A Bilingual Regional Workshop
Methodologies for Designing and Implementing Multimedia Communication Strategies and National Communication Policies Niamey, Niger 1-5 April 2002

The Design and Implementation of National Information and Communication Policies for Sustainable Development in Africa: Issues and Approaches
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The Communication for Development Group
Extension, Education and Communication Service
Research, Extension and Training Division
Sustainable Development Department

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FAO’s Extension, Education and Communication Service (SDRE) organised a regional workshop in Niamey (Niger) on the methodologies involved in designing and implementing national policies and multimedia communication strategies. The workshop’s principle objectives were twofold: to reinforce the impact of its fieldwork within the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and to ensure the availability of the field tested and developed methodologies in the area of communication policies and strategies.

Most of FAO’s experiences were undertaken in the following ECOWAS member countries: Mali, Guinea-Bissau, Cape Verde, Burkina Faso and Niger. In order to satisfy the ever-increasing demands made with regard to national communication policies, it seemed more logical to work on heightening awareness in the other countries in the same geographical area (fifteen countries with a total population of 230 000 000 inhabitants). In this manner, they were aware of the progress; the constraints and the lessons learned, through the experiences of the countries that had already commenced these activities, and were thus able to successfully develop their communication policies and multimedia communication strategies within the framework of development projects and programmes.

After ten years of support to the member countries in French- and Portuguese-speaking Africa, the transfer of knowledge and the lessons learned proved to be useful, if not indispensable. This initiative is part and parcel of the Extension, Education and Communication Service’s mission, namely, the strengthening of national technical capabilities.

In ensuring the availability of the knowledge and know-how needed for designing and implementing national policies and sector-based strategies regarding communication for development, FAO is able to provide a modest contribution by means of the different manuals and case studies (in Mali, in Guinea-Bissau, in Burkina and in Niger), these were developed during the Niamey workshop. They are a contribution for the executive officers of both governmental and non-governmental institutions involved in the definition of national communication policies, in order to improve the design and implementation of communication policies and strategies, particularly with regard to rural sustainable development and food security.

Ester Zulberti
Chief
Extension, Education and Communication Service
The manual on how to design and implement a national communication development policy is a result of the work undertaken by participants of regional workshop held in Niamey, Niger in April 2002.

The manual is based on experiences from 1992 when FAO was asked by Government of Mali to assist in designing a communication development policy. The division in charge of communication for development at the time created a methodological approach which made it possible for national consultants to sum up the status of communication for development; to organize a national workshop to validate the results of the studies and design the mission, objectives and plans for implementing a national communication for development policy.

This first methodological approach appeared to be successful, but as is the case with all innovative work, the approach was considered incomplete; the grass-root communities had not been consulted and their needs had not been taken sufficiently into account. Research undertaken during the preparation of the rural development directorial plan on rural life in Mali gave us the opportunity to know the aspirations, wishes, doubts and the demands of the rural world. These were taken into account during the design process of the national communication for development policy.

The origins of the methodological phase ensured that regional-level communities were consulted upstream, regional meetings were then held, using a questionnaire and a basic discussion structure was organized. The objective of the meetings was to identify the information and communication needs of the actors at the grass-roots level and develop a structured and coherent approach to communication for development.

This phase was subsequently developed in Guinea-Bissau. NGOs, farmers’ organizations, members of civil society and decentralised government services were consulted in order to know how they communicated with one another, with their partners in the region and with the capital. The questions asked included: What obstacles exist in the free circulation and management of information? What can be said regarding the institutions and means of information and the communication structures and infrastructures? What solutions are being proposed by the regions and the grass-root actors based on a communication for development diagnosis?

In Guinea Bissau, Niger, Cape Verde and Burkina Faso, the methodological steps included the organization of a pedagogical workshop to update the con-
sultants. By using a participative approach, the different complementary tasks contained in the terms of reference were equally shared among the participants.

In the Central African Republic the national workshop responsible for defining policy, objectives, short-, medium- and long-term action plans found that there was no need to create a committee or working group to analyse the needs and action plans. It was felt, and with good reason, that these points could not be dealt without the other working groups and that the needs and action plans needed to be discussed and developed within each working group.

