

To: World Services Inventory Composite Group
World Services Inventory Support Team

From: WSO Board of Directors

Date: November 15, 1993

Re: Inventory Project

The Composite Group has asked that we provide clarification of our recent memo to you, particularly in relation to our comments about staff input on the Composite Group. Before getting into the specifics of our comments, it may be helpful by way of background to explain the different roles the staff can play when participating in the work of a committee. The first type of participation is one strictly of support, such as the participation of the staff the Composite Group presently has for its work. When staff serves in a support role they are instructed to remain neutral in all discussions and to refrain from taking any position of advocacy on issues facing the committee, so as to not compromise their effectiveness in supporting the committee. Alternatively, staff can participate as a member of a committee during which they will share their perspective and experience regarding the issues addressed by the committee. Finally, there are times when it is appropriate for staff to act in both a supporting and a participating role on a committee. It is the separate active participating role of staff that we were proposing the Composite Group incorporate into its committee.

In observing and discussing the work of the Composite Group, we have come to realize that the project work is being deprived of the critical component of staff participation in its deliberations with the result that information and dialogue essential to the success of the inventory project is not being considered. This dialogue is necessary in at least two areas, both of which are recognized in the inventory plan as important to the success of the plan, those being the level of staff support available for implementation of the plan and the self-assessment of all components of the World Service Office. With regard to information on the level of staff support, because staff actively participates as a member only on the Interim Committee of the three committees participating in managing the inventory project to date, this information has had to flow from the Interim Committee to the Support Team and the Composite Group in the form of comments or inquiries about decisions already made by your groups, creating unnecessary inefficiencies in the decision making process. Looking ahead, staff support for processing surveys, board and committee inventories and development of the conference and WSO inventories will all significantly benefit from staff participation in those discussions up front before decisions are made. As to the WSO inventory itself, it seems self-evident to us that staff participation in

formulating the form that inventory will take can only add value to that process, in the same way that it was thought the membership from each board and committee on the Composite Group would add value to the overall development of the inventory project.

The importance of staff participation on the Composite Group to the success of the inventory project has been recognized by the Interim Committee, the WSC Administrative Committee and the World Service Board of Trustees steering committee. Each of these committees has unanimously endorsed our proposal to add staff as active participants of the three arms of the world service and as such they have had the opportunity to work with staff on a regular basis. The input we have received from these members is that including the experience of staff in their decision making process has contributed greatly to the success of their projects and could only benefit the inventory project.

Turning to the last paragraph of our recent memo to you, the "points of conflict" referenced in that paragraph is the situation described above caused by the input from staff on the inventory project flowing through the Interim Committee to the Composite Group instead of being considered by the Composite Group at the outset. The limits imposed by this process deprived the Composite Group of the full reasoning of staff and the timeliness of receiving the input from staff as proposals are discussed. Instead, the Composite Group has only gotten the Interim Committee's or our Board's "after the fact" summary reactions to your proposals based, in part, on input received from staff. Often these "late in the game" decisions or discussions may engender a perception that staff is somehow seeking to undermine the inventory project by not raising concerns earlier in the decision-making process. We realize that this is not necessarily the case in this particular situation and that these conflicts are sometimes born from staff frustration or due merely to a misunderstanding of staff's role in the process. We believe that staff participation on the Composite Group will not only diminish these potential "points of conflict" but will add a valuable component of world services to your committee's work.

We understand that in your initial discussion of our proposal you have discussed waiting until the annual World Service Conference to seek further guidance before making a decision on this issue. We strongly encourage you not to delay a favorable decision on this proposal. We believe that the inventory plan provides you with the flexibility to add staff to the committee in a participating role and had the conference thought about it, given what we know now, we are confident that the conference would have addressed what we think is simply an oversight in the plan by incorporating our proposal. To delay a decision until the conference would result in an unnecessary loss of resources during a critical phase of the inventory plan. During a period when we are short of staff resources due to illness and other unforeseen events we can ill afford to employ our staff and committee resources inefficiently. We trust that this memo provides you with enough information on which to base your decision, however, should you have further questions please do not hesitate to contact us.