

**Statement by Mr. Hossein Maleki, Counselor, Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations (27 April 2004)**

Mr. Chairman,

On behalf of the delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran, let me begin with congratulating you and the other members of the bureau, on guiding this Committee since last year. I am confident that your ability and wisdom in leading the Committee during the current session will contribute to the success of the work and leads to satisfactory results. I would also like to take this opportunity to express my delegation's gratitude to Mr. Shashi Tharoor, Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information, for presenting a comprehensive report of the Secretary-General yesterday and for his efforts in leading the Department of Public Information towards more efficiency, accountability and more collaboration with member states. I commend the Department of Public Information for the timely presentation of its reports to the Committee on Information which they have provided.

I would also like to associate myself with the statement made by the distinguished Permanent Representative of Qatar on behalf of G77 and China which expressed the main views and concerns of the group.

Mr. Chairman,

As contained in the Secretary General's report (A/AC.198/2004/2), the Department of Public Information's mission is to help fulfill the substantive purposes of the United Nations by strategically communicating the activities and concerns of the Organization to achieve the greatest public impact. The image of the United Nations to the public is projected by the Department of Public Information (DPI). Therefore DPI should demonstrate the activities, as well as, the difficulties and the challenges the United Nations facing with.

The role of the Department of Public Information in dissemination of information on issues of direct impact on human life is of great importance. Information relating to issues such as international and regional peace and security, terrorism, human rights, poverty, drug trafficking, environment and development are imperative to disseminate all over the world in order to enable the peoples of all societies to be prepared and be aware of the situations they face. The role of the DPI in today's monopolized world of media is extremely difficult and crucial in bringing the true picture of the facts and realities to the attention of the people worldwide, especially at time when the dissemination of a partial and biased picture of world's events has become a commonplace practice. Therefore, we believe that United Nations media section should be more strengthened for discharging its duties in the world dominated by the known mass media.

In the same context, we are of the view that not only the DPI but also its affiliated bodies outside the UN HQ including the United Nations Information Centers (UNICs) can and should play a significant role in dissemination of information, in promoting public awareness and mobilizing support for the work of the United Nations. We hope that the restructured and strengthened DPI will be able to elaborate coherent communication strategies to that effect.

Given that the United Nations is the only organ that is able to bring the people together to express their views and negotiate their common concerns, we cannot ignore the important role that the DPI plays in this regard. We are here to strengthen this role and to do our utmost in helping the DPI to promote its activities in a meaningful manner and continue to prepare a good guideline for its future in order to serve all people of the world in the best way possible.

Mr. Chairman,

The progress made on implementation of the regionalization initiative in Western Europe and in other high-cost developed countries is welcomed. However, due to the differences and dissimilarities between the developed and developing world, the proposed strategy and modalities for the implementation of that initiative in developing parts of the world seems to be inappropriate and inapplicable. The rationalization of the information centers should not negatively affect the flow of information into and within developing countries which are mostly, among other things, suffering from the lack of adequate and suitable technological infrastructures. We can not easily draw an analogy between the developed and developing world especially in the area of Information Technology. In other words, and among other factors, the existing differences in information technology and communications should be duly taken into account in rationalization and regionalization process. As clearly referred to by Mr. Tharoor, in his presentation of yesterday, it is obvious that the main engine for rationalizing the network of United Nations information centres around regional hubs is lack of financial resources. We believe that financial shortcomings can not and should not justify the rationalization aiming at closing the information centers in developing countries. We believe that the rationalization process should lead into freeing the resources in the high-cost developed countries and redeploying them in the developing states. Moreover, adequate resources should be allocated for the effective functioning and strengthening of the UNICs in developing countries.

Mr. Chairman,

As pointed out by other delegations, there are important issues that should be touched upon by the DPI in its daily activities. There are also other matters with global nature that are worth to be under the constant attention of the DPI such as dialogue among civilizations that I see no need to highlight its importance in this session. The Department of Public Information can certainly play more active role in this regard. While appreciating the creation of a United Nations web site on dialogue among civilizations, the delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran believes that DPI should provide necessary support for dissemination of information pertaining to this issue of high magnitude and take appropriate steps in fostering the culture of dialogue among nations via all mass media such as internet, print, radio and television.

In concluding, Mr. Chairman, I would like to assure you of our full cooperation with you and other members to achieve the goals set for this session of the Committee on Information.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.