

Statement by H.E. Mr. Octavio Errázuriz, Permanent Representative of Chile to the United Nations, on behalf of the Community of Latin-American and Caribbean States (CELAC) (25 April 2012)

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation has the honor to participate in this debate on behalf of the Member States of the Community of Latin-American and Caribbean States, CELAC, recently established. At the outset, the CELAC would like to wish success to the Bureau and to you in the accomplishment of your goals. We would also like to express our complete disposition to contribute in a constructive manner to the work of the 34 session of the Committee on Information.

Mr. Chairman,

The CELAC appreciates the reports presented by the Secretary General on the activities of the Department of Public Information (DPI), included in documents A/AC.198/2012/2, 3 and 4 in relation to strategic communications services, news services, and outreach services. This presentation allows for an improved appreciation of the progress made by the Committee in the implementation of resolution 66/81 A Y B.

The CELAC widely recognizes the valuable efforts of the DPI in promoting and achieving a better understanding of objectives and the work of the United Nations in a wide variety of issues of high importance and interest for the international community.

Likewise, we recognize its efforts to improve the quality and effectiveness of the products and services related to news and media, and to seek new ways of reaching the widest possible audiences in all parts of the world.

Mr. Chairman,

Concerning the sphere of information technology, the CELAC supports the spontaneity and agility of electronic communication, and agrees that it is necessary to capitalize the opportunity to expand the new media platforms and mobile devices. However, even though we consider that the development of web sites is a very useful tool to promote, convey and access the message of the UN, we express our concern over the growing digital gap between developed and developing countries. We also consider that traditional media, such as radio, television, and written press, should continue to be employed in order to convey the message of the United Nations, since they constitute a major source of information in developing countries.

In doing so, the CELAC appreciates that the United Nations Radio has continued to enhance its services in the six official languages, providing news, features and special programmes on United Nations Priority issues, such topics as, among others, the MDG's, Peacekeeping and the next United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, RIO+20.

In this regard, the CELAC welcomes the work done by the DPI, as chair of the inter-agency Communications Group Task Force on Rio+20, in order to discuss a common strategy, develop joint communications products and coordinate messaging and activities. We also welcome the launch in November 2011 of the global campaign entitled "Rio+20: The Future We Want". The CELAC recognizes the efforts by the DPI to continue strengthening its interaction with other organs of the United Nations System, particularly the close cooperation with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support, as well as broadening an understanding of activities relative to peacekeeping and peacebuilding.

The CELAC reaffirms that the media should be used with full respect of the international legal framework. In that sense, the CELAC is concerned by the violations of radio-electronic frequencies, and reiterates the need for these frequencies to be used in favor of public interest in conformity with the principles of international law.

Similarly, we welcome the intense work in the area of information and promotion by the DPI and the United Nations Information Centers, which have demonstrated they play a valuable and effective role, working with partners from both within and outside the UN System. The CELAC considers that the work of the Information Centers, their services and information components provided throughout the world are essential due to the invaluable promotion of a better understanding of the work of the United Nations. We encourage the DPI to continue supporting them through the effective use of the resources available.

In this connection, the CELAC welcomes once again the decision to establish an Information Center in Luanda, Angola, and for the report of the Secretary General of its progress status. We hope it can be fully operational this year 2012, since we are convinced this constitutes an invaluable contribution to disseminate the voice of the Organization, as well as to consider the needs of the Portuguese speaking African countries.

Mr. Chairman,

One of the most valuable goals of the CELAC is to achieve parity among the six official languages of the United Nations, on a basis of equality. We are concerned that despite the efforts made to improve the multilingual contents of the UN website, the problem has not been resolved.

In this regard, we take note with appreciation that the DPI in its purpose to achieve multilingualism and language parity in the UN website, study measures to reduce the costs of translation, in order to solve this dilemma, and we continue to support alternatives like the agreements of cooperation reached with several universities, so that volunteers and educational institutions continue providing services intended to diminish the referenced language gap.

Nevertheless, much remains to be done in order to reach the necessary parity among all six official languages, including the UN webpage. In this sense, taking into account the information provided by the Secretariat at the 33rd COI session, we consider that time has

come to make progress and, as a first step, have press releases in all official languages. A clear distinction should be made between working and official languages in the public dissemination through the Organization webpage. That is why we request the Secretariat to provide deeper information and design a mechanism allowing for the dissemination of press releases in all official languages. In an initial phase, to overcome the unfair current situation facing face financial constraints, creative schemes could be set up including the rotation of languages to be determined, for instance, taking into account the statistics available at the DPI and included in the Secretary General's reports.

We call for the distribution of information, at least through traditional media, and particularly in radio programs, to be distributed in as many languages as possible, including Portuguese and indigenous ones. Multilingualism is inherently associated with the United Nations, due to the nature, reach and goals of the Organization.

Mr. Chairman,

The CELAC recognizes the result of the effort by the DPI in continuing to ensure that people with disabilities have access to the services of the United Nations. We invite to continue with this work, in order to remove the barriers to that access and to continue to ensure the compliance of the technical standards provided for assisting departments and offices across the Secretariat to produce accessible UN web contents.

Our Group reiterates its recognition and support for the work of the Department of Public Information and invites it to increase its efforts to continue to improve its information machinery in order to fulfill its goal of bringing the voice of the Organization to the world, and we make a call to maintain the level of services provided by the DPI during the implementation of the Capital Master Plan.

I thank you.