



STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY H.E. MR. MOURAD BENMEHIDI, AMBASSADOR / PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF ALGERIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS AND CHAIRMAN OF THE GROUP OF 77, AT THE THIRTY-FOURTH SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION (New York, 23 April 2012)

Mr. Chairman,

1. I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China at the commencement of the thirty fourth session of the Committee on Information.
2. Allow me at the outset to wish you Mr. Chairman as well as the other members of the Bureau all the best of success and assure you of the full cooperation of our Group in the work of this important body of the Organisation.
3. The Group of 77 and China expresses its appreciations to Mr. Maher Nasser, the Acting Head of the Department of Public Information for his comprehensive and informative presentation on the activities and strategies of the Department of Public Information (DPI).
4. I would like to seize this opportunity to express the appreciations of the Group for the efforts of the former Head of DPI, Mr. Kiyotaka Akasaka in managing efficiently the activities of the Department and improving the image of the United Nations and making its work known.

Mr. Chairman,

5. The close cooperation and partnership between the Department and the Committee on Information has always been the cornerstone of DPI's policies on Public Information. Therefore, the Group of 77 and China stresses the importance of strengthening this partnership and calls for its continued improvement as the DPI continues to play its vital role as a public voice to promote the purposes and image of the United Nations.
6. The Group of 77 and China has taken note of the three reports of the Secretary-General on the activities of the Department of Public Information (DPI).
7. The United Nations has made important progress in the field of public information. We are thankful to the contribution made by the DPI. However, the G77 and China would like to highlights the challenges that developing countries are facing in terms of lack of resources and technical means which are of primary importance to promote access to information regarding the United Nations activities. In this regard, we are of the view that the DPI must identify areas of strength and weakness, and to better align products and activities with targeted audiences needs. Therefore, the Department has a challenging task to reach out to the widest possible audience and project important accomplishments of the United Nations world over in order to promote greater understanding and goodwill between all nations.

Mr. Chairman,

8. The G77 and China fully supports the work of the Department of Public Information in promoting and advancing the work of the Organization through its continued campaigns on issues of importance to the international community. These issues are, among others, the United Nations

Millennium Declaration and the progress made in implementing the internationally agreed development goals; United Nations reform; the eradication of poverty; conflict prevention; peacekeeping; peacebuilding; sustainable development; disarmament; decolonization; human rights, including the rights of women and children, persons with disabilities and migrant workers; strategic coordination in humanitarian relief, especially in natural disasters and other crises; HIV/AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis, non-communicable diseases and other diseases; the needs of the African continent, the nature of the critical economic and social situation in Africa and the priorities of the New Partnership for Africa's Development; the special needs of Least Developed Countries: the establishment of the permanent memorial to the victims of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade: combating terrorism in all its forms and manifestations; dialogue among civilizations, the culture of peace and tolerance, and the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster, as well as prevention of genocide.

9. Taking into consideration the importance of the upcoming Rio+20 Conference, the Group 77 and China commends the work of DPI's 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.

10. The Group also emphasizes the importance of the DPI's Special Information Programme on the Question of Palestine in raising the international community's awareness of the Question of Palestine and in supporting the efforts to achieve a just lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East, in accordance with international law and United Nations resolutions.

11. In this connection, the Group of 77 and China congratulates the Department of Public Information for updating the permanent exhibit on the question of Palestine at the United Nations and commends the DPI for its implementation of this important Programme and underscores many of its necessary and useful elements such as the annual training for Palestinian media professionals from the Occupied Palestinian Territory that aims at assisting them in the development of their media skills and capacity. We reiterate the need for these and other activities undertaken by the DPI and call for their further enhancement and reinforcement.

Mr. Chairman,

12. The Group of 77 and China attaches great importance to the role and work of the Network of United Nations Information Centers (UNICs). In this regard, the Group fully shares the concerns of the Secretary general's which outlines that the UNICs continue to face the challenges posed by ageing office automation equipment and the lack of a cost-effective, enterprise-level system to access tools, such as the Organization's Intranet and e-mail system, available at Headquarters. In addition, more than half of the computers used by the Information Centres are at least five years old, well beyond the recommended four-year replacement standard. We, therefore, urge that all possible measures be taken to strengthen the UNICs.

13. Our Group welcomes the support by some developing Member States to offer rent-free premises to host the UNICs while bearing in mind that such support should not be a substitute for the full allocation of financial resources for the Information Centres in the context of the programme budget of the United Nations. The Group of 77 and China wishes to underline that any decision pertaining to reorganizing the UNICs must be made in close consultation with the host countries, and take into account the geographical, linguistic and technological characters and needs of different regions.

14. The Group of 77 and China welcomes the resolution A/RES/64/243 adopted by the General

Assembly which decided to establish the United Nations Information Centre in Luanda, as a contribution to addressing the need of Portuguese-speaking African countries. The Group reiterates its requests to the Secretary-General to take the necessary measures for the prompt establishment of this Centre and to report to the Committee at its thirty fifth session on the progress made in this regard.

Mr. Chairman,

15. As stated in the Secretary General's report, the use of Internet has been increased significantly in recent years and mainly in countries where the United Nations official languages are used. It's also important to note that the use of the United Nations websites has been growing due to the new content which has been added in the different languages. However, despite the efforts made by the DPI to improve the multilingual contents of the UN website, the disparity among the use of the official languages has continued to deepen, which includes the issuance of daily press releases. The Group reiterates its request that all content-providing offices in the Secretariat translate all English-language materials and databases into all official languages and make them available on the respective language websites. The Group is of the view that more resources and efforts should be allocated to achieve full parity of languages in the UN websites including the issuance of daily press releases, in order to fully take advantage of this very important resource. The Group considers that a strategy should be designed and implemented so that further steps are taken aimed at making full parity among six official languages a reality regarding website contents including the delivery of daily press releases in the six official languages.

16. At the same time, the Group emphasizes the importance of continuing the use of traditional media, including both radio and prints, in disseminating the main messages of the United Nations. Traditional media has been and still is the primary means of communication in many developing countries. The Group also continues to underscore the importance of the closer co-operation between the DPI and other substantive Departments in particular the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and the Department of Field Support (DFS). In this context, the Group welcomes the availability of the United Nations peacekeeping website in all six official languages.

17. The Group of 77 and China stresses the need for the implementation of a number of measures that will result in the modernization of the Dag Hammarskjold Library and to improve its operations and services such as developing an institutional digital repository to preserve and provide access to the Organization's digital resources as well as an improved and wider access to relevant external electronic resources. In this context, the Group invites the Dag Hammarskjold Library as the keeper of the UN's heritage and preservation of documents to continue diligently its programme to digitalize the official parliamentary records of the United Nations.

18. In conclusion, allow me, Mr. Chairman, to assure you of our full support and of our constructive and active engagement during this session. We are confident that under your able stewardship the Committee on Information will once again reach a successful outcome.

I thank you.