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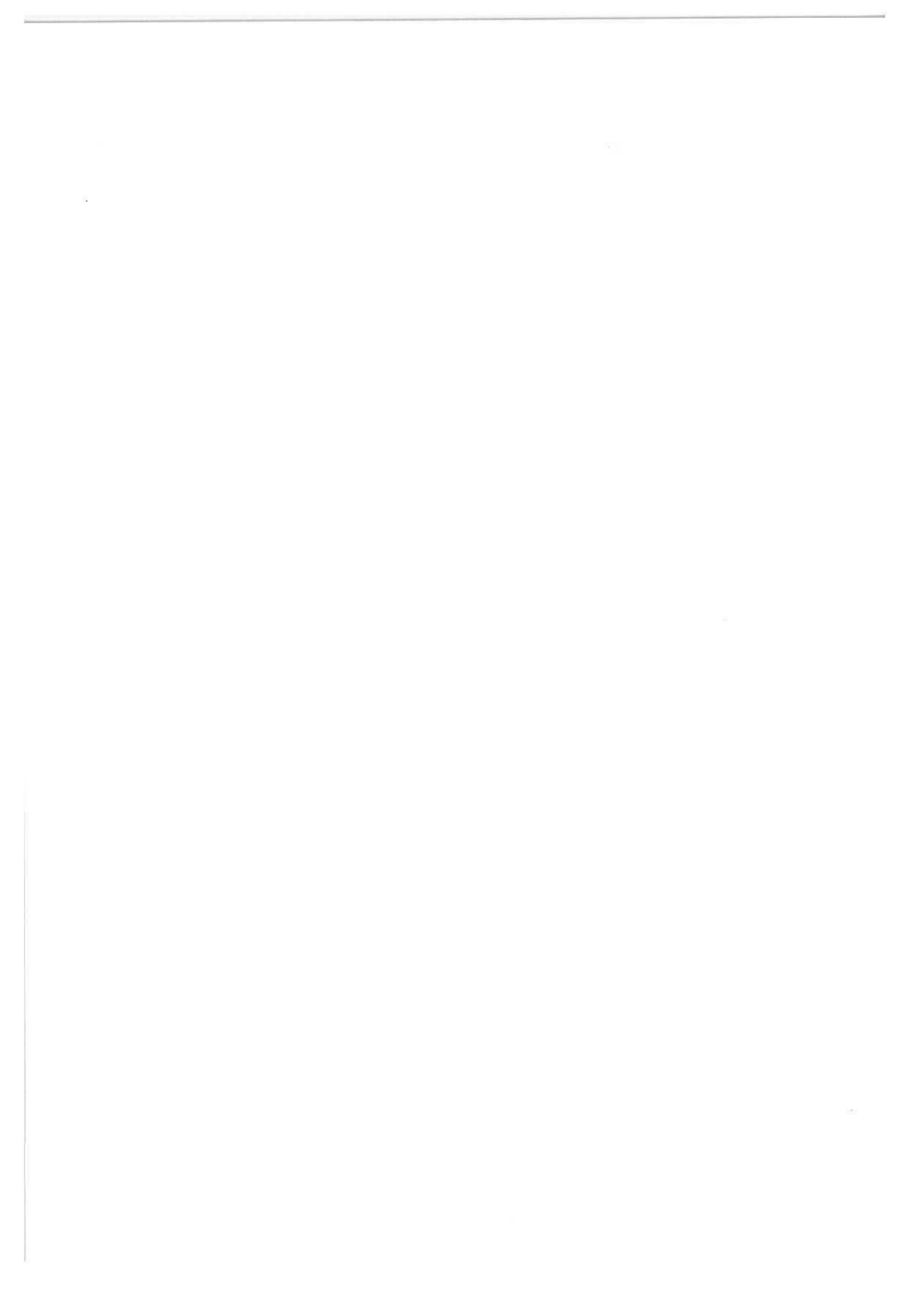
# Review of Norwegian Assistance to IPS

*by COWI*

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A report submitted to the Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

The Ministry does not accept any responsibility for the information  
in this report nor the views expressed, which are solely those of  
the consultant



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# Executive Summary

## Introduction

1. Inter Press Service has received financial support from the Norwegian Government under framework agreements since 1987. The latest agreement, covering 1992–1995, had an allocation of NOK 9,275 million. In 1996, additional support of NOK 2.5 million was provided and the Ministry decided to undertake a review of the assistance.
2. The purpose of the **Review of Norwegian Assistance to Inter Press Service** is to provide a basis for the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) to decide the objectives, size, content and form of continued Norwegian support to IPS and in particular to assess the appropriateness of providing assistance to IPS through a framework agreement.
3. As most of the Norwegian assistance has been used to finance operations of IPS in Africa and Asia, the focus of the review is on results achieved in these two regions. In addition, the review includes a discussion on the role and strategies of IPS in light of the changing global context. The analysis of the quality of IPS products and of the problems IPS is facing in terms of resourcing and management helps to put the Norwegian support into a more general perspective.

## Key findings

### *The Role and Strategies of IPS*

4. Profound changes in international relations and rapid technological developments have dramatically altered the parameters of IPS operations over the last decade. The need for IPS as a provider of contextualised, development-oriented news features, however, has not diminished. Developments in the international and national media markets have only increased the need for news products which put events in perspective.
5. IPS has made substantial efforts to formulate strategies and policies to meet these global developments. However, the overall policies and strategies of the agency remain too general in nature to form an adequate basis for operative plans of action and subsequent resource allocation.
6. The production of a contextualising news feature

service remains by far the most important core activity of IPS. The scope of this activity remains global in nature and the outreach of its product is growing, in particular through the use of Internet/e-mail and other advanced communication technologies.

7. Short-term project activities have become important for the overall economy of IPS. The subsequent commitments on IPS, however, threaten the credibility of the agency's core news feature production and detract from the agency's ability to focus on this core activity.
8. Historically, IPS has made important contributions by providing links for communications (e.g. for news agencies) in the South, but technological developments have greatly diminished the need for such services. The IPS objective of becoming an Internet/e-mail communications provider for NGOs worldwide has little potential since other institutions are more expertly venturing into this field.

### *Results achieved in Africa and Asia*

9. IPS is consistently delivering a news feature product, which is supplementary to the main international news agencies, providing media in southern Africa and Asia with alternatives and correctives. The IPS news product is consistently contextualised from a South perspective. The NGO communities may be a potential, substantial market for IPS products, especially in Asia, but IPS has no clear picture of these markets.
10. The democratisation in Africa and the subsequent proliferation of more pluralistic media and greater opportunities for popular participation in governance have increased the potential for IPS in southern Africa. Economic growth and the subsequent growth also in the media markets, coupled with marginalisation of still more people in Asia, have created new challenges and economic possibilities for IPS in this region.
11. As a result of Norwegian support and support from other donors, IPS has consistently developed its core programme in southern Africa, expanded outreach through the media and maintained training efforts. Progress and consolidation of results, how-

ever, are hampered by poor monitoring of achievements, by lack of any clear, regionalized strategy and plan of action and by financial restraints.

12. It is difficult to determine the effect of the comprehensive training efforts of IPS Africa. There is no systematic monitoring of the effect. The consistent application of the on-the-job-training strategy and the interviews made the present review suggest, however, that much relevant skills-building is taking place and that IPS contributes significantly to the media in southern Africa as a whole through these efforts. The training efforts, which are a direct result of Norwegian support, are a prerequisite for the core activities of IPS in southern Africa and closely intertwined with these.
13. During the democratization process in southern Africa, IPS products have been instrumental in qualifying the content of the mushrooming independent media, but the agency has lost important ground with the mass circulated government papers. Through the innovative Sabanews initiative the IPS news product penetrates national broadcasting corporations in all but two countries in southern Africa. In this way, the IPS product reaches the majority of the population in southern Africa, also in rural areas.
14. The IPS news product routinely appears in major English papers in a number of Asian countries. IPS translations also target the vernacular media – including media in China. Effects are difficult to gauge, since there is no consistent monitoring. The potential for further outreach in Asia is great and easy to identify.
15. The journalistic qualities of IPS news feature products from Asia and Africa have increased significantly during the years of Norwegian assistance. In addition, IPS products from these regions are consistently supplementary to the mainstream news agencies because of IPS' developmental priorities and journalistic methodology. The IPS products are therefore clearly marketable to both news media and NGOs, but increased emphasis on journalistic timeliness and «newsness» would help boost outreach and sales beyond the present levels.

#### *Problems in Terms of Resources and Management*

16. A severe crisis of management and governance has ensued since 1995. In May 1997 successful international mediation led to the signing of an in-

ternal agreement and the election of a new board of directors of IPS. While the mediation continues, IPS has now entered into a transition period and the outlook for internal reconciliation has improved significantly.

17. The overall incomes of IPS have been reduced by more than half from 1992 to 1996. The reductions in donor grants for the agency's core programmes have been less dramatic, but the financial situation remains bleak. IPS has adjusted to this situation by reducing operations primarily in the North and at headquarters, retaining a South orientation in its operations and without reducing the output of its core news feature service.
18. The general conditions of the global news market dictate that the news feature service of IPS will not be financially self-sustainable. Increased sales of the IPS news product in Africa and Asia, however, will remain an important key to reduced dependency on donors and a major indicator of achievement.
19. The relation between IPS and its donors has been negatively affected by the lack of transparency, as perceived by the donors, with regard to the financial linkages between the various parts of IPS and related projects; and by the wish on the part of the donors to earmark funds for very specific activities which are forcing IPS into separate and demanding accounting and reporting procedures. It is not possible for each donor to trace exactly how each contribution has been spent by IPS, but a more transparent accounting system, which illustrates how expenditures relate to funds received, may be developed by IPS. Donors should be discouraged from the very specific earmarking of funds and instead provide programme support for IPS.

#### *Norwegian Assistance to IPS*

20. The Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) is one of the largest contributors to the IPS core programmes. The MFA is one of the few donors who has not cut down its contributions to IPS. At a general level, the support for IPS is perfectly in line with Norwegian South Policy, which promotes democratization and respect for human rights, targeting in particular low income countries in Africa and Asia. The administration of this support, however, is not assisted by more concrete policy guidelines relevant to this type of development cooperation as Norway, in contrast to other like-minded countries,

including Sweden and Denmark, does not have a media development cooperation policy.

21. Norway participates in the «Core Group of Donors» to IPS, but there is considerable scope for improvement with regard to cooperation between IPS and its main donors. A proposed «Joint Reporting Format», although welcomed and facilitated by IPS, has not yet served its purpose of cutting down the administrative burden of IPS while maintaining adequate reporting to donors. It appears that enhanced donor coordination is a prerequisite for a coherent development of the IPS core news feature programme.
22. The framework agreement modality has been an effective mechanism for Norwegian assistance to IPS. It has provided IPS with important long-term, predictable support for its core programme and placed MFA in an influential partner role. Additional reporting and consultation procedures, however, have not been adequate as a means of constructive dialogue and cooperation.

### Overall conclusion

23. IPS is engaged in a wide variety of activities and products worldwide. As a result of Norwegian support and contributions from many other donors, the scope and outreach of these activities have increased significantly. In spite of financial constraints, the level of output of the agency remains high.
24. Lack of regional policies and analysis of regional markets has left IPS without proper tools and data for strategic planning in Africa and Asia, where staff and financial resources are spread very thin. Because of the resignation of regional directors of IPS in Africa and Asia, there is presently a need to enhance the planning and management capacity in both regional centres. Production may be maintained at current levels for the time being, but any further depletion of resources would pose a threat to the consolidation of achievements already made as a result of the support provided under the frame-

work agreements between MFA and IPS. With the current level of resourcing, neither IPS Africa nor IPS Asia is in a position to honour additional commitments. Increased economic support is a prerequisite for better long-term planning, capacity building and development of ownership to IPS in Africa and Asia.

### Recommendations

25. To sustain and further develop outreach, quality, and sales of the IPS core news feature services in Africa and Asia, it is recommended that Norwegian support to IPS core programmes should be continued with an increase in the annual Norwegian commitments.
26. It is recommended that the assistance should be provided through a five-year framework agreement which stipulates
  - that regional policies and plans of actions should be developed by IPS regional and international staff in a three-year rolling schedule;
  - that IPS should engage in dialogue on implementation and up-dating of these plans not only with regional advisory committees, but also with the core group of donors on an annual basis;
  - that the support should be targeted primarily at the development of IPS core news feature programmes in Africa and Asia, without any additional earmarking of funds;
  - that IPS before 1 March 1998 should carry out comprehensive studies of the potential markets for IPS' news feature products in Asia and Africa and that these studies should be reflected in regional planning.
27. To guide Norwegian assistance in the area of information and media development, it is recommended that MFA should prepare a media development cooperation policy. It is also recommended that the MFA should promote a more effective cooperation and coordination within the «Core Group of Donors to IPS».

# 1 Introduction

Inter Press Service was established in 1964 as a cooperative of journalists. IPS provides a news service which is a development-oriented alternative – or a supplement – to the news offered by the main international news agencies. Norway has been one of the main donors supporting IPS since the mid-1980's. From 1987 most of the financial support has been provided under Framework Agreements between the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and IPS.

The present review of Norwegian assistance to IPS provides a basis for the Ministry to decide objectives, size, content and form of continued Norwegian support to IPS. It is not an evaluation which determines effects and impact of the assistance provided, but rather a rapid, but still profound, assessment of changes which have occurred and results which have been achieved. The focus of the review is on IPS in Southern Africa and Asia as most of the Norwegian assistance has been used to finance parts of the IPS operations in these two regions. While the report includes the hitherto most comprehensive independent analysis of IPS operations in Africa and Asia, it does not provide a full picture of IPS because important parts of the operation, in the Americas in particular, are not covered, or discussed only rather briefly, by the report. The Terms of Reference of the Review is included as Annex 1.

The review was undertaken by COWI from April to July 1997. The review was divided into two phases: A short pre-phase to determine the focus of the review and

the appropriateness of undertaking the main phase in May and June, taking the financial problems and the severe crisis of governance and management within IPS into consideration. The pre-phase included brief visits to Oslo, IPS Headquarters in Rome and NOVIB in Holland, which is chair of the Core Group of Donors of IPS. On the basis of the Inception Report submitted by COWI in the beginning of May, it was decided to proceed with the main phase. The main phase included brief visits to the Regional Centres of IPS in Harare and Manila with short stopovers in Lusaka and New Delhi and concluding discussions with the IPS Management in Rome. The lists of people interviewed and documents reviewed are contained in Annexes 2 and 3 of the Report.

The review team wishes to express its sincere appreciation of the open, friendly and constructive cooperation extended by all the various parts of IPS, which we have met. Many observers of IPS and users of IPS products have also provided extremely useful information, which has helped us a lot.

Although the scope of the present review relates to the *Norwegian* assistance to IPS, the review team has assumed that the report may also be studied with interest by other donors and agencies cooperating with IPS and perhaps contribute to the further development of effective and efficient relations between IPS and its major donors.

## 2 Overview of Norwegian Assistance to IPS

### 2.1 Evolution of Norwegian Cooperation with IPS

Norway has cooperated with IPS since the early 1980's. In 1984, 1985 and 1986, IPS was granted support of some 1 mill. NOK per year for specific projects, including special coverage of the UN conference on population issues in Mexico, and efforts to increase coverage of gender issues and women in Latin America and Africa.

The initial framework agreement between the multilateral department of the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and IPS was entered into in 1987. It covered a four-year period with 1 mill. NOK in assistance for the IPS core programme in 1988 and 1.25 mill. for each of the following years including 1991.

The framework agreement did not earmark specific lines of activity for which the grant was to be used, but on the initiative of MFA, it was indicated that IPS and Norway would conduct annual consultations to determine in which spheres of IPS activity the support could be utilized. These consultations in general took the form of a relatively detailed funding request from IPS, based on a report of the work of the previous year, with subsequent approval by Norway.

In addition to the programme grant IPS received annual project grants of 250,000 NOK (gender issues) in the years 1988-1991 and between 250,000 and 500,000 annually for projects designed to increase the agency's capability and output in the field of environmental reporting. In 1990 a special grant of 450,000 NOK was granted for that year's annual meeting of IPS staff.

Hence, in the last two years of the initial framework agreement (1990 and 1991), the combined annual Norwegian support (projects and programmes) for IPS had a total value of some 2.4 mill. NOK. (See Figure 1 for overview of Norwegian support for IPS projects.)

In the request for a renewal of the first framework agreement, IPS suggested, and Norway agreed to, the following main lines of activities for the first year of the new phase (1992):

1. African training programme and communication support
2. Development of the Asian network of IPS
3. Maintenance of reporting network in the Caribbean and in Central America
4. Management support.

In a comment on IPS' request the then acting head of information of NORAD only reluctantly supported a renewed framework agreement. He stressed that IPS, unlike Reuters and AP for instance, does not have photo-service, and that «the agency is criticised for only forwarding the views and analysis of the elites in the 3rd world and less of the voices of the poor in the South». In contrast, he applauded IPS' efforts in the field of journalism training in Africa and suggested that in future these efforts of IPS could be linked to other journalism training efforts supported by Norway in Africa.

The second framework agreement covered 1992, 1993, 1994 and 1995 and doubled the value of the annual core programme grant to 2,5 NOK. Meanwhile, project support to IPS from NORAD was reduced. As in the first framework agreement it was agreed that IPS allocation of these funds would be subject to annual consultations with Norway. (See Figure 2 for overview of framework agreements for Norwegian contributions to IPS.)

In May 1995, IPS Director General, Dr. Savio, requested a renewal of the framework agreement with Norway for an additional period of four years (1996-1999) with the same modalities, annual agreements on programmes to be supported and joint reviews of results.

In a follow-up letter, IPS suggested allocations of the support for 1996 much in line with those of the now expired framework agreement, but with a significant increase in the allocation of funds for IPS operations in Africa and Asia. There was no request for contributions to IPS operations in Latin America. In May 1996, MFA transferred 2.5 mill. NOK to IPS in Rome in support of this request, which in turn emphasized the relative importance of Norwegian contributions to IPS in Africa and Asia.

## Projects funded by Norway (1992 – 96)

Funder and project title	Year	Amount
<b>NORAD</b>		
Training and briefing for IPS journalists on environment and development issues	1991 – 92	NOK 250000
Production of Terra Viva conference newspaper for the Beijing conference	1995	USD 12347
<b>Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs</b>		
Strengthening the flow of information on the 1995 World Conference on Women	1993 – 95	USD 189000
Environment awareness programme as run – up to Rio Summit	1991 – 92	NOK 500000
Production of Terra Viva conference newspaper for the Social Summit	1995	USD 30000
<b>Department of Special Programmes, Development Cooperation, MFA</b>		
Training and briefing for IPS journalists on environment and development issues	1991 – 92	NOK 500000

Figure 1. Overview of Norwegian support for IPS projects

Figure 2. Overview of Framework Agreements for Norwegian Contributions to IPS

**FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT FOR NORWEGIAN CONTRIBUTIONS**

Annual allocations by region, as proposed by IPS and agreed to by Norway (in USD)

Agreement	Year	Region	Asia/Pacific	Central America/ Caribbean	Total
	1996	Africa	153,000	0	396,000
1992 – 1995 agreement	1995	207,000	74,800	92,200	374,000
	1994	206,000	72,000	87,000	365,000
	1993	206,000	72,000	87,000	365,000
	1992	182,000	60,000	78,000	320,000
1987 – 1991 agreement (began in 1988)	1991	131,400	60,000	26,600	218,000
	1990	101,000	60,000	42,900	203,900
	1989	101,000	60,000	42,900	203,900
	1988	203,200	0	0	203,200
<b>Totals</b>		<b>1,580,600</b>	<b>611,800</b>	<b>456,600</b>	<b>2,649,000</b>

## 2.2 Relative Importance of Norwegian Support

Norway is one of the major donors of programme support, with only the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs and NOVIB, a Dutch NGO, providing more

financial support to IPS programmes. Table 1 below lists the main contributors to IPS programmes in 1995 and 1996.

*Table 1. Main Contributors to IPS Programmes in 1995 and 1996 \**

Programme Grants	1995	1996
	USD	USD
CDG, Canada .....	245,834	51,376
CIDA, Canada .....	245,834	61,465
Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs .....	46,186	122,658
FINNIDA, Finland .....	46,186	42,658
Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung/BMZ, Germany .....	104,250	93,182
Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs .....	157,757	161,854
Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs .....	726,162	687,876
Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs .....	400,256	386,800
NOVIB, Netherlands .....	307,206	481,513
NOVIB (for DOEN Foundation) .....	1,872,449	1,620,955
UNICEF .....	25,000	25,000
UNDP .....		50,000
UNFPA .....		350,000
<b>Total .....</b>	<b>3,885,100</b>	<b>4,135,339</b>

\* Source: Notes to the consolidated financial statements for the year ended December 31, 1995 and 1996, respectively.

The Norwegian support of 386,800 USD for the programme activities of IPS in 1996 amounted to some 15 per cent of the total of programme grants received by IPS (less incomes from the Dutch lottery). In 1995, Norwegian assistance represented almost 20 per cent of all programme grants received by IPS.

In regional terms the relative importance of the Norwegian grant was higher. With IPS Africa, Norwegian programme support met some 25 per cent of total ex-

penditure in 1996, while with IPS Asia Norwegian support met some 20 per cent of expenditures.

The relative importance of the Norwegian programme grants has increased since the signing of the second framework agreement in 1992, as other donors have decreased their support to IPS programmes and as other incomes have also decreased. (See Figure 3 for overview of Norwegian contributions as proportional of total costs in regions.)

