

62nd SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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**Statement by**  
**Ambassador Daniel Carmon**  
**Deputy Permanent Representative**

During Open Debate  
30th Session of the Committee on Information

United Nations, New York  
29 April 2008

Mr. Chairman,

Allow me to congratulate you on your election as Chairman of 30th session of the Committee on Information, and wish you much success in guiding our work. My delegation extends to you and the Bureau our full support and cooperation.

I also wish to thank Under-Secretary-General Akasaka for his statement, and offer compliments to him and the entire Department of Public Information on their tireless efforts to spread the United Nations' message around the world.

My delegation also expresses its appreciation for the cooperation that exists between members of the Committee on Information and the DPI and Committee Secretariat. In this regard, we welcome the report of the Secretary-General, "Activities of the Department of Public Information", A/AC.198/2008/2-3, parts one and two, which highlights key advancements made by the DPI during the past six months to promote the work of the United Nations to the global audience, and offers a comprehensive picture of the strategic challenges and opportunities facing the UN in the realm of public information and communication.

Mr. Chairman,

As the DPI's many activities span a wide range of fields and issues, I wish to limit my comments today to a few choice areas.

This coming Thursday, Israel and the Jewish world will observe *Yom Hashoah*, the annual day of Holocaust remembrance. Hence, it is only fitting that my delegation takes this opportunity to express its support for and praise to the DPI team upon the successful outcome of the third International Day of Commemoration in memory of the victims of the Holocaust, which took place this past 28 January – which included, as we all remember, a one of a kind concert – and was simultaneously observed in cities around the world. We have no doubt that this year's program was highly successful due to the passion, enthusiasm, and commitment of the DPI team. And we thank them for this.

The Outreach Programme on "the United Nations and the Holocaust" has become a crown jewel in the activities of the DPI, and it continues to play an instrumental role in bringing Holocaust remembrance and education to all corners of the Earth. We welcome the mentioning of the Outreach Programme in Under-Secretary-General Akasaka's statement yesterday as a key aspect of DPI's annual activities.

The international community's success in affirming the eternal memory of the Holocaust and the United Nations' own achievements in promoting Holocaust remembrance, however, are greatly threatened by the proliferation of Holocaust denial in some parts of the world. Holocaust deniers can be found in positions of prominence, including within revered academic institutions, at the helm of media organizations, and even as leaders of national governments. Indeed, it is gravely alarming that Holocaust deniers and detractors garner public attention today, as we live in a society that is just over 60 years from the Nazi atrocities. Their determination signals for us the ever growing importance of Holocaust education initiatives such as the outreach programme, and the need to intensify those efforts. In particular, we wish to mention the permanent exhibit on the Holocaust, which was created with the assistance and guidance of Yad Vashem Holocaust Museum. We believe the permanent exhibit will play an important role in educating the nearly million visitors to the

UN each year. Through the exhibit, DPI has made a significant contribution to Holocaust remembrance, and we applaud those efforts.

We continue to support DPI's activities on Holocaust remembrance, and we reiterate our anticipation for the continuation of such outreach programs and activities within the UN system and within educational systems of all Member States. We look forward to seeing other variations of the programme, at headquarters in New York and in UN centres and campuses around the world.

Mr. Chairman,

Notwithstanding the admirable work of the DPI, we are disappointed that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict continues to feature as the only conflict in the world that still has a Special Information Programme, and certainly the only conflict having a programme which conveys – by the very definition of its mandate – a one-sided, biased, and misleading picture.

My delegation has been in continuous dialogue with the DPI regarding its implementation of the General Assembly resolutions on the Palestinian Information Programme. In the past, we recognized the DPI's efforts to make the seminars and materials emanating as objective as possible. But problems still remain. As a result of the Palestinian Information Programme, Israel continues to be the only Member State that is the target of such political bias. So long as the mandate for the programme stems from an anti-Israel resolution that is inherently one-sided and biased, we will be obliged not to attend or participate in these seminars.

It is our position, Mr. Chairman, that this programme should be substituted with a more balanced and constructive joint effort concerning peace in the Middle East, aimed at the promotion of tolerance, peace education, mutual understanding, and the prevention of incitement. At this time when Israel is deeply engaged with the moderate Palestinian Authority leadership in a dialogue to advance the negotiations, it is all the more bewildering that one-sided initiatives and one-sided narratives that potentially undermine our efforts are supported by the membership. Israel has previously expressed its interest in partnering on a programme that is balanced and does not resort to singular narratives on the conflict, and we look forward to seeing the fruits of such partnership in the future. For that to happen, however, the programme needs to be adjusted to remove the inherent bias against Israel.

Mr. Chairman,

Israel is proud to have been a member of the COI for a number of years, and we are once again participating in this discussion with the hope that our call for greater fairness and evenhandedness will be heard and heeded.

In a world where the internet and technology has been used to harm and endanger, it is refreshing to see how the DPI has harnessed the power of communication technology for the greater good. Israel remains committed to constructive and cooperative conduct of these deliberations and a positive outcome to our work.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.