

STATEMENT BY MR.TARIQ ANWAR, MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT AND MEMBER OF THE
INDIAN DELEGATION, IN THE SPECIAL POLITICAL AND DECOLONIZATION
COMMITTEE (FOURTH COMMITTEE) ON AGENDA ITEM: 32: QUESTIONS RELATING
TO INFORMATION ON OCTOBER 22, 2008



Mr. Chairman,

The Indian delegation welcomes this opportunity to comment on the topic of "Questions relating to Information". Through his comprehensive statement at this session, on the activities in the first half of 2008, Under-Secretary-General Akasaka has set the tone for a lively debate. I would like to complement him for his leadership in revitalizing the Department of Public Information (DPI) and assure him of our support in meeting the challenges ahead. I would also like to associate my delegation with the statements made on behalf of G-77 and NAM.

Mr. Chairman,

The DPI has a pivotal role to play as it is the conduit for the flow of information between the UN, member states, media, civil society and the public at large. We take note of DPI's strategic focus in the areas of peace and security, development and human rights. Its success will be measured by its ability to meet its goals within limited resources.

Mr. Chairman,

DPI needs to intensify its efforts to meet the concerns and special needs of the developing countries in the field of information. Populations in developing countries that continue to be deprived of the benefits of the information revolution need to benefit from all aspects of the information and knowledge economy. Traditional means of communication, including radio and print, retain great relevance for spreading the UN message in developing countries. We encourage the combination of traditional means, such as print and radio, with modern technologies, such as webcasts and podcasts.

We also support the effort to facilitate the emergence of a world in which information is disseminated not merely in UN official languages, but also in other languages. Increasing the level of local content and involvement in the production of programme material will make the information more relevant locally. It will also encourage local talent and creativity to involve itself in the work of the UN.

Mr. Chairman,

The role of United Nations Information Centres [UNICs] in disseminating information about the activities of the United Nations, especially in developing countries, is critical. Adequate budgetary resources must be assigned to UNICs. We encourage the DPI to consult closely with host countries, other countries served by these Information Centres, as well as the concerned region, in its efforts at further improvisation and innovation. Development of websites in local languages must also remain a primary DPI concern. In this context we welcome efforts of DPI to expand its partnerships with international broadcasters as well as post programmes on the UN Radio website in Asian languages including Hindi, Bangla and Urdu.

Mr. Chairman,

Information needs to be spread in a manner that makes it interesting and enjoyable for the audience. This is not easy to achieve and those working on content management must be driven by a constant desire for improvement. Moreover, DPI's programmes should seek to focus their coverage on projection of the most noteworthy activities of the UN, in particular, those that directly impact upon the lives of ordinary

people. These include humanitarian activities as also the work performed, often under extremely demanding circumstances, by UN peacekeepers.

We would particularly like to see DPI, DPKO and DFS work closely in highlighting UN Peacekeeping success stories by providing accurate, impartial and timely information on the activities of UN Peacekeepers, including the exceptional work undertaken by them beyond their routine tasks. The DPI, by projecting stories of goodwill and down to earth cooperation, could go a long way towards creating a positive image for the United Nations and its peacekeepers. The establishment of United Nations Radio Stations in five peacekeeping operations is a welcome move.

In conclusion, Mr Chairman, I would like to assure you of India's full backing as you guide the work of this Committee, as well as to the DPI as it seeks to project the UN story.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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