Figure 3. Overview of Norwegian contributions as proportional of total costs in regions.  
In US dollars

Framework agreements 1992– 95

Year	Africa			Asia/Pacific		
	Total cost	Norway	Norway as %	Total cost	Norway	Norway as %
1992	763614	180714	23.67%	495901	58988	11.90%
1993	628276	187975	29.92%	511639	73058	14.28%
1994	780006	204406	26.21%	567258	75477	13.31%
1995	1045187	223151	21.35%	505661	74182	14.67%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>3217083</b>	<b>796246</b>	<b>25.29%</b>	<b>2080459</b>	<b>281705</b>	<b>13.54%</b>

Framework agreements

Year	Central America/Caribbean			Grand total		
	Total cost	Norway	Norway as %	Total cost	Norway	Norway as %
1992	406610	76274	18.76%	1666125	315976	18.96%
1993	412967	88358	21.40%	1552882	349391	22.50%
1994	238303	87341	36.65%	1585567	367224	23.16%
1995	351257.71	111968	31.88%	1902106	409301	21.52%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>1409137.71</b>	<b>363941</b>	<b>27.17%</b>	<b>6706680</b>	<b>1441892</b>	<b>21.54%</b>

### 2.3 Rationale of Norwegian Support to IPS

The initial 1988-1991 and subsequent 1992-1995 framework agreements were based on recognition of the fundamental objectives of the IPS mission, which were then presented as

- the promotion in a South-South and South-North flow of information about and understanding of development processes and international cooperation rather than of isolated events
- the promotion of the voices and views of the South in international communication
- the promotion of information about and understanding of the United Nations.<sup>1</sup>

In addition, the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) recognized at the time that IPS would not in the foreseeable future, if ever, be in a position to generate enough incomes of its own to eliminate the need for outside assistance. In recommending the Norwegian framework agreement with IPS for the period 1992-1996, which was subsequently entered into by the MFA, the special adviser to NORAD presented the objectives of IPS as summarized above and established how:

«news and background information about development, about poverty alleviation, about the United Nations, about environment and development, about gender and development will never be the commodity most favoured by the international media market with money to spend (...) In the context of these markets, IPS with its professional value system and thematic priorities has taken upon itself a permanent handicap. It follows that the work of IPS is dependent on continued official support from governments and nations in the North which find these value systems and thematic choices and priorities of IPS important as well in a political North-South and South-South relation as in a broader context

where democracy and the plurality of opinions in the world becomes a value in itself».<sup>2</sup>

Also in a note in 1992 from the Multilateral Department of the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the importance of IPS as «an alternative to the more commercial news agencies» was reiterated. The department further emphasised the role played by IPS in the training of journalists from developing countries and the impact this had on the development of a «free and democratic press».

There is no more elaborate recording of the objectives of the Norwegian support for IPS, and no specific, further policy guidelines within the aid administration directly applicable to Norwegian assistance for IPS. In a broader sense, however, the support for IPS seems to correspond well with the more overall statement of Norwegian South Policy, which stipulates how «Norway will (also) contribute towards developing and safeguarding freedom of expression, among other things by encouraging free, independent media.»<sup>3</sup>

During the 1990's guiding policy papers listing strategies and objectives for assistance to media development in the South have been established within the Swedish and Danish aid administrations. In SIDA's strategy for media development cooperation of 1992, such cooperation was specified as follows: «*Media development cooperation consists of contributions to radio, print media, television and news bureaux, as well as support to auxiliary functions relating to these media. Supporting media of communication serves the comprehensive goal of promoting 'freedom of expression' and thus form part of SIDA's policy to promote democracy and human rights. Media development cooperation aims to support the development of civil rights and political participation in the recipient country and to facilitate diversity of cultural expression.*»<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> As summarised from Halle Jørn Hansen, Special Adviser to NORAD, in 'NOTAT til FN-seksjonen, Multilateral avd.'. Oslo, 30-6-1992.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> no. 19 to the Storting (1995-96), A changing world, Main elements of Norwegian policy towards developing countries.

<sup>4</sup> 'Freedom of Expression', SIDA, 1992

### 3 Global Change Affecting IPS

Major global developments have taken place in the period under review. The following briefly presents the main changes, describes IPS responses to the changes and provides an assessment of whether these developments have reduced the role of IPS in the process of development.

#### 3.1 Changes in International Relations

The two initial Norwegian framework agreements with IPS came to see not only the fall of the Berlin Wall, but also a series of political, economic and technological developments in the South which have had strong bearings on IPS strategies and activities.

The then all-pervasive political conflict between East and West has ceased to be the dominant mechanism of world politics. The threat of a nuclear war has subsided and more complex and diverse patterns of conflict, engaging more players from the South, now influence defence thinking of the major powers and generally demand the attention of the international community.

Marxist value systems have largely lost their appeal, also among follower nations in the South, leaving open new avenues for economic liberalisation and political change towards more pluralistic political systems. In Africa tens of millions of people are facing the possibility of direct participation in development and decision making processes, something which 20 years ago would have seemed wholly out of reach.

The concept of national economies is increasingly becoming meaningless, and global economic trends are setting the framework and agenda for national policies. With the words of Michael Zürn (University of Bremen):<sup>5</sup> «Since the mid-1970's globalization has accelerated and the effectiveness of national policies to achieve desired ends has been drastically reduced.»

Other observers like Benjamin Barber<sup>6</sup> have argued that the gradual undermining of the nationstate in the proc-

ess of globalization can accelerate the process of further fragmentation of nationstates.

The global process seems at the same time to be a process of fragmentation and globalization. And globalisation is not only a dominant trend in the economic sphere. Growing international consensus is e. g. evolving in the recognition of universality of codified human rights. Other issues like environment, organised crime and commercialised entertainment and culture (and infotainment) have also more and more global aspects. The trend from national and international media towards media having a global audience is part of this development.

The far-reaching changes in the world order and in international relations have also been illustrated by the Gulf War in 1990 and the subsequent UN-sanctioned deployment of foreign troops to protect minority Kurds in Iraq against the Iraqi Government.

National sovereignty no longer outrules interventions by outside forces when the international community chooses to identify systematic human rights abuses. The US led military invasion in Somalia, proposed to protect humanitarian aid, further illustrated to a world audience changes in the international balancing of power. Unchecked civil war in the former Yugoslavia and a near total lack of political response to genocide in Rwanda and Burundi later coupled to underline the nature of a new and volatile global architecture. More than 15 million people were refugees from their country of birth, another 20 million lived as internally displaced.

Increasing globalisation of the economy and of communications raises hopes, in some quarters, for renewed economic development for the benefit of the South – and, in others, growing fears of dangerous marginalization of those already deprived. As the North persistently advocates continued economic liberalization, structural adjustment programmes and other harsh measures in the South as the more potent vehicles for eco-

<sup>5</sup> Michael Zürn in Holm & Sørensen (ed.) *Whose World Order? Uneven Globalisation and the End of the Cold War*. Westview Press. 1995.

<sup>6</sup> *Jihad vs. McWorld*. How the planet is both falling apart and coming together and what this means for democracy. Times Books. 1995.

conomic development, financial allocations for direct development cooperation are diminishing at an ever-growing rate.

Increasingly, environmental problems have a global as well as a regional, national or local component and therefore also play a much bigger role in news. While many governments at one level tend to down-play many environmental problems, they must at the same time recognize that a number of problems are of rapidly growing importance. Urban pollution poses a threat to people's health as well as to the economic development in a number of megacities. Massive pollution from some economic activities harms other activities sometimes with cross-border implications, and growing water scarcity is a source of growing conflict in several of the world's development regions. The security dimension of regional environment is therefore also becoming increasingly prominent and changes international conflict patterns.

### 3.2 Changes in the Global Flow of Information

In adjusting to this series of global currents, the mainstream international news agencies (Reuters, AP, EFE, AFP, DPA, etc.) produce significantly more coverage of events in the South than they did 10 years ago.<sup>7</sup> Also, technological advances have coincided with a much greater demand for international news to create lucrative markets for the providers of global TV news like Visnews, CNN and others.

Mainstream news providers are, however, basically unchanged in their modes of operations, in their underlying editorial priorities and news perspectives. These news agencies, although diverse in ownership, nationality and geographical outreach, still market their products on a media market organized by a demand-and-supply economy. The news agencies provide what their paying media customers, most of whom are in the North, request. And while media in the North, print and electronic, have certainly reacted to the increasing impact of events in the South with more news, more pictures and commentary, the automatic and inherent focus is still on dramatic events (wars, famine, natural disasters, coups) of which sadly there seems to be an ever

more ready supply. The great attention paid to isolated, negative events in the South has occasionally led to the false impression that media interest in the deeper issue of development and international cooperation is growing. But news about development, about poverty alleviation, about the United Nations, about environment and development, about gender and development is still not a sought-after commodity on this market. Rather, the persistent focus on gore and catastrophe, poverty and war, has taken on a quantity and force which is now threatening to scare shut both eyes and ears of still more people in the North to exactly these issues.

In a computer assisted analysis of news dispatches from Reuters, Associated Press and IPS done at the School of Communication, University of Washington, USA, the author concluded:

«The decline of East-West rivalry as a news frame does not mean that international issues no longer are reported in terms of conflict (...) East-West controversies have largely given way to a North-South divide, a clash of ideologies and economic interests between the have and have-not nations. No doubt this was present in the past, but was overshadowed by superpower rivalry. However, qualitative analysis of the reports (from the three news agencies) suggests that, while developing nations now feature more conspicuously, they often are defined in terms of their support for or opposition to Western policies or values. Most often, with the exception of IPS, the relationship is conflictual: they are depicted as chainsaw-wielding despoilers of the rain forests, exploiters of child labour who deny women equal rights and allow their populations to spiral unchecked (or worse, enforce abortion), as undeserving supplicants for debt relief or bigger handouts. Now that the developing nations have the attention of the international media, the challenge will be to achieve correspondingly more sympathetic coverage».<sup>8</sup>

Structured alternatives redressing this syndrome are still few. Certainly, the Internet and other technologies are opening new and seemingly unrestricted channels for distribution of information for development-oriented agencies, NGOs and others. However, only few independent actors in this field have yet build the capacity to exploit these avenues on a global scale or to market

<sup>7</sup> See e.g. Kunda Dixit: *Dateline: Earth, Journalism as if the Planet Mattered*, IPS 1997.

<sup>8</sup> C. Anthony Giffard, *The World of Inter Press Service*, 1995.

systematically other than relatively narrow, issue-related material which is often not commensurate with the demands of the mass media. In addition, the mass media will often regard information provided by NGOs or even UN agencies with suspicion, fearing unintended bias and/or outright manipulation.

The growth in international coverage of events in the South has not in any substantial way enhanced the position of views or voices of the South in international exchanges or decision making procedures. This was also illustrated by Giffard, when he analysed Reuters, AP and IPS coverage of four major international conferences.<sup>9</sup> In describing his analysis of coverage of the Conference on Social Development in 1995, by IPS; Reuters and AP, Giffard writes:

«Judging by the specific individuals named or quoted, the three agencies almost seem to have been covering different conferences (...) For AP and Reuters, the top newsmakers were primarily Americans and Europeans. People from these two regions comprised more than 60 per cent of all actors mentioned by the AP, and about 54 per cent of those on Reuters.»

The accumulated consternation in the South over this misrepresentation was recently emphasised when some 30 Ministers of Information of the Non-Aligned countries in September 1996 passed a declaration on the subject. The Ministers noted the «continued imbalances and inequalities in the field of international information and communication» and agreed to «reduce dependence on the information and cultural media of the industrialised nations» and to increase cooperation in «programming, message content and networking in the media systems of non-aligned and other developing countries.»

And finally they urged that «views, models and perspectives of the media of developed countries not be allowed to determine to a unique extent the style and orientation of media policies in developing countries». Expressing concern over the «sustained, biased and distorted western media reporting on non-aligned countries» they agreed to take their concern to the UN, and in

<sup>9</sup> The UN Conference on Environment and Development, Rio 1992; the UN Conference on Human Rights, Vienna 1993; the UN Conference on Population and Development, Cairo 1994; the World Conference on Social Development, Copenhagen 1995.

particular to UNESCO. They found that the «struggle for the new world information and communication order should be intensified in spite of the end of the cold war».<sup>10</sup>

The call by the Ministers was soon met by a counter-statement from the US-based World Press Freedom Committee, which saw in the Ministers' statement a new threat to press freedom and called for counter-measures within the UN and elsewhere.

### *3.2.1 Changes to the Media in Africa and Asia*

At national level the continuing liberalisation of both political and economic environments has led to a further development of civil societies in the South and to a proliferation of more pluralistic media. New independent print media have mushroomed in many African and Asian countries, and structural changes have been recorded within government sponsored or owned media, especially print media.

National radios are still under government control in most countries but more independent local radio stations are gaining increasing importance.

While changes within national TV broadcasting corporations have been limited in most countries, the influence of international TV broadcasts is rapidly increasing. In a number of developing countries many citizens now have better access to international news on TV than to national news. Access to regional news on TV is also widening. As part of the rapid commercialisation of international TV-broadcasting a number of international broadcasters have developed their regional coverage and perspective. This trend is especially conspicuous in Asia.

Local news consumption in the South is more than ever influenced by international providers of news – in print and on TV. The content of the news provided, however, is still determined primarily by the news providers' need to meet the demands for news and entertainment of the Northern industrialised countries where the willingness and ability to pay for these services is present.

<sup>10</sup> Final declaration of the Fifth Conference of Ministers of Information of Non-Aligned Countries, Abuja, 1996.

International news agencies have for a long time found it increasingly difficult to base their economy on the core activity of providing news. United Press International (UPI), one of the world's leading mainstream news agencies, had to wind up, and surviving international agencies are increasingly financially dependent on other services than traditional news. IPS operates on a market which is economically difficult for all players.

London-based Reuters finances its loss-making news agency through the profits from sales of financial and economic news to the business community, but is still the dominant provider of news to anglophone Africa and competing with the US-based Associated Press for dominance in Asia. Agence France Press (AFP), subsidized by the French Government, is still without comparison the largest supplier of foreign news to franco-phone Africa and a cut-price major competitor to Reuters and AP worldwide. The world's biggest news agency, Associated Press, as the name implies, is directly owned by the American mass media which also decides the agency's editorial policies and pricing structures. It caters directly to the demands of the US market – but is nevertheless one of the main suppliers of news also to thousands of media in Africa and Asia.

Indeed, with numerous national news agencies in the South currently experiencing a decline in government funding (often the mainstay of national news agencies in the South), the dominance of international news agencies entrenched in value systems of the North seem only likely to grow.

The advent of Internet and other cost-effective tools for international communication and dissemination of information may cause much change to all this. IPS and other players in the field of development communication see these new technologies as a possible tool for leap-frogging otherwise entrenched obstacles to a more equitable, participatory and development-oriented flow of communications.

It is difficult to assess the validity of such hopes. The Internet certainly presents new possibilities for dissemination of IPS products – this has already been instrumental in bringing IPS news products to the independent press in Southern Africa (see 5.1). The Internet,

<sup>11</sup> 'Stringer' is media jargon for journalists who supply their news stories on a pay-per-piece basis. As opposed to 'correspondents', who receive a fixed salary.

however, will still for many years remain out of reach to large proportions of the populations of the South.

### 3.3 IPS' Response to Global Changes

With the Italian/Argentinean journalist and founding member, Dr. Roberto Savio as a central driving force at IPS headquarters in Rome, IPS initially established a widespread network in Latin America and, by the early 1970's, had become a widely recognized provider of news and telecommunication services in that region. Funding at this stage was primarily secured through sales of the agency's own products and services and from governments in Latin America, Italy and, from 1973, the OPEC member states.

In the 1970's and early 1980's the agency continued to strengthen its presence in the Caribbean, in North America, in the Middle East and in Europe. Soon, the number of dispatches of the English news feature service of IPS grew to match that of the Spanish. In 1983 an African network of stringers supplying IPS with news features was established with full-time staff and a headquarters in Harare.<sup>11</sup>

In 1987 the establishment of IPS Asia in Sri Lanka followed. By 1990 IPS stringers and correspondents were delivering inputs to IPS in some 70 countries. They were primarily recruited in the South but Northern IPS Centres, financially independent of the southern IPS network, was also soon established in Norway, Finland, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Germany, Sweden, Austria and Spain. (Organigram provided in 9.2.1.).

The geographical expansion of IPS, which is still ongoing, has been widely reflected in a more global representation in copies produced. In 1983, more than 50 per cent of all IPS dispatches in English were written in Latin America. By 1995, this figure had dropped to 17.5 per cent with coverage of Africa, Asia and Europe increased accordingly.<sup>12</sup>

Results like these, however, did not directly address the core problem of IPS at the time as identified by a team of evaluators (Hamelink, Ansah et.al.), which was

<sup>12</sup> Giffard: *The World of IPS 1995*, University of Washington, Seattle, 1996.

commissioned by three of the main donors, Sida, NORAD and NOVIB.

This team found that

«the essential immediate tasks for IPS are: a) The unequivocal articulation of its profile. The definition of IPS as a «communication system» is too diffuse. Neither collaborators in the field nor the community of clients identify sufficiently with this definition. Present unclarity also hampers an adequate allocation of scarce resources(...).<sup>13</sup>

On the recommendation of this evaluation, IPS wrote a five-year work plan for 1990-1994 placing priority on its news agency mandate, which guided operations into the first years of the second Norwegian framework assistance.

In late 1992/early 1993, the core donors of IPS conducted a brief mid-term review of the implementation of the IPS work plan 1990–1994.<sup>14</sup>

The review team did not specifically address the lack of a clear identity of IPS specified by the 1989-evaluation, but found, among other things, that

- the implementation of the plan was underway («we feel IPS takes the plan seriously and uses the plan as a guideline for action»)
- the agency was expanding its operation in a steady and controlled way
- outreach through the established media was growing consistently
- the position of IPS in the world of international institutions had been strengthened
- significant efforts were made to strengthen quality of output

but also that

- the agency lacked sufficient analysis of the regional markets for its products
- the agency lacked performance indicators and more consistent monitoring and evaluation of progress at regional level

- this lack of monitoring hampered overall efficiency and accountability of the agency.

By 1994 the lack of a clearer identity, the findings of the 1992 review, the tumultuous changes in international relations, and increasing demands on IPS' central management of a growing enterprise had made the need for rethinking of IPS strategies, management structures and editorial priorities essential.

In 1994, through consultations with senior editorial staff from all geographical regions, internal consensus on a new agency-wide editorial strategy for the rest of the century, «IPS 2000», was reached.

Through this strategy IPS decided to focus its editorial efforts on global issues, establishing as a key mechanism of a changing world order the still broadly defined concept of globalisation:

«(There is) a mushrooming of threats to humankind at the individual and social levels (...) and these threats know no geographical or cultural boundaries. They range from environmental pollution, through the collapse of welfare values to denial of basic human rights. It is within this context that IPS took the decision at the start of the 1990's to up-date its role as an international news agency, originally set up to give prominence to the voices of the developing world. Today, the challenge is to transform the agency into a truly global communication system (...) dedicated to offering a differentiated 'market' systematic, continuous and in-depth coverage of global issues.»<sup>15</sup>

A «Mission Statement» read:

«As we head into the next millennium, rapid development processes are affecting more and more people and, at the same time threatening human security. Understanding who and what controls these complex processes, requires a news reporting paradigm based on the principles of interdependence. As national borders are obscured, news services must convey the impact of international systems on local peoples, so they are em-

<sup>13</sup> Executive Summary, Evaluation report, Inter Press Service, 1989.

<sup>14</sup> NORAD, SIDA, NOVIB, and the Dutch National Postal Code Lottery, of which IPS was a beneficiary. The review followed the evaluation of IPS activities commissioned also by the main donors, in 1989.

<sup>15</sup> IPS: Notes for an IPS Year 2000 Plan – Premise.

powered to understand their own world and the effect of the outside world upon them. It is only by ensuring an informed global civil society that peoples everywhere will share equitably in the development process».

In addition, «IPS 2000» now defined four core target groups, or «constituencies»: i) the media, ii) the donor community iii) the UN system and iv) the NGOs or «civil society».

IPS 2000 also established that the number of daily news features circulated on the main world news service of IPS would be decreased in order to a) concentrate more efforts on raising the quality and providing a more homogenous service and b) save costs. Through a compromise between the different regions of IPS, a production figure of some 30 news feature stories per day was arrived at. This broke with the established working mode of the agency where no limits were posed on the daily output.

Also, «IPS 2000» established that IPS editorial focus would now be on ten specific themes: 1) Human rights and democratisation, 2) Environment and natural resources, 3) Population, health and education, 4) Food and agriculture, 5) International finance and trade flows, 6) Peace and disarmament, 7) Culture, 8) Science and technology, 9) Regional integration, 10) Sustainable development.

«IPS 2000» had an immediate effect on the editorial work of the offices in all regions where production figures had to be adjusted and new priorities implanted in work routines.

Meanwhile, a sharp decline in the overall incomes of IPS core operations presented all sectors of IPS with new dilemmas. From 1993 to 1995 the total incomes of IPS dropped from 14,606 mill. USD to 9,796 mill. USD. In this light, and in order to adjust the organisational structure of IPS to the new editorial policy, an organisational «structural adjustment programme» was construed as a further elaboration of «IPS 2000»

«IPS 2000: Phase II» focused on streamlining of the IPS organisational structure, decentralising of responsibilities from head office in Rome to the regional offices

and more aggressive balancing of costs with incomes. The shift from less advanced and expensive means of communications (i.e. telex lines) to more advanced and cheaper means was emphasised.

In a preface to «IPS 2000 : Phase II», IPS Director General Dr. Roberto Savio wrote:

«The rapid changes in recent years in the international political scenario and the pressing demands of ever-more advanced and sophisticated technology have finally caught up with IPS and we have been forced to recognise the moment has come to streamline our structure and operations if we wish to continue to serve the cause of global human security.»

«We believe this streamlining is only possible through delegating responsibility for operations to the various regional components of the organisation. This strategy, which most directly affects the agency's Northern-based operations and revalues those in the Southern hemisphere, will enable the agency to bring spending more in line with income and, by the year 1997 (have) resulted in an agency with new skills and strengths (...).<sup>16</sup>»

In addition to «IPS 2000: Phase II» a strategy for the utilization of new communications technologies, IPS Online, was constructed. This was an ambitious plan to utilize the Internet to maximise IPS outreach, marketing and interaction with NGOs.

In the introduction to this Online policy, the authors wrote:

«(...) IPS has yet another opportunity to set the development agenda. Via the Internet IPS and its friends can promote understanding among the world's peoples, can promote policy dialogue and most importantly can ensure that the voices of all groups of actors, however faint, are heard. The potential market that the Internet will unlock also increases the viability of the IPS funding base through cheaper distribution.»

In 1995/1996 the implementation of «IPS 2000: Phase II» was to be facilitated primarily with 2 mill. USD from cash reserves held by the IPS Trust Fund. In

<sup>16</sup> Roberto Savio, IPS Director General in preface to the policy document 'IPS 2000: Phase II', 1996.

mid-1996, however, it was discovered that these cash reserves, some USD 4.9 mill. in total, were indeed not available to IPS.<sup>17</sup>

In the IPS narrative report on results of work in 1996, the impact of the apparent loss of these cash reserves on the implementation of the «IPS 2000:Phase II» is summarized as follows: «the task of further radical restructuring of IPS operations, which was going to be a complex and painful business even with USD 2 million of reserves to count on, turned into a challenge of huge proportions, since it had to be tackled with an inadequate cash flow».<sup>18</sup>

Scanning back over the years of Norwegian framework agreements with IPS, it is obvious that IPS has made substantial efforts to formulate strategies and policies to meet the challenges resulting from the changes in its international, political and physical parameters.

The basic role of the agency in the development process, as defined by its overriding Mission Statement, has not changed. The need for context to the still more constant provision of news of isolated events has only increased the proliferation of new media in the South and the greater potential for popular participation in governance in the South, and in Africa in particular, has also only increased the need for IPS news products. In Asia in particular, economic marginalisation of large parts of the region's population has similarly increased the need for current and contextualised information with a stringent regional and unbiased perspective.

