



STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY H.E AMBASSADOR PETER THOMSON, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF FIJI TO THE UNITED NATIONS, CHAIR OF THE GROUP OF 77, ON THE AGENDA ITEM 55, "QUESTIONS RELATING TO INFORMATION", AT THE SPECIAL POLITICAL AND DECOLONIZATION COMMITTEE, DURING THE 68TH SESSION OF THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY. (New York, 16 October 2013)

Mr. Chairman,

1. I have the honor to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.
2. On behalf of the Group, I would like to seize this opportunity to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, on your election as Chair of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee during the sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly. We also extend our congratulations to the members of the Bureau.
3. The Group of 77 and China would like to thank the Secretary-General for his report on the activities of the Department of Public Information (DPI) as presented by Under Secretary-General Mr. Peter Launsky-Tieffenthal, and we thank Mr. Launsky-Tieffenthal for the comprehensive and informative presentation on the work of DPI over the last year.

Mr. Chairman,

5. It goes without saying that the United Nations has made important progress in the field of public information and we are thankful for the contribution made by the DPI. The Group would like to stress that cooperation between DPI and the Committee of Information is crucial in ensuring that there is seamless interaction and identification of needs and priorities of Member States and their citizens regarding information on the UN. and to allow prioritization of such work within current budgetary realities.
6. This is particularly important in the context of current budgetary realities, as it allows agreed prioritization of DPI's work. From the Group's perspective, due to the lack of resources and technical means currently available, many developing countries are still facing challenges to access information regarding the United Nations activities. The Department has, therefore, a challenging task to reach out to the widest possible audience and project important accomplishments of the United Nations world over in order to promote greater understanding and goodwill between all nations.

Mr. Chairman,

7. The G77 and China continues to support the work of the Department of Public Information in promoting and advancing the work of the Organization through its continued campaigns on issues of great importance to the international community.
8. In this regard, the Group would like to emphasize the importance of the DPI's Special Information Programme on the Question of Palestine in raising the international community's awareness and in supporting the efforts to achieve a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East, in accordance with international law and United Nations resolutions. Given the importance of the follow-up processes from the Rio +20 Conference held in 2012, all of which form inputs in the

process of elaborating the post-2015 development agenda, the Group would encourage DPI to continue sharing information with the public on developments in this regard.

9. The Group of 77 and China would like also to encourage the DPI to work with the Special Committee on Decolonisation to raise awareness of the Third Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism 2011-2020, during which much work remains to be done for the 17 non-self governing territories on the UN's agenda.

Mr. Chairman,

10. The Group of 77 and China attaches great importance to the work of the Network of United Nations Information Centers (UNICs). The Group reiterates its concerns with regard to the challenges that those centers are still facing in terms of ageing office automation equipment and the lack of a cost-effective, enterprise-level system to access tools, such as the Organization's Intranet and e-mail system, available at Headquarters. We, therefore, urge once again that all possible measures be taken to strengthen the UNICs, as they are the UN's interface with the public in many parts of the world.

11. The Group welcomes the support by some developing Member States to offer rent-free premises to host the UNICs while bearing in mind that such support should not be a substitute for the full allocation of financial resources for the Information Centers in the context of the programme budget of the United Nations. The Group of 77 and China wishes to underline that any decision pertaining to reorganizing the UNICs must be made in close consultation with the host countries, and take into account the geographical, linguistic and technological characters and needs of different regions.

12. In this regard, in line with the resolution adopted by the Committee on Information this year, following up on General Assembly resolution A/RES/64/243, the Group of 77 and China trusts that the Secretariat is taking the measures necessary in coordination with the Government of Angola for the prompt establishment of an Information Centre in Luanda.

Mr. Chairman,

13. There is no doubt that the use of Internet and the United Nations websites has increased significantly in recent years, mainly in countries where the United Nations official languages are used. However, despite the efforts made by the DPI to improve the multilingual contents of the UN website, the disparity among the use of the official languages has continued to deepen. In this regard, the Group reiterates its concern that the issuance of daily press releases has not been expanded to all official languages, as requested in previous resolutions and in full respect of the principle of parity of all six official languages. We welcome the "pilot project" announced by the DPI in this regard at the COI's 35th session and, reiterate the call in the draft resolution for the Department of Public Information to design a strategy, in close collaboration with other departments, to deliver daily press releases in all six official languages through creative schemes, in a cost-neutral manner and in accordance with the relevant General Assembly resolutions, and to report thereon to the Committee on Information at its thirty-sixth session. The use of the phrase "creative schemes" in the resolution presented as part of the report of the Committee of Information was deliberate, as we recognize that in times of zero-real increases in budgets, the Department must find ways of doing more with static resources.

14. At the same time, the Group emphasizes the importance of the traditional media, including both radio and prints, which continues to be the primary means of communication in many developing

countries, in disseminating the main messages of the United Nations.

15. Taking into account the key role of the Department as coordinator for multilingualism, the G77 and China underlines the responsibility of the Secretariat in mainstreaming multilingualism into all its communication and information activities as detailed in the draft resolution under consideration. Initiatives such as the establishment of the Group of Friends of Spanish in the United Nations (A/67/998) could serve, in this context, as a valuable tool to contribute with the DPI in enhancing multilingualism as a guiding principle of all United Nations activities.

16. Finally, Mr. Chairman, the Group wishes to emphasise the need for both the historical archives of the UN, and the large volume of new material being created on a daily basis, to be preserved properly for future generations, as this work of the UN will no doubt shape international relations in the future. We urge that all efforts be made to prioritise this work, and the Group will continue to work with DPI on this and other aspects of its work.

I thank you Mr. Chairman.