



## **BANGLADESH**

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**Statement  
by  
Ms Sharke Chaman Khan  
First Secretary  
Permanent Mission of Bangladesh to the UN  
at the General Debate of the 33rd Session of the Committee on Information  
on April 28, 2011**

**Mr. Chairman,**

At the outset, let me begin by congratulating you and your Bureau on your well deserved elections. My delegation assures you and your Bureau of its full support and cooperation in the course of this important Committee's deliberations. We believe that under your able stewardship the Committee will be able to accomplish the expected outcomes. Allow me to acknowledge your predecessor Ambassador Antonio Pedro Monteiro Lima, the Permanent Representative of Cape Verde, for his contribution to the committee.

My delegation thanks Mr. Kiyotaka Akasaka, the Under Secretary General for Communications and Public Information, for his comprehensive presentation on the activities of the Department of Public Information. We extend our deep appreciation to him for his wise leadership of the department and to all the staffs of the department for their efforts for carrying out their tasks. My delegation also welcomes Secretary General's report on the activities of the Department of Public Information.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement made by the distinguished representative of Argentina on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. I would however like to make some additional comments of our concern.

**Mr. Chairman,**

Bangladesh happily notes the close cooperation of the DPI with DPKO and DFS in projecting the work of UN peacekeepers. As a major troop contributing country, Bangladesh attaches great importance in publicizing the UN's noble endeavour in peacekeeping and peacebuilding worldwide. Military personnel and civilian police from Bangladesh are currently involved in meeting more of the challenging peacekeeping missions around the world. It is urgently felt that DPI can leave a positive contribution directly and in complementary role in global peacekeeping. This is specially true in the case of missions with more dynamic engagements and which is worse compounded by the threat of natural calamities. For example a full female Bangladesh FPU has been deployed since 2010 in Haiti immediately aftermath of the disastrous earthquake and

sequentially followed by tsunamis. We strongly feel that there is a dire need of highlighting the role of these valiant female peacekeepers alongside male peacekeepers.

**Mr. Chairman,**

Another area where Bangladesh is willing to support the UN work and cooperate with DPI is climate change. As one of the countries directly bearing the brunt of global warming to which it has no contribution, Bangladesh, being the possible worst victim, seeks greater international cooperation to support developing countries facing similar problems. The conscience of the world's powerbrokers won't be stirred unless DPI helps spotlight the cases of such countries. We think DPI could leave a very positive contribution in highlighting the effects of climate change and the serious consequences that the people of the resource-constraint countries would encounter. As time is running out in an alarming pace, we insist on proactive actions in building awareness, facilitating preparedness and averting further deterioration in this regard.

**Mr. Chairman,**

The Secretary General reported that for better addressing the needs of varied audiences and partners in the developing countries, DPI maintained a strong focus on traditional means of communication—radio, television and print- while at the same time making every effort to capitalize on the opportunities presented by the internet and new media platforms, including social networking sites and mobile devices. Particularly laudable has been DPI's emphasis on using the web in local languages. We note with great appreciation the effort by UN Information Centre in Dhaka to promote the use of Bangla on its website. Admittedly the world is increasingly embracing the Internet, but for the vast majority of people in developing countries, radio still remains a key source of information. In Bangladesh, there is a new emphasis on developing community radio programming, targeting rural population, including those living in distant and isolated regions and islets far off from city. DPI, with its vast experience in international radio programming, can assist Bangladesh and other coastal countries to make the best use of community radios which can save lives and properties. We are ready to join you in fruitful collaboration in this area.

**Mr. Chairman,**

We thank the Under-Secretary-General for his frank appraisal of the budgetary challenges faced by the network of UN information centres. While we understand and fully appreciate his warning about the dire situation, my delegation would like to emphasize its appreciation for the important work being done by the information centres.

In some countries, these centres remain the only window to the wider world of public information on crucial global issues, such as MDGs, HIV/AIDS, climate change and communicable diseases. We strongly oppose any consideration either to further curtail the operational abilities of these centres or close any one of them. DPI, together with Member States in the Fifth Committee, must find ways to keep these centres fully

functional and active. Bangladesh stands ready to extend every possible support in this endeavour.

**Mr. Chairman,**

My delegation is pleased to note the adoption by the General Assembly of the Committee's recommendation to recognize and incorporate the observance of International Mother Language Day on 21 February within the framework of the resolution on questions relating to information. In its resolution 65/107 of 10 December 2010, the General Assembly *requests* the Department of Public Information to raise awareness of 21 February as International Mother Language Day, which is being observed by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and Member States throughout the world in a befitting manner. I take this opportunity to thank COI colleagues for their unanimous endorsement of this proposal. In the view of my delegation, the adoption of this resolution confers upon DPI some additional responsibility to observe International Mother Language Day in a befitting manner. While it is the primary responsibility of Member States, the leadership role of DPI in this regard is crucial. We hope that an annual observance of the Day will be planned at the Headquarters with the participation of senior UN officials. We know the personal commitment of Under-Secretary-General Akasaka to multilingualism. We believe, your guidance and leadership role in this area will generate greater buy-in from Member States, civil society and educational institutions. My delegation stands ready to support you, Mr. Akasaka, in any way possible.

My delegation would like to thank DPI for their assistance in celebrating the fourth annual World Autism Awareness Day on 6<sup>th</sup> April this year at the UN. Permanent Mission of Bangladesh and an NGO, Autism Speaks organized a panel discussion on autism in collaboration with the DPI and US Mission to mark the day.

**Mr. Chairman,**

Finally a word about the importance of freedom of the press. Bangladesh firmly believes that "Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media regardless of frontiers". These words, taken from Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, serves as cornerstone of Bangladesh national policy on media. My delegation is pleased to reiterate that the freedoms mentioned in Article 19 - the freedom to make up one's own mind and to speak one's mind, the freedom to seek, publish and exchange information - are fundamental human rights. Bangladesh believes that the right to think and to speak freely is to no avail if ideas cannot circulate and if speeches remain unheard. I am pleased to mention that as a multiparty democracy, Bangladesh has strived to promote complete freedom of its press – whether print, TV or the web.

What, however, needs to be stressed is that many developing countries, still need international support to develop stable communications infrastructure. They also need

training for its media personnel. We note with appreciation DPI's continuing emphasis on media training through its Reham Al Farra training programme. The media training for Palestinian journalists is also an important on-going effort, and we thank DPI for its careful and judicious approach in imparting hands-on training to these media personnel. Before I conclude Mr. Chairman, let me reiterate once again our support for the DPI and reassure you of our fullest cooperation in steering committee's work to a successful conclusion.

I thank you Mr. Chairman.