

33rd Session of the Committee on Information

April 27, 2011

Statement by the Delegation of Brazil

Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, my Delegation would like to congratulate you on your election to preside over the 33rd Session of the Committee on Information. We are sure that under your able guidance we will achieve successful results. We also wish to congratulate the other members of the Bureau.

We thank the Secretary-General for his reports to the Committee and the Undersecretary-General Akasaka for his comprehensive briefing, as well as for his and his team's daily committed work.

Brazil fully associates itself with the statements made by the G-77 and China as well as the Rio Group, and wishes to add the following comments in its national capacity.

Mr. Chairman,

In order to ensure that peoples from all parts of the world have access to as much information as possible about the United Nations, it is essential to have the UN message spread out in as many languages as possible. Therefore, the activities of DPI and the United Nations as a whole must take into account the linguistic diversity of peoples everywhere. This would also serve to improve accountability of the UN programs and activities. Brazil would like to commend once again the efforts undertaken in this regard by the Portuguese Unit of UN Radio, despite the limited human and financial resources available to it.

My Delegation also reiterates Brazil's continued support to the work of the United Nations Information Center in Rio de Janeiro, which has been disseminating information on the activities of the United Nations family for more than six decades. The activities of UNIC Rio - carried out through collaboration with the media, NGOs, universities and government bodies - help educate and raise awareness of the Brazilian public about the fundamental role of the United Nations to promote multilateral solutions to our contemporary challenges. We welcome, in particular, several events and initiatives promoted recently by UNIC Rio, such as a roundtable on the International Holocaust Remembrance day and a seminar about the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Mr. Chairman,

We remain strongly convinced of the importance of promoting synergies between traditional and new medias. Without traditional means of communication the message of the UN will not reach the world's poorest populations, particularly in developing countries. The new medias, on the other hand provide a dynamic asset both in terms of improving the networking capacity of the Organization and of providing timely information to a varied array of actors.

As we mentioned last year, the role of traditional and new media was highlighted during the aftermath to the earthquake in Haiti. Traditional media helped mobilize international solidarity and support while social networking and other new platforms provided live updates of the situation in the country. This important synergy between traditional and new media also came into play in the aftermath of the earthquake and the *tsunamis* that hit Japan. We commend the role of the DPI in the international response to the tragic events in both Haiti and Japan.

This mutually reinforcing combination of traditional and new medias should also be used to address pressing issues of our day, such as the promotion of sustainable development, poverty eradication, peacekeeping and peacebuilding, loss of biodiversity, the impacts of desertification and climate change. Developing effective communication strategies should help further raise world public awareness on these issues, particularly in the lead up to the UN Conference on Sustainable Development, in Rio, in 2012.

Mr. Chairman,

We encourage DPI and Member States to work together to explore creative ways to ensure the necessary support and progressive strengthening of the network of information centers, services and components of the UN. United Nation Information Centers were the first ever field presence of the United Nations in member States and remain an essential element of the public information activities of the Organization, especially in developing countries.

We wholeheartedly welcome the measures carried out by the DPI, in coordination with the Government of Angola, to take the initial steps involved in the creation of a UNIC office in Luanda to address the special needs of Portuguese-speaking countries in Africa. By acting upon the long-standing offer of the Government of Angola, the UN now can work closer with Portuguese-speaking African countries to tackle the specific challenges they face. We do hope that construction can be completed and the center can be operational by the end of 2011.

As mentioned by the Group of 77 and China, several countries offer to host UNICs in rent-free and maintenance-free premises. We are glad to report that these are the cases of both Angola and Brazil. Other States, however, including developed countries, do not do so. We still encourage all States that host UNICs, and are in a position to do so, to consider offering rent-free and maintenance-free premises for their operations. Without prejudice to the need for enhanced budgetary support to the activities of DPI, this initiative on the part of Member States would enable the Department to concentrate its limited funds on outreach and public information activities, as well as on strengthening the UNICs network, where necessary, notably in Portuguese speaking Africa.

Mr. Chairman,

Brazil reiterates its appreciation for the work undertaken by DPI under the Special Information Programme on the question of Palestine. We consider that the sensitization of public opinion and the promotion of dialogue among journalists, civil society, academic community and policymakers may play an important role to foster innovative and grassroots initiatives for peace in the Middle East.

Finally, I wish to address the important role of DPI in preserving the historical memory of the United Nations. We commend the efforts of the Department, inter alia, to increase online access to information, as well as the progress in the retrospective digitization of UN documents. The digitization efforts need to be combined with continued measures to ensure the durable preservation and appropriate access to documents, photographs and audio-visual records of historical significance for the Organization, particularly due to work carried out under the Capital Master Plan. We need to ensure the availability of financial support, both budgetary and extrabudgetary for such digitization and preservation activities.

Also, utmost care will have to be taken in the relocation process of the UN legacy during the renovation of the UN building, in order to ensure the preservation and accessibility of the archives.

The preservation of our institutional memory and the lessons derived from it is essential for us to pursue and uphold in our future work the principles and goals of the United Nations.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.