

Mr. Chairman,

Allow me to join the previous speakers in extending the warm congratulations of my delegation for your well-deserved election as the Chairman of the 25th session of the Committee on Information. I would also like to express my delegation's congratulations to the other members of the Bureau. My delegation expresses its thanks to the outgoing Chairman of Committee Ambassador Milos Alcalay of Venezuela for the effective manner in which he presided over the deliberations of the Committee, over the past two years, at a time when the DPI has been undergoing through a far-reaching reorientation of its work program. My delegation is specially grateful to Mr. Shashi Tharoor, Under-Secretary General for Communications and Public Information for its comprehensive and as usually, eloquent and thought provoking presentation on the work done and strategies for its future development.

Mr. Chairman,

The 25th meeting of the Committee on Information is being held at a time of serious

new mission statement is solidly based on the priorities set forth in the Millennium Declaration.

My delegation attaches special importance to the fact that under the Department's new structure, the network of information centers, services and information components of UN offices had been made an integral part of the Strategic Communications Division. In our view this would be an important step towards "bringing the UN closer to the people" by reaching out civil society, academic community and even individuals. It is also essential for coordination and streamlining of the information activities of the UN system, and its specialized agencies.

We believe that the special needs of the developing countries should be kept in mind in implementation of restructuring of the United Nations information centers and it should be implemented in close consultations with the concerned Member States.

Many developing countries lack the necessary infrastructure and resources in monetary terms and human resources to benefit from the rapid advance of information and communication technology. Until the ever increasing digital divide is addressed effectively, radio broadcasting still remains the most cost effective and universal means of communications popular in many developing countries. We, therefore, fully support the project on the development of international radio broadcasting capacity for the United Nations.

Where there is no UN Information center the information components of UN offices could play a pivotal role in providing and dissemination of information on UN activities. While we support the need for a strict observance of multilingualism, we should not lose sight of the fact that there are only 6 official languages of the United Nations. In many developing countries, where none of these languages are neither spoken nor popular only the elite and privileged have access to the United Nations and the UN Offices web sites in those countries. We are of the view that bridging this gap requires innovative steps on part of the information components of the UN Offices so that they have websites in local language and cooperate closely with the local media and civil society and win their active involvement. In my view a monthly briefing or