



**STATEMENT BY H.E. MR. VIRACHAI PLASAI, AMBASSADOR AND  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE KINGDOM OF THAILAND TO THE  
UNITED NATIONS, ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA, AT THE  
GENERAL DEBATE OF THE 38TH SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE ON  
INFORMATION (New York, 26 April 2016)**

Mr. Chair,

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

At the outset, we express our appreciation to Ms. Cristina Gallach, Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information, for her comprehensive presentation on the activities of the Department of Public Information. We also commend the Department for its continued efforts in informing the global public of the works of the United Nations in a manner that is informative, engaging, and accessible. The importance of the Department's work cannot be stressed enough, amid increasing calls for the United Nations to better communicate to and connect with the global public, in order to be better understood and remain relevant.

Mr. Chair,

The Committee on Information is tasked by the General Assembly with an important responsibility of providing guidance and direction to the Department of Public Information. Last year, under your able leadership the Committee successfully concluded its work. We are confident that you and other members of the Bureau will once again steer the Committee towards another successful session.

Mr. Chair,

2015 was a momentous year for the United Nations. We commend the Department, in partnership with Governments, academia and civil society, for organizing events and activities to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations. 2015 was also the year of global actions on sustainable development. The issue is very dear to our Group.

We therefore appreciate the outreach efforts and communication campaigns, through various media platforms, relating to the question of sustainable development, in particular the Summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda and the United Nations Climate Change Conference and their respective outcomes.

We encourage the Department to continue to promote through its public campaigns key decisions and agreements reached by the international community, including on sustainable development, decolonization, dialogue among civilizations and the culture of peace, initiative on a world against violence and violent extremism, peacekeeping, disarmament, poverty eradication and climate change.

Mr. Chair,

The General Assembly resolution 69/324 recognizes that multilingualism promotes unity in diversity and international understanding. The Group fully supports its integration into all activities of the United Nations. While noting that some progress have been made, the Group continues to be

concerned at the disparity in the use of all official languages in United Nations public information materials and platforms, including various social media campaigns. In this regard, we encourage the Department to reinforce its efforts to narrow the gap among the official languages on United Nations websites and, as a matter of priority, to design a strategy to deliver daily press releases in all six official languages, in accordance with the relevant General Assembly resolutions.

In addition, we also reiterate our full support for the work of the United Nations Information Centres in disseminating information about the work of the United Nations in local languages. This will not only help overcome the language barrier faced by a large portion of the world population, but also enable them to participate in the discourse on global issues. We therefore encourage the Department to continue supporting them and strengthening their structure regarding both staffing and equipment.

Mr. Chair,

The Group recognizes the potential of social media to significantly amplify the United Nations messages to the widest possible audiences and to enhance greater interaction with the United Nations, in particular among the global youth population. However, the use of traditional media, including television and radio broadcast as well as print, must continue, since they remain the primary means of public communications in developing countries.

Mr. Chair,

Information and communications technologies, including social media, also pose a risk of misuse and abuse. Inaccurate reporting and distorted information can have a negative impact on nations and their citizens. The Group rejects such practice and reiterates our position that the use of such technologies should be fully compatible with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, international law, in particular the principles of sovereignty and non-interference in internal affairs of States, and internationally recognized rules of civil coexistence among States.

Mr. Chair,

The Question of Palestine and the Middle East peace process deserve our special attention. The Group underscores the importance of the Special Information Programme on the Question of Palestine in raising the international Community's awareness on this important issue and in supporting the political process to achieve a just, lasting and comprehensive peace. We commend the Department's efforts in this regard, including the annual training programme for Palestinian journalists, which aimed at strengthening skills and capacities of young Palestinian journalists, and call for their continuation and enhancement.

Mr Chair,

In conclusion, I take this opportunity to assure you of our continued and full support. We reiterate the commitment of the Group to work constructively with our partners, in order to achieve an outcome that will give the Department of Public Information policy guidance to better reach out to and connect with the people who are the true stakeholders of the Organization.

I thank you.