

# AUSTRIA



PERMANENT MISSION OF AUSTRIA  
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

## COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION

Statement by the Chair

delivered by

H.E. Jan KICKERT  
Permanent Representative of Austria

New York, 1 May 2018

*Check against delivery*



Ms. Under-Secretary-General,  
Distinguished delegates,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

As we move into the second year of the current Bureau of our Committee on Information, I would like to commend my distinguished colleagues who have served as Vice Chairs and Rapporteur along with the Committee delegates who supported the successful adoption of last year's resolution and have followed up on its implementation. Our provisional agenda for the work of the Committee this year was prepared on the basis of consultations among the members of the Bureau. Thanks also to the constructive relationship that has been cultivated between the Committee and the Department of Public Information (DPI), under the direction of its leadership and that of the Secretary-General, and with the support of the Secretariat of the Committee, the promotion of global awareness and understanding of the work of the United Nations have continued to progress.

As a subsidiary body of the General Assembly established to deal with questions relating to public information, the Committee on Information oversees the work of the Department of Public Information and provides guidance on its policies, programmes and activities.

We shall hear, shortly, a statement by the Under-Secretary-General for Global Communications and Head of the Department of Public Information about this work. We would like to acknowledge that the Under-Secretary-General has already demonstrated her commitment to the work of the Committee by holding an informal briefing for us earlier this year about her ideas for a new approach to delivering on the mandates of the Department. We look forward to hearing more in this direction from her this morning as well as later today, when we shall also have the benefit of an informal interactive meeting with senior management of the Department.

In the remainder of our session, we shall conduct our General Debate in consideration of reports submitted by the Secretary-General on the activities of the Department (including its strategic communications services, news services and outreach services); meet in our Open-ended working group; and, finally, consider and adopt our report to the General Assembly at its seventy-third session. We shall do so in what has become the extremely fluid context of contemporary global communications.

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This is so because in recent years, we have witnessed an ever-more rapid transformation in the media field from the simple provision of information to complex forms of multidimensional interaction. People today wish not merely to be informed as a whole, but moreover to participate individually; to provide and receive feedback; to propose, debate and decide; and to contribute in more immediate ways to shaping their world through shared discourse. It is gratifying to see how the United Nations and the Department of Public Information have been listening to these profound and challenging developments, and begun fostering such genuine dialogue with the peoples whom the Organization serves. It is also rewarding, if daunting, to know that our work in this Committee can be decisive for enabling the United Nations to meet these demands of our time. Guiding the United Nations to become a more relatable and approachable institution has become especially important for identifying and responding to the needs of the younger generations who are inheriting our world. For all of this, your critical observations and your constructive engagement are sought, so that we might continue to strengthen the Department of Public Information, across its entire range of products and platforms, as the voice of the United Nations.

Distinguished delegates and friends,

The annual observance of World Press Freedom Day falls during our Committee's session. While the commemoration on Thursday, 4 May, is not a part of the Committee's own agenda, this will be an opportunity for us to celebrate the fundamental principles of press freedom; assess the state of press freedom throughout the world; defend the media from attacks on their independence; and pay tribute to journalists who have lost their lives in the line of duty.

Distinguished delegates and friends,

Seventy-two years ago, our predecessors established the Department of Public Information in the knowledge that the "United Nations cannot achieve the purposes for which it has been created unless the peoples of the world are fully informed of its aims and activities". I look forward to working with you in order to develop a productive consensus that, reflected in our concluding resolution, will provide the Department with clear guidance on the policies and activities that we need to best communicate with the global audience served by the United Nations.

Thank you very much for your attention.