



## **United States Mission to the United Nations**

140 East 45<sup>TH</sup> Street  
New York, NY 10017

---

**Statement by LeRoy G. Potts  
Adviser**

**U.S. Mission to the United Nations  
Tuesday, April 29, 2008**

---

Thank you Mr. Chairman and good afternoon everyone. Let me congratulate you on your election as the chairman of the committee.

On behalf of the United States we would like to thank Under Secretary General Akasaka for his remarks delivered yesterday.

Last year, we encouraged the Under Secretary General to take a “fresh look” at Department of Public Information activities and to focus on core activities, and improve coordination, efficiency, and integration throughout the entire UN system. We welcome the Under Secretary General’s efforts to date to communicate the broad activities and concerns of the United Nations and to achieve the greatest public impact with the greatest efficiency. We are also appreciative of the detailed reports of the Secretary General on the activities of the Department of Public Information that were prepared in response to General Assembly resolution 62/111. In addition we wish to thank Mr. Akasaka for yesterday’s interactive dialogue which we found useful.

The 2008-2009 biennium budget has once again imposed constraints that members of this Committee cannot ignore. DPI along with all other parts of the UN must continue to carry out its important mandate within existing resources. We have a duty to

help DPI work within these constraints without undermining their mandate.

We note efforts by DPI to improve synergy between headquarters and the field and we encourage continued efforts in this regard. We also support efforts by DPI to foster a culture of evaluation. The continued use of programme assessments and the use of data collection tools will help both DPI and member states evaluate the organization and give better direction within the context of this committee.

The United States supports the Department of Public Information's efforts to rationalize UN information centers and we hope that Under Secretary General Akasaka will link the United Nations Information Center (UNIC) regionalization process with a system wide evaluation of all UN offices worldwide. We would like to see the UN continue efforts to house all UN system country offices under one roof and with one central public information unit. In addition we welcome DPI efforts to create and update 26 websites for information centers in developing countries. We support the efforts made in 2007 to build functioning websites in all 63 information centers with information available in five official languages.

Also, our delegation remains committed to streamlining the resolution at the conclusion of the Committee on Information. For some of us, the yearly resolution is too unwieldy and streamlining this resolution –in a holistic manner – would go a long way towards providing DPI with the guidance that it needs and deserves from member states.

Mr. Chairman,

On Thursday, May 1st, World Press Freedom Day will be commemorated at headquarters and at other UN offices. Freedom

of the press, a cornerstone of American democracy, is enshrined in our Constitution's Bill of Rights. We strongly believe that a free press is fundamental for true democracy. For this particular body – the Committee on Information – it is important that we recall the Universal Declaration of Human Rights' affirmation in Article 19 that "everyone has the right to freedom of expression...this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers."

Thank you.