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To: Members of the Executive Board

From: The Acting Secretary

Subject: **Strengthening the Fund's External Communications—Plans and
Resource Implications**

Attached for consideration by the Executive Directors is a paper on plans to strengthen the Fund's external communications and their resource implications, which is tentatively scheduled for discussion on Friday, February 4, 2000. Conclusions appear on page 14.

Mr. Hacche (ext. 37409) and Ms. Aylward (ext. 37807) are available to answer technical or factual questions relating to this paper prior to the Board discussion.

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INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND

Strengthening the Fund's External Communications: Plans and Resource Implications

Prepared by the External Relations Department

In consultation with the Office of Budget and Planning

Approved by Thomas C. Dawson

January 27, 2000

I. Introduction

This paper outlines plans to strengthen the IMF's external communications and the implications for staff resource requirements in the medium term. The paper is intended both to supplement the documentation providing the basis for the Executive Board's consideration of the Fund's medium-term budget, for FY 2001-03, and to follow up on the Board's discussion in July 1998 of the Fund's external communications policy.

The paper discussed by the Board in 1998—the first Board paper to focus on the Fund's external communications—noted that while in the past the Fund's approach to external communications had tended to be restrained, scholarly, and conservative, developments over the previous 15 years or so, and particularly over the previous two years, had required that this approach change considerably.¹ Factors cited in the paper included the intensely heightened public interest in the IMF associated with the Asian financial crisis; the increase in the influence of various public groups interested in the Fund's work; advances in information technology that had helped to create a global, 24-hour news cycle; and the upward trend in the transparency of public institutions generally. Furthermore, the Interim Committee, in its most recent communiqué (of April 1998), had requested the Fund, in the context of the need for greater availability and transparency of information regarding economic data and policies “to continue its efforts to increase the dissemination of information on its policy recommendations.”

In the July 1998 Executive Board discussion, “Directors endorsed the overall strategy for the Fund to be more proactive in communicating its message” (Buff/98/65, July 16, 1998). Directors also noted that the “ongoing effort to further strengthen communications ... would

¹ See “The Fund's Approach to External Communications—Next Steps,” SM/98/153, June 22, 1998.

entail providing more information to diverse target audiences, extending the reach of our communications, and engaging our critics more effectively." It was noted, moreover, that "external relations must be a genuine dialogue, and the Fund should be open to suggestions and criticisms by informed parties outside the Fund, and take into account such feedback in our policy discussions." Preserving and enhancing the credibility of the Fund was seen by Directors as the most important objective of the strategy to strengthen external communications.

In the year or so following the July 1998 Board discussion, and taking into account the views of the Board, a number of steps were taken to develop the Fund's external communications, particularly by the External Relations Department. An increase of six staff-years in EXR's resources in FY 2000—the first significant increase in EXR staffing in many years—was spread over a number of activities, reflecting the pattern of demands and priorities in an environment of intense critical attention to the Fund's work, increasing Fund transparency, and rapid progress in information technology. Specifically, the additional resources were used to help staff the recently developed external website, to increase the output of material for the print media explaining and defending the Fund's work, to provide additional staff resources for speech-writing for management, to ease constraints on editorial capacity, to increase EXR's outreach effort to legislatures (especially the U.S. Congress), and to formalize staffing for the Fund's civic and community relations program. At the same time, resources were redeployed in a number of ways, including from the media relations team to allow the creation of a News and External Communications Division responsible for monitoring news and for taking a more proactive approach in writing material to explain Fund positions in the media, including in response to attacks on the Fund.

In addition, and in response to the view of several Directors that it would be useful to obtain further insights into the effectiveness of the Fund's external communications on the basis of outside advice, a number of consultants' reports were commissioned by EXR. These were completed in mid-1999 and were made available to Board members in connection with a series of informal briefings during July-September.

The findings of the consultants, summarized in Section II below, strongly confirmed the need to strengthen the Fund's external communications and helped to formulate the plan outlined in Section III. The resource implications of this plan are discussed in Section IV, with some concluding remarks following in Section V.

