

Statement by Mr. Masood Khalid, Deputy Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations (23 April 2002)

Mr. Chairman,

This is the area where we want the United Nations to step in. This is the problem which we want the Department of Public Information (DPI) to focus its energies on. We recognize the importance of publicizing the work of the United Nations to the outside world. But we also feel that it is equally important that the United Nations through its relevant departments and agencies concentrate some of its energies and resources in bridging this digital divide.

Mr. Chairman,

We are grateful to the Secretary General for his report on the re-orientation of United Nations activities in the field of public information and communications. We are pleased to note that the DPI would continue and further improve its activities relating to developing countries and that the reorientation exercise would contribute to bridging the existing gap between the developing and the developed countries in the field of public information and communication. We hope that the comprehensive review of DPI would also be instrumental in rationalizing its activities, enhancing its efficiency and effectiveness through optimum use of available resources.

I would not be commenting on each and every proposal contained in the Secretary General's report, which I am sure would be debated by delegations in the course of this meeting. However, I would like to briefly touch upon the issue of United Nations Information Centers (UNIC).

The importance of UNICs in disseminating information relating to the UN can hardly be over-emphasized. These centers serve as UN window especially in developing countries for disseminating knowledge and information on global affairs. The UN Information Center in Islamabad is surely one of such centers. The range of activities and the quality of various publications brought out by this center is quite impressive. We hope that the center will keep up its good work.

We are aware that the major chunk of the budget of information centers is eaten up by the rentals and rent related expenses. However, we were a little surprised to learn that a large portion of these costs was being incurred in just five capitals. Therefore, we were intrigued by the desirability of maintaining these centers in high cost developed countries rather than use the resources by opening information centers in some developing countries where populations have little access to sources of information like internet than their counterparts in the developed world.

I am sure that delegations would consider this aspect of the report and other issues objectively and dispassionately so that we can increase the effectiveness and the capacity of the United Nations in carrying out the vision of the Secretary General outlined in his Millennium Report.

Thank you.