

PAKISTAN MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS
INFORMATION SECTION
NEW YORK

**STATEMENT AT THE UN GENERAL DEBATE
30TH SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION
29 APRIL 2008**

Mr. Chairman,

Allow me to begin by extending our warmest felicitations on your assumption of the Chair of the Committee on Information. My delegation also wishes to extend our sincerest greetings to the members of the Bureau on successfully conducting the work of this important Committee. I would be remiss if I fail to appreciate the contributions of your predecessor Mr. Rudy Christen.

2. My delegation is confident that with your diplomatic skills and leadership qualities, you will steer the Committee with greater efficiency and effectiveness. We wish you all success in guiding the Committee to a successful conclusion.

Mr. Chairman,

3. We align ourselves with the statement of the Group of 77 and China.

4. We appreciate the comprehensive report made by the Under Secretary General for Information, His Excellency Mr. Kiyo Akasaka. We are grateful to him for updates of the Department's activities during the past year and giving us a fuller sense of the challenges ahead. The interactive session was equally useful for member States to comprehend the direction and dimension of the Department. We thank Mr. Kiyo Akasaka and his team for their frank exchange on the activities of the Department of Public Information as well as their future plans.

5. We would also like to place on record our appreciation for the staff and officers of the Department of Public Information who have worked strenuously to carry out the mandate of the Department.

6. The United Nations is the center of world's affairs. The most daunting task before the Department of Public Information as the mouthpiece of the United Nations, is to reach out to the widest possible audiences and project UN ideas and accomplishments. My delegation believes that DPI will continue to provide accurate, impartial, comprehensive and timely information to member States. The DPI should use all available tools to create a conducive environment so that its messages can create the maximum impact.

7. As a result of the general elections held on February 18, a new Government has been established in Pakistan. This Government is committed to uphold the Constitution of Pakistan which clearly stipulates that the right of freedom of expression and speech as a fundamental right of each citizen.

8. Freedom of expression is a universal right which needs to be promoted and protected. Freedom of one does not need to offend others ,to prove that one has the freedom of expression. My delegation agrees with the Secretary General that freedom must always be accompanied by social responsibility.

Mr. Chairman,

9. My delegation welcomes the condemnation by the Secretary General on the airing of Geert Wilders' offensive film. We also appreciate the opposition voiced by the Government of the Netherlands and many Member States. The film has not only hurt the sentiments of Muslims but also threatens the stability of many societies and as such is in violation of UN charter, as well as the laws of the countries where these sacrilegious acts are carried out. It is now all the more important that the DPI redouble its efforts not only to sensitize the media but also the member states on the need to understand and respect various cultures and beliefs We feel that the United Nations can play a vital role in bridging the gulf between various beliefs and cultures.

10. My delegation appreciates the work of the DPI in promoting issues of importance to the International Community such as UN Reform, Climate Change, Human Rights, Development of Africa, Preventing Genocide, Alliance of Civilization , Millennium Development Goals, Peace Keeping Operations, Peace and Security, Reform of the General Assembly and Counter terrorism.

11. The reform issue is complex, often with varied perspectives among Member States and Groups. While disseminating statements of senior United Nations officials on reforms issue, DPI should strive to maintain a balance and comprehensively project the position of various Member States.

Mr. Chairman,

12. We are fully cognizant of the enormity of the task and the efforts being made by the DPI to grapple with the goal of achieving parity among official languages. In this regard we note the Secretary General's report in Document A/C.198/2009/3 regarding the cost and human resource involved to translate press releases in other official languages with a view to expand coverage. This in-depth cost and benefit

analysis by the Department will help the Committee arrive at a decision on the issue.

13. We have noted the Secretary General's report on Activities of the Department of Public Information in document A/AC-198/2008/2. We welcome the culture of evaluation in the Department of its products, services and activities which would help to further improve the Department's performance

Mr. Chairman ,

14. My delegation welcomes the efforts of the DPI to increase awareness about the achievements and challenges of UN Peace Keeping. My delegation continues to underscore the importance of close cooperation between the DPI and other substantive Departments in particular the DPKO and Department of Field Support. The UN Peacekeepers work in very challenging conditions and often produce huge success stories for the United Nations. It is important that this part of the story is also told - both globally and locally.

15. Finally, we reiterate our support to the Department of Public Information and its endeavours to effectively carry out its mandate and also reassure you of our fullest cooperation in steering the Committee's work to a successful conclusion.

