

Permanent Mission of Lebanon to the United Nations

At the outset allow me to congratulate you, Madame chair and other members of the bureau on your elections, and to thank the Under-Secretary-General and head of the Department of Public Information, Mr. Peter Launsky-Tieffenthal for his statement. Lebanon appreciates the three reports of the Secretary-General on the activities and strategies of the Department of Public Information.

Mr. Chairman,

Knowledge is a powerful force in our world, affecting great influence and impact upon our societies. It is our duty at the United Nations, to harness the use of knowledge in pursuit of progress, prosperity, equality, justice and peace.

Towards these objectives, we, as the Committee on Information, in partnership with the Department of Public Information should employ knowledge to serve two important functions:

One, to adequately inform and diversify the debate: Diversifying our range of knowledge will stimulate a lively political and economic discourse and social debate, which necessarily involves many countries and stakeholders in the global conversation. Let us support the DPI in transmitting this message of dialogue to the world.

Two, to ensure adequate access to information and outreach: Lebanon welcomes the DPI's outreach services, to connect the local to the global, and emphasizes the need to enhance efforts to ensure that the flow of information is effectively delivered to local populations.

Mr. Chairman,

A balanced mix of media sources is essential for meaningful and equitable dissemination of information. In this context, Lebanon welcomes the efforts of the Strategic Communications Division, and supports the use of both traditional media channels and interactive social media platforms in promoting UN messages, news stories and thematic campaigns, such as UN peacekeeping operations and the post-2015 development agenda.

Successful conduct of these information campaigns requires increased collaboration, mission coordination and partnerships. My country is host to a notable example: the UN Public Information Office in Beirut. The Office adopts an integrated approach, merging peacekeeping efforts with those of the political section and the civil affairs team.

Mr. Chairman,

We commend the strategy of the DPI in leveraging social media and engaging in real-time content on the ground. One telling initiative in Lebanon is the launch of the new television series, "The Challenge," in which eight Lebanese University journalism graduates each spend one day with one of UNIFIL's contingents. The result has revealed the dynamic profile of UNIFIL, as the Lebanese students have called it an 'educational journey.' The series utilizes the Facebook page of UNIFIL's Public Information Office to promote easy access to their episodes.

Moreover, Lebanon has always, with its rich history of the printing press, valued traditional media platforms. In this context, the local radio in Beirut has contributed to the public campaign for sustainable development. As part of the International Year of Sustainable Energy for All, an awareness campaign on sustainable energy was launched on MTV Lebanon, dubbed ‘Change your habits, save your energy,’ reaching around 40 million viewers over a period of just one week.

Such use of interactive platforms broadens the reach of the messages and activities of the UN and contributes to overall transparency and accountability of the UN system.

Mr. Chairman,

With our increasing interconnectedness, the role of traditional journalism has developed to deliver its services in new and engaging ways, involving the greater participation of youth, women and civil society. Across the globe, we have witnessed this evolution through the stories of citizens empowering their voices, as journalists and young people have stood side by side to convey their message to the world for dignity, freedom and a more promising future. In this spirit, Lebanon acclaims the achievement of Ms. Tawakul Karman, awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2011, as the Chairwomen of ‘Women Journalists Without Chains’.

Mr. Chairman,

The issue of accessibility to information bears great moral relevance in its ability to reveal social realities and unveil injustices. In this regard, Lebanon acclaims the work being done by DPI’s Special Information Program on the Question of Palestine in awareness-raising and efforts towards a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East.

Allow me to conclude with a quote by Napoleon, as found in the personal journals of thinker Albert Camus:

"There are only two powers in the world: the sword and the mind. In the end, the sword is always conquered by the mind."

At the United Nations, let us work towards our collective mission, to empower the mind over the sword and prove that knowledge can prevail for a more just, equitable and peaceful world.