

AS DELIVERED

CLOSING REMARKS BY
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FOR COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC INFORMATION

AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE GENERAL DEBATE
OF THE 32nd SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION

WEDNESDAY, 28 APRIL 2010
CONFERENCE ROOM 2

Monsieur le Président,
Délégués distingués,

like to assure you that DPI remains fully committed to implementing this special information programme in order to raise the awareness of the international community on the question of Palestine, as well as on the situation in the Middle East, in such a way as to effectively contribute to an atmosphere conducive to dialogue and supportive of the peace process. In this regard, I'd like to inform you that preparations for the 2010 International Media Seminar on Peace in the Middle East and the 2010 DPI training programme for Palestinian journalists are currently underway.

We appreciate the concern expressed by the distinguished representative of Bangladesh on the issue of climate change. We agree that the climate change situation has significantly changed since Copenhagen. While DPI, along with its partners across the UN system, have adopted a markedly different communications approach to climate change, the Department has

special theme “Haiti Standing.” A special exhibition on Haiti will open in the General Assembly Public Lobby on May 28th.

DPI has produced information materials in Chinese for the World Expo in Shanghai, which will observe the UN Peacekeeping Week from 29 May to 5 June. These materials include a DVD on women in peacekeeping, entitled, “Power to Empower,” a peacekeeping operation timeline and fact sheet, and photographs and other exhibit materials. The UN Police Adviser will represent the United Nations at the Peacekeeping Week observation at the World Expo. DPI is also participating in a forthcoming field personnel selection exercise, which DFS is conducting in Brindisi, Italy.

The delegations of India and Pakistan indicated that DPI should publicize their contributions to UN peacekeeping more. I am pleased to inform you in this regard that the 2009 *Year in Review in UN Peace Operations*, for example, features a photo of Pakistani General Ghuman, Commander of the South Kivu Brigade, working with the visiting Under-Secretary-General for Field Support, Susana Malcorra, in Bukavu, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The publication also highlights the all-female Formed Police Unit from India to the UN Mission in Liberia.

With regard to the statement made by the Minister of Information of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, H.E. Mr. Lambert Mende Omalanga, on the work of MONUC, I drew the attention of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to his concerns. We have been advised by DPKO that MONUC is not engaged in lobbying anybody in the DRC in order to influence decisions regarding MONUC’s future. The mandate of the Mission and its duration fall within the purview of the Security Council.

We have been further advised by DPKO that when MONUC releases information regarding developments in the country and about its own actions, it does so in line with the principles and guidelines of the United Nations regarding relations with the media, and in the interest of transparency and informing all interested audiences, including the media and the public, about the Mission’s actions and the context in which MONUC is operating. The Mission makes every effort to verify the accuracy of the information it releases, and to indicate the source, as appropriate, if MONUC is not the primary source.

With regard to the incident of 4 April, to which the Minister of Information referred, I understand that MONUC’s investigation is continuing.

Mr. Chairman,

Several speakers, including many speakers today such as Egypt, Russia, Lebanon and Tunisia, discussed the importance of achieving linguistic parity in the work of the Department, particularly on the UN website. As I have emphasized before, multilingualism is one of the cornerstones of our work related to the UN’s web presence.

However, there are several important points that I would like to note in this regard. First, not all the content presented on the website originates from – or is produced by – DPI. A

significant part of it is posted by various departments and other content-providing offices. Many of them do not have sufficient resources to reproduce and post that content in all official languages, although we are doing our best to encourage them to work towards language parity.

Our Department faces similar resource constraints, particularly as we try to strike a judicious balance in the allocati

flexibility for visitors, who can now choose either a guide-led or audio tour in any of the six official languages they choose. The audio tours have significantly reduced the waiting time for tours and have been developed in two formats -- one that caters to adults, and one that caters to children under 10 years old.

Mr. Chairman,

On behalf of my Department, I would like to thank the many delegates who have spoken so highly about the work of our Information Centres and the need to ensure that they are provided adequate resources to carry out their work. Among the speakers on this subject was the distinguished representative of Yemen, who spoke on behalf of the G77 and China, and who urged that all possible measures be taken to strengthen UNICs, which are – in his words - “a vital source for the flow of information.”

The work of UNICs was variously described by other Member States as “vitaly important,” “essential,” and “the most direct means of communicating with the world public.” We are grateful for this positive feedback.

I would especially like to thank those Member States who continue to provide support to the Information Centres, either through rent-free premises or voluntary contributions, and hope that others will be inclined to follow suit. DPI also appreciates the statement by the distinguished representative of Brazil, encouraging more Member States to offer rent-free and maintenance-free premises for UNICs. Indeed, as he pointed out, this would allow the Department to concentrate its limited resources on outreach and public information activities.

As I mentioned, I last year wrote letters to those Member States that host a UN information centre to consider either providing the UNIC with rent-free premises or subsidizing its rent. I regret to inform you that the response to my letter was not encouraging. I intend to write another letter to the Governments concerned, and I will continue to press this issue about the UN information centres, which you so highly value.

Several delegations welcomed the decision by the General Assembly to establish an Information Centre in Angola. In this regard, the pledge of support from the Government of Angola, which was conveyed by the Honourable Gc conveyed 337 Tw[, of94f0cs0003 TczNICs. I3302 T

press, which we will address tomorrow with a high-level segment and panel discussion on the theme Freedom of Information: the Right to Know.

I would like to add one final word. I appreciate the comments by delegations who said that the mission of the Department of Public Information is “to provide timely, accurate, impartial, comprehensive, relevant and coherent information on UN objectives and activities to the widest global public.” This is the mantra that I have been using on every occasion. I am glad that we agree on this mission. I repeat that we will make our best effort every day “to provide timely, accurate, impartial, comprehensive, relevant and coherent information on UN objectives and activities to the widest global public”. We look forward to working closely with you to accomplish this goal.

Délégués distingués,

Bien que le débat formel soit maintenant achevé, le Département de l’information, dont j’ai la responsabilité, attend de poursuivre ce dialogue par l’intermédiaire du Bureau dont il dispose pour traiter de ces questions et de tout autre sujet pertinent. J’attendrai avec impatience le résultat de vos délibérations au cours des jours qui viennent, ainsi que la direction stratégique et les conseils que le Comité fournira à travers les recommandations qu’il fera à l’Assemblée générale réunie en sa soixante-cinquième session.

Je vous remercie.