

Statement by the delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (2 May 2001)

Mr. Chairman,

Please allow me to begin by congratulating you on your election as chairman of the current session of the Committee on Information. I also wish to extend congratulations to all other elected members of the Bureau. I express the hope that this session will bear desired results under your able leadership.

My delegation thanks Mr. Shashi Tharoor, interim head of the Department of Public Information for his informative statement at the opening session and UN Secretary General for timely presentation of reports on several issues concerning the recent UN public information activities.

Mr. Chairman,

The 21st century is the age of information. Information and communication technologies rapidly developing in recent years have a great impact on various fields of social life such as politics, the economy and culture and play an important role in giving an impetus to their development.

Information and communication technologies also become an indispensable means in promoting the intellectual development of humankind and in furthering cooperation and exchanges among countries with different cultures and development level.

On the contrary, negative impacts of rapidly developing information and communication technologies cannot be ignored, either. The gap between developing and developed countries is ever widening in the field of information and communications, further deteriorating the present inequalities between them.

There continues to be the attempts to mobilize modern mass media to inject their values into progressive countries and dilute their precious cultural traditions.

To make matters worse, information and communication technologies are being extremely commercialized and restrictive measures applied on their transfer, thus making it difficult for the majority of developing countries to have access to modern technologies.

In order to overcome this phenomenon, due attention should be paid to the establishment of a just and new international information order in corresponding with the development of new information and communication technologies.

We are of the view that the establishment of a new international information order becomes one of primary tasks facing the international community. This is to make the new century peaceful and prosperous by using modern information and communication technologies achieved by the wisdom of humankind solely for promoting friendship and solidarity among countries and for the better-off of people.

In this context, my delegation holds that it is necessary for developed countries possessing modern information and communication technologies to recognize its importance and actively support developing countries in their efforts to enhance their own public information capabilities through transfer of technology and financial assistance.

Mr. Chairman,

As indicated in the report of the Secretary General, the main objective of the UN public information activities is to build broad-based global support for the work of the United Nations by disseminating information on the UN activities to the world peoples.

With the UN Millennium Summit held last year as an occasion, there is a growing interest about the UN activities worldwide and therefore, we need to further increase the awareness of the world towards the work of the United Nations.

What is important in this regard is to ensure that the principles of respect for sovereignty and non-interference in other's internal affairs are observed in the UN public information activities, since the UN is based on the principle of the sovereign equality of all its members.

Along with this, we should ensure objectivity and impartiality in the UN public information activities. The UN public information activities are, in essence, to inform the world of the activities of member States pursuant to relevant UN resolutions and their views on respective issues.

Accordingly, a lack of objectivity and impartiality may result in transmitting distorted information to the world. That would have adverse effects. Therefore, special attention needs to be paid to that, lest the UN public information activities represent only the interests of a certain country or region.

We should also ensure that the UN public information activities make a tangible contribution to the economic and social development in developing countries. As is well known, there is no permanent peace without development. The UN Millennium Summit set the development and eradication of poverty in developing countries as one of the major objectives to be achieved in the new century. It is, therefore, that priority should be given to this field in the UN public information activities, thus building up international climate favorable for achieving the objective.

Practical steps should be taken to transfer modern information and communication technologies to developing countries. In this regard, my delegation positively takes note of an annual training course for broadcasters and journalists from developing countries, that has been organized by the Department of Public Information for many years. Likewise, we believe that the DPI may consider organizing a training course specifically on information and communication technologies, which can be used as an opportunity to transfer new communication technologies to developing countries.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, my delegation assures you of its close cooperation with the members of the Bureau and other delegations for a success of this session.

Thank you.