II. Consultants' Findings and Recommendations

In the latter part of 1998, EXR commissioned a major survey and report on the IMF's external communications by the consultancy groups Edelman Public Relations and Wirthlin Worldwide. Three narrower studies were also undertaken, dealing respectively with the Fund's communications with financial markets in the wake of the Asian crisis (by Mr. Susumu Awanohara of Nikko Securities), its communications with the U.S. Congress in the context of the eleventh quota review (by Ms. Mary Locke of Georgetown University), and its media operations during the Spring 1999 ministerial meetings (by Mr. James Morgan,

Morgan, formerly of the BBC). These reports were completed between March and August, 1999, and the findings were reported informally to Executive Directors.²

The **Edelman/Wirthlin Study** involved opinion surveys of Fund management and senior staff, as well as of more than 400 influential members of society across the world, including from the media, business, civil society, and academia.

The key conclusions of the Edelman/Wirthlin study were that the public image of the Fund was bad, comparing unfavorably with those of many other international organizations (see Figure); that the widely held views that Fund policies were ineffective and the Fund itself insensitive to outside views and the needs of individual countries, could not be viewed as a transitory phenomenon related to the Asian crisis, but were associated with a lack of understanding of the Fund's work; and that the Fund lacked a clearly defined communications strategy. To correct the image, such a strategy needed to be developed, and would involve, in particular:

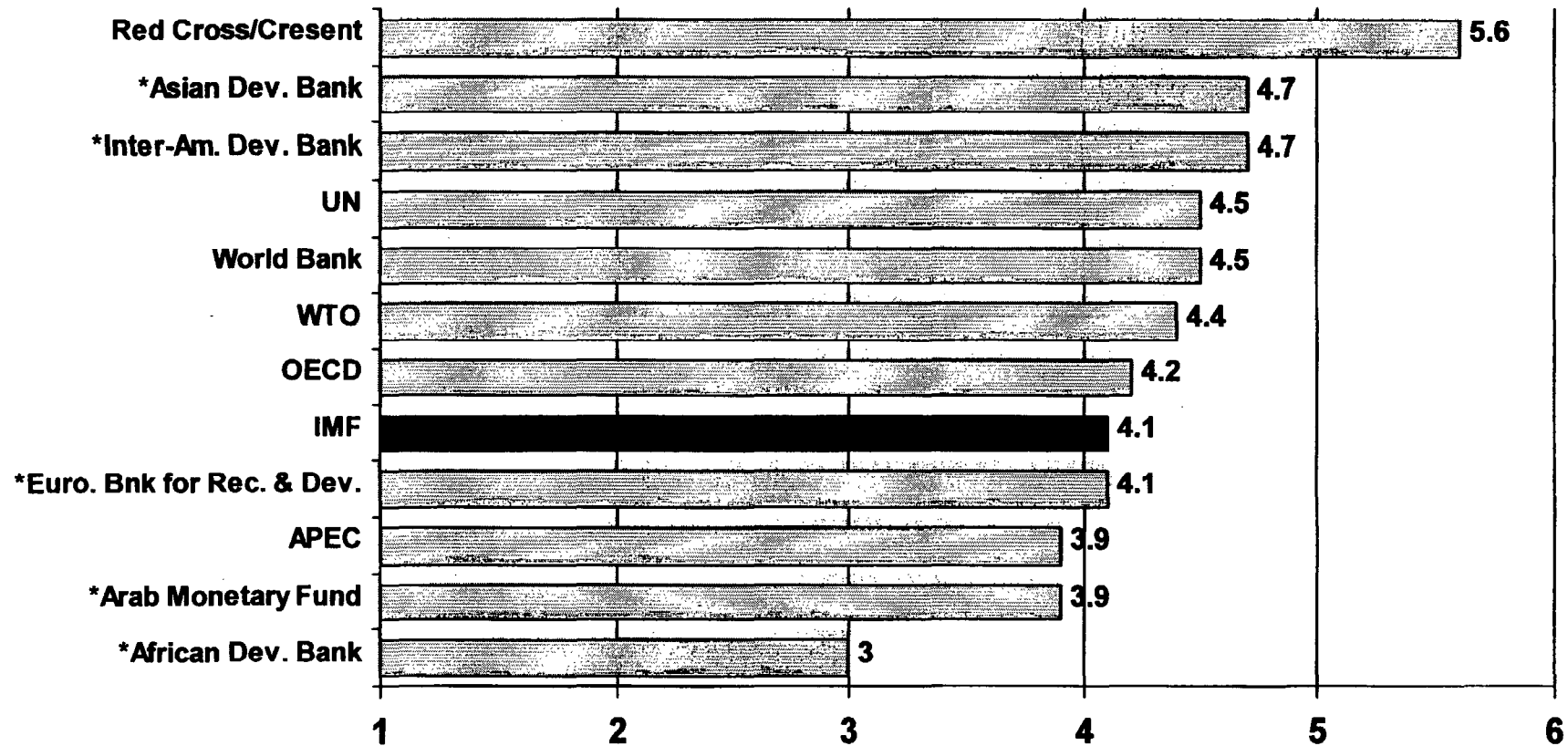
- the development of a clear message;
- clearer focus and improved coordination of the Fund's public output; and
- more proactive external communications, which would actively claim the successes of Fund work, and respond more effectively to its critics.

