



## **United States Mission to the United Nations**

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**Statement by Eileen P. Merritt  
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**U.S. Mission to the United Nations  
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Thank you Mr. Chairman and good morning everyone. I'd like to commend you on your excellent work as chairman of the committee, as well as the other members of the bureau. I would also like to congratulate the new vice chair to the bureau and the committee. We look forward to continuing to work with all members of this committee in a constructive manner as we consider the important issues before us.

On behalf of the United States we would like to thank Under Secretary General Akasaka for his remarks delivered today. We are also appreciative of the detailed reports of the Secretary General on the activities of the Department of Public Information that were prepared in response to General Assembly resolution 64/96 B. We would also like to thank Under Secretary General Akasaka and the staff of the Department of Public Information for their continued hard work and efforts, especially in light of their increasing mandates, to spread the message of the importance of many of the events, and initiatives of the United Nations all over the world. Their efforts and perseverance continue to make many of these activities a resounding success.

We continue to encourage the Under Secretary General to identify ways to improve coordination, efficiency, and integration of the Department of Public Information activities throughout the entire UN system. We continue to welcome the Under Secretary

General's efforts to date to communicate the broad activities and concerns of the United Nations and to achieve the greatest public impact with the greatest efficiency.

Mr. Chairman,

On Monday May 3rd, World Press Freedom Day will be commemorated around the world. Freedom of the press, a cornerstone of American democracy, is enshrined in our Constitution's Bill of Rights. We strongly believe that a free press is fundamental for true democracy. For this particular body – the Committee on Information – it is important that we recall the Universal Declaration of Human Rights' affirmation in Article 19 that "everyone has the right to freedom of expression...this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers."

In closing, Mr. Chairman, The United States would like to thank Under Secretary General Akasaka and his staff for their hard work.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.