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**STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE**  
**COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION**  
**AT THE OPENING OF THE THIRTY-SIXTH SESSION**  
**28 APRIL 2014**

Mr. Under-Secretary-General, Distinguished delegates,

Allow me to express my sincere gratitude to Under-Secretary-General Peter Launsky-Tieffenthal, and through him to the Department of Public Information, for the excellent cooperation extended to me, and to the members of the Bureau of the Committee on Information, during the past year.

I am greatly encouraged by the growing working relationship between DPI and the Committee, which has now evolved into a solid partnership. Although the Committee meets only once a year, as members of the Bureau we remain in contact with DPI throughout the year, and are able to convey to the Department the expressed views of Member States on issues which relate to their priority concerns. The Under-Secretary-General has also taken steps to increase his Department's direct interaction with Member States between sessions. I am particularly appreciative of the series of consultations he has held with negotiating groups and partners in advance of this year's session. These frank and open-ended consultations provided valuable opportunities for the Department to better appreciate the priorities and strategic preferences of the Member States that provide DPI with policy guidance.

The challenges the Department faces are both complex and complicated. Having to address new and sometimes competing mandates, the need for rapid response to emerging "hot spots," and a constantly evolving media climate, the Department has to balance its long-term priorities and more urgent, and often unexpected, tasks. Nonetheless, the Department's strategic approach, as reflected in the three reports of the Secretary-General now under your review, continues to be the promotion of the broader ideals and values of the Organization. Its task remains "to tell the UN story".

From mediating peace and maintaining it, promoting development and fighting poverty, providing humanitarian succour to people in conflict zones, advancing human rights and creating greater opportunities for women and vulnerable groups, the UN strives to provide support to States and peoples who need its presence. The UN seeks to make a lasting difference to the lives of millions of people on a daily basis.



It is for the Department of Public Information to bear witness to humanity's pursuit of the goals set out in the Charter. The three reports before us describe the work being carried out by the three sub-programmes of the Department. I congratulate the Department on producing such results-based reports and on their timely publication.

A fourth report, the Strategic Framework for 2016 – 2017, is also before you for review, reflection and necessary action. This is, perhaps, the most important report before the Committee at this session as it outlines the proposed overall orientation of the Department, including the strategy and logical framework for each of the Department's three divisions for the next budget cycle. It is my understanding that the Committee for Programme and Coordination will review this document in June this year. As COI is the main deliberative body dealing with public information, it is our task and responsibility to consider this document closely and analytically and to provide recommendations and guidance to the CPC for its own review.

Distinguished delegates,

These reports outline the efforts of the Department to promote unity of purpose and a collective approach to the activities of the many offices and units of the Department. This binary relationship – between individual offices and their collective work plan – must also be at the heart of the strategic approach the Department must pursue. DPI will be unable to convey its messages to Member States and obtain the support of the media without a strategic sense of what it wishes to communicate. But it cannot implement that strategy without the involvement of the many specific and general constituencies to which it reaches out, and it can only leverage its outreach fully if its dimension and content find mention in outlets which capture popular attention. It is this approach which the three reports of the Secretary-General attest to with a breadth of specific examples. The general debate and the subsequent discussion on a consensus draft resolution will provide us with the setting of a meaningful conversation on DPI's work and how best should it endeavor to achieve the goals enunciated in these reports.

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~~One of the issues this Committee has been preoccupied with for the past several years – and increasingly so recently – is the importance of achieving linguistic parity on the UN website and in the Department's overall work.~~

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This parity is a clearly-defined and fully-measurable objective for the Department. Through numerous resolutions adopted by this Committee and other legislative bodies of the General Assembly, Member States have clearly and unequivocally pronounced their support for total parity among all recognized UN languages. And yet, this is one area where the Department lags behind.

I have had several opportunities to discuss the issue of multilingualism with the Under-Secretary-General. I found him fully cognizant of the task. He



has also been frank about the difficulties associated with it. The reason why the Department has so far been unable to fully implement the mandate on multilingualism is not any lack of commitment but, rather, the lack of adequate resources on the basis of the currently-determined priorities. Within the existing resources, the Department can do only so much. The Department has tried to pursue various creative ways and configurations but so far has been unable to meet the expectations of all interested parties.

It would thus appear the answer has to be found in securing additional resources to reach the multilingualism objective set by this body.

I know this Committee is not the place to determine resource allocation. But this is the Committee to discuss and determine Member State priorities on all issues related to public information.

If we want DPI to deliver on the tasks we propose, we must also equip it with tools it needs. The choice before the Committee is therefore clear. It can either seek an augmentation of the resources available to DPI through the appropriate constitutional means or it can re-order the priorities of the Department to better accommodate the requirements of multilingualism.

Distinguished delegates,

In the days ahead we must consult together with a view to adopting a consensus document at the end of our deliberations. The result should be to collectively provide the best possible policy guidance to the Department so that our Organization continues to benefit from the strong voice given to it by DPI.

As your Chairman, I promise to do my part. I am sure you will do yours.

Thank you.

