

Statement by H.E. Mrs. Madina B. Jarbussynova, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Kazakhstan to the United Nations (30 April 2003)

Mr. Chairman,

I would like to congratulate you on your election as the Chairman of the 25th session of the Committee on Information. We are confident that this session under your able stewardship will have positive outcome. Our congratulation also goes to the newly elected members of the Bureau.

Kazakhstan welcomes Saudi Arabia as a new member of the Committee on Information and supports the applications of Switzerland, Suriname and St. Vincent and the Grenadines for their membership in the Committee. My delegation would also like to express its sincere gratitude to Ambassador Milos Alcalay, Permanent Representative of Venezuela, for having successfully presided over the deliberations of the 24th session of the Committee.

I thank Shashi Tharoor, Under-Secretary-General, for his comprehensive presentation of the strategy of the Department of Public Information for the years to come. Further improvement of the United Nations activities in the sphere of information is an integral part of the whole reform package and the tireless efforts of Shashi Tharoor to strengthen the Department are highly commendable. Under his leadership the key department is entering its new phase to fulfill the substantive purposes of the United Nations by strategically communicating the activities and concerns of the Organization.

We share the view of the Secretary-General that reform is necessary to ensure that the Organization possesses the most effective communications mechanisms to meet the global challenges facing the international community. We note the significant progress that has been made in repositioning the Department of Public Information to meet the Organization's communications challenges. The Department continues to play a central coordinating role in conveying a consistent message on the United Nations role in maintaining international peace and security and promoting social and economic development.

Before the present session are the documents on the various aspects of work of the Department of Public Information, including reports on the implementation of the pilot radio project, the modernization and integrated management of United Nations libraries, and programmatic aspects of the 2004-2005 proposed programme budget.

My delegation, having considered the reports on the main aspects of the United Nations activities in the sphere of information, would like to make a few comments. Undoubtedly, the main focus of the Committee's deliberation centers on the report on the reorientation of the Organization's public information and communication activities, which sets out the next phase of the reform of the DPI. The document outlines the measures being undertaken by the Department to implement the objectives contained in the report of the Secretary-General on strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change. It confirms the increasing role of the Department of Public Information in a challenging, efficiency-oriented environment

since the United Nations is repositioning itself for even greater relevance as an indispensable global institution.

We are encouraged by the new organizational structure of the Department. With the creation of the Strategic Communications Division, News and Media Division and Outreach Division the DPI has now all necessary instruments to carry out its significant mandate. We believe that a renewed and restructured Department of Public Information, being the voice of the global Organization, will contribute to bridging the existing gap between the developed and developing countries.

My delegation notes with great satisfaction the intension of the Department to further focus on poverty eradication, conflict prevention, human rights, HIV/AIDS pandemic, education, international terrorism and other social issues. This is consistent with the priorities of the national governments to build a better future for their people.

Regarding the United Nations information centres we think that their activities deserve serious consideration, as well as a proposal to regionalize the information centers. The Secretary-General considers it as an important measure in enhancing the efficiency of the Department. We believe that the envisaged restructuring must be undertaken on step-by-step approach and in consultation with the countries concerned.

Another important objective entrusted to the Department of Public Information is to ensure the full, equitable treatment of all the official languages. We share the view expressed by other delegations that the Department has made a significant progress in this respect. My delegation commends innovative approach of the DPI towards achieving the goal of multilingualism within the existing resources and supports the plan of the Department to expand the United Nations News Centre into all official languages. The News Centre is the most popular UN site and it serves as a gateway to other information sources system-wide.

However, we think that the Department of Public Information must continue its efforts in enhancing equality among the official languages on the United Nations website. Further development of the web site is consistent with the common strategy on reorientation of the United Nations in the field of public information and communications. We also agree that the responsibility for achieving greater language parity on the website must not fall to the DPI alone.

Radio broadcasting is the most cost-effective and far-reaching traditional means of communications. Radio remains a vital link between the United Nations and people of the world as millions of people listen to the United Nations radio every day. It is extremely important to continue this international broadcasting capacity to generate understanding about the United Nations and all the priority issues on the agenda of the international community.

We share the concern expressed by other delegations that the process of reform in the Department of Public Information must go on but it must not be conducted at the expense of

the programmes related to poverty eradication, dialogue among civilizations and cultures, sustainable development and needs of the developing countries.

Mr. Chairman,

Resolution 56/64 entitled "Questions relating to information" encourages the Department of Public Information, in cooperation with relevant organizations and bodies of the UN system, to take appropriate measures to enhance world public awareness of the problems and needs of the Semipalatinsk region, which has been affected by nuclear tests. As the problem of Semipalatinsk remains to be a matter of great concern to the Government of Kazakhstan for its consequences with regard to life and health of the people living in this area, we would kindly request the Committee to include this issue in a resolution to be adopted by the present session of the Committee on Information.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.