

## **Statement by H.E. Ambassador Hjalmar W. Hannesson, Acting Permanent Mission of Iceland to the United Nations (25 April 2006)**

Allow me to begin by thanking the Under-Secretary-General Mr. Shashi Tharoor for his comprehensive opening address yesterday and for his able leadership of the Department of Public Information (DPI). I would also like to thank the Department for the timely issuance of the reports that we have in front of us for this meeting, which provide a very useful and detailed overview of the activities of the Department and provide a solid basis for our discussion.

Iceland attaches much importance to the work of the Department of Public Information which has shown an excellent ability to cater to the very varied needs of its clients. The DPI has succeeded in responding to a changing environment and rapid technological innovations, while maintaining the basic, traditional means of reaching audiences far and wide, young and old, at all levels of development and bringing the important messages of the United Nations to the world.

We welcome the identification of three strategic goals by the DPI to enhance the communications work by pursuing well defined and targeted delivery of information; to build partnerships with civil society and to exploit ongoing advances in information and communication technology.

My delegation takes note of the report on the continued rationalisation of the network of United Nations Information Centres (UNIC) and the progress achieved so far in the implementation of a regional strategic communications model - by rationalizing the network of UN information centres around regional hubs. We wish to express our support for this initiative and the creation of a network that more effectively addresses the needs of client audiences. Like many European countries, Iceland supports the work of UNICs, in particular the UN Regional Information Centre for Western Europe in Brussels and stresses the importance of providing these offices with sufficient resources to ensure and enhance their programme activities. The Icelandic Government contributes financially to the running of a UN centre in Iceland run by the Icelandic UN Society.

We warmly welcome the report of the Secretary General on modernization and integrated management of UN libraries, which underlines that a significant progress has been made by United Nations libraries since last year in the implementation of new activities to better support the core work of the Organization and to streamline traditional library processes, moving away from collections to connections. We are impressed with the scope of the changes being undertaken which will affect all aspects of the work of UN-libraries.

We welcome the continued efforts of the Department to improve the UN web site which is an important source of information and is growing in popularity as illustrated by the increasing number of users. Full access to the Official Document System (ODS) on the Web will be another important step towards an open and transparent process of governing the United Nations.

Advances in information technology are among the strongest driving forces behind increased productivity and wealth creation in many parts of the world. It is important that information technological advances are made available throughout the world. The role of information technology should therefore be borne in mind in all development cooperation.

Mr. Chairman,

Credibility and worldwide understanding are fundamental to support for the UN. Effective and targeted communication is a key tool for the United Nations in promoting global awareness and greater understanding of the UN and its work in priority areas. Iceland looks forward to working with all members of this Committee in a constructive manner to improve the effectiveness and comprehensiveness of UN's communications.