

Statement by H.E. Mr. Baatar Choisureen, Permanent Representative of Mongolia to the United Nations (29 April 2003)

Mr. Chairman,

Allow me to join the previous speakers in extending the warm congratulations of my delegation for your well-deserved election as the Chairman of the 25th session of the Committee on Information. I would also like to express my delegation's congratulations to the other members of the Bureau. My delegation expresses its thanks to the outgoing Chairman of Committee Ambassador Milos Alcalay of Venezuela for the effective manner in which he presided over the deliberations of the Committee, over the past two years, at a time when the DPI has been undergoing through a far-reaching reorientation of its work program. My delegation is specially grateful to Mr. Shashi Tharoor, Under-Secretary General for Communications and Public Information for its comprehensive and as usually, eloquent and thought provoking presentation on the work done and strategies for its future development.

Mr. Chairman,

The 25th meeting of the Committee on Information is being held at a time of serious challenges for the United Nations. The restructuring and reform of the Department of Public Information, increasing its reach and effectiveness will be part and parcel of the efforts of the Member States to meet these challenges. My delegation believes that the new structure of the Department as well as the new operating concept for the United Nations information centers around regional hubs will allow the redeployment of freed resources to areas of high priorities such as multilingualism on the United Nations Web site, and the systematic evaluation of the impact of its activities. Thus they would constitute a timely response to the challenges in the fields of communications and public information. We can say that the new structure of the DPI had already been put in test by the latest events in Iraq and the lessons learnt should be taken into account in the continuing process of improvement of the United Nations communications and public information activities.

My delegation shares the view of the outgoing chairman that the COI and the DPI can be not only be the voice of this global organization to the peoples of world "but also be a conduit to the Organization of the views of peoples from all regions of the world".

Mr. Chairman,

While fully subscribing to the statement made by the distinguished Ambassador of the kingdom of Morocco on behalf of the group of 77 and China at the opening meeting of the Committee, I would like to make a few brief comments to further elaborate the national position of my delegation.

Mongolian delegation welcomes the new organizational structure of the DPI. The new Strategic Communications Division, News and Media Division and Outreach Division are well designed for carrying out the tasks entrusted to the DPI by the General Assembly. And its

new mission statement is solidly based on the priorities set forth in the Millennium Declaration.

My delegation attaches special importance to the fact that under the Department's new structure, the network of information centers, services and information components of UN offices had been made an integral part of the Strategic Communications Division. In our view this would be an important step towards "bringing the UN closer to the people" by reaching out civil society, academic community and even individuals. It is also essential for coordination and streamlining of the information activities of the UN system, and its specialized agencies.

We believe that the special needs of the developing countries should be kept in mind in implementation of restructuring of the United Nations information centers and it should be implemented in close consultations with the concerned Member States.

Many developing countries lack the necessary infrastructure and resources in monetary terms and human resources to benefit from the rapid advance of information and communication technology. Until the ever increasing digital divide is addressed effectively, radio broadcasting still remains the most cost effective and universal means of communications popular in many developing countries. We, therefore, fully support the project on the development of international radio broadcasting capacity for the United Nations.

Where there is no UN Information center the information components of UN offices could play a pivotal role in providing and dissemination of information on UN activities. While we support the need for a strict observance of multilingualism, we should not lose sight of the fact that there are only 6 official languages of the United Nations. In many developing countries, where none of these languages are neither spoken nor popular only the elite and privileged have access to the United Nations and the UN Offices web sites in those countries. We are of the view that bridging this gap requires innovative steps on part of the information components of the UN Offices so that they have websites in local language and cooperate closely with the local media and civil society and win their active involvement. In my view a monthly briefing or a highlights of UN activities by the UN office through local media, TV or radio broadcast, in local language will be extremely useful in getting wider access to local community, thus facilitating to the honorable task that the voice of UN is heard in every corner of the world.

Before concluding, we would also like to commend the DPI for the timely issuance of the reports and the useful briefings for the delegations to the Committee session, which I am sure will facilitate the successful conclusion of our deliberations during this session of the COI.

I thank you.