



STATEMENT DELIVERED BY MR. SABELO SIVUYILE MAQUNGO, CHARGE D' AFFAIRES ON BEHALF OF THE G77 AND CHINA, AT THE SPECIAL POLITICAL AND DECOLONIZATION (FOURTH) COMMITTEE SESSION UNDER AGENDA ITEM 34 "QUESTIONS RELATING TO INFORMATION" (New York, 17 October 2006)

Mr. Chairman,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China on agenda item 34 entitled "Questions relating to information. I would like to congratulate you on your election to guide the work of the Special Political and Decolonisation Committee and we have every confidence that you will steer the Committee's work with efficiency. Our congratulations are also extended to the other members of the Bureau on their election.

The Group thanks the Under-Secretary General for Communication and Public information, Mr. Shashi Tharoor, for his comprehensive and useful presentation on the work carried out by the Department of Public Information (DPI) during the past six months.

Mr. Chairman,

The Group of 77 and China reaffirms the indispensable role of the DPI in promoting a positive public image of the United Nations through the provision of accurate, impartial, comprehensive and timely information to the public on the role and activities of the United Nations.

We commend the DPI for its work on its activities on various communications campaigns, particularly the thematic campaign on the establishment of the Human Rights Council. We further believe that the particular focus by the Department on the question of Palestine and promotion of Africa through highlighting the goals of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) continues to be necessary.

Mr. Chairman,

The Group reiterates its position on the importance of strengthening the public information capacity of the DPI in the field of peacekeeping operations Coordination and collaboration with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO). We therefore believe that the co-operation between the two Departments should be strengthened. At the same time, we call on the DPI to continue to promote the activities of the newly established Peace Building Commission.

The G77 and China reiterates the importance of United Nations Information Centres (UNICS) in developing countries in promoting the public image of the United Nations and in bringing the message of the United Nations closer to local populations. We maintain our view that the presence of these Centres in developing countries strengthens the flow of information in these countries and assists in addressing the disparities faced by developing countries in the areas of access to information and information technology.

While we welcome the efforts of the DPI in this regard, we call on the Department to allocate adequate resources in order to ensure the effective functioning of UNICS in developing countries. Moreover, the views of the host country should be taken into account on all proposals relating to its UNIC.

Mr. Chairman,

We are pleased at the efforts being undertaken by the Department to improve news services, especially those relating to the Office of the Spokesman for Secretary-General.

On the United Nations website, we welcome the progress that has been made in narrowing the gap among different official languages. We however, call on the DPI to continue with its efforts to attain parity of all the official languages on the website in accordance with the relevant General Assembly resolutions.

Mr. Chairman,

The G77 and China supports the efforts by the DPI to draw attention to crucial issues and developments that are often ignored by the media, especially in developing countries through the "Ten Stories the World Should Hear More About" initiative.

The Group also attaches the utmost importance to the continuation of the use of traditional media in disseminating the main messages of the United Nations since traditional media remains the primary means of communication in developing countries. In this regard, we further encourage the DPI to continue building partnerships with local, national and regional broadcasters to extend the United Nations message to all corners of the world in an accurate, impartial and effective way.

Mr. Chairman,

We are studying the proposals on the new strategic directions for United Nations libraries as outline in the report of the Secretary-General A/AC.198/2005/4. In this regard, we are studying the proposals on the expanded role given to the Dag Hammarskjöld Library in improving knowledge sharing and internal communications within the United Nations Secretariat.

In conclusion, the Group of 77 and China reaffirms its support for the work of the DPI in being the public voice of the Organisation. At the same time, it must be borne in mind that the role of DPI should be further consolidated in the ongoing process of reform. This is essential given that the DPI continues to play a leading role in promoting to the wider public worldwide, the importance of the purposes and objectives of the United Nations.

I thank you.

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