

Statement by Mr. Rajesh Mishra, Counsellor, Permanent Mission of India to the United Nations (24 April 2012)

Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, I would like to congratulate you as well as all the members of the Bureau of the Committee for the way you have conducted the 33rd session of the Committee. I also congratulate the new members of the Bureau on their election. We wish you all the best of success and assure you the full co-operation of India during the ongoing session of the Committee.

We also appreciate Under Secretary General Kiyo Akasaka for his dedication and contribution to the work of the UNDPI. We believe that he will always be remembered for his dynamism, creativity and the way he guided the DPI in communicating the ideas and activities of the United Nations. We wish him good health and a very happy retired life.

Mr. Chairman,

We welcome the reports of the Secretary-General on activities of the DPI in the areas of strategic communications, news service and outreach services, which enable us to have a better perspective of DPI's efforts to fulfil its mandate despite challenges emanating from limited available resources.

We express our appreciation to Mr. Maher Nasser, the Acting Head of the DPI for his comprehensive presentation on the activities of the DPI.

We also associate ourselves with the statement made by Algeria, on behalf of the G-77 and China.

Mr. Chairman,

We emphasize the need to use the widest possible range of technologies, to make the work of the DPI accessible across the digital divide, making it an effective channel for the flow of information between the UN and the peoples of the world. It is essential that the end product offered by DPI is dispensed through a wide spectrum of media channels ranging from webcasts and podcasts to the traditional and very cost-effective means of communication, such as radio and print. These remain of tremendous importance in reaching out to ordinary people in many parts of the developing world, and must constantly be kept in sight.

We note with satisfaction that viewership of the UN Webcast and followers of the DPI Twitter account have expanded manifold. However, while appreciating the efforts to expand the following of social media accounts and UN webcast, we would like to encourage the Department to further increase the number of media outlets using UN Radio programmes, by expanding its partnerships with broadcasters in various parts of the world.

Mr. Chairman,

We consider the network of UN Information Centres as crucial in enhancing the public image of the UN and in disseminating its message, particularly in the developing world. These information outposts are the real interface between the United Nations and local communities, and they need to be strengthened. We would encourage the DPI to work closely with host countries in these efforts. We would also support adequate budgetary resources being made available to strengthen public outreach and ensure the effective functioning of Information Centres in developing countries.

We would like to commend the useful and creative work being undertaken by UNIC in New Delhi, including presentation of awards to animated films on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and promotion of gender equality, and providing training and support to Model United Nations conference organizers and students. We also appreciate UNIC, New Delhi for producing translated information material in languages like Hindi, Urdu, Bangla and Tamil.

Mr. Chairman,

While appreciating DPI's Strategic Communications Division for giving comprehensive coverage to priority issues like MDGs, peace keeping operations, disarmament, counter-terrorism, climate change and sustainable development and human rights, we would like to add that the Department must seek to further deepen and strengthen the coverage and projection of the most noteworthy activities of the UN, in particular those that directly impact upon the lives of ordinary people. These include humanitarian activities as also the work performed, often under extremely demanding circumstances, by UN peacekeepers in strife-torn lands. In this regard, we would like to see the DPI, DPKO and DFS working closely in highlighting UN peacekeeping success stories and providing accurate, impartial and timely information on the regular activities of UN peacekeepers, as also on the exceptional work that they often do that goes beyond the routine keeping of the peace and the call of duty.

Mr. Chairman,

We commend DPI's Outreach Services Division for its Academic Impact, UN4U and Celebrity Advocacy initiatives aimed at improving awareness about goals, priorities and concerns of the UN and strengthening international support for the role and activities of the world body. We believe that such initiatives will help build stronger ties between the UN and its global constituencies.

We are pleased to mention that a number of Indian Universities are members of the Academic Impact initiative and that the University of Calcutta, one of our oldest and most renowned universities, is designated as Academic Hub by the UN to develop teaching-learning expertise in Peace and Conflict Resolution Studies under the Academic Impact initiative. India strongly supports this initiative of the DPI, which goes beyond the limited mandate of providing education, and in fact enables educational bodies to contribute to the UN.

We would also like to mention that India is co-sponsoring the event on the International Jazz Day on April 30, as part of the UNAI programme on "Unlearning Intolerance". We are working

closely with the DPI in organizing the event under auspices of this Committee. We would be happy to see all of you at the event.

Mr. Chairman,

We would like to assure you of India's full support to the DPI as it endeavours to project the working of the UN, and to you as you guide the work of this Committee.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.