It follows that the overall objectives of IPS as presented by the agency today, are still relevant in a developmental context. They also appear in accordance with those of Norwegian development cooperation in general.

At a more concrete level, however, the IPS Mission Statement and its pursuant strategies, IPS 2000, IPS 2000:Phase II and IPS Online, remain too general in nature and they are not sufficiently suited to create a basis for identification by staff, clients and donors.

In addition, while these ideological strategies, objectives and overall plans of IPS were certainly drawn up after thorough internal consultations, IPS has so far not operationalised these strategies through concrete, regional strategies and plans of action reflective of proper regional needs-analysis and local realities.

This lack of clearly defined strategies and objectives for concrete and measurable action by the actual field staff (e.g. within IPS Africa or IPS Asia-Pacific) now couples with a serious cash flow problem to make IPS' ability to stringently follow its overall strategies vulnerable – especially to interference from donors. Already, a substantial part of IPS' activity is designed to meet quite specific requirements of the donors rather than clearly stated objectives of IPS.

Meanwhile, IPS is handicapped in its exchanges with donors by its own lack of systematic monitoring of activities and proper documentation of achievements – and by a disruptive lack of donor coordination.

As for the current operations of IPS, the sustained decrease in donor funding and the unexpected disappearance of the IPS Trust Fund cash reserves have obviously hampered IPS efforts to implement its plans over the last two years. This financial crunch and the lack of clearer objectives are seen by the review team as the main back-drop for IPS activities.

<sup>17</sup> The IPS Trust Fund capital is a result of a public lottery in the Netherlands, which had IPS as a beneficiary. In an unexpected move in 1996 some 4.9 mill. USD in cash reserves of the Trust Fund had been appropriated by the Board of Directors of the Trust Fund. Their reasoning for this appropriation and the pursuant action by IPS do not fall within the scope of this review. In December 1996 the District Court of Amsterdam ordered the former board members of the Trust Fund to return the money, but as of

mid-June 1997 the money still remained without the reach of IPS. An additional 2.5 mill. USD of the Trust Fund capital was deposited in a New York bank, where it was used as collateral for a bank loan. IPS management expect that this money will be available to IPS in 1997; and that it will be used primarily to pay back the loan.

<sup>18</sup> IPS – Inter Press Service, Results of work in 1996, May 1997.

## 4 Current Operations

The operations of IPS can be grouped in three inter-linked categories.

- **A news feature service**  
Providing contextualised news features to end-users<sup>19</sup> with the established media; with new media (Internet/ e-mail); with the international community and with NGOs.
- **Additional projects related to the news service**  
Providing training and awareness building to the corps of IPS writers and others; providing coverage of the activities of UN agencies and others; facilitating specialised IPS products.
- **Communications services**

Providing communication opportunities to other institutions (national news agencies, NGOs and others).

The relative importance of these three categories has shifted during the years of Norwegian framework assistance. Throughout the 1970's and 1980's IPS was an important partner for national news agencies, for the PanAfricanNews Agency (PANA) and other media institutions in the South by providing technical support, training and communications facilities. However, this role has diminished as technological developments have all but eliminated the need for such services. Even if it was always the most significant component, the news service (and the related projects) has taken on a still more dominant position in the IPS portfolio.

The staff behind the IPS activities, the IPS network of stringers, correspondents, editors, technicians and managers span, broadly speaking, the whole world. Some 200 people are currently attached to IPS, with about half earning their main income through the agency. Others only occasionally provide input to IPS activities.

The complex web of IPS products, services, projects and embraces defies simplistic description. But, in light

of the shift in relative importance of the three main categories of activities, one basic observation can be justified as a guide to IPS in 1997:

Most IPS activity today hinges on one core activity – the writings of some 120 journalists worldwide, most of them attached through freelance arrangements.

Most other activities, although with some noticeable exceptions, can generally be understood as means to facilitate and maximise the effect of this basic journalistic activity.

### 4.1 The News Feature Service – the Core Product

The core product of IPS is the articles produced by stringers and correspondents, who are paid for their services. These writers are professionals, subscribing to a set of values no different from those guiding the mainstream media: Reports must be accurate, truthful, unbiased and fair.

In addition, IPS writers are guided by the editorial values and priorities of IPS. In consequence, IPS reports must be:

- Contextualised, providing additional (global) perspective to the news.
- Unbiased also in a South-North context and in the context of economic, social and cultural dogma. (Economic growth, for instance, is not automatically considered a positive factor in development, Hollywood films are not necessarily the best, etc.).
- Focused on the ten specific themes listed above, all pertaining to «human security» using a variety of development actors as sources.

In a recent comment, the former director of IPS Asia addressed the need for such additional values to those of the mainstream media:

<sup>19</sup> End-users are here defined as final recipients of IPS products, including NGOs, research institutions and individuals accessing IPS products via Internet.

«(The) prevalent news formula is inadequate to confront the challenges of equity, social justice and ecology. The planet is in crisis partly because the poor and the voiceless have never counted, and they have not counted because the media mostly ignored them (...) Proponents of this (mainstream) media school claim that such «balanced» and «neutral» reporting is a time-tested model of journalism and the only one that works. But we know that status-quo journalism is biased because it cannot take sides against wrongs. And by denying its bias, mainstream media actually shows partiality. (...) Journalists shouldn't just hold a mirror to society, but be a part of its reflection. They must be involved in the communities and the planet they write about and care deeply about them.»<sup>20</sup>

An IPS dispatch is generally 600-1000 words. It may be a «timeless» piece, or – more often – it may be linked to a specific event. IPS does not, however, propose to compete with the mainstream news agencies in the market for instant «spot-news» (i.e. a coup has taken place, a typhoon has hit Chittagong, etc.). IPS provides a supplementary service – providing perspective to the raw news.<sup>21</sup>

#### 4.1.1 Distribution of the Core Product

The articles written by IPS journalists are distributed in a variety of combinations – with the most important summarised as follows:

- The IPS world service. Distributed in English and Spanish, this service offers clients some 30 news features, analysis and comment by IPS writers on all weekdays; a leaner package on Sundays. It is delivered on-line or otherwise.
- Regionalised services. In Latin America, Africa, Asia and other regions, clients are offered special packages (English or Spanish) of selected features pertaining specifically to their region. Delivered on-line or otherwise.
- Translations. Selected items from the world service are translated into some 15 languages from Hindi and Mandarin to Finnish and German on a regular

<sup>20</sup> Kunda Dixit: *Dateline: Earth, Journalism as if the Planet Mattered*. IPS. 1997.

<sup>21</sup> In Latin America, the region where IPS has traditionally held a larger share of the mainstream media market, clients' expectations have had IPS keep a limited feed of spot news, but this is contrary to the overall policy of IPS.

basis. Some translations are available online as they are produced, but in the South most are delivered bi-weekly or as monthly packages by mail.

- Itemised bulletins. Issue-oriented clients are offered special selections of dispatches from the IPS world service – i.e. only features pertaining to «environment», «human rights», «health», etc. Distributed online or otherwise.
- TerraViva. A daily selection of IPS dispatches faxed or e-mailed to UN officials, UN missions and other receivers. Also available through UNDP's website.
- TerraViva monthly. A monthly selection of IPS dispatches published with the Council of Europe and mailed to some 4,000 recipients.
- Internet/WorldWideWeb services. Through different IPS web-sites and web-sites managed by other institutions, individual users can access the IPS product on Internet/ WorldWideWeb. In some instances this requires a paid subscription; in other instances' access is free, but only to older IPS copy.

#### 4.1.2 Other Main News Products

In addition to the core product described above, IPS produces a number of more specialised products related to its news service. Main items are:

- Conference TerraViva newspapers. Since 1992 IPS has produced comprehensive coverage of, and high-profile in-house conference newspapers at major UN-conferences.<sup>22</sup>
- Tierramérica. A bi-monthly development / environment newspaper supplement (funded by UNEP). This supplement is carried by some 10 major newspapers in Latin America.
- Ciudades del Mercosur. Weekly newsletter produced in collaboration with Mercosur.
- Derechos Humanos. Weekly bulletin produced with Brazilian Ministry of Justice.
- Fax Mercosur. A weekly fax newsletter in Portuguese, distributed to some 3,000 users in Brazil, produced with the state-run Agencia Estado, Brazil.
- ConflictWatch. A monthly magazine providing in-

<sup>22</sup> UNCED, Rio '92; WCHR, Vienna '93, ICPD, Cairo '94; WSSD, Copenhagen '95; 4th WCW, Beijing '95; 'Habitat', Istanbul '96; and World Food Summit, Rome '96. At some of these conferences the IPS conference paper has competed with other conference papers for attention.

depth analysis of armed conflict, early warning systems and peace building in Africa. Jointly produced by IPS Africa and Third World Network, Ghana.

#### 4.1.3 *Monitoring of Effect*

The outreach of the IPS news feature service is a main indicator of the performance of the agency. The number of media of different kinds that actually print or make other use of these features remains key to any assessment of the effect of the agency's activities.

At present, however, IPS's own monitoring systems allow only for partial assessments. Since the signing of the second Norwegian framework agreement (1992–1995), there has been no central unit within IPS assigned to the task of compiling and analysing the result of monitoring efforts in the different geographical regions. While several staff members at headquarters in Rome were previously keeping track of outreach data from all regions, this function has been eliminated as a cost-saving measure.

The main regional monitoring efforts are based on clippings from newspapers and magazines. In some regions/countries IPS stringers, correspondents or other associates will supply the regional centre of IPS with clippings from (some of) the local media. In other instances (Latin America, India) IPS pays professional agencies to monitor the media for IPS copy.

IPS staff in the regions will frequently enter data from these clippings on the IPS internal electronic communications system. In consequence, IPS writers in Africa, for instance, will soon have an indication of whether his or her feature was printed in the media. This could be in Australia, Venezuela or Norway. Hence the system is a helpful tool, especially for the morale of writers who would otherwise be without means of knowing whether their product was being used.

As a proper means of assessing the overall effect of the IPS core product, however, it has limited value. The compilation of clippings is relatively comprehensive in some regions, i.e. Latin America, but quite erratic in Africa and Asia. Also, it does not help one's assessment much to learn that a newspaper in, say, Canada printed a lot of IPS features if no additional data is provided. This information is of little worth without additional information as to whether this paper has a print-run of 500,000 or 500.

In total, however, indications from the different elements of monitoring are that the outreach of IPS news products is growing. Chapters 5 and 6 will detail this trend for southern Africa and Asia.

#### 4.2 **Project Activities**

During the years of the second Norwegian framework agreement (1992–1995) and beyond, a substantial part of the IPS income was derived from relatively short-term special projects that are additional to the core activity of the agency.

Major projects since 1992 have been a Danida/Sida/Unifem-funded three-year project «Strengthening the Gender Perspectives in IPS News Coverage» (world); a three-year UNDP-sponsored project Creation of Awareness on Sustainable Human Development»(Asia) and a Swiss-funded project to increase awareness of popular participation in local government (world). In 1997 Finnida has decided to fund a major increase in the environmental reporting of IPS in Africa. A lengthy list of other projects has been more short-term, some with a global scope while others have been specific to a single region.

These projects will often include a training component, allowing IPS to arrange workshops or seminars for IPS stringers and correspondents, sometimes in a combination with trainees from other institutions. These projects will also often commit IPS to produce coverage of the specific themes of the project during the project period.

A special category of projects is labelled «field coverage contract». This signals how a contract has been entered into with a sponsor to provide coverage of a specific theme or of the specific activities undertaken by the sponsor. IPS has entered into such contracts with a number of UN special agencies, including ILO, WHO, FAO, UNFPA, UNWRA, UNICEF and IOM, with the Italian government and with ECHO, ICA and CI. These contacts commit IPS journalists to write within a certain time frame articles on, for instance, FAO projects in Africa, using information from FAO and quoting FAO officials.

These projects have been of increasing financial importance to IPS as donor funding for core IPS programmes has dwindled. Like other recipients of donor aid, IPS has had to realise how much easier it is to raise funds for issue-related projects. This is with regard to the theme-

of-the-day («women», «human rights», «environment») than it is to raise funds for core programmes.<sup>23</sup>

It appears that all major projects have so far been compatible with the objectives of IPS in the overall sense. None of the project sponsors have had goals or objectives in conflict with those of IPS; more often they will work towards objectives easily compatible with those of IPS. In addition, projects are generally designed and suggested by IPS with IPS as primary implementing agency.

It seems evident, however, that continued growth in IPS dependence on relatively short-term and often issue-specific projects should be viewed with much concern. The «field coverage contracts» and similar commitments by IPS pose a threat to the overall credibility of IPS reporting.<sup>24</sup> It will, for instance, be difficult to trust IPS to deliver truthful reporting on a FAO project, when the report to be filed is part and parcel of a FAO funded drive to promote FAO information and FAO's image.

The threat to overall IPS credibility may not, as of yet, pose any serious challenge to outreach in southern Africa and Asia – but this may soon change. Even if close cooperation with the UN system will still be considered constructive in many corners in these regions, it does not tally with the more stringent, editorial views on media independence that is presently coming to the fore with the media in the South.

Also, it appears that continued reliance on project funds will detract from IPS's ability to increase timeliness and editorial focus of its core product. When important and still more scarce human resources are tied up in a variety of project commitments (14 different project currently for IPS Africa), the danger is that insufficient resources will be available to secure consolidation of quality and timeliness of IPS's core product.

In a summary of plans for 1996–1998, IPS maintains that «projects are a central part of its competitive advantage in the information market». IPS staff in Africa and Asia and at central level, however, are much aware

of the dilemmas caused by the project portfolio. In reality, most would rather concentrate their efforts on the core task – that of providing a timely and quality-conscious news-feature product. All concerned, however, are also apprehensive of the financial importance of the project commitments.

### 4.3 Communication Services

Since its early years IPS has offered editorial and technical services to institutions in the South with a desire to disseminate news and information. Technical and capacity building cooperation with such institutions (national news agencies in the South, for instance) has traditionally been regarded as an important IPS contribution to the development of communication.

Since the signing of the second Norwegian framework agreement, the main partners in this context have included:

- OPECNA, the information agency of OPEC. The product of this agency is distributed using IPS lines of communication.
- TIPS, a UN-sponsored project based on the same premises as IPS in Rome, used IPS lines of communication for an exchange of scientific and technological information in a South-South context.
- SID (Society for International Development), which is also based on IPS premises in Rome, produces several newsletters with IPS.
- Third World Network. IPS produces in cooperation with TWN a daily newsletter which is distributed to UN Missions in Geneva.
- The Group of 77 at the UN. IPS edits and distributes a liaison bulletin among the different chapters of this group.
- CONGO. IPS produces an ECOSOC-related newsletter in a joint venture with the Conference of NGOs that have consultative status with ECOSOC. IPS was granted consultative status with ECOSOC in 1991. The newsletter is currently suspended due to lack of funds.
- Also, IPS is involved in efforts to link into closer

<sup>23</sup> The trend has increased over the last years, but it is by no means a recent phenomenon. Already in 1989 an evaluation team (Hamelink, Ansah et al.) recommended a re-allocation of funds from these 'rather more fashionable pet-projects' to the financing of core-programmes, administrative and personnel items.

<sup>24</sup> In the USA IPS is still to some degree considered 'married' to the UN. This has had a marked effect on outreach and sales in the US media.

exchanges news providing agencies of a number of states in the Pacific.

With these as main components of the agency's communication services over the last years, it appears that this part of the IPS portfolio may no longer be crucial to the agency's pursuit of its main objectives. The need for the technical services of IPS has diminished greatly as technological developments in communications have rendered complex and expensive telex and other links useless and/or more affordable. Finally, cheaper links of communication are now so readily available that those available by IPS will not in any crucial way assist in the dissemination of South-South information, for instance, or in the marketing of important, development-oriented information.

During the years of the latest Norwegian framework agreement and beyond (1992–1995), IPS has projected a role for itself as a main provider of Internet/e-mail communication linkages for and between NGOs across the globe. In a sense, from having provided important support for the national news agencies in the South during their years of establishment, IPS seems now to have turned to a new constituency in civil society – much in line with overall political changes in the South.

This objective, however, has not yet been operationalised in a way that suggests any significant potential.<sup>25</sup> While IPS is an important provider of news feature coverage, it does not seem to have manifested itself as an important provider of Internet access and linkage for NGOs. Indeed, other institutions seem to be more expertly building capacities and outreach in this particular field. This seems to suggest that pursuance of new partnerships with such expert institutions may be a more probable conduit for development rather than new initiatives spearheaded by IPS.

#### 4.4 Cooperation with NGOs

Since the adoption of «IPS 2000» IPS has allocated increasing resources in a drive to forge links with the NGO community.

In this context, IPS follows three main lines of activity:

- Coverage of NGOs. IPS stringers and correspondents are systematically urged and trained to use NGOs as sources of information and to cover NGO activities.
- Marketing of IPS products to NGOs and their constituencies. Through special bulletins, special pricing structures for NGOs and through low-cost on-line arrangements IPS products are increasingly made available to NGOs.<sup>26</sup>  
On these two aspects IPS is making marked progress, as the more detailed descriptions of operations in southern Africa and Asia should show.
- Providing Internet / e-mail linkages to NGOs. As mentioned above, IPS is making little progress in this line of activity.

In general, the potential for outreach of IPS news service products via NGOs seems significant in Africa and in Asia. In particular in Asia, the growth of NGOs suggests that IPS could well expect to find a ready market for its contextualised news service products here. As one prominent NGO researcher / official in Asia writes:

«Democratization of information is a big factor in the growth and success of citizens» movements (...) it is safe to say that television, radio, newspapers and other forms of media have been important in shaping mass behaviour and in deciding the outcomes of dramatic social changes in Asia-Pacific. Certainly, media played a role in galvanising people's responses, in deterring dictators from engaging in mass slaughters in the Philippines, South Korea, Nepal, Bangladesh, Thailand and elsewhere, and even just letting people know what is happening in a far-flung forest. The extensive local, regional and international networks of NGOs and people's organizations serve as channels for information flow. These networks will continue to be crucial not only in spreading knowledge but also in strengthening solidarity across national borders».<sup>27</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Due not the least to a lack of allocation of resources to this line of activity.

<sup>26</sup> Since 1989 IPS has cooperated with the Association of Progressive Communication (APC). Through subscriptions to APC some 14,000 NGOs enjoy free access to IPS material with a 72-hour delay. In addition, two daily IPS news

items now feature on the 'OneWorld' website which is the central host to some 150 NGO-websites from across the globe.

<sup>27</sup> R. Serrano: Civil Society in the Asia-Pacific Region, 1994.

There are, however, some limitations to IPS's current abilities to exploit the potentials in the NGO communities. While overall policies and guidelines for this activity are largely in place, there are no operationalised plans for action in the regions. Hence, efforts to penetrate these markets remain somewhat ad hoc, with no systematic marketing efforts or needs-analysis made by IPS.

#### **4.5 Crisis of Management and Governance**

In the wake of the Trust Fund episode a crisis of management within IPS ensued. Sustained differences between a numerically small but influential group of regional personalities within IPS and the central management in Rome led to a deterioration of intra-agency

relations. In mid-1996 the IPS Director General, Dr. Roberto Savio, tendered his resignation but later agreed to continue in his post. Since then, however, two of the Regional Directors of IPS, Mr. Peter da Costa of IPS Africa, and Mr. Kunda Dixit of IPS Asia, have resigned.

Through an initiative of IPS Norway, international mediation in this crisis began and in May 1997 an agreement was reached between representatives of the two factions. A new Board of Directors of the governing IPS Association has been elected. Furthermore, the agreement states that IPS has now entered into a period of transition. No specific objectives or time frames for this period of transition have been specified, but it is understood that it will among other things lead to changes at managerial level.

## 5 Operations in Africa

IPS Africa, established in 1983 as an integral part of IPS' worldwide activities, operates from a regional headquarters in central Harare, Zimbabwe. A sub-regional office slated to coordinate a net of stringers in francophone Africa is under establishment in Benin.

The activities of IPS Africa cover sub-Saharan Africa. Northern Africa is coordinated by the European office of IPS.

### 5.1 Products and Outreach

At present the main products of IPS Africa are

- an average of four news features each weekday (plus one on Sundays). These feature stories are all routed onto the IPS world service and distributed to subscribers worldwide. As a result of the cost-saving limitations of stringer input and the «IPS 2000» policy to increase overall quality of output, the number of dispatches from IPS Africa is down by an estimated 50 per cent as compared to before 1996.
- one weekly feature is contributed to the IPS arts and entertainment feature service.
- a twice daily package of some 30 radio news items, ready for use in radio news broadcast. This service, provided directly to news rooms of the national broadcasting corporations in 10 southern African nations (SABA) by e-mail or fax, is funded by the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung until July 1997.
- A Kiswahili service of IPS, which provided translations of selected IPS features to Kiswahili media in east Africa was suspended in early 1997 as a cost saving measure.

#### 5.1.1 Outreach in Africa

The outreach of these products has grown gradually over the years of the Norwegian framework agreements

with IPS, with noticeable leaps made especially since 1995.

Publication reports, listing all newspaper clippings of IPS stories received from contact points in a number of African countries, show no noticeable decrease in the number of times stories filed by IPS Africa were actually reproduced in African print media. However, since the papers which print IPS dispatches today are different from the papers which printed IPS dispatches just three years ago, a closer analysis than that provided by the IPS publication reports is necessary to assess the actual effect with any amount of clarity.

The number of times feature news stories filed by IPS Africa are reprinted in the media outside Africa also seem largely unchallenged by the decrease in number of stories circulated from Africa. Although the exact reasons for this continued outreach despite the fall in the number of dispatches are uncharted, the trend can probably be attributed to a general increase in quality in the stories fielded from Africa.

Furthermore, it is reasonable to assume that this increase in overall quality is at least partly attributable to sustained training efforts of IPS Africa.

IPS outreach in Southern Africa is not at present achieved through subscriptions by individual media. No individual print media in Southern Africa presently have paid up subscriptions with IPS.<sup>28</sup>

The virtual absence of individual media subscribers, however, hides the fact that the prime growth in outreach of IPS news features over the period of Norwegian framework assistance has been achieved through other means of distribution. These are mainly electronic, accessing a larger number of media outlets through collective arrangements.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>28</sup> This differs somewhat from the situation in East and West Africa where some individual media have arrangements with the IPS offices in Lagos and Nairobi.

<sup>29</sup> Depending on the final destination of IPS copy, it may be routed directly from the regional IPS Africa headquarters in Harare to Internet-networks serving groups of end-users. Or from Harare via Internet/or X25 to a local IPS office, say in Dar es Salaam, from where IPS products are then faxed, mail or sometimes delivered by hand to either groups or individual media subscribers/end users.

These new distribution channels, including distribution to a network of radio outlets, have boosted IPS outreach in Africa significantly.

