

Statement by Mr. Boris N. Malakhov, Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the United Nations(1 May 2007)

On behalf of the Russian delegation I want to congratulate you and the other members of the Bureau with election to such an important post and to thank you for your skilful moderation of the Committee's work.

We also welcome Mr. Akasaka in his capacity of Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information and wish him success in his future work at this important and urgent direction of the Organization's activities.

We support the basic principles of the strategic approach in the activity of the Department of Public Information. We highly appreciate its role in extensive and systematic delivery to the international community of information on tasks and goals of the United Nations. Objective, adequate and comprehensive information policy as well as its professional implementation is seen as one of the Department's most important tasks at the modern stage.

The reports of the Secretary General reflect the massive work undertaken by the DPI to implement the Committee's recommendations in all priority areas outlined at its session last year. We note with satisfaction that they not only acknowledge the Department's reform process launched several years ago, but make an intermediate summary of the DPI's accomplished work.

On the whole, the results can be seen as positive. The DPI's leadership has given more attention to the essence of work of UN departments, selection of target groups, and besides, touching upon hot and urgent issues - freedom of information, overcoming racism, intolerance, and xenophobia. Such an agenda stimulates discussion, gives a push to research at all levels of communication activities.

An important component needed to reach success in implementing the tasks that the DPI is facing lies in bringing multilingualism into practice, including development of the UN Radio and the web-site in all the official languages of the Organization. In future we should further increase the potential of non-English web-sites of not only the UN itself, but also other bodies and organs within its system.

We welcome support for development of all forms of Russian-language information coverage of the UN activities, which is reasonable. As mentioned in reports of the Secretary General, last year alone the number of page visits and views in the Russian section at the UN website has significantly increased by 87% and 37% respectively. These statistics show increased interest of Russian-speaking audience to the UN activities, which gives ground to raise the question of Russian-language webcasts of meetings of the Organization's main bodies (Security Council, General Assembly, ECOSOC, etc). We believe that implementation of this idea will not require substantial funding: the only thing required would be technical support for publishing the webcasts at the UN website, whereas the interpretation itself would be fed directly from interpreters' booths. At present webcasts of the Security Council and the General Assembly, which are made in the English language with the original language added

later, do not cover the demand of the multilingual audience for immediate access to urgent information.

We support the progress achieved in developing the multimedia activities of the DPI, including the work of the Media Library, modernizing UN Radio and UNTV , developing webcasts.

We take positive note of the efficient work of the international radio broadcast system, further enhancing and strengthening partnership relations with local, national, and sub-regional broadcast stations. We would like to note fruitful work of the UN Radio Russian Language Unit, which in 2006 started broadcasting for Moscow, Moscow Region, and Saint Petersburg at the frequency of "World Radio Network" (Russian language service). Specifically, we would like to mention constructive cooperation of the UN Radio Russian Language Unit with a leading radio station "Voice of Russia".

We welcome constructive innovations of the Department in preparing and publishing DPI information materials, press briefings, and work of the Office of the Spokesperson.

We support efforts of the DPI in covering UN peacekeeping activities in coordination with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations.

Mr. Chairman,

We take positive note of further rationalizing the way UN information centres work on the basis of the three-pronged approach, which provides for strategic realignment of DPI's resources, expanded use of new information technology and working together at the regional level for greater impact.

We believe that information centres should prepare materials in languages spoken by the local audiences, arrange events for and with participation of the civil society of the host country, direct their work at those who shape the public opinion, involve the local media in the communication process, arrange complex communication campaigns.

We reaffirm the need to have an equal approach to different information centers, be it budget allocation, personnel policy, etc.

We believe it necessary to note fruitful and creative work of the Moscow information center, which largely plays a coordinating role in issues relating to outreach activities of UN bodies within Russia and CIS countries. Activities of the information centre are seen as rather successful from the point of view of the DPI's general strategy as well as from the point of view of the regional audience and its specifics.

Mr. Chairman,

An urgent track in DPI activities is establishing partnership relations with non-governmental organizations, informing them about UN activities, arranging joint events. With satisfaction we note successful joint event arranged by the DPI together with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of

Russia, that is the 14th Annual International Seminar for the media on the peaceful settlement in the Middle East in June 2006 in Moscow.

An important element in DPI's outreach activities is arranging exhibitions, also in cooperation with Permanent Missions of UN Member States. We are thankful for constructive work and support of the Department when arranging exhibitions in the UN Headquarters.

We hope that the personnel policy of the DPI would further conform to the principle of geographic representation, taking into account the need to have native speakers at corresponding directions of the Department's work (UN Radio Russian Language Unit, UN website, Media Liaison Office).

Mr. Chairman,

During the session on the Committee on Information we annually state again and again the fact that the number of journalists and media representatives who fall victims during armed conflicts, especially in Iraq, is rising.

In December 2006 the UN Security Council developed and adopted resolution 1738 on protection of journalists in armed conflicts. This document has become an important instrument in implementation and protection of the freedom of speech, respect for independence of journalists and their right to carry out their professional activities during armed conflicts. The resolution condemns attacks against journalists in situations of armed conflict and calls upon all parties to put an end to such practices. Adoption of this document, mandatory in its nature, gives hope that the tragic figures of media representatives falling victims in hot spots of our planet will not rise.

Mr. Chairman,

2007 has seen the second anniversary of the Holocaust Victims Commemoration Day, which was established by the General Assembly resolution 60/7, to which Russia was a cosponsor. In our country people honour as sacred the memory of the victims of Nazism.

In the context of the information policy of the DPI in covering the basic principles, which lie in the foundation on the United Nations, support historical memory about the outcome of World War II we believe it of utmost importance to raise the question to denounce any attempts to justify the crimes of fascism, to revive neo-fascism in the world, which has as one of its manifestations the attempt in some countries to raze monuments to Soviet soldiers-liberators. Russia paid a huge price for the victory over fascism and cannot and will not be indifferent towards the campaign to remove monuments to Soviet soldiers, who gave their lives for freedom of not only their people, but for the whole world to be free from fascism.

We thank the leadership of the Department for involving public organizations of Russian-speaking veterans of World War II to participate in events organized by the DPI in 2007.

Mr. Chairman,

The Russian delegation is ready to cooperate constructively with all members of the Bureau, Member States of the Committee, and DPI personnel to strengthen the ties and mutual understanding between the United Nations and the international community.

Thank you for your attention.