

**Statement by Mr. Bahk Sahng-Hoon, Representative of the Republic of Korea  
(19 April 2005)**

Mr. Chairman,

Let me begin by expressing my warmest congratulations to you on your assumption of the chairmanship of the 27th session of the Committee on Information. My delegation is confident that under your able stewardship this Committee will have constructive deliberations in the coming days. My delegation's congratulations also go to the other members of the Bureau.

Mr. Chairman,

As the United Nations continually faces new challenges in a rapidly changing international environment today, it is even more important than ever that Member States and their citizens understand what the Organization is doing to meet these challenges. The United Nations deserves a higher visibility and stronger support from its Member States and the general public all around the world. The importance of the Department of Public Information (DPI) as a public voice of the United Nations in spreading that awareness cannot be overemphasized in this regard.

The Republic of Korea attaches great importance to the work of the DPI. We welcome and support the DPI's efforts to fulfil its mission better through reorientation, based upon the comprehensive review of its management and operations. We are pleased to note that, following the reorientation, the DPI adopted a new strategic communications approach that concentrates on key messages, acquired new communications tools, and widened its network of communications partners. We call upon the DPI to continue making these types of improvements, which will bring the United Nations closer to peoples of the world.

We commend DPI's active outreach efforts aimed at showing the media and the general public how the UN is responding to global challenges and at building partnerships with NGOs, educators, students, representatives of the media and the private sector. As we will celebrate the 60th anniversary of the founding of the United Nations this year, my delegation encourages the DPI to strengthen further its outreach activities, highlighting the Organization's accomplishments over the past six decades. In promoting the outreach activities, we believe that even greater attention should be given to those whose native language is not one of the official UN languages. Considering the severe information gap between those countries whose native language happens to be one of the six official languages of the UN and the rest of the world, more efforts are called upon to address this issue.

Mr. Chairman,

The Republic of Korea supports the DPI's rationalization of the network of United Nations information centres (UNICs), as we believe that this would help focus the work of the information centres on priority thematic issues and concerns of particular relevance in each region.

While supporting the DPI's efforts, we are of the view that the rationalization should not automatically be understood as a reduction in the number of centres, but rather as an improvement to promote a more systematic and effective flow of information and more active outreach activities. The priorities of rationalization should be determined primarily on the basis of demand for the services provided by UNICs and the availability of alternative means of access to UN information services.

We remind this Committee that currently about one fourth of UN Member States are still outside of the scope of the DPI's field information capacity, and we hope that the rationalization of UNICs will proceed in such a way as to strengthen the Organization's information outreach to those Member States currently remaining outside of the scope.

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation commends the activities of the UN Communications Group. We recognize that the Group, since its establishment in January 2002, has played an indispensable role as a strong platform for UN communicators to pool their resources, share expertise, and undertake joint action.

In particular, we are pleased to note that the innovative "Top 10 Stories the World Should Hear More About" initiative, launched by the Under-Secretary-General Shashi Tharoor, has been quite useful, and encourage the Group to develop this initiative further. Moreover, my delegation commends the active work of the Task Force of the Communications Group, which includes arranging a public opinion survey conducted by Zogby International, and obtaining quality news footage on issues of current concern. We encourage the Group to continue to serve as a strong unifying tool for interagency coordination in this field.

Turning to the issue of parity among official UN languages on the UN website, my delegation believes that the supply of information should correspond to the demand. Resources, therefore, should be put towards improving more heavily accessed web pages rather than those less visited.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, my delegation reiterates its strong support for the central role that the DPI plays as the public voice of the United Nations in promoting awareness of the Organization's work on priority issues.

Thank you.