

STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN
OF THE COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION,
ANDREAS BAUM, AT THE OPENING OF THE
THIRTIETH SESSION,
28 APRIL 2008

Under-Secretary-General Akasaka,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Allow me to express my gratitude to the members of the Committee on Information for electing me as your Chairman for the remainder of the term of this Bureau. I wish to assure the Committee that, with the support of the Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information, Mr. Kiyoo Akasaka, and the staff of the Department of Public Information, I will make every effort to ensure that this thirtieth session be a productive one, and that its results be fully reflective of your collective decisions.

I should also like to express my thanks and appreciation to Mr. Rudolf Christen, my predecessor and good colleague, for having conducted the Committee's business in an exemplary manner. I will do my best to carry on the honour of leading this Committee.

In recent years, the relationship between the Committee and the Department of Public Information has been characterized by a high level of cooperation and partnership. This has been possible thanks in large part to the leadership of Under-Secretary-General Akasaka. I look forward to working with

you, Mr. Akasaka, and with your staff, to further the work of your Department. I would also like to welcome Ms. Paula Refolo, Secretary of the Committee, and thank her and her team, on behalf of the Bureau, for their precious support throughout the year.

The Committee is meeting at a crucial time in the history of the Organization. This is the year of the sixtieth anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and we are at the mid-point of the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals. We are also in the midst of a renewal of the Organization led by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.

The United Nations is an organization of Member States, but it is also an organization for the people. Over 7 billion people look to the UN to better their peace and security, to improve their development, to guarantee their human rights. Not to mention the giant new challenges of climate change and food security. For the UN to meet these expectations, its actions, goals and aspirations need to be understood. And for the UN to be understood, it must communicate clearly, inform in a timely and precise manner and reach out actively.

The task of the DPI is therefore a central one. I am pleased to note that the reports of the Secretary-General on DPI's activities, submitted for consideration by the Committee, take stock of steady progress in reaching its strategic objective. Particularly noteworthy are DPI's emphasis on increased cooperation with United Nations system partners, with civil society organizations as well as its results-based approach.

The DPI is a credible and audible voice of the UN in the world, but big challenges remain. There is a breathtaking speed of change in the way information is produced, gathered and passed on. It takes ingenuity and a will to embrace new technologies to stay on the front line of change and not lose touch. New technologies are but an addition to our rich world of many languages, cultures and identities. Multilingualism, though an often professed goal of the organization, has not been realized to its full extent.

Distinguished delegates,

The basic objective before us will be to produce a consensus resolution summing up our deliberations. I hope for a clear, easily understandable and well-structured resolution, that will provide the Department with practical guidance on public information policies and programmatic activities. The resolution of the Committee on Information could and should be action-oriented. If DPI is the voice of the UN, the Committee on Information is the tuning fork that sets the tone.

I have no doubt that we will work together in the most collegial manner. As your chairman, I will do everything in my power to support your efforts.

Thank you.