

## **Statement by H.E. Ambassador Motohide Yoshikawa, Representative of Japan to the United Nations (23 April 2002)**

Mr. Chairman,

At the outset I would like to congratulate you for your re-election to the chairmanship of this Committee. I am confident on that our work will continue to go smoothly under your able leadership. My delegation will give its full support to you and the Bureau during the course of this session.

May I thank Mr. Shashi Tharoor, Interim Head of the Department of Public Information, for the very comprehensive and policy-oriented presentation that he made yesterday. Later I would like to return to some of the pertinent questions that he raised in his statement.

I wish also to express my deep appreciation to the Secretary-General for his reports to the Committee (A/AC.198/2002/2-7). These useful documents, in particular the report on "Reorientation of United Nations activities in the field of public information and communication,"(A/AC.198/2002/2) will provide a good basis for this Committee's deliberations on public information and communication issues at the United Nations.

Mr. Chairman,

Let me touch upon some of the issues being treated at the current session of the Committee. First, I wish to refer to the reform of the DPI. The Secretary-General, at the very beginning of his second term of office, expressed his renewed and strong commitment to the reform of the whole United Nations system. Reorientation in the field of public information and communication is included in this reform effort, and is thus a major topic at this session of the Committee.

The importance of public information activities by the United Nations is widely recognized. They are an essential factor in enhancing understanding and support for the Organization as it addresses not only issues related to international peace and security but also economic and social issues such as poverty, the environment, human rights, HIV/AIDS. At the same time, in the Millennium Declaration, the Member States of the United Nations urged the Secretariat to make the best use of its resources in all its endeavors. We very much appreciate that the Secretary-General's report has been written with full recognition of this instruction.

Under such circumstances, Japan strongly welcomes the initiative taken by Mr. Tharoor to review the Department's activities. Although the proposed mission statement for the Department needs further careful consideration, at this juncture I wish to endorse the "broad directions of the DPI's reorientation" that the DPI has commenced. My delegation welcomes, for example, the introduction of the concept of "customer needs" and "performance management" in the Department. Japan would like to encourage the DPI to continue its exercise on prioritization among its activities. As some delegations mentioned yesterday, we should bear in mind that review of the DPI is a continuing exercise which should be followed up during the 57th session of the General Assembly.

Mr. Chairman,

The second issue I wish to touch upon concerns languages.

Language is an important factor in ensuring that public information activities have a strong impact on the targeted population. As information presented in the local language is most effective, the Department should continue its efforts to distribute resources effectively among activities in various languages.

With regard to the question of official languages used on the United Nations web site, Japan is looking forward to the concrete proposals on strengthening the DPI within the existing capacity that the Secretary-General has been requested to submit to the General Assembly.

Mr. Chairman,

Lastly, let me refer to the role of United Nations information centers.

Recognizing the fact that 35 percent of the DPI's budget is used to maintain 77 information centers around the world, my delegation would welcome a proposed cost-benefit analysis of the centers. However, I wish to put on record here that the Government of Japan highly appreciates the activities of the United Nations Information Center in Tokyo under the dynamic leadership of its director, Mr. Hatsuhisa Takashima. He has become a well known figure among Japanese politicians, academia and private citizens as a spokesman on issues related to the United Nations. The Japanese Government will continue to support the activities of the Tokyo Information Center by making voluntary contribution both in money and in kind.

Mr. Chairman,

I wish to conclude by reaffirming my delegation's commitment to engage itself actively in the work of this session of the Committee.

Thank you very much.