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Committee on Information

Statement by
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Permanent Representative of
the Republic of Indonesia to the United Nations

at the General Debate of the 31st Session
of the Committee on Information

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Mr. Chairman,

I wish to begin by congratulating you, on behalf of the delegation of Indonesia, upon your assumption of the chair of the Committee on Information. Our felicitations also go to the other members of the Bureau. We are confident that under your experienced leadership and guidance, the Committee will be able to accomplish the tasks programmed for its 31st Session.

Before I go on to the substance of my remarks, I would also like to take a moment to express our appreciation to the Under-Secretary-General for Information, Mr. Kiyoo Akasaka, for his comprehensive and lucid presentation on the work of his department, with particular reference to the strategies being adopted by DPI in the coming years.

We are pleased to note the department's identification of a proactive and strategic approach to meeting the complex information needs of the department. As the USG has outlined, the focus, this year, is a comprehensive strategy focusing on the development agenda, peace and security in a number of conflict zones, human rights, climate change, as well as disarmament and non-proliferation. As broad as this is, the department wisely found it fit to add other emerging issues to the list, along with other important elements.

My delegation commends Mr. Akasaka for his outstanding performance as head of DPI. We extend to him our best wishes for even greater success in delivering the mandates of the department.

Indonesia would like to align itself with the statement made by the Chair of the Group of 77 and China. The following remarks pertain only to some issues of particular relevance to Indonesia.

Mr. Chairman,

The principal purpose of DPI is to promote the work of the UN by providing accurate, impartial, comprehensive, timely and relevant information to the widest possible global audience. By this measure, there is no doubt that the department has successfully fulfilled its role as the public voice of the Organization during the past year.

One of the areas worthy of note, to which Mr. Akasaka alluded in his address, is DPI's efforts in the use of media and communications as a cornerstone of governance in peacebuilding. The example of Sierra Leone is a significant one

in this respect, and we encourage the department to continue to find similarly creative ways to deploy its professionalism. We welcome its growing use of partner radio stations—which will create a powerful network for the Organization—and its exploration of the opportunities arising from various social networking tools on the world wide web.

The delegation of Indonesia has followed, with close interest, the reports of the UNSG on the activities of the DPI, in its three parts in accordance with the three subprogrammes of the Department: strategic communication services, news services and outreach services. The reports are extremely rich in information about the breadth and depth of the coverage of DPI, as well as the internal structural arrangements that make its success possible.

As we express our appreciation for the diversity in the activities of DPI and the United Nations Information Centres (UNIC) around the world, we encourage DPI to continue to develop its ability to report programmes and activities concerning peace and security, development and human rights.

While many of these issues are related, we would like to draw particular attention to such specific subjects as the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, the battle against HIV & AIDS, terrorism, the financial crisis, and the battle to prevent human pandemic stemming from H1NI or any other virus. We call upon DPI to strengthen its efforts to play an active role in raising public awareness of these crises and their various dimensions, as well as their impact on development.

While we have commended the success of the department in promoting a positive public image of the UN, we also challenge it to use its expertise and its long reach to help combat prejudice and division among nations and peoples and religions, with the objective of transforming the world into a more tolerant, peaceful, multicultural community. Perhaps more than any other institution, DPI understands that the mass media can be the messenger either of peace and tolerance, or of misunderstanding and hatred. With the diversity and potency of the tools at its disposal today, DPI can move the world rapidly towards peace and tolerance.

With particular reference to the Middle East, we would like to take this opportunity to call on DPI to continue the implementation of its media program on the Palestinian issue. We are pleased, in this regard, at the forthcoming annual International Media Seminar on Peace in the Middle East, scheduled for Rio de Janeiro in July, and we thank the Government of Brazil for agreeing to host the event. It is essential to continue to sensitize the people all over the world on the suffering of the Palestinian people under

occupation and the siege and the unjust collective punishment of which they are victims, in contravention of the norms of international law. It is in this spirit that, next month in Jakarta, Indonesia will be hosting the next United Nations Asia Pacific Meeting in Support of the Palestinian People and UN Public Forum in Support of the Palestinian People.

Mr. Chairman,

Let me now turn to the subject of multilingualism and the importance of the UNICS.

As we have stated in the past, the efforts of DPI to make information about the work of the UN as accessible as possible to the broadest global audience, especially in the developing world, is of tremendous importance to Indonesia.

In this regard, we support the efforts of the department to disseminate information using as many media channels and opportunities as possible, including through languages outside the official languages of the UN.

We believe, however, that UN information program materials will enjoy greater distribution, dissemination and acceptance if they have higher level of local involvement and content in their production. On this point, we are pleased to learn that DPI and the UNICs now have the capacity to work in as many as 48 languages, and have produced information materials in over 130 languages. This is certainly several steps in the right direction.

Without doubt, UNICs—particularly, in the developing world—are crucial in the effort to enhance the public image of the UN and in disseminating its message. These centres must, therefore, be strengthened. To that end, we encourage DPI to continue to work closely with the host countries in these efforts. Adequate budgetary resources should be made available to ensure the effective functioning of UNICs.

Mr. Chairman,

With particular reference to Indonesia, we would like to commend the useful work being undertaken by UNIC Jakarta, including the maintenance of a website; the publication of a newsletter in Bahasa Indonesia; as well as production of information materials in our local languages, including Balinese, Acehnese and Bugisnese.

We would also like to acknowledge, with appreciation, the convening in Bandung last month, of a seminar as well as an exhibition on job opportunities in international organizations jointly organized by UNIC Jakarta and the

Department of Foreign Affairs of Indonesia. That event proved to be crucial in helping to increase the interest of our domestic public towards the United Nations and other international organizations. We look forward to similar events in the near future.

Mr. Chairman,

As a troop-contributing country, Indonesia recognizes the vital nature of information dissemination in United Nations peacekeeping. This is why we are pleased at the current growing cooperation between DPI, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the Department of Field Support, and the Department of Political Affairs. We fully believe that this continued coordination will enhance the image of the United Nations in the eyes of the world, as well as the quality of peacekeeping missions.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, we would like to reiterate our full support of, and cooperation with you in ensuring the success of the 31st Session of the Committee on Information.

Thank you.