

Statement by the Delegation of Brazil to the United Nations (30 April 2003)

Mr. Chairman,

I have the honor to address the Committee on Information at its 25th Session on behalf of the CPLP, the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries. First of all, let me congratulate you on your election, as well as the other members of the Bureau, and affirm the willingness of our Community to contribute to an effective meeting that may consolidate and further guide the ongoing process of reform of the United Nations on the domain of information and communication.

We would also like to extend our appreciation to the Secretary-General for the submission of comprehensive reports that will serve as the basis of our work during this session and in the months ahead.

We share with several previous speakers the firm belief that recent developments in the world scene reinforce the perception of the unique role of the United Nations in matters related to international peace and security and the promotion of development. The Department of Public Information (DPI) can offer a crucial contribution both in raising awareness to the UN broad range of day-to-day activities and also in keeping up with increased demand for real time information in strenuous situations, such as those resulting from armed conflict and humanitarian relief.

But most of all, the reform agenda that has been embraced by Member States in the last years must work in tandem with a renewed perception of society around the world as for the role of the United Nations in ensuring peace and development. And the Department of Public Information is the connection between our internal efforts and the external accountability of this institution. In saying so I would like to welcome the steps taken by the DPI staff, under the firm leadership of Mr. Shashi Tharoor, in streamlining and increasing efficiency of its activities, in line with the recommendations of General Assembly resolution A/57/300. Notwithstanding, the restructuring process will proceed and we will work together with the DPI and our partners at the Committee on Information to ensure that the envisaged outcomes will be achieved.

Mr. Chairman,

Since the last decade the United Nations has been devoting many efforts to avoid duplication of products and programs and ensure cost-effectiveness in its activities. Our task is made more difficult inasmuch as it requires striking the right balance between quantitative and qualitative considerations. In this context, the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries attaches great importance to the upkeep of an adequate and efficient structure in the DPI dedicated to disseminate information in our national language.

The Portuguese Speaking Community spreads over the five continents and has particularly benefited from international radio broadcasting in coming into contact with news from the United Nations. The report of the Secretary-General "on the implementation of the pilot project on the development of an international radio broadcasting capacity for the United

Nations" has revealed the results of a survey carried out with partner stations, in the six official languages and Portuguese. The survey breakdown refers to more than 27 million listeners to daily five-minute news bulletins in Portuguese. And these are conservative figures because they do not take affiliated stations and other broadcasters as satellite and short wave into account.

Given its universal reach and cost-effectiveness, radio remains one of the most powerful means of communicating messages of the United Nations to diverse cultures in countries at all stages of development. We would like to take this opportunity to commend the efficiency and dedication of the staff that is in charge of radio broadcasting in Portuguese at the United Nations' Radio. Even being a small staff they were capable of producing significant extra coverage during the war in Iraq. We would also like to stress the importance of maintaining Portuguese services in the regional hub to be created in Europe, for they constitute an established source of information for European and African Portuguese speaking countries.

Mr. Chairman,

While the CPLP considers the increasing use of information technology in the dissemination of information by the DPI of crucial importance, we note with concern the digital gap that prevent millions of people in the poorest countries from accessing information. Thus, we are looking forward to the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society to be held next December as a means of boosting access to information and knowledge in the developing world.

In conclusion, let me reiterate the support of the CPLP for the ongoing process of reforms as a means to both streamlining resources and ensuring greater efficiency in communicating United Nations' activities to greater audiences around the globe.

Thank you.