

Statement of the President of the United States

more evaluative information on the use of the website, the achievement of the Department in both feeding and stimulating the demand is estimable.

The report on the reorientation of public information activities does address some key aspects of the reform process. We appreciate the reasoning underlying the new operating model for the Department and the emphasis attached to partnership with substantive departments in shaping priorities and crafting messages. If it is the Secretary-General's judgement that this new organizational structure will enable more purposeful, co-ordinated and results-oriented public information work, we fully support him. To achieve its intended results, the reorganization needs to be backed up by consistent efforts to define specific objectives more clearly, to define measures of success, and to assess the results achieved.

We also very much appreciate the Secretary-General's proposal to rationalize the network of UN Information Centres around regional hubs, starting with the creation of a Western European hub. Frankly, we see little alternative to the regional approach if we are to attain positive results from the resources available. As presently constituted and operated, the UN information centres are not shown to produce results commensurate with their cost. The proposed criteria for the regionalization of information are headed in the right direction, but can be refined further and improved, including by clearer reference to the need for cost-effectiveness.

full support for the very useful specific actions outlined by the Secretary-General in Agenda for Further Change, such as a clear division of labour among libraries, including clear leadership, digitization, and enhanced electronic access.

Mr. Chairman,

We recognize that results-based budgeting is still relatively young in the UN, and that the results approach is particularly challenging in the area of public information. Looking at the programmatic elements of the proposed programme budget for 2004-05, it may nevertheless be possible to improve the presentation further, in order to express more substantive objectives and clearer indicators of achievement. We can be more specific on this in the context of the open-ended working group.

Mr. Chairman,

The membership of the UN has long been aware of the potential importance of public information for the work of the UN. The world presents a tough and competitive public information environment, and, within the UN, member states present multiple and competing visions of priority. DPI has a daunting task in this setting. We appreciate the dedication of public information staff and the vision of its leadership. We have every confidence that pursuit of the reform path set out by the Secretary-General will equip the Organization with a public information service that meets the needs of the organization more effectively than ever.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.