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CLOSING REMARKS BY
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FOR COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC INFORMATION

AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE GENERAL DEBATE
OF THE 30TH SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION

WEDNESDAY, 30 APRIL 2008, 11:30 A.M.
CONFERENCE ROOM 1

M. le Président,
Distingués délégués,

Merci de me donner la parole pour m'adresser au Comité, au moment où vous concluez le débat général de cette trentième session. Permettez-moi de commencer en remerciant toutes les délégations pour les paroles aimables qu'elles m'ont adressées, ainsi qu'au Département de l'information et à son personnel. J'apprécie tout particulièrement les conseils et le soutien que vous m'avez prodigués au cours de ma première année à la tête de notre Département.

Les nombreux comf

Sur le terrain, la contribution importante que les

quantité de documentation potentiellement disponibl

information and knowledge, thereby reinforcing their roles and making their services more relevant.

Mr. Chairman,

A number of delegations referred to the Department's special information programme on the question of Palestine, including the distinguished representative of Palestine participating as an observer this morning. DPI continues to implement this General Assembly-mandated programme objectively. The programme includes an annual training session for Palestinian media practitioners, an annual media seminar on peace in the Middle East, updating booklets and materials, and other activities. In this connection, I am pleased to announce the decision by the Government of Austria to co-host this year's media seminar in Vienna in October. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Austrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs for this generous offer.

I would like to thank the distinguished delegate of China for his interest in the evaluations conducted by the Department. In 2007, a major focus of our assessment activities was our work with the media. This included best practices and lessons learned in working with UN system partners to produce relevant and timely media products and services. We also examined UNIC media outreach activities and analyzed the placement of opinion pieces by the Secretary-General and other senior officials, to better understand what factors influenced the willingness of newspapers to print such pieces.

DPI uses the information from such evaluations to continuously improve its products and services, but we also use it to report to you, as succinctly as possible, what we have achieved. Most recently, we collected data on such DPI activities as the UN CyberSchoolbus, library services, and the Reham al-Farra journalists' fellowship programme, to cite just a few examples. Owing to space limitations, however, not all the evaluation results could be fully reflected in the report on the activities of DPI and we, therefore, included an overall rating, compiled from all the feedback we received across all target audiences. As mentioned in the report on the activities of the Department, 84% of our respondents were satisfied with DPI's products and services, compared to 80% in 2005.

DPI also works closely with the Pretoria-based NEPAD Secretariat, providing its staff and advisers with updates on Africa's progress on the MDGs, arranging opportunities for NEPAD's senior officials to speak to the press when they are in New York, and facilitating the flow of information on NEPAD's sectoral programmes to a wider audience. Also in cooperation with the Secretariat, the Department is making widely available in print for the first time, copies of [redacted] and is looking for partners to produce this booklet in some of the major African languages.

The Department is also playing an important role in the UN's inter-agency consultative group charged with formulating joint projects that will further NEPAD's implementation.

In response to the concerns voiced by several Member States, our Department, in consultation with the Department of Safety and Security and other relevant offices, will do what it can to facilitate access by press officers from the permanent missions to restricted areas during periods of elevated security, such as the opening of the General Assembly.

In response to questions on the Capital Master Plan, our Department is working very closely with the CMP Secretariat and with colleagues in the Department of Management and the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management to ensure that coverage of all open meetings, as well as of briefings and other public events, are maintained during the renovation of the complex. There will, however, be certain limitations during the renovation time and logistical issues, as well as the possible impact of unforeseen circumstances for a project of this magnitude and complexity.

For coverage, connectivity is key and our Department, the Information Technology Services Division and the Department of Management have been involved in detailed planning with the CMP Secretariat to ensure that cabling and connectivity is available for TV, radio and Internet needs. DPI has worked very closely with these offices, including with the Broadcast Conference and Support Section, to plan for not only normal Secretariat IT functions, but also the special needs of coverage. Detailed discussions have been held on connectivity issues to enable full coverage and dissemination of audio, video and electronic outputs.

In addition, issues such as stake-out areas, camera positions, desks for press

that given cost constraints, there may be some small quality loss in lighting, for example, in some temporary rooms.

Proximity to conference and broadcast facilities has been the primary criteria for the location of News and Media Division staff during the CMP. A number of staff will remain on-site: broadcast, webcast and photo staff in the basement; staff servicing the press corps in the Library and South Annex. The rest of the News and Media Division staff will be located in DC-1 across the street, providing

Finally, I would like to repeat what I said at the opening of this session of the Committee. My approach to the work of the Department is based on the idea that a strategic approach will result in the best and most effective outcome. I have emphasized this strategic approach because we need to plan and prepare ahead, prioritize, coordinate, and enhance partnerships. I have promoted this idea in every aspect of our work. Last year, as you have seen, we prioritized our work in such areas as climate change, the Millennium Development Goals and peace and security. This year, a number of events have taken place. But these events are not taking place separately from each other. We are trying to prioritize our activities so that they are more effective and have a greater impact.

You have said that the good image of the United Nations should be promoted by our Department. Indeed, as I mentioned, there are some concerns in certain areas of the world about the United Nations' image. This may be because of the lack of our public information activities, or because of substantive disagreements among Member States on important issues before the United Nations. We must enhance and strengthen our activities so that the United Nations' goals and ideas can be better understood, and so that we can achieve stronger support from the global general public. And it is because of our limited resources and constraints that we need to prioritize our work and take a strategic approach. We would like to enhance our partnership with Member States, NGOs, civil society, business and young people. You will see that we are doing some interesting things with partners like filmmakers and screenwriters, because through them, we know that our work will be understood by a greater general public.

As to the management of our Department, I mentioned six basic principles to my colleagues when I began my work in the Department, which I refer to as TEAPOT: transparency, efficiency, accountability, partnership, organized approach and teamwork. I believe that under these principles, our staff have produced enormously important work. You have seen our work with television, radio, webcasting, press releases, and organized events and seminars – and I hope you have seen a difference. I would like to make sure that with greater transparency, efficiency, accountability, partnerships, an organized approach and teamwork, our Department will be even more effective and more responsive to the needs of the Organization. I also hope that it will make a difference in helping to make the United Nations stronger for a better world.

Distinguished delegates,