One noticeable result of the emphasis on electronic distribution is the cooperation between IPS Africa and MISA, the Media Institute of Southern Africa, entered into through a memorandum of agreement in 1994.<sup>30</sup>

Through MISA's electronic communications network MISANET, some 40 members of MISA have full access to all Africa related IPS dispatches. Subsequently, MISA-members are now among the most ardent users of IPS material in Africa. And while many of the newspapers within the MISA network have relatively small print runs, a number of them are highly influential in their respective markets, i.e. The Post (Zambia), The Namibian ( Namibia), The Weekly Mail & Guardian (South Africa), The Independent and the Financial Gazette (Zimbabwe). In April 1997 a new MISA chapter in Malawi reported that six print media, including the main newspapers in the capital Blantyre, as well as the Malawi Broadcasting Corporation had now begun utilizing IPS material through MISANET.

Economically, the agreement with MISA is of limited value. MISA pays a yearly fee of some 11.500 USD for a collective subscription to IPS only. As a means of boosting outreach without any added administrative burden, however, the MISA-arrangement appears highly beneficial to IPS.

Also significantly boosting outreach is the IPS contract with SABA, the Southern African Broadcasting Association, which was entered into in 1995. Through this contract, IPS has undertaken to establish and run a radio news service for the members of SABA, which are the national broadcasting corporations of the 12 SADC states. Through a regional head office in Harare, located on the same premises as IPS, this innovative radio news-service, SABANEWS, now provides (through fax or e-mail) two daily news bulletins containing some 30 ready-made «rip-and-read» news-stories to 10 of the 12

national broadcasting corporations in southern Africa (less Angola and Mauritius).

There is no consistent monitoring of the actual impact of the SABANEWS feed, but indications are that most of the 10 receiving national broadcasting corporations now rely, in some instances almost exclusively, on SABANEWS for the foreign news content of their daily news broadcasts. To IPS this has opened a very broad avenue to a large segment of the general public, both urban based and rural. SABANEWS estimates that 15 per cent of all news items in the two daily SABANEWS bulletins are IPS news features re-edited for radio consumption. Furthermore, the editor of SABANEWS is a long-time employee of IPS.

The SABANEWS mission statement corresponds directly with that of IPS: «If democracy is to take root and have meaning beyond the formal electoral process, people in Southern Africa must be in a position to understand the changes taking place around them. They must be enabled to take part actively in processes and decisions which affect them and make informed choices. Public broadcasting, in providing access to a wide range of information and ideas, serves as an instrument of popular empowerment.»<sup>31</sup>

SABA pays an annual subscription fee of 18,000 USD for the use of IPS copy. In addition, IPS receives a 12,000 USD annual management fee to run SABANEWS. IPS is currently negotiating with the European Commission a proposal to replicate the SABANEWS concept in East Africa, francophone Africa, the Caribbean, and the Pacific.

IPS' working agreement with the South African Press Association, SAPA, which runs the national news agency in South Africa, has also significantly boosted outreach, even if only primarily in South Africa. As from 1996 SAPA has received each day five Africa-related stories from IPS. SAPA picks three of these for distribution on SAPA's own news service. Through this channel, IPS reaches almost all established news outlet in

<sup>30</sup> MISA is, in short, an association of primarily privately owned media in southern Africa. MISA has gained substantial influence on media policies in the entire SADC region. MISA organises training seminars, policy workshops, urgent-action campaigns and, shortly, credit schemes for media development.

<sup>31</sup> SABANEWS, an operational report, by Accedoga P. Chile-di, Editor, Sabanews, for the 1997 SABA annual meeting, April 1997.

South Africa and a small number of SAPA subscribers in the media also outside South Africa. SAPA pays a fee of 2500 USD per annum for this service.

These three main examples, and especially the cooperation agreements with MISA and SABA, illustrates how IPS Africa have pursued a number of «strategic partnerships» during the period under the Norwegian framework agreements. This strategy, with the former regional director for IPS Africa, Mr. Peter da Costa as its main proponent, meant to forge partnerships with relevant institutions in the region. It also implies that IPS Africa – when relevant – would let such new partners take the main lead in joint ventures. This strategy has for some time been the subject of discussion within IPS. Sceptics highlight the potential setbacks this strategy could have for IPS fund-raising, since project would no-longer be exclusively IPS projects, and since money raised would now on more occasions have to be shared with new partners.

Other developments during the years of Norwegian framework assistance have provoked direct set-backs for the outreach of IPS Africa. As a general move to meet the challenges presented by liberalisation of the media in Africa, IPS has dissolved most of the working relationships with the national news agencies established in the early 1980's (see 5.6). While this was in the overall picture a constructive adjustment of priorities, it had obvious drawbacks. In Zimbabwe and Zambia, for instance, IPS material is no longer printed in the main, national dailies (The Times of Zambia and The Herald and The Chronicle in Zimbabwe). These papers, with daily print runs far larger than any other print media in these countries, automatically received the IPS feed through their respective news agencies. And they did not take up individual subscriptions to IPS when links between the agencies and IPS were severed.

### 5.1.2 Project Commitments

IPS Africa is currently committed to some 14 different projects (nine specific to IPS Africa, five which form part of IPS' global commitments). Through six of these projects the journalists writing for IPS Africa are committed to include in their production of features for the IPS world service a certain number of news-features on a given theme within a set time frame.

Through an agreement between IPS and FAO, for instance, IPS Africa is committed to produce 10 news

features per year about food and agriculture; through a IPS agreement with UNFPA IPS Africa is committed to produce 75 articles on «population and development» in 1997 – etc. The senior staff of IPS Africa on the whole welcomes the current commitments as relevant to IPS Africa, and they do not feel particularly bothered that these commitments compel IPS to write on certain subjects even if no events or particular developments would otherwise call for journalistic coverage.

These arrangements, even if lucrative, presents an obvious threat to the relevance, timeliness and quality of the IPS Africa product. Also, it depletes to a noticeable degree the scarce manpower available for the core operations of producing independent, alternative/supplementary news features.

## 5.2 Staff and Management

IPS Africa is staffed by

- four full-time correspondents (Lagos, Nairobi, Harare and Johannesburg).
- some 20 stringers
- one Regional Editor, who edits copy from stringers and holds overall responsibility for the editorial output,
- one Senior Editor, who also edits stringer copy and serves as main trainer vis-à-vis stringers and correspondents (see 5.6)
- one Editor / translator
- one Technical Director, responsible for IPS communications on the continent, linkages with and training of stringers
- one Projects and Marketing Officer,
- three administrative / logistical staff.

The former regional director of IPS Africa resigned in April 1997 in the cause of a crisis of governance within the IPS Association. The resignation of the regional director, who lend a high degree of dynamism to IPS Africa, much increased the desire of the remaining staff to see conclusive solutions to the crisis of governance in IPS. It should be regarded as an important, positive sign that in June 1997 he was elected to the Board of Directors of the IPS Association as the African representative.

IPS management has decided to leave the post as director of IPS Africa temporarily vacant – at least until the end of 1997. Management tasks of IPS Africa are pres-

ently divided between the Regional Editor and the Marketing and Projects officer in Harare, and the IPS Projects Coordinator, who is based in Johannesburg.<sup>32</sup>

Four full time correspondents and some 20 freelance «paid-per-piece» stringers (mainly in anglophone Africa) supply news-features to the Harare desk of IPS Africa, mainly through e-mail. From Harare the edited Africa dispatches are made available to IPS subscribers in Africa and worldwide simultaneously.

The editorial staff members of IPS Africa (editors, correspondents and stringers) have worked with the agency on average just less than four years. This figure covers, on the one side, a core of «old hands» who have worked consistently for the agency for as much as 15 years – and a group of 11 stringers who joined IPS only in 1996 or 1997. In general, the rate of staff turnover is not considered problematic by the senior staff in Harare.

But with the restrictions on the spending on stringers (introduced with the «IPS 2000» policy and later re-enforced) the potential income of IPS stringers in Africa is now strictly limited. Stringers in Africa are paid 75-100 USD per story, but each stringer will be able to sell only a relatively small number of stories per month. The task of keeping qualified stringers motivated is therefore becoming more difficult. In Zambia, for instance, two of the country's better journalists were at once stage both working as stringers for IPS. Today there is no IPS stringer in Zambia.

IPS Africa has a physical presence (correspondent or stringer) in 21, or only just less than half the African nations. This will often restrict IPS' ability to report from countries where there is no IPS presence. IPS is, for instance, without a permanent presence in the former Zaire, and chose not to pay the substantial costs of dispatching a correspondent during the recent civil war and the subsequent change of government in that country. Concerted efforts were made by IPS staff both in Africa and elsewhere to provide IPS subscribers with contextualised Zaire-coverage, but the absence of a field reporter in Zaire was recognized as a severe handicap.

<sup>32</sup> The former director of IPS Africa is also still assisting IPS Africa as an unpaid adviser from his new post as advisor on development communication with the UN Economic Commission for Africa, Addis Ababa.

Although a number of IPS reporters already cover more than one country, there is a strong desire within IPS to increase the number of stringers in Africa. One result of this, is the planned establishment in 1997 of a new network of stringers in francophone Africa, which is expected to manifestly increase IPS' Africa geographical outreach. News features generated by this francophone addition to IPS Africa will be marketed in francophone Africa alongside other feed from IPS and – when translated into English at the Harare office – to the rest of the world. The francophone network is financed by the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the period 1997-1999.

In total, it appears that the staff of IPS Africa is currently working more than full-time to maintain the present level of production, training, project management and overall network management. However competent and dedicated, at the current level of resourcing, it is not likely that this staff will be in a position to undertake any comprehensive new, strategic planning processes, marketing initiatives or increased monitoring of the effects of current activities.

### **5.3 Capacity Building in Africa**

#### *5.3.1 Objectives*

The implicit objectives of the training activities of IPS Africa are to increase the basic, journalistic skills of IPS stringers and correspondents and implant in this core target group the IPS editorial priorities and values.

In addition, IPS Africa implicitly assumes a greater responsibility for upgrading of African journalism in as much as it readily accepts that a number of those who receiving training through IPS will go on to other jobs in the media industry or couple their work for IPS with work for other employers.

#### *5.3.2 Target Group*

The main target group of the training efforts of IPS Africa remain its own stringers and correspondents. In June 1997, the IPS stringers and correspondents consisted of 5 women and 19 men.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>33</sup> Some IPS stringers write for IPS more regularly than others; some are considered 'closer' to IPS than others, but they are all, in principle, part of the target group of the training efforts.

In reality, there is no distinction between stringers/correspondents and «trainees», but the amount of training that each person receives varies a lot according to need. Most of the trainees are relatively young with little prior experience.

### 5.3.3 Training Strategy

Training and awareness-raising within the editorial staff of IPS Africa is pursued, as a matter of IPS principle, through on-the-job training (as opposed to a more «classroom-based» approach).

This should not be confused, however, with a mere «learning-by-doing» approach. The methodology of «on-the-job-training» as applied by IPS Africa entails that the day-to-day work of stringers and correspondents will be consistently coupled with feed-back from a qualified trainer in a joint production and learning process.

The editorial staff in Harare on receiving copy from stringers and correspondents will in most instances enter into further (often on-line) exchanges with the reporter, explaining weaknesses, flaws as well as strengths in copy delivered. Then, the IPS editors will often ask the stringer/correspondent to furnish additional clarification, additional information, additional sources or increased accuracy following the guidelines provided by the trainer in Harare.

This approach of IPS Africa often becomes a mix of emphasis on training and an emphasis on speed. In some instances, the demand for speed inherent in any news organisation will have overriding priority, leaving less room for dialogue with the stringer/correspondent. In other instances, the demand for speed will be less relevant, and more effort can go into exchanges with the writer.

As a specifically elaborated input to the training programme, the Senior Editor with IPS Africa has coordinated international IPS efforts to develop tools for more gender sensitive reporting. New ways of implanting gender sensitivity within the corps of IPS stringers

in Africa have been explored and a coherent methodology for future efforts in this specific field of journalism training is being established. In June 1997 IPS editors from Asia-Pacific and Latin America met in Harare to study these experiences of IPS Africa. The accomplishments of IPS Africa on this specific point can well be considered a major achievement.<sup>34</sup>

Since 1994 on-the-job training has been supplemented by a week-long annual meeting of all IPS Africa editorial staff, where elements of training form part of the agenda.

Supplementary to the daily, on-the-job training activities, training has also been a main and sometimes sole component in issue-related projects involving IPS Africa. In this context, stringers and correspondents of IPS have gathered, for instance, for workshops designed to increase their awareness on human rights issues, the environment, gender issues, the role of NGOs and other themes central to the IPS mission. Workshops on media and promotion of human rights were held, for instance, in Southern and in francophone Africa and in East Africa. Likewise, in early 1997, IPS signed a major agreement with the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs which earmarks significant resources for a three year training-programme focused on environmental reporting within IPS Africa.

On the technical side, stringers and correspondents of IPS Africa are subjected to a separate training scheme enabling them to communicate via computer with IPS in Harare on Internet/e-mail or SITA/X25. IPS Africa's technical director has developed a fairly easily digested disc-based software package for this purpose. A printed training manual covering these manoeuvres was also done by the IPS Africa and is now distributed to all staff.

In August 1996 IPS reporters gathered for a week-long seminar to develop a «news coverage agenda» for the period of September-December 1996; an interesting sign that more strategic prioritizing of coverage is now pursued.

<sup>34</sup> Many journalism trainers have debated for long hours how journalists could be not only sensitised to gender issues but also taught how to implement in everyday journalism their increased understanding of gender issues. So far, however, few have been as practical and 'hands-on-persistent' as IPS Africa in this field.

#### 5.3.4 Staffing and Resourcing of Capacity Building

There is no specific budget or accounting for the training activities of IPS Africa. Training activity is intertwined with the general operations of the office. To the extent this is needed to meet donor demands a separation of costs specifying the amount spent on training activities will be made as a separate accounting procedure.

The costs of the core day-to-day training activity is that of the time spend by editors on these activities. In addition, the training editors will occasionally have to spend additional time preparing for workshops and seminars, but most often the costs of such preparation will be covered by specific grants for the specific workshops.

There are no additional costs directly resulting from the training activity. When IPS in its funding requests to the MFA has specified an additional cost as «distribution of trainees reports» this in reality covers the ordinary communications costs involved in putting stringer copy onto the IPS world service, reflecting that this copy is a result of a process with a training component.

The training within IPS Africa is undertaken by the three editors in Harare with the Senior Editor as the main coordinator.

The process is highly time consuming. While each member of the target group is assured of personalized instructions, the methodology of «on-the-job training» leaves no room for collective approaches. IPS estimates that on the whole the three editorial staff in Harare spend just more than half their working hours (1.6 out of every 3 hours) actually editing and writing copy for the IPS news feature service. The remaining hours (1.4 out of 3) are spend on training related activity.

IPS Africa does not include out-side resource persons in this day-to-day on-the-job training.

A significant part of Norwegian framework assistance has been earmarked for the core training activities of IPS Africa, with the designation being «editors' time for training». In a process of «on-the-job-training», however, it is inherently difficult to distinguish with any significant clarity between the time spent on «production» and time spent on «training». Consequently, it seems that continued insistence on a such break-down will remain without much anchoring in quantifiable

monitoring and that it should therefore be avoided or substituted with a more general designation of funds for training purposes.

#### 5.3.5 Monitoring and effect

There is at present no persistent monitoring of the effects of the training processes within IPS Africa. It is assumed through the general increase in outreach of the IPS product and other ad hoc indications that the training efforts do have a profound effect, but no there is no systematic input on which to base a more detailed assessment.

Since most training-related communication between editors and stringers in Africa is in writing (either fax or e-mail), it is generally recorded and kept for future reference. In this way a useful point of departure has been established, but the file of communications is not currently utilized for further analysis of training needs or for systematic assessment results.

This is not to say that IPS Africa is without means of recording developments in the general capabilities of the stringers / correspondent. But these recordings are mainly trough observations made by the individual editors and not recorded in a way that allows for any further analysis or for a stringent continuation of training efforts in case any disruption of the current relationship between trainers and »trainees« should occur.

IPS Africa has a formal working relationship with the Mass Communication Department of the Harare Polytechnic, with journalism students coming for internships at IPS on a regular basis. Two of the four full-time IPS Africa correspondents are former interns from the Polytechnic. IPS Africa has no formal relationship with other basic journalism training institutions elsewhere on the continent.

In conclusion, it seems evident that the experience in journalism training now accumulated within IPS Africa is a valuable resource and that on-going training efforts do make use of this resource to a reasonable degree. However, it seems equally evident that the formulation of a more stringent set of objectives for these efforts, based on more precise analysis of training needs within the organisation, may well enhance effect. Also, it appears that a more systematic monitoring of effects of the core training activity would assist in refining methodology and content. Such monitoring could possibly be

achieved through relatively simple means like regular questionnaires to the target group, regular assessments of stringer copy by non-IPS resource persons etc.

In addition, the experience of IPS Africa in the field of journalism training could well be shared with other institutions of journalism training in Africa – possibly through paid contributions by IPS. IPS, through its comprehensive experience with hands-on training in Africa, would most likely be able to provide valuable input to several existing training institutions on the continent, not the least in South Africa.<sup>35</sup>

#### **5.4 IPS Responses to Democratization in Southern Africa**

During the years of Norwegian framework assistance to IPS profound changes towards increased popular participation in government have been brought about in a majority of the states of Southern Africa. This is the case, in varying degrees, in Namibia, Tanzania, Malawi, South Africa, Zambia, Mozambique, Lesotho, Madagascar and Angola.

In all of these countries the moves towards a greater degree of democracy have been coupled, and often markedly assisted by, a proliferation of independent media and, in most instances, also by a consequent professionalising of the government controlled media. Furthermore, this has been followed by a vigorous growth of the number of NGOs and by increased engagement in development by civil society as a whole.

These developments have created a number of challenges for IPS and in particular for IPS Africa. Some of the responses of IPS to these challenges have been assessed by the review team as an indicator of overall IPS responsiveness to change.

In particular, the review team has assessed the reflection of democratization in Southern Africa:

- in IPS coverage and
- in IPS outreach / marketing

<sup>35</sup> Several training institutions in South Africa, The Institute for the Advancement of Journalism and the Technicon in Natal for instance, have worked for years to develop proper tools for training in 'development journalism' and related

#### **5.4.1 IPS Coverage**

In overall terms IPS coverage of Africa as compared to IPS coverage of other regions in the world has increased in the 1990's. In a comprehensive content analysis of the IPS new feature service in 1995 (see 7.1) the author noted how more than 20 per cent of all dispatches on the IPS English news feature service now originated from Africa. (The comparative figure for dispatches from Associated Press and Reuters was 7 per cent).

The author noted how the earlier dominance by dispatches from Latin America in the English version IPS world service had been replaced by «much expanded coverage of Africa, Asia and Europe».

This trend was further illustrated when the author computed all references to nations in the total IPS feed from a certain period of time. He found that 23.6 per cent of all references made to identified nations by IPS writers in this period was made to nations in Africa. In Southern Africa especially Namibia and, less surpassingly, South Africa had received significant attention by IPS in this period.

These observations seem to reflect fairly directly the investment made by IPS in coverage of especially South Africa.

Coverage of the democratization process in South Africa was made a priority by IPS Africa in 1993/1994. The position of a full time correspondent in Johannesburg (one of four in Africa) was established in this period.

In Mozambique IPS retained for the early part of the 1990's regular coverage from two very competent stringers of the civil war there and of the initial stages of the developments that eventually ended the war, paved the way for multipartism, elections etc. In Namibia and Zambia, equally competent stringers were providing IPS with copy during important stages of the independence process.

Today, however, these stringers in both Zambia and Namibia no longer provide IPS with copy and the agen-

subjects. Most of these institutions are keen to include other partners in their work. The Nordic-SADC Journalism Centre, based in Mozambique, also seems an obvious partner for IPS in this context.

cy has yet to establish sustained contact with equally competent replacements, mainly because there is no money available to attract new stringers.

In other countries in the region where equally fundamental changes have taken place, coverage has remained erratic throughout. This is the case especially for Angola, Madagascar and Malawi.

This seems to indicate that coverage has not necessarily always been reflective of editorial policies, but occasionally also subject to less stringent resource allocation (from Rome and from Harare) and coincidence.<sup>36</sup>

In a more subtle reflection of the democratization process the training efforts of IPS Africa in this period started to include the promotion of a more comprehensive understanding of the role of the media in the promotion of human rights. Through the day-to-day on-the-job training described above, and through specific workshops for this purpose, editors with IPS Africa directed stringers and correspondent towards sources, themes and priorities more directly involving them in the issues of human rights.

#### 5.4.2 *IPS Outreach / Marketing*

When IPS began operating in Africa in the early 1980's it had no choice but to sign agreements with government controlled national news agencies. In some instances this was the only legal option for dissemination; in most countries in southern Africa these agencies were the only media institutions who presented any real possibilities for IPS. Through these agreements IPS achieved new outreach for its product while simultaneously providing training, technical assistance etc. to the agencies. This seemed an important part of IPS's mission in the South at the time.

However, through the agreements with IPS the national news agencies of these countries had retained the powers to choose what part of the IPS feed should be distributed to the media and what parts should not. This was clearly not commensurate with the IPS objectives and increasingly inappropriate in the light of the general development towards a more pluralistic media in the region. Also, the increasingly out-dated technology of

these agencies made distribution of IPS feed cumbersome and inefficient.

In some instances, as in Nigeria where IPS is still compelled by law to distribute through the national news agency, IPS still retain these linkages, but in Southern Africa – in Mozambique, Zambia, Zimbabwe and Tanzania – IPS deliberately dissolved relations with the agencies in the early part of the 1990's. Instead, IPS looked for means to effectively access the independent media now prevalent in most countries in the region. The establishment of closer relations to MISA in 1994, was a direct result of this major policy shift.

Meanwhile, however, as mentioned above, IPS lost outreach through some of the main daily papers in Zambia, Zimbabwe and Mozambique which had previously relied on the national news agencies to provide IPS feed free of charge. IPS has not since regained this important territory.

The establishment of SABANEWS in 1995 should also be seen in the light of the continuing moves in the region towards greater popular participation in governance. This move by IPS Africa reflects the understanding that although largely government controlled, the national broadcasting corporations in the region still offer by far the most effective means of outreach to the greater majority of the peoples of southern Africa.

Thus, it seems clear that IPS Africa has been instrumental in increasing IPS coverage of Africa and of important aspects of the democratization process in Southern Africa. IPS coverage of the political processes has increased noticeably in the important, independent media in Africa and also in media outside the continent. The allocation of resources to a full-time correspondent in South Africa seems a very reasonable priority in the regional context.