The FAO methodology presented for use by the workshop involved a total of eight (8) stages. At the conclusion of the Niamey meeting, another three (3) were added for the definition phase and six (6) for the implementation phase, an overall total of seventeen methodological stages for the two phases were defined.

I would like to thank Professor Alfred Opubor who agreed to present the introductory statement at this regional workshop and facilitated the discussion regarding the methodological stages for the design and implementation of the national policies of communication for development. Professor Opubor was the ideal person for this task due to his extensive and distinguished career in the communication field at both the national and international level (UNFPA). During the mid 1980s Professor Opubor organized one of the first workshops dealing with communication policies in Africa under the aegis of the OAU in Abeokuta in Nigeria.

In placing structuring instruments for implementing global action in the communication sector at the disposal of persons responsible for creating national policies of communication for development, FAO would like to reiterate several important principles in the methodology of communication for development, and a number of basic methodological considerations inherent to communication policies:

• In order to define the themes and sectors that are vital in each and every tool and medium it is essential to begin with the needs of the communities concerned, within the general context of the overall situation of the country in question, in relation to what can be provided as support for all the development sectors and areas. This is the most important principle.

• Identifying, cataloguing and analysing the communication needs of the different social actors in the urban environment and above all in the rural world, reflecting upon and offering concrete proposals in the form of sectoral and regional action plans with regards to the mission and objectives of the national communication for development policy. The role and place of the media, in training in the area of communication for development and the role and place of the institutional and juridical framework responsible for the implementation and following-up of a communication policy.

In the process of designing a national policy of communication for development, the following factors are fundamental:
• awareness of the interdependence between communication and other development sectors and areas;

• the creation of a new approach of communication for development which includes the involvement of the entire population in the country’s affairs;

• to envisage an approach that gives communication a human dimension by ensuring that it is not monopolised by the media but that it is carried out by teachers, agricultural workers, health officers, field veterinarians, community and religious leaders as well as members of NGOs and farmers’ organizations;

• to understand that the implementation of a communication for development policy must be placed in an appropriate juridical and institutional framework;

• to choose a multimedia approach that includes interpersonal and group communication, traditional means of communication, the media and new communication technologies;

• to take into account specific situations as well as the realities and needs of the countries concerned and in particular of their own means and their human, material and financial capacities.

Jean-Pierre Ilboudo
Technical Supervisor for designing
Communication Policies Projects in French- and Portuguese-Speaking Africa
“What are our goals, how do these relate to creating a better world, and how do the technologies we pursue help achieve our goals?”

The relationship between information flows and national or local-level development has become better understood in recent years; as has the role of communication processes in mediating social and individual change. However, in most African countries these relationships are not widely discussed or easily accepted, especially by development planners.

Basically, communication is a social process that produces changes in the knowledge, attitudes and behaviours of individuals, and groups, through providing factual and technical information, through motivational or persuasive messages, and through facilitating the learning process and social «environment». These results might then lead to increase in the mastery of crucial skills by the individual, and to enhancing the achievement of various instrumental goals. Other possible consequences of communication include enhancement in self-esteem and well being through participation in community and social life, increasing the individual’s perceived efficacy in dealing with other people, reinforcing mutual respect and enhancing confidence among social groups and building trust within communities. These outcomes are the ingredients that contribute to the creation of those positive individual, community and societal changes that together are often referred to as “development». Communication can thus positively influence development.

But using «communication for development» means different things to different people. It has even been viewed differently in different eras, considered variously as «social engineering» or «giving voice to the voiceless». Both as idea and as practice, the relationship of communication to development has been problematic, as it has raised many questions. Can we show that communication has a place in the development process? What kind of communication has what kind of effect on what aspects of development? The questions are intriguing and intractable. Often the gains from communication become apparent only when something goes wrong in society.

