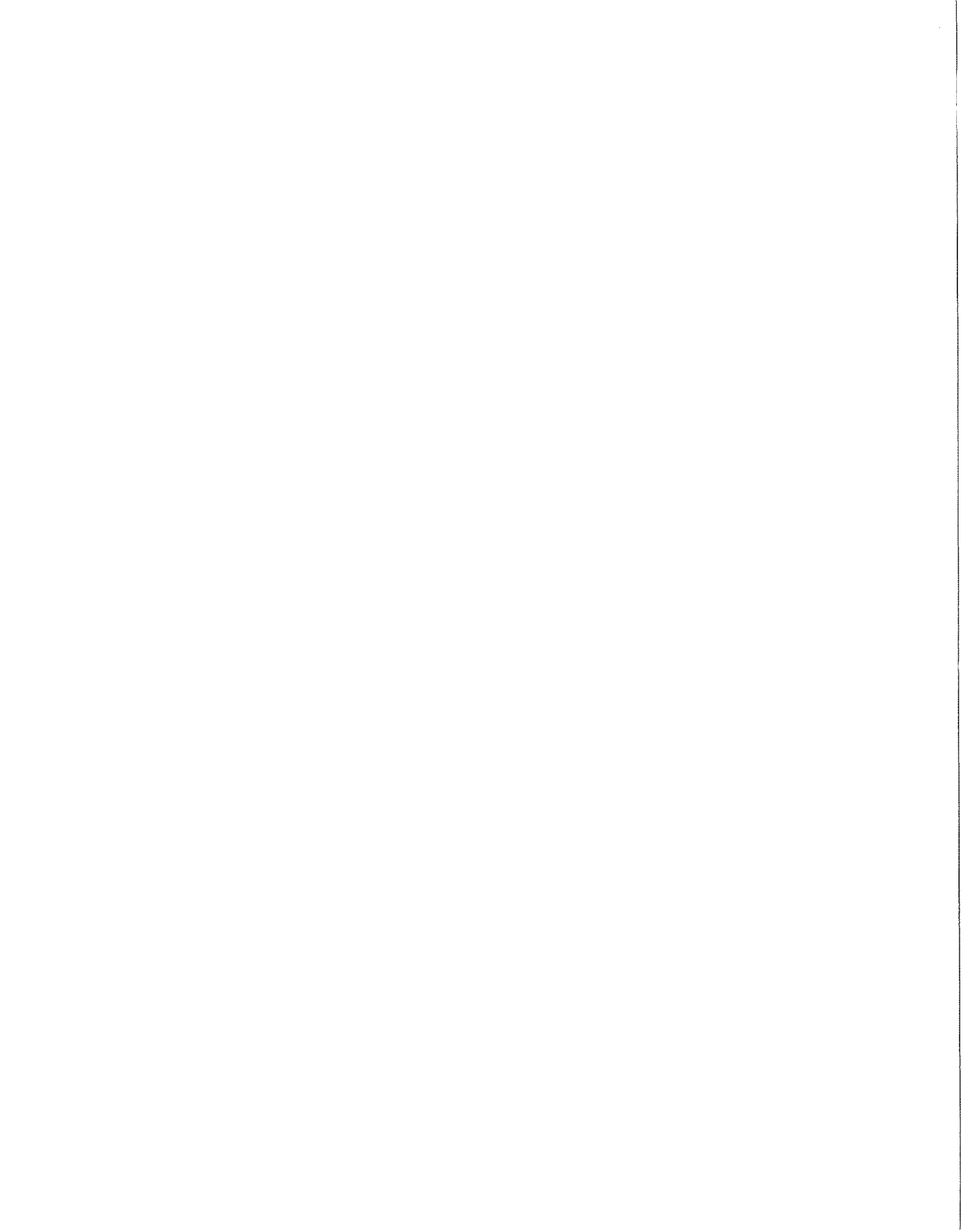


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TO THE UNITED NATIONS
ON THE
COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION

