



SECRETARÍA PRO-TÉMPORE
CHILE
2010-2012

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ON BEHALF OF THE RIO GROUP**

32 SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION

April 26th 2010

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation has the honor to participate in this debate on behalf of the Member States of the Rio Group. At the outset, our group would like to wish success to the Bureau and to you in the accomplishment of your goals. We would also like to express our complete disposition to contribute in a constructive manner to the work of the 32 session of the Committee on Information.

Mr. Chairman,

The Rio Group appreciates the reports presented by the Secretary General on the activities of the Department of Public Information (DPI), included in documents A/AC.198/2010/2, 3 and 4, in relation to strategic communications services, news services, and outreach services. This presentation allows for an improved appreciation of the progress made by the Committee in the implementation of resolution 64/96 B.

The Rio Group widely recognizes the valuable efforts of the DPI in promoting and achieving a better understanding of objectives and the work of the United Nations in a wide variety of issues of high importance and interest for the international community.

Mr. Chairman,

Concerning the sphere of information technology, the Rio Group supports the spontaneity and agility of electronic communication. However, even though we consider that the development of web sites is a very useful tool to promote, convey and access the message of the UN, we express our concern over the growing digital gap between developed and developing countries. We also consider that traditional media, such as radio, television, and written press, should continue to be employed in order to convey the message of the United Nations, since they constitute a major source of information in developing countries.

The Rio Group reaffirms that the media should be used with full respect of the international legal framework. In that sense, the Group is concerned by the violation of radio-electronic frequencies, and reiterates the need for these frequencies to be used in favor of public interest in conformity with the principles of international law.

We recognize the efforts by the DPI to continue strengthening its interaction with other organs of the United Nations System, particularly the close cooperation with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support, as well as broadening an understanding of activities relative to peacekeeping and peacebuilding.

Similarly, we welcome the intense work in the area of information and promotion by the DPI and the United Nations Information Centers. Our Group considers that the work of the Information Centers, their services and information components provided throughout the world are essential due to the invaluable promotion of a better understanding of the work of the United Nations. We encourage the DPI to continue supporting them through the effective use of the resources available.

Mr. Chairman.

One of the most valuable goals of the Rio Group, which has been expressed constantly to this Committee is to achieve parity among the six official languages of the United Nations, on a basis of equality. In this context, we are concerned about the fact that the Secretary-General mentions the possibility that the gap of the contents of the website in Spanish and the other languages, with respect to its English version, will increase rather than be diminished. Notwithstanding, we welcome the recommendation in the report that the DPI and the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management study measures to reduce the costs of translation, in order to solve this dilemma.

We continue to support alternatives like those aforementioned and we value the agreements of cooperation reached so that volunteers and educational institutions continue providing services intended to diminish the referenced language gap.

We call for the distribution of information, at least through traditional media, and particularly in radio programs, to be distributed in as many languages as possible, including Portuguese and indigenous ones. Multilingualism is inherently associated with the United Nations, due to the nature, reach and goals of the Organization.

In other context, the Rio Group appreciates the tribute offered by the UN through its website to all those MINUSTAH members that lost their lives in the earthquake that struck Haiti.

Mr. Chairman

The Rio Group recognizes the result of the effort by the DPI to promote accessibility to people with disabilities to the services of the United Nations. We invite to continue with this work in order to remove the barriers to access and to promote the application of relevant norms in the creation of new UN website.

We also take note of the initiative by the DPI to transform the UN Chronicle Magazine into another with more methodological rigor, which allow it to be a useful analytical tool in the decision-making process to different sectors of society. We also value the launching of the UN Chronicle website, which allows access to the magazine's issues published in English since 2007. We recognize the efforts of the Department for persevering to find ways so that this publication, in addition to its English and French versions, is also available online in Spanish, Arabic, Chinese, and Russian.

The Rio Group welcomes the interest of the DPI to increase its collaboration with non-governmental organizations. In that sense, we highlights the annual Conference with NGOs that took place in Mexico City in September 2009, which convened more than 1,000 representatives from NGOs from more than 50 countries who work in areas such as women's rights, maternal health, child welfare, human rights, education, climate change, social justice, and disarmament.

Our Group reiterates its recognition and support for the work of the Department of Public Information and invites it to increase its efforts to continue to improve its information machinery in order to fulfill its goal of bringing the voice of the Organization to the world, and we make a call to maintain the level of services provided by the DPI during the implementation of the Capital Master Plan.

I thank you.