

THE NORTH-SOUTH ROUNDTABLE

SOCIETY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

ROUNDTABLE ON INFORMATICS REVOLUTION

TOKYO, JAPAN

THE INFORMATICS REVOLUTION AND DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS OF TOKYO

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The Hon Justice Michael Kirby CMG

The following are a series of suggested principles derived by Justice Michael Kirby (Australia) who was Chairman of the Third Session (Priorities in International Cooperation in Informatics) of the Tokyo Roundtable on the Informatics Revolution in Tokyo, Japan, 30 September - 3 October 1987.

I. ETHICAL VALUES

In the development of informatics policy pay attention to ethical and human values. Build defences for cultural, linguistic and social variety. Pay attention to new social problems such as unemployment, social dislocation, the need to protect privacy and confidentiality and to provide solutions to new social problems - such as leisure etc.

II. PEACE

Consider the contribution which informatics policy can make to world peace - the exchange of information can reduce the risks of antagonism built on ignorance.

III. COMPATIBILITY

Attend urgently to the needs of compatibility between systems in the hope of avoiding unnecessary disparity and expensive incompatibilities between systems. This may be achieved by internationally accepted standards, for example in software but also in hardware.

IV. TRANSNATIONAL CORPORATIONS

Keep an eye on the special role in informatics of the private sector and of multinational corporations, in particular. Many such corporations have a good record as good corporate citizens. But the very size and power of such corporations and their insusceptibility to domestic control by individual countries - even groups of countries - poses new problems for achieving agreed national, and even international goals.

V. BRAIN DRAIN

Attend to the special problems and difficulties in the field of informatics of the brain drain. The very international features of informatics makes technological skills of international utility. Defences against the loss of talent include the training of trainers in the environment of developing countries.

VI. DUMPING

Beware of the dumping of outmoded and already supervened technology. In informatics this is a special problem

because of the speed of technological change and the fact that costs of equipment frequently falls making the purchase of outmoded technology doubly disadvantageous.

VII. SOCIALIST COUNTRIES

Attend to the special needs of development in the socialist countries, in order that their development be integrated in an appropriate way with that of other countries.

VIII. OPTIMISM

The dynamic and evolving nature of informatics as an international technology permits general optimism about the long term impact of informatics, including upon developing countries.

X. INSTITUTIONS

The urgent concern of the international community should include attention to the need for institutional arrangements to attend to the many policy problems presented by informatics - whether technological, social or otherwise. The OECD has served developed countries well; but there is no truly international, universal, accepted and effective agency to co-ordinate the aggregate policy studies concerned with informatics issues. UNESCO has been a late entrant to the field. IBI has not enjoyed universal participation. The urgent need for co-ordinated international attention to informatics issues is demonstrated by the urgency, difficulty and variety of the issues which have been debated at this Roundtable.