

**Statement by H.E. Ambassador Maged A. Abdelaziz, Permanent Representative of Egypt to the United Nations (25 April 2006)**

Mr. Chairman,

I would like to extend to you, at the outset of the works of the Committee on Information, my heart-felt congratulations for your election as chairman of the twenty-eighth session of the Committee on Information and I also congratulate members of the Committee Bureau.

My delegation associates itself with the statement delivered by the delegation of South Africa on behalf of the Group of 77 and China that contained the framework of the priorities and concerns of the Member States of the Group in respect to UN policies, activities and priorities in the field of information and communications.

Mr. Chairman,

We listened yesterday to the statement of the Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information Mr. Shashi Tharoor in which he reviewed the role of the organization in the field of communications and information and the strategic outlook for the future. I would like, in this respect, to extend appreciation to the staff of the UN Department of Public Information for the tireless effort they have been exerting to highlight the role of the United Nations in all areas, shedding light and conveying its sublime message to the whole world using the finest advanced techniques. This is not to mention dealing positively and speedily with the challenges and the problems that the UN faces.

The world today, in truth, is undergoing a critical phase full of disputes, conflicts and challenges that have cast their shadows not only on states but also on their peoples. They further affect all walks of life and enhance the methods the governments and peoples are adopting to encounter the dangers of spreading pandemics such as HIV/AIDS, malaria and recently the avian flu. This is not to mention the systematic addressing of poverty, famine and desertification. All these issues have led to the expansion of the role of the United Nations in the face of these numerous challenges. Consequently, the United Nations, in addition to the works it is entrusted with, has a significant role to play with a view to educating and spreading the culture of peace and cooperation, deeply entrenching the concept of tolerance, and boosting the concepts of dialogue among cultures and civilizations, in addition to enhancing the principle of respect for the other and his beliefs. Hence the significant importance of the works of the Committee on Information and the pivotal role of the UNDPI.

Mr. Chairman,

In the context of our clear and increasing interest in the role of the United Nations in the field of information and consequently the interest in the role of this committee, I would like to make some remarks pertaining to the Secretary-General's five reports before this session as follows:

**First:** In respect of the Secretary-General's report on the rationalization of the network of the United Nations information centres, we commend the reallocation of three director-level posts by DPI to centres located in Cairo, Mexico City and Pretoria. We also commend the specific regional responsibilities carried out by these centres that, undoubtedly, would contribute to enhancing the joint and strategic work with and inside UN information centres existing in neighbouring countries for more efficient and effective implementation of the United Nations information policy in the three above-mentioned regions. We further welcome the efforts aiming at enhancing the use of the information and communication technologies to speedily and efficiently convey the information message to all UN information centres.

Undoubtedly, It is of high importance to allocate fixed and additional resources out of the UN programme budget to promote the capabilities of the information centres to effectively carry out their duties and tasks corresponding with their status so as to reflect the effective presence of the United Nations to the average citizen, students and researchers all over the world, particularly in developing countries.

**Second:** In respect of the report on assessing the effectiveness of United Nations public information products and activities based on the results of a three-year evaluation project, Egypt would like to emphasize its appreciation for the efforts exerted by DPI in terms of the implementation of the recommendations of the Committee on Information during the last three years on ensuring a culture of evaluation for the impact of the programs and activities of DPI. On our part, we encourage the continuation of adopting and developing this approach so as its ultimate target will be to improve the efficiency of the United Nations information message and ensure access to this message by the largest possible number of the people and by using diversified methods and policies compatible with the peculiarities, requirements and priorities of the targeted societies.

There is also no doubt that in as much as this evaluation process will lead to redistribution of the available resources in line with the nature of DPI work, the principle of redistribution of resources should not substitute our endeavours to provide sufficient and additional resources for this purpose. Furthermore, the activities of special political and technical importance that are carried out by the United Nations in the information field should not be affected by redistribution or diminishing of resources.

**Third:** In respect of the report on the activities of DPI, the delegation of Egypt records anew its appreciation for the diversity of these activities including those of developmental, cultural, political and social impacts. The delegation of Egypt would like, in this regard, to encourage DPI to continue paying attention particularly to the programmes and activities related to the implementation of the NEPAD initiative in Africa as it embodies a real symbol of the African ownership for the future of the Continent on one part, and the international commitment to achieve the ambitions of the African peoples on the other. This can be further enhanced through the provision of the necessary objective material to acquaint the international community with the achievements accomplished within the framework of that initiative, the challenges it faces and the priorities that require urgent materialistic and technical assistance.

Fourth: In respect of the report on the recent developments and the progress towards parity among the official languages on the UN website, the delegation of Egypt has always called for achieving multilingual parity in a strict and genuine way. In appreciation of the effort exerted in this respect, we still notice apparent shortage in terms of posting information in a timely manner in the six official languages on the UN website. We further notice some shortage in terms of publishing the UN documents in all the official languages on the Official Document System (ODS).

We deem that the multilingual parity should be given priority in channelling the limited resources of DPI. We are all aware of the fact that access to information in the most widely circulated languages among world peoples in accordance with the rapid tempo of events and the enormous issues the United Nations addresses represent the core and crux for assessing the effectiveness and the efficiency of the United Nations information message.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

(Unofficial translation)