

**Statement by Mr. Arun Jaitley, Member of Parliament & Member of the Indian Delegation, on Agenda Item 55 – Question Relating to Information at the Special Political Decolonization [Fourth] Committee of the 68<sup>th</sup> Session of the United Nations General Assembly on October 16, 2013**

**Mr. Chairman,**

At the outset, on behalf of India, I would like to congratulate **Ambassador Carlos Garcia Gonzalez** of El Salvador on his election as Chairman of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee to the 68th General Assembly, as also the other members of the Bureau on their election. I wish you all the best of success and assure you of my country's continued co-operation and support. I would also like to congratulate the former Chairman, the Permanent Representative of Gabon, **Ambassador Noel Nelson Messone**, for doing an admirable job in conducting this committee during the 67<sup>th</sup> session of the General Assembly.



We also welcome the report of the Secretary-General on Questions Relating to Information (A/68/315), which provides an update on the activities of the Department of Public Information (DPI) in the areas of strategic communication services, news services and outreach services, and enables us to have a better understanding of DPI's efforts to fulfill its mandate, despite challenges emanating from limited availability of resources. We also welcome the report of the Committee on Information contained in document A/68/21.

India aligns itself with the statement made by Fiji on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

**Mr. Chairman,**

We underline the central role played by the DPI in promoting and advancing the work of the United Nations, and taking the issues of global importance, such as the internationally agreed upon development goals, to the larger world audience. We also take note of the DPI's efforts to highlight the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and promote consultations on the post-2015 development agenda, and the various events held by it in this regard.

The role played by the UN Information Centers (UNICs) is also noteworthy. The UNICs act as an important interface between the UN and local communities, and by improving awareness about the work of the United Nations, help enhance its public image. We are happy to note that these information outposts have played an important role in giving due publicity to the MDG Report 2013, and have also promoted local, national and sub-regional consultations on the post-2015 development agenda. We are of the view that the UNICs, particularly in the developing countries, should be strengthened through provision of adequate budgetary support, and urge the DPI to work in close cooperation with the host countries in these efforts.

It is important to raise local content and local involvement in the production of DPI's publicity material. The UNICs, which have the capacity to work in local languages, can significantly contribute in this regard. This will also enable local talent to be involved in the work of the United Nations. We also urge DPI to encourage the UNICs to deepen their collaboration with local communities, in order to take the UN agenda to the grass root level.

We particularly commend the work of the UN Information Centre in New Delhi, which organized a well-received commemorative event in cooperation with UN-Women in April this year, and subsequently in July, also organized the national launch of the MDG Report 2013.

**Mr. Chairman,**

The academic community can play a crucial role in promoting the UN agenda. It is, therefore important for the DPI to continue expanding its partnership with institutions of higher learning under its Academic Impact initiative. We note with satisfaction that more than one thousand colleges and universities from over 120 countries have enrolled themselves as members of this initiative. We are happy that a large number of universities in India have also joined this initiative, and have committed to carry out activities aimed at promoting the UN mandate.

India has always been supportive of the Academic Impact initiative, and has been collaborating with the DPI in organizing events to promote intercultural dialogue and understanding, under the "unlearning intolerance" series. We are pleased to mention that on May 30, 2013, the Indian Mission joined the DPI and the Permanent Mission of Bangladesh to organize an event to mark the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the award of the Noble Prize for Literature to poet Rabindranath Tagore.

**Mr. Chairman,**

As highlighted by the Secretary General in his report on ‘Questions Relating to Information’, the DPI has, in conjunction with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and the Department of Field Support (DFS), been organizing activities on the United Nations Peacekeeping Missions in Africa. We appreciate these efforts, and hope that the DPI will continue to work more closely with the DPKO and DFS to highlight the work of the UN Peacekeepers, their success stories as well as the exceptional work being done by them, that often goes un-noticed.

**Mr. Chairman,**

We support the efforts towards multilingualism by the DPI, which enables the UN to disseminate information not only in its official languages, but also in other languages. We are happy to note that the DPI is now producing media content in several other languages, including some Indian ones. These efforts need to be further intensified and widened, so as to reach a larger audience.

**Mr. Chairman,**

As indicated by the Secretary General in his report, there are an ever growing number of people becoming aware of the working of the United Nations, through modern communication networks and social media platforms. We welcome the use of the widest possible range of technologies, including the new information and communication technologies based on the internet, in the work of the DPI. However, we would like to underline that many countries in the developing world are still far behind in technological terms, and therefore it is essential that media products of the DPI are disseminated through the widest possible spectrum of media tools, including the traditional media. Use of widely used media tools like radio and print continues to be of importance to reach out to people in the developing countries.

**Mr. Chairman,**

Let me conclude by conveying India’s good wishes to the DPI, and our continued support to its efforts to project the great work being done by the United Nations.

**Thank you, Mr. Chairman.**

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