



SECRETARÍA PROTEMPORA  
MÉXICO  
2000-2016

**STATEMENT OF AMBASSADOR CLAUDE HELLER, PERMANENT  
REPRESENTATIVE OF MEXICO, ON BEHALF OF THE RIO GROUP AT THE  
30<sup>th</sup> SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION**

April 28, 2008.

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation has the honor to take the floor on behalf of the member States of the Rio Group: Argentina, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Dominican Republic, Uruguay, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, and my country, Mexico.

We wish you and the Bureau success in carrying out your responsibilities, and we also express to you our resolve to contribute to the success of the 30<sup>th</sup> Session of the Committee of Information.

Mr. Chairman,

The Rio Group appreciates the Report of the Secretary General on the Activities of the Department of Public Information, documents A/AC.198/2008/2 and 3. Likewise, we welcome the statement made by Mr. Kiyoo Akasaka, Undersecretary General for Communications and Public Information, and his willingness to participate in the interactive debate that will take place this afternoon, which will contribute to enrich our deliberations.

The Rio Group recognizes the work done by the Department of Public Information (DPI), for it contributes to a better understanding of the tasks the United Nations Organization carries out in the maintenance of international peace and security, respect and promotion of human rights, efforts to achieve the Millennium goals, fight against the illegal traffic of arms and organized crime, fight against terrorism, prevention of health diseases such as the HIV, natural disasters, climate change, eradication of poverty, respect for norms and principles of international law, and the reform of the United Nations, among others.

We recognize the efforts made by the DPI in order to strengthen cooperation with other organs of the United Nations System, and we underline that strengthening this cooperation will contribute to a broader and truthful dissemination of the tasks our Organization carries out in order to comply with its responsibilities in the maintenance of international peace and security.

In particular, we take into account the close cooperation between the DPI and the Departments of Peacekeeping Operations and of Field Support, and the efforts of DPI to disseminate information on peacekeeping operations in order to promote a better understanding of their activities.

In that regard, the Rio Group would like to have more information on the functions and the scope of the orientation and support activities that the DPI carries out, taking into account the creation of the Public Affairs Unit in the Office of the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations.

The Rio Group considers very positive that the 63 information centers, services and information components allow our organization to have presence around the world, and encourage them to strengthen their capacity to disseminate the message of the United Nations.

We underline the work made in our region by the information centers, services and information components through the modest resources they have to disseminate the message of our organization, and we encourage the DPI to keep on supporting them.

We call for a constructive and permanent dialogue between the DPI and member states in order to strengthen the network of information centers, services and information components.

Mr. Chairman,

The Rio Group has examined the efforts undertaken by the DPI to reach the goal of parity among United Nations official languages and has taken note of Table 2 of the Secretary General Report on the increase in the number of page visits and access to the United Nations web site in the official languages, in the period 2005-2007. We appreciate the information given, but we also are aware that there is a lot to do, and therefore we encourage the DPI to renew its efforts in order to make progress towards the goal of parity among the official languages.

It is also very encouraging the information provided in the Report of the Secretary General regarding the broad coverage and the high number of visits to the United Nations Webcast (UN Webcast), for this service allows direct access of the public to the activities of the main organs of the United Nations. We welcome the efforts carried out by the DPI to examine ways for expanding webcasting capacity in the six official languages.

The work of the Department of Public Information contributes to improve the image of the Organization. However, additional efforts are required in order to promote the message of the United Nations not only in the official languages, but also in as many languages as possible. The Rio Group considers a priority to ensure the parity and respect of the official languages of the United Nations.

With the aim to achieve an effective promotion of the message of the Organization, the Rio Group considers important to continue to use traditional mass media, such as radio, television and written press, taking into account that they are still the fundamental means to obtain information in developing countries. Therefore, we believe that the presentation of radio programs should be encouraged in as many languages as possible, including Portuguese and indigenous languages. We also encourage the DPI to continue to strengthen its relationship with radio stations and local journalists of Member States.

The Rio Group recalls once again that not only the DIP but all the UN agencies should offer public information in all the official languages, and that it is important that the press releases are also published in Spanish. Nowadays, at the verge of the internet era, our Organization cannot continue working only in two languages, and most of all, it cannot continue the tendency to focus in only one of them.

With respect to the information contained in Annex 1 of document A/JAC.198/2008/3, the Group considers that this Committee is not the adequate one to decide on budgetary and administrative issues, since those proposals shall be analyzed and reviewed by the Fifth Committee.

Mr. Chairman,

The Rio Group reiterates that the cost of multilingualism cannot be quantified by the amount of public or official documents that should be translated, nor is the best solution to increase the budget. What we really look at is to improve the architecture of the informative structure of the Organization and, particularly, its human resources in the six official languages in order to directly relate them to a linguistically diverse world.

We understand multilingualism, within the UN, as the capacity of the Organization to communicate in different languages, besides the six official languages. It is a concept that denotes an additional ability to communicate outside the Organization. Multilingualism is not only a matter of principle, but also a way of putting into practice the universal vocation of international organizations.

To this respect, the Rio Group would like to clarify an incorrect concept mentioned in documents A/AC.198/2008/2 and 3 regarding the working languages of the Organization. The correct and real definition of the official and working languages of the United Nations is contained in the Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly (Article 51), in the Provisional Rules of Procedure of the Security Council (Rule 41), in the Rules of Procedure of the Economic and Social Council (Article 32), and in the Provisional Rules of the Committees of the ECOSOC (Rule 29). The Rio Group believes that mistaking the working languages of the Secretariat with the working languages of the organs that compose this Organization, constitutes a denial of the principle of multilingualism, which both the General Assembly and this Committee consider of utmost importance. Therefore, the Group insists in underlining the obligation of the Secretariat to watch for the parity among the official languages.

We consider that the revolution on information technology and communication makes more necessary to any international organization to have qualified personnel to express and promote information in the main languages of our world. The United Nations should adapt to this new reality.

The Rio Group welcomes the result of the efforts of the DPI in allowing that persons with disabilities – including visual and hearing disabilities – access the UN website, and encourages it to continue to work in this direction.

We welcome the creation of the Group of Friends of Spanish, composed by members of delegations, staff from the Secretariat and members of the press, that look forward to contribute to parity among the official and working languages of the Organization, particularly Spanish.

Mr. Chairman,

We reiterate our support to the work of the Department of Public Information, taking into account the importance of promoting the message of our Organization in order to favour a better understanding and a stronger support of its activities by the international community.