The report advised that such a strategy would call for the Fund to strengthen its outreach to the media, the financial community, parliamentarians (especially, but not only, the U.S. Congress), and civil society.

The consultants recommended that there should be an overarching theme in the Fund's communications, emphasizing that the IMF is effective, responsive, and fair. They suggested planning proactive outreach around significant international meetings and other events, and greatly stepping up EXR's writing program to produce more articles and letters in the press. They further suggested strengthening and sharpening "the voice of the Fund" by developing a proactive, coordinated campaign of speaking and other events for management, creating an IMF spokesperson role in EXR, and initiating frequent and regular press briefings. They also recommended the development of media guidelines and a media training program, and the simplification of language in press releases.

² "Moving the IMF Forward: A Plan for Improving the Fund's Communications with Critical Audiences Around the Globe" by Edelman Public Relations Worldwide, June 1999 (which incorporated results from surveys by Wirthlin Worldwide); "The Effectiveness of IMF Communications: View from the Markets" by Susumu Awanohara, March 1999 (with a follow-up assessment in August 1999); "The IMF and the U.S. Congress: An Uphill Struggle" by Mary Locke, May 1999; and "Assessment of IMF Media Operations During the Interim Committee Meetings" by James Morgan, April 1999 (with a follow-up assessment in October 1999).

Job Favorability of World Organizations



*Rated only by regional respondents

Mean Scores

Figure. Excerpt from the Edelman/Wirthlin Survey

The IMF's external website (www.imf.org) scored high marks in the international survey and was recognized as an invaluable tool for IMF public relations, but the consultants saw a need to develop and expand the site and to put more resources into this new means of communication, with the establishment of a website division. For the IMF's publications program, the main recommendations were to put more resources into the development of products accessible and attractive to wide audiences, and to strengthen editing and editorial discretion over technically written material, when appropriate, in order to sharpen "the voice of the Fund" in various IMF publications.

Edelman/Wirthlin emphasized that strengthening external communications would require a Fund-wide effort and improvements in internal communications, especially EXR's communications with area and functional departments, but also its communications with resident representatives and regional offices. Enhanced coordination with the external relations programs of other relevant international organizations was also advised.

The main recommendations of the three more narrowly focused studies reinforced many of the conclusions of the Edelman/Wirthlin report. They pointed to shortcomings in the Fund's communication with the groups studied, and indicated the need to develop a defined and articulated communications strategy.

The **Awanohara Study** of the Fund's communications with financial markets, based partly on interviews in February 1999 with 90 market participants in five financial centers, found that:

- almost all survey participants believed that the Fund had suffered a serious erosion of credibility, in part because of perceived policy mistakes but partly also because of weaknesses in communications—not only a failure to understand and communicate with the markets, but also a failure actively to project a positive image; and
- to regain credibility, the Fund should be more proactive in projecting a positive image, engage the financial markets by institutionalizing contact with them, become more attuned to the interests and sensitivities of Asia and other regions, and make its public statements and publications more user-friendly.

A follow-up survey in August 1999 reported that about 40 percent of respondents saw some recent improvements in the Fund's communications, praising in particular its greater openness, especially through the website, but many of the earlier complaints remained.

The **Locke Study** of the IMF's communications with the U.S. Congress found that:

- the IMF is not widely enough "connected" on Capitol Hill to influence the environment in which IMF matters are considered or, therefore, to reduce the danger of future legislative defeats;

- the public debate in the run-up to the last quota increase was dominated by critics from across the political spectrum, who raised substantive questions that created new doubts about the IMF and its programs even among IMF supporters; and that
- to improve its influence and position in Congress, the IMF must make more proactive congressional liaison efforts, seeking out opportunities for senior staff and management to meet with congressional senior officials, and taking into account the interests of congressional staff, which in the end is what the Congress focuses on when considering IMF matters.