1 ‘Technology for Development or Development for Technology?’; chap II in Information and Communication Technologies for Development: A UNESCO Perspective, 1996, p3
Although the relationships are not clearly established, the Human Development Index, HDI, shows marked differences in the communication profiles of countries of high, medium and low human development. The indicators generally employed in the HDI are mostly infrastructural and technological, e.g. «access to: radio; television; book titles published; post offices; main telephone lines; fax machines; mobile cellular telephone subscribers, Internet users, personal computers». It is probably the case that the opportunities that these channels provide for carrying information and messages and for allowing multiple social interactions, that «drive» social progress, are a crucial contribution to the level of socio-economic development of societies. Yet even if communication is only a necessary and not a sufficient ingredient for development, that potential contribution has provided a motive for continuing to search for more effective ways of relating communication processes with development processes, and for justifying investments in information and communication ideas and practices. That is why a policy approach is needed to support the integration of information and communication thinking and practice into national development and governance plans.

There are, at the moment in Africa, few examples of policies designed to «push» the systematic use of information and communication as part of general development strategy\(^2\). A number of short-term social campaigns include information and communication activities; but these episodic interventions, do not appear to be able to sustain a national critical mass for instigating desired social change on a continuous and consistent basis. In the face of dwindling resources, African countries will have to avoid unplanned, inconsistent, ostentatious or wasteful investments in the information and communication sectors. They will also have to tackle the underdevelopment or unbalanced development of communication institutions, and be more open to certain ideas and practices (such as freedom of expression or accountability) that accompany a more open and participatory approach to national development. The relevance of a «sustainable development» perspective for information and communication investments and programs is therefore an important consideration for African countries at this time.

\(^2\) A notable exception is the effort by a few West African countries to elaborate national communication policies for development, in collaboration with FAO. See for example, Document de la politique nationale de la communication pour le développement au Burkina Faso, Tome 1, Tome 2; Burkina Faso, Ministère de la Communication et FAO, Rome, 2001.
RATIONALE: WHY DO WE NEED AN INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION POLICY?³

Government and other institutions create policies to ensure coherence and to avoid contradictions in the actions of various public and private entities. Policy instruments also seek to solve social and technical problems and to legitimise the implementation of programs and projects.

African countries are not strangers to policy-making. Most countries already have policies in various sectors; some of them well articulated, for example, an economic policy, a health policy, an agricultural policy, an educational policy, an environmental policy and a foreign policy. In some countries these are merely cosmetic documents virtually moribund, with no living dynamic reality, and not much possibility of being implemented. In other countries these policies provide sectoral orientations that can contribute to the overall goals of national development. In that context, a communication policy may be seen as a further contribution to the national development environment through consolidating actions around issues that cut across several sectors.

As far as communication policies are concerned, they have been described as:

«Sets of principles and norms established to guide the behaviour of communication systems. They are shaped over time in the context of society’s general approach to communication and to the media. Emanating from political ideologies, the social and economic conditions of the country and the values on which they are based, they strive to relate these to the real needs for and the prospective opportunities for communication».⁴

In every society, public and private institutions and individuals undertake internal and external communication for many reasons. There is often no over-arching idea or vision to help coordinate or rationalise these various actions, probably because policy-makers and planners do not see how they can be related. A

³ Information policies deal more with the hardware and software of a society’s ‘info structure’, related to the implications of the ICTs and the ‘information highway’ for the processing of ‘factual’ material and its storage and transmission as knowledge. Communication is more social process oriented, concerned with interactions among individuals and groups and also the development and use of mass media. Obviously the two concepts intersect massively, and from a policy standpoint, they need to be taken together. In this paper, less attention is being given to ‘information policy’ as such, which merits detailed treatment in its own right. See also UNESCO, op. cit. 1996, for an extended treatment of this topic.

national policy on information and communication for development provides a necessary conceptual and institutional framework for the coordination and integration of technical and social interventions undertaken by institutions ranging from agricultural extension to education and health ministries, from NGOs such as women’s resource groups and human rights activists, to private sector interests such as chambers of commerce or banks. The contribution of a national policy is to articulate principles, values and norms that are applicable to communication at all levels of government, to civil society and the private sector, within the context of the development goals of the nation. An approach that considers information and communication as a «sector» for development planning would also help to rationalize investments as well as provide a basis for integrating information and communication interventions within national development strategies.

