

STATEMENT BY

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TO THE

**THIRTIETH SESSION OF THE
COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION**

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FINAL TEXT

Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, allow me to congratulate you on your election to chair the proceedings of this important Committee, and to welcome also, other members of the Bureau. I assure you that my delegation is committed to working with you to ensure a successful outcome to our discussions.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by the Distinguished Representative of Antigua and Barbuda on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Allow me also to thank the Secretary-General for the comprehensive report contained in documents A/AC.198/2008/2 and A/AC.198/2008/3, on the activities of the Department of Public Information. The reports which outline the activities of the UN information centres and also provide an update on the work of the Department of Public Information (DPI) over the past year, in the areas of coordination, communication on thematic issues, and other general operational issues, will provide a useful basis for our work.

My delegation also takes this opportunity to express its gratitude to the Under-Secretary-General for Communication and Public Information, Mr. Kiyo Akasaka, and other staff members of the DPI for the extremely useful and informative interactive briefing session which was held yesterday afternoon. My delegation has come to regard this interactive briefing as a very important element of the Committee's annual sessions.

Mr. Chairman,

The Jamaican delegation congratulates the staff of the DPI, for their tireless efforts to continuously improve the image of the Organisation. The critical role of the DPI in enhancing the image of the UN and disseminating information on its principles and purposes cannot be overstated.

Through its effective work, the DPI, as the voice of the Organization, continues to ensure that the UN's achievements in the promotion and protection of human rights, sustainable development, particularly in the context of climate change and the protection of the global environment, as well as peace and security, and gender issues, are effectively communicated to the wider international community. In so doing, it plays a fundamental role in helping to maintain the legitimacy of the UN in the international community.

The issues I have just referenced are but a snapshot of the myriad of issues dealt with in the Organisation on a daily basis. Given the increasing plethora of issues and their cross-cutting nature, collaboration with the Organisation's various departments and units has become more critical in order to ensure that the UN speaks with one voice on all matters of importance to the international community, in sum, 'delivering as one', in the area of communication and information. My delegation urges the DPI, as well as other

Departments within the Secretariat to further strengthen this collaboration in order to ensure that the information disseminated is timely, accurate and comprehensive.

Mr. Chairman,

It is undeniable that the DPI has made significant progress in recent years, which has resulted in wider dissemination of information about the organization through both traditional and non-traditional means, as well as making the UN website accessible to persons with disabilities. This use of modern technologies notwithstanding, my delegation urges the DPI to continue the use of traditional means of communication, in particular radio broadcasts, which, despite the advances in technology, does in fact remain, the key source of communication in developing and least developed countries.

My delegation takes note of the progress made by the DPI in achieving parity among all six official languages of the Organisation, and encourages the use of all six languages in official communication, particularly in press releases.

Mr. Chairman,

The 30th Session of the Committee on Information is an auspicious one as it coincides with the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, one of the most important international instruments of our time. The DPI and its network of information centres are to be commended for their efforts in using this milestone to further promote global awareness of this instrument, its importance to the international human rights architecture and the rights that are prescribed under this Declaration.

Significantly, 2008 also marks the sixtieth year of the UN's engagement in peacekeeping activities. Peacekeeping, as we are all aware, remains a significant area of activity for the organization, commanding an ever-increasing share of resources and attention. The joint efforts of the DPI, Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and Department of Field Support (DFS) have resulted in more accurate, comprehensive and timely information on UN peacekeeping missions. Through the collaborative efforts of the DPI and DPKO, in promoting UN actions to curb incidents of sexual abuse and exploitation committed by its peacekeepers, there has been a noted decline in the commission of, as well as reports of such acts, in the media.

The Jamaican delegation calls on the DPI to strengthen its relationship with the DPKO and DFS to ensure that information on peacekeeping activities is reported in a fair and balanced manner, and that our peacekeepers are also duly recognized for the important work being carried out to rebuild communities in countries emerging from conflict.

Mr. Chairman,

World Press Freedom Day will be celebrated on 1st May 2008, during the proceedings of this Committee. My delegation welcomes the celebration of World Press Freedom Day, and notes with alarm, the increasing numbers of attacks on journalists worldwide. Jamaica stands ready to contribute to all efforts that will preserve and protect the principles of freedom of the press and freedom of information.

Mr. Chairman,

The United Nations information centres, remain a critical tool for the dissemination of the UN's message to populations across the world. The role of these information centres has been particularly effective in developing countries where they have played a critical role in enhancing access to information on events in the wider international community, and in helping to close the technological gap. My delegation applauds the efforts of the UN information centres to provide information to local communities in their local languages.

Jamaica fully recognizes the high value in the work of the UN information centres, especially at the local level, and therefore believes it necessary to reiterate its call that any future rationalization be undertaken in consultation with the host country as well as all other countries served by the centre.

We have noted the important work of the DPI and its network of information centres, in promoting the outcomes of international conferences and UN years and Observances. In this respect, I wish to draw attention to an issue of importance to my delegation. In 2008, the international community is celebrating the International Year of Sanitation (IYS). Jamaica is currently hosting a Caribbean Conference on Sanitation in Kingston, where it has been noted that the achievement of effective sanitation is critical to human health and development and the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). I take this opportunity to urge that particular attention be paid to promoting the objectives of this international year.

My delegation also wishes to reiterate its call for the enhancement of the information component within the UNDP Office located in Kingston, which will serve as a complement to the vital work being carried out by the Caribbean region's only information centre located in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. Chairman,

In a matter of days, the Capital Master Plan will be officially launched. The role of the DPI will become even more important during this phase, given the inter-dependence of its work with the various Departments and news services, which will no longer be housed in

one central location. Mr. Chairman, the global community is facing increasingly challenging times, with new issues including the global food crisis commanding urgent and strong action from the United Nations.

My delegation therefore strongly urges the DPI to ensure that the high level of service provided to both Member States and the wider global citizenship, is not diminished throughout the period of implementation of the Capital Master Plan.

Mr. Chairman,

Before closing, allow me to take this opportunity, on behalf of my delegation, to publicly thank the DPI for its assistance and hard work in helping to organize the events of 25th March 2008, marking the 1st International Day of Remembrance for the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade.

This bicentennial commemorative event has also inspired the initiative by Members States of the Caribbean Community, endorsed by the General Assembly together with the collaboration of the DPI, for the erection of a Permanent Memorial that will serve as a constant reminder of one of the most egregious tragedies in the history of mankind that should never be forgotten.

I thank you.