Olarewaju B.Smith  
Executive Secretary  
Global Forum on Agricultural Research (GFAR),  
Secretariat  
Ola.Smith@fao.org

Jacky Sutton  
Information and Communication Officer  
Food Security and Agricultural Projects Analysis  
Service(ESAF)  
Jacky.Sutton@fao.org

Jakob S Thompson  
Associate Professional Officer (APO), SDRE  
Jakob.Thompson@fao.org

Sophie Treinen  
Information Management Specialist, WAICENT  
Capacity Building and Outreach Branch (GILF)  
Sophie.Treinen@fao.org

#### **International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)**

Helen Gillman  
Manager of Editorial Services, Communication  
Division  
H.Gillman@ifad.org

Sandra Mcguire  
Director of Communications  
S.Mcguire@ifad.org

Roxanna Samii  
Web Manager, Communication Division  
International Fund for Agricultural Development  
(IFAD)  
R.Samii@ifad.org

#### **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)**

Jean Fabre  
Deputy Director in charge of communications  
Jean.Fabre@undp.org

#### **United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP)**

Robert Bisset  
Spokesperson for Europe,  
Robert.Bisset@unep.fr

#### **United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)**

Kwame Boafo  
Communication and Information Sector  
K.Boafo@unesco.org

Wijayananda Jayaweera  
Director, Communication Development Division,  
Communication and Information Sector  
W.Jayaweera@unesco.org

Venus Jennings  
Assistant Programme Specialist, Communication  
Development Division  
V.Jennings@unesco.org

#### **United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)**

Neil Ford  
Regional Adviser, Programme Communication,  
Eastern and Southern Africa, Regional Office  
NFord@unicef.org

Rina Gill  
Senior Adviser, Behaviour and Social Change  
RGill@unicef.org

#### **World Bank**

Lucia Grenna  
Unit Manager,  
Development Communications Division SDO  
External Affairs  
LGrenna@worldbank.org

Paolo Mefalopulos  
Communication Officer, Development  
Communications Division  
PMefalopulos@worldbank.org

Paul Mitchell  
Director, Development Communications Division  
PMitchell1@worldbank.org

Riikka Rajalahti  
Agricultural Specialist, Agriculture and Rural  
Development Division  
RRajalahti@worldbank.org

#### **World Food Programme (WFP)**

Francesco Luna  
School Feeding Service  
Francesco.Luna@wfp.org

#### **World Health Organization (WHO)**

Gregory Hartl  
Communications Adviser  
HartlG@who.int

Cristiana Salvi  
Technical Officer for Communication and  
Advocacy, WHO Regional Office for Europe  
CSa@who.int

### **Technical Centre for Agriculture and Rural Cooperation (CTA)**

Oumy N'diaye  
Head of Communication Channels and Services  
Department, Technical Centre for Agriculture and  
Rural Cooperation, The Netherlands  
NDiaye@cta.int

### **International Development Research Centre (IDRC)**

Guy Bessette  
Senior Program Specialist  
International Development Research Centre  
(IDRC)  
GBessette@idrc.ca

Blythe McKay  
People Land and Water Programme Initiative  
International Development Research Centre  
(IDRC)  
BMckay@idrc.ca

Luis A. Navarro  
Team Leader, PlaW Program, International  
Development Research Centre (IDRC) Kenya  
LNavarro@idrc.or.ke

### **INDEPENDENT CONSULTANTS**

Awa Adjibade  
Adjibade\_Awa@hotmail.com

Silvia Balit  
Silvia.Balit@mclink.it

Luis Ramiro Beltran Salmón, Bolivia  
LRBeltran@unete.com

Saik Yoon Chin  
Southbound  
Chin@south.pc.my

Jean Yves Clavreul  
Jean-Yves.Clavreul@wanadoo.fr

Colin Fraser  
ColinSonia@compuserve.com

Lydda Gaviria  
LyddaGaviria@yahoo.com

Bruce Girard  
BGirard@comunica.org

Daniel Gregoire  
Daniel.Gregoire@tiscali.be; dgrgr2@yahoo.fr

Abigail Mulhall  
ITAD Ltd, United Kingdom  
Abigail.Mulhall@itad.com

Maria Protz  
Protz@mail.infochan.com

Wendy Quarry  
WQuarry@magma.ca

Chantal Salako,  
Sylvain.Salako@tiscali.fr

Fatoumata Sow  
FSow@refer.sn

Jacqueline Stoeckler  
JSs97210@yahoo.com

### **MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS ORGANIZATION**

José Luis Aguirre Alvis  
Director, SECRAD (Service of Training in Radio and  
Television for Development)  
JLA2863@yahoo.com; buho2@ucb.edu.bo