A communication policy can, therefore, be an instrument for supporting the systematic planning, development and use of the communication system, and its resources and possibilities, and for ensuring that they function efficiently in enhancing national development.

Efficient, widespread and continuous public communication is an important prerequisite for democratic governance. In the developing or re-emerging democracies of Africa, social communication provides the cement that binds various communities and social groups together in their resolve to build new societies. It can create linkages between political, religious, traditional and community leaders and their followers, and can build bridges between rural and urban communities and across generations.

It is through communication that government agencies and NGOs attempt to provide technical information and social services for improving the quality of life of citizens, and that civil society seeks to broaden and sustain participation in governance. New agricultural practices and policies, health campaigns, literacy classes, adult political and civic education and other development efforts have succeeded largely through communication support. In the context of current development challenges posed by the rapid spread of HIV/AIDS, communication for social mobilization and social change to support preventive behaviour and to support the infected and affected is a crucial necessity.

But communication can also divide people along various socio-cultural lines, contributing to social cleavage, marginalisation and even violence. These seemingly contradictory possibilities pose the challenge of \textbf{choice}, of making deliberate decisions to ensure that communication plays a positive role in society. The results of such decisions can be articulated in a policy statement.

\textsuperscript{5} The idea of ‘communication planning for development’ was introduced into the communication literature during the 1980s. It was seen as a tool for moving from policy to action as a ‘process of formulating societal objectives, correlating these with the potential of the communication system, and making use of technology to secure the best possible match.’ See: A. Hancock, Communication Planning for Development: An Operational Framework, Paris, UNESCO 1981; also A. Hancock, Communication Planning Revisited, Paris, UNESCO 1992.
Within this general framework, strategies can be devised to facilitate organised and intensified use of interpersonal, group and mass media channels of communication that are sensitive to cultural resources and orientation, and that are decentralized as necessary, in support of development programs. There is increased need to encourage local organizations to make use of new communications technologies, such as the Internet, to promote social linkages and to ensure widespread support for development efforts; so that in a dynamic and organic sense, communication can become an instrument for building solidarity for the common national and community goals of good health, economic recovery, poverty eradication, empowerment of women and youth, and good governance. These outcomes can be facilitated through a deliberate communication policy linked to national development policy.
For a national communication policy to be effective, it must attempt to be comprehensive, covering the issues that are considered relevant for the particular society. It should embrace various fields and sectors of human communication, including: traditional and indigenous cultural forms, print media, electronic/broadcast media, film, cinema, video, theatre, advertising, language development, training and technologies. These are the areas of major action, as well as possible conflict of interest that are of concern to development actors and partners at different levels. Given the various socio-economic-cultural problems facing the continent, public information and communication in Africa should increasingly become development-oriented, directed at promoting the health, and economic and social well-being of the people, educating them on their civic rights and responsibilities, as well as empowering them to understand and implement solutions to national and community problems related to food, water, economic and entrepreneurial activities, population, environment, civic education etc. Therefore, one of the major policy issues in the development agenda of Africa, as we move forwards in the twenty-first century, must be: how to use information and communication to support development initiatives at national and local levels. One possible answer is through a national communication policy.
OBJECTIVES OF A NATIONAL INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION POLICY

In view of the foregoing considerations, a national policy on information and communication for sustainable development in African countries may have the following objectives:

• To support national development initiatives and programs, and to improve the quality of life of the people, by facilitating systematic and effective use and coordination of communication and information strategies and activities;

• To rationalize multi-sectoral investments in information and communication hardware and software through their consolidation and appropriate integration in national development plans and planning structures;

• To enhance access to information and communication infrastructures and new technologies, especially in rural communities;

• To promote national dialogue on development issues by all citizens, consistent with the emerging democratic culture and national constitutional provisions;

• To preserve national cultural identity, promote the national cultural patrimony and enhance the development of cultural and artistic capabilities and institutions, while enabling productive regional and international interchange;

• To ensure the timely, orderly and effective growth of information and communication institutions and professions through standards setting, capacity-building and human resources development.
DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT COMMUNICATION: DSC

The practice of Development Support Communication, DSC, is a multi-sectoral process of information sharing about development agendas and planned actions. It links planners, beneficiaries and implementers of development action, including the donor community. It obligates planners and implementers to provide clear, explicit and intelligible data and information about their goals and roles in development, and explicitly provides opportunities for beneficiaries to participate in shaping development outcomes. It ensures that the donor community is kept constantly aware of the achievements and constraints of development efforts in the field.

