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Summary record of the 11th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 19 October 2010, at 3 p.m.

Chairperson: Mr. Chipaziwa (Zimbabwe)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 50: International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space (*continued*)

Draft resolution A/C.4/65/L.2/Rev.1 on international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space

1. **Ms. Miculescu** (Romania), introducing draft resolution A/C.4/65/L.2/Rev.1, said that it was being submitted for adoption by the Committee in the revised version agreed to by the Working Group of the Whole.

2. **Ms. Herity** (Secretary of the Committee), speaking in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure, read out paragraphs 16 and 33 of the draft resolution and said that the draft resolution would not entail any programme budget implications for the biennium 2010-2011. She drew attention to General Assembly resolution 45/248 B, reaffirming that the Fifth Committee was the appropriate Main Committee of the Assembly entrusted with responsibilities for administrative and budgetary matters, and reaffirming also the role of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions. She also drew attention to paragraph 67 of the first report of the Advisory Committee on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001 (A/54/7), which indicated that the use of the phrase “within existing resources” or similar language in resolutions had a negative impact on the implementation of activities and should be avoided where possible.

3. *Draft resolution A/C.4/65/L.2/Rev.1 was adopted.*

Agenda item 59: Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (*Territories not covered under other agenda items*) (*continued*)

Draft resolution VI on the questions of American Samoa, Anguilla, Bermuda, the British Virgin Islands, the Cayman Islands, Guam, Montserrat, Pitcairn, Saint Helena, the Turks and Caicos Islands and the United States Virgin Islands (A/63/23, chap. XII)

4. **The Chairperson** said that draft resolution VI had no programme budget implications.

5. **Mr. Ja'afari** (Syrian Arab Republic), speaking as Rapporteur of the Special Committee on decolonization, said that consensus had been reached on the text of the following revisions to draft resolution VI. In draft resolution B I on American Samoa, a new paragraph 1

should be inserted, reading: “1. *Takes note* of the proposed amendments to the 1967 revised Constitution of American Samoa adopted at the fourth constitutional convention held in June 2010;”. All subsequent paragraphs would be renumbered accordingly, and the text of what was now paragraph 2 should be replaced by the following: “2. *Welcomes* the work of the territorial Government and legislature in accordance with the recommendations made by the Future Political Status Study Commission in preparation for this convention, and commends the related efforts of the territorial Government to enhance public awareness of the convention;”.

6. In draft resolution B IX on Saint Helena, the eighth preambular paragraph should be replaced by the following: “*Noting also* the importance of improving the infrastructure and accessibility of Saint Helena, and, in this regard, the administering Power’s announcement on 22 July 2010 about plans for building an airport on the island of Saint Helena;”; and paragraph 4 should be replaced by the following: “4. *Calls upon* the administering Power to take into account the unique geographical character of Saint Helena while resolving as soon as feasible any outstanding issues related to the airport construction;”.

7. In draft resolution B X on the Turks and Caicos Islands, the seventh preambular paragraph should be replaced by the following: “*Noting* the postponement of elections in the Territory;”. The order of paragraphs 1 and 2 should be reversed; the clause “and notes also the view expressed by the administering Power not to postpone elections any longer than necessary” should be added at the end of paragraph 3. A new paragraph 4 should be inserted, reading: “*Notes* the extensive public consultations undertaken by the Constitutional and Electoral Reform Adviser and the continued debate on constitutional and electoral reform within the Territory, and stresses the importance of participation by all groups and interested parties in the consultation process;”. All subsequent paragraphs should be renumbered accordingly, and what was now paragraph 5 should be amended to read: “5. *Stresses* further the importance of having in place in the Territory a Constitution that reflects the aspirations and wishes of the people of the Territory, based on the mechanisms for popular consultation;”.

8. *Draft resolution VI, as orally revised, was adopted.*

9. **Mr. Quarrey** (United Kingdom), welcoming the revision of some of the language in draft resolution VI, said that the final text better reflected the situation in the Territories concerned. The United Kingdom had joined the consensus on the draft resolution as a reflection of its full support for the right of self-determination. However, it regretted that the Special Committee on decolonization had not taken full account of the fact that the relationship between the United Kingdom and its Overseas Territories had been modernized in a way acceptable to both parties, based on partnership, shared values and the right to self-determination; and therefore, as in previous years, could not agree with some of the language in the draft resolution.