Finally, the **Morgan Study** of the Fund's media operations, based partly on a survey of about 80 journalists, found that:

- the technical and nuanced language of the Fund is viewed as a significant obstacle to true transparency;
- the level of service in the IMF/World Bank newsroom at the time of the ministerial meetings needs to be upgraded; and
- while the increased output of documents and associated transparency are welcomed, one important result is an increased demand among the media for interpretation, analysis, and perspective by Fund staff, including in particular media relations officers in EXR.

Morgan also saw a clear need to develop a medium-term communications strategy that would build a more effective bridge from the Fund to the outside world.

III. Initial Plan of Action

Taking into account the initial reports of the consultants as well as the views of the Board expressed in the July 1998 discussion, management signaled its support for the strengthening of the Fund's external communications by charging the new Director of EXR, appointed in July 1999, with the tasks of further professionalizing and improving the Fund's public relations; enhancing the Fund's contacts with the media; building up the Fund's relations with the U.S. Congress and other legislatures; and broadening the Fund's outreach to, and improving its relations with, civil society. The Director of EXR was also asked by management to take charge of the Fund's relations with the private financial sector, especially that part of it active in emerging markets. In addition, as part of the effort to improve the focus of the Fund's messages, management indicated its recognition of the need to involve EXR more than hitherto in the Fund's decision-making at an early stage and in formulating Fund responses to breaking economic, financial, and political news and developments.

This guidance from management, together with the consultants' recommendations and the views of senior staff and Executive Directors—including those expressed in discussions of the consultants' reports—provided the basis for the formulation of an initial plan of action

to strengthen the Fund's external communications. This underlies the Program Outlook Note for media and public relations that forms part of the documentation for the Board's consideration of the medium-term budget.³

The action plan focuses on a number of specific needs. One is the development of a strategic plan for working with member countries' *legislatures*, including in particular the U.S. Congress. This will entail increased and more proactive efforts by EXR and other staff to engage U.S. congressional staff and Members of Congress, in collaboration with the U.S. Executive Director. The development of work with other legislatures will, of course, depend on the advice of the Executive Directors concerned.

Another element of the plan, involving a new kind of work for EXR, is the building of relations with the *private financial sector*, especially institutions active in emerging market countries. This work, which is part of the Fund's efforts to involve the private sector in the prevention and resolution of financial crises, will involve collaborative efforts by staff in MAE, PDR, RES, area departments (including resident representatives) and the regional offices, along with EXR.

With regard to communications with the *media*, a new spokesperson role is already being performed by the Director of EXR. He has given regular briefings to the media since October 1999 that have enabled the Fund to have greater influence over media reporting of its activities. He has also been given the authority to speak ad hoc to the media when direct comment by management is not deemed appropriate or feasible. The action plan also aims to make the press releases and background briefs more accessible to journalists. In addition, as proposed by the consultants, new media guidelines for Fund staff are being developed, and a redevelopment and expansion of the media training program is planned. The action plan proposes that all resident representatives and mission chiefs, in particular, be strongly encouraged to undertake media training. Broader international coverage of our media relations capability and more media relations work in the field are other important near-term objectives, with direct implications for resource needs. In particular, the Fund has for some time had no media relations officer covering the Middle East, and there is only one covering Africa.

The action plan includes a significant further enhancement of the production of *material for media publication* such as op-ed articles and letters to the editor. This work is coordinated largely by EXR's News and External Communications Division, which, as indicated earlier, was formed in 1999. EXR plans to build on its recently increased efforts in this area, and thus to enhance further the volume, timeliness, and geographic coverage of the dissemination of the Fund's message. EXR plans also to promote more actively the placement of material authored by supportive third parties.

³ "Medium-Term Plans and Resource Estimates—Program Outlook Notes," EBAP/99/148, December 28, 1999, pages 40-3.

