



# БЕЛАРУСЬ

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## Statement

by Mr. Andrei Savinykh,  
Director of Information Directorate,  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus  
at the 33<sup>rd</sup> session of the Committee of Information.

Dear Mr. Chairman, dear colleagues,

The delegation of the Republic of Belarus sincerely believes that the work of the Department of Information is of paramount importance to the process of ensuring broad public support for UN activities at a global level.

In that respect we strongly support the DPI's efforts to improve the quality and effectiveness of its strategic communication services, news and media related products as well as outreach activities.

We all know perfectly well that DPI is working under the pressure of financial constraints. This situation makes it even more important to utilize the resources available in the most efficient way and emphasizes the key role of the strategy formulation and planning in the success of the program activities.

While noting with appreciation the abundance of different DPI's approaches and forms of activities we clearly see that they all group at two levels: DPI level or global level and the field or national level of information centers.

DPI focuses on global strategic communication campaigns trying to target the global audience in all member countries. This global audience is extremely versatile in languages, beliefs, experiences, education, interests. We believe that a mere task of delivering the message constitutes a fundamental logistical problem to say nothing about a need to produce a real impact on people's views.

At the same time, information centers and information officers on the ground limit their activities to the local or national level.

Thus, there is a feeling of fragmentation and inconsistency because the well thought and developed regional strategies are missing.

The idea of regional approaches and strategies can be beneficial for many reasons. Let me present for your consideration some of them.

First, we should keep in mind that economic, social, environmental and other challenges differ from region to region. Even common problems can have distinctive variations and content. This situation makes it extremely difficult to generate one information signal from one global source and achieve visible results all over the world. However, this target looks much more reachable if we use the regional strategy.

The regional strategy should focus on problems and development issues typical and most important to a concrete group of countries. It should also take into account the level of the development of mass media and information society. The messages created within the regional strategy can be tailor made to the regional priorities and needs, to the demands of the governments and the expectations of common people and aspirations of the public. Thus, a stronger impact will become a reality.

This approach will also allow us to accomplish the task specifically mentioned in GA resolution where the Department of Public information was requested to continue building partnerships with local, national and regional broadcasters.

It will also make much easier to implement the ongoing program for broadcasters and journalists. For example, in our region and in Belarus we clearly see the scarcity of the journalists who have a professional understanding of the current UN activities, the UN procedures and methods of work. We need to invest in training activities if we want them providing professional services to the public. It is extremely expensive to organize these training activities in New York, Geneva or Vienna. While the regional approach is cost saving and makes a big difference.

Having regional strategies in place the DPI will become a local player for many governments. This situation will enable DPI to encourage more effectively the host countries to respond to the needs of the UN information centers. Viewing these centers as part of the public campaign focused on the needs of local sustainable development, considering UN information service as a partner who helps to build up awareness and generate support to the development plans many governments will be willing to provide in a return a noticeable support to the DPI activities on the ground.

To a great extent the regional approach can be considered a solution to the question whether we should continue cooperation with traditional media or focus on the new media.

In fact, that is a nonexistent dilemma in my region. If you choose the new media, you can easily reach younger generations who are developing new information habits much faster. While using the traditional media, you communicate with older generations who are of key importance in local decision-making process.

Referring to other forms of work, we are convinced that the regional approach should benefit a lot to organization of various local video, news paper and Internet contests that will be extremely beneficial to the UN information activities.

We usually think about DPI as a source of information about UN activities for local public and local media. But, what can happen, if we shift the approach and will make a local media the main and ever growing source of information about local UN activities and achievements. Using this approach the UN web site and DPI can become a recipient of huge volume of information from the national level on what the UN is doing in countries. These products can be placed in global UN information resources thus making them also a kind of experience exchange database.

The best writers can be awarded a distinguished UN journalist title. In many countries around the Globe this title will be seen as a confirmation of global professional recognition and will be highly valued by the journalists.

We would also wish to underline the necessity to reach a fundamentally new level of the coordination of information activities within UN and its bodies. We talk a lot about these issues but we still have a rather fragmented landscape with each and every institution trying to pursue an independent information activities program poorly coordinating their efforts with one another.

This situation contradicts to the global tendency where all efficient organizations focus on their core competences delegating other functions to specialized agencies and partners. This delegating strategy proved to be cost saving, reliable and efficient. The same model should be used with all UN bodies and organizations with DPI being this specialized agency.

While talking about the key issues of global information strategy we would like also to voice our support to the tasks reflected in the GA resolution on questions relating to information and in particular to the need to ensure equitable treatment of all the official languages and continue efforts to ensure that technological infrastructures and supportive applications in the UN fully support Latin, non-Latin and bidirectional scripts.

Thank You very much for your attention.