

the previous Under Secretary - General for Communications and Public Information, Mr. Shashi Farooq, and to warmly welcome his successor, Mr. Kyotak Akasaka, and convey to him our very best wishes for every success in his important new assignment.

We welcome also guests to the delegations of Thailand and the Dominican Republic the two new members of this Committee. My delegation also aligns itself with the statement of the G -

A related issue, Mr. Chairman, is the question of UN Information Centres, which are crucial in enhancing the public image of the UN and in disseminating its message, particularly in the developing world. We agree with the view expressed by many delegations that our goal should be to strengthen, rather than weaken, these information outposts of the United Nations. Hub and spoke models may appeal in certain managerial contexts, where local sensitivities and regional variations need not be important. However, it makes little sense to employ them in a people-intensive sector such as the media.

The argument in favour of a more relevant outreach effort by the UN is also related to the larger objective of creating more locally relevant content and greater local involvement in the work of the United Nations. This should logically also be a larger objective of the UN, since the UN will in turn become more widely relevant by virtue of being more locally accessible.