The IMF's *video program* was not appraised in the recent consultants' reports, and the action plan includes a consultant's evaluation of this program during FY 2001. Since 1990, 13 videos on the work of the institution have been produced and distributed to broadcast and educational audiences worldwide, in more than 10 languages. Video allows the Fund to communicate with large audiences that, in many cases, cannot be reached by other means and it is well suited to delivering clear and simple messages about the work of the institution. IMF videos were shown by television stations in 27 countries in 1999; they are also used by the IMF Institute in its courses for officials. A new institutional video will be released shortly. Other applications, including the delivery of video via the internet, satellite media tours, and such products as video public service announcements, are also being explored. The proposed consultant's evaluation would evaluate the video program, assess the effectiveness of the resources devoted to it, and consider the current (contractual/vendor) staffing arrangements.

Video teleconferencing, which has given management and EXR increased opportunities to reach press and other audiences, has up to now been an ad hoc activity, but it is planned to become more frequently and regularly used beginning in FY 2001.

The action plan calls for a strengthening of the Fund's *publications* program, so that it will contribute more effectively to the dissemination of the Fund's message and information about the Fund's work. Actions to accomplish this will include the provision by EXR of more proactive guidance to staff on the type and mix of publications produced, with the objective of publishing more titles aimed at wide audiences and key audiences; readership surveys; and experimenting with peer reviews in appropriate cases where publication is not urgent. IMF publications have traditionally been supply- rather than demand-driven, and more active guidance by EXR, based partly on readership surveys, should help to allocate scarce editorial resources more effectively. Apart from these initiatives that form part of the plan, the number of documents being released has been growing, including staff country reports (Article IV pilots and others) and reports on standards and codes. It is also planned to continue to develop the restructured *Finance & Development* by publishing a variety of articles that cover the full range of Fund activities and reflect the views of outside experts. EXR is also planning to prepare a guide to clear writing for Fund staff to enhance the quality of writing in the increasing volume of documents released to the public.

The Fund's publications also need improved publicity, through better advertising, marketing, and dissemination efforts, to bring them to the attention of civil society as well as influential readers. In this area, it is planned to develop further in FY 2001 a number of new activities, including the formulation and implementation of a comprehensive marketing program for all statistical products. In addition, EXR is forming copublishing and distribution partnerships to disseminate publications more widely and in languages other than English. The conversion to a new fulfillment vendor will be completed in FY 2001, resulting in a saving that is planned to be used to help the development of e-commerce, which will allow customers the opportunity to purchase publications directly through the Fund's website.

The IMF's *external website* (www.imf.org) has received high praise from many (including in each of the consultant's surveys), but there are a number of important development needs that have to be addressed. These concern both content (for example, the need for more material in non-English languages and more material appealing to wider audiences) and infrastructure (such as improved search and e-mail notification features). There is also a continuing need to ensure that the content of the website is compatible with developments in information technology (such as the downloading of material to hand-held devices).

The action plan also aims to strengthen the Fund's outreach to *civil society*. EXR is developing further strategies for proactively engaging NGOs, labor unions, and religious groups, in particular. During the 1999 Annual Meetings, EXR arranged a record number of meetings between NGOs and IMF senior staff, and produced a seminar on labor issues that provided a forum for IMF management and leaders of labor organizations to exchange views. And in support of the poverty reduction strategy and in the run-up to the 2000 Annual Meetings, EXR plans to develop contacts with NGOs and other civil society representatives in developing countries, with the assistance of resident representative offices, and to improve the distribution of publications to these groups.

An essential part of the action plan is to ensure the *involvement of area and functional department staff* in the external communications effort, and to encourage also the involvement of Executive Directors and country authorities.

The IMF cannot succeed in promoting a clear message without coordination between EXR and other departments, and several actions are under way or planned to address this need. In recent months, EXR has established arrangements with most area and functional departments to ensure an adequate sharing of information on a timely basis on current and expected developments pertinent to the Fund's external communications needs. EXR has also made progress in establishing better links with resident representatives and regional offices, recognizing the importance not only of the local information available to field staff, but also of their need to be kept fully informed of developments at headquarters. In the coming months, EXR plans to discuss with the Office in Europe, the UN Office in New York, the Office in Geneva, and the Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific how their external relations activities may be strengthened. Another possibility to be explored eventually is the inclusion in country documents of a section that would discuss the external communications strategy appropriate for the Fund in each country, given its economic situation and the nature of its involvement with the IMF.

It is also envisaged that the Executive Board will be asked to commit itself to a strategy that calls on *Directors and their authorities* to take responsibility for promoting the Fund more effectively within their own countries, including through explicit understandings regarding the presentation to the public of programs and policies supported by the Fund.

