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STATEMENT

by

Mr. Rajesh Mishra, Counsellor
Permanent Mission of India to the United Nations

at

the 36th Session of the
COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION

New York    April 29, 2014
Madam Chair,

I would like to begin by congratulating you Madam Chairperson, for doing an admirable job in conducting this Committee during its 35th session. I would also like to complement the Under Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information Mr. Peter Launsky-Tieffenthal, on his excellent presentation on the activities and strategies of the Department of Public Information (DPI). I wish you all the best of success, and assure you of my country’s continued co-operation and support in the conduct of the affairs of this Committee.

Madam Chair,

We welcome the reports of the Secretary-General on the activities of the DPI, which provide a summary of the key advances made by the Department in projecting the work of the United Nations to the global audience through its strategic communication services, news services, and outreach and knowledge services.

Madam Chair,

India aligns itself with the statement made by the Chair of the G-77 and China. We would, however, like to make some observations on the activities of the DPI, in our national capacity.

We express our agreement with the view that the United Nations has been at the centre of the world’s consciousness following a series of challenges and opportunities in the areas of development, peace, security and human rights. India fully supports the efforts to develop and deepen understanding of the ideals and activities of the United Nations by engaging the diverse global community. We commend the DPI for fostering dialogue with the academic community, non-governmental organizations, youth and students, under its various initiatives, including Academic Impact, NGO and Student Conferences, the Secretary General’s Envoy on Youth, and the Creative Community Outreach Initiative.

It is heartening to see a consistent effort of the DPI to strengthen and expand partnerships with institutions of learning, and under its Academic Impact (UNAI) initiative, in creating a global network on universities and academic institutions. The UNAI has expanded rapidly in terms of its activities, and its membership has grown to 926 in 120 countries, including India.

A range of activities, including an international essay writing competition on multilingualism, a series of talks for students and teachers, and discussions on current issues and global response to them, were organized under this initiative. India also collaborated with the UNAI and organized an event titled “Music for Peace” at the UN headquarters on March 24, 2014, which featured legendary Sarod player Ustad Amjad Ali Khan. India will continue to support the activities of the UNAI in whatever manner it can.

Madam Chair,

India also supports all efforts to attain linguistic equality, in which information is disseminated in not merely in the six official languages of the UN, but also the other languages. We are happy to note that multilingualism is at the centre of the activities of the UN Radio, which
apart from producing programs in the six official languages, does so in various other languages too, including Indian languages like Hindi, Urdu and Bangla.

We reiterate our view that to ensure an effective flow of information to people in all parts of the world, the UN needs to remain cognizant of the digital divide between the developing and developed world, and the importance of reaching out to ordinary people in the developing world. To achieve this, equal importance should be given to all available channels of communication, including the traditional and very cost-effective means of communication like radio. We commend the DPI for its efforts to extend the reach of UN Radio and Television to all regions of the world, by entering into partnerships with local broadcasters and media organizations.

We are of the view that UN humanitarian activities and the work of the UN Peacekeepers should be given prominence in the featured programs on the UN media, and for this the DPI should work closely with the DPKO and DFS. UN media should highlight success stories and provide accurate, impartial and timely information on the activities of peacekeepers, as also the exceptional work done by them. Soldiers, including those from India, serving in peacekeeping missions, have consistently been making a special place for themselves in the hearts of the local population by providing medical support, promoting community development projects, and providing vocational training. Such stories of goodwill and support should be told to the world through the UN media.

Madam Chair,

We underline the importance of the UN Information Centers (UNICs) as an interface between the United Nations and people at the grass roots level. These UN outposts, with their ability to interact with local communities and communicate with them in their own language, are crucial in disseminating the UN message, fostering dialogue with local communities, and making people aware of important global issues like climate change, MDGs and counter-terrorism. We are happy to note that the UNICs have worked closely with the governments and local civil society groups, academic institutions and business houses to mobilize support for UN goals and objectives. Such partnership and cooperation with host governments and local community organizations should be further strengthened. UNICs should also be encouraged to emulate innovative ideas like “United Nations corners”, to promote wider UN presence.

We would also support adequate budgetary resources being made available to the Information Centers, particularly in developing countries.

Madam Chair,

We would like to conclude by assuring India’s full support to the DPI as it endeavors to project the work of the UN, and to you as you guide the work of this Committee.

Thank you, Madam Chair.