

## **SUMMARY OF EMAILS - '76 UNCHS FILMS - RE DIGITIZING**

### **1. Sharad Shankardass UNCHS Nairobi to Jim Carney - 9/12/07**

Dear Mr. Carney,

I must apologise for not replying to your emails. I must admit that immediately after WUF III, I was on holidays after which we were pre-occupied by preparations for World Habitat Day.

After our brief conversation during WUF II, had every intention of working on your proposal immediately after World Habitat Day. However, unfortunately I fell seriously ill during the World Habitat Day celebrations in Kazan, resulting in hospitalisation there and subsequently in London followed by a long period of recuperation. It took me some time to recover and fully get back to work.

I think your project proposal is excellent but I suspect it will be difficult to activate. Basically, I have not been able to get very far with your request because no one seems to know who has the original films or the original rights. As far as I am aware, from discussion with Tom Perlmutter, the NFB does not have the originals or the negatives. As Habitat I in 1976 was a UN conference, when I was last in NY, we checked the archives in the UN but they do not seem to have any copies either.

I have looked through our archives here in Nairobi and we only have very bad scratched films available most of which are in appalling condition. Earlier this year I tried to raise funds to employ a couple of people to go through all our old 16 mm archive films to check what we have and in what condition but this stalled due to a lack of resources. Honestly, cataloguing them may be an academic exercise as they seem to be in terrible condition from years of use and subsequent neglect.

I must admit that I suspect that each government that was responsible for making the films has kept the original negatives etc. I believe that the whole point was of the exercise was to decentralise the production process. By its very nature, this will make it very difficult to track down their location. (I dread to think what the archiving policies and conditions were in most of the Ministries of Information responsible for the films.)

I am not sure how you wish to proceed but do feel free to contact me at any time. And this time I will certainly reply as quickly as possible.

Sharad Shankardass  
Spokesperson, Head Press and Media Relations Office of the Executive Director UN-  
HABITAT Box 30030, Nairobi, Kenya

### **2. Hives to Carney April 21/10**

I would certainly be interested in assisting with the project although there are limits as to what the Library will be able to do I suspect. We still have the tapes of the conference sessions and these are quite accessible in our vault. The other materials maintained by the Center for Human Settlements as a "library" are boxed and stored offsite.

### **3. Carney to Hives April 21/10**

Thanks for the prompt response. My principle interest is in digitizing the AV presentations submitted by national governments, as distinct from the tapes of the conference sessions. I take it from your reply that the former would be among the UBC/CHS items that are boxed and stored off-site.

### **4. Hives to Carney April 21/10**

Yes that would be correct. The government presentations are boxed and in storage. I don't believe that any of these are in English. We have tapes with original numbers 008-326 from the CHS inventory in the vault.

### **5. Hives to Carney April 22/10**

Just wanted to follow up with some good news. While the bulk of the tapes you are interested are indeed in the Library's Surrey warehouse I do have a random set of about 24 of these in our vault which did not get re-incorporated into the collection before the rest of the boxes went into storage. So this should provide a nice little sample in terms of looking at what might be done with the bigger batch of material. I have highlighted and put \*\*\* beside the tapes that are currently here on your "Government AV Presentation" list.

### **6. Hives to Carney April 22/10**

Language is certainly going to be an issue with the copies of tapes we have. For instance I pulled the Qatar - "Utilization of Sewage and Garbage" and the quality of the picture is quite good. Listening on the headphones there are two sound tracks - one in French and the other in Chinese. I seem to recall that others who have accessed these tapes in the past have commented that they have been in a language other than English.

### **7. Carney to Hives April 22/10**

The UN guidelines for the production of the national AV presentations in 1975/76 required that a) the original film or slide presentation be produced (i.e. submitted) in either 16mm film or 35mm slide format. This was because at that time there was no common world-wide video format (NTSC v. PAL v. SECAM), video tape technology was limited and generally unavailable in developing countries and b) they be produced in one of five of the six UN official languages: Arabic, English, French, Russian and Spanish. (Chinese was excluded as China was not expected to participate in the AV program. However, for purposes of the conference EVERYTHING - each item - had to be available in ALL five languages.

