

Under-Secretary-General Shashi Tharoor,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Allow me to express my sincere gratitude to the members of the Committee on Information for electing me as your Chairman for the next two years. On behalf of the newly-elected Bureau, I wish to assure the Committee that, with the support of the Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information, Mr. Shashi Tharoor, and the staff of the Department of Public Information, I will make every effort to ensure that this twenty-seventh session is a productive one, and that its results are fully reflective of the vision that the Secretary-General have for DPI, and do deliver on the expectations the membership has from a Department they hold in trust and respect.

I should also like to express my sincere appreciation and gratitude to Ambassador Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury for his wise and skilful leadership over the past two years. I shall continue to count on him for support and guidance.

In recent years, the relationship between the Committee and the Department of Public Information has been characterized by a very high level of cooperation and partnership. This has been possible thanks in large part to the exceptional leadership of Under-Secretary-General Tharoor. His energy, creativity and willingness to implement change have greatly contributed to the renewal of DPI. I look forward to working with you, Mr. Tharoor, and with your staff, to further the activity of your Department. I would also like to welcome Ms. Paula Refolo as Secretary of the Committee. On behalf of the Bureau, I trust we will be counting on Ms. Refolo and her team for an excellent cooperation.

The Committee is meeting at an extraordinary time in the history of the Organization. It will turn sixty this year, a milestone in any way you measure it. Coinciding with the observance of the sixtieth anniversary of the Organization and marking five years of progress towards the implementation of the Millennium Declaration, the Secretary-General has presented to Member States a package of bold and far-reaching policy and institutional reform proposals. These changes could provide an effective collective response to current global threats and also lead to the renewal of our Organization. Of course, public information is an integral part of this renewal, as the Secretary-General affirmed this in his 2002 reform proposals, and DPI

