

**Statement by Mr. Sanga Panggabean, First Secretary at the Permanent Mission of Indonesia to the United Nations (26 April 2006)**

Mr. Chairman,

Let me begin by congratulating H.E. Ambassador Mihnea Motoc of Romania, for his election as Chairman of the Twenty-eight session of the Committee on Information, and to convey my delegation's gratitude to Mr. Shashi Tharoor, the Under-Secretary General for Communication and Public Information for his comprehensive statement regarding the work of the Department of Public Information/DPI.

Before I continue, my delegation would also like to associate itself with the statement delivered by the distinguished Representative of South Africa on behalf of G-77 and China.

Allow me now, to avail myself of this opportunity to make a few brief remarks on some issues of particular interest to my delegation.

Mr. Chairman,

The changes introduced by the Department of Public Information in the past few years have, in my delegation's view, generated greater effectiveness in its work, particularly in the areas of targeted delivery, making enhanced use of new tools of information and communication technology, and building an expanded grass root support base through partnerships. These enabled the department to position the United Nations, for instance, at the centre of the international response tsunami disaster. Similarly, in the case of the September 2005 World Summit, it has positively enhanced the image of the United Nations as a universal organization leading a global effort for the common good and willing to take the path of reform.

Regrettably however, that projection is somewhat distracted/distorted at the grassroots level, especially in the developing countries, because of the absence, or inadequate access to information. In this connection, I would like to touch upon the issue of the United Nations Information Centres (UNICs). We are deeply concerned, on this issue, that DPI is not receiving adequate funding for its work, a feeling that is prevalent among Member States who share our view that the department needs to be better funded to enable its UNICs serve the people in the developing world better.

The information centres and services are the vital link through which DPI connects to the public at large throughout the world. Indeed, for developing countries, which have a very diverse social and cultural background not to mention technological and communication limitation, it would be counter productive to replace the local function of these UNICs, as the logistics would be most complicated. By supporting the local information centres and building partnerships with them, we can greatly enhance DPI's ability to promote the work of the United Nations.

It is in this connection that my delegation would like to support the DPI for the new strategic innovations it has adopted in the expansion of its operational base by building new partnership with Governments, civil society and the private sector, investing more in information and communication technologies and bolstering its information presence in key locations by reallocating resources and strengthening professional staffing.

We also hope that the post of director of UNIC in Jakarta, which is currently vacant, will be filled in the near future.

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation cannot agree more with the remark made by Under-Secretary-General Shashi Tharoor, that the work of DPI is to tell the story of the United Nations. In that regard, the acquaintance of the public, especially in the developing world, with economic development and social issues such as the Millennium Development Goals and HIV/AIDS will facilitate deeper involvement with the work of the United Nations. We support DPI in its efforts to do even more to highlight such issues, and the work of the UN in addressing them.

My delegation would like also to emphasize the role that DPI can play and has played in the issues of culture of peace and dialogue among civilizations. Today, our world is full of violence, much of it attributable to prejudice born of misunderstanding, miscommunication or simply lack of communication. DPI can play an important role in bridging this gap, by fostering understanding, tolerance and cooperation among peoples of different religions and beliefs, thereby combating stereotypes and misperceptions. To this end, we commend the department for its great work in the seminars on the unlearning of intolerance and encourage the DPI's further participation and contribution in the various interfaith, intercultural and intercivilizational initiatives.

Core economic development and social issues remain the overriding priorities of developing countries. We welcome DPI's focus over the past year on priority issues such as HIV/AIDS, the Millennium Development Goals, Palestine, Human Rights etc. We support DPI in its efforts to do even more to highlight such issues and the work of the UN in addressing them.

Mr. Chairman,

The DPI faces important and enormous tasks. It has continued to find innovative ways to fulfil its task of conveying the work and image of the United Nations to the public, including through strengthening access to the United Nations website, increasing the reach of traditional media such as television and radio, and highlighting important stories that lack commercial value ("Ten Stories the World Should Hear More About.").

My delegation believes that the relevance of the United Nations should continue to be strengthened. Public, private and other media as should be encouraged to maintain public awareness of the important work of the organization through appropriate and timely dissemination of relevant information on the multitude of issues before it. In the long run,

however, this assignment could become more difficult for DPI, unless it is equipped with an adequate budget. We should focus our energies on finding a solution to this problem.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.