

Mr. Chairman,

I have the honor to address the Committee on Information at its 27th session on behalf of the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries, comprised of Angola, Brazil, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, Portugal, São Tomé and Príncipe and Timor-Leste.

At the outset, allow me to congratulate you on your election, as well as the other members of Bureau, and to assure you of our Community's readiness to work constructively with a view to improving the capacity of the United Nations in the field of public information and communications.

We would also like to extend our appreciation to the Secretary-General for the preparation of the reports that will serve as the basis of our work during this session and in the months ahead.

Mr. Chairman,

Our Community acknowledges the valuable work of the Department of Public Information in raising awareness of the broad range of UN endeavors, as well as in providing real time information in strenuous situations. In this sense, we consider the work of the DPI to be crucial for ensuring the external accountability of the UN and we welcome the efforts of its staff, under the leadership of Mr. Shashi Tharoor, towards increased efficiency.

In this connection, we reiterate the request for the opening of an UN Regional Information Centre in Luanda, in accordance with the offer made by the Government of Angola, to address the special needs of the Portuguese Speaking African Countries.

We have taken note of the Secretary General's indication that, in the current biennium, resources are not available for opening and operating an additional information centre. Our understating is that such an evaluation does not exclude the possibility of allocating the necessary resources for the opening of Luanda's hub in the forthcoming programme budget for the biennium 2006/2007.

With regards to Brazil, we welcome the Secretary-General's evaluation of the "essential role" played by the Rio de Janeiro UNIC in reaching a variety of constituencies in the country and extending essential communications support to the remainder of the UN Brazilian country team. As we have pointed out in previous occasions, the Rio de Janeiro UNIC, currently the only Portuguese language UNIC, is a special case in Latin America, and deserves continued support.

A word should also be said about Timor-Leste. While its public information concerns are currently still met by the UN presence in that country, we should begin to envisage as of now the provision of UN information services in Portuguese language once the current United Nations Mission in Timor-Leste completes its mandate.

In all these cases, adequate arrangements for translation of reports into Portuguese should be provided.

Mr. Chairman,

Despite increasing technological progress, traditional means of communication, such as radio, remain effective and far-reaching media instruments, particularly in developing

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benefit of developing countries, so as to bridge the information gap between the developed and developing world.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.