

**Statement by H.E. Mrs. Liberata Mulamula, Chargée d'affaires, a.i. of the
Permanent Mission of the United Republic of Tanzania to the United Nations
(30 April 2003)**

Mr. Chairman,

Let me begin by expressing my personal delight in seeing you presiding over the work of our Committee with your usual charismatic humour and intellect. My delegation would like to assure you of its utmost cooperation and support in discharging your duties.

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation would like too at the outset to associate itself with the statement made on our behalf by the Chairman of the Group of 77 and China. He spoke for all of us in thanking the Under-Secretary General for Information and Communication, Mr. Shashi Tharoor, and his staff for the relentless efforts they have been making in the service of information and communication. The reports before us are a clear testimony of those efforts.

Mr. Chairman,

As others who have spoken before me stated, we are meeting at very trying times in the history of our Organization, at a time when the credibility of the UN has been put to test in its maintenance of international peace and security. Tanzania believes that this is the time when the communication strategies being devised by the DPI should come into actual play aimed at countering all the propaganda and misinformation about the role of the UN and its credibility. Others have referred to the recent negative trends in international relations as a "deficit of faith" in multilateral diplomacy. These fears can be allayed through effective communication of UN best practices across the globe and by underlining the importance of multilateralism as the best mechanism for managing relations between states.

We are pleased to take note of the on-going review of the activities and repositioning of the Department of Information (DPI) in order to meet the challenges of the time. We support the initiatives aimed at ensuring greater efficiency and effectiveness of the DPI in recognition of the fact that communication function is not static. "It is a dynamic and interactive process. (President Mkapa). The Department has to be responsive to the changing needs of the times but without detracting from the mandate and priorities as set out by the Committee and the General Assembly in particular.

As we consider the newly created Strategic Communications Division and Outreach Division, the citizens of the world are eager to hear what is being done by the UN that impacts on their lives and not what is being planned. For the poor countries the overarching demand is eradication of poverty and all its ills. Africa being the poorest of the world's continents, we believe, deserves special attention. Africa has put before the international community its all-inclusive programme in the name of New Partnership for Africa's Development. We expect the Africa section in DPI to use this programme that has been unanimously adopted by the UN General Assembly as the platform in reaching out the intended audiences and mobilizing

international support for its implementation. In other words the communication content on Africa should draw from the priority issues as outlined in NEPAD.

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation could not hide its excitement during the informal briefing by DPI staff when they broadcasted as a demo the live radio programme in Kiswahili. Millions of Tanzanians tune to their radios to hear the weekly radio UN programme broadcasted from New York in Kiswahili. This gives them a sense of belonging as part of the UN family of nations.

It is a truism that despite the advances in information technology in today's world, the use of radio still remains the most effective means of communication in reaching a wide audience in most of the developing countries and more so the least developing countries like Tanzania. It is in this regard that we strongly endorse the Secretary' General's proposal that the pilot radio project be made an integral part of the Department's activities. My delegation would however wished to see a more detailed proposed programme budget for continuation of the radiobroadcasting project. Here we have particularly in mind our appeal for provision of adequate resources both financial and human commensurate with the task at hand in broadcasting this particular radio programme that has been hailed as one of the success stories of the Department. Ironically the programme is currently manned single handedly by a producer who is expected to deliver the radio broadcast in a timely manner while ensuring quality of content. We commend him for the good job despite the constraints.

Mr. Chairman,

In addition my delegation would like to propose inclusion of Kiswahili among the key languages of the UN News Centre. We believe this request would not add substantially to the cost of production of the news but would guarantee dissemination of UN message to more than 70 million listeners across Africa continent and beyond. given the track record of Kiswahili radio programme cited above. It is our hope that the proposed programme budget would take into consideration this ardent need.

Mr. Chairman,

A communication strategy must have a systematic feed back mechanism. This would not only confirm that the intended message has been effectively communicated to the targeted audiences but also ensure that the world public opinion forms an important input into the policy formulation, evaluation and implementation process. It is in this regard that we welcome the proposals for enhancing the role of Information Centers as they are the eyes, ears and voices of the organization in the field. My delegation has studied the report on the review of the structure and operations of these Centers. There are still issues to be adequately addressed in terms of allocation of resources and managerial approach. We do not believe in a "one size fits all" approach. As rightly pointed by the Office of Internal Oversight Services, the Information Centres in developing countries require a different managerial approach. There has to be, for example, a criteria established to allow National Information Officers to serve as the Heads of the Centers, not only as a cost-cutting measure,

but also to ensure effective communication with the nationals in a language they understand. We also agree with the view that the allocation of resources should take into account the size of the country and population for adequate coverage. We share the view expressed by many that the idea of regional hubs should take into account the specifics of countries in the region. Certainly this concept cannot be adequately applied for countries with the underdeveloped communication system and infrastructure without undermining the objectives of the Committee and mandate of the Department and implementing agencies. Hence a need for approaching this proposal on a case-by-case basis.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, my delegation would like to emphasize the need for capacity building in communication. We need to look beyond the dissemination functions of the Department of Information and focus on the broader issues of communication. These include addressing the ways and means of bridging the digital divide between the rich and the poor, between the developed and developing world, and between the high-income and low-income countries for the betterment of our societies and people. Our people expect the United Nations to address these challenges in a coordinated and coherent manner. It is in this connection that Tanzania has taken an active interest in the preparation for the World Summits on Information Society scheduled to take place in Geneva and Tunis in December 2003 and 2005 respectively. The Committee's input and the Department's active role in the preparatory process, leading to the convening of these Summits cannot be over-emphasized.

I thank you.