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Mission permanente de la Suisse
auprès des Nations Unies à New York

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**30^e Session du Comité de l'information
Point 7 Débat général**

Déclaration prononcée par

**Simon Pidoux
Conseiller**

New York, 29 avril 2008

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**30th session of the Committee on Information
Item 7 - General Debate**

Statement by

**Simon Pidoux
Counsellor**

New York, April 29th 2008

Mr President,

I would like to begin by adding my congratulations and wishes of success to those of my distinguished colleagues in the previous speeches. I can also assure you of Switzerland's full support for your task of leading the work of the 30th session of the Committee on Information.

Mr President,

My delegation would like to thank Under-Secretary General Mr. Akasaka for presenting the various reports and for highlighting their salient points. Switzerland also wishes to commend the excellent work of the Department of Information, which successfully dealt with the challenges posed by last year's full agenda. I am thinking in particular of the remarkable coverage of the United Nations Conference on Climate Change in Bali last December. Switzerland hopes that the Department of Information will make similar efforts to publicise the activities connected with the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Continuing the rationalisation efforts

Mr President,

After the partial re-orientation carried out by the Department of Information, we believe that it is now necessary to respond in a sustained and pragmatic manner to the rapid developments in the media world so that the Department of Information can offer its clients the best product possible. Such products are the only means of ensuring a wide dissemination of information about the work of the United Nations.

These rationalisation efforts must begin with the work of the committee. My delegation hopes that together we can produce a more readable resolution. Let us abandon this vain search for exhaustiveness which often produces only a list of minor and diluted elements. Let us opt for a more incisive approach, focusing on a more limited number of priorities. We believe that it is very important for the Department of Information to be able to base its work on a mission and on objectives that are clearly defined by the work of the committee. My delegation also supports the idea of avoiding redundancy by ensuring that the same issue is not examined several times in different bodies.

In turn the different information centres must be able to base their work on a mission and on objectives clearly defined by the Department of Information. This would also make it possible to define respective responsibilities more clearly, to measure results and if necessary to make the adaptations required for effective action. To increase the quality of the dissemination of information on United Nations activities, Switzerland intends to maintain its focus on the content rather than the form of rationalisation. While the regionalisation project with the creation of the Brussels Regional Centre led to increased synergies, it also demonstrated the limits of this kind of model. Switzerland also regrets the very strong ideological positions with regard to this rationalisation model. My delegation intends to learn the positive and the negative lessons from this experience in order to pursue an intelligent and pragmatic rationalisation policy which takes account of specific regional features.

UN internet site, multilingualism and network of libraries

Mr President,

My delegation welcomes the improvements to the internet site and considers this instrument as a very effective tool in the UN information armoury. Given its importance, we encourage the Department of Information to pursue its efforts to achieve linguistic parity of the content of this internet site for the different official languages of the United Nations. Switzerland is also aware that in some parts of the world the traditional media remain the best means of effectively disseminating information.

While Switzerland naturally favours multilingualism, it advocates a pragmatic approach on this issue, an approach which combines effectiveness of communication with the need for as widespread a use as possible of the official UN languages. Switzerland does not support multilingualism as an end in itself but as a means of achieving a better dissemination of United Nations messages in certain regions.

With regard to the network of libraries, Switzerland welcomes the modern approach of networks of communities sharing their knowledge. As for the change of name of the Dag Hammarskjöld Library, my delegation would like to know the opinion of the Department of Information about the possible operational implications for the UN network of libraries as a whole.

Mr President,

You will have noticed that the word pragmatism has recurred several times in this speech. Switzerland is convinced that the work of this committee can and should avoid the pitfalls of politicisation and of excessively ideological positions. By basing its work on the search for pragmatic and commonsense solutions, this committee should be able to produce clearer and more specific guidelines for the Department of Information and thus to ensure the success of this 30th session of the Committee on Information.

Thank you.