Development Support Communication makes use of all available structures and means of information sharing. Therefore it is not limited to mass media alone. It also uses both formal group and non-formal channels of communication, such as women’s and youth associations, as well as places where people gather.... markets, churches, festivals, and meetings. But its contribution is in using these in a systemic, continuous, co-ordinated and planned manner, to perform linkage and enabling functions. It requires analysis of the communication environment, of the available and needed communication competencies and resources (hardware, software, financial and human), and clearly indicates expected results from specific resource inputs, so as to maintain accountability.

In short, DSC is a legitimate function of development planning and implementation. DSC therefore needs to be examined as a valuable «technology» for using the social communication process to foster and strengthen sustainable development at local and national levels. It should be taken more seriously in programs of social change, and should be reflected explicitly in development policy and strategy. One way of doing so is through the enunciation of a national information and communication policy, which can be explicitly integrated into national development thinking and practice.

SOME ISSUES REQUIRING POLICY ACTION

- Media development: regulation and deregulation
- Enhancing communication professions and institutions
- Cultural development and social integration
- Human resources development and training
- Communications technologies: old, new and emerging
- Development Support Communication
- Regional and international cooperation
• Commercialisation and Privatisation
• Resource Mobilisation and Allocation.

Because of the multi-sectoral and comprehensive nature of national development needs and objectives, a national strategy on information and communication for sustainable development must be seen also as a multi-sectoral, multi-dimensional issue, around which different development stakeholders can find a rallying point, and to which they can make invaluable constructive contributions. Previous attempts in some countries to deal with information and communication policy issues, because they lacked an over-arching development-oriented framework and justification, have tended to be ad hoc, and overly politicized.

By focusing almost exclusively and without much negotiating margins, on particular sectoral interests or thematic considerations (e.g. commercialization, privatization, public service, monopoly, freedom of expression, minority rights, etc.), they tended to exacerbate areas of tension and disagreement, instead of promoting opportunities for constructive dialogue. The development and management of a national information and communication policy can be seen as a mechanism for ensuring widespread public education and informed public participation in decision-making on the future directions of development in African society.

**CONSTRAINTS**

The process of developing and implementing a national policy on any issue probably goes through several steps, among them:

1. **Development**

   Is Africa developing? Is your country developing? Whether your answer is: «yes», «no» or «maybe», how can information and communication enhance development in your country?

   Specifically, how can a policy approach to information and communication enhance development in your country?

   In that connection, what are the goals of development in your country? Are you concerned about economic growth? Are you concerned about reducing the level of poverty? Are you concerned about the quality of life of your people? Are you concerned about the people’s right and freedom to speak out?

   How can a policy approach to information and communication enhance development in your country?

2. **Politics**

   Policies are about politics.

   Politics is about power; power to choose, power to decide. Who has the power to decide in Africa today?

   The challenge is political will. Where lies the political will in Africa?

   Governments are obviously important; but civil society and the individual citizen are becoming important as well.
How can the process of designing and implementing national communication policies affect the «balance of power» in African countries?

3. Democracy
African governments and citizens are expressing a commitment to democracy, even though it is often not clear if democracy means more than holding periodic elections. Remember what the late Claude Ake said: «In much of Africa, people are voting without choosing».

Whatever it means, democracy must include the notion of participation by the majority in discussing issues of national importance. How can the design and implementation of a national information and communication policy enhance democracy?

4. Culture
Culture is about adjustment to the physical and metaphysical environment.

Culture is about identity, about defining who we are, what our values are, how we see ourselves, how we want others to see us.

