

**Statement by H.E. Mr. Mehdi Mollahosseini, Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations (29 April 2003)**

Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, allow me to extend my delegation's sincere congratulations to you and other members of the bureau on your election to preside over the 25th Session of the Committee on Information. I am confident that under your able leadership our deliberations will lead to successful conclusions. I would like to take this opportunity to assure you of my delegation's full support in your important task and responsibilities that lie ahead.

I would also like to extend our thanks to Mr. Shashi Tharoor, the Under Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information for the tireless efforts he is undertaking and for his lucid and comprehensive presentation to the Committee. We are also grateful to the Secretary-General and DPI for the important reports placed before us.

Mr. Chairman,

Vision and proposals of the Secretary-General to improve the effective and targeted delivery of public information activities, including the restructuring of the Department of Public Information are welcomed by the General Assembly resolution A/Res/ 57/300. Today, while my delegation associates itself to the statement made by the distinguished Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Morocco on behalf of the Group of 77&China, with reference to the report A/AC.198/2003/2, I wish to raise some of the issues which are more important to my delegation.

1. We firmly believe in the central role of the United Nations in today's world. We therefore, wish to underline the importance of a strong DPI as the voice of the Organization to the world so as to provide timely information to the public on tasks and responsibilities of the United Nations and its roles and achievements. Moreover, and in particular, in present situation of the world, the DPI should intensify its campaign for promoting the principles and proposes of the United Nations and multilateralism. Here I would like to emphasize that the recent developments in international political affairs once again revealed that in today's world more than ever peoples are looking for a source of accurate, impartial, comprehensive and timely information. In our opinion, this is the reason that the world today more than before looks towards the United United Nations as a unique source of reliable information and UN web site records millions of accesses per day.
2. We continue to support the Secretary-General's vision and proposals for reorientation of the United Nations activities in the field of public information and restructuring of the DPI. At the same time we would like to reaffirm the key role of the Committee on Information in guiding the process of restructuring and repositioning of the Department of Public Information. Maintaining and improving the activities of the DPI in the areas of the special interest to developing countries is very important for us as a developing country.

3. We follow with special interest the Secretary-General's proposal on restructuring and rationalizing the network of information centers around regional hubs, starting with the creation of a Western European hub. We fully agree that in high-cost developed countries whose public have greater access to a wide range of sources of information there is no need to maintain UNICs. Therefore, in the case of developed countries the proposed United Nations regional information hub and redeployment of freed resources of UN centers to the areas of higher priority, including centers in developing countries, is considered as a very positive initiative. However, applying this initiative to developing countries demands more prudent and flexible approach.

Although we see great deal of merits in guidelines and criteria for the regionalization of the United Nations Information Centers in developing countries as indicated in annex I of the report A/AC.198/2003/2, but in our view complexity of situation in developing countries regions, the need for direct access by their public to the United Nations Information Centers due to the lack of indirect facilities in many developing countries and significant role of Information Centers in coordinating of training and educational activities in these countries, are some of the elements which require a very flexible approach in their case.

4. We appreciate extensive efforts of the DPI on the continued development and enrichment of the United Nations web site in the six official languages. We believe it is also important that in some of the developing countries in which none of the official languages of the United Nations are considered as an official language, the United Nations Information Centers expand their activities in developing of their own web pages in local languages.
5. We welcome the proposals to improve management of the United Nations libraries, comprehensive plan for integration of the United Nations library services at various locations and improving electronic access to the United Nations collections. The consultation with Member States, host countries and relevant organizations makes the process of reform in those areas more successful.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, I wish to join the others in underlining the importance of commemoration of the World Press Freedom Day on 2 May. In recent weeks a number of journalists lost their lives in the war in Iraq. We condemn violation against journalists and pay tribute to those who lost their lives or were injured in the line of duty. We also expect that in present circumstances of the Middle East, the DPI increases dissemination of information on the question of Palestine and the facts related to suffering of the Palestinian people.

Thank you very much Mr. Chairman.