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Statement by Mr. Narayan Dev Pant, Minister Counsellor of the Permanent mission of Nepal to the United Nations, in the General Debate of the 30<sup>th</sup> Session of the Committee on Information (New York, 30 April 2007)

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation is delighted to see you preside over this prestigious Committee. We repose full confidence in your astute diplomatic skills and would like to convey our best wishes to you and the other office bearers on the bureau for a successful outcome.

I take this opportunity to put on record our appreciation for Under-Secretary-General Mr. Kiyo Akasaka for his active leadership of the Department of Public Information, and also thank him for his opening remarks.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement of the G-77, delivered by the distinguished representative of Antigua and Barbuda.

Mr. Chairman,

We are living in an age of unrelenting revolution in the field of information and communication. A knowledge-centered world is fast outpacing a capital-centered one with the increasing risks that a sizable number of the people from the developing world, mainly from the LDCs, finds itself drifting away from the mainstream of the fast evolving knowledge society. Against this backdrop, my delegation views the role of the Department of Information as crucial to mitigating this asymmetry through effective delivery of authentic information to these stranded billions across the globe, particularly on the activities and concerns of the United Nations. In the same vein, it is our conviction that the Committee on Information can provide the necessary strategic directions to the Department in dealing with this situation.

Mr. Chairman,

Allow me to make a few observations on some of the key activities undertaken by the DPI in promoting the work of the United Nations.

My delegation recognizes the significant works carried out by the DPI in enhancing the substantive purposes of the United Nations, especially in the context of such burning issues as UN reform, the Millennium Development Goals, sustainable development, climate change, the dialogue among civilizations, the right of women and children, HIV/AIDS, transatlantic slave trade, among others.

Nepal appreciates the DPI's efforts in bringing the peacekeeping matters into prominence. As one of the largest troop-contributing countries to the UN peacekeeping operations, we feel that the DPI should work in close collaboration with the DPKO so as to be able to better highlight the importance of the UN peacekeeping operations.

Parity in disseminating information in all official languages has been one of the concerns of the Member States. The DPI has therefore not only to make further efforts to achieve this goal, but also to ensure that a large constituency comprising the developing world, including the LDCs, feels well served by such arrangements. In this respect, we wish to underline the need to produce and broadcast audio programs in the local languages, including those spoken by the indigenous people, in view of the popularity of traditional means of communications like radio so that no one will feel left behind.

UNICs do not only represent the DPI as its field offices, but also symbolize a bridge that connects the local people with the United Nations and its activities. As such, they have to be made more user-friendly and effective in keeping with the needs and priorities of the host countries. My delegation would therefore like to stress that proper assessment of the specific needs and conditions of each centre, and prior consultation with the host countries should be conducted before any step towards rationalization of UNICs is considered by the DPI.

In this regard, we wish to reiterate that the UNIC in Kathmandu needs to be further strengthened in order to make it an effective regional hub.

Mr.Chairman,

As we all are aware, the World Summit on Information Society had agreed on a set of targets for improving access to Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), to be attained by 2015 at the latest. It is, however, regrettable that the achievement is far from encouraging for most of the poor countries. Although the divide is shrinking in terms of quantity, differences in terms of quality is exacerbating.

Therefore, in concluding, my delegation feels that the best way to address this predicament is to intensify efforts aimed at bridging the gap through a multitude of policy reforms at the global level in which multilateral approaches take the center-stage. Indeed, the DPI as a mouthpiece of the United Nations with universal presence, should be able to devise innovative ways to assert its responsibility in generating momentum for a more equitable, inclusive and affordable information order for all.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.