In the negative, it remains clear that IPS has not been in a position to provide sustained coverage of all major aspects of democratization in the region. This seems primarily due to inadequate resourcing of IPS Africa, but it could possibly have been addressed through a more elaborate regionalized strategy, prioritizing and resource allocation.

Madagascar. Rather, logistical and monetary constraints have been allowed to prevent more thorough coverage of these nations.

<sup>36</sup> IPS, whether in Rome or Harare, have not been unaware, of course, of the depth of events in Malawi, Angola and Ma-

The dissolving of agreements with the government-controlled news agencies and the subsequent targeting of the independent media seems in a very constructive sense reflective of the democratization process in southern Africa. The establishment of SABANEWS furthermore illustrates a pragmatic and even visionary response to the challenges presented by the democratization process in the region. The concurrent loss of territory within mass circulation government newspapers, and the absence of a contingency plan to re-access these papers, however, again raises the question of a more stringent, regionalized strategy and resource allocation.

### 5.5 Cooperation with NGOs in Africa

In consistency with overall IPS strategies, IPS Africa pursues cooperation with NGOs, African as well as international. In its request for Norwegian programme support for 1996-1998 IPS described the background for these activities as follows:

«For a number of reasons, including repression, poor telecommunications and lack of staff capacity, many NGOs in Africa still do not have the capacity to advocate what they should. They have little skill to feed information into mass media channels. The media (for some similar reasons including self-censorship) do not recognise human rights and development issues as fundamental to their news agenda. The social, economic, and political situation in African countries is however in constant flux, with more and more agitation by civil society for accountable government. This process of empowerment is accompanied by increasingly sophisticated, and often brutal, state repression (...) The fact remains that making information available in a timely and digestible fashion is a sine qua non for an empowered society, and links must be strengthened, or where they do not exist build, between the mass media (...) and NGO activists. With the development of telematics and new low-cost, secure channels such as electronic mail, and with the increasing globalisation of world issues, opportunities exist to strengthen this media/civil society alliance for the furtherance of legal and human rights objectives.»<sup>37</sup>

<sup>37</sup> Letter from IPS Deputy Managing Director, Vic Sutton, to MFA. to Mr. J:D: Hutchison, 7.5.96.

Through joint workshops and other ventures with NGOs, stringers and correspondents with IPS Africa have established working relationships with NGO staff and activists otherwise uncommon in the journalistic fraternity. Links have been established in particular with African NGOs concerned with human rights and/or gender issues.

Through in-house training and other exchanges with IPS reporters the editors of IPS Africa often stress the need for NGO sources in news stories and of IPS coverage of NGO activities/civil society. In addition, the IPS editors in Harare have on some occasions been able to sell IPS services to NGOs, primarily by assisting in media and PR related training.

IPS Africa is currently involving a number of gender-oriented NGOs, African and international, in a networking project into which IPS editorial products are also delivered. However, technical difficulties with e-mail/Internet connections have caused progress to be uneven.

Finally, IPS is developing an on-line system, whereby NGO and other end-users in Africa can access the IPS feed via e-mail at minimum cost. This development is achieved through partnership with the South Africa based non-profit Internet provider/training institution, Sangonet.<sup>38</sup>

At this stage, it seems clear that general scarcity of resources has been a serious obstacle to further penetration of the NGO community. It does appear, however, that recognition of IPS in the NGO community has grown considerably and that sustained progress in this field would be achieved with relatively little additional effort. Progress would be aided through the formulation of a more precise, regional marketing strategy and plan of action based more distinct analysis of the needs of NGOs in Africa and of the regional objectives of IPS Africa.

<sup>38</sup> In principle, all NGOs capable of paying a hefty telephone bill, a computer, and modem can access IPS via the Internet / WorldWideWeb. But this is time-consuming and relatively expensive. Instead, IPS will now offer a more inexpensive dial-up facility based on e-mail.

## 5.6 Resourcing and Marketing

The core expenditure of IPS Africa in 1996 was 585,834 USD dollars. Norwegian programme assistance met some 25 per cent of this expenditure.

In addition to grants from the Norwegian framework agreement IPS has received programme grants earmarked for IPS Africa from the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. A new framework agreement with a fiscal value of some 400,000 Finnish mark per year for the period 1997-1999 was entered into by IPS and the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs in early 1997. This grant is earmarked to the improvement of IPS Africa's coverage of environmental issues.

Sales of IPS products from the Harare office of IPS amounted to some 24,000 USD, or some four per cent of the 1996 expenditure, with expectations only marginally higher for 1997.<sup>39</sup> Apart from the 11,500 in incomes from MISA, the South African Press Association (the South African news agency) paid some 3100 USD in subscriptions to IPS; other main subscribers were Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (Dakar) and the London-based newspaper, *The Voice*. Incomes from SABA, the Southern African Broadcasting Association is not rubricated as «sales».

While still more IPS offices in Latin America are transformed into autonomous profit centres operating under franchising agreements with IPS, such arrangements are generally deemed less relevant in Africa. The Lagos and Nairobi offices of IPS do operate as franchises, generating own incomes from sales of IPS products and ser-

vices and receiving relatively smaller subsidies from IPS Third World, but most other IPS points in Africa would not at present be likely to generate incomes sufficient to make franchising arrangements viable.

However, this situation could change within a relatively short period of time. With economic growth continuing in more African countries, still more African media are making profits. New markets are opening to IPS products, and it is not unlikely that IPS central management will encourage more IPS staff in Africa to work under franchise agreements as this mode of operation is seen by IPS to be both cost-saving and sales-promoting.

The senior staff at IPS Africa recognizes the absence of a clear regional marketing strategy / business plan for IPS sales and image boosting activities in the continent. While the more obvious IPS allies in the development-oriented NGO community are now being targeted, other strata of society, noticeably the business community, the financial sector, libraries and academia, are not currently covered by IPS marketing. Earlier plans to market a financial and economic news service in Africa have not materialised; neither have plans to include more sellable, contextualised sports coverage in the IPS Africa feed.

This lack of a more strategic marketing impetus corresponds with the slightly amateurish «grassroots» image that some observers and sections of the African media community still connect to IPS Africa – even when they readily attest to the widely recognized improvement of IPS' editorial product.

<sup>39</sup> Sales here include income from MISA, but not from SABA. Other incomes from sales in East and West Africa are handled by IPS offices in Lagos and Nairobi.

## 6 Operations in Asia

IPS Asia-Pacific (IPS Asia in the following) is the youngest addition to the IPS global network. An India bureau of IPS was opened in 1981 with a more regional «IPS Asia» opening from a headquarters in Colombo 1987. In 1989 the Asian regional headquarters was moved to Manila.

A sub-regional centre for the handling of IPS south Asia operates from New Delhi. IPS production, sales and project activities in this part of Asia are coordinated from New Delhi under supervision from the IPS Asia regional office in Manila.

### 6.1 Products and Outreach

The main products of IPS Asia are

- a daily average of four news feature articles (plus two on Sundays). Due mainly to financial restraints this figure is down some 50 per cent as compared to pre-1996 levels. The news features are all entered onto the IPS world service. They are written by IPS stringers in Asia and edited by the regional editor in Manila or by the sub-regional editor in New Delhi. In 1994, IPS Asia produced 1706 news features for the IPS world service. In 1995 the figure was 1723, in the first half of 1996 it was 805.
- one weekly news feature for the IPS Arts & Entertainment package
- a fortnightly bulletin, Inter Press Service Features, which packs eight or nine news features from the IPS world service, related cartoons and one or two items from the IPS columnist service. This package is printed and mailed to subscribers. Efforts to put this service on-line to e-mail subscribers are on-going, with two subscribers currently receiving on-line.
- monthly, translated packages of IPS features in Thai, Bahasa Indonesia, Mandarin, Bengali, Tamil, Nepali and Hindi. Translators in Bangkok, Jakarta, Dacca, Beijing etc. receive the «IPS Features» by mail, translate and then distributes to end-users in

their home constituencies. End-users of these translations receive them free of charge. The translations are made possible through a UNDP-sponsored project on sustainable human development, supported also by NOVIB and run by IPS. The project comes to an end in June 1997. A search for further funding is on-going.

- a weekly selection of 10-15 features from the IPS English world service made by the sub-regional office for South Asia in New Delhi. This bulletin serves as additional input for the monthly translated packages in India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Nepal.
- an e-mail delivery service, «IPS Interline». This will deliver to subscribers the four daily news features produced by IPS Asia plus all other IPS news features with a direct bearing on Asian affairs.<sup>40</sup>

IPS Asia presently has 16 paying media subscribers. Nine of these paying subscribers receive the «IPS Features» pack. Two have full subscriptions to the IPS world service, while four have subscriptions to «IPS Interline». In addition, four NGOs have paid subscriptions to IPS products.

#### 6.1.1 Outreach in Asia

Through paid subscriptions, IPS Asia currently has a regular outreach in the main English papers in Bangladesh, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Nepal, Thailand, Pakistan and the United Arab Emirates. In the Philippines two smaller, but influential dailies, are also paying subscribers.

The list of paying subscribers does not, however, paint a full picture of IPS outreach through the established media in Asia. This list does not cover, for instance, the agreement reached with «The South China Morning Post», an influential daily in Hong Kong. Since 1996, this paper has received «IPS Features Pack» free of charge, but on the condition that IPS is paid a fee whenever the paper actually prints IPS material. In an-

<sup>40</sup> A news feature written in Montevideo, for instance, with relevance to an Asian audience will be coded 'Asia' by the author. It will then automatically travel to a computer in

Manila and then be transferred to the e-mail address of the subscriber, say, The Nation, in Bangkok.

other instance, the Bhutanese newspaper, Kuensel, the only one in Bhutan, regularly prints IPS features. Kuensel, however, does not pay a subscription fee. The paper is considered a «prime target» of IPS, which provides its service free of charge. In a third instance, in Madras, the daily paper of «BusinessLine» receives a weekly list of IPS stories from New Delhi, chooses one or two, after which copy is faxed to Madras and payment made.

The list of paying subscribers does not take into account either the substantial outreach achieved through the translations of IPS features and columns into other languages than English. These translations, some done since 1993, are instrumental in bringing the «IPS Features» (and cartoons) to a host of print media as well as electronic media, community radios and NGOs also in markets outside the capital cities of Asia. Clippings received from Bangladesh, Nepal, Indonesia and India indicate that the «kill ratio» for stories provided to the vernacular press is often as high as for those provided to the English-language papers. The monthly package of IPS features translated into Hindi is distributed to some 50 media and 50 NGOs in India.<sup>41</sup>

While the translations have so far brought no monetary income to IPS Asia, plans to charge a fee from end-users in the vernacular media are now under consideration – especially for the more affluent markets in Thailand and Indonesia.

One particularly significant development of the translations was the opening of a Mandarin translation service in December 1996. A journalist with the semi-governmental «Chinese Forum for Environmental Journalists» now translates «IPS Features» into Mandarin and distributes these translations to a 50 print media and NGOs in China. There has been no systematic monitoring of the effect of this distribution, but the potential is obvious.<sup>42</sup>

The total cost of all Asian translations of «IPS Features» is currently some 2000 USD per month.

<sup>41</sup> The kill ratio indicates how many times a single dispatch was printed in the media.

<sup>42</sup> Ideally, the next step would be to make the Mandarin translations available to the numerous 'ethnic' Chinese media in other Asian countries – either by electronic means, ordinary mail or otherwise. The potential market for such a Mandarin service spans not only Taiwan, Thailand, Bangkok, Singapore, Brunei and other Asian nations with signif-

Also not included in the list of paying subscribers is the 10-year old arrangement in India, where the English IPS world service is delivered online to UNI, United Press of India, a semi-governmental news agency linked to more than 1000 media in India. Each day, UNI will select three to four IPS features and forward to all UNI subscribers. While this arrangement brings little income to IPS, and while it is essentially a result of restrictive legislation, compelling foreign agencies to distribute through a local agent, the outreach achieved by IPS through UNI is very large (and well documented, since IPS pays a professional bureau to monitor a large number of Indian media).

Finally, it should be noted that a number of end-users are not known to IPS. IPS has entered into an agreement with the Association for Progressive Communication (APC) which allows some 14,000 NGOs and media free across the globe access to the full IPS feed. Especially in Asia, where computers and Internet access are widening by the hour, this «free» version of IPS will presumably be a growing difficulty for IPS sales. Already, IPS Asia estimates a «loss» of sales in Australia of some 2000 USD per year. Here, several potential end-users simply prefer the cheaper option through APC to a full-price subscription to IPS.<sup>43</sup>

Publication reports from Asia, listing all newspaper clippings received by IPS Asia, indicate that media in Asia which do receive IPS material generally make good use of it. For instance, the March 1997 report indicates how «Kuensel» in Bhutan printed nine IPS features during that month, three of which were accompanied by an IPS cartoon. «The Observer» in Bangladesh printed 15 IPS features during that month. «The Jakarta Post», the largest English paper in Indonesia, printed 16, six of which ran either on the front page or otherwise prominently positioned.

IPS Asia recorded 3692 clippings of articles filed from either Manila or New Delhi in 1994. In 1995 the figure was 3655, with the first half of 1996 netting some 1577.<sup>44</sup>

icant Mandarin speaking communities but also the growing Chinese communities in, for instance US and Australia.

<sup>43</sup> The APC subscription provides an income to IPS of USD 40,000 per year.

<sup>44</sup> Figures culled from 'Final Report, Creation of Awareness on Sustainable Human Development Project', Jakarta, 1996.

The value of these figures, however, is questionable. IPS estimates that the clippings represent about half of all instances where a IPS story from Asia is printed, but this estimate is difficult to assess. Any real assessment of effect would also have to be accompanied by, for instance, the print runoff the media in question.<sup>45</sup>

It seems obvious that the obstacles to IPS sales and penetration of the media in Asia will remain formidable. The editorial policies of the media in Asia are often decided along highly political, and less journalistic criteria and on a belief that certain «Asian values» dictate journalistic restraint. As the former regional director for IPS Asia writes:

«These values are supposed to reflect the greater importance that «Eastern» societies attach to the rights of the community than to the rights of individuals, the need for consensus and harmony over dissension and discord, the need for the media to help the state rather than play an adversarial role (...) Unfortunately, the term «Asian values» has also become a slogan for authoritarian rulers in the region to keep the lid on the press. It is not just politically blasphemous stories that are frowned upon, environmental journalism and features questioning prevalent development models can be hazardous as well. Journalists have been jailed or harassed for reports on illegal logging, political-business collusion, investigative pieces on shady fisheries licences or the environmental costs of mining.»<sup>46</sup>

Noticeably, there is often as much political bias and censorship within the younger independent media, sprung up in newly democratized states, as in the older, more established media:

«The press in some new-found democracies have crossed over into overt point-of-view journalism. (...) Blatant flag-waving, amateur and sycophantic coverage made these media simply reincarnations of the shameless party organs that they were in previous lives. Their newspapers turned into mouthpieces of the power centres that owned them (...) It will take time for the media in

these countries to attain maturity, so that pluralism, rule of law and the role of the fourth estate can be defined and accepted.»<sup>47</sup>

These characteristics of the politics of Asian media and the increasing commercialization of mainstream journalism also in this region will continue to work against the objectives of IPS. Even in this light, however, it seems safe to conclude that the outreach of IPS Asia through the media has been growing consistently during the years of Norwegian assistance. Increased timelines, consistency and overall journalistic quality of IPS products, readily attested to by media personnel in Asia, furthermore indicates that the agency has created a substantial potential for additional outreach through the media in this region.

It is equally evident, however, that the recent cut-backs in staff and the May 1997 resignation of the regional director for IPS Asia has hampered IPS' ability to exploit this potential. Remaining staff are spread thin and therefore in a difficult position to design, let alone execute, any comprehensive marketing or other expansionist initiatives. At least one additional staff with distinct marketing, media and networking skills would be needed if any systematic expansion, based on the recent achievements of IPS Asia, is to take place.

The seven translations of IPS material into other languages than English have opened important new avenues for IPS in Asia, also into more non-elite circles outside the capitals and in the Chinese market. This seems directly aligned with the overall objectives of IPS and certainly with those of Norwegian development cooperation. These translations, however, have only come about as a result of a UNDP-sponsored project. Less than two months before the expiry of UNDP funding for these activities, only sketchy plans for a continuation of the translation services have been drawn up. It seems that the continuation of at least the more successful of these highly cost-effective translation services in Asia should be given high priority.

<sup>45</sup> Publication reports from IPS Asia will show, for instance, that 'Newsasia' in the Philippines printed an astonishing heap of 73 IPS features in the month of March 1997 alone. This figure gives little meaning unless one knows that 'Newsasia' is a loss-making, tiny paper printed in 500 copies aimed only at expatriate Japanese in Manila. In

India, IPS estimates that it is able to monitor only some 70 per cent of the English media and far less than half of the vernacular media.

<sup>46</sup> Kunda Dixit: *Dateline Earth, As if the Planet Mattered*, Inter Press Service, 1997.

<sup>47</sup> Kunda Dixit: *Dateline Earth, As if the Planet Mattered*, Inter Press Service, 1997.

Monitoring of outreach in the Asian-Pacific media is made difficult by obvious obstacles. This region spans half the world's population and a geography stretching from North Korea to Palau and westwards to Qatar. At present, publications reports from IPS Asia give useful indications of outreach in selected countries, but little in the way of a clear picture. As outreach through the media is one of the main indicators of achievement and an important guideline and tool for future IPS marketing in Asia, development of more systematic and transparent monitoring tools should be made a priority.

## 6.2 Staff and Management

In 1997, the operations of IPS Asia were affected by the scrapping (as a cost-cutting measure) of one editorial post in Manila and in May 1997 by the resignation of the regional director since 1987, Mr. Kunda Dixit. There are no plans for his replacement. The head office of IPS Asia in Manila is now staffed by

- Two correspondents
- 20 stringers<sup>48</sup>
- one Projects & Marketing Coordinator, also in charge of administrative management of the office, recruiting of staff, communications with IPS central management and project management.
- one regional editor, who edits and puts on the IPS worldwide net an average of two feature stories from the stringers in East Asia per day. The same person doubles as the Manila based East Asia correspondent writing two to three feature stories herself per week.
- one Regional Accountant
- one administrative assistant (vacant)
- one messenger

The sub-regional office for South Asia in New Delhi is staffed by

- one Subregional Editor, who edits copy from IPS stringers in South Asia (India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Bangladesh and the United Arab Emirates (UAE))
- one India correspondent (vacant)
- one Office Manager

In consistency with the general IPS efforts to cut costs, all handling of communications of the technical equipment in Manila (computers, modems, software etc.) has been out-sourced. The former IPS technical director for Asia is now attached to IPS on a consultancy basis.

IPS has consistent contact with stringers in only less than half the 40 nations in Asia. While this figures does give an indication of a certain weakness in some of IPS' Asian coverage (there is, for instance, no stringer in Afghanistan nor Iran) this should be regarded with caution. Like in Africa, and as it is certainly the case with other international agencies, IPS stringers in Asia will often cover more than their base country.

More important than the number of stringers, is the obstacles hindering IPS from tying existing stringers more closely to the agency. This is, basically, a question of money. Most stringers in Asia have other paying jobs besides their writing for IPS – only one or two regard IPS as their main source of income.

Stringers in Asia are paid per story sold to IPS and according to where they live. The stringer in India, for example, is currently paid the equivalent of USD 80 per feature sold, which is the lowest on the scale, whereas stringers in Japan and Hong Kong are currently paid 150 USD per story. The purchasing power of these fees varies highly from one part of the region to the other. The East Asia stringers in general regard IPS only as a supplementary source of income to their better-paying engagements with other institutions/media. In South Asia, the IPS fee per story is considered quite competitive, but since most stringers only write occasionally, the accumulated income from IPS is still relatively low.

To the senior staff in Manila, this has led to the conclusion that increased fees would probably be just as, or even more effective, than additional training efforts as a tool to tie stringers closer to IPS, increase their motivation and thus further increase the quality of production.

On the whole, it is evident that the staffing of IPS Asia has recently been cut so low that further reductions, any

<sup>48</sup> Japan, China, Korea, Taiwan, Australia, the Philippines, Indonesia, (Papua New Guinea), Malaysia, Hong Kong, India, Nepal, and Singapore. The picture changes: IPS staff is currently banned from working in Bhutan due to its coverage of the Bhutanese refugees in Nepal. In 1993,

following a series of critical IPS stories, the authorities in Malaysia refused renewal of the press accreditation of the IPS correspondent based in Kuala Lumpur. A new Malaysia stringer was only appointed recently.

prolonged sick-leave or other disruptions could have immediate, negative effect on current productions.

The remaining senior staff in Manila and New Delhi are competent and experienced media professionals with a remarkably high degree of identification with IPS.<sup>49</sup>

Operations are likely to continue at current levels for the time being, even with the recent cutbacks in staff. Indeed, with two editors (Manila and Delhi) there should, in principle, be room for an increase in the number of news-features edited per day in case the current restrictions on the number of stories produced in Asia is lifted.<sup>50</sup>

But with the current budget, the closure of one editorial post in Manila, with no immediate plans for the replacement of the former Regional Director, and with a continued influx of short-term project commitments from IPS in Rome, IPS Asia has little real scope for expanded production, renewed marketing initiatives, comprehensive training efforts, additional NGO-cooperation or new project commitments.

### 6.3 Capacity Building in Asia

In-house training and capacity building have not been made a main core activity within IPS Asia. This stems partly from the fact that the stringers of IPS Asia are generally skilled and experienced journalists with limited need for more basic journalistic training; indeed, a number of these journalists are widely recognised writers in their own right.<sup>51</sup>

IPS staff in Asia, however, recognize that additional training efforts or «awareness building» measures would most likely be constructive in further consolidating the quality of IPS copy by bringing into more precise focus among the stringers the exact editorial priorities and journalistic values of IPS.

Such additional focusing is currently pursued through regional workshops where specific themes are highlighted (a human rights workshop in Katmandu 1995, and a NGO/media-workshop on sustainable human development in 1994). These events are instrumental in bringing IPS stringers more precisely in tune with the IPS agenda. They are, however, often attended by only a part of the IPS Asia network of stringers and they occur only as results of IPS' more ad hoc project commitments, not as a part of IPS Asia core operations on a fully sustained basis.

In South Asia, the sub-regional editor is preparing for an up-grading of training activities through her own participation in a «training-trainers» workshop with IPS Africa in Harare, June 1997. Here, the training experience accumulated within IPS Africa will form a point of departure for debate on how to train IPS writers to do more gender sensitive reporting.

IPS Asia at present does not have formal working relationships with journalism training institutions in the region, but staff in Manila and New Delhi saw no obstacles in principle to future cooperation. Both offices would welcome, for instance, the placement of journalism trainees or interns.

It is evident that the need for training in Asia is much different from that in Africa. Future efforts have to take into account the nature of the relationships between IPS and its stringers in Asia, where added motivation rather than skills-upgrading would in most instances be the main objective.

