Statement by Ms. Erika Watanabe Patriota
Counsellor

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(check against delivery)
"Madam Chairperson,

Let me congratulate you and the bureau for presiding over this 36th session of the Committee on Information. I take this opportunity to express Brazil’s willingness to constructively engage in the debates.

My delegation also wishes to thank the Secretary-General for his three comprehensive reports on the Activities of the Department of Public Information, as well as Undersecretary-General, Mr. Peter Launsky-Tieffenthal, for his comprehensive briefing yesterday morning. The valuable contribution of the DPI team to the interactive dialogue, yesterday afternoon, also merits our acknowledgment.

Brazil aligns itself with the statements made by Bolivia on behalf of the G77 and China, and wishes to present the following comments in its national capacity.

Considering that Portuguese is not a UN official language, we welcome the fact that the DPI is working towards the creation of subscriber numbers and profiles in Portuguese on its social media accounts, as stated in the SG’s report on strategic communications services. This is a timely initiative indeed, as there is growing interest in UN related matters throughout the Brazilian academic milieu; student community, and among researchers.

This interest is backed by figures. As noted in SG’s report, in two months time, the Facebook page of the United Nations country team in Brazil, by developing a creative application for mobile devices, reached 90,000 "likes". The UN Twitter account did not lag behind, totaling 85,000 followers. These figures would place Portuguese as the third most important language on social media platform, behind only English and Spanish, and not very far away from the latter, which attained a level of 110,000 Facebook "likes".

When it comes to the full UN website, however, figures change dramatically, because there is no Portuguese content. And here Madam President, I touch upon a subject that is dear to those - like Brazil and the Group of Friends of the Spanish - who are not part of the Anglo-Saxon world: multilingualism.
It would not be incorrect to assume that, given the similarities between the two languages, many Brazilians - who do not master the English language - find in Spanish a port of entry to the UN website content. Multilingualism allows non-speaking English students, academy, researchers and government officials to access the UN world, bridging the gap between the national dimension of citizenship and multilateralism. Given the importance of the issue, we reiterate the G77 position to strongly urge DPI to promote and support language parity, integrating multilingualism into its activities on an equitable basis.

Madam chair,

Brazil would like to recognize and support the work of the UN Radio in Portuguese. Despite its limited human and financial resources, the network of partnerships established by UN Radio allows it to disseminate United Nations' content in more than 16 countries, covering a broadcast area where approximately 235 million Portuguese-speaking people live. It is also relevant in countries with significant Portuguese-speaking communities, as in the United States.

In Brazil, the UN Radio in Portuguese has approximately 100 partners, which include four major national radios. More recently, and while continuing the use of traditional media, the Radio launched a pioneering partnership - at zero cost for the UN - with Brazil's leading TV broadcast company, in a unique multimedia initiative. Everyday, the nation’s second most watched news journal brings a live news summary prepared in Portuguese by UN Radio, which is also transmitted to Portugal and all Portuguese-speaking countries in Africa.

These are commendable initiatives that demonstrate ways in which UN Radio and UN Information Centers in different countries can work towards "creative solutions" of interest to Members and the institution.

Let me put in a word in respect of the future. Brazil fully supports the G77 in its request, made yesterday, that the DPI continue to publicize negotiating processes in the Organization that will shape development for the years to come. Therefore, we encourage the DPI to devote its best efforts to duly cover and diffuse the Rio+20 follow-up and discussions on the elaboration of a Post-2015 Development Agenda.
As a final remark, Brazil would like note the importance it attaches to the International Decade for People of African Descent, proclaimed last December. We hope to count on the full engagement of DPI in promoting the Decade and activities related to its Program of Action. These activities are aimed at educating the public and raising awareness in order to combat prejudice, intolerance and racism, contributing to the long due reparation of one of the worst crimes committed against humanity.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson."