



'Dilemma For UNESCO'

Sir: Your editorial of June 29, 1989 on "Dilemma For UNESCO" rightly depicts the mess inherited by Frederico Mayor from his predecessor Amadou Mahtar M'Bow. The original cause of the withdrawal of the United States is 1984 was to a great extent dissatisfaction with the leadership of Mr. M'Bow which they termed as autocratic and his attempt to establish a New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO) which was viewed by the West as a threat to the freedom of the Press.

The recent approval by the Executive Board reaffirming UNESCO's commitment to NWICO will do little to assuage these fears and it is unlikely to entice either the United States or Britain back into the fold. This, along with the accusations being hurled at the Director General, does not bode well for the future of the Organisation. Already in great financial trouble triggered by the exodus of the U.S., Britain and Singapore who contributed 30% of the finance of UNESCO, attempts to bring them back into the Organisation are likely to come to grief as a result of this resolution and Mr. Mayor may well go the way of his predecessor.

When Legal Adviser Mr. Karel Vasek resigned in 1986 decrying "the immense mess at UNESCO which will have great difficulty recovering from your 'reign' if it is able to do so" may have been prophetic words and the accusation by the United States that it is "A badly run, generally anti-U.S. outfit" probably still holds good in their eyes for UNESCO has not been able to build up a new consensus in spite of the hope that it would be able to expand its potential and broaden its worldwide base.

This resolution appears to be a step backwards for the Organisation if the intention was to entice the United States, Britain and Singapore back and thereby put UNESCO on a firm financial footing. But, as you say, "UNESCO" is in no position to endorse or support restrictions on press freedom or on the free flow of information and one can only hope the Director General can balance the divergent viewpoints emerging within the Organisation so that the good that has been done in many fields so far, may continue.

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Dhaka-1989.