

**Statement by Representative of the Russian Federation S.V.Trepelkov
in the Fourth Committee of the 59th Session of the UN General Assembly
on agenda item 78 “Questions relating to information”**

October 20, 2004

Unofficial translation

Dear Mr. Chairman,

First of all, I would like to welcome you as a Chairman and also to thank Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information Shashi Tharoor for his detailed presentation which represents an important complement to the reports previously submitted for our consideration.

We note with satisfaction that in recent years the UN has made a significant contribution to resolving international problems of information. The UN activities in the area of public information are becoming more indispensable, the demand for them is growing. This is due, firstly, to the fact that we are already living in the developing information society. Secondly, the need for an impartial and broad coverage of the UN work today is bigger than ever because of the objective problems that the Organization faces in

addressing the new, more and more complex tasks which emerged in the wake of the recent international developments.

The Russian Federation expresses its support to the initiatives of the Secretary-General to reform the UN activities in the area of information and communication. The Russian delegation believes that the new strategic goals, functional priorities and concrete steps of the Department of Public Information to implement the outlined reforms on the whole deserve a positive assessment. We are convinced that the consistent and interested approach of the DPI leadership can ensure a consistent progress in addressing the tasks ahead of the Department.

We support these efforts by the DPI and call to keep the pace and to firmly adhere to the course of establishing the culture of communication as one of the key elements in the reform and enhancement of effectiveness of the whole UN system.

At the same time we believe that in implementing the agreed communication strategy the DPI should, first of all, focus its efforts on dissemination of information which is really crucial and strategic for the UN in the modern world, namely, maintenance of international peace and fight against new threats and challenges to security, among which international terrorism is the principal one.

The importance of multilateral efforts in this area was mentioned in the statement made by President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin at the World Congress of News Agencies “Information: Challenges of the 21st Century”, which took place in Moscow at the end of September of this year. He stressed, in particular, that the recent “series of terrorist acts that descended on Russia is a direct threat to all the civilized states. And the response to it has definitely to be united”.

We believe an important preventive contribution to this fight on the information front was made through the series of seminars “Unlearning Intolerance” launched by the DPI

with a view to examining different manifestations of intolerance and exploring ways in which education and civil society may help overcome them. Our delegation notes with satisfaction the success of the first seminar of this series on “Confronting Anti-Semitism” and hopes that the next seminar on “Confronting Islamofobia” to be held this December will be even more successful.

Our delegation also notes with satisfaction that the DPI has made headway in establishing and maintaining partnership agreements with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) of civil society, private business as well as involvement of the Department in joint projects, including the ones which are carried out under the UN Foundation auspices. However in this area we deem it appropriate to recommend more targeted and coordinated efforts of the entire Department rather than of the NGO Section only. It will help avoid duplication of efforts and, as a consequence, save some material resources and manpower.

Mr.Chairman,

We continue to closely follow the Department’s work on promoting and improving the network of the UN Information Centers. We support the process initiated by the Secretary-General to incorporate the UN Information Centers into integrated regional hubs. At the same time we believe that this plan should be implemented taking into account opinion of the affected countries and using the saved funds both to strengthen the Information Centers in the developing countries and to address other priorities in the informational activities of the United Nations.

We are pleased to see that the recent statements and reports of the DPI leadership regularly note the steady and efficient work of the UN Information Center in Moscow. During the last years the Center has considerably strengthened its partnership links with the other UN institutions in Russia and plays a coordinating role within the system of the coordinating resident in Russia on most issues related to the outreach activities of the

United Nations institutions, holding international conferences under the UN aegis and so on. It would be fair if these efforts were taken into consideration when it comes to the question of just distribution of resources between information centers.

We continue to follow the DPI's work on improving and streamlining the activities of the UN libraries. We support the launched mechanism embodied in the Steering Committee on Modernization of the UN libraries which is to develop impartial recommendations on how to enhance effectiveness and accessibility of the Organization's library services.

In this context we take note of the Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services A/59/373 as a part of implementation of the Resolution 58/270 and note the successful efforts of the Steering Committee and its Secretariat headed by the Director of the DPI Outreach Division on reorganization and coordination of the activities of the UN libraries. We draw your attention that the report speaks of the importance to develop a new library policy in the UN agencies as well as of the necessity to finance the activities of the Steering Committee and its Secretariat which was already underlined in our statement at the 26th session of the Committee on Information this April.

We also follow with interest the plans of the new Head Librarian of the Dag Hammarskjöld Library on changing the concept of library services as it is reflected in the Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services in the UN Headquarters in New York. We refer to the moving from "collections to connections" with the purpose of systemizing the "knowledge management" within the whole Secretariat. In this regard the Russian delegation is interested in getting a detailed plan of the restructuring and possible reorganization of the library services in the Headquarters because according to our preliminary estimates it may entail significant operational and financial consequences both for the personnel of the delegations and the personnel of the

Secretariat and, as a result, may affect the productivity of regular services in accordance with the mandate in effect since 1949.

Mr.Chairman,

We have no doubts that the principle of multilingualism and equality of official languages which passed the test of time should not only be reaffirmed by the General Assembly on a regular basis but should also be reflected in practice through delivery of equal information services both in quantity and in quality for the Member States.

Department's concrete steps to ensure the language parity in the UN web-site and its firm commitment to further improvement of the web-site to make it keep up with the new information era, deserve a positive assessment. We are convinced that the Department's permanent monitoring of the implementation of the relevant UNGA decision and a responsible attitude by all the divisions of the Secretariat to the preparation of their materials for the web-site in all the official UN languages, will contribute to this goal.

We would like to specially note the successful functioning of the Russian version of the UN web-site and of the UN News Center in Russian language which become more and more popular among Russian-speaking users.

The international UN Radio Service can serve as an illustrative example of the multilingualism in the UN activities. This project, which used to be a pilot one, is one of the most successful Department's innovations and through joint efforts became a standing one. For instance, the UN Radio programmes in Russian language rebroadcast by the biggest state radio station "Voice of Russia" have about 40 million listeners weekly without taking into account the Russian-speaking audience in other countries.

We also welcome the Department's efforts to radically change the UN Chronicles which are published in all official languages, can be accessed at the UN web-site and are more frequently used for learning and information purposes.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, let me express my conviction that the decisions adopted at the current UNGA session on the issues of information will bring us closer to the achievement of our goals and serve as a good basis for further activities.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.