### 6.4 Cooperation with NGOs

IPS Asia recognizes the increasing role of NGOs in development in Asia. IPS Asia has linked with a number of these NGOs through workshops and seminars and especially through sustained coverage of NGO ac-

<sup>49</sup> The Projects and Marketing officer is a former correspondent through ten years with Reuters in Manila; the Regional Editor/regional correspondent earned much praise through a decade as a reporter in Manila, the sub-regional editor in New Delhi served as a sub-editor with India Today, India's leading news magazine, for several years before joining IPS.

<sup>50</sup> For financial reasons, and as a result of the IPS 2000 policy, IPS Asia, like IPS Africa, only buys a very limited number of features from stringers. See 3.3.

<sup>51</sup> One prominent example is that of the present Minister of Information in Pakistan, Mr. Mushahid Hussain, who was a highly valued supplier of copy to IPS until 1996. The IPS stringer in Tokyo is currently studying at Harvard University, USA, on a Niemann Fellowship.

tivities and through the inclusion of NGO representatives as sources in IPS news coverage.

Through a UNDP-sponsored IPS project (1995-97) to strengthen awareness of sustained human development amongst media and NGOs, IPS Asia has been able to explore further how to build closer working relationships between media and NGOs. In a recent book, now circulated among IPS personnel, the former IPS Regional Director for Asia, has elaborated extensively on this theme.<sup>52</sup>

There is growing recognition of IPS, its products and its capability of providing media coverage of NGO activities within the NGO community in Asia. Local interaction between NGOs and IPS staff as well as the high visibility of IPS at international NGO events have coupled to build a significant IPS profile in the NGO community creating identifiable potential for IPS sales and further outreach through NGOs in Asia.

Marketing and sales of IPS products and services vis-à-vis NGOs in the region have not been systematic or comprehensive. While, for instance, the monthly Hindi translation of IPS features is circulated to some 50 NGOs in India, such systematic approaches are not yet general with IPS products in this region.

## 6.5 Resourcing and Marketing

The Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs so far remains the only major donor agency which has specifically earmarked funding for the core activities of IPS Asia. As mentioned above, these resources in 1996 covered some 20 per cent of the core operations (salaries, rent, communications etc.) of IPS Asia. Additional funds have been allocated by IPS central management in Rome from the overall IPS budget. The total income from subscriptions in 1996 was USD 41,618. In 1994 the comparable figure was 32,830 USD.

Since 1995, a UNDP-funded IPS project, which expires in June 1997, has greatly assisted in meeting IPS expenditure in Asia. Funds from this project have been instrumental in covering the salaries of the (now resigned) regional director, the sub-regional editor in New Delhi, communications and other main expenditure.

In the last years IPS Asia has increased its fund-raising activities in the region, with some funds from projects now routed directly to IPS Asia – not via IPS Third World in Rome. The staff of IPS Asia, however, still remain somewhat uncertain as to what degree regional fund-raising is consistent with overall IPS policies. This issue, to what extent the regional IPS offices could raise of their own, has been a central theme for internal IPS debates for some time. In Asia this issue may be particularly relevant because of the potential for fund-raising for IPS activities in the aid communities of both Australia, Japan and possibly from donors in other Asian «tiger-economies».

Marketing of IPS products in Asia is done by the senior staff in Manila and Delhi and to in varying degrees by IPS stringers and translators. The IPS editors will market IPS products when travelling in the region, and on an ad hoc basis selected media are targeted for sales activities (for instance, when a new editor is appointed, a new paper is established etc.).

Various strategies for more systematic and aggressive marketing have been contemplated over the last years. Flooding the media market with free or low-cost IPS material still remains an option – but the prospect of relatively small returns from such a potentially massive exercise has so far closed this avenue. More selective campaigns aimed at specific strata in the media community (provincial/rural media, radio, TV, the vernacular press etc. are also contemplated as future possibilities. Marketing routes in the non-media markets, libraries, research institutions, academia, the business community and the NGO community remain largely unexplored.

IPS staff in Asia has not decided which marketing strategy would be more likely to bring additional outreach and/or income. Some argue that additional visibility of IPS products in the media would in itself generate additional sales/outreach – and that resources would therefore be most constructively spend on motivating stringers to write better through increased fees or by establishing more full-time correspondents. Others argue that more concerted marketing efforts by additional IPS staff at the sub-regional or regional office would be likely to boost sales/outreach of an already high-quality product.

<sup>52</sup> Kunda Dixit: *DateLine Earth / Journalism as if the Earth Mattered*, InterPressService, 1997.

While the two approaches would obviously yield the best results if pursued in conjunction, budgetary constraints prohibit any action on either of them for the present.

Franchising of IPS Asia along the lines used in Latin America is currently being contemplated both at head office in Rome and by the staff of IPS Asia. There is much uncertainty among the staff, however, as to

whether sales in the region could presently be boosted so significantly as to make such arrangements feasible. It is, for instance, difficult at the moment to foresee to what extent the current net of stringers could be motivated to take upon them additional marketing commitments under individual franchise agreements with IPS Asia. Likewise, it is difficult to assess with any clarity the potential incomes from the largely untapped NGO market in Asia.

## 7 Operations in Latin America – an Overview

Since the establishment of the agency in 1964, IPS' presence and outreach has been stronger in Latin America than in any other region.

### 7.1 Products and Outreach

From a regional editing and translating centre in Montevideo IPS Latin America disseminates its products to

- The world service of IPS (six features per day, translated into English in Montevideo or New York).
- Major newspapers and other clients in Latin and Central America. These clients will often receive the regional service: All features produced by IPS journalists in Latin and Central America plus selected stories from the IPS world service translated into Spanish.

In addition, in a joint venture with UNEP, IPS produces a bi-monthly newspaper supplement, *Tierramerica*, focused on the environment. This supplement is currently printed by some 12 newspapers in the region. In collaboration with the Brazilian Ministry of Justice, IPS produces a weekly bulletin entitled *Derechos Humanos* and with the state-run *Agencia Estado*, Brazil, a fax newsletter entitled *Fax Mercosur* in Portuguese, distributed to some 3,000 users in Brazil.

During the first semester in 1996 a monitoring firm used by IPS recorded some 7,186 clippings of IPS features in the media in Latin America. This figure was consistent with the comparable figure from 1994 (7,345) and up from the 1995 comparable figure of 6,558.

In Latin America, the agency has traditionally been more «mainstream» than in the rest of the world. IPS journalists will cover news events in this region much like journalists from other agencies, competing in the media market with the international, commercial news agencies – also for the «spot news» markets.

This has changed somewhat with the adoption of the «IPS 2000» policy in 1994/95. IPS in Latin America is now changing its mode of operation so as to provide greater depth to the news provided to clients, but there is much apprehension that the more «newsy» and therefore more marketable nature of IPS products in Latin America should no be lost.

### 7.2 Franchising

In a significant move now affecting IPS worldwide, 12 IPS offices in Latin America out of a total of 16 and offices in Haiti, Spain, Portugal, Great Britain, Turkey, France, Hungary and Nigeria, have been «franchised» since 1995. Subsidies from IPS Third World in Rome to these offices, some operated by a single journalist, have been reduced by up to 50 per cent. Cooperation with the Latin American offices is now managed through contracts between the individual offices and IPS Latin America in Montevideo. These contracts allow the national offices (in some instances just one journalist) to retain for their own allocations (rent, salaries, communications, etc.) substantial parts of revenues from sales of IPS products and services in their respective areas of operation.

This in turn has had three marked effects:

- The administration in Rome as been relieved of much time-consuming accounting. Prior to the franchise concept, IPS in Rome would keep track of all disbursements of funds within Latin America (rent, salaries, communications, equipment, etc.). The franchise contracts allow for much simpler relations (see 9.3).
- IPS personnel in the field have responded to the increased financial incentives by a) staying on b) becoming marketers and increasing sales.
- Overall sales of IPS products in Latin America have remained more or less stable.<sup>53</sup>

<sup>53</sup> Initially, there was much anxiety that sales would drop in Latin America since 'IPS 2000' replaced the 'spot news' approach in this region with a focus on more context-providing – and less 'flashy'-features.

### 7.3 New Markets

In an attempt to build new sources of revenue IPS Latin America has lately ventured into partnership with commercial enterprises, offering services such as clipping

collection, institutional communications and publicity. This is seen as a possible way of reducing reliance on short-term projects as means of support for the main news service.

## 8 The Quality of IPS Products

The following is an assessment of the extent to which the main product of IPS, that of its news feature service, and in particular that of the input to this service from IPS Africa and IPS Asia, can be said to be

- consistently supplementary to the main, international news agencies, by providing useful news coverage in a development-oriented context to end-users in southern Africa and Asia.

This criterion for assessing the «quality» is reached by the review team taking into consideration

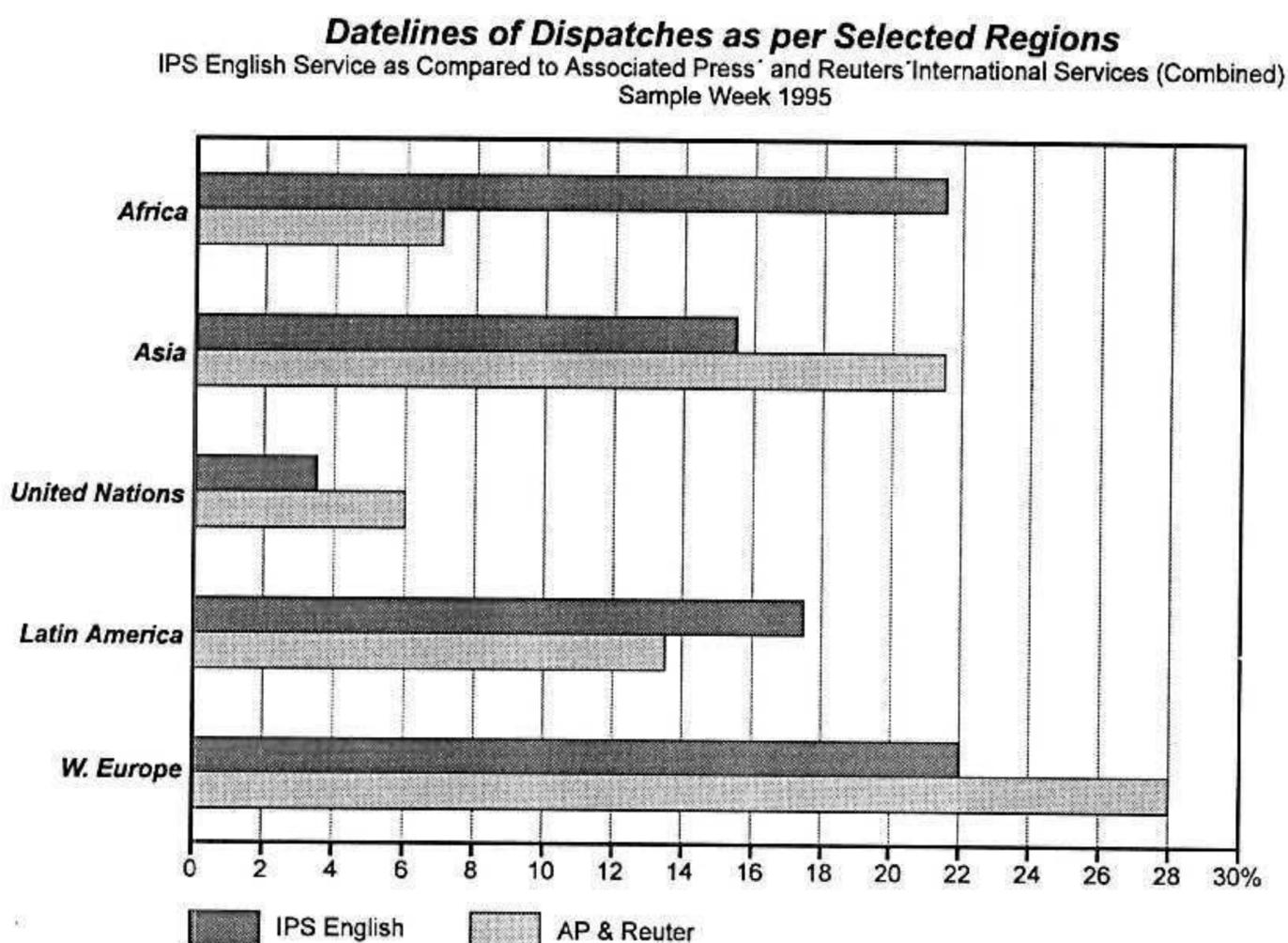
- the objectives of Norwegian framework assistance to IPS (see 2.1), and
- clear indications from IPS's monitoring of output and from the review team's own observations that the basic journalistic professionalism in IPS news

products and their final outreach have indeed increased in Africa and Asia during the years of Norwegian assistance.

### 8.1 IPS as Supplement to the Mainstream News agencies

Comprehensive studies of the content of the news feature service of IPS as compared to the international news offered by the major, international news agencies were made in five of the years covered by the Norwegian framework agreements (1991, 1992, 1993, 1994 and 1995) by the Director of the School of Communications, University of Washington in Seattle, Prof. C. Anthony Giffard. (A similar study by Giffard in 1996 discusses IPS copy but only sporadically compares IPS copy with that of the mainstream news agencies).

Figure 4.



\* Source: Giffard: The World of Inter Press Service 1995

While Prof. Giffard is closely associated with IPS, the concrete findings of these studies provide valuable data for a content analysis.

In one of the latest of these studies, *The World of Inter Press Service 1995*, Giffard analyses some 2,000 news reports from the IPS service and from the world wires of the Associated Press (AP) and Reuters. For the IPS services, the sample comprised a seven-day constructed week (each day of the week was represented) for each of the months of December 1994 and January 1995, or a total of 1,121 dispatches. The AP and Reuters sample, drawn at random over the same two-months period, comprised 781 reports on international events, provided from correspondents and bureaux outside the USA.

The data in each dispatch were analysed according to a «Statistical Package for Social Sciences» and by a computer content analysis package, TextPack.

In the English dispatches of the IPS service, Giffard found that datelines (which indicate from which city the story is filed) were «evenly distributed across geographic regions with roughly similar proportions from Western Europe, Africa, Latin America and Asia/Pacific. The combined AP and Reuters datelines had a «very different profile». Here emphasis was on Western Europe (25.4 per cent), Asia/Pacific and Latin America. Eastern Europe was represented proportionately twice as often in AP/Reuters copy, largely because of intense coverage of the war in the Balkans. AP and Reuters also paid «double as much attention to conflict in the Middle East» as did IPS, but only «half as much attention to Africa».

63.6 per cent of all datelines on the IPS English dispatches were from developing nations. For AP and Reuters this figure was 35.2 and 45.4 respectively. (See Figure 4.)

Giffard writes: «These data suggest some changes in the IPS news geography since 1994. There has been a small decline in the proportion of datelines from European and North American nations compared to the 1994 study. African datelines have increased, as have those

from Asia, Australia and the Pacific. Over the longer term, these changes are even more striking.

In 1983, more than 50 per cent of the IPS material on the English service had Latin American datelines. By 1995 that had dropped to 17.5 per cent. In its place is much expanded coverage of Africa, Asia and Europe. Those three regions, which among them comprised 24 per cent of the English file in 1983, now represent 63 per cent.»

Computing all references to nations in the English service of IPS, Giffard found that 61.9 per cent of all references to nations in IPS dispatches were to the developing world. The figure for the AP and Reuters combined was less than 45 per cent.

African nations were mentioned more often on the IPS English service than any other region, with 23.6 per cent of all references made to African nations. Asian nations were next, with 19.2 of all references being to nations in this region. In comparison, 7.9 per cent of the combined references made by AP and Reuters went to Africa, 14.9 to Asian nations.<sup>54</sup>

Looking at what kind of people the three agencies most frequently approach for comments and observations, Giffard found that IPS and AP/Reuters all featured prominent people, heads of states etc., much more frequently than representatives of «civil society». In the IPS dispatches 60 per cent of all references to individuals were to government and political actors. This was, however, still «markedly» lower than for AP/Reuters.

When counting only once all individuals mentioned (heads of states, for instance, would often be mentioned many times) Giffard found that 55 per cent of all IPS references were to representatives of «civil society». Measured this way, more than 30 per cent of actors in IPS dispatches were ordinary citizens, 11 per cent were NGO representatives, seven from business/labour and six per cent were UN officials.

Only some 10 per cent of all references on the 1995 IPS dispatches were made to women. This proportion of

<sup>54</sup> The five nations most mentioned by IPS in Asia were China, Japan, India, Malaysia and Indonesia. In Africa the five nations most mentioned were Algeria, Rwanda, South

Africa, Egypt and – somewhat inexplicable – Guinea. see 5.4.1

women on the IPS services was «a little higher» than on the AP/Reuters dispatches and higher than in the previous years. This trend continued, when in his study on IPS dispatches from 1996, Giffard found that of all references to persons, 14 per cent were made to women. Women actors, however, were proportionately better represented in industrialised regions than in developing. 21 per cent of all actors from Western Europe and North America were women, whereas only 10 per cent of all actors from the South were.

(Although reliable data is not available yet, the representation of women in IPS coverage is likely to have grown since. Agency-wide efforts to increase gender sensitivity of IPS reports have been made consistently since 1994.)

## 8.2 Informal Survey of Users and Potential Users of IPS News Features

In order to further assess the quality and usefulness of IPS' news product the review team has conducted an informal survey among users and potential users of IPS products in the media and NGO communities in Africa and Asia.

26 editors, publishers, representatives of media organisations and NGO representatives in Africa and Asia agreed to assist the review in person, via telephone or e-mail. Some of these individuals were suggested by IPS, others identified by the review team (see Appendix 2 for list of people met).

In addition, this informal survey included a telephone conversation with the head of an earlier evaluation team, commissioned by IPS' main donors in 1989, Prof. C. Hamelink, University of Amsterdam; an interview with the Executive Director of The Panos Institute, itself an international provider of development information, Mr. Nigel Cross; and a telephone conversation with senior researcher Mr. Richard Carver of the London-based, freedom-of-speech NGO «Article 19».

The Executive Secretary of the Media Institute of Southern Africa, MISA, Mr. David Lush, provided his written observations of the value of IPS to the independent press in Southern Africa.

### 8.2.1 *IPS as Supplementary Source to the Media*

In both Africa and Asia media professionals have no difficulty in distinguishing IPS from the mainstream international news agencies.

All those participating in this survey were very much aware that

- a) IPS does not compete in the market for «spot-news», but delivers a contextualised version instead
- b) IPS is rooted in a «South» perspective different from that of the «western» agencies.

In this context many media end-users in Africa and Asia highlighted the ability of IPS to provide coverage of their own, neighbouring or regional countries unbiased by «western» perceptions. Several media observers noted how IPS will more often rely on qualified, «local» sources rather than on the «western diplomat» or «US official» often exclusively favoured as sources by the mainstream news agencies. It appears that still more media officials in Africa and Asia are now actively opposed to this «western» bias and thus increasingly receptive to IPS's southern perspective.<sup>55</sup>

In the every-day operations of the media, IPS's emphasis on development angles, human rights, democratisation, gender issues and other priorities particular to IPS (see 2.3), will occasionally provide editors in Africa and Asia with added political latitude and an opportunity to focus on issues otherwise left uncovered.

The media in many Asian and African countries are only nominally «free», with a good amount of entrenched self-censorship and/or official restrictions still

<sup>55</sup> One editor of a broadsheet in the Philippines related how IPS provided him with badly needed material to balance biased news reports from Associated Press (AP), his main other supply of foreign news. In the midst of a May/June 1997 stand-off between China and the Philippines over territory in the South China Sea this editor told, for in-

stance, how AP had 'China already invading the Philippines'. He printed this overtly anti-China AP coverage – but he was more than happy that he could add more nuanced and analytical material from IPS.

in force. Some media users highlight how IPS, although thoroughly rooted in these regions itself, is not bound by these restrictions and how this added latitude will at times couple with IPS's superior regional insight to create stories that the editor

- a) would not have been able to produce out of his own staff
- b) would not have dared to print, unless it arrived under the banner of a foreign agency.

### 8.2.2 *IPS as Supplementary Source to NGOs*

IPS has only recently begun targeting the NGO community in Africa and Asia as a regular market for its news product. However, it seems that there is growing recognition within the NGOs in Africa as well as Asia of IPS as a provider of news/information with an overall developmental approach different from that of the mainstream media.

The supplementary nature of IPS as a source of information to NGOs, however, would have to be assessed from the point of view of two separate parts of the NGOs: 1) the NGO activists themselves and 2) the constituents of the NGOs.

For both parties it does not matter much whether IPS's product as such differs from the product of other agencies. NGOs in general do not subscribe to news agencies. An assessment of the supplementary nature of IPS would have to hold up IPS's product vis-à-vis other main sources of information to NGOs / their constituents.

In this context, most NGO representatives interviewed stressed the main character of the IPS product, namely that of being «newsy»; meaning more timely and current than the main flow of information reaching NGOs.

<sup>56</sup> One senior NGO researcher, who is regularly consulted by international agencies for his knowledge of African affairs, noted how IPS often stood out as the by far most useful source of information on current events in that continent. He noted how the combination of a more local selection of sources would often combine with the newsy character of IPS to provide him with highly valued input not available from other sources.

This characteristic, that the IPS product is not only development oriented but also «news», is by far the most dominant observation from NGO activists.<sup>56</sup>

All NGO-representatives also assumed that the special editorial priorities of IPS would mean that the IPS product would be relevant to their constituencies. This, however, is still mostly a hypothetical observation, since only very few NGOs have so far made use of IPS products for further distribution.<sup>57</sup>

There are clear indications that there is a potential for IPS products, or possibly new IPS products, as a supplementary source of information for some NGOs. It is also clear, however, that this potential has not yet been sufficiently analysed. The current data available to IPS on what NGOs need and what they demand remain limited and unsystematic. Of course, NGOs are a very diverse group ranging from local grassroots groups to highly political lobbies. An analysis of the sector itself is a prerequisite to assessing the relevance of the IPS products.

In Africa and Asia it remains particularly unclear to what extent NGOs are able and willing to pay for IPS services. Many NGOs in developing countries do not have the resources to pay for such services but will most probably have an interest in free IPS products. Finally, it seems clear that the Internet will continue to grow as a possible vehicle for IPS products to NGOs – with the Asian NGOs likely to remain for some time well ahead of their African counterparts in this field.

### 8.2.3 *Timeliness*

While IPS is evidently providing news items with a content much different to that of the mainstream news agencies this will not be the only factor determining the usefulness to media and NGOs in Africa and Asia.

