

Statement by Mr. Mansoor Suhail, Press Counsellor, Permanent Mission of Pakistan to the United Nations (28 April 2004)

Mr. Chairman,

The United Nations Committee on Information has the primary responsibility of addressing all issues in the domain of information. It had been envisaged as the forum to formulate a cogent and coherent information policy for the world which could bring about harmony, goodwill and greater understanding amongst peoples by building bridges between various societies, cultures, religions and regions. It was also supposed to have served as the vehicle for

world of not only the deliberations of the member states, but also the policies and activities of the UN Secretariat. The role and performance of the Strategic Communication Services and the News Services Wings of the DPI has been of special significance to us. We have noted the concept of DPI envisaged in the Secretary General's report contained in document A/AC.198/2004/7, providing thematic overview of the DPI's four sub-programmes during 2006-2007. My delegation is convinced however, that the understanding of and support for the work of the UN on priority thematic issues, can go a long way in stepping up the process of developing understanding and goodwill between peoples of the world, through the UN Information Center services and other branches of the Strategic Communication Division.

The UN Information Centers play a pivotal role in reaching out to the people in their subjective countries of accreditation. Pakistan delegation attaches great importance to the work of the UN Information Centers, which can carry out a whole range of activities for a comprehensive dissemination of information about the priorities and objectives of the United Nations system. The network of these United Nations Information Centers has the capacity to reach out to the peoples around the globe through the media in different capitals of the world to effectively communicate the goals of the UN. Dissemination of information can be tailored to the objective requirements of a certain society, and the outreach depends on logistical impediments. Only United Nations Information Centers can do so effectively and comprehensively.

Mr. Chairman,

The media in the developed world can have direct access to the UN. Even otherwise it has the resources to cover the UN in a comprehensive manner depending on the will to do so. It is, on the contrary, the media and the people in a country like my own, which would need to be catered to with regard to the news concerning the U.N.. The United Nations Information Centers can do so most effectively. The concept of creating regional hubs has served to affect and hit at the most vital of the information services rendered by the DPI. The objective stated for this exercise in the report of the Secretary General contained in A/AC.198/2004/3, specifies that the concept of regionalization is "to strengthen the flow and exchange of information in developing countries". The report acknowledges that the majority of people of developing countries still do not have direct access, either to delivery services based on information and communication technologies or to the information products they provide. The report further states, that "the Secretary-General is aware that the gap between developed and developing countries regarding access to information and communications technologies has continued to widen, and that vast segments of the populations in developing countries have yet to benefit from the information and technological revolution. The digital divide, especially the lack of connectivity, makes it all the more difficult to overcome the transportation and communications barriers that exist in much of the developing world.

The above evaluation of the Secretary General is pertinent. However, the strategy seems somewhat misplaced. The performance and efficiency of the United Nations Information Centers can be improved. The performance and efficiency of the United Nations Information Centers can be improved.

My delegation joins others in observing the Freedom of the Press Day every year on May third. We attach great importance to the principle of freedom of information and press. Pakistan has a commendable record of achievements and accomplishments in this field. As a result of policy decision of the Government, the public and private media, both print and electronic, have multiplied and emerged as strong pillars for sustainable democracy in

