

## **Statement by Minister Mian Jahangir Iqbal (24 April 2012)**

Mr. Chairman,

Let me begin by congratulating the two new members of the Bureau on assumption of their offices. It is a matter of great pleasure to see you presiding over the 34th session of the Committee on Information (COI). We are confident that under your able guidance, this important committee will achieve optimum results. We assure you of our complete

Mr. Chairman,

The importance of the work of United Nations Information Centers (UNICs) around the world cannot be over-emphasized. These Centers, which are the eyes and ears of the UN, are a vital source of information and greatly help to bridge the gap between the developed and developing countries in terms of access to information and communication technologies. We, therefore, urge the DPI to allocate adequate resources for UNICs to ensure their effective functioning, particularly in the developing countries. We also urge DPI to consider restoring full services at the UNIC in Islamabad. To secure rent-free premises for UNICs from host countries, it is important that the economic conditions of those countries should also be taken into considerations while ensuring full allocation of financial support for the Centers.

We welcome DPI's efforts to make available U.N. publications and translated information material in 39 local languages, including Urdu, while maintaining websites in 29 of those languages. These steps ensure the spread of the United Nations message of peace to all corners of the world. We also appreciate the live coverage of the meetings of the Security Council, the general debate in the General Assembly, daily press briefing and other major events at the UN Headquarters and abroad through UN webcast.

Mr. Chairman,

Freedom of expression is a fundamental right which needs to be promoted and protected. But

Radios that are licensed to work independently in the country. The constitution of the country under article 19 also ensures that every citizen shall have the right to freedom of speech and expression while the newly incorporated article 19A ensures that every citizen shall have the right to access to information in all matters of public importance.

Mr. Chairman,

Allow me to conclude by reiterating our support to the Department of Public Information and its endeavours to carry out its mandate effectively and reassure you of our fullest cooperation in this regard.

Thank you.