How can a national information and communication policy contribute to cultural development? In the 21st century can we still speak about national cultures in Africa? Are we not becoming part of a global society? Who defines how that global society should communicate, and about what? What is the contribution of Africans to a global cultural environment? How can this be articulated in national communication policies?

Culture is also about institutions, such as religion. What provisions need to be made in a national information and communication policies with reference to religion?

In much of Africa, culture is about diversity; because many African nations are multi-ethnic, with several cultural backgrounds. How can a national information and communication policy make provisions for cultural diversity as well as the national cultural unification, which is much desired?

5. Language
Communication is centred on language; and the language of communication can either exclude or include individuals and groups. The language policy of a national communication policy is an important aspect of its acceptability and impact.

6. Freedoms
The right to communicate, to speak and to be spoken to has become a universal right. A national communication policy should recognize the right to communicate and ensure that it is respected legally and practically.

7. Access
There is a wide gap between individual and among groups in their ability to access the media or other channels of public communication. A national communication policy seeks to enhance access and reduce factors that inhibit access.
8. Technology
As the 1972 UNESCO report states: «The rapid development of communication technology makes it especially important for potential users to keep up to date». What was technically or economically untenable yesterday may be possible today and quite attractive tomorrow. “A national communication policy will seek to balance the needs of the day after tomorrow with the realities of today”.

9. Economics
Should information and communication policies deal only with what is affordable? Should the nation’s resources alone guide what is examined and proposed in the policy?

10. The institutional framework
Who should be responsible for initiating and managing a policy on information and communication?

In some countries, the initiative has come from the government department charged with public information or telecommunications. A re-baptised Ministry of Communications has led the management of a communication policy often. Earlier international discussions suggested a National Communication Council as an independent entity, responsible to Parliament or some non-partisan framework. What actually happens in any given country will be a matter for negotiation among the competing interests and social forces in the development context.

However, the existence of strategic communication actions in support of programs or projects in development sectors may also influence the choices made in the directions that a national communication for development policy takes. For example, many countries have a communication support system or project in agriculture, involving agricultural extension and agricultural information, combining interpersonal and mass media communication strategies. Many countries have also developed health promotion and health education programs or projects. In yet other countries, population communication is often based on a sectoral strategy for promoting reproductive health, or adolescent behaviour change. Similarly, the communication activities in support of HIV/AIDS prevention in many countries are based around multi-media, multi-sectoral strategies. All of these actions on the ground are building blocks for the implementation of a national communication for development policy. Civil society, including the legal profession, journalists, advertising and marketing groups, women’s societies, human rights activists and NGOs have been actively involved in pushing one or more areas of communication policy to suit their particular political or economic agenda. These also can contribute perspectives and actions in dealing with the basic challenge, which is: To develop or to not develop, how can information and communication play a role?

11. Policy Design and Implementation

Preliminary considerations in the design of a policy
Some preliminary considerations in the design of a policy involve questions such as: Who needs it? The need for a communication policy is often felt at the level of public or private institutions or of civil society. Whatever the source of
concern, information/communication policy provisions will impact on various groups or individuals. Therefore, the design and formulation of the policy should be seen as a «public good», of potential interest to a wide spectrum in society. The process should therefore be transparent, and should seek to be inclusive of diverse interests. While information and communication technicians and professionals should be involved, other groups should also be represented, so as to make the ownership of the process and the product truly «national».

Another question concerns the challenge and vision, in other words: Why is it needed? Experience has shown that the increasing global influence of information and communication technologies and organisations is felt at various levels in Africa. Similarly, changes in the political arena, with democratisation and more involvement in governance by civil society create tensions, which require changes in the management of public goods and services, including those related to communication. Therefore such issues as the control and ownership of telecommunications and media organs, as well as freedom of expression, and access to media by political parties during elections have become prominent in the national discourse of many countries. In addition, the need for individuals and communities to participate in development activities makes communication for building trust and consensus on the development agenda an important goal of governments and society at large. The emergence of new technologies, including computers, the Internet and related adaptations, is creating situations, which require concerted action within national and regional space. These are some of the reasons which usually make a policy necessary; to deal in a clear and public manner with technical and cultural issues.

