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CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS

Written statement* submitted by World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU), a non-governmental organization in general consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[3 February 2005]

*This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

RIGHT TO TRUE INFORMATION

Recently the Organization of United Nations announced, in the conference celebrated in the Japanese city of Kobe, the decision to create a world-wide system of early alert on natural catastrophes.

Experts of the World-wide Conference on the Prevention of Catastrophes, agree that such a system of only ONE alert, effective and precocious, will be able to reduce the impact of the natural disasters and by consequence it will help to save thousands of lives.

In this particular case, only ONE information - the alert - will be spread only on one manner and at all possible costs in one only comprehensible language to manifold receiving, becoming thus a beneficial factor for the humanity.

Nevertheless, applying the same formula to other types of information, could leads irremediably - since unilateral - to a disinformation flow.

The World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) considers that the majority of media today uses and abuses the freedom of speech putting all their ideological and technical force to the service of purely political objectives.

In such conditions, the power of media does not tolerate any critic against the present neoliberal globalization, censoring all those which are against their will.

This circumstances leads to aberrant situations as the fact of defend the rights of the workers, in many circumstances, becomes a stigmatized and persecuted attitude.

The World Federation of Trade Unions agree with all these precepts contained in various Declarations – among them, the one of the Summit of the Information Society - which is opposed to the media empires which claim to rule the world.

Some time ago, in February 2003, the British Prime minister reiterated that "... it is obvious that Iraq has weapons of mass destruction ", hours before this affirmation was announced at the United Nations by the Secretary of State of the United States of America.

The "news" was massively reproduced on all available media and widely spread on radio, television, press and Internet. But a lie, although repeated time and time again, will never become true. In February 2005, report of the Group of Investigation in Iraq concluded that it was improbable that Iraq had had weapons of mass destruction.

This way, the owners of different mass media have turned their information into "the information", their supposed reality into "the reality", transforming the alleged "free" information traffic into a one-way flow, with unique content and sole objectives.

Only apparently, the information flow is free. Within the framework of the present globalisation, the reality built by these organizations owners of information

production means and distribution, is send to people as "the absolute truth", although this is not more than a mere interpretation of economic powerful groups to continue supporting a system that provides them big income.

It is lawful to ask then, if the concentration of information media obeys to a detailed plan of global hegemony in which citizens are reduced to be passive receivers of information emitted by a small number of mass-media producing centres.

We wished to express our increasing preoccupation on the capacity of highly developed countries to make a cultural colonization, taking into consideration the fact that they generate the new technologies, control the property of most Medias and elaborate the immense majority of the informative and cultural products which are spread globally.

In October 1980 the UNESCO, faced with this information imperialism, approves the principles contained in the called "Report Mac Bride", which concludes: "the aspects of that process will be modified constantly, whereas the objectives remain the same: greater justice, greater fairness, greater reciprocity in the exchange of information, minor dependency in relation to the communication currents, greater self-sufficiency and cultural identity and greater number of advantages for all the humanity".

The plurality of the informative approach, the freedom of information, a true free and balanced circulation of the information and free access to mass media are concepts that already have been expressed in the Universal Declaration of Human rights.

More numerous and varied points of view as well as easier access to a larger number of people are needed in order to increase the possibilities of interchanging information in a higher level of equality for the political forces, the cultural communities and the social groups.

The World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) insists to support the proposal of the International Labour Organization (ILO) to promote an ambitious and innovating approach required to eradicate the illiteracy and to promote a lifelong learning and permanent professional instruction that constitute essential pre-requirements to participate, indeed, in the society of the information. This could be favoured through the use of its own instruments provided by the information technologies.

We cannot stay inert in front of a world-wide order that tries to legitimize itself using all possibilities made available by the technological development of the information and the communication. We need to elevate the mechanisms of coordination and unitary actions that are opposed to the dramatic effects of this reality and in particularly to the causes that condition them.

The first creativity exercise must be done by those who want not only to be aware, but also take care to avoid a cultural recolonization.

Our respective populations have a cultural and identity wealth that constitutes a formidable obstacle to the hegemonic projects.

The World Federation of Trade Unions, who maintains an active and permanent tendency to the unit of action in the defence of the interests of workers, is in disposition to participate in the fight to effectively obtain, as it proclaimed the Declaration of Principles of the Summit of the Society of the Information: "*.....The Information Society centred in the people and at the service of the humanity providing an environment in which all the sectors of the population can spread and use the necessary information and knowledge for their economic, social, cultural and political development.....*".

The World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU), who maintains the defence and development of the rights and liberties of workers and unions; the respect to the free determination of the people and to our diverse identities and cultures, considers that

"Another type of communication is possible".
