

Statement by Mr. Boris N. Malakhov, Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the United Nations (25 April 2006)

Dear Mr. Chairman,

On behalf of the Russian delegation let me thank you for skilfully guiding the work of the Committee. I would also like to express my gratitude to Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information Shashi Tharoor for the constructive and substantive statement at the first meeting containing strategy and main results of the work done by the Department of Public Information (DPI) in the area of information.

The past year of 2005, the anniversary year for the Organization, has clearly demonstrated the demand for a systematic and long-term information policy covering the UN activities. Providing clear, comprehensive and quality information illustrating the work of the Organization is the main task ahead of the DPI at this stage. Interaction of the DPI with all the institutions of the Organization is the precondition for effective work and successful implementation of the tasks set before the Department.

The Secretary-General's reports submitted to the Committee reflect the significant work done to implement the recommendations of the UN Committee on Information in all priority areas. The Russian delegation positively assesses many of the results achieved by the DPI during the process, initiated by the Secretary-General, of reorienting the Department's activities following the recommendations of the General Assembly in its [resolution 56/253](#).

Today we can say that the process of the Department's reform on the whole went in the right direction, and the results of this reform are visible and being implemented.

The Russian delegation supports the substantiated willingness of the DPI leadership to focus its efforts on dissemination of information which is really crucial for the United Nations, like maintenance of international peace, assistance in implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, UN reform, combating new threats and challenges to security, poverty, and prevention of conflicts.

We welcome the role played by the United Nations in holding The World Summit on the Information Society in Geneva and Tunis addressing the problems related to development of new information technologies, such as the "digital gap", etc.

A year ago in its statement the Russian delegation emphasized the critical importance that the problem of cooperation between authorities and media encountering terrorism as well as responsibility of the media covering terrorist acts and counterterrorist operations, is gaining. On September 14, 2005 the UN Security Council adopted resolution 1624 against propaganda and incitement of terrorism. It is necessary to closely watch how the Member-States implement provisions of this resolution and to prevent double standards in this sphere.

We are satisfied with the intention of the Department to further support and implement the principle of multilingualism. One of the positive examples of that is the active development of

the UN web-site in all official languages of the Organization. We would like to specially mention the successful work of the Russian web-site. Today more than 300 million people in the world speak Russian. Therefore, one can hardly overestimate the importance of all forums of the information in Russian illustrating the UN activities. It can be proved not only with the figures contained in the reports, which show an increase in visits of the Russian web-site by more than 30% (report [A/AC.198/2006/3](#)), but also with the opinions of the Russian-speaking users of this web-site. It is necessary to further build up the potential of non-English web-sites not only in the United Nations itself, but also in other organizations of its system. By the way, such step would not require considerable additional job by translators, since most materials already exist in the UN official languages.

I would also like to mention the effective work of the international radio broadcast service. It is encouraging to see that in recent months the UN radio has launched a whole number of special initiatives, including the project "60 years in 60 minutes" by the Russian section, which prepared 30 two-minute reviews of the landmarks in the UN history on the basis of archived audio and video materials.

At the same time we would like to emphasize that the amount of information produced by the DPI sometimes negatively affects the quality of its presentation. Obviously, more attention should be given both to the language and style of presentation of the materials for the media. Often, the DPI press-releases represent copies of UN official documents written with a dry official language, while the materials submitted to the media should clarify the main points of the official documents rather than duplicate them.

Mr. Chairman,

While continuing the process of rationalizing the network of UN information centres one should fully take into account the lessons of the 2002 DPI restructuring. We are convinced that the rationalization should be done taking into consideration opinions of the interested countries and regional groups as well as availability of financial resources. We believe that there should be equal approach to the information centres in such questions as distribution of budget funds, staff policy etc. It would be wrong to see the information centres only as intermediaries between UN news services and local media. Their enlightening function is not less important.

The information centres should also serve as a link between the United Nations and civil societies of the receiving countries. It is only through the use of the whole arsenal of the outreach activities (conferences, seminars, learning programs) and ensuring close interaction with public organization and civil society that we could get closer to a better understanding by the world public of importance of the Organization and its unique role in the modern world. The latter, in its turn, is the key to resolving the most topical problems dealt with by the United Nations.

Mr. Chairman,

We support the ongoing process of the reform and tangible results achieved in the new activities of the UN libraries with a view to improving support of the main work of the Organization and rationalizing the work of the libraries. We would also like to voice our support to the work of the Dag Hammarskjöld Library organizing such events as academic symposia, conferences, presentations etc. It is with interest that we perceived the proposal to change the name of the Dag Hammarskjöld Library to "Dag Hammarskjöld Library and Knowledge Sharing Centre" (report [A/AC.198/2006/2](#)). At the same time, we would to ask the DPI to provide additional information on how the proposed change of the name could affect work of the library, its functions, structure and responsibilities.

An important area of work of the DPI is dedicated to building partnership relations with NGOs, informing them of the UN activities, holding joint events.

Exhibitions organized in cooperation with permanent missions of the UN Member-States represent an important element in the DPI outreach activities. We are grateful to the Department for its constructive work and support in organizing exhibitions in the UN Headquarters.

Mr. Chairman,

Of course, the World Summit 2005 was one of the crucial international events last year. At the same time it was a true exam for the DPI, highlighting both achievements and weaknesses in the work of the Department with mass media during the high-level segment of the 60th session of the UN General Assembly. The expeditious work of the DPI web-site was a great help to the journalists covering the General Assembly meetings. Good job was done by audio and video broadcasting service, web-casting and photo service. We can say that the work of the Department in these areas deserve only positive words.

Mr. Chairman,

In 2006, according to GA resolution 60/7, elaborated with participation of Russia, for the first time the Holocaust Remembrance Day was marked. In our country we hold sacred the memory of the victims of Nazism, including 6 million Jews, 3 million of whom were USSR citizens. We hope that next year events organized by the DPI will embrace public organizations, which include Russian-speaking veterans of the Second World War. It is not by chance that January 27 was chosen as the International Holocaust Remembrance Day. That was the day in 1945 when Soviet troops liberated Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp in Oswiecim.

The Russian delegation supports continuation of the discussion of problems of information society with a special attention to such topical issues as the role of media in covering terrorist acts, media and religious intolerance, during the Day of Freedom of Media traditionally held on May 3'd in the course of the session of the Committee on Information.

As known, the uniqueness of the United Nations lies in its capacity to promptly respond to new realities and global problems of the world. We are pleased to see that the work of the

DPI to a great extent is based upon these glorious traditions of the United Nations, combining the basic principles of the Organization with new breakthrough ideas.

Thank you.

(Unofficial translation)