

Statement by H.E. Mr. Choisuren Baatar, Permanent Representative of Mongolia to the United Nations (26 April 2006)

Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, allow me to join the previous speakers in saluting you and the rest of the Bureau and wish you every success in discharge of your duties. I thank Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information Mr. Shashi Tharoor for his elegant, eloquent and comprehensive address to this Committee. I commend him and the whole DPI team for the early issuance of reports this year - a fact that provided delegations additional time to study and reflect on their substance.

I also take this opportunity to warmly welcome our new member - Austria, and to express the support of my delegation to the request of Thailand and the Dominican Republic to join the Committee on Information. I fully agree with the Under-Secretary-General's assessment that the almost twofold increase in the Committee's membership since its establishment is a testimony to the vivid interest that Member States have in the work of the DPI.

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation fully associates itself with the Statement made by South Africa on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. I will, therefore be brief and make only a few remarks from my national perspective.

My delegation congratulates Under-Secretary-General Mr. Tharoor and his team for the completion of the reform and reorientation of the DPI, as can be seen from the absence of a report specifically addressing this subject. The 3 year reform and reorientation process maybe over, but the DPI will need to continue adapting and evolving itself against the changing circumstances.

This Department has a very important role - it is the public voice of the Organization. It has a mission to deliver to the wider public the great ideals that this Organization stands for, and the efforts it takes to realize them. It also acts as a barometer of public perception of the Organization. In this respect the Under-Secretary-General Mr. Tharoor gave us concrete examples illustrating changes of perception of the UN among people according to opinion-polls organized by various organizations. It might be advisable if such data could be compiled and presented to this Committee, and if countries covered also represented the diversity of the membership of this Organization.

Mr. Chairman,

The work done by the Department in commemoration of the 60th anniversary of the United Nations and the coverage of the 2005 World Summit was particularly noteworthy. It is now important not to lose the unique momentum generated in September.

Mongolia wholeheartedly supports the efforts of the Department to seek additional ways to further publicize the work and decisions of the General Assembly. Indeed, achieving greater awareness of the work done by the General Assembly is an important aspect of the overall goal of revitalizing this principal organ as the chief deliberative, policy-making and representative body of the United Nations. It is gratifying to see that the coverage of the activities of the GA and the President of the GA was significantly expanded. The Department should continue its activities in this field. In the same vein, as a troop-contributing country Mongolia can only laud the attention that has been given to achieving favourable depiction of UN peacekeeping and peacekeepers. We owe this service to our troops in the field. Misgivings of the few should not be allowed to spoil the good name of the overwhelming majority of the brave men and women who are there to serve and help.

Mr. Chairman,

Establishment of a genuine dialogue among civilizations remains one of the priorities for Members States in today's world. Different peoples, religions, cultures and civilizations are engaged everyday in an unprecedented and unstoppable level of interaction and interchange of values and ideas, regardless of the distances separating them. Such openness and perceived defencelessness in the face of overall change sometimes create a reaction of rejection, distrust or even fear in people, and lead to attempts to define and protect their identity through exclusion and separation. The activities of the DPI within the overall framework of the global agenda to examine different manifestations of intolerance, exploring ways to promote respect and understanding among peoples and ways in which education can help overcome intolerance, are therefore of special importance.

Mongolia welcomes the "Unlearning Intolerance" seminar series, with their focus on the topical problems of today such as anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, the role of "hate media" and combating genocide. I believe that the work of the DPI in promoting the dialogue among civilizations should also involve showcasing examples of its successes, not only difficult moments; and encompass all rich diversity of world civilizations, cultures and religions.

Mr. Chairman,

The UN website is a primary source of information as it is vividly illustrated by the increased number of hits. The growing number of hits is also a testimony to the quality and content-accessibility of the website. The popularity of the website will only continue to grow. My delegation, therefore, supports all further efforts to improve it.

In conclusion, I would like to assure you that my delegation will exert its efforts in a constructive and open manner to achieve a positive outcome of this session of the Committee.

I thank you.