But solving today’s problems is not the only goal of policy. A good policy should be able to provide signposts for the next decade or so. It is true that the communication sector is changing rapidly worldwide, so the policy environment may be more dynamic, even in the short term. For this reason, it is important that policies be forward-looking, and that they meet the future expectations of the people who will implement them and be influenced by them. One concrete way of ensuring this is through visioning; that is getting the collective ideas of a cross-section of society about the kind of future environment in which they would like to live, and to see what role information and communication would play in those future scenarios. This would then be part of the environment to which a communication policy should respond. Joint visioning is a tool for social management, which should be incorporated in the process of designing the policy.  

Yet another question: What are the Development Challenges on the ground? What do we know? What do we need to know?

A situation analysis is the first step in the policy design process. It attempts to «scan» the policy environment. It should help to define the need for a policy by identifying the development problems that a policy on information and communication can help to solve. In this connection, relevant questions include:

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What is the current situation of the communication system, looking at various components and sub-sectors? What are its strengths and weaknesses? The situation analysis should evaluate the potential of the system for change in the short to medium term, considering the opportunities and constraints, which may confront the system.

Among the preliminary concerns are objectives, goals and principles. A policy should have goals and objectives. These represent answers to the long term and medium term development needs that the policy should address. A policy should also be based on certain norms or principles, which will guide its orientation and content. These are usually derived from national development goals or constitutional provisions, which may in turn have been derived from internationally agreed ideas. A sample of underlying principles includes:

- Democratisation
- Popular participation
- Equity/Access to information and communication
- Freedom of expression and reception
- Social integration
- Cultural promotion and preservation
- Responsibility in public communication
- Communication rights
- Coherence with other social/sectoral policies.
The following steps seem to be necessary in the process of designing and implementing a national communication for development policy.

**DESIGN PHASE**

1. Expressed national willingness to design a national communication policy in support of development programs.

2. Establishment of a National Committee to provide strategic guidance to the design effort.

3. Identification and selection of themes and sectors to be involved in the situation analyses and background studies, in the context of national possibilities.

4. Preparation of a summary document outlining the major development thrusts, and the socio-cultural-economic challenges and realities of the country. This will serve as a reference/guide for national experts preparing sectoral and other studies.

5. Organisation of a national training and consensus building workshop for national experts and others involved in the design process, to facilitate common understandings and set common values and goals.

6. Undertaking of desk and field research in the identified areas, using a common methodology and especially participatory approaches.

7. Organisation of regional/provincial consultations to assess information and communication needs at these levels, and to involve the views and ideas of frontline development workers and grassroots communities in policy the design process.

8. Preparation of a summary document of the results of field research and information collected at national and regional levels, as a background paper and stimulus for national dialogue.

9. Organisation of a national workshop to design a national communication for development policy, involving a broad spectrum of stakeholders from government, civil society, private sector, NGOs and community based organisations. Inputs to the workshop include the conclusions and recom-
mendations of the regional/provincial workshops, which are then dis-
cussed, noted and actioned as necessary.

10. Report back consultations to stakeholders especially at regional/provincial
levels.

11. Design of a national communication for development program with short,
medium and long-term action plans, sectoral programs and budgets.

IMPLEMENTATION PHASE

1. Reaffirmation of the national will to commit to the implementation of the
adopted policy. This should involve government, civil society and all actors
in national development.

2. Establishment of a credible, independent, flexible institutional framework
for the implementation and management of the policy. This should include
both a policy-level organ and a technical secretariat of qualified experts.

3. Identification and allocation of human and financial resources for the
national coordinating mechanism.

4. Promotion of the national communication for development policy to obtain
support from development partners and national stakeholders, including
grassroots communities.

5. Organisation of donors’ round table and other actions for resource mobili-
sation.

6. Monitoring and evaluation of the national communication for development
policy.

These steps while not meant to be followed mechanically should be thorough-
ly examined in each national exercise, to ensure that the most suitable design
and implementation process has been followed, so that the resultant policy and
its implementation will add value to national development.


