

Mr. Chairman,

It is a great pleasure to see you, Ambassador Chowdhury, presiding over this Committee once again. I am confident that our work will continue to proceed smoothly under your able leadership. I also wish to express my appreciation to Mr. Shashi Tharoor, Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information, for the very comprehensive, policy-oriented presentation that he made yesterday.

Mr. Chairman,

As you are aware, the United Nations is now facing a number of difficult challenges, and the necessity of UN reform is being asserted with increasing urgency. In this connection, a high-level panel was established last year on the initiative of Secretary-General Kofi Annan, and the Panel is in the midst of ongoing, active debate on this issue.

Mr. Chairman,

At this time, it is a matter of the utmost importance for the UN to garner the support and understanding of the international community, and the role of the Department of Public Information and the UN Information Centres has become that much more critical as a result.

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purpose of achieving budget savings for the Department. Such efforts must have as their primary goal streamlining the flow of information and making the content more effective. That undertaking requires the efforts of Member States in addition to the steps being taken by DPI.

Japan has been cooperating actively for the further strengthening of UN information services. The importance Japan attaches to UN information activities is reflected in the assistance it

dollars will be provided, and in 2005, the Japanese government contribution is expected to increase to as much as 350,000 dollars, an amount which will include the facilities expenses

importance of the UN among the Japanese people. As you know, Japan is the second largest financial contributor to the UN regular budget and a major financial contributor to many UN agencies. Such a high level of support is possible only with the understanding and support of Japanese taxpayers concerning UN activities.