<sup>57</sup> Although it is not specific to Africa and Asia, one indicator that the IPS news product is useful also to NGO constituencies, could possibly be found in the reaction on the Internet to the inclusion of IPS's news product on the website 'OneWorld'. This London-based web-site which is host to and link between the web-sites of about 150 NGOs across the globe, experienced significant increase in 'hits' (people clicking in via computer) when it started featuring two IPS news dispatches per day in early 1997. The number of 'hits' on 'OneWorld' grew by about 15 per cent to two million per month.

As indicated above, NGO users place great emphasis on the timeliness of IPS's product – a factor which obviously plays an even more important role with the media. The ability of IPS staff to prioritize what items to cover and to follow through quickly will remain pivotal to the usefulness of their product. In this context, a number of media observers noted how IPS still often lacks in timeliness and how this will substantially deflate the usefulness of the agency's output. The IPS contextualised version of the news will rather frequently reach end-users with the media so late that it will no longer be marketable or at best be delegated to a less prominent space.<sup>58</sup>

While timeliness does not directly bear down on an assessment of the agency's supplementary nature, it will eventually determine much of the agency's ability to effectively market this supplementary quality. Timeliness will also often determine not only whether clients will use IPS copy – but whether they will also pay for it.

Computer-based delivery systems have significantly increased the speed of delivery of IPS dispatches, particularly in Africa, and has thereby assisted in increasing

overall timeliness. In the end, however, it is the ability of the journalist in the field to be quick, not the technical means of final delivery, which most decisively determines the overall timeliness of a news item.

In conclusion, there seem no doubt that IPS is indeed delivering a news product to the media in Africa and Asia which is supplementary to that of the mainstream agencies through its development-oriented editorial priorities and methodology.

It also seems evident that this news product offers itself as a very marketable supplementary source of information to NGO activists and staff in these two regions.

In both instances, however, the usefulness of this supplementary product will often hinge on its timeliness; its ability to be not only supplemental in content but also supplemental in the context of time. Continued emphasis on electronic delivery systems will help consolidate and expand current outreach, while equal or more significant potential for growth in Asia and Africa would probably lie in a quality-conscious increase in timeliness.<sup>59</sup>

<sup>58</sup> One editor of a newspaper in Africa related that he was once an active user of IPS features, readily attesting to IPS's professionalism, creative selecting of sources etc. Now, after his paper has changed from a weekly to a daily, the IPS feed no longer appeared relevant to his needs.

<sup>59</sup> This need for added timeliness was stressed already in 1989, when the evaluation team commissioned by the main donors (Hamelink, Ansah et al.) in their findings named as essential immediate task qualitative improvements of the news service particularly in terms of journalistic alertness (...).

## 9 IPS – Resourcing and Management

Since the signing of the second Norwegian framework agreement (1992–1995) three main trends have been evident within IPS:

- Incomes have dropped by more than 50 per cent (1996 compared to 1992). Donor funding for core programmes of IPS have decreased by just less than 32 per cent, from 3,684 mil. USD in 1992 to 2,514 mil. USD in 1996.
- IPS in response has restructured its organisational structure, reduced administrative expenditures; slimmed operations in the North and embraced a more market oriented approach to operations in the South.

- Financial management has been adjusted and improved in attempts to meet the demands of decreasing resources and increased demands from donors in terms of reporting.

### 9.1 Resourcing

By 1996 the continued decrease in incomes had brought the economy of IPS to its worst in the last decade. With Norwegian and Dutch contributions as exceptions all IPS donors had reduced programme grants.

*IPS income 1992–1996 in USD thousands*

	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996
Sales and contracts	3,904	4,126	3,550	2,825	1,910
Programme grants	3,684	3,117	2,566	2,013	2,514
SUB-TOTAL	7,588	7,243	6,116	4,837	4,424
Project grants	2,106	1,424	2,092	2,646	1,180
SUB-TOTAL	9,694	8,667	8,208	7,483	5,604
ADD:					
NPL/DOEN	2,874	2,953	2,312	1,872	1,621
Italian-funded projects	901	819	581	440	83
TIPS	1,571	2,169	2,247	0	0
TOTAL	15,040	14,608	13,348	9,796	7,308

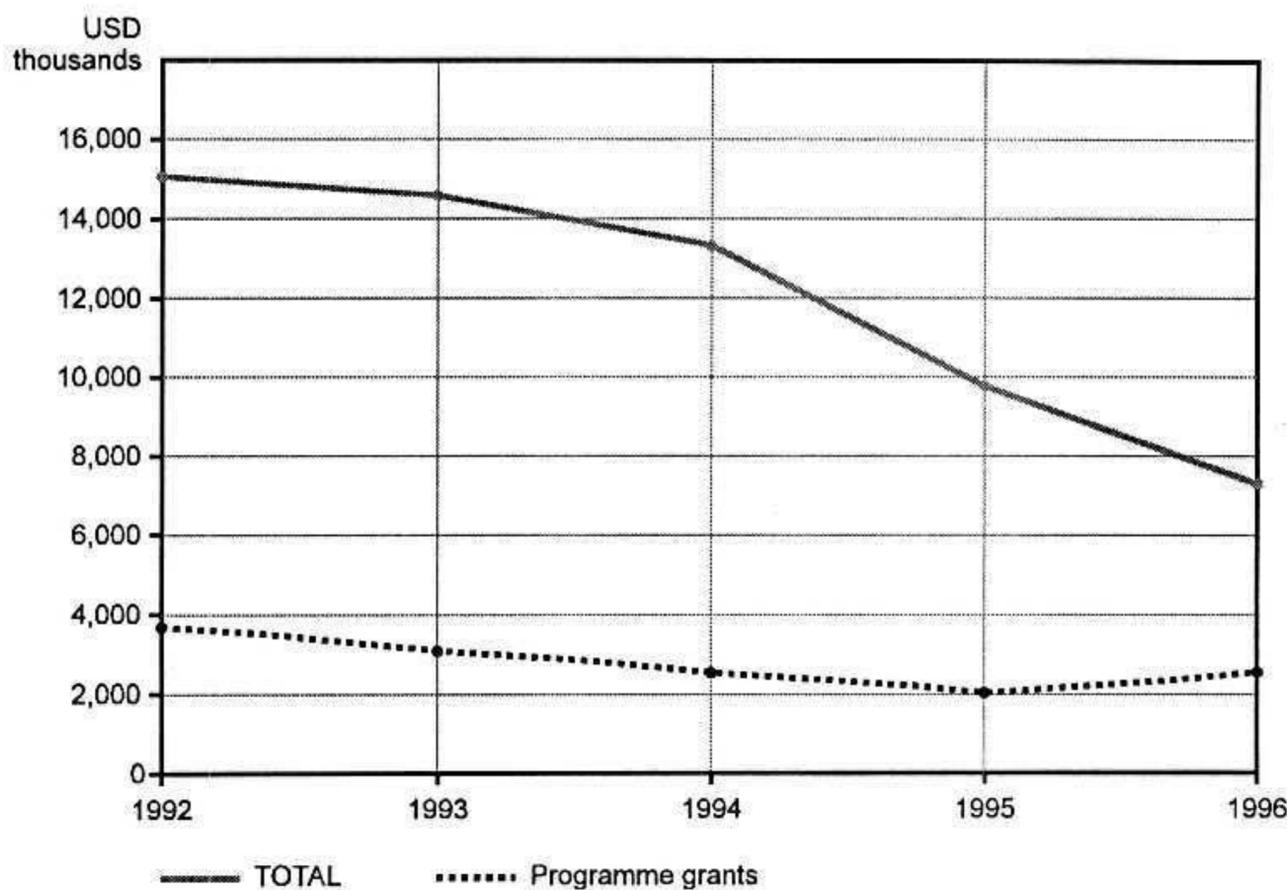
While in 1992 IPS operated on a budget of some 15.04 mill. USD the total expenditure for 1996 was 7,864 mill. USD. The 1997 budget includes further substantial cuts in staff salaries, cutbacks in number of staff in IPS structures in the North and other extraordinary reductions.

To some extent, however, these figures paint a misleading picture of donor support to IPS. If revenues in the early 1990's ran relatively high, this was not exclusively due to the donors, but for a large part due to a rather extraordinary public lottery in the Netherlands, which had IPS as a beneficiary. This lottery was initiated by a

IPS functionary in the Netherlands, but relations with IPS are being severed. The income which IPS derived from this lottery is down from 2,874 mill. USD in 1992 to 1,621 mill. in 1996. IPS does not expect any income from this source in 1997.

In 1992-1994 IPS had substantial incomes from communication services provided to TIPS, an international programme for South-South exchange of technological and scientific information supported by UNDP and Italy. As of 1995, this source of income was no longer assisting IPS.

## IPS income 1992–1996 in USD thousands



So, while in overall terms, IPS incomes were some 7.7 mill. USD, or just more than 50 per cent, lower in 1996 than in 1992, the drop in donor support for programmes in the same period amounted to «only» 1.17 mill. USD.

Thus, while the reduction in capital flow from donors is certainly real, it is the decreased flow of capital from the Dutch lottery and from TIPS that now makes the cash-flow crisis look so dramatically bleak.

Meanwhile, hopes that cash reserves of the IPS Trust Fund would help finance transitions within IPS have been disappointed. The Trust Fund had accumulated some 4.9 mill. USD from the Dutch lottery to be used as financial reserves and/or for future IPS activities. Contrary to the expectations of IPS these funds have not been available to IPS. Outlooks for recovery of these cash reserves remain cloudy and the money may be permanently lost.

### 9.2 Management & Restructuring

The IPS corporate structure has undergone noticeable change since the signing of the second Norwegian framework agreement (1992–1995). Main trends can be summarised as follows:

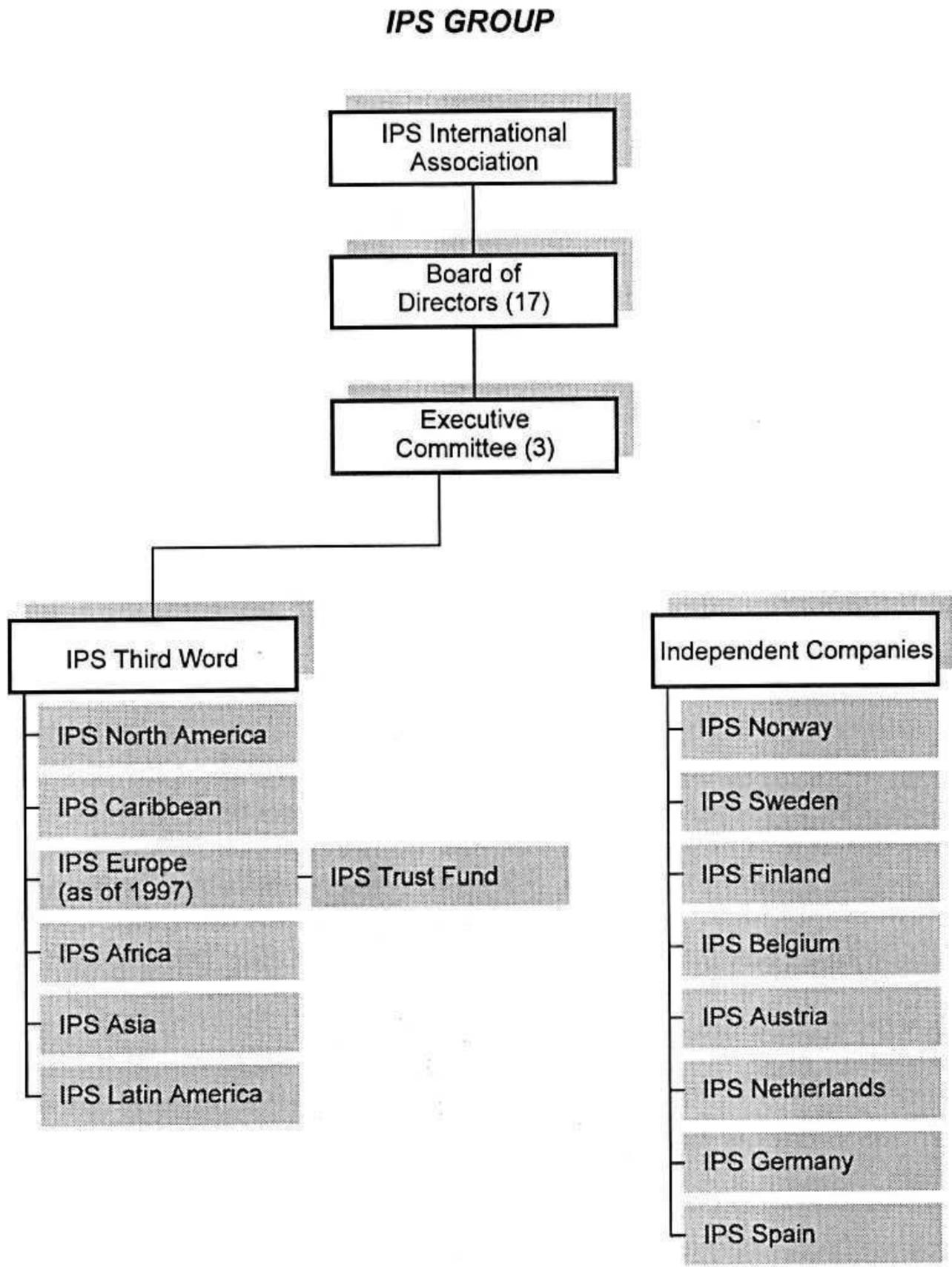
- The organisational structures have been streamlined. In 1994 the IPS Cooperative was changed into the IPS International Association. The Association is open to all staff, associates and friends of IPS and was by 1995 the central holding company within the IPS Group. Obsolete legal structures in France, Portugal and elsewhere have been scrapped.
- Streamlining of operations. In particular, headquarters staff and expenditures have been reduced and a market oriented «franchise» concept, already used with IPS structures in the North, has been broadened to include IPS operations in the South, particularly in Latin America. This approach allows for transfer of much administrative work from IPS headquarters in Rome to the individual IPS offices in the South, and for new financial incentives for IPS personnel in the field.

#### 9.2.1 Organisational Structure

The IPS Group presently consists of

- IPS International Association (of 1994), a non-profit body, which took the place of the IPS Cooperative. The Association currently has some 180 members, is open to all IPS staff.

*Organisational Structure of IPS*



In June 1997 the members of the Association elected four members of the Board of Directors which will have a total of 10 members elected from a group of international personalities (non-IPS staff), 5 members elected by the IPS regions and 2 members elected from the HQ in Rome. The Board will appoint an Executive Committee, which is expected to be chaired by Mr. Terje R. Larsen from Norway. In a transition period, the Executive Committee will meet often. Mr. Terje R. Larsen is part of a Norwegian mediation team which in early 1997 brokered an agreement within IPS that led to the election of the new Board of Directors.

This agreement was reached between a dissenting group of IPS personnel, including the directors of IPS Africa and Asia, and the central management, (with the support of the majority of Association members) which had been in open disagreement over management policies since 1995.<sup>60</sup>

The agreement specifies that «a period of transition is now underway within IPS». No specific objectives of this transition are spelled out and no time-frame has been specified, but it is understood that the period of transition will lead to changes at managerial level.

The Board of Directors of the IPS Association appoints the Director General of IPS and the Executive Committee of IPS Europe, which in turn, through its own Executive Committee, will appoint the Board of Directors of the IPS Trust Fund.<sup>61</sup>

The IPS Association holds 100 per cent of the shares of

- IPS Third World, registered in Panama (off-shore), which is the coordinating and administrative body for IPS Africa, IPS Asia-Pacific and a majority shareholder with IPS Germany and IPS Italy.

IPS Third World likewise embraces all IPS operations in North America (UN office and North America office), Latin America, the Caribbean, and, from 1997, IPS Europe.

<sup>60</sup> Noteworthy, this conflict was never over the overall editorial policy as spelled out by 'IPS 2000'.

<sup>61</sup> The IPS Trust Fund was set up to aid financial management of IPS. It became the focal point of much controversy in 1996, when its then Board of Directors diverted some 4.9 mill. USD cash reserves to so far undisclosed destinations.

<sup>62</sup> According to one suggestion presently under discussion, all IPS regional centres would be 'franchised' in the near fu-

- In addition, five IPS offices in the North operate as independent companies; IPS Belgium, IPS Sweden, IPS Norway, IPS Finland and IPS Austria.
- Finally, through 1995 and 1996, twelve of the 16 offices of IPS in Latin America, one in the Caribbean, six in Europe and one in Africa, have been re-arranged along the «franchise» concept. While still operating under IPS Third World auspices and according to IPS editorial priorities, each office will receive only reduced subsidies from IPS Third World for its expenditures. As compensation – and incentive – the staff of each office are now authorised to keep incomes (up to a limit) from sales of IPS subscriptions and services for allocations within their own operation (rent, communications, salaries, etc.).

None of the offices in Southern Africa and Asia have yet been «franchised». But discussions on how and when to extent the franchise concept to these regions are on-going.<sup>62</sup>

As an additional development, considerations are now ongoing as to whether the IPS headquarters should be shifted from Rome to a new or an existing IPS centre in the South. Already, the Rome headquarters has been markedly reduced. While ten personnel including project staff currently work at the head office in Rome, this figure was down from some 50 staff members in 1990.<sup>63</sup>

The restructuring and streamlining of IPS since 1992, made difficult as they were by the serious decrease in incomes, seems to have been constructive and concerted to maintain overall editorial objectives in sight. The transformation of IPS in Latin America with a new emphasis on «franchises» is particularly encouraging.

The central management in Rome, however, did not manage to streamline operations in a manner which met the aspirations of the regional centres in Africa and Asia. The resignation of the Regional Directors of these two centres is a significant loss to the organisation. The

ture. In order to maintain a global perspective and uniform overall policies of all IPS operations, each IPS centre would be governed by a Board of Directors identical to that of all other IPS centres.

<sup>63</sup> Internal discussions are on-going as to whether Johannesburg in South Africa would be the preferred location of a future, central IPS secretariat.

management of IPS points to the fact that while substantial reductions in operations in the North and at headquarters in Rome have taken place, no cuts have been made in the core programme budgets of IPS Africa and Asia over the last years. Reductions in these centres have come about as funding for specific projects have terminated.

The recent agreement on a period of transition and the subsequent election in June 1997 of a new Board of Directors of the IPS Association, appear as very constructive signs for the future. Furthermore, ongoing internal discussions of moving the central secretariat of IPS to the South may strengthen outlooks. While this development is still only at the fact-finding stage it would be fair to speculate that a such move might bring at least two benefits:

- A boost of image; creating an opportunity to project the South-orientation of IPS with more clout
- A general lift of morale. After a period of internal disagreement, a move to the South could possibly provide new impetus by sending a signal that problems have been replaced by challenges.

### 9.3 Financial Management and Relations with Donors

#### 9.3.1 Financial Management

Financial management in IPS has improved considerably over the last few years. Not all parts of IPS are using the same financial management system and there is still a rather long way to go before the systems applied can be used by managers of IPS in the regions and at the HQ to take more well-informed decisions. In terms of financial management IPS is a head office (in Rome) with branches (regional centres), which are accountable to the head office.

*Accounting at IPS Africa* has been out-sourced to the accounting firm of Deloitte & Touche Ltd., Harare, after a number of years of poor in-house accounting at the IPS office in Harare. Since late 1995 a bookkeeper from D&T on regular, sometimes daily, visits to the IPS office in Harare keeps IPS Africa cash books, handles a range of finance related tasks of the office and prepared

monthly financial reports with attachment of vouchers for all expenditures to IPS headquarters in Rome. A renewed and less cumbersome accounting system, which would move responsibility also for the consolidating of accounts from Rome to Harare, is currently under consideration. The continued use of the fairly expensive services of Deloitte & Touche is a reflection of the fact that it is not easy to recruit accountants who can do the job. When the adjustments in the account system have been completed and it has been in proper use for a longer period of time, a return to a more regular situation, however, with an employed accountant appears to be a more cost-effective option.

In April 1997 the auditing firm of Ernst & Young, Harare, conducted a pre-award audit survey on the operations of IPS Africa, on behalf of USAID. This followed a USD 135,000 SABANEWS related funding request to USAID fielded by IPS. While this survey did find isolated flaws in the financial control systems of IPS Africa, the funding request was subsequently approved by USAID.<sup>64</sup>

*Accounting of IPS Asia activities* is done by a qualified IPS accountant in Manila, with monthly cash flow reports from the sub-regional office in New Delhi routed to Manila by mail. The accountant in Manila has been with IPS Asia for 10 years. Accounting procedures vis-à-vis IPS in Rome has undergone two shifts since 1994/1995. From 1995, as part of a temporary centralization of accounting within the IPS corporate structure, cash flow reports with reconciliation statements and vouchers were routed by mail from Manila to Rome on a monthly basis along with an itemised cash fund request covering expenses for the subsequent month. Since 1997, a less cumbersome procedure has been re-introduced, with IPS Asia submitting only monthly itemised cash fund requests. At the end of the year, IPS Asia will submit an annual financial report, which will be reconciled with records in Rome. Budgeting is routinely done by the regional office in Manila in July/August based on project and operational projections, and financial statuses drawn up by the accountant.

It appears from the above that the financial management system of IPS is not uniform, but rather pragmatic and

<sup>64</sup> Only part of this money will benefit operation at IPS Africa – with the rest to be utilized by national broadcasting corporations subscribing to SABANEWS.

designed to match the capacity available in different regional centres. In 1995 a computerized system was introduced, which allows tracking and analysis of costs. There is still however a fair amount of duplication of work (e.g. records are maintained both in the regional centres and in the HQ), a delay in feeding back of information from HQ to the regional centres, inadequate systems of controlling spending versus budgets, and a traditional system of preparing budgets, which are based on projections from the most recently recorded costs of previous years modified as required by objectives and action plans for the year for which the budget is being prepared. The management in Rome is well aware of these, after all minor, deficiencies in the financial management system, and gradually the system is being improved.

### 9.3.2 Relations with Donors

There has been a long and often fairly complex relationship between IPS and its major donors. IPS has enjoyed support from many agencies which have appreciated the need for more and development-oriented news and information from developing countries. Several donors, including the Norwegian Government, have agreed to fund important parts of the IPS-operation for a good number of years. The management of the relation with donors, however, has not been an easy task for IPS. Over the years, many different arrangements have been in place, but they have not so far provided a stable and predictable relation with donors. A yearly meeting between the management of IPS and its Core Group of Donors provides an opportunity for them to discuss results achieved, the priorities and plans for the future and the effectiveness of the relationship between them.

The relationship between IPS and its major donors has been constrained by a number of factors. Two inter-related factors deserve special attention:

- IPS has developed – what appears to be – an overly complex web of subsidiaries and project partners with financial interlinkages, which have been difficult for donors to comprehend and appreciate. The lack of transparency has generated an uncertainty among donors with regard to the utilization of funds, donated to IPS.
- Donors, including the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who are supporting the general objectives of IPS, still choose to earmark their funds to specific parts of the IPS-programme or to in-

formation activities, which they consider to be of particular importance.

