



**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY MS. NAMITA KHATRI, FIRST SECRETARY OF THE REPUBLIC OF FIJI, AT THE THIRTY-FIFTH SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION, 22<sup>nd</sup> APRIL 2013**

Madam Chairperson,

1. I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China at the commencement of the thirty fifth session of the Committee on Information.
2. Allow me at the outset to congratulate you, Madam Chairperson, as well as the other members of the Bureau, on your appointment, and to wish you success in the task ahead with assurance of the full cooperation of our Group in the work of this important body.
3. The Group of 77 and China welcomes Mr. Peter Launsky-Tieffenthal, Under Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information to his first session of the Committee of Information in his new role, and thanks him for his comprehensive and informative presentation on the activities and strategies of the Department of Public Information (DPI).

Madam Chair,

4. The work of DPI in promoting global awareness and understanding of the work of the United Nations is vital to ensuring that the United Nations is well appreciated around the world. This is particularly necessary as we work on elaborating a development framework beyond 2015, and also with the unfortunate incidences of attacks on UN compounds and personnel. To achieve these goals of positive global awareness of the work of the United Nations, the cooperation and partnership between the Department and the Committee on Information has always been the cornerstone of DPI's policies on Public Information. Therefore, the Group of 77 and China stresses the importance of strengthening this partnership and calls for its continued improvement as the DPI continues to play its vital role as a public voice to promote the purposes and image of the United Nations.
5. The Group of 77 and China has taken note of the three reports of the Secretary-General on the activities of the DPI, namely those on strategic communication services, on news services and on outreach activities.

Madam Chair

6. The United Nations is the only universal forum for collective deliberation and decision on issues and concerns faced by the international community. The task of the DPI in reaching out to a global audience with different backgrounds, worldviews and languages is therefore a challenging one. The Group is therefore thankful for all the efforts made

by DPI, and is fully supportive of all efforts necessary to reach the widest possible audience through relevant technology and in a timely fashion. It is incumbent on DPI to identify areas of strength and weakness, and to better align products and activities with targeted audiences needs.

Madam Chair,

8. The G77 and China fully supports the work of the DPI in promoting and advancing the work of the Organization through its continued campaigns on issues of importance to the international community. These issues include, among others, the implementation of the internationally agreed development goals which will include the elaboration of the post-2015 development framework, decolonization, peacekeeping, disarmament, human rights, sustainable development, poverty eradication, climate change, and the priorities of the New Partnership for Africa's Development.

9. Given the importance of the work being undertaken as a follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) to formulate a post-2015 development framework, dissemination of information in this area is particularly important. Of importance to the Group of 77 this year is also the first ever High Level Meeting of the General Assembly on Nuclear Disarmament, and efforts in this regard should be made known to the public.

10. The Group also emphasizes the importance of the DPI's Special Information Programme on the Question of Palestine in raising the international community's awareness of the Question of Palestine and in supporting the efforts to achieve a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East, in accordance with international law and relevant United Nations resolutions.

11. In this connection, the Group of 77 and China commends the DPI for its implementation of this important Programme and underscores many of its necessary and useful elements, including the annual training for Palestinian media professionals from the Occupied Palestinian Territory that aims at assisting them in the development of their media skills and capacity. We reiterate the need for these and other activities undertaken by the DPI and call for their further enhancement and reinforcement

Madam Chair,

12. The Group of 77 and China attaches great importance to the role and work of the Network of United Nations Information Centers (UNICs). The Group supports efforts to strengthen the network of UNICs, and wishes to underline that any decision pertaining to reorganizing the UNICs must be made in close consultation with the host countries, and take into account the geographical, linguistic and technological characters and needs of different regions.

13. The Group of 77 and China welcomes the support by some developing Member States to offer rent-free premises to host the UNICs while bearing in mind that such

support should not be a substitute for the full allocation of financial resources for the Information Centres in the context of the programme budget of the United Nations.

14. The Group of 77 and China looks forward to necessary measures being taken for the establishment of the United Nations Information Centre mandated by resolution A/RES/64/243 of 2009, to serve the purpose of contributing to addressing the need of Portuguese-speaking African countries.

Madam Chair,

15. With the increased use of the internet, and improved connection speeds, particularly in countries where the United Nations official languages are used, the platforms for information dissemination have grown, expanding to include real time internet viewing and streaming options. However, concerns remain, as expressed by the Group in the past, as well as in successive reports of the Secretary-General, that the disparity among the use of the official languages on the UN website has continued to deepen. This is despite the efforts made by the DPI to improve the multilingual contents of the UN website. The Group reiterates its request that content-providing offices in the Secretariat translate all English-language materials and databases into all official languages and make them available on the respective language websites. The Group welcomes the initiative taken by DPI to pilot the translation of press releases into Spanish for the Commission on Population and Development currently under way. This will certainly contribute to the ultimate objective of having these press releases also made and disseminated at the same time as the current other languages, as soon as possible. The Group nonetheless reiterates its request that a strategy should be designed and implemented to provide such press releases in the official languages of the UN, so as to achieve full parity among the six official languages insofar as website content is concerned.

16. The Group also emphasizes the importance of continuing the use of traditional media, including both radio and prints, in disseminating the main messages of the United Nations. Traditional media has been and still is the primary means of communication in many developing countries, where internet coverage is sparse. The Group continues to underscore the importance of the closer co-operation between the DPI and other substantive Departments, in particular the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and the Department of Field Support (DFS). In this context, the Group welcomes the availability of the United Nations peacekeeping website in all six official languages.

17. The Group of 77 and China recognises that the work of the UN, both past and future, must be preserved properly for future generations. In this context, the Group encourages the DPI to continue to take collaborative action to digitise the audiovisual archives of the UN. It also notes the efforts to deploy the Media Assets Management system which has been procured to provide for the digital archiving of new content.

18. Looking ahead, Madam Chair, the Group of 77 and China will celebrate next year the 50th anniversary of its existence in the United Nations. We look forward to commemorating this event in the spirit of partnership for peace and development with which the Group has worked over the years, with appropriate coverage by the DPI of this milestone for developing countries' representation at the United Nations.

19. In conclusion, allow me, Madam Chairperson, to assure you of our full support and of our constructive, active engagement during this session. We are confident that under your able stewardship the Committee on Information will once again reach a successful outcome.

I thank you.