



**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY
COUNSELLOR AHMED ELSHANDAWILY, PERMANENT MISSION OF EGYPT
TO THE UNITED NATIONS, AT THE 40TH SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE ON
INFORMATION (New York, 1 May 2018)**

Mr. Chair,

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

At the outset, I would like to thank you, Ambassador Jan Kickert, Permanent Representative of Austria and Chair of the Committee on Information for the current period, for your commendable efforts.

We also sincerely express our appreciation to Ms. Alison Smale, Under-Secretary-General for Global Communications, Department of Public Information for her comprehensive presentation on the activities of the Department of Public Information. We would also like to thank the Department for the invaluable efforts it has exerted this past year and in previous years, in carrying out its mandate to inform its audience worldwide on UN activities. These efforts are of special importance in this day and age, especially in light of the common challenges faced by the international community, to highlight the role the UN plays in attempting to surmount those challenges, and the importance of highlighting and explaining this role to the global public.

Mr. Chair,

The previous year especially has witnessed several important milestones for the international community. These milestones were related to sustainable development, the environment and climate change, peacekeeping and many other vital issues in which the UN and its member states play a pivotal role in addressing. In this regard, the Group once again expresses its appreciation to the DPI for its outreach efforts and communication campaigns, and we especially take note of the Department's new communications campaigns, including the revitalized umbrella campaign entitled "Sustainable Development Goals: 17 Goals to transform our world", a campaign to promote the seventieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Climate Action campaign in the lead-up to the Secretary-General's 2019 climate summit, the Spotlight Initiative to eliminate violence against women and girls, a campaign to draw attention to the service and sacrifice of peacekeeping troops and a campaign to support the negotiations on global compacts on migration and refugees.

Mr. Chair,

We strongly encourage the DPI to continue to promote, through its important endeavors, the relevant milestone conferences, decisions, resolutions, and agreements that have been reached and that hopefully will be reached in the coming months. In that regard, we place special emphasis on developments related to, inter alia, sustainable development, climate change, decolonization, migration and refugees, counterterrorism, and other pressing global issues.

Mr. Chair,

Multilingualism as a main promoter of unity and international understanding has been addressed by

successive General Assembly resolutions, including resolution 71/328 which recognized that multilingualism, as a core value of the Organization, contributes to the achievement of the goals of the United Nations, as set out in Article 1 of the Charter of the United Nations and also recognized that the United Nations pursues multilingualism as a means of promoting, protecting and preserving diversity of languages and cultures globally, as well as of improving the efficiency, performance and transparency of the Organization.

The Group, while recognizing some progress on the issue, remains concerned at the continuing disparity in the use of all official languages in UN public information materials. We therefore strongly encourage the DPI to continue to exert efforts aimed at narrowing this existing gap. Additionally, the Group also highlights the importance of local languages, and in this regard, reiterates its full support for the work of the United Nations Information Centres in disseminating information about the work of the UN in local languages, with a view to surmounting the language barrier and thereby unlocking the potential for all the peoples of our diverse world to learn about, and actively contribute to, United Nations activities. We strongly commend that these Information Centres had, by January of this year, translated the Sustainable Development Goals into 61 languages.

Mr. Chair,

The importance of modern communication technologies currently available to the global public is undeniable. Some of the Group's members are in fact major contributors to the growth and development of these technologies. However, the use of legacy media such as print, and radio and TV broadcasts must continue since they remain predominant means of communication in several developing countries, as well as remaining extremely relevant with regards to communicating with all the generations that make up our global community.

Whether with regards to traditional media or modern media, the risk of inaccurate information as well as the use of information technology to subvert the legal and political order of States could potentially have a very significant negative impact on the global community, whether as a whole or with regards to individual member states. In that regard, the Group reiterates the importance that the use of communication should always 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 continues to deserve our special attention. We commend the Department for its activities in that field, including but not limited to organizing the annual training programme for Palestinian journalists during October-December of last year, and providing communications support for activities commemorating the Annual Day of Solidarity With the Palestinian People observed on 29 November. We encourage DPI to continue with these efforts.

Mr. Chair,

With regards to the issue of reform of the DPI, the Group underlines that this process should primarily take into account the priorities set out by the Committee on Information as the main subsidiary body mandated to make recommendations relating to the work of the Department. Moreover, we understand that once the internal assessment of the Department has been completed and before implementing the reforms, we firmly believe that the Department should hold

consultations with Members of the Committee. In that regard, as one of the main actors in the negotiation of the resolution adopted by the Committee every year, the Group of 77 and China anticipates its disposition to engage constructively with the Secretariat to provide feedback to the reform.

Mr. Chair,

The Group takes this opportunity to assure you of our full and continued support as well as its unwavering commitment to work constructively with you and our partners to achieve a fruitful outcome to our discussions.

I thank you.