

Statement by the Representative of Indonesia (28 April 2004)

Mr. Chairman,

Let me begin by expressing my delegation's appreciation to you and the members of the Bureau. We are confident that under your able guidance, our deliberations will lead to substantive results. My delegation wishes to assure you and the other members of the Bureau of its support and cooperation in the discharge of your duties.

We take this opportunity to convey our gratitude to Mr. Shashi Tharoor, the Under-Secretary General for Communication and Public Information for his comprehensive statement and his efforts in leading the Department to respond to the dynamic changes unfolding in the information and communication sector.

My delegation would also like to associate itself with the statement delivered by H.E. Ambassador Nassir Abdulazis Al-Nasser, the Permanent Representative of Qatar speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. Allow me therefore to avail myself of this opportunity to make a few brief remarks on some issues of relevance to my delegation.

Mr. Chairman,

First of all, we would like to commend the major reform of the Department of Public Information's structure and operating method currently underway to improve the effective and targeted delivery of public information services. This move is a positive sign amidst the growing communication and information disparity existing between developed and developing countries. The consequence of that disparity continue to keep developing countries in a disadvantaged position, hindering the capability of their public, private and other media as well as individuals from disseminating information and communicating their views to ensure the diversity of information sources and their free access to information.

Without a doubt the question of regionalization will take up a great portion of the deliberations during this 26th Session. Although we concur with the need to increase efficiency and coherence of the functioning of the United Nation Information Centers/UNICs and welcome the inauguration of a regional hub in Brussels for the region of Europe last January, we believe that the case of developing countries should be viewed from a different perspective, considering the social and cultural diversities among countries in each region and the communication and information technologies gaps and infrastructure gaps between developing and developed countries. To this end, more in depth consideration and study must be done before embarking on the next stage of the regionalization programme. In our view, for the moment at least, the outreach activities of the UNICs is the more appropriate model and existing UNICs should therefore be strengthened.

We also regard as important the notion that the works of the General Assembly must not be confined to the United Nations itself but must reach all stakeholders in order to stimulate their participation and encourage their inputs on decisions taken. The Department of Public Information's mission is to help fulfill the substantive purposes of the United Nations by

strategically communicating its activities and concerns in such a way to achieve the greatest public impact. In this regard, we welcome the recommendation to publicize the work and decisions of the GA. Toward this end, we encourage the DPI to establish a working relationship with the office of the President of the General Assembly. We should, for instance be made more aware that the issues currently before the United Nations are leading it to put too much emphasis on 'hard threats' - such as acts of terrorism or dangers posed by weapons of mass destruction," while the 'soft threats,' such as extreme poverty and hunger, endemic or infectious disease, or environmental degradation that afflict millions of people, rarely make the headlines.

We are encouraged by the result of the World Summit on the Information Society in Geneva in December 2003 and anticipate the follow up conference in Tunis 2005. Bridging the communication and digital divide between the developing and the developed countries is of significant interest to my delegation because it is obvious that those countries that lack access to information cannot reap the benefits of globalization

Thank You Mr. Chairman.