

Statement by Mr. Yashar Aliyev, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Azerbaijan (2 May 2001)

Mr. Chairman,

Allow me to congratulate you and the members of the Bureau on your election and express confidence that under your able leadership the current session of the Committee will successfully cope with its task. I would like also to thank your predecessor Mr. Elhassane Zaid for his excellent work.

I wish also to commend Mr. Shashi Tharoor, the Interim Head of the Department of Public Information and Mr. Kensaku Hogen, former Under-Secretary-General for their efforts and work aimed at enhancing the capacity of the Department of Public Information.

Mr. Chairman,

The technological revolution and the flow of information have transformed the world into global village. We are of the view that one of the primary tasks of the United Nations is to disseminate cultural values and to promote cultural integration of peoples in order to contribute to the objectives of peace and stability.

Our delegation would like to highlight the DPI's role in promoting the commemoration of the UN Year of the Dialogue among Civilizations. In this millennium, the enhanced dialogue between different cultures and religions will be conducive to the mutual understanding, tolerance and peaceful coexistence.

In his report to the Millennium Assembly, the Secretary General of the United Nations outlined the "digital divide" in time of information revolution. We deem it necessary to adopt a practicable plan aimed at narrowing the gap in the sphere of information technology.

Our delegation would like to affirm its concurrence with the Secretary General's view in assigning the major role to communications and information activities of the United Nations system for attaining global support to the Organization's goal and tasks.

DPI needs to maintain and improve its activities in areas of interests of developing countries as well as other countries with special needs, including countries in transition.

Our delegation wishes to express its appreciation to DPI for organizing its training programme for journalists from developing countries and countries in transition, which has given them a good opportunity to acquaint themselves with the work of the United Nations and to cover Organization's activity on behalf of their news organizations. We believe that this programme is very useful and should be continued.

Many delegations have stressed the importance of the DPI's activity on economic and social issues. In addition, we consider that the dissemination of information related to conflict resolution and preventive diplomacy should be also one of the DPI's priorities.

Mr. Chairman,

Our country welcomes significant progress made in the electronic information field and the corresponding library services. Internet access to the United Nations documents in all official languages have enabled Member States to obtain important information from the United Nations as well as have enhanced public awareness on the United Nations' activities. We commend the DPI's activity in developing and maintaining the very useful website of the United Nations. However, there might be a certain deal of the necessity for further improving the UN Optical Disk System. In our view, some technical measures could be taken to increase the quality of the ODS website.

In the meantime, I would like to stress that the traditional mass media are still the principal sources of information. Despite the revolutionary progress of electronic means of information, the traditional ones — TV and newspapers will remain for a long time the primary media not only in developing countries but also in developed countries. Changes in psychology are not so rapid as in technology. Therefore, DPI needs to continue focusing on dissemination of information through TV, radio and press.

Mr. Chairman,

Our delegation believes that United Nations information centers have played and continue to play a significant role in term of cooperation between the Organization and Member States in the field of information. Importance of the centers is increasing, particularly, in new member states.

In this regard, I would like to commend the work carried out by the information center in Azerbaijan and by the DPI's representative Mr. Dorani. This information center closely and productively cooperates with state's bodies as well as with NGOs. We attach great importance to such activity of the information center.

Mr. Chairman,

In conclusion, on behalf of the Delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan, I have the honour to request the valuable support of the Member States of the Committee on Information for the candidacy of my country to the membership of the Committee.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.