

Statement by Minister Katsuhide Ariyoshi
Delegation of Japan
On the 33rd Committee on Information
28 April 2011

Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, let me join other speakers to congratulate Ambassador H.E. Mr. Eduardo Ulibarri of Costa Rica for his assumption to the Chair of the 33rd Committee on Information as well as the newly elected members of the bureau. I also wish to express my confidence that the Committee will surely have a productive session guided by your able leadership. Japan is prepared to extend its full support to you and the bureau of the Committee.

I also wish to appreciate the comprehensive statement on the activities of the Department of Public Information (DPI) delivered by Under-Secretary-General Mr. Akasaka as well as the reports of the Secretary-General A/AC.198/2011/2, 3 and 4 regarding the activities of the Department in the areas of strategic communications services, news services and outreach services. It is our hope that DPI will continue its efforts to enhance effectiveness and accountability, while proactively conducting the public relations activities of the United Nations and providing timely, accurate, impartial, comprehensive coherent and wide-ranging information.

Mr. Chairman,

First of all, I would like to touch upon the achievement of DPI.

Japan, as you know, was struck by an unprecedented disaster on 11th March. The Great East Japan Earthquake, a magnitude 9 event which spawned unimaginably huge tsunami and precipitated a nuclear power accident, has been, I believe, one of the greatest disasters Japan has ever faced. An overwhelming number of people have lost their lives or are missing and many more still remain evacuated. As soon as the news of this disaster spread all over the world, a significant number of countries, international organizations including the United Nations, as well as NGOs and other entities have communicated their willingness to provide assistance. I take this opportunity to express once again our sincere gratitude for the condolences and support offered by your Missions, your countries and your organizations to the Japanese people in this time of great hardship. The

generous and invaluable cooperation and assistance that the international community has extended to Japan at this difficult time will never be forgotten.

In this regard, I particularly would like to thank the DPI News and Media Division for creating the heartfelt “Video Messages of Solidarity with the People of Japan” in which words of solidarity by the Secretary-General as well as several UN Messengers of Peace including HRH Princess Haya Al Hussein, Michael Douglas, Stevie Wonder, Wangari Maathai and Midori Goto, are recorded. These messages posted on the Internet site YouTube both in English and Japanese have brought courage and energy for recovery to Japan. The Japanese people are deeply grateful for this kind initiative by the United Nations.

Mr. Chairman,

Over the last several years, DPI has been giving comprehensive coverage to the principal and highest-priority activities of the United Nations, such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), international peace and security, human rights, climate change and sustainable development, gender equality, peacekeeping operations, disarmament and African issues. The public information work of the 57 United Nations Information Centers (UNICs) including UNIC Tokyo, two information services, one regional information centre and eight information components of United Nations offices, is invaluable in raising the profile of United Nations activities. Japan also commends DPI for undertaking the challenge of working towards enhanced effectiveness and more streamlined operations.

The Department’s efforts to capitalize on the synergies between traditional and new communication tools are also highly appreciated. As the international community works to address the problem of digital divide for developing countries, it is essential to continue public information activities in a balanced manner for both sides of the divide. In addition, DPI should emphasize fiscal discipline and increase efforts to enhance the efficiency of its activities by promoting greater internal coordination, networking closely with other UN organizations and building partnerships with civil society and other groups, within its existing resources.

Mr. Chairman,

During the period covered by the Secretary-General’s report, Japan saw a number of important international events, among them the visit of the

Secretary-General to Japan.

At the invitation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, the Secretary-General visited Japan from the 3rd to the 7th of August last year. During his stay in Japan, Secretary-General H.E. Mr. Ban Ki-Moon met with Prime Minister H.E. Mr. Naoto Kan and then Foreign Minister H.E. Mr. Katsuya Okada. These meetings provided an opportunity to exchange views on various global issues including development issues, in particular the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), peacekeeping operations (PKOs), the DPRK, nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, Security Council reform, climate change, biodiversity, and regional issues such as the situations in Afghanistan, Sri Lanka and Myanmar.

Secretary-General Mr. Ban also visited Nagasaki and Hiroshima and attended the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Ceremony, for the first time as the Secretary-General of the United Nations. The Secretary-General's attendance at the event sent a powerful message to the international community and generated a new momentum toward the realization of a world free of nuclear weapons in the 65th anniversary of the dropping of the atomic bombs. This visit to Japan by Secretary-General Mr. Ban also had a positive effect on the existing cooperative relationship between Japan and the United Nations. I therefore wish to take this opportunity to thank the Secretary-General once again for visiting Hiroshima and Nagasaki and demonstrating his earnest resolve to realize a world free of nuclear weapons.

We appreciate as well the arrangements made by the United Nations Information Centre (UNIC) in Tokyo during the visit of the Secretary-General. In connection with this, Japan believes that it is indispensable for UNIC Tokyo, under Director Ms. Mari Yamashita, to continue its efforts to ensure its accountability. At the same time, we intend to maintain close cooperation with DPI in order to achieve sound management and strengthen the strategic public information activities of UNIC Tokyo.

Mr. Chairman,

In conclusion, Japan reiterates its commitment to continue its support for DPI's activities and participate actively in the discussions to be held in this session of the Committee on Information.

Thank you.