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Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, let me congratulate Mr. Shalva Tsiskarashvili of Permanent Mission of Georgia on his election as Chairman of the Committee. We welcome the reports of the Secretary-General on the three-fold activities of the Department of Public Information, namely strategic communications, new as well as outreach activities and public information, itself with the statement made by the Chair of the G-77

Mr. Chairman,

This debate provides an occasion to reiterate the central concerns of Member States over the process of dissemination of information. For us, the defensibility of the work of this Committee lies in its relationship with the Department of Public Information, and the ongoing cooperative effort to disseminate information upon the delivery of relevant information inputs to millions of potential users across the world.

The DPI's role is pivotal as it has to strategically communicate the message of the United Nations with the greatest public impact in a situation where the UN confronts a variety of complex challenges and opportunities. Let us look at this with some supporting facts. According to the report on news services, between July 2009 and January 2010 more than 1,700 press releases containing statements by and messages from the Secretary-General and other officials and departments as well as 682 summaries of press briefings of the Secretary-General's spokesperson and other press conferences here at UN Headquarters were disseminated. This represents a quantum jump in

However, it must also be pointed out that such impressive improvements are occurring in the midst of the continuing anachronism of press briefings which remain off limits for delegates from various Permanent Missions accredited to the United Nations. In other words, this means that while I can make a statement on the working of the DPI here at the UN headquarters, I cannot sit in as a silent observer in a press conference at the Dag Hammarskjöld Library Auditorium!

Mr. Chairman,

The Committee's focus has to be on how to make the work of the Department of Public Information the main channel for the flow of information between the UN and the peoples of the world. To achieve this, the widest possible range of technologies needs to be harnessed. As many countries simultaneously span several centuries in technological terms, it is essential that

the end product offered by DPI is dispensed through a wide spectrum of media

technologies, such as webcasts and podcasts, a strong emphasis must also be retained on using traditional and very cost-effective means of communication, such as radio and print. These remain of tremendous importance in reaching out to millions of people in remote parts of the developing world and must constantly be

We also fully support the effort to enable the emergence of a more individually equal world, in which information is disseminated not merely in the limited parameters of the law, but also according to various other constraints, such as

language. The promotion of multilingualism by the United Nations is a laudable goal, and we support the efforts of the United Nations to further widen and improve access to information in different parts of the world.

Involvement in the production of DPI programme material. Doing so will also help improve local capacity and autonomy in producing and disseminating information. A related issue is the question of UN Information Centers, which are crucial in

particularly in the developing world. We agree with the views expressed by many that our goal should be to strengthen, rather than weaken, these information

services to the United Nations, and since internet now access to certain managerial contexts, but make little sense in a people-intensive sector such as the media. We would encourage the Department to work closely with host countries to ensure that the necessary resources are being made available to strengthen the public outreach and ensure the effective functioning of Information Centres in developing countries. We would like to

including in the promotion of the Millennium Development Goals.

The information being disseminated has to be relevant and meaningful and to

and those working on content management must be driven by a constant

performed, often under extremely demanding circumstances, by UN peacekeepers in strife-torn lands.

As regards the latter, we would like to see DPI, DPKO and DES working closely in highlighting UN peacekeeping success stories and providing accurate, impartial and timely information on the regular activities of UN peacekeepers, also on the exceptional work that they often do that goes beyond the routine keeping of the peace and the call of duty. To provide just one example with which I am somewhat familiar, Indian soldiers serving as UN peacekeepers have consistently carved a very special place for themselves in the hearts and minds of the local population in their area of operations as a result of their friendly touch via enthusiastic involvement in providing medical and veterinary support, promoting local community development projects aimed at soil conservation and water harvesting, and the goodwill and down to earth cooperation that the world needs to hear more of.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, I would like to assure you of India's full backing as you guide the work of this Committee, as well as to the DPI as it projects the UN story and builds support for the Organization and its noble aims.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.

