

Statement by Ms. Grace Mujuma of the Permanent Mission of the United Republic of Tanzania to the United Nations (20 April 2005)

Mr. Chairman,

Let me begin by expressing my delegation's warm congratulations on your election as Chair of this Committee for 2005 and 2006. Our congratulations also go to the rest of the members of the Bureau. You should count on our full support and cooperation.

We also wish to express our appreciation to Ambassador Iftekhar Chowdhury for his very able stewardship during the last two sessions.

Mr. Chairman,

Our appreciation is also extended to Mr. Shashi Tharoor, Under- Secretary General for Communications and Public Information, for his comprehensive and informative introductory statement as well as the interactive dialogue that followed in the afternoon of 18th April 2005 and we further commend the good work of his Department.

May we also join other Member states in welcoming Cape Verde, Iceland, Madagascar and Qatar to this Committee.

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation fully aligns itself with the statement made by the Representative of Jamaica on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. However, in our national capacity we wish to comment on a few areas.

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation notes with appreciation the efforts of the DPI to promote to the greatest extent possible an informed understanding of the vital role of the United Nations and in enhancing its image at a time when the Organization has been subjected to criticism and misperceptions. The DPI should be in the forefront in providing elements for an informed debate on the reform of the United Nations and the indispensability of multilateralism.

As we approach the Millennium Declaration High-Level Review Conference in September, the document by the Secretary General — "In Larger Freedom", offers us a focused reference on the crucial issues for reforming the Organization. The DPI should reach out to governments and civil society on achieving the Millennium Development Goals such as poverty and hunger eradication, gender equality, universal education, basic health and fighting of diseases such as malaria, TB and HIV/AIDS, and advancing the protection of the environment. The freedom from fear and the requirements of collective security need to be matched with the imperatives for the respect of human rights of individuals and peoples. The DPI occupies a strategic position in forging communication and partnership between development partners in their respective commitments to achieve the MDGs under the leadership of the United Nations.

Mr. Chairman,

Despite various efforts by the DPI, still we note with great concern the continuing widening gap on the information and communications technologies between the developed and the developing countries to the disadvantage of the people of developing countries.

It is our sincere hope that while making great efforts to inform the world about the United Nations, this should also be addressed if our genuine target is the international community

Rationalization of the network of the UNICs

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation continues to remain concerned on the issue of the rationalization of the network of the United Nations Information Centers (UNICs). We have taken due note of the conclusions and the recommendations in the report of the Secretary General on further rationalization with regard to the strategic recalibration of the existing network of the UNIC's since the process cannot go on further at least at the current stage. While regional hubs will continue to play strategic roles, it is equally important that the remaining UNIC's are also enhanced to keep pace with the needs of these hubs as they will no doubt continue to be valuable feeders.

Multilingualism and Public Information

Mr. Chairman,

On multilingualism, we maintain the importance of the equitable treatment and utilization of all official languages of the United Nations in all the outreach activities so that the information is well received by the wider community and not just a section of this global community. The efforts of DPI in this regard need to be encouraged and supported by the international community.

My delegation has noted the continued progress by the DPI towards its effort at strengthening partnerships with radio and television broadcasters with the objective of furnishing more audio-visual products to a broader audience. In this regard, we commend the launching of a new radio programme dedicated to Africa. This is of great significance bearing in mind the importance of the traditional means of communication still utilized by the wider global community, particularly in developing countries.

We thus commend the United Nations Correspondents Association, through the Dag Hammarskjöld Memorial Scholarship Fund, which has enabled journalists from developing countries to come to the United Nations Headquarters and have the privilege of not only reporting on the activities of the UN, but also the opportunity to see first hand how the UN functions thus exposing them to the realities of their work to their advantage.

Mr. Chairman,

In conclusion we wish to express our support at the constant appeal from DPI for adequate resources from assessed contributions to meet the obligations we have entrusted them with and the tasks we ask them to perform.

I thank you Mr. Chairman.