



# **The Permanent Mission of Iceland to the United Nations**

**Statement by  
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to the United Nations**

**General debate of the United Nations Committee on Information  
during its 30th session**

New York, 29 April 2008

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Mr. Chairman,

Allow me first of all to congratulate the new Chairman of the Committee on Information, Mr. Andreas Baum of Switzerland, and other members of the bureau on their election. You may be assured of Iceland's full support and co-operation as you guide our work. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the outgoing Chairman of the Committee, Rudolf Christen, for his excellent work.

I would like to express our gratitude to the Under-Secretary General, Kiyo Akasaka, and the Department of Public Information for the thorough reports prepared for this meeting, which provide an excellent overview of the activities of the Department and will be of practical use in our deliberations. We acknowledge the positive impact of the Under-Secretary General on the work of the Department and thank him for his opening remarks from yesterday.

Iceland attaches much importance to the work of the Department of Public Information. We warmly welcome its continued efforts to develop a more comprehensive and strategic approach to promoting global awareness and better understanding of the work of the United Nations. We broadly share the priority themes identified by the Department in the areas of development, peace and security, including peacekeeping, human rights and climate change.

The UN information centres (UNIC) are central to the work of the Department of Public Information. They play a crucial role in enhancing the public image of the UN all over the world. We welcome the progress and achievements made so far in the implementation of a regional strategic communications model - by rationalizing the network of UN information centres around regional hubs. We firmly support this ongoing work and the creation of a network, within our budget constraints, that more effectively address the needs of client audiences.

I would like to echo my colleague from France, who spoke yesterday on behalf of the European Union, about the excellent work and the initiatives undertaken by the Regional Information Centre in Brussels, as we are celebrating the sixtieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Like the EU, we take note of the improved resources of the information centres, the increased cooperation among them and the pilot role allotted to some of them. The UN information centre in Iceland, run by the Icelandic UN Society, is supported financially by the Icelandic Government.

Mr. Chairman,

Iceland welcomes the continued efforts of the Department to improve the UN website which is an increasingly effective instrument for disseminating information about the UN and is growing in popularity as indicated by the increasing number of visits to the website. We also welcome the steps taken by the Department to make the website more accessible to people with disabilities, including people with visual and hearing disabilities.

My delegation has underlined in previous sessions that multilingualism is a key aspect in the work of the United Nations in all its activities. We take note of the considerable progress that has been made towards reaching parity among the official languages on the website and encourage the Department to continue and strengthen its concrete work in this regard.

We recognize the efforts made by the Department to strengthen cooperation with other UN entities to develop a more coherent communications strategy. I would like to commend the Department's increased cooperation with civil society organizations and its enhanced focus on young people as a strategic audience for its work. Reaching young people should be a top priority in all our actions to promote the values and work of the UN. The Model UN programme, in which more than 400.000 students participate worldwide every year, is a good example how to educate young people about the United Nations.

Mr. Chairman,

In closing, Mr. Chairman, I would again like to assure you of Iceland's firm support. My delegation looks forward to working with all members of this Committee in a constructive manner, through consensus, to improve the overall effectiveness of our work.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.