

## **Statement by the Delegation of the Republic of Korea (1 May 2003)**

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation would like to join previous speakers in congratulating you upon your election. We would also like to commend the efforts of Mr. Shashi Tharoor, Under-Secretary-General for Communication and Information, and his team to overcome the challenges unfolding in the information and communication sector.

Mr. Chairman

The rapid technological advances made in the new millennium are profoundly impacting the entire global society. Today, the digital revolution generates a massive flow of information almost instantaneously at the click of a mouse. It has changed our lifestyle dramatically and also, the way in which multilateral organizations like the United Nations works. Given that the use of information can be materialized to promote great wealth and prosperity, we must endeavor to ensure that its positive effects reach the whole international community. In realizing this objective, greater efforts should be exerted to promoting partnerships between developed and developing nations.

For its part, the Republic of Korea is committed to taking a proactive role in the use of information and communication technologies. We are keen to share our experiences with developing countries. The Government of the Republic of Korea has focused its cooperation policy on bridging the digital divide and supporting developing countries in achieving a more sustainable information society. In 2002, the Korean Government has trained more than four hundred individuals from developing nations in the areas of IT, Information Policy and E-business. We have also taken initiatives to establish regional information and telecommunication centers and to extend ICT projects for Asian and African nations. The Korean Government aims to further develop IT partnerships with developing countries.

The enormity of the tasks posed in bridging the digital divide calls for the United Nations to play a significant role. In this regard, my delegation fully supports the endeavors of the Secretary-General in bridging the digital divide through the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) to be held in Geneva, in December of this year. My delegation is certain that in the coming years, the question of information will become one of the main themes in international fora, considering its potential benefits to promote development for all mankind. In that respect, the convening of the WSIS is both appropriate and timely.

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation has taken note of the reports submitted by the Secretary-General, which clarify the goals of the DPI and suggest some steps to be taken for further strengthening the activities of the Department. We believe that these reports will certainly serve as useful input to our debate. Now my delegation would like to highlight a few areas, which we believe deserve further attention.

First, we recognize that in recent years, the DPI has exerted all efforts to re-orient its activities and has published several reports on them. My delegation is pleased to note that the DPI has revised its operating models and has established its organizational structure based on the recommendations in the reports. Keeping in mind that reform is a process, not an event, the DPI should continuously adapt itself in meeting the new challenges. In my delegation's view, it is essential to carry out these re-orientation and reform endeavors with efficiency, effectiveness and transparency, but without losing sight of the budgetary aspects. Therefore, we are strongly supportive of the re-evaluation of activities lacking urgency so that the resources can be diverted to other high priority areas. My delegation also wishes to underline the central role of the Committee on Information in the ongoing restructuring and reorientation process of the DPI's activities. This requires the active participation of Member States at all stages.

Second, we fully recognize that it is desirable to maintain the parity in the use of the six official UN languages in the work of the DPI. However, we can not disregard the increased operational costs and efficiency matters accompanied by the additional multilingual services. In light of this consideration, we believe that it is necessary for the DPI to explore various initiatives and other alternatives which can be implemented within the parameters of its limited resources. My delegation has taken note that Mr. Shashi Tharoor has been appointed recently as the Coordinator for multilingualism and we remain fully confident in his abilities to play a creative and innovative role.

Third, we have taken note of the Secretary-General's report that the DPI is seeking actively to expand partnerships with the private media. My delegation believes that the DPI should explore ways of establishing and broadening cooperative partnerships with large commercial sector TV networks to produce television programmes and broadcast them to the public. Indeed, the potential offered by audio-visual medium is immense in reaching vast segments of society. Through those partnerships, the DPI could contribute to keeping the world community better informed of the United Nation's role and its activities. My delegation also encourages the DPI to enhance its existing partnerships with the private radio sector.

Fourth, my delegation fully supports the proposal to rationalize the network of information centers around regional hubs. We are pleased that the creation of a Western European hub is being discussed and detailed guidelines and criteria for its reorganization have been proposed. In this regard, it is recommended that in light of budgetary constraints, the DPI should find the best effective method to reduce the costs of management of regional hubs in close consultations with respective host countries. Limited resources could be reallocated to upgrade and improve the UN web site. In our view, the most efficient way to maximize the dissemination of information about activities of the Organization is to develop a user-friendly UN Website.

Fifth, considering the paramount importance of the United Nations peacekeeping operations, we join other countries in reaffirming support for closer coordination between the DPI and the respective missions in the field and at headquarters. It is important that a more proactive and professional approach is developed both within and between the DPI and the DPKO, in order

to successfully achieve the mandate of peacekeeping operations, as well as to reduce areas of duplication and fragmentation of functions. My delegation also wishes to underline the need for the DPI to apprise Member States of the progress made so far, including the modalities of cooperation and relevant structural re-arrangement and its future plans for increased coordination with the DPKO.

In concluding, Mr. Chairman, we encourage the DPI to continue its efforts for reform, revitalization and renewal under the forward-looking leadership of Mr. Shashi Tharoor. My delegation will work with other Member States to ensure that innovative ideas are translated into concrete action in the field of public information activities of the United Nations. No doubt, as the pace of information quickens, the role of the Committee on Information will become a crucial one in expanding the popular appeal of the United Nations and its vital role in the international arena.

Thank you.