

## AGENDA FOR ACTION

The drafting of action recommendations began with the preparations for the Founding Convention began in the fall of 1995. A group of Conveners representing affiliated and supporting organizations and individuals developed the initial draft and helped set up the structure of 15 Working Groups (see list below) to consider it at the Founding Convention.

Each of the 15 Working Groups reviewed the drafts and developed a set of recommendations. Statements of policy, principle, and standards were integrated into the Viewers' Declaration of Independence and the People's Communication Charter. The Agenda for Action is a synthesis of the more specific action items contained in the recommendations. Pending further comments, suggestions, and refinements, and the development of specific projects, based on each of the items, the Agenda for action, the list that follows is in no particular order of priority or category.

1. Organize a day of "Action for the Cultural Environment," including a Parents' March, teach-ins on college campuses and town-meetings in selected cities, in collaboration with affiliated and supporting groups.
2. Convene a Second International Broadcast Standards Summit of CEM affiliates and supporting organizations, media executives, and representatives of producers and creative workers in participating countries, to develop a mechanism for regular consultation and broad participation in the development of media policy standards and international trade.
3. Set up a Global Marketing Awareness Task Force to expose the "dumping" of cultural products worldwide that drive out home-produced and quality materials.
4. Initiate a formal complaint procedure to investigate and publicize violations of the People's Communication Charter. A People's Media Inquiry, in collaboration with local and regional affiliated and supporting organizations, would hold open hearings and publish a report at the end of the year.
5. Support a Women's Roundtable committed to strengthening women's voices in male-dominated media.
6. Arrange a Media Literacy and Critical Awareness Program Development and Coordination project, culminating in an international assembly of leaders of the movement.
7. Advocate that schools, churches, youth organizations in the community include media literacy in their programs. Attend school board meetings, promote candidates, support teachers and students active in the media literacy movement. Oppose the use of media literacy as a public relations tool to rationalize the existing media system.

8. Hold forums with community leaders and media professionals devoted to creating alternatives for the cult of violence and brutality that hurt our youth, cultivate meanness, glorify domination, deform masculinity and sexuality, and polarize our society.
9. Promote the development of and access to successful resource-generating and organizing models for independent productions and journalism. Explore what mechanisms (e.g. media laws, direct and indirect subsidies) democratic societies around the world use to support independent voices.
10. Enhance regular monitoring of media ownership, employment, and content, and release annual reports of the health and diversity of the cultural mainstream. These reports should include assessments of and guidelines for:
  - (1) diverse and equitable media ownership and employment practices;
  - (2) fair and realistic gender, racial, ethnic, aging, disability and mental illness portrayal;
  - (3) health-related presentations, including depiction of addictive substances without consequences, promotion of prescription drugs to the public, the aggressive marketing of pharmaceuticals as "miracle drugs," and other inducements for "pill popping" that, together, make for a drug culture;
  - (4) fast and reckless driving both as a dramatic and sales feature;
  - (5) violence with invidious patterns of victimization and without realistic consequences or suggesting alternative approaches to conflict, and;
  - (6) impossible standards of beauty, especially for high fashion, diet programs, cosmetics, cosmetic surgeries, and other products that imply that normal women are defective.
11. Conduct cross-national comparative studies to document trends in global homogenization vs. diversification.
12. Publish major CEM documents widely, including full-page advertisements with lists of affiliated and supporting organizations and donors, soliciting other affiliations, and announcing forthcoming action.
13. Develop a Center to serve as an information service, clearinghouse, speakers bureau, and newsletter editorial office to coordinate action on the national and international levels. Publish a calendar of events to link independent producers and publications to in local communities. Include notification of teach-ins, town meetings, open hearings, policy briefings, and activities of affiliates.
14. Use CEMNET and Internet as organizing tools and forums for independent voices, while also noting that powerful technologies are used most effectively by powerful institutions; there is no technological fix to social and cultural problems.
15. Propose ad-free zones for schools; oppose the use of school time and space for commercial messages.

