

Statement by H.E. Ambassador Ajai Malhotra, Acting Permanent Mission of India to the United Nations (25 April 2006)

Mr Chairman,

At the outset let me express my deep satisfaction upon having you preside once again over the deliberations of the Committee on Information. You can be assured of my delegation's full support as you guide our work. I would also like to join others in conveying our appreciation to Under-Secretary-General Shashi Tharoor for his comprehensive and skilful presentation of the 'balance sheet' of the performance of the Department of Public Information [DPI] over the past year. His leadership has contributed to a transformed DPI, with a new focus, direction and purpose. I would also like to associate my delegation with the statement made by the distinguished representative of South Africa, as the G-77 Chairman.

The United Nations has recently been receiving a concentrated dose of media attention as a result of the 2005 World Summit and its follow up. Despite its image being affected by scandal-driven media coverage, the UN remains a pivotal global institution. The UN presently stands at the threshold of a new era, with a variety of opportunities and threats on its horizon. The DPI has a pivotal role to play at this sensitive stage, since it is the conduit for the flow of

limited resources while functioning in an often unhelpful environment.

Looking ahead, the DPI must further intensify its efforts to meet the concerns and special needs of the developing countries in the field of information and communications technology. The 'digital divide' remains vast; huge segments of populations in developing countries continue to be deprived of the benefits of the information and IT revolution. Trade world.

Core economic development and social issues remain the overriding priorities of developing countries. We welcome DPI's focus over the past year on priority issues such as HIV/AIDS, Human Rights, New Partnership for Africa's Development, the Millennium Development Goals, Palestine, etc. We support DPI in its efforts to do even more to highlight such issues and the work of the UN in addressing them.

We also favour a strong relationship between DPI and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations [DPKO]. We welcome the two major guidance projects for the public information components of peacekeeping missions that have been recently completed. We would also

encourage DPI and DPKO to devise and implement a comprehensive communication strategy that highlights success stories of peacekeeping and the role of peacekeepers in their areas of operation. An example would be to bring out the humanitarian activities being undertaken by a peacekeeping mission such as the UN Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea [UNMEE]. Using resources voluntarily provided by Troop Contributing Countries such as Jordan, Kenya and India, UNMEE has been successfully implementing a focussed 'Winning

of its actions must underpin its efforts and a systematic "culture of evaluation" guide its work. Training of staff to constantly review the impact of their work is a natural follow-up to this emphasis on evaluation. It is good that DPI is constantly exploring new ideas in this regard.

The DPI's challenge is not simply to make the UN's voice heard loud and clear, but to simultaneously deliver a message that is easily understood, appreciated and assimilated. In doing so, it will need to constantly improvise, modernise and re-invent, seeking to tell the UN story in an effective and efficient manner. I would like to convey our support to the DPI team in tackling the formidable tasks before it.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.