



Bangladesh

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Statement by
Mr. Muhammad A. Muhith,
Minister of the Permanent Mission of Bangladesh to the UN, New York
at the General Debate of the 30th Session of the Committee on Information
on 29 April 2008

Mr. Chairman,

At the very outset, let me congratulate you on your election as the Chairman of the Committee.

I take this opportunity to express my delegation's sincere appreciation to Mr. Kiyo Akasaka, USG for Communications and Public Information for his candid, informative and objective statement delivered before us yesterday. We also commend his excellent leadership of the DPI at a time when many parts of the UN are undergoing reform and restructuring for the purpose of enhancing its capacity for delivering mandates effectively and efficiently. We expect that DPI would benefit from this ongoing reform exercise.

Needless to say, we attach great importance to the activities and performance of the DPI for its being the strategic communicator of Organization's activities and concerns to achieve the greatest public impact.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement made by the distinguished delegate of Antigua and Barbuda on behalf of Group of 77 and China. I would however like to make some additional remarks.

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation always commended and supported the structural overhaul conducted by the DPI for last couple of years. We welcome the fact that the Department's activities are guided by the imperative of promoting a culture of evaluation and performance management, which has been vigorously initiated since 2001. We find this as a critical element that can help ensure expected outcome. It can also guide to identify whether expected accomplishments are obtained. We recall the principle of results-based management (RBM), which focuses on achieving outcomes, implementing performance measurement, learning and changing, and more importantly evaluating and reporting performance. My delegation maintains that this is the time to shift managerial and administrative emphasis from a process-focused approach to one based on performance and results, i.e., outcomes. We would expect DPI to continue to pursue these issues aggressively, in accordance with the relevant General Assembly resolutions.

Mr. Chairman,

While we commend the fact that the UN Communications Group, established by the DPI in 2002, has started yielding encouraging results, we would expect them to exert more efforts to focus more on specific issues like MDGs, climate change etc. globally.

We note with appreciation DPI's increased attention on climate change issue and for its inclusion within broad communications priority themes identified by the Department earlier this year along with the three core pillars of the Organization. The efforts of DPI in creating impact among the global audience of IPCC reports, high-level event on climate change and Bali Conference deserve our sincere appreciation. Bangladesh, being one of the most vulnerable countries facing the debacle of climate change, expects that a robust programme of work would be devised so that the actions of DPI are not limited only to publicising these events but also expanded to make itself a clearing house of information which could be accessible by GOs and NGOs, think tanks, experts and the general public in order to facilitate comprehensive and cohesive global action on climate change.

Mr. Chairman,

We have heard from the USG's statement about the resource constraints that the DPI has been suffering from and which can impede the Department to carry out its many important functions. This is not acceptable. We believe that adequate resources, commensurate with the mandates approved by the General Assembly, should be allocated in and this is the responsibility of the Member States to do so. We would like to reiterate our position here that, the Secretariat, for last may years have been proposing zero-nominal growth biennial budget which is a concept not approved by the GA. In this regard, while referring to the resources crunch being faced by the UNICs, we would ask for further strengthening UNICs with human and financial resources, particularly those are located in LDCs.

At this point, allow me Mr. Chairman to make a brief reference to the activities of the UNIC Dhaka. UNIC Dhaka continues to play a critical role in promoting the goals and objectives of the United Nations. Making best use of its available resources and teaming up with local educational and civil society groups, it has helped observe the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, to promote the Millennium Development Goals and to highlight the role Bangladesh plays in UN Peacekeeping. We are particularly impressed with the careful planning to involve children and youth in various activities. Bangladesh has always stressed that the best hope for a stronger United Nations lies in exposing our next generations to the core values of United Nations. We are pleased to see that UNIC Dhaka is performing its obligation to our next generation.

Mr. Chairman,

Turning to the peacekeeping issue, let me mention here that Bangladesh remains one of the largest contributors to UN peacekeeping operations. The country is proud of the involvement and contribution of its brave soldiers at nearly a dozen field operations. Last year, the BBC described Bangladesh peacekeepers as 'cream of UN peacekeepers'. While deeply rewarding, service as peacekeepers is not without perils. In recent years, Bangladesh has lost over 50 of its brave soldiers, including

nine in the Democratic Republic of Congo and six in Cote d'Ivoire. In the past, this Committee had urged DPI to do more to publicize the work of peacekeepers and to focus on stories incorporating a national angle. Bangladesh would appreciate knowing what has been done in this regard.

Mr. Chairman,

While we talk about multilingualism here at the UN, we should not forget the need to promote and protect the mother languages around the world. Bangladesh is pleased to see that the UN system has started paying greater attention to the observance of International Mother Language Day. Bangladesh's involvement with this observance is both historical and deeply emotional. The Day, 21 February, commemorates the beginning of Bangladesh's language movement, which is directly linked to its quest for national independence. We are pleased to see that the observance was duly reflected on UN websites, especially on iSeek. We are thankful for these efforts. Bangladesh would like to ask DPI to consider producing a public service announcement that could be used to promote the observance of the Day throughout the world. The network of UNICs could also be encouraged to play a more active role in this regard.

I thank you Mr. Chairman.
