



Promoting Change Through Education

30th March 2004

To Whom It May Concern:

## **RESPONSE TO BBC CHARTER REVIEW**

### **General Comments**

- Keep the BBC as a communications provider of large scale and scope, publicly owned, funded by the licence fee, with the licence fee rising reliably with inflation;
- Modernise and radically rewrite the out-of-date Charter and Agreement, so that they become clear, understandable public documents saying what we can expect from 'Our BBC';
- Make sure these documents state the BBC's purpose as 'to serve the communications needs, rights and interests of citizens';
- Give each channel and service its own legal statement of purpose
- Don't let the BBC, or the government, change these statements at a whim during the period of the next Charter;
- Make BBC Online a core part of the BBC's services;
- Make BBC1 and BBC2 provide a clear public service of information and education as well as entertainment – including factual programmes on 'matters of international significance or interest';
- Ensure all the BBC's channels and services are adding clear public service value; replace those that don't; and keep clear boundaries to BBC expansion.

### **Active Citizens In A Democratic Society**

For the UK citizen, acting as an autonomous, choice-making, participative user of communications services, good public service communications in the digital era will need to be:

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BBC Online's primary roles should be refined and clarified; and should include duties to serve citizens in areas of information and knowledge in which they are increasingly 'under-served' by mainstream broadcast media (including BBC broadcast channels), such as:

- 'Matters of international significance or interest'
- Science
- Social issues
- Religion and cultures
- Matters of interest to minority ethnic communities

The government should commission a new process to develop a definition of citizens' communications needs, rights and interests in the UK, in the context of the

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World Summit on the Information Society, and to examine the implications of such a definition for the provision of public service communications

### **International Information**

As the Development Education Association is primarily concerned about coverage of international issues, we would like to specifically make some comments and observations on this area.

The BBC should therefore continue to exist to 2016 as (among other things) the principal public service communications provider of international information.

The UK is a global society and people of all ages and backgrounds to be effective citizens need information and opportunities to learn more about the world in which they live. The BBC is a unique position to be a market leader in this area.

We would therefore welcome more coverage of international issues not only through news and current affairs but through all aspects of broadcasting from drama to documentaries, schools programmes to sports coverage.

The BBC World Service should be maintained and strengthened; a reliable funding formula must be cemented in place.

I hope you find these comment of value.

Yours sincerely



Doug Bourn  
Director  
DEA