

Statement by
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At the General Debate of
the 30th session of the United Nations Committee on Information

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In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

Mr. Chairman,

I would like to begin by extending my congratulations to you and other members of the bureau on your election and wish you all success in your endeavor to guide this session of the Committee on Information towards a fruitful outcome. My delegation also would like to thank Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information, Mr. Akasaka and his colleagues in the Department of Public Information for their hard work to carry out the mandate of the Department and to strengthen the relation between the Committee and the Secretariat.

My delegation associates itself with the statement made by the distinguished Representative of Antigua and Barbuda on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Mr. Chairman,

There is no doubt that the main pillar of the Department of Public Information's policies and activities lies on its close cooperation with the Committee on Information. Continued development of this partnership is essential as DPI continues to play a pivotal role as the public voice of the United Nations in helping strengthen the image of the United Nations throughout the world.

My delegation expresses its appreciation for the efforts of the Department of Public Information in promoting and advancing the work of the United Nations on important issues such as UN reform, attainment of the Millennium Development Goals, sustainable development, the dialogue among civilizations and culture of peace, respect for religious, cultural and historical values. We are of the view that there are other issues on the agenda of the Organization that deserve DPI's more attention for their catastrophic impacts on the international peace and security. In this context, I would like to refer to the escalating catastrophic humanitarian situation of the innocent Palestinian civilian population who have been under occupation and siege and seriously suffering from negative effects of the tragic situation for so many years. DPI should embark on wider publicizing the negative impacts of the humanitarian situation prevailing in the occupied Palestinian territories, in order to inform the world public opinion of the work of the UN system in this regard.

Mr. Chairman,

Let me now briefly touch upon some important aspects of the work of DPI which, in our view, should be taken into account in current debate of the Special Committee. I shall, therefore, limit myself to some remarks on issues that we consider to be of particular importance:

- 1) The Department, as the window of public communication and the voice of the United Nations, should always commit itself to reach out to the widest possible audiences and to provide accurate, relevant, impartial, balanced, and timely information to the international community on the work of the Organization and to promote the public image of the United Nations by serving as the first source of news for the UN Member States. We certainly support the DPI's efforts to treat all important global issues in a fair and balanced manner.
- 2) For many countries in the developing world, lack of the necessary resources and technical equipments are among main challenges to access information regarding UN works and activities. An appropriate response to these needs could strengthen the positive image of the United Nations in these countries and decrease the effects of the media's prevalent tendency to aggrandize "bad news" and weaken the positive public image of the Organization.
- 3) My delegation would like to stress on the central role of the Committee on Information in examining United Nations public information policies and

activities with a view to promoting the idea of a just and more effective world information and communication order. To achieve this noble goal, the Committee should increase its efforts to formulate an effective and efficient UN information policy that would ensure a greater understanding and respect among peoples belonging to various societies, cultures and religions.

- 4) In the world today, developing countries are victims of an unjust, inequitable, partial and monopolized world of media that, by taking advantage of their modern communication technology and strong financial structures, are continuously trying to distort the facts and realities relating to these countries. It is our sincere hope that DPI could boost its endeavors to take solid measures to help developing countries address this serious challenge and continue to serve as a fair and balanced voice for both developing and developed countries. The Department of Public Information should enhance its technological infrastructure on a continuous basis with a view to improve its activities in the field of public information and communications, especially in the areas that are of special interest to developing countries.
- 5) We share this view with most of the Member States that the increasing negative political and media discourse in certain parts of the world targeting religions and their believers is a matter of grave concern for all and a serious threat to the international peace and security. My delegation deplores all acts of insult and incitement against religions and their sacred principles and precepts. We along with many Member States and the Secretary-General of the United Nations Condemn, in the strongest term, the release of the blasphemous film "Fitna" which is a clear insult not only to the belief of more than 1 billion Muslims but also a serious threat to the stability of many societies in the world. We commend the action of the international media in turning down the broadcast of that film and fully support calls for exploring the possibility of an international instrument on the respect for religions and elimination of all forms of intolerance and defamation. We encourage the UN Secretariat, especially DPI, to increase their efforts to help promote respect for all cultures, religions and civilizations.
- 6) We commend The United Nations Information Centers (UNICs) for their valuable efforts in mobilizing public opinion and playing an important role in conveying the messages on United Nations activities to the peoples in their host countries. We also take note of the report of the Secretary-General on UNICs contained in document A/AC.198/2008/3 in which he has mentioned that UNICs are now able to reach wider segments of the public in the countries where they are located, through producing information material in 36 local languages including Farsi. My delegation believes that the policy of rationalization of the work of the UNICs should be continued vigorously under the guidance of the Committee of Information and necessary measures should be taken to strengthen them. Close consultation and better coordination between UNICs and the host countries, provision of necessary new information and communication technologies to these centres, allocation

of adequate resources, and careful attention to the geographical, cultural, social and economic characters of different regions are among important elements that should be taken into account in this regard. Moreover, we would like to emphasize that any decision on reorganization of UNICs must be made in close consultation with the host countries.

- 7) We have always welcomed the efforts of DPI in ensuring multilingualism in all its activities. In our opinion, the pursuance of true multilingualism means promotion, protection and preservation of diversity of languages and cultures globally. To ensure that the Organization is keeping on using a wide array of media and languages to deliver its messages to the people of the world, it should continue to extend these activities to as much local languages as possible. We reiterate the importance of dissemination of information in local languages and encourage DPI to allocate adequate resources and technical facilities to those languages.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, I would like to assure you of my delegation's full support to the work of DPI and its striving for effective and comprehensive delivery of its mandate. My delegation also reiterates its commitment to work constructively with other Members of the Committee to achieve a successful outcome in this very meeting of the Committee.

Thank you.