FY 2001 will be the first full year of operation of the *Phase III IMF Center*, an important new educational facility for visitors to the Fund's headquarters. The action plan proposes to

use the Center actively to promote the Fund's message and inform the public about the Fund.

As indicated, a number of the elements of the plan outlined above have begun to be implemented using existing resources, with positive results and feedback. But even the highest-priority elements of the plan cannot be adequately implemented without additional resources.

IV. Additional Resources Required to Strengthen the IMF's External Communications

Table 1 itemizes the staff increases by activity that are judged by management and staff to be needed over FY 2001-2003 to implement the highest-priority measures in the initial action plan outlined above. Fund-wide, an additional 20 staff positions are requested over the next three fiscal years, 17 of which would be in EXR, the other three positions being for external communications work related to the poverty reduction strategy by other departments and field offices.

The additional positions requested are based on the action plan outlined in the preceding section, but some further words of explanation may be helpful. First, as indicated in the table, four of the additional positions requested for FY 2001 are to restore positions that had to be *redeployed* in FY 2000 to more urgent tasks—specifically, to staffing the website, expanding the writing team (including for speech writing for management), and bringing in additional expertise on the U.S. Congress and the private financial sector, from economic analysis, editorial capacity, and the IMF Center and bookstore. The redeployments made might be viewed as indicating the lowest priorities, and the delay in the opening of the IMF Center and bookstore did allow two virtually costless redeployments. But the costs of the other gaps created have been real and substantial, especially in terms of the editorial program and the pressure of work on EXR's few economists (see below). And the IMF Center is now firmly expected to open in spring 2000, making the restoration of resources to it essential.

Second, with regard to the positions requested for the *front office*, the Fund, at management's request, is already in the process of recruiting a second deputy director for EXR, to relieve pressures in the department's unusually small central administration and to enable the most senior staff in the department to undertake official travel. The advisor (economist) position was approved in last year's budget exercise but subsequently redeployed to recruit a writer, partly to help management in the preparation for speaking engagements. EXR's economic expertise needs to be built up: currently, aside from the director and deputy director, only two staff members of EXR are in the economist stream, and one of these is employed full-time as speech writer for the Managing Director, the other being a (part-time) Assistant to the Director.

Third, the additional resources claimed for the *external website* reflect not only the development needs and plans outlined in the previous section, but the low level of resources

Table 1. EXR Staff Resources, FY 2000, and Proposed Increases FY 2001-2003

	Financial Year			
	Current Resources FY 2000	2001 ^{2/}	2002	2003
Front Office Second Deputy Director Advisor (economist) ^{1/} Support (staff assistant)	19	+3 (+1) (+1) (+1)	0	0
Media Relations (Media relations officers, partly to cover Middle East and Africa, partly for work in field)	9	+2	+1	0
News & External Communications (Morning Press and writing of press articles, etc.)	8	+1	0	0
Public Affairs Website professional Website support PAD professional (NGOs, correspondence) Senior information assistant (public enquiries) IMF Center support ^{1/}	12	+6 (+2) (+1) (+1) (+1) (+1)	0	0
Editorial ^{1/}	13	+1	0	0
Current Publications (<i>Finance & Development</i> , <i>IMF Survey</i> <i>Staff News</i>)	10	0	+1	0
Publication Services (Bookstore) ^{1/} (Marketing)	11	+1 (+1)	0	+1 (+1)
Total	82	+14	+2	+1

^{1/} Restoration of positions redeployed in FY 2000 to more urgent tasks.

^{2/} Excludes three staff positions outside EXR, mainly for external communications work of other departments related to the poverty reduction strategy.

devoted to the site relative both to website teams in comparable organizations ⁴ and the continuing (partly transparency-driven) growth in the number of items posted on the site. The number of items being posted on the site is currently about 2 ½ times what it was two years ago, and EXR expects work needing to be done on the site roughly to double in FY 2001. The Edelman/Wirthlin consultancy report proposed that a website division be established, but at this stage EXR proposes only a new website section, with two additional professional positions and one support position.

Finally, the request for additional resources should be viewed in the context of the *limited growth in the volume of resources devoted to external communications by the Fund during the 1990s*, relative to the growth in demands on them, and also in the context of the scale of the Fund's effort relative to comparable organizations. Thus Table 2 shows that the increase in EXR staffing since 1991 is proportionately much smaller not only than the growth in the Fund staff as a whole but also than readily available indicators of the growth of activity relevant to external communications. It also seems difficult to find a comparable international organization that devotes less resources than the Fund to external communications, relative to its activity and the public prominence of its work. ⁵ It seems clear that implementation of the request for additional resources would leave external communications activity at the Fund at a moderate level relative to the role of the institution.