The earmarking is accompanied by a commitment to check that the funds donated are in fact used for the purposes agreed. Donors and their representatives, including state auditors, wish to be able to «follow» the use that IPS is making of their funds. There is, however, a limit to how far any donor can pursue this line of action. In reality no donor can effectively trace how IPS is using funds received for specific purposes unless such donations are deposited in separate bank accounts, used exclusively to pay bills jointly signed by IPS and the donor, – a cumbersome and costly procedure, which is very demanding in terms of administrative and managerial capacity and therefore not acceptable to donors and IPS. IPS can report to donors about the implementation of activities, which have been agreed upon, including the money spent on these activities, but with the present system, donors have no way of knowing if «their» money was spent on these activities. This reality is true not only for IPS, but for all institutions, receiving funds from many donors for different purposes.

The donors are of prime concern to the IPS management in Rome and a lot of effort is going into getting the reports to the donors right. The Norwegian Government was the first to suggest a framework agreement, but many other donors are now having such agreements. They are, however, all different because each donor has its own funding procedures and reporting requirements. The degree of «earmarking» of funds varies considerably.

In 1994 the Core Group of Donors decided to prepare a «Joint Reporting Format», which could be used by IPS to report – in one go – to all donors. The format was approved in 1995 and IPS reorganized its financial management system to be able to meet the requirements of the joint format. In spite of the good intentions, most donors are still demanding separate agency-specific reports on the use of funds provided by the individual donors. In reality, IPS most often has had to provide separate narrative as well as financial reports to each donor.

With regard to reporting to MFA there has been a degree of uncertainty if Norway would be satisfied by receiving the audited accounts of IPS where the Norwegian contribution is clearly stated, or if separate audited statements of accounts on the use of the Norwegian

funds were required. There is a need to re-examine the reporting requirements of the Norwegian Government and other important donors to see if the joint reporting format can be turned into an effective tool for joint reporting to all IPS donors.

The demands of donors for separate reports, even in the case of quite small contributions, add to the administrative burden of IPS. The tying of the assistance to specific types of expenditure also tends to distract IPS from its core activity. At a general level most donors are presently caught between two mutually exclusive demands: On the one hand they are required to move from project to programme support. On the other, they are concerned about «visibility» and «accountability». They need to be able to demonstrate tangible results to their constituencies (the public, the press and the political parties).

With the decline in core funding, IPS has had to enter into many different arrangements with multilateral

agencies and other institutions, which require reporting on specific themes. The problem appears to be that IPS itself has not been in a position to draw up plans – including regional action plans – which were attractive to the donors. It appears that over the last few years donors have had difficulties in subscribing to the IPS-agenda, partly because it was not articulated very clearly. Transparent, easy-to-measure indicators of success were absent. Instead many donors have supported specific projects or interventions, which they – at the time – considered to be more attractive than the general IPS-agenda. Therefore IPS has to a certain degree become a donor-driven agency with few top-priorities of its own. IPS has successfully pursued a very pragmatic and flexible approach to be able to accommodate the different requirements of a multitude of donors. There is a need to reverse this trend and convince donors (and perhaps limit the number of donors) to subscribe to the core mission of IPS. Norway, it appears, is in a good position to show the way.

## 10 Future Norwegian Cooperation with IPS

The analysis in previous chapters of this report clearly points to the fact that noteworthy progress has been made by both IPS Africa and IPS Asia:

- gaining additional outreach for IPS new features
- improving the overall quality of its products
- strengthening capacity-building (more relevant in Africa than Asia).

Finally, it is clear that in Africa and in Asia, IPS has quite successfully

- created identifiable potential for further expansion with the established media, with the new media (Internet/e-mail) and within the NGO communities.

However, as discussed in particular in Chapters 5 and 6, the sustained decrease in IPS's incomes, especially serious in 1995 and 1996, has meant an overall decrease in staff levels in both Africa and Asia. Remaining staff are spread thin and not in positions to exploit the potentials built up through the years of Norwegian programme support.

It is evident that any further decrease in resource allocations for IPS structures in these regions would pose a risk not only to future expansion but also to consolidation of recent achievements.

### 10.1 IPS and Norwegian Policy Concerns

One of the five main stated objectives of the Norwegian South Policy is to

- contribute towards promoting peace, human rights and democracy.

While different parts of the Norwegian South Policy have different tasks, it is also stressed that the individual parts should be seen in conjunction with each other «so that they can reinforce each other.»

Norwegian South Policy has for many years included cultural cooperation and assistance within the cultural sector as part of support for democracy. «Cultural di-

versity is essential to foster broad popular participation, thereby reinforcing democratic attitudes and processes.»<sup>65</sup>

Support for stronger and more independent media is undertaken as a part of cultural cooperation. The Report to the Storting states this very explicitly:

«Local media play an important role in a country's cultural life. They serve as a corrective and an alternative to the cultural influence transmitted by foreign media, and contribute significantly to popular participation in discussions on national issues and to the promotion of local culture and debate.»

It is therefore also a part of the Norwegian policy that «Norway will (also) contribute towards developing and safeguarding freedom of expression, among other things by encouraging free, independent media.»

The Report to the Storting (1995–96) states that the Government will increase its support for cultural measures in developing countries, and the contribution towards the media is being mentioned in this context.

In addition, Norwegian development assistance is increasingly focusing on regions instead of just countries, and regional allocations have been increased. Priority regions in Norwegian bilateral assistance are Southern and Eastern Africa, South and South-East Asia and Central America.

While Norwegian assistance to IPS is not bilateral assistance or assistance to a specific region, the priorities within the IPS-programme and the focus on Africa and Asia in core activities of IPS are in line both with the priority of targeting low income countries and with the regional approach.

The agreement between MFA and IPS is therefore fully in accordance with the overall objectives of Norwegian development assistance objectives as well as with geographical priorities, even if it is not based on a more comprehensive or operative media development policy.

<sup>65</sup> No. 19 to the Storting (1995–96).

Media development is part of cultural development, but should not be limited to a concept of cultural development. The development of more independent print and electronic media is a prerequisite for the development of a democratic society and also for open and transparent economic development. The role of media is instrumental in many other developments in the society.

## 10.2 Objectives, Size, Content and Mechanisms of Future Norwegian Support to IPS

The support of MFA to IPS must be viewed in a context where a number of other donors exercise guiding influence on the activities of IPS. In many instances, donor coordination will be a prerequisite for effective pursuance of the objectives of support to IPS. As a donor specifically focused on the core programmes of IPS, the MFA will be particularly vulnerable to the influence of donors with more specific, issue-related interests.

Norwegian support to the IPS core programme, that of the news feature service should also be viewed in the context of the international market for such services. As described in Chapter 3 of this report, out of the group of international news agencies only Associated Press, which caters to the highly profitable US media market, is currently making a profit from its news operation.

IPS is not likely to be economically self-reliant in the foreseeable future, if ever. This should not detract from the importance of continued efforts to increase sales of IPS news products, which will remain key to reduced donor dependency and a major indicator of achievement. It is important, however, that the core donors to IPS recognize the economic environment in which the agency operates.

### 10.2.1 Objectives

The overall objectives of Norwegian support to the core programme of IPS should be based on an understanding of the importance of the media and of information in the

South in promotion of human rights, transparent governance, popular participation and socio-economic development.

Furthermore, support for IPS's core programmes would have to clearly recognize the validity of the main objectives of IPS's core programmes as stated by the agency itself. At present, this would include that MFA subscribes to the IPS Mission Statement and the sentiments expressed by «IPS 2000» or alternatively additional clarifications of these strategic statements by IPS.<sup>66</sup>

The specific objective of the next framework agreement should be to consolidate and further develop the operations of IPS in Africa and Asia, based on a regional policy for IPS in each of the two regions and action plans, which are subject to annual consultations. An increase in IPS' income from sales, strengthening of regional ownership to IPS and a further increase in outreach will all be important indicators of the success of the framework agreement.

### 10.2.2 Size of Future Support

The key findings of this review identify a number of achievements and potentials which are the direct results of Norwegian support to IPS's core programmes.

The review, however, is also clear in its observation that with the current level of resourcing of IPS's core programme, affected by the overall decline in incomes, it will remain difficult to ensure consolidation of these achievements and impossible to pursue identified opportunities and potentials.

Hence, several inter-related factors suggest an increase in the annual Norwegian contribution:

- the annual contribution has been constant for four years without taking inflation into consideration
- consolidation of achievements already made with Norwegian support cannot be ensured at the current level of resourcing

world and the effect of the outside world upon them. It is only by ensuring an informed global civil society that peoples everywhere will share equitably in the development process'.

<sup>66</sup> One central element of the objectives of IPS as specified in its Mission Statement stipulates how '(...) news services must convey the impact of international systems on local peoples, so they are empowered to understand their own

- identifiable potentials in southern Africa and Asia created by IPS with Norwegian support cannot be pursued at the present level of resourcing.

Considering also:

- the immediate need for increased planning and analysis at regional level and
- indications that additional planning will lead to increased sales of IPS news products in the regions and thus eventually reduce the need for donor funding

the review could propose a total contribution of NOK 18 million for the years 1997-2001 to be disbursed as indicated in the table below.

#### *Proposed Norwegian Assistance to IPS 1997–2001*

1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
4 mill. NOK	4 mill. NOK	3.5 mill. NOK	3.5 mill. NOK	3 mill. NOK

A substantial increase in the Norwegian contribution to the operations of IPS in Africa and Asia in the coming two years will allow IPS to consolidate achievements already made in the two regions, strengthen the capacity of the regional centres, develop regional ownership to IPS, undertake systematic market surveys, introduce more effective monitoring and on-going evaluation, and promote regional planning. Carefully implemented, all these efforts are likely to produce results – also in economic terms – which will allow the Norwegian Government to cut down on its contributions as reflected in the table. If the Norwegian Government is not in a position to increase its support to IPS, it is recommended that financial support at current levels is continued to consolidate as much as possible the achievements already made.

#### *10.2.3 Content*

The degree to which Norway should earmark its contribution to IPS has been the point of debate between Norway and IPS over the years.

In contemplating future support, it seems that a main concern in this regard would be that increased earmarking of the Norwegian contribution would add to the already obvious dilemma that IPS is too often forced to work towards objectives as defined by donors, rather

than towards concrete objectives clearly stated by the agency itself. This dilemma should be addressed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in concerted efforts with other donors and IPS.

In addition, however, three factors point to at least some degree of earmarking of future programme contributions:

- Norwegian support to IPS will have to correspond with and support the overall objectives and priorities of Norwegian development cooperation policies, including geographical priorities.
- Future resource allocation should be guided by concrete, prioritised objectives and plans of actions.
- Recent achievements made under the years of Norwegian framework assistance are currently not covered by any IPS policies, which ensure that they will be consolidated (e.g. the training efforts in Africa, the translation services in Asia).

It follows that continued earmarking of Norwegian support to IPS activities in southern Africa and Asia would seem in line with both the overall objectives of Norwegian development policy and with the more immediate concerns raised by this review. It would also seem in line with IPS' efforts to balance the overall resourcing of regions, and to reduce expenditures in the North.

Earmarking for more specific lines of activity (e.g. training in Africa) should probably be substituted by a constructive, well-informed dialogue between IPS and its core group of donors, including the Norwegian Government, on regional policies and achievements in relation to objectives stipulated in the regional plans of action, which are proposed by this review.

More detailed earmarking, however well intended, is at present forcing IPS into separate and demanding accounting and reporting procedures. These procedures will often be as much designed to meet donor demands as relating to an accurate picture of operations on the ground. It is possible that increased earmarking of donor funds would eventually undermine the future of IPS.

The overall objectives of the Norwegian support to IPS would therefore be best served by awarding the assistance from Norway as untied support for the core news feature service programme of IPS in Africa and Asia.

#### 10.2.4 Mechanisms

The framework agreement has proven to be a good vehicle for Norwegian support to IPS.

It has provided IPS with

- support at sustained predictable levels in a period of time where several donors have cut down their contributions and overall incomes have been declining;
- support for its core programme when still more donors have preferred to contribute through issue-based, high-profile project support.

At the same time, the framework agreement has provided MFA with

- a central platform from which to partake in the dialogue with other donors and IPS.

The modalities of the framework agreement, however, – the recurrent consultations between IPS and Norway, and meetings within the core group of donors – can be further developed. While the MFA has not had the resources required and necessary information about results, constraints, and potentials, to engage in a constructive dialogue with IPS on future directions of the agency, IPS on its side has found Norwegian calls for reporting and accounts somewhat demanding.

Hence, it appears that more concrete and prioritized plans of actions for the regional activities of IPS would not only assist IPS in formulating more strongly its objectives but also form a more constructive basis for dialogue with MFA and other donors, for consultations within the core group of donors and for subsequent requests for funding by IPS.

To be useful for such dialogue regional plans of action, elaborated by the regional staff of IPS in consultation with a group of regional advisers and the central management, should include

- short and medium term regional policies and strategies for IPS
- clearly defined and prioritized objectives for all lines of activity (e.g. production, editing, sales, marketing, training, fund-raising)
- clearly defined performance indicators for each line of activity (e.g. income from sales, number of stories produced, increases in quality and timeliness, funds raised from local and regional donors)
- definitions of means of monitoring (e.g. clippings, questionnaires to trainees, regular user-surveys of IPS news products, evaluations of IPS dispatches by non-IPS resource persons)

Related to the preparation of the regional plans of action, it is suggested that IPS undertakes a *survey of the markets for IPS news features products* in southern Africa and Asia. These studies would map potentials for

- outreach of the IPS news product within the media, (including print, radio, TV and internet media), the NGO communities and other markets
- sales of IPS news products in these markets
- (regional) fund-raising for the core news feature service.

The surveys should be carried out or commissioned by the regional centres of IPS in Africa and Asia in cooperation with IPS central management utilizing the increased financial support from MFA. Also to be consulted in these studies should be a panel of selected regional resource persons or advisers identified by IPS for their insight and expertise in such fields as regional media development, regional NGO liaison and socio-economic development. The consultations with the regional resource persons should be conducted with a view to the possible future establishment of regional advisory committees in Africa and Asia to the Board of Directors of the IPS International Association.

## Terms of Reference for a Review of Norwegian Assistance to Inter Press Service

### 1. Background

Inter Press Service, which was founded in 1964, provides a development oriented alternative to the main international news agencies. IPS has received financial support from the Norwegian Government under framework agreements since 1987. The latest agreement, covering 1992–1995, had an allocation of NOK 9,275 million. In 1996, additional support in the amount of NOK 2,5 million was provided and it was decided to undertake a review of Norwegian assistance to IPS.

### 2. Objective

The review will provide a basis for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to decide the objectives, size, content and form of continued Norwegian support to IPS and in particular assess the appropriateness of providing assistance to IPS through a framework agreement. The review includes an assessment of results of assistance provided in light of priorities of Norwegian foreign aid policies. In addition, the review will provide advice to management of IPS on further changes required to improve cost-effectiveness while maintaining the quality. The review will also provide an input to the broader discussion on the relationship between modern, market-oriented media and development.

### 3. Scope of the Review

The review will focus on Norwegian assistance since 1992, in particular through the framework agreements. The assistance has mainly been used to finance parts of the operation in regional centres in Harare, Manila and Kingston, but the review will be limited to operations in Southern Africa and Asia. It is not an evaluation which will determine the effects and impact of the assistance provided, but rather a review which will provide recommendations based on a quick assessment of changes which have occurred, and results which have been achieved.

### 4. Issues to be Studied

The logic of the study is reflected in the following four

sets of issues, which will constitute the core of the review:

- Is there a role to play, which is relevant to priorities of Norwegian foreign aid policies, for an agency such as IPS considering the dramatic changes that have taken place over the last few years in terms of diversification in the South, the end of the Cold War and the revolution within the media and communication technology. The present IPS strategy shall be assessed against this background and recommendations for future strategic options be presented and assessed.
- If so, is IPS – generally and in the way it is resourced, structured and managed – in a position to play this role effectively? How well has IPS been able to adjust to changes in the world? The way IPS has adapted to democratization in Southern Africa and the subsequent freedom of expression and growth of new media, has been chosen as an indicator of the responsiveness of IPS.
- Has the support provided by Norway made a difference in the capability of IPS to fulfill its objectives? Results of IPS-operations in Africa and Asia, which have received the bulk of Norwegian assistance, will be assessed, with particular emphasis on the effectiveness of capacity building efforts and the underlying strategy.
- General and financial management of IPS shall be assessed with particular emphasis on accounting and reporting routines to Norway.
- Did the framework agreement turn out to be an effective mechanism for the provision of Norwegian assistance to IPS from the latter's and the Norwegian Government's point of view. If further Norwegian assistance to IPS is recommended, what should be the objectives, content, duration, volume and mechanisms of the support to be provided by the Norwegian Government.
- An important part of the review will be to assess the quality and usefulness of news and information, produced by IPS. For this task the review will rely on secondary data, but also conduct an informal survey among users and potential users of IPS in Africa and Asia.

## 5. Implementation and Staffing

The review will be undertaken by COWI during May and June 1997 with a team of consultants, comprised of:

**Lars P. Christensen** (team-leader), an institutional planner, who has specialised in international development co-operation and aid effectiveness studies.

**Martin Breum** (team-member), a journalist, who has specialised in media development and communication in Southern Africa and related capacity building.

**Knud Vilby** (recourse person), a journalist and editor, who has specialised in North-South relations and support to media development in Asia and Africa.

The review will include brief visits to the Regional Centres of IPS in Harare and Manila, with stop-overs in Lusaka and New Dehli, followed by further consultations with the IPS management in Rome and drafting of the the review report. It will be submitted in draft form to the Royal Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 15 June 1997.

## Annex 2

# List of Persons Interviewed

\* by telephone \*\* by e-mail

### Europe

Richard Carver, Senior Researcher, «Article 19», London\*

Andreas Danevad, Executive Officer, Multilateral Department, Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Kjell Halvorsen, Director General, Multilateral Department, Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Mr Allert van der Ham, Head Special Programmes, Netherlands Organization for International Development Cooperation (NOVIB)

Prof. C.Hamelink, University of Amsterdam, Netherlands\*

Halle Jørn Hanssen, Secretary General, Norwegian People's Aid, former Head of Information Department, NORAD

Terje R. Larsen, IPS-mediator\*

### *Inter Press Service – Rome*

Roberto Savio, Director General

Giovanni Spinelli, Managing Director

Michael Keats, Managing Editor

Vic Sutton, Director of Projects

Alejandro Kirk, Deputy Managing Editor

Susan Alexander, Director NGO Liaison

David Rothschild, Director of Finance and Planning

Jacqueline Netto, Projects Officer

Daniela Vatter, Projects Officer

Pablo Piacentini, Director of Columnist Service

Phil Harris, Editor TerraViva

### Africa

Kenneth Blackman, Regional Editor And Acting Administrative Head, IPS Africa, Harare

Patricia Made, Senior Editor, IPS Africa, IPS Inter-Regional Gender Coordinator, Harare

Lynette Matimba, Marketing & Projects Officer, IPS Africa, Harare

Lulu de Aguiar, administrative assistant, IPS Africa, Harare

Peter da Costa, former regional director IPS Africa (resigned April 1997), Development Communications Consultant, UN Economic Commission for Africa, Addis Abeba \*

Ami Ambala-Odinga, bookkeeper, Deloitte & Touche, Harare

Nigel Cross, Executive Director, The Panos Institute, London

Mark Chivunduka, editor, The Standard, Harare

Geoffrey Nyarota, editor in chief, Venture Publishing Ltd., Harare

Tarcay Munaku, features editor, Zimbabwe Inter-Africa News agency (ZIANA), Harare

Iden Wetherell, chief editor, The Independent, Harare

Tafadzwa Mumba, programme officer, Zimbabwe Women's Resource Centre & Network (ZWRCN), Harare

Ncamsile Matsebula, news editor, Swaziland Broadcasting Corporation

Bentry Mdlule, reporter, National Director, Media Institute of Southern Africa, Malawi Chapter, Blantyre \*

David Lush, Programme Coordinator, Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA), (MISANET responsible), Windhoek \*

Charles Inyanga-Obbo, Editor in Chief, The Monitor, Kampala \*\*

Vincent Chikwari, Vice-President, Union of African Journalists, Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) National Director, Zimbabwe Chapter, Harare

Methaetsile Leepile, Executive Director, Media Institute of Southern Africa, Windhoek

Accadoga P. Chiledi, editor, SABANEWS, Harare

Aida Opoku-Mensah, Director, The Panos Institute Centre for Public and Policy Debate for Southern Africa, Lusaka

John Mukela, Executive Director, Nordic SADC Journalism Centre, Maputo

Enoch Kayaya, Bureau Chief, Southern Africa Region, Pan African News agency (PANA), Lusaka

Sunday Sinkala, Assistant Editor, The Post, Lusaka

Jowie Mwiinga, Reuters correspondent, former IPS stringer, Lusaka \*

### Asia

Kunda Dixit, Editor, «Himal South Asia»; South Asia representative for The PANOS Institute (Nepal); Regional Director IPS Asia (1987-1997), Manila

Chi Liquicia, Projects and Marketing Coordinator, IPS Asia, Manila

Johanna Son, Regional Editor & East Asia correspondent, IPS Asia, Manila

Jossie Patubo, Accountant, IPS Asia, Manila

Eric Bringas, Technical Consultant, IPS Asia, Manila

Howie G. Severino, reporter, Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism, Manila

Julius Fortuna, Associate Editor, The Manila Chronicle, Manila

Angelito L. Santos, Editor-in-Chief, NewsAsia, Manila

Isagani R. Serrano, Vice President, Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement; member for East Asia, NGO Working Group of the Asia Development Bank (ADB), Manila

Fides Balgasao, acting Executive Director, Community Organisation Training and Research Advocacy Institute (Co-Train); Asia representative, International facilitating group for the NGO-forum at the UN «Habitat» conference 1996, Manila

Bobby Tiglo, correspondent, Far Eastern Economic Review, Manila

Ann Ninan, sub-regional Editor, IPS South Asia, New Delhi

George Josph , Office Manager, IPS South Asia, New Delhi

Mahesh Uniyal, editor/writer, India Abroad News Service; IPS India correspondent (1990-1997), New Delhi

Praful Bidwai, columnist, Times of India, New Delhi

Kushik Mitter, Resident Editor, AsianAge, Delhi

Priti Mehra, Editor, BusinessLine (The Hindu),

Madras \*

M. Venugpala Rao, first Bureau Chief, IPS India; IPS legal representative in India until 1997, Delhi\*

## Annex 3

# List of Documents Reviewed

### IPS Documents

IPS. Inter Press Service, Asia-Pacific. Cities & Citizens.

The AP2000 Experience: Information, Networking, Advocacy, Capacity building and Resource Mobilisation.

IPS. Notes for an IPS Year 2000 Plan – Premise.

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