



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 FOURTH COMMITTEE OF THE 71ST SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON AGENDA ITEM 53: QUESTION RELATING TO INFORMATION (New York, 14 October 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 sincere appreciation to Ms. Christina Gallach, Under-Secretary-General for Communication and Public Information, for her comprehensive overview of the activities of the Department of Public Information. We also commend the Department of Public Information for its continued efforts in raising awareness of the works and activities of the United Nations, as outlined in the report of the Secretary-General A/71/227.

We noted the review on the Public Information and Communications Policies and Practices in the United Nations system conducted by the Joint Inspection Unit (A/71/383). We believe the recommendations contained therein on how to improve United Nations public information and communications merit further consideration.

Mr. Chair,

We would like to congratulate Ambassador Kaha Imnadze of Georgia, who ably chaired the 38th session of the Committee on Information to a successful conclusion. We also express our appreciation to the Rapporteur of the Committee on Information, Mr. Hossein Malaki of the Islamic Republic of Iran, for presenting the report of the Committee. We recognize and fully support the work of the Committee in providing guidance and direction to the Department of Public Information.

Mr. Chair,

In 2015, Member States of the United Nations adopted the 2030 agenda for sustainable development to guide our actions over the next fifteen years on development, in order to transform our world for the better. Now is the time for implementation. Building knowledge base and ensuring accurate understanding about the Sustainable Development Goals are crucial for their implementation. The Department of Public Information has an important role in this regard. We therefore appreciate the Department's outreach efforts and communication campaigns on the promotion of SDGs through various media platforms.

In addition to the work on sustainable development, we encourage the Department to continue to promote through its public campaigns developments in other key issues of global interests including peacekeeping, disarmament, decolonization, the question of Palestine, poverty eradication and climate change.

Mr. Chair,

The Group of 77 and China reaffirm the importance of multilingualism in promoting unity in diversity and international understanding, as recognized in the General Assembly resolution 69/324. The

Group call on the United Nations to integrate multilingualism in all of its activities. While the Secretary General report indicates progress on the use of all six official languages of the United Nations in the Department's activities and products, the disparity in the use of all official languages still persists. Efforts should continue to be made in narrowing such gap among the six official languages.

Multilingualism also helps connect the United Nations with people, especially in developing countries where language remains a barrier to communication. We, therefore, support the work carried out by the United Nations Information Centres in disseminating information about the work and activities of the United Nations as well as raising awareness of challenges the world community is facing now in the

local languages. We reiterate the call for the Department to continue supporting the United Nations Information Centre and strengthening them, both in terms of staffing and equipment.

Mr. Chair,

Social media is now a part of our globalized and digitalized world. We support the use of social media by the United Nations, such as Facebook, Twitter or other channels, to reach as many audiences as possible. However, this should not be at the expense of conventional media, namely print, radio and television. A significant number of people in developing countries still do not have or have limited access to the Internet and rely mainly on traditional communication means. In doing so, the Department will contribute to closing the information gap between developing and developed countries amidst the widening digital divide.

Mr. Chair,

Our group also caution against inappropriate use of public information and abuse of information technologies. Inaccurate reporting and distorted information can have a negative impact on nations and their citizens. The United Nations, especially the Department of Public Information, should lead by example in adhering to the highest standard of accuracy, integrity, accountability as well as full compliance with purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and international law.

Mr. Chair,

Let me conclude with the reassurance of our continued support to Department of Public Information. We will work closely with our partners to better the work of the Department in reaching out to the global citizens with the messages of the United Nations.