



Committee on Information
Thirty-Fifth Session

Statement Delivered by

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Thank you Madam Chairman,

Allow me to join the other members in congratulating you on your election. It is a pleasure to have someone of your stature and expertise chairing this important committee. I also congratulate the other newly elected officers and pledge to support their efforts for success in this session.

On behalf of the United States, I thank Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information Launsky-Tieffenthal, and the Department of Public Information for their reports and overview given yesterday to the Committee. DPI's work on public education, capacity building, and strengthening global cooperation are not to be taken lightly. These are the things that truly make it possible for the United Nations to fulfill its promise to the world.

Madam Chairman,

I would like to mention that the United States was one of the many member states who benefited from DPI's extraordinary efforts as the United Nations commemorated the International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade in March. We commend the creativity and thoughtfulness they brought to a very meaningful series of events.

Madam Chairman,

As many of the members have noted in this debate, freedom of expression is a fundamental, universal human right enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and central to the development of innovative, entrepreneurial, and prosperous democratic societies. As communications technologies evolve, we are reminded that all individuals are entitled to the same human rights and fundamental freedoms online as they are offline, and all governments must protect those rights regardless of the medium. We must also recognize the importance of journalists and we call on all governments to protect the ability of journalists, bloggers, and dissidents to write and speak freely without retribution.

We agree with UNGA Resolution 67/124 that the lack of communications infrastructure and capacity in developing countries sometimes impedes access to

quality information that could underpin expanding economic opportunities and an improved quality of life. This is why the United States is part of the Alliance for Affordable Internet, which seeks to enable the next billion users in low-income countries to obtain Internet access for less than five percent of their monthly income. The United States also supports a variety of journalist training programs that provide journalists and bloggers with investigative tools and training on security so they can report without endangering themselves. UN leadership in this area is welcome and we see this as an important area for partnerships, like the ones DPI is so astutely pursuing.

The United States and other member states have called on the UN to increase its efforts to maximize the existing resources it has been given and to seek more efficient ways of doing business such as a greater use of technology. Therefore, we appreciate the efforts that the Secretariat is making to accomplish its mission with the resources it has at its disposal. The strategic goals and clear vision for the work of DPI in its strategic communications, news, and outreach and knowledge services is an important first step.

In conclusion, let me say again here that we were pleased to join consensus this year on the resolution containing the activities of the Department of Public Information, though we think the process is better served when we avoid importing political or divisive issues into our information-sharing and awareness-raising work. Those issues should be discussed and negotiated in the appropriate forums. The work of telling the story of the United Nations to a global audience in the most effective ways possible is too important to dilute.

Thank you.

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