

Mr. Chairman,

This 26th session of the Committee on Information provides us with an opportunity to thank the Department of Public Information, its chief, Under-Secretary-General Shashi Tharoor, and all his staff, for the work effected over the past year. In the Swiss delegation's opinion, a good job was done in terms of communication, under often difficult circumstances.

Our gratitude is particularly addressed to Ms. Thérèse Gastaut, who ran this Committee's secretariat with great competence and to whom we offer our best wishes in view of her upcoming retirement.

My delegation notes with satisfaction that the DPI has progressed in the implementation of reforms, notably its new orientation towards providing information as a client-oriented concept, and formulated with its customers' specific needs in mind. This positive approach must allow the establishment of closer ties between the public and our Organisation, between the citizens of our States and the United Nations, by making the actions it undertakes and the policies it follows more comprehensible. A real step forward in the direction of more modern and efficient communication has been taken, and we will acknowledge with interest the evaluations to be carried out.

My delegation also rejoices that the use of modern means of communication has consequently been introduced, such as the Internet, and notes that more traditional means of information, such as the radio, remain indispensable and must be adapted to specific circumstances. If it has not been possible to attain all the goals — for example the implementation of the Official Documents System of the United Nations, originally foreseen in Spring but postponed until this Fall — the results attained are nonetheless significant.

As we've learned from the World Summit on the Information Society — the first phase of which was held last December in Geneva and whose second phase will be held next year in Tunis — even though we started working with new technology more than eight years ago, much remains to be done.

Mr. Chairman,

Two of the reports submitted to our Committee merit particular observations from my delegation.

As concerns the rationalisation of the network of United Nations Information Centres (UNICs), the report informs us on the status of implementation of the Secretary-General's proposed

