

## **Statement by the delegation of Sao Tome and Principe, on behalf of the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries (CPLP) (20 April 2005)**

Mr. Chairman,

I have the honor to address the Committee on Information at its 27th session on behalf of the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries, comprised of Angola, Brazil, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, Portugal, São Tomé and Príncipe and Timor-Leste.

At the outset, allow me to congratulate you on your election, as well as the other members of Bureau, and to assure you of our Community's readiness to work constructively with a view to improving the capacity of the United Nations in the field of public information and communications.

We would also like to extend our appreciation to the Secretary-General for the preparation of the reports that will serve as the basis of our work during this session and in the months ahead.

Mr. Chairman,

Our Community acknowledges the valuable work of the Department of Public Information in raising awareness of the broad range of UN endeavors, as well as in providing real time information in strenuous situations. In this sense, we consider the work of the DPI to be crucial for ensuring the external accountability of the UN and we welcome the efforts of its staff, under the leadership of Mr. Shashi Tharoor, towards increased efficiency.

In this context, the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries attaches great importance to the maintenance and, where possible, improvement of the structure in the DPI dedicated to the dissemination of information in Portuguese.

Within the context of rationalization, the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries takes note of the Secretary General's evaluation that with the resources available for the current biennium programme budget for the Department, it is impossible to create new regional hubs.

The existing RUSIC in Brussels has proved, so far, to be effective in disseminating UN information in Portuguese language as we were pleased to verify through the activities carried out since its creation.

Indeed, the Portuguese language desk has produced an outstanding volume of information in our idiom as indicated by the SG report on Continuing Reorientation of DPI's activities, document A/AC.198/2005/2. But the overall activities in this centre are targeted primarily to Portugal and Portuguese speaking communities in Europe.

Indeed, the closure of the UNIC in Lisbon left an information gap in the Portuguese Speaking Countries in Africa.

In this connection, we reiterate the request for the opening of an UN Regional Information Centre in Luanda, in accordance with the offer made by the Government of Angola, to address the special needs of the Portuguese Speaking African Countries.

We have taken note of the Secretary General's indication that, in the current biennium, resources are not available for opening and operating an additional information centre. Our understating is that such an evaluation does not exclude the possibility of allocating the necessary resources for the opening of Luanda's hub in the forthcoming programme budget for the biennium 2006/2007.

With regards to Brazil, we welcome the Secretary-General's evaluation of the "essential role" played by the Rio de Janeiro UNIC in reaching a variety of constituencies in the country and extending essential communications support to the remainder of the UN Brazilian country team. As we have pointed out in previous occasions, the Rio de Janeiro UNIC, currently the only Portuguese language UNIC, is a special case in Latin America, and deserves continued support.

A word should also be said about Timor-Leste. While its public information concerns are currently still met by the UN presence in that country, we should begin to envisage as of now the provision of UN information services in Portuguese language once the current United Nations Mission in Timor-Leste completes its mandate.

In all these cases, adequate arrangements for translation of reports into Portuguese should be provided.

Mr. Chairman,

Despite increasing technological progress, traditional means of communication, such as radio, remain effective and far-reaching media instruments, particularly in developing countries, where access to more advanced forms of communication is still far from satisfactory.

The Portuguese Speaking Communities, spread over five continents, comprising close to 250 million citizens, have greatly benefited from United Nations international radio broadcasting.

We are greatly appreciative of the work carried out by the Portuguese Language Unit. Despite scarce resources, the Unit currently provides programmes to over 20 radio networks in Latin America, Europe, Africa and Asia, comprising over 800 radio stations reaching close to 1700 cities.

Being this the only non-official language information service operating on a daily basis as official language radio Units do we believe that by incrementing staffing and resources the Portuguese language radio unit would be able to reach an even larger audience.

In conclusion, allow me to reiterate the support of our group for the reorientation process undertaken by the DPI, which we are certain to have increased efficiency, raised the quality and increased the flow of UN public information and communications, particularly for the

benefit of developing countries, so as to bridge the information gap between the developed and developing world.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.