⁴ The IMF external website is currently staffed by one professional and two support staff in EXR, with the help of three TGS computer technicians and graphics staff. It is understood that in the World Bank, excluding technicians, more than eight staff are engaged full-time in website activity at headquarters alone. A UN Survey of its agencies in March 1999 reported that the number of staff engaged in website activity was six full-time and upwards of 40 part-time at UNDP, 15-30 full-time at FAO, and many more than 10 full-time at UN headquarters.

⁵ Comparisons are not straightforward because of organizational differences, but it is understood that on roughly comparable definitions, the World Bank, for example, has about 300 staff working on external communications, including about 180 in the Bank's External Affairs Vice-Presidency and about 50 public information/NGO liaison officers in its field offices. It is also understood that the OECD's Public Affairs and Communications Directorate has a staff of over 120 which, after netting out its in-house publications printing staff, reduces to a number of about 90 with responsibilities comparable to those of EXR. (The OECD's total staff stands at about 1,800.)

Table 2. EXR Resources and Output Indicators, 1991-2000

	FY 1991	FY 1998	FY 1999	FY 2000 (estimate)	Percentage change, FY 1991- FY 2000	Percentage change, FY 1998— FY 2000
Number of EXR staff	69	72.8	74.4	82	19	13
Number of total IMF staff (excluding OED)	2,156	2,715.3	2,773.3	2,859	33	5
Speeches prepared for management (including DMDs)	23	28	33	38	65	36
Op-ed articles and letters to the editors published	10	37	61	100	900	170
Public Information Notices issued	--	88	116	140	New activity	59
Press contacts; telephone interviews	14,200	32,400	34,500	38,500	171	19
Press seminars, conferences, and briefings at HQ	--	195	205	225	New activity	15
Press and public affairs briefings and seminars abroad (number of countries visited)	--	35	37	42	New activity	20
Requests for information from the non-press public	8,800	13,500	13,000	14,000	59	4
Items posted on the IMF website	--	421	809	1000	New activity	138
Staff Country Reports, published and posted on the IMF website	--	134	149	175	New activity	31
Titles in print	1,300	2,616	2,989	3,100	139	19
Publication revenue (\$m)	2.9	5.1	4.7	4.7	62	-8

V. Conclusions

The action plan proposed, and the increase in resources requested, in this paper point toward a further step in the IMF's "ongoing effort to further strengthen communications" supported in 1998 by the Executive Board. They also reflect the findings of a number of consultants' reports—initiated on the advice of Directors—that have indicated that the Fund suffers external communications problems but that these problems can be addressed through broader, deeper, and more proactive efforts. They reflect, in addition, an awareness in the Fund that its external communications problems have damaged the effectiveness of its operational work, with examples including developments relating to the Asian crisis and the eleventh quota review.

More fundamentally, the plan for enhanced external communications activity and resources derives from:

- the increased **openness and transparency** of the Fund appropriately demanded over recent years by the membership;
- the increase in **public attention** to the Fund's activities over recent years, partly reflecting the institution's more prominent role, (deriving from its work in a number of areas, including the transition process, assistance to the poorest countries, and the crises in emerging market economies in Asia and elsewhere), but also reflecting more active attention by NGOs and other bodies;
- the resulting increase in the **need to explain** the work of the Fund to a wide range of audiences. This is not only a matter of defending the Fund from attacks: there is also a need to explain the Fund more proactively. And as the volume of material that the IMF releases to the public increases with greater Fund transparency, there is a risk of key messages being submerged in the flow of information unless more work is put into explanation and interpretation;
- the **limited growth in the resources** devoted by the Fund to external relations over recent years, which has involved what Edelman/Wirthlin identified as a **neglect** of those activities; and
- the need for **improved coordination** of external communications activities across the Fund.

The plan is conservative in relation to the recommendations of the consultants, reflecting a recognition of resource constraints, of limits on absorptive capacity, and of the need to monitor the effectiveness of implementation.

The request, in the view of the staff, represents a minimal additional claim on resources, given the tasks ahead.