

Statement by Mr. Estevão Umba Alberto, First Secretary (Press), Permanent Mission of the Republic of Angola to the United Nations (1 May 2007)

Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, allow me to welcome you as Chairman and also thank the Secretary-General for his report on the activities carried out by the Department of Public Information during the past year.

We would also like to join others in congratulating Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information, Mr. Kiyo Akasaka for his appointment and for his detailed and excellent statement before this Committee yesterday. Our appreciation goes also to other newly elected members of Bureau and to the entire staff of the Department for the way they have carried out their tasks.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by the delegation of Pakistan, on behalf of G-77 and China.

Mr. Chairman,

The challenge of creating and disseminating accurate and meaningful information that will be heard by every corner in our interconnected world is, indeed, daunting.

My delegation welcomes the report of the Secretary-General, which is a thorough account of the range of information issues the Department of Public Information must address, and a careful consideration of ways for it to meet its goals. We note with appreciation the Department's impressive strides in developing a communications strategy and creating a structure to effectively achieve the objectives that have been set.

Mr. Chairman,

The Department of Public Information, together with all departments within the United Nations, faces the challenge of completing its tasks in an environment of tightly constrained resources. My delegation fully understands that this dilemma has no easy solution, but we reiterate our position that the Department of Public Information must accomplish its tasks within the existing resources or push forward for the allocation of additional resources.

In this connection we urge the Department of Public Information, to continue its efforts for the opening of the Luanda Centre, to serve the special needs of five developing countries. For these countries effective presence of a UN Information Centre has a key development promotional role to play. In this context I am once again authorized to reiterate the rent-free offer for the premises by the Government of Angola. Moreover, the decision to open the Luanda Centre should not be dependent on the process of rationalization or regionalisation of the UNICs. We are of the view that such decision should only be based on the grounds of especial needs of the countries concerned, namely the linguistic, geographical and technological dimension. This is also a means of renewing our commitment for a better

dissemination of information of the work of our organisation in the world and particularly in Africa.

While we commend the fruitful work undertaken by the Desk for Portugal in the UN regional centre in Brussels, the Portuguese Speaking African Countries cannot just rely on such services. The special needs of these five developing countries can more effectively be addressed through a centre in Luanda. The local communities do not have the same new technologies such as print media, radio and internet, as compared with developed countries. This is a question of access to the means of information which many countries like ours still have a tremendous deficit.

We recognize that the United Nations must reach many levels of audience, from those with state of the art communications techniques to those which have yet to achieve literacy. This spectrum of conditions is represented not only by individual nations, but also by audiences within the same nation. The need to develop different media for different audiences is clear.

Let me say, Mr. Chairman, that yesterday I was very encouraged by the words of His Excellency Under-Secretary-General, Mr. Akasaka that we should have patience; which to my interpretation, they only mean one thing: a "green light" inside the tunnel. We have to be gracious for these words since this was the first time they were pronounced.

Mr. Chairman,

The delegation of Angola would like to commend to those, who cover to the fullest extent the work of the UN Radio, and here our special thanks and appreciation goes once more to the Portuguese Radio Unit, for the services they provide around the world and we therefore encourage them to continue to do more, particularly in Africa.

Angola also commends the Department for redesigning the UN Website and welcomes the New Press Release Webpage and daily Media Alert published by it. Furthermore, we join other delegations in congratulating the DPI for the improvement in the delivery of services offered by UN libraries. We are of the view that these services be available in other languages to reach all users, especially in developing countries.

We also commend the DPI for the tremendous work carried out in Peacekeeping Operations Missions.

We are concerned with the shortage of Portuguese community staff members at the DPI and encourage the department to use all available means to achieve an equitable result.

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation is concerned with the current state of affairs of the world environment, particularly the climate change. My delegation believes that measures to prevent it should be adopted and the United Nations Department of Public Information has a crucial role to play in raising awareness to this issue. Therefore, the DPI as the public voice of the organization should continue its task in promoting the seriousness of this matter.

Mr. Chairman,

Finally, on May 3rd the freedom of the Press World day will be celebrated, and our delegation cannot let it go unrecognized, given its significance to so many, around the world.

Freedom of the press is one of the most important pillars of a democratic society under the rule of Law.

Freedom of the press is closely linked to sustainable economic and social development and it is a valuable tool to ensure the exercise of the fundamental rights and liberties of the people.

Freedom of the press, speech and thought and democratization of the media are principles that the Angolan government attaches great importance in its political priorities as the country consolidates peace and national reconstruction.

Therefore, like others, Angola also welcomes the Security Council Resolution 1738 of 23 December 2006 aiming at better protecting journalists in conflict zones.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, Angola underlines its support for the work of the DPI under the guidance and direction of Under-Secretary-General, Kiyu Akasaka to make this Department increasingly more effective. We look forward to having a constructive negotiation and adopt a text that, as always, enjoys consensus.

I thank you.