

Statement by Mr. Yoon Yeo-Cheol, Counsellor at the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations (25 April 2006)

Mr. Chairman,

I would like first to extend my delegation's congratulations to you on your election as Chairman of the 28th session of the Committee on Information. I am confident that under your able stewardship, our discussions in the coming days will be constructive and fruitful. My delegation also thanks Under-Secretary-General Mr. Shashi Tharoor for his informative statement yesterday and for his leadership of the Department of Public Information (DPI), all of whose members deserve our appreciation for their hard work and dedication.

Mr. Chairman,

The Republic of Korea attaches great importance to the work of the DPI, which has served as the public voice of the United Nations, informing the world about the work of the Organization. We note with satisfaction that over the past four years the Department has improved its work by focusing on new strategic goals. By striving to achieve greater effectiveness in its communications through targeted delivery, to make enhanced use of new information and communications technologies, and to develop an expanded support base through partnership with civil society to maximize its global outreach, the DPI has significantly enhanced its effectiveness. It is particularly heartening to note that the Department continues to support the promotion of the Millennium Development Goals and to strengthen its outreach activities to civil society, including enhancing partnerships with educational institutions. In particular, my delegation wishes to commend the DPI's efforts to support the work of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights by facilitating media contacts and producing various public information materials.

The Republic of Korea supports the DPI's rationalization of the network of United Nations Information Centres (UNICs), which we believe will help focus their work on priority thematic issues and concerns of particular relevance in each region. Nevertheless, rationalization is not an end in itself, but rather a means to achieve the objective of making UN information accessible to a greater number of clients without expending additional resources. The priorities of rationalization should be determined primarily on the basis of demand for the services by UNICs and the availability of alternate means of access to UN information. In developed countries where the Internet is widely used, and especially where one of the six official UN languages is spoken, the UN website will soon obviate the need for UNICs. Eventually UNICs will add value only in countries where none of the six official UN languages is spoken or where Internet service is still not widely available. We hope that the rationalization of UNICs will be conducted in a manner that will strengthen the Organization's information outreach to those Member States currently outside the scope of the field information capacity of the DPI.

With regard to the UN website, we recognize the effort the DPI is making towards parity among the six official languages. However, it is true that the DPI will not be able to undertake all of the proposed improvements to the UN website simultaneously. In this regard, we believe

that the DPI could give greater priority to enhancing the website in those major languages that receive the most traffic as a way of making a more efficient use of its limited resources.

Turning to the UN libraries, we are pleased to see coordinated efforts to ensure that their activities and services are supporting the UN's goals and objectives. We support the new motto, "From collections to connections", which emphasizes the transition of UN libraries from document repositories to hubs in networked knowledge-sharing communities. In this regard, we support changing the official name of the Dag Hammarskjöld Library to the Dag Hammarskjöld Library and Knowledge Sharing Center, as proposed in the Secretary-General's report.

Mr. Chairman,

We are encouraged by the results of the three-year evaluation project of the DPI contained in the Secretary-General's report [A/AC.198/2006/4](#). My delegation would like to draw your attention to the public perceptions and expectations of the United Nations reflected in a number of public opinion polls conducted by the DPI. Although the UN's image has been badly bruised by recent scandals, the majority of the public wants a stronger United Nations and believes that the UN is central to resolving global conflicts. This is where we stand. We should strive to meet these expectations, and as we do so, it is vitally important that the DPI continue its efforts to help the public to understand the reality of the United Nations and its hopes for the future.

Thank you.