For this, the UN arranged to have the AV presentations - 16mm films and 35mm slides, in its original language of production - shipped to Toronto where the sound tracks were translated into the other 4 or 5 language versions (including perhaps Chinese); then both picture and sound were dubbed over to UMATIC video. However, each UMATIC tape could only accommodate two sound tracks; hence the language versions were paired: two tracks to each tape, requiring three tapes for each presentation (and each individual presentation was accompanied by a three-minute "capsule version", similarly versioned). Furthermore, because of the several presentation venues in Vancouver, each item had to be replicated in three or four sets. All of this had to be accomplished in a matter of three to four months; the logistics were horrendous !

As you know, immediately following the conference in 1976, Professor Oberlander established the UBC Centre for Human Settlements on the fourth floor of the LPC which eventually included a (very attractive) viewing facility on the ground floor or basement of LPC, with an extensive library of the Habitat UMATIC tapes for on-campus use. Concurrently, the UN Audio Visual Centre on Human Settlements (Vision Habitat) with offices on the 4th floor of the LPC, undertook the world-wide distribution of the national government presentations. One could surmise that the UBC/CHS collection in the LPC viewing facility would include only the English and possibly French language versions of the video tapes and that therefore they are NOT included in the material stored in Surrey.

What all this implies of course is a) that the English-language versions may be available but buried somewhere in the mountain of material in Surrey and b) that there is one hell of a sorting job to be done at the Surrey warehouse ! Would there possibly be a detailed inventory of that material ?

### **8. Hives to Carney – Thurs. April 22/10**

I had a colleague have a listen to another 11 or so the sampling of the AV presentations and it would seem only one of those included an English track. For some reason it is one of three tracks somehow with the others apparently French and Chinese. Another six of them were what appears to be French/Chinese and the others were Spanish with perhaps Indian? So the bottom line is that for the tapes we have (which I think would correspond to AV Presentation list of 218 tapes that you provided) it would appear that because we have only one copy of each tape that we have the non-English version.

This single set of AV Presentation tapes and the conference session tapes that we inherited from the Centre of Human Settlement are all that came to us many years ago. Unless someone else on campus has a stash of the English language version of these tapes I am afraid that your search for this material will have to continue.

## **9. Boothroyd to Carney April 21/10**

Tom Radford NFB) and I made contact with some UN Habitat people (when we were at WUF5 in Rio) and they have helped us to find the key to the secret vault in Geneva where the '76 films are housed (and hopefully are still intact).

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## **10. Hives to Carney April 26/10**

I am getting increasingly intrigued by this project and its good to have the opportunity to really sort out what we have here. Starting with the Catalogue produced by Ross Nelson - it would appear that we have copies of all the tapes beginning with the prefix "CHS" from 008 to 327. We do not have copies of CHS tapes after 327. These deal primarily with the presentations from the Habitat Forum and UN Conference in addition to a number of interviews. These are all in our vault on-site.

I think that the material we have stored off-site in Surrey of which we do have a sampling of materials on-hand is the Governmental AV presentations but it would appear that the one copy we have of these will be all in non-English languages.

*(Please see Appendix A – "Explanatory Note and Update-April 30, 2010")*

**. Carney to Tom Radford April 28/10**

A list of the approx 218 National Government AV presentations which I extracted from the UBC/CHS "A/V Viewing Library Catalogue" prepared by Ross Nelson in 1980. The whole catalogue (58 pgs, 10 MB) lists the hundreds of AV materials accumulated subsequent to the Conference by the late Prof Peter Oberlander for the UBC Centre For Human Settlements and available for on-campus viewing at the CHS Viewing Facility in UBC's Library Processing Centre (LPC). At some point much of this material - including the UMATIC copies of the 218 National Government AV presentations (NGAV) - was turned over to the UBC Archives. It appears that the NGAV component, comprising a single copy - i.e. one UMATIC video tape - of each title is stored in the UBC Archives storage facility in Surrey. Chris Hives retained approximately two dozen of these tapes (indicated by \*\*\* in the list I refer to above) and checked for languages at UBC. No English versions were found. The majority of the sampling appeared to be in Spanish and French, with some Chinese and Arabic (?).

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