

Statement by H.E. Mrs. Madina B. Jarbussynova, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Kazakhstan to the United Nations (24 April 2002)

Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, I would like to congratulate you on your re-election to the chairmanship of this Committee and wish all of us the achievement of ever more tangible results under your guidance. My delegation joins in extending a warm welcome to Azerbaijan and Monaco as the new members of the Committee on Information.

I thank Mr. Shashi Tharoor, interim head of the Department of Public Information, for the comprehensive presentation that he made at this session.

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation, having considered the reports by the Secretary-General on the main aspects of the United Nations activities in the sphere of information, would like to make a few comments.

We are highly encouraged by the renewed commitment of the Secretary-General to the comprehensive reform of the United Nations system. It goes without saying that reorientation of the UN activities in the field of public information and communications is a key issue at the present session, as this process is an integral part of the whole reform package.

The report of the Secretary-General reflects a rather complicated situation in the Department on Information with regard to numerous mandates and directives entrusted to it by the General Assembly over the last years. However, despite the fact that the Department continues to face critical deficiencies, it is actively responding to the call by the General Assembly to improve its activities in order to strengthen the communication function within the United Nations.

We welcome the intention of Mr. S. Tharoor to review comprehensively the activities of the Department of Public Information which is mandated to promote the fulfillment of the substantive goals of the United Nations. The role of the Department in the twenty-first century should not be underestimated since the Organization is repositioning itself for even greater relevance as an indispensable global institution. We hope that the reorientation of the UN activities in the field of information and communications will contribute significantly to bridging the existing gap between the developed and developing countries.

Mr. Chairman,

In its resolution 55/136 B, the General Assembly encouraged the Secretary-General to "continue his efforts to develop and enhance the United Nations web sites in all the official languages of the Organization". According to the report of the Secretary-General on development of the UN web site, the usage of the UN web sites in languages other than English has continued to increase. However, after English, the level of the usage is highest in

the Spanish and French languages. The usage of the sites in Arabic, Chinese and Russian is the lowest as the number of the documents available in these languages is quite few. It is highly important for the DPI to reorganize the management structure for the language web sites so that all the sites could be developed in balanced way. We think that there should be no disparity in staffing for the six languages. My delegation would also like to express our support for the web sites developing independently for the gradual achievement of parity targets.

We appreciate the increasing use of modern technology by the United Nations. At the same time we recommend the DPI to achieve the balance between advanced technology and traditional means of communications. We find extremely important the implementation of the DPI project on disseminating United Nations broadcasts in the six languages that helps to improve the access to information by all nations and peoples. We think that the UN radio project should be put on a stable basis

Regarding the services provided by the Department to the Member States, I would like to mention the daily press releases. We share the view expressed by other delegations that these unofficial UN documents are invaluable to the countries, which do not have large missions and are not be able to attend all the meetings being held every day. We join the opinion that the reorientation exercise must not affect the current level of services provided to Member States.

Turning to the dissemination of information, we think that the work of the Department must be more focused on poverty eradication, advancement of women, children's issues, education and other social issues. My delegation notes with great satisfaction the creation of the multilingual "UN Action Against Terrorism" page after tragic events of September 11. We hope that the DPI has the key role to play in disseminating information of international terrorism and raising the awareness of this global threat to all nations.

Mr. Chairman,

The year 2002 marks the tenth anniversary of the admission of Kazakhstan to the United Nations. Ten years ago the resolution of the General Assembly on the admission of my country to the Organization received unanimous support, thus signifying the acceptance of Kazakhstan by the international community as an independent state. Since that time many events have taken place. Despite criticism of the Organization and pessimistic appraisals of its potential, the United Nations continues to represent the overriding hope of humanity as a whole for peaceful development and international cooperation. This was evidenced by the outcome of the Millennium Summit, whose Declaration embodied fundamentally important provisions representing the renewal of the Organization and a programme of actions directed towards the normalization of international relations.

All these years Kazakhstan has continued to enhance cooperation with the United Nations system within its efforts to advance its socio-economic development. A major aspect of our work in the United Nations remains that of enlisting the assistance of the international

community in resolving problems relating to the environmental disasters and especially in eliminating the aftermath of nuclear tests the former nuclear site in Semipalatinsk.

The GA resolutions on rehabilitation of the Semipalatinsk region paved the way for the elaboration of the programme of action, consisting of multidisciplinary projects in the fields of health, environment, economy, humanitarian assistance and provision of information. Work in this field will continue and my Government is looking forward to further coordination by the DPI of efforts to enhance public awareness of the consequences of this man-made disaster. We hope that the resolution to be adopted by the present session of the Committee on Information will contain a paragraph concerning the problems of the Semipalatinsk region.

Thank you.