

Statement by H.E. Mr. Marari Raj Sharma, Permanent Representative of Nepal to the United Nations (28 April 2004)

Mr. Chairman,

I am delighted to see two very close friends and South Asians (PR of Bangladesh and USG) at the podium of this important Committee. I congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, on your assumption of chairmanship of the Committee for the second year and assure you of my delegation's full support in achieving the objectives of our meeting.

Let me also appreciate Mr. Shashi Tharoor, Under-Secretary-General for Communication and Information, who provided us with comprehensive update of the activities carried out by his Department during the past year.

My delegation welcomes the 3 new members - St. Vincent and Grenadine, Surinam and Switzerland - who have joined

My delegation would like to thank the ITSD Mission Support Desk for the assistance they provide to permanent missions and request them to continue such assistance, both hardware and other services in the future as well.

Mr. Chairman,

Nepal generally supports the Secretary-General's proposal on the rationalization of the network of United Nations Information Centres (UNICs) with a view to further strengthening and enhancing effectiveness in providing UN information on time, easily and accurately. We emphasize that the resources released from the rationalization and regionalization of the UNICs in developed countries should be deployed for strengthening UNICs in developing countries. In view of economic vulnerability and handicap, and special circumstances, least developed countries should be accorded high priority in the allocation of resources.

We strongly hold the view that the presence of UNICs carries tremendous symbolic value and enormous practical utility at the national level. Therefore, the existing UNICs should not be closed down without proper assessment of specific needs and conditions of each center. Any change without consultation with the host countries will send a wrong signal to the people of those countries.