

63rd SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Check Against Delivery

**Statement by
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Deputy Permanent Representative**

Committee on Information

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Mr. Chairman,

Allow me to congratulate you on your election as Chairman of the 31st session of the Committee on Information, and wish you much success in guiding our work. My delegation extends to you and the Bureau our full support and cooperation.

My delegation would also like to extend our appreciation to Under-Secretary-General Akasaka for his statement and work. Likewise, we wish to congratulate the entire DPI team for their extensive work, professional standards, commitment, and dedication.

My delegation also expresses its appreciation for the cooperation that exists between members of the Committee on Information and the DPI and Committee Secretariat. In this regard, we welcome the reports of the Secretary-General, “Activities of the Department of Public Information,” A/AC.19/2009/2-4, which highlight key advancements made by the DPI to promote the work of the United Nations to a global audience, and offer a comprehensive picture of the strategic challenges and opportunities facing the UN in the realm of public information and communication.

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation commends the DPI for its many accomplishments, particularly its work to reach young audiences. Israel firmly believes that now more than ever, it is critically important that young people be engaged in — and learn about — the issues that matter to the future of our planet. The DPI strives to create new partnerships and opportunities to reach younger generations using new technologies and fora to discuss and address many complex issues. Such multi-dimensional work should serve as a model for other departments of the organization.

In that vein, Israel was honored to participate and contribute to DPI’s events during World Autism Awareness Day. It was an important occasion that helped raise awareness of the challenges faced by individuals with autism, as well as their families. The events also showcased how the DPI can effectively tackle sensitive thematic issues in a professional manner that offers the international community an opportunity to recognize and confront challenges in our time. Israel commends this activity and we will gladly participate in similar efforts in the future.

Another such thematic event was the fourth Annual International Day of Commemoration in memory of the victims of the Holocaust. One of the most important lessons the United Nations must imbue upon younger generations — as well as all citizens of our world — is the dangers of hate, racism, and xenophobia. As such, Israel would like to express its deep appreciation to the DPI for yet another remarkable and moving commemoration ceremony. We would also like to commend our colleagues within the DPI for their superb and tireless efforts in promoting Holocaust remembrance and awareness of the threat posed by genocide and crimes against humanity.

In fact, The Holocaust and the United Nations Outreach Programme has become a crown jewel in the activities of the DPI. In one particular example, one of their projects — “Footprints for Hope” — represents an additional step forward to ensure that the lessons of the Holocaust are taught to new generations of students. It is inspiring to see such initiatives that not only commemorate the Holocaust, but also ones that actively engage academic institutions, NGOs, and others to ensure that no atrocities similar to the Holocaust ever occur anywhere, to anyone, ever. “Never again.”

Finally, Israel is pleased that throughout the years more and more Member States are participating in these events, and we hope that additional efforts will be made to increase the participation of as many Member States as possible, representing all regions, in the future.

Mr. Chairman,

The international community’s success in affirming the eternal memory of the Holocaust and the United Nations’ own achievements in promoting Holocaust remembrance, however, are greatly threatened by the proliferation of Holocaust denial in some parts of the world. Holocaust deniers can be found in positions of prominence, including within revered academic institutions, at the helm of media organizations, and even as leaders of national governments.

Unfortunately, the world is witnessing a resurgence of anti-Semitism. The Holocaust and the United Nations Outreach Programme is an essential pillar in combating this dangerous phenomenon. We believe that such efforts — including the permanent exhibit on the Holocaust displayed here at United Nations headquarters — play an important role in educating the nearly million visitors to the UN each year. Through such efforts and the exhibit, the DPI makes a significant contribution to Holocaust remembrance and combating rising anti-Semitism, and we applaud those efforts.

Mr. Chairman,

Notwithstanding the admirable work of the DPI, we remain concerned about one particular information program at the DPI. Out of all the thematic issues covered by the DPI, the Palestinian Information Programme is based upon an anti-Israel resolution that focuses on a specific conflict. Furthermore, and in contrast with what we heard from our friend and colleague, the distinguished representative of Egypt, my delegation is

concerned by the fact that the work related to the Palestinian Information Programme offers a one-sided, biased, and misleading narrative of our region.

My delegation maintained in the past dialogue with the DPI and Member States regarding the General Assembly resolution on the Special Information Programme on the question of Palestine. Indeed, we recognized the DPI's efforts to offer objective materials and events on the subject. Yet problems still remain.

As a result of the DPI's continued one-sided mandate that established this programme, Israeli government officials will continue to be obliged not to attend or participate in these seminars until it is modified to reflect a more even-handed approach.

As such, Israel would be willing to engage in the formulation of a new, more constructive, and more balanced resolution to mandate future activities. Such a resolution must be aimed at the promotion of peace education, tolerance, mutual understanding, and the prevention of incitement. Members of the Secretariat — as well as Member States — have privately supported this idea.

Mr. Chairman,

Israel is proud to have been a member of the COI for a number of years, and we are once again participating in this discussion with the hope that we can improve and expand the vital work of DPI in a fair, constructive, and evenhanded manner.

Israel remains committed to the productive and cooperative work of the DPI and a positive outcome to our deliberations.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.