José Miguel Arévalo Delgado  
Coordinator SICR, Asociación latinoamericana de  
Educación Radiofónica (ALER)  
Pepe@aler.org

Indrajit Banerjee  
Secretary-General, Asian Media Information and  
Communication Centre (AMIC), Singapore  
Indrajit\_Banerjee@amic.org.sg

Steve Buckley  
President, World Association of Community Radio  
Broadcasters (AMARC)  
Steve@commedia.org.uk

Gissela Maritza Davila Cobo  
Coordinador, Social de Radios Populares y  
Educativas del Ecuador (CORAPE), Ecuador  
corape@aler.org

James Deane  
Managing Director, Communication for Social  
Change Consortium (CfSCC)  
JDeane@communicationforsocialchange.org

N'Golo Diarra  
Researcher/Trainer, Centre de Service de  
Production Audiovisuelle (CESPA), Mali  
NGoloDiarra@yahoo.fr

Nathan Ducastel  
Programme Officer, Knowledge Sharing, IICD  
NDucastel@iicd.org

Gustavo Gómez  
Programme Director, AMARC, Uruguay  
GusGomez@chasque.net

Dominique Hounkonnou  
Consultant, Connecting Development Partners  
(CDP) International  
DHounk@intnet.bj

Jean Baptiste Ilboudo  
Director, Centre de formation de l'Union des  
Radiodiffusions et, Télévisions Nationales  
d'Afrique (URTNA), Burkina Faso  
JBilboudo@yahoo.fr

Professor Christopher Kamlongera  
SADC Director-Centre of Communication for  
Development  
CKamlongera@fanr-sadc.co.zw

Jones Kaumba  
Senior Communication for Development Trainer  
SADC-Centre of Communication for Development  
JKaumba@fanr-sadc.co.zw

Lun Kimhy  
Deputy Provincial Programme Advisor, PLG/RAT,  
Cambodia  
Kimhy@camintel.com

John Kofi Larweh  
Station Coordinator, Radio Ada, Ghana  
KLarweh@yahoo.com; gcbs@ghana.com

Chris Morry  
Director Special Projects and Technical  
Development, The Communication Initiative  
CMorry@comminit.com

Michelle Ntab-Ndiaye  
Regional Director, AMARC – Africa, South Africa  
regionald@amarcafrica.org

Souleymane Ouattara  
Coordinator, Network for African Journalists  
(JADE), Burkina Faso  
S.Ouattara@liptinfor.bf

Rosalie Ouoba  
President, Network for Citizenship of Rural  
Women of West Africa and Chad, Burkina Faso  
ROsalieouoba@yahoo.fr

Michael Pickstock  
Director Wrenmedia, United Kingdom  
M.Pickstock@wrenmedia.co.uk

Peter Van de Pol  
Project Coordinator New Media Activities  
Radio Netherlands Training Centre (RNTC)  
Peter.VandePol@rntc.nl

Mark Wilson  
Executive Director, Panos Institute, London  
Mark.Wilson@panos.org.uk

## UNIVERSITIES AND RESEARCH ORGANIZATIONS

Claude Adandedjan  
Training and Education Specialist, ICRAF  
(International Center for Research in  
Agroforestry) Sahel  
C.Adandedjan@icrisatml.org

Liano Angeli  
Head of Department, DEAR (Department of Agro-  
Forestry Economics and Rural Environment)  
University of Viterbo, Tuscia University, Italy  
Angeli@unitus.it

Serge Théophile Balima  
Professor of Communication, University of  
Ouagadougou  
Serge.Balima@univ-ouaga.bf

James L Brewbaker  
Dept of Tropical Plant and Soil Sciences  
University of Hawaii  
Brewbake@hawaii.edu

Lourdes Margarita Aves Caballero  
University Research Associate  
Isang Bagsak SEA  
LourdesMargarita\_A@yahoo.com

Maria Celeste Cadiz  
Dean and Associate Professor  
College of Development Communication  
CelCadiz@yahoo.com

Waad El Hadidy  
Programme Manager, Centre for Development  
Services, Egypt  
WHadidy.cds@neareast.org

Shadi Hamadeh  
American University of Beyrouth  
Department of Animal Sciences  
SHamadeh@aub.edu.lb

