

**Statement by H.E. Mr. Carlos Dos Santos, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Republic of Mozambique to the United Nations, on behalf of the Community of Portuguese speaking countries (CPLP) (2 May 2001)**

Mr. Chairman,

I have the honour to take the floor for the first time at the Committee on Information, on behalf of the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries, known as "CPLP", which has been granted observer status during the 54th General Assembly.

As you are aware, Mozambique currently holds the Presidency of the CPLP, a multidimensional forum gathering the Portuguese-speaking nations of Angola, Brazil, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, Portugal and São Tomé and Príncipe. East Timor is already an active party of our Community, as it was warmly welcomed in the Maputo Summit.

Allow me to extend, on behalf of the member states of CPLP, our most sincere congratulations to you, Mr. Chairman, and to the distinguished colleagues, on your assumption as new members of the Bureau of the Committee on Information.

We also take this opportunity to warmly welcome the Interim Head of the Department of Public Information, Mr. Shashi Tharoor, and to thank him for his insightful and comprehensive statement, delivered at this Committee on Monday. We wish to state our full cooperation with the DPI and support to Mr. Tharoor's "energizing" of the work of the Department.

Mr. Chairman,

Today we deal again with the issue of information, one of the most valuable commodities of the new Millennium. In such connection, the countries of CPLP have examined in detail the reports of the Secretary-General (A/AC.198/2001/2 to A/AC.198/2001/9), that offer us the scope of the challenges the UN faces in its role of contributing to a more equitable world communications and information order.

Information is about empowerment and development. It is the key to lifting the lives of more and more peoples towards the knowledge society and the new digital society that are being outlined. The CPLP commends the UN Secretary-General for his leadership in building bridges over the digital divide. But the future that we all want will only be produced by our work in the present, according to the realities of today.

And today's realities, even within the Lusophone Community, are as different as the regions in the world where our countries are geographically located. In regions as diverse as Europe and Africa, as distant as Latin America and Asia, we have one common language but also one realistic common widespread information tool — the RADIO.

That is why, Mr. Chairman, we attach particular importance to the message of the United Nations through DPI's radio broadcasts and its Portuguese Language activities.

We highlight that the Portuguese-language service is the only non-official language that strives to offer an amount of work equal to that produced by the six official languages in the UN Radio. This is to say that it also broadcasts, on a daily basis, news bulletins, as well as weekly magazine programmes, to the five continents, reaching therefore a worldwide audience of more than 230 million Portuguese-speaking people, by means of 21 networks that gather, approximately, over fifteen hundred radio stations around the globe.

This service has shown itself to be a success-story for the Department of Public Information. It has time and again proven to be a superb tool for the spread of the UN message where Portuguese is spoken and heard.

People in the Portuguese-speaking world are, thus, better informed on what the UN sets out to accomplish. Indeed, thanks to the outreach and quality of the UN Radio's Portuguese-Language programme, people are better aware of the importance of the UN role in today's world.

But more has to be done to ensure that this success story does not turn into a glory of the past.

We therefore wish to reiterate our Community's strong support for strengthening the capacities of the UN Radio's Portuguese-Language Programme. They are performed today by one single producer, Mr. João Lins de Albuquerque, whose tireless work towards meeting the goals of the United Nations in the complex field of public information is commended at the highest level by us.

Mr. Chairman,

Our countries will once again voice their support for such strengthening during this session of the Committee on Information. It may be brought about once the UN Radio's Portuguese Service increasingly equipped with the human resources it needs to adequately perform its valuable task.

Such strengthening would demand, as stated in document A/AC.198/2000/6, a minimum standard team of 4 (four) full-time producers, a backup producer and a production assistant. A team that would resourcefully cover the complex range of issues facing the UN today, as well as geographical regions as diverse as Europe and Africa, as distant as Latin America and Asia.

We know the financial constraints of the Department of Public Information. However, we think that, through creativity and skillfully allocating resources, it is possible to reinforce the Portuguese-language service towards a better efficiency and quality.

We know that DPI is also aware of the possibilities that lie ahead. That is why DPI is lending its support for the initiative of the web page of the Portuguese-language service, which is going to be launched next Tuesday, on May 8<sup>th</sup>.

Let me point out, Mr. Chairman, that the Heads of State of the Seven Portuguese-speaking countries and Mr. Xanana Gusmão, on behalf of the Timorese people, are sending their firm messages of support for this new challenge of UN Radio.

We must remark that this new service will be made available without DPI having to commit further budgetary resources. Such accomplishment is to be fully credited to the personal efforts of Mr. João Lins de Albuquerque (UN Radio) and Mr. António Carlos Silva (Multimedia Unit), who are putting additional work into making this initiative come true.

Mr. Chairman,

Portuguese has sided along the UN official languages in the history of the Organization's radio service for almost half a century. With just these two men's diligence, the Portuguese-language programme found a valuable platform to improve the information service towards reaching the same technological level already available to the six UN official languages.

Once again, we only want practical means to keep providing good quality service.

Mr. Chairman,

In Europe and, particularly, in Africa and Latin America, millions use radio as a primary source of information on world affairs. In Asia, and especially in East Timor, UN Radio has been a fierce advocate of the importance of the UN role today and in the coming Millennium.

The Members of the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries do believe that the United Nations will largely gain from a UN Radio that really tries to reach out and wants to remain politically meaningful for the public opinion of those members of the United Nations.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.