Statement by Mr. Yussef Kanaan, Senior Adviser, Permanent Observer Mission of the State of Palestine to the United Nations, before the Committee on Information, 36th Session (30 April 2014):
(Check against delivery)

Madame Chair,

At the outset, I wish to express, on behalf of the State of Palestine, our profound appreciation for your able and skilled leadership of this Committee. We express our appreciation to H.E. the Secretary-General of the United Nations for his reports on the activities of the Department of Public Information and to the Committee on Information for its comprehensive report and valuable efforts in this regard. We also express our gratitude and appreciation to H.E. Mr. Peter Launsky-Tieffenthal, the Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information and the Coordinator for Multilingualism, for his valuable efforts in enhancing the role of DPI and for the informative, comprehensive statement he delivered before the Committee.

My delegation aligns itself with the important statement made by H.E. the Permanent Representative of the Plurinational State of Bolivia on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Madame Chair,

The delegation of the State of Palestine reaffirms its appreciation for the commendable efforts exerted in implementation of the Department of Public Information’s many important programmes, including the Special Information Programme on the Question of Palestine. We highly appreciate the General Assembly’s adoption of resolution 68/14 on 26 November 2013 regarding the programme on the Question of Palestine by an overwhelming majority, reaffirming once again strong international support for this programme. This programme is instrumental in raising the international community’s awareness of the Question of Palestine and the situation in the Middle East. It also raises awareness and support of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to self-determination.

In this regard, the delegation of Palestine highly commends the Department of Public Information, especially the Palestine Section, for continuing to carry out several activities in connection with this programme, including organization of the annual International Media Seminars on Peace in the Middle East, the latest of which was held in Istanbul, Turkey, in October 2013. We look forward to the next seminar to be held in Japan in June 2014. We also commend DPI for its valuable efforts in updating and redesigning the permanent exhibit on the Question of Palestine at UN Headquarters in New York. We also commend the DPI for its efforts in the commemoration of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.
on 25 November 2013, which included a concert by Palestinian singer Mohammed Assaf, UNRWA Regional Youth Ambassador, and Palestinian singer and musician Nai Barghouti. We also commend United Nations information centers and offices around the world for undertaking a variety of activities to commemorate this day. In this connection, we refer to General Assembly resolution 68/12 adopted on 26 November 2013 proclaiming the year 2014 as the International Year of Solidarity with the Palestinian People and we look forward to activities to be undertaken by DPI in this regard along with the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat.

My delegation also wishes to reaffirm the importance of DPI’s continued provision of assistance to the Palestinian people in the field of media development through the annual training programme for Palestinian broadcasters and journalists from the Occupied Palestinian Territory. This valuable training opportunity effectively contributes to strengthening the media skills and abilities of those practitioners privileged to be selected, despite the severe restrictions imposed by Israel, the occupying Power, on the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem.

In previous statements before this Committee and the 4th Committee, we emphasized the importance of the undertaking by DPI of the other activities requested by the General Assembly in relevant resolutions, including the expansion of the Department’s collection of audio-visual materials on the Question of Palestine and the organization and promotion of fact-finding news missions for journalists to the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel. We hope that these activities will be soon undertaken with sufficient funding and staff to enable full implementation of DPI’s mandate vis-à-vis the Question of Palestine.

Madame Chair,

Regrettably, the Israeli occupying forces and Israeli settlers continue to systematically and deliberately, and with impunity, commit acts of violence and provocation and against Palestinian and foreign journalists in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, to prevent them from conveying the grim reality about Israel’s illegal and aggressive policies and practices against the Palestinian people. Freedom of expression continues to be suppressed by Israel through the ongoing campaign of arrests and detention and use of excessive force against Palestinian and foreign journalists and photographers, particularly those covering peaceful civilian demonstrations in several Palestinian towns and villages protesting the Israeli occupation, the colonial settlement campaign, the Apartheid annexation wall, the inhumane treatment of Palestinian prisoners and detainees in Israeli prisons and detention centers, and ongoing incursions and attacks by the Israeli occupying forces and settlers against Al-Haram Al-Sharif and Al-Aqsa Mosque in Occupied East Jerusalem.

In this regard, we refer to Israel’s non-compliance with General Assembly resolution 68/163 adopted on 18 December 2013 entitled “Safety of journalists and the issue of impunity”, as well as its continuing disrespect of all United Nations resolutions relevant to the Question of Palestine and the situation in the Middle East. This reflects Israel’s intransigence, as it continues to behave as a State above the law while the international community stands helpless in
compelling Israel to implement those resolutions and holding it accountable for its violations, and hence fostering its impunity.

We reiterate our call to this distinguished Committee and international organizations concerned with journalists’ rights and freedom of the press to step up their efforts to protect Palestinian and foreign journalists and to demand a halt to Israel’s violations of international law and norms which provide for the protection of journalists and to ensure that they are able to work without the Israeli repressive censorship restrictions and the use of military force against them.

Madame Chair,

In closing, we reaffirm the importance of DPI’s Special Information Programme on the Question of Palestine and its instrumental role in fostering support for the regional and international efforts to achieve a just, lasting and comprehensive solution to the Question of Palestine and the Arab-Israeli conflict as a whole on the basis of relevant United Nations resolutions, Madrid Principles, including the principle of land for peace, the Arab Peace Initiative, and the Quartet Roadmap. The Palestinian leadership has always affirmed its commitment to achieve peace that will end the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and other Arab territories occupied since 1967, and enable the Palestinian people to exercise their inalienable rights, including to self-determination and return according to GA resolution 194, and to achieve the independence of the State of Palestine on the basis of the 4th of June 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital, and to take its historical and rightful place among the community of nations.

Thank you, Madame Chair.