



BANGLADESH

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Statement
by
Mr. Shabbir Ahmad Chowdhury
Deputy Permanent Representative
The Permanent Mission of Bangladesh to the UN
at the General Debate of the 31st Session of the Committee on Information
on May 05, 2009

Mr. Chairman,

Let me begin by congratulating you and your Bureau on your well deserved elections. My delegation assures you and your Bureau of its full support and cooperation in the course of this important Committee's deliberations. We believe that under your able stewardship the Committee will be able to accomplish the expected outcomes.

My delegation thanks Mr. Kiyotaka Akasaka, the Under Secretary General for Communications and Public Information, for his comprehensive presentation on the activities of the Department of Public Information. We extend our deep appreciation to him for his wise leadership of the department and to all the staffs of the department for their efforts for carrying out their tasks.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement made by the distinguished representative of Sudan on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. I would however like to make some additional comments of our concern.

Mr. Chairman,

Our meeting is taking place at a time of unprecedented crises. The global financial meltdown has affected countries big and small, rich and poor. Bangladesh, like most other developing countries, has also been hit by the global recession. The newly democratically elected Government has taken every precaution to ward-off the worsening effects of the economic and financial meltdown. With care, wisdom and patience, it is working hand-in-hand with the UN system organizations and other international bodies to face the rising challenge. We take this opportunity to thank the Office of the Resident Coordinator in Bangladesh and members of the UN Country Team for standing side by side with the Government and people of Bangladesh during these difficult times. We believe that DPI has a role in publicizing and highlighting the role of the UN with regard to financial crises in order to harnessing the global support and gathering the collective wisdom in braving the odds.

Mr. Chairman,

Bangladesh has been following with great interest the ongoing debates on climate change, specifically the global warming. As a country that could potentially be severely disrupted by the consequences of rising sea level, we are particularly interested to learn how other small and developing countries are coping with the challenge of global warming. Ironically, despite extensive coverage of the issue in the international media, there has been very limited effort to create a forum for developing countries where they can learn ways and means of coping with the crisis. DPI can play a useful role in this regard. We call upon DPI to make greater efforts to highlight the effects of global warming for developing countries by producing user-friendly publicity materials that could be broadcast on national media. Instead of generic studies, these products should highlight the state of individual countries. Bangladesh stands ready to extend its all-out support and help such an initiative. As time is running out in an alarming pace, we insist on proactive actions in building awareness, facilitating preparedness and averting further deterioration in this regard.

Mr. Chairman,

Another area where DPI can extend help to Bangladesh – and other developing countries – is community radio. Admittedly the world is increasingly embracing the Internet and television, but for the vast majority of people in developing countries, radio still remains a key source of information. In Bangladesh, there is a new emphasis on developing community radio programming, targeting rural population, including those living in distant and isolated regions and islets far off from city hubs. Our recent experience shows that community radio can be of invaluable use in early preparedness for cyclones and similar natural emergencies. DPI, with its vast experience in international radio programming, can assist Bangladesh and other coastal countries to make the best use of community radios which can save lives and properties. We are ready to join you in fruitful collaboration in this area.

In this connection, we are pleased to note the outreach efforts of UNIC Dhaka. The centre has now been without a full-time director for almost 25 years. Yet, its national staffs have shown great acumen and creativity in mobilizing public support for the United Nations at the national level.

At this point, allow me **Mr. Chairman** to make a brief reference to the activities of the UNIC Dhaka. UNIC Dhaka continues to play a critical role in promoting the goals and objectives of the United Nations. Making best use of its available, although meager resources and teaming up with local educational and civil society groups, it has helped to promote the Millennium Development Goals and to highlight the role that Bangladesh has been playing in UN Peacekeeping for the last two decades. Peacekeeping, being the flagship enterprise of the UN deserves ample publicity and we commend UNIC Dhaka for playing their part in this regard.

Mr. Chairman,

Bangladesh is happy to note the expanding cooperation between DPI and DPKO in projecting the work of UN peacekeepers. As one of the major troop-contributing countries to UN peacekeeping operations, Bangladesh is particularly interested to see the role of UN peacekeepers and of the troop contributing countries better highlighted in DPI's multi-media activities. In the past, we urged DPI to do more to publicize the work of peacekeepers and to focus on stories incorporating a national angle. In the same vein, we would urge DPI to exert considerable efforts in restoring the image and credibility of the UN peacekeeping missions and troop-contributing countries in the face of otherwise false allegations.

Mr. Chairman,

Bangladesh is also keen to support DPI and other UN organizations in promoting the International Mother Language Day. The Mother Language Day, now an annual observance promoted by UNESCO, underlines the importance of mother language as a means of communications and also as a repository of national heritage. This day commemorates the sacrifice of young Bangladeshi students who more than fifty years ago, on 21 February 1952, were gunned down while defending the right of mother language. We are pleased with the efforts of UNESCO to publicize the day and promote its ideals. However, we note with regret that DPI, the principal public voice of the Organization, has done very little to bring together the international community in a global observance of this important and historic occasion in support of all the mother languages across the globe. My Mission stands ready to support every effort that DPI may undertake in this regard.

Before I conclude Mr. Chairman, let me reiterate once again our support for the DPI and reassure you of our fullest cooperation in steering committee's work to a successful conclusion.

I thank you Mr. Chairman.