

## **Statement by Mr. Hira B. Thapa, Minister Counsellor, Permanent Mission of Nepal to the United Nations (23 April 2002)**

Mr. Chairman,

The delegation of Nepal fully associates itself with the statement delivered yesterday before the Committee by the distinguished representative of Venezuela on behalf of the G-77 and China.

My delegation also welcomes Azerbaijan and Monaco as new members of the Committee on Information.

The revolutionized communication technology has indeed brought about many benefits. Humanity is being served by the unprecedented progress in the field of information and communications in a variety of ways. The world has become a small village due to the development of communication technology which has shortened the distance in a way we did not dream of before.

Nonetheless, there exists a huge gap amongst nations of the world in terms of reaping benefits from the revolution in communication technology. We are still faced with the problem of digital divide so clearly reflected in the available statistics of communication facilities in the developed world and the developing world. 80% of all internet users in the developed world has only 15% of the global population, whereas we in South Asia, a region inhabited by almost 20% of the world population have just 1% Internet users. While the United Nations with the mission of promoting and informed understanding of its work and purposes is being reoriented to achieve such goals, the Secretary-General has aptly remarked about the yawning digital divide in the current world.

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation appreciates the fact that the Secretary-General has embarked upon the broader reform of the United Nations and within it the reorientation process of its activities in the field of public information and communications. His report contained in document A/AC.198/2002/2 has valuable proposals meriting due consideration by the UN members. We would like to focus on the on-going efforts of the Department of Public Information to provide training facilities to the journalists of the developing world. As majority of the population of the globe reside in these countries, trained and better informed journalists from them will contribute positively to the realization of the goals of information activities of the UN.

As budgetary constraints deprive many developing countries of having their journalists take advantage of DPI-imparted training, we-still do not understand why resources cannot be saved by reorganizing the existing UN Information Centers especially in those areas where high rental costs absorb the larger part of the budget related to information activities. A sound policy to remedy this discrepancy will also go a long way to reduce the digital divide that so painfully characterizes the present world.

I thank you Mr. Chairman.