

Statements by Mr. Yuriy Khomenko, Representative of Ukraine (24 April 2002)

Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, my delegation would like to congratulate you and other members of the Bureau on your reelection. We are confident that under your chairmanship this Committee will achieve considerable success.

I would like to welcome Mr. Shashi Tharoor, the interim head of the Department of Public Information, and to express my delegation's appreciation for his able leadership of the Department towards enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of the DPI's activities.

My delegation welcomes the report of the Secretary-General on the reorientation of United Nations activities in the field of public information and communications, which in a comprehensive manner outlines the activities of the DPI towards strengthening the communication function within the United Nations, including in offices in the field, aimed at creating an informed understanding of the Organization's work and building broad-based global support for it.

Mr. Chairman,

There is no doubt that the ability to translate the full potential of information and communication technologies differs from country to country. It was widely acknowledged that ICT offer new opportunities for many developing countries but that, at the same time, greater efforts are needed to deal with the digital divide.

In this regard, we will be supporting every global effort to maintain activities in the areas of particular interest to developing countries and economies in transition.

We believe that DPI can play central role in drawing international attention to issues of global concern such as the problem of Chernobyl disaster that continues to affect on the lives of millions people in Ukraine, as well as in Belarus and the Russian Federation.

Taking this opportunity, I would like to express special gratitude to Mr. Shashi Tharoor and DPI staff, all missions of the UN Member-states for its assistance in organizing a number of events in the UN headquarters and beyond devoted to the anniversaries of the accident. And we sincerely believe that DPI will continue its activities to provide the objective information on the dimension of the Chernobyl disaster.

In the context of the reorientation of UN activities in the field of public information and communications, the Ukrainian delegation would like to commend the Department for its continuing efforts to update the United Nations web site and make it more informative, functional and visually attractive. One of the successful examples in this regard is the recently redesigned UN News Centre, which serves as an excellent source of news on the latest developments around the United Nations system as well as a gateway to a wide array of links to in-depth resources related to news of the day. In this era of instant communication, it is

hard to underestimate the importance for the UN image of online availability of the news in easily accessible and user-friendly format.

The recently launched e-mail news service is also a welcome addition and is certainly a feature that can help journalists, researchers, the public at large and a variety of other audiences, to get quick and easy access to the latest news from and about the United Nations. By directly reaching journalists and other disseminators, it could be viewed as an important step towards bridging the digital divide and helping to bring the latest news about the UN to the public in the countries where Internet is not yet widely available.

In this regard, we would like to note that existence of such a well-designed and informative site in all official languages would greatly enhance the Department's ability to disseminate news about the Organization. We realize, as the Secretary-General notes in his reports and as Mr. Tharoor told us in his statements, that the Department is very limited by the existing resources and continuing mandates. Nevertheless, we believe it is a direction the Department should consider as it reviews and reorients its activities.

In closing, I would like to again commend Mr. Shashi Tharoor for their able management and to thank the staff of DPI for their hard work. I sincerely pledge Ukraine support for the Department's efforts aimed at re-orienting its activities for the benefit of all.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.