Sarah Karinge  
Development Consultant and Researcher  
Vrije Universiteit Brussels, Belgium  
Sarah.Karinge@vub.ac.be

Meya Patricia Kalindekafe  
Senior Lecturer in Ecology,  
University of Malawi  
LKalindekafe@chanco.unima.mw

Ziad Moussa  
Communication/Training Specialist, American  
University of Beirut, Faculty of Agricultural and  
Food Sciences  
ZMoussa@cyberia.net.lb

Gregoire Njejimana  
Rector of Université Lumière de Bujumbura,  
Burundi  
GregNjejimana@yahoo.com

Naiboka Nora Odoi  
Development Communication Specialist  
Kawanda Agricultural Institute, Uganda  
OdoiNora@hotmail.com

Nora Quebral  
Professor of Development Communication,  
College of Development Communication (CDC)  
University of the Philippines, Los Baños  
Nora\_Quebral@yahoo.com

Madeline Quiamco  
Assistant Professor, CDC, University of the  
Philippines, Los Baños  
Madzbaguio@yahoo.com

Ricardo Ramirez  
Assistant Professor, School of Environmental  
Design and Rural Development  
University of Guelph, Canada  
RRamirez@uoguelph.ca

William Rivera  
Associate Professor, University of Maryland  
WR11@uamail.umd.edu.

Niels Röling  
Emeritus Professor, Agricultural Knowledge  
Systems, Wageningen University, The Netherlands  
N.Roling@inter.nl.net

Jean Pierre Sakaganwa  
Professor, Université Lumière de Bujumbura,  
Belgique  
Inagisabo@yahoo.fr

Dr Karidia Sanon  
Researcher / Lecturer, Université de  
Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso  
KSanon@bf.refer.org

Fabio Santucci  
Professor, Department of Economics (DSEE),  
University of Perugia, Italy  
FmSant@unipg.it

Joseph Seepersad  
Senior Lecturer, Department of Agricultural  
Economics and Extension  
University of the West Indies, Trinidad & Tobago  
JSeepersad@fans.uwi.tt; Seeps@tstt.net.tt

Jan Servaes  
Professor, Head of School of Journalism and  
Communication, University of Queensland,  
Australia  
J.Servaes@uq.edu.au

J. Douglas Storey  
Associate Director for Communication Science and  
Research, The Health Communication Partnership,  
Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health,  
USA  
DStorey@jhucpc.org

Dr Jacques Thiamobigad  
Institut de l'Environnement et de Recherches  
Agricoles (INERA)  
ThiamoJacques@yahoo.fr

Cleofe S. Torres  
Associate Professor, CDC, University of the  
Philippines, Los Baños  
doCle\_2003@yahoo.com

Ma. Theresa H Velasco  
Associate Professor and Chair, Department of  
Science Communication, CDC, University of the  
Philippines, Los Baños  
MTHVelasco@yahoo.com

## PANOS RAPORTEURS

Annelise Dennis  
Annelise.Dennis@panos.org.uk

Teresa Hanley  
Director of Programmes  
Teresa.Hanley@panos.org.uk

Nikki van der Gaag  
Chief Rapporteur  
Consultant to Panos  
NikkiVDG@yahoo.co.uk

Alex Whiting  
Alex.whiting@panos.org.uk

## OTHER

Ahmadou Sankare  
Permanent Inter-State Committee for Drought  
Control in the Sahel (CILSS),  
Burkina Faso  
padlos@cilss.bf

*If development can be seen as a fabric woven out of the activities of millions of people, communication represents the essential thread that binds them together.*

Colin Fraser and Jonathan Villet

This report documents the contributions and outcomes of the Ninth United Nations Inter-Agency Roundtable on Communication for Development which took place in Rome, Italy, from 6-9 September 2004. The Ninth Roundtable was organized by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) with the Government of Italy, UNESCO, the World Bank, IDRC and CTA.

The United Nations Roundtable is a biannual event which brings together the various agencies, bilateral and multilateral donors, foundations, development agencies, non-governmental organizations, scholars, and a number of practitioners in development communication throughout the world.

The Ninth Roundtable, attended by some 130 participants from around the world, focused on **Sustainable Development**, with three specific thematic areas:

- Communication and natural resource management.
- Communication for isolated and marginalized groups.
- Communication in research, extension and education.

Through a series of paper presentations and working group discussions the participants developed clear recommendations to highlight the contribution of communication to sustainable development, in particular, the essential role of communication for development in achieving the Millennium Development Goals. The Roundtable concluded with a Plan of Action to carry these recommendations forward.

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