

EGYPT



مصر

The Permanent Mission of Egypt
to the United Nations
New York

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*Statement
Of
The Delegation of Arab Republic of Egypt
Before
The Thirtieth Session
Of the
Committee on Information*

29 April, 2008

(check against delivery)

Mr. Chairman,

I would like, at the outset, to congratulate you on your election as Chairman of the Thirtieth Session of the Committee on Information and I also congratulate members of the Bureau of the Committee.

I extend thanks to Undersecretary-General for Communications and Public Information Affairs Mr. Kiyoo Akasaka for the comprehensive presentation he made at the inauguration of the works of the Thirtieth Session of the Committee. I would like to stress my delegation's continuous interest in following up all the efforts exerted by the Department of Public Information (DPI) in cooperation with the chairman and members of the committee to materialize the targets of the United Nations in terms of media and enhance its capability to implement its sublime message all over the world.

My delegation associates itself with the statement delivered by the delegation of Antigua and Barbuda on behalf of the Group of 77 and China that expressed the general framework of the priorities and concerns of the Group Member States in regard to the UN policies, activities and priorities in the field of information and communications. My delegation also associates itself with the statement delivered by the Syrian Arab Republic on behalf of the Arab Group.

Mr. Chairman,

There is no doubt, that the continuous development of mass media and the sustained progress of information and communication technology and its applications have become one of the central aspects marking our contemporary world, with all implied challenges in terms of the knowledge gap between the developing and developed worlds. These challenges also imply the necessity to achieve a new international media system that is more just and based on the principles of equality and mutual respect for different cultures and values. Consequently, the UN has to continue carrying out its responsibility, with a view to enhancing and deepening international cooperation in the media domain to bridge the knowledge gap and enable the developing countries to get access to knowledge objectively. In so doing, the developing countries' need to enhance their capabilities and upgrade their

media structures has to be taken into account. This should go hand in hand with the efforts exerted to develop the media message of the UN to cope up with the spirit of the age so as to enlighten the world public opinion on the sublime message of the UN and its role in addressing many of today's issues, and to spread out the culture of peace and values of tolerance and enhance dialogue of civilizations, cultures and religions.

In this context, we are concerned that the media message of the UN has not yet reached the aspired-for standard to deal with the nature and circumstances of the international status quo, or to attain the objective purposes of the UN in its three main fields: development, world peace and security and respect for human rights, and to confront the new challenges such as climate change, capital market fluctuations, food crisis and others. The media message of the UN still has gaps we are hoping to fill in quickly through promoting access to all peoples, achieving multilingualism and the aspired-for parity among the UN six official languages, and developing the content of the media message and working towards its diversity, in line with the cultural, civilizational and religious diversity in today's world.

Consequently, the delegation of Egypt looks forward to DPI to improve the quality of media coverage of the thematic issues of priority to the work of UN, raise awareness on the goals of the UN initiatives and push forward efforts of implementation. This is in addition to improving the understanding of local societies for the work of UN, through a media message that is more focused on and accessible to all categories of societies, and improving integration and coordination between the works carried out at the headquarters in New York and the activities of the UN Information Centers (UNICs) all over the world. This is alongside with improving the professional capabilities of the staff through training, striking balance among multimedia and benefiting from the technological development in the field of disseminating and receiving information.

Given the foregoing, there is a need to strengthen the leading role of the major UNICs in Cairo, Mexico City and Pretoria, support the integration of the joint work between these centers and regional centers in neighboring countries. There is also a need to extend the UN media structure to all geographical areas without downsizing, in a bid to achieve better results for its work, particularly in developing countries through expanding communication activities and building new partnerships, with the aim of achieving the efficiency and the impact of the media message of the UN around the world. In carrying out these steps, the circumstances and idiosyncrasies of each area have to be taken into account, at the same time.

Mr. Chairman,

We have followed with interest the report of the UN Secretary-General on the activities of DPI, in its two parts. As we express our appreciation for the diversity of these activities that have developmental, cultural, political and social impacts, that are inspired by the needs of the peoples and the Millennium goals, we encourage DPI to continue its interest in the programs and activities related to socio-economic development, particularly in Africa, through awareness on the efforts aiming at raising growth rates, publicizing the accomplished achievements and defining the challenges that are still there and the priorities of urgent financial and technical support. We further encourage DPI to expand consultation with Member States of the Committee on Information and enhance closer strategic cooperation in all fields. We call upon DPI to continue the implementation of its media program on the Palestinian issue and get people acquainted with the suffering of the Palestinian people under occupation and the siege and the unjust collective punishment they are subjected to, in contravention of the norms of international law.

As for the UN website and the progress achieved towards parity among official languages, accessibility to the disabled and content management, we still call for achieving this parity in an effective and practical way and posting more pages on the website. With our full appreciation of the effort exerted by DPI in this respect, we still observe some deficiencies in terms of posting information, in the six official languages on the UN website, in a timely manner. We further note some delay in terms of publishing the UN documents in all official languages on the Official Document System (ODS).

Mr. Chairman,

The delegation of Egypt is seeking a sincere and objective media message for the UN that is more capable of defining its role and enhancing dialogue and understanding among various civilizations and cultures, especially with the attempts we are witnessing on the part of some people, which are rejected, to distort the culture of the other and propagate negative values that incite hatred and discrimination against certain cultures and societies such as Islamophobia and other negative phenomena that need to be dealt with more effectively. We hope more efforts will be exerted by DPI

to narrow the knowledge gap between the North and South and support the latter's capabilities through transfer of technology and knowledge.

We are highly confident that the continuous efforts by DPI will help attain these goals and define the role of the UN in enhancing values of tolerance and assisting developing countries in confronting the challenges of development so as to catch up with progress.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.