

9th UNITED NATIONS ROUNDTABLE ON COMMUNICATION FOR DEVELOPMENT

Rome, Italy, 6–9 September, 2004

Introduction

FAO will host the 9th United Nations Roundtable on Communication for Development, in Rome, Italy, from 6 to 9 September 2004. The Roundtable brings together United Nations agencies, bilateral and multilateral donors, foundations, NGOs, scholars and practitioners of Communication for Development from around the world. These bi-annual meetings provide strategic direction and input to development communication programmes for participants at the Roundtable and the larger development community.

The Communication for Development Roundtable is conceived as an informal international forum for donors and those working in communication where approaches can be harmonized, news of progress given and good practises shared. Communication for Development lies at the heart of the challenge to involve people in the process of their own development. When successful, Communication for Development is a powerful tool to mitigate poverty and hunger and promotes social change in many countries, especially in the agriculture and rural development sectors.

The first Roundtable was hosted by UNICEF in 1989 in New York. Since then Roundtable meetings have been organized every two years. The last Roundtable held in 2001 took place in Nicaragua and was hosted by UNFPA and the Rockefeller Foundation.

The Roundtable, originally planned for 2003 had to be postponed to September 2004 because of the numerous events which took place in the last quarter of 2003:

- The Executive Council and the UNESCO General Conference (September-November 2003).
- The 125th FAO Council and 32nd FAO Conference (November-December 2003).
- The World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) (December 2003).

Prior to the Roundtable, a preparatory three day workshop on the use of Communication for Development in Natural Resource Management will be implemented. This workshop will be attended by 20 practitioners from developing countries with the objectives of sharing views and preparing an overview paper to be presented and discussed at the Roundtable. This “write shop” will be coordinated and funded by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), Canada.

Objectives of the Roundtable

The objectives of the 2004 Roundtable are to:

- Prepare a background paper on Communication for Sustainable Development to highlight the relationship between communication and development

- Address key issues and envisage proposal for joint cooperation and action in relation to the three thematic papers
- Examine, discuss and assess current trends in Communication for Development activities
- Set priorities for future directions
- Identify areas for potential collaboration.

Expected Outputs

The workshop is expected to produce the following outputs:

1. A Status Report and/or an update on the Current Status of Communication for Development in UN agencies and other organizations developed
2. Three reports on the three thematic areas discussed and improved
3. New initiatives in Communication for Development (project proposals, plan of action, joint activities) planned and promoted through strengthened collaboration among interested partners
4. Funding opportunities explored.

Participants

In addition to representatives from the UN and other organizations, participants will be coming from Africa, Asia and Latin America. Participants will include experts in development, in communication in particular. They will also be coming from universities, NGOs...

Presentations and Papers

The structure of the Roundtable will differ slightly from previous years; in addition to a background paper, it will provide three thematic papers which will be available prior to the meeting. Participants should be prepared to make their comments and suggestions on the papers.

A background paper on 'Communication for Sustainable Development' will be prepared to highlight the relationship between communication and development. It will also underline new initiatives since the last Roundtable. The three thematic papers will enable the participants to address key issues and envisage proposals for joint cooperation and action to be discussed by each working group and in Plenary.

The themes are:

1. Communication for Natural Resource Management (NRM)
2. Communication in Research, Extension and Education
3. Communication for Isolated and Marginalized Groups.