

Statement by Simon Pidoux, Counsellor, Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations (26 April 2006)

Mr. Chairman,

I would, first of all, like to join my distinguished colleagues in the expressions of congratulations and best wishes they addressed to you in their statements. It is a pleasure for me to assure you of Switzerland's full support for your task of leading the work of the 28th session of the Committee on Information.

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation would like to thank the Under-Secretary-General, Mr. Shashi Tharoor, for his presentation of the different reports and for highlighting their salient points. Switzerland also notes the excellent work of the Department of Public Information (DPI), which successfully met the challenges of last year's very full agenda. I am thinking of its coverage of the World Summit (M+5) and especially of its outstanding work in explaining the UN reform process in general and the creation of the Human Rights Council in particular.

Continuation of the rationalisation efforts

Mr. Chairman,

Following up on the punctual reorientation phase engaged by the DPI, we are now convinced that it is now necessary for the DPI to adapt itself on an ongoing process in order to face the rapid changes taking place in the media world. This would allow the DPI to provide its "clients" with the best possible products, which are the only means of ensuring a wide distribution of information about the work of the United Nations.

The courageous experiment of regionalization undertaken with the creation of the Regional Information Centre in Brussels has not only generated synergies but also enabled us to see that this model has a number of limitations. Switzerland intends to learn the positive and negative lessons of this experience to allow it to pursue the rationalisation plan intelligently and pragmatically while taking specific regional aspects into account.

It seems very important to us that the different centres can base their activities on a mission and on objectives which have been clearly defined by the DPI. This will allow them to gain an idea of the necessary skills, to measure results, and to carry out changes where and when needed. Switzerland wishes to focus on the substance rather than the form of the rationalisation process in order to improve the methods by which information on UN activities is disseminated.

Mr. Chairman,

The rationalisation efforts must also apply to the work of this committee. In this context, we should give our attention to a number of proposals contained in paragraph 55 of the report entitled: "Mandating and delivering: analysis and recommendations to facilitate the review of

mandates" (N60/733). My delegation supports the view that it is unnecessary for different bodies to examine the same question and that this practice should be avoided. It also seems possible to us to reduce the number of reports requested by the Committee on Information.

The UN website, multilingualism and the network of libraries

My delegation welcomes the improvements to the website and considers the website to be a very efficient instrument for disseminating information about the UN. In view of its importance, we encourage the DPI to pursue its efforts to provide the same amount of information in each of the UN official languages. Switzerland, as a country with four national languages, favours multilingualism in principle and on this point proposes a pragmatic approach which would combine efficiency in the DPI's communications activities with the requirement to use the UN official languages as widely as possible.

Concerning the network of libraries, Switzerland welcomes the up-to-date direction that has recently been adopted to enhance the status of the network of communities which share knowledge. With regard to the proposal to change the name of the Dag Hammarskjöld Library, my delegation would like to have the opinion of the DPI on the possible implications on the operations of the UN libraries' network as a whole.

Mr. Chairman,

In conclusion, I would like to assure you that Switzerland will actively pursue the search for constructive solutions with a view to ensuring the success of the 28th session of the Committee on Information.

Thank you.