16. Design a cultural environment education course showing how media-driven consumer lifestyles impact the environment.
  17. Devise a pilot program to promote communication skills through storytelling and to counteract media-driven expectations. Propose at least one storyteller's presence in every school or school district.
  18. Launch a campaign for the establishment of a National Endowment for Telecommunications to support alternatives to cultural dependence on private corporate advertising.
  19. Explore the feasibility of a Constitutional challenge of the give-away of the public airways for private profit.
  20. Join legal action to (1) reverse media monopoly; (2) force strict compliance with EEOC diversity and FDA food and drug testing and disclosure rules; (3) limit surveillance of consumers in the market place and employees in the work place, and (4) to encourage and protect Micro-Radio projects of low power broadcasting (5) ensure that all individuals have equitable access to new communication technologies at affordable rates, and (6) to reinstate the Fairness Doctrine and strengthen the Equal Time provisions of the FCC, and (7) restore the family viewing hour and require substantial quality children's programming per week, some of it in prime-time, as a licensing requirement
  21. Create a CEM Awards and CEM Censure program that (1) honors outstanding media challenges to media stereotyping and other harmful or wasteful practices, and (2) exposes the most flagrant examples of media "pollution."
  22. Establish an Award category for productions, including children's programs, that promote portrayals of older adults, especially women, as vital productive persons in realistic, believable situations with the full range of human emotions, hopes and desires.
  23. Start a network for mentoring young, alternative-oriented media professionals through internships with affiliated and supporting organizations and media.
  24. Work with communities of faith and spirituality to help express their views and concerns about diversity and freedom in the cultural environment.
  25. Collaborate with the AFL-CIO and the media workers unions (1) to develop labor participation in CEM and leadership in communications and cultural policy-making, and (2) to create public support for diversity efforts and avoid policies that result in loss of jobs in the cultural industries.
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## **Working Groups and their tasks**

- (1) **Whose Voices in the Mainstream? Telecommunications Concentration, Media Monopoly.** "Merger mania" has been the rule of the decade and is escalating virtually unchecked. This working group addressed anti-trust and freedom of press issues.
- (2) **Against the Stream: Independents, Public and Other Alternatives.** This Working Group represented producers, journalists, media executives, scholars, and other leaders concerned with the disappearance of independent and alternative voices from the cultural mainstream.
- (3) **Educational Imperatives: Media Literacy, Critical Awareness.** A critical and analytical understanding of the cultural environment is necessary to build public support for schools and to address both the problems of the image and commercialization of schools and the need for media literacy programs at every level of education.
- (4) **Health Promotion and Harm Prevention: the Cultural Frontier.** Tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs claim more victims than all other sources combined. Stigmatization of disability and mental illness hurt millions more. Prevention starts with countering culturally induced hurt and destruction.
- (5) **Religion As a Cultural Force.** The pervasive misrepresentation of religious convictions and motivations leads to cultural polarization, conflict, repression, violence and even to wars. Life and its values must not be reduced to what can be sold and consumed.
- (6) **Technology, Consumerism and the Ecosystem.** Sustainable societies require the recognition of patterns of science and technology that are detrimental to physical, social and cultural environments, worldwide. This Working Group media representations of technology and environmentally destructive practices and lifestyles.
- (7) **Labor—Jobs, Work and Image.** Decline employment, diversity, freedom, and balanced representation of media workers and other working people were the major concerns of this Group.
- (8) **Global Village or Global Dominion? Cultural Integrity and Human Rights.** "Eliminating the distinction between information rich and poor countries is critical to eliminating economic and other inequalities... Telecommunications cannot be simply treated as one commercial sector of the economy." This quote by Nelson Mandela, opening the "Telecom 95" conference on October 3, 1995, in Geneva, Switzerland, provided the focus for this Working Group.
- (9) **Children, Youth, Aging and The Family; Media from Cradle to Grave.** Under- and misrepresentation of children, stereotypic portrayals of aging

and family, children's programs built around merchandising and mayhem were some of the problems addressed in this Working Group.

- (10) **Women And Men: Gender Issues And Sexual Orientation.** Gender is culture's symbolic response to the biology of sexual differences. Meanings ascribed to these differences are used to organize production, reproduction, and consumption. This Working Group examined the meanings ascribed to gender and sexual orientation in the current cultural environment.
  - (11) **Affirming Diversity, Equity, Justice.** The attack on diversity and equity provisions, coupled with conglomerate consolidation, pose the worst threat to minority ownership, employment, and representation in recent media history. Organizations that led the civil rights struggle came together in this Working Group to extend it to media diversity.
  - (12) **War and Peace and the Cult Of Violence.** Images of violence fill our homes and the minds of our children. This Working Group addressed the meaning and driving forces behind this unprecedented flood of violent images and messages.
  - (13) **Storytellers in a Culture of Storysellers.** Those who have stories to tell need to recapture their role in the art and practice of storytelling in the family, community, and society.
  - (14) **Advocacy: Communicating What Works.** This Working Group explored examples and lessons of successful grass-roots activity on the national, regional and local levels.
  - (15) **The Women's Room.** A special place and time was designated for discussion of issues common to women in all Working Groups.
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