

Statement by Mr. Sanga Panggabean, Representative of the Republic of Indonesia (20 April 2005)

Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, my delegation would like congratulate you (Ambassador Ioan Motoc) on your (his) election to the Chairmanship of this session of the Committee on Information. I would also like to thank the Secretary General for his reports, and the Under-Secretary General for Communication and Public Information, Mr. Shashi Tharoor, for his comprehensive presentation on the work being carried out by the Department of Public Information/DPI, as well as his insightful interactive session. Before I continue, let me state that my delegation fully associates itself with the statement delivered by the distinguished delegate of Jamaica on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Mr. Chairman,

In the rapidly changing global information environment, DPI has produced a new strategic orientation derived from its 2002 reforms proposal. This includes the introduction of a new mission statement, a new operating model and a new organizational structure. My delegation acknowledges and appreciates the improving of delivery of public information services such as the radio and website, which have become the premiere tool for reaching target audiences such as the media, non-governmental organizations and the academia.

Beyond this, however, the gap in the information and communication technologies between the developed and the developing countries has continued to widen, and vast segments of the population in developing countries are not benefiting from the present information and technology revolution. This has impaired the ability of many societies to become knowledgeable about, or involved in, the work of the UN.

The developments in the information and communication technology revolution open vast new opportunities for economic growth and social development and can play an important role in the eradication of poverty in developing countries. Communication is a powerful tool in bringing people and perceptions together, and for moving them forward. The disparity in the availability of these new technologies, therefore, could lead to the further widening of disparities between and within countries.

DPI has an indispensable role in managing the public image of the United Nations. However, its work in this area should be carried out in all Member States. It is in this context that my delegation is in agreement with the findings in the Report on the "Further rationalization of the network of United Nations information Centers/UNICs" that the geopolitical and characteristics complexity of regional groupings outside the developed countries are not conducive to the application of regionalization. Indeed, my delegation feels that UNICs are the most appropriate medium for promoting public awareness and mobilizing support for the work of the United Nations at the local level, bearing in mind that information in local languages has the strongest impact on the local population. Indonesia is also deeply concerned by the persistence of insufficient resources which negatively affects the UNICs.

On the positive side, we are encouraged that DPI has undertaken pro-active outreach efforts aimed at showing the media and the public at large the many ways in which the organization is responding to global challenges on a daily basis. As a tsunami-affected country, my delegation is highly grateful for the relevance and the effectiveness that the UN demonstrated following the tsunami tragedy, when it responded swiftly to coordinate relief efforts and to provide a global forum for consensus regarding longer-term measures. DPI played a vital part in ensuring regular and timely multimedia coverage of the tragedy, thereby helping to awaken international humanitarian consciousness of the disaster, and mobilize recovery effort in the countries affected by the tragedy.

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation agrees with the notion that people around the world seek a stronger United Nations, one that is capable of living up to the expectations they have of it. To that extent, we urge the international community to endeavor to make DPI a voice that provides accurate, impartial, comprehensive and timely information to Member States and the wider community on the tasks and responsibilities of the United Nations.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.