

Statement by Minister Takahiro Nakamae, Delegation of Japan (24 April 2012)

Mr. Chairman,

First, I would like to emulate the other speakers in thanking Ambassador Eduardo Ulibarri of Costa Rica for chairing this meeting of the 34th Committee on Information. Through your able leadership, I am confident that the 34th Session of the Committee will be a productive and efficient session. As always, Japan extends its full support to you and the bureau of the Committee and we will actively participate in this important discussion.

I would also like to extend my appreciation to Mr. Nasser of the Department of Public Information (DPI) for delivering the comprehensive statement on their activities, as well as the reports of the Secretary-General A/AC/198/2012/2, 3 and 4 regarding the activities of the Department in the areas of strategic communications services, news services, and outreach. I hope that DPI will continue to work to enhance its effectiveness, efficiency and accountability, while actively engaging in public relations activities which provide timely, accurate and coherent information on the works of the Organization.

In addition, I would be amiss not to extend my deep appreciation and sincere gratitude to H.E. Mr. Kiyotaka Akasaka, who has over the course of five years served as the Under-Secretary-General of DPI, during which he also served as the UN's Coordinator for Multilingualism. H.E. Mr. Akasaka's dedication to the improvement and efficacy of DPI is evident in his work as the de facto spokesperson for all of the Organization's priorities, from the promotion of UN Women, UN Academic Impact initiative, Stand Up Against Poverty campaigns, to his most recent work to promote and educate the public on Rio+20, and countless more achievements.

Mr. Chairman,

DPI plays a crucial role in the United Nations with regards to international peace and security, human rights, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), climate change and sustainable development, gender equality, peacekeeping operations, and other important issues in its function as the principle department of the UN to communicate the work of Organization to the world's diverse audience. Without such important work being done effectively and efficiently, the United Nations would not gain the essential support necessary from the international community to be of service in the world. Therefore, it is imperative that DPI continue to identify priorities and strategically communicate them to the world, promptly and accurately, about the roles and missions of the United Nations. In particular, the effective and efficient management of the 57 United Nations Information Centres (UNICs) including UNIC Tokyo, is necessary for DPI to conduct effective public information activities in order to mobilize the interests of the global community and foster greater awareness on the priority agenda of the United Nations. Japan has commended DPI for undertaking this challenging work within existing resources to continue and even increase their important functions. Placing high importance on the role of UNICs, Japan has supported their work, including through financial support, for over 10 years, most recently making a voluntary financial contribution of Yen 26,048,000 (USD \$313,303.00) to UNIC Tokyo this March to expand the public information activities there.

Mr. Chairman,

As many of my colleagues have pointed out, the problem of a growing information gap between developed and developing countries continues to affect the balance of public information activities in areas where the people need it most of all. Japan highly appreciates DPI's efforts to combine traditional and new communication tools in this "new world of information and communication order" as it has been termed, so that countries on both sides of the gap can participate in raising the awareness of their nationals of the important work of the Organization. In this regard, Japan also expects DPI to continue to exercise fiscal discipline and increase its efforts to enhancing the efficiency of these activities through the promotion of greater internal communication, networking closely with relevant UN agencies, and coordinating closely with civil society, business, and other relevant groups on the ground in order to function better within the existing resources. As the Secretary-General himself has stated last June after being elected for a second term, "we must...do better with less."

Mr. Chairman,

As global challenges become more complex and pronounced in this "new world," so too does the work of the United Nations, the Secretary-General, and DPI. Last year's tragedies following the Great East Japan Earthquake have reminded us all that although we live in a very diverse world, we also share many commonalities. Japan continues to share the lessons learned from our own experiences with the aim of preventing such disasters and reducing the damages they cause wherever disaster may strike. As Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan Mr. Joe Nakano stated at the Thematic Debate on Disaster Risk Reduction held at the UN on 12 April, mainstreaming disaster risk reduction is an integral part of international cooperation. The rapid response of the international community following the disaster, which included disaster relief and medical assistance from 24 countries and expert teams from OCHA, FAO, IAEA, and WFP is a testament to effective international cooperation. I would like to reiterate our sincere appreciation for these efforts and special thanks to the DPI News and Media Division for their work to create and transmit the heartfelt messages of solidarity with the people of Japan that could be viewed on the internet and which encouraged the Japanese people and revived their spirit for recovery.

In connection with this, I would like to note the outstanding effort from DPI, particularly the Outreach Division and the Media Accreditation and Liaison Unit (MALU) over the past few months during our earthquake anniversary events "Overcoming the Disaster," the Japanese traditional drumming and musical concert in the General Assembly Hall and "HIKOBAE," the theatrical performance about the aftermath of the earthquake. DPI's exceptional assistance in facilitating these important events here at the UN was imperative in making the events memorable and successful.

Furthermore, the Secretary-General visited Japan from the 7th-9th of August last year, during which he traveled to Fukushima to show the solidarity of the international society with the people in affected areas. The Secretary-General's visit to Japan took place during the 66th anniversary of the dropping of the atomic bombs at Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The visit was helpful in keeping up the momentum towards the realization of a world free from nuclear

weapons. The recent launch by the DPRK is a reminder that there is much to do in this regard. The flow of information through UN agencies as well as the freedom of the press and unimpeded media can do much to keep the momentum necessary for peace and security everywhere.

Mr. Chairman,

In conclusion, Japan reiterates its commitment to continue its support of DPI's activities as it works to provide the world with accurate and timely information on the Organization, and we look forward to participating actively in the discussions held in this session of the Committee on Information.

Thank you.