

Statement by Ambassador Shamshad Ahmad, Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations (30 April 2001)

Mr. Chairman,

As we prepare to mark the World Press Freedom Day on May 3, let me begin by paying tribute to all those media persons who have lost their lives in the line of duty. The World Press Freedom Day is certainly the right occasion to acknowledge the achievements of such individuals.

My delegation joins the Committee in extending a warm welcome to Armenia and Libyan Arab Jamahiriya as the new members of the Committee. We hope that the admission of new members will bring fresh ideas to the work of this Committee.

I would also like to associate myself with the statement made by the Islamic Republic of Iran on behalf of Group of 77 and China.

We have noted various reports submitted by the Secretary General on different aspects of the work of the Committee on Information. I am certain that the Committee, during its deliberations, will reflect on these reports with a view to promoting the objectives set out by the General Assembly in the field of public information and communication as a means to strengthen peace and international understanding.

Mr. Chairman,

Modern information technology is the key to progress and prosperity. The advancement in information technology has taken place at an unprecedented pace radically transforming all areas of human activity.

Though the flow of information has become a global phenomenon transcending state boundaries, application of information technology still remains restrictive. While the developed countries are coming closer by mutually sharing their technologies in various fields, the developing world lags behind in benefitting from the ongoing information and technology revolution. It is true that today millions of people can access the information highway, but the fact remains that member states of this august body are at completely varying levels of development in terms of their access to information and communication. This imbalance in the global information and technology revolution needs to be corrected so that its benefits are shared on a more just and equitable basis by all.

Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights spells out that everyone has the right to "seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers." The Millennium Declaration also proclaimed the right of universal access to Information and Communication Technology (ICT).

In Pakistan we fully realize the importance of information technology and have taken concrete measures for the development of information technology in the country. The resource allocation in this area has been increased manifold during the last one and a half year. The main focus of this drive is