10. On the question of the Turks and Caicos Islands, much had been done to reform and embed the principles of sound financial management and good governance, with the support of advisers funded by the United Kingdom, since the suspension of ministerial government. Although public expenditure had been much reduced, the \$135 million debt accumulated under the previous government of the Islands remained, and his Government would be providing financial support for the mammoth task of balancing the budget. The public consultation process which was under way, with the encouragement of his Government and the Governor, would allow the views of everyone in the Territory to be made known to his Government and would enable a new constitution to be put in place that would help a democratically elected territorial government to remain on a sound financial and governance footing. The United Kingdom did not intend to postpone elections indefinitely; the Minister for the Overseas Territories would issue a statement by the end of 2010 setting out the remaining milestones which must be met before elections could take place.

11. On the question of Saint Helena, he recalled that his Government had announced that the building of an airport there was subject to certain preconditions and that the Saint Helena government also had a responsibility in that regard.

12. **Mr. Díaz Bartolomé** (Argentina) said that Argentina had joined the consensus on the draft resolution because of its full support for the right of self-determination of the peoples of the 11 Territories it covered. At the same time, he recalled that the principle of self-determination was, according to General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV), only one of

the two guiding principles of decolonization, the other being the principle of territorial integrity. One special case in which the latter applied was that of the Malvinas Islands, the subject of a draft resolution adopted earlier by the Committee. His Government reiterated its continued willingness to resume negotiations with the United Kingdom to settle the sovereignty dispute between them over the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas.

13. **Ms. Pedros-Carretero** (Spain) said that her delegation had joined the consensus because the principle of self-determination applied to the Territories included in draft resolution VI; at the same time it recalled that self-determination was not the only principle relevant to decolonization, and there were certain cases in which the principle of territorial integrity applied. One such case was that of Gibraltar, the subject of another resolution that had been adopted by consensus. In order to advance the decolonization of that Territory, Spain was ready to facilitate a definitive settlement, which could be the result only of direct negotiation with the United Kingdom, taking into account Gibraltar's interests and aspirations.

14. **Mr. Quarrey** (United Kingdom) said that he wished to make it clear that the United Kingdom did not accept the assertion that the people of Gibraltar and the people of the Falkland Islands did not have the right of self-determination.

15. **Mr. Díaz Bartolomé** (Argentina) reiterated his Government's position that the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas were an integral part of Argentina illegally occupied by the United Kingdom and were the subject of a sovereignty dispute.

16. **Mr. Aimee** (Saint Lucia), thanking the representative of the United Kingdom for his constructive approach to the adoption of draft resolution VI, observed nevertheless, with regard to the Turks and Caicos Islands, that the ratio of debt to GDP was not a reasonable criterion for suspending a constitution; and that the suspension of trial by jury in the name of good governance run counter to the principle of democracy and went beyond the mandate of the administering Power. He hoped that the adoption of the consensus resolution was a sign that the United Kingdom would continue to engage with the Committee and the Special Committee to advance the

cause of self-determination in all Territories under its jurisdiction.

Agenda item 54: Questions relating to information
(A/65/21 and 277)

17. **Ms. Chambers** (Jamaica), speaking as Rapporteur of the Committee on Information, introduced the report on its thirty-second session (A/65/21). In the Committee's general debate, the central role of the United Nations in global affairs and of the Department of Public Information as its public voice and also the vital role of the Committee on Information had been recognized. Other issues emphasized had been the part played by new information and communications technologies in promoting the work of the United Nations, but also the need to strike a balance between traditional and new media so as not to accentuate disparities between the North and South; the importance of freedom of the press and freedom of expression; the need for linguistic parity in the information produced by the Department; the importance of closer cooperation between the Department of Public Information and the Departments of Peacekeeping Operations and Field Support; the need to enhance the Department's special information programme on the question of Palestine; and the need to strengthen and provide more funding for the operations of the United Nations information centres. The final chapter of the report included two draft resolutions on questions relating to information.

18. **Mr. Akasaka** (Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information), drawing attention to the report of the Secretary-General on questions relating to information (A/65/277), said that the strategic approach taken by the Department of Public Information was characterized by advance planning, partnerships, clear organization and coordination, responsible use of resources and impact assessments. The Department had coordinated and led the United Nations Communications Group task force in preparing for the High-level Plenary Meeting on the Millennium Development Goals and its related events. That process had involved the use of traditional as well as new media, the full involvement of the global network of United Nations information centres and the creative engagement of civil society and of young people in particular. Among other things, the Department had produced major global and regional online competitions on the Millennium Development Goals and mobilized celebrities and others to champion the Goals. New

media, especially blogs, had been a major channel for information dissemination.

19. With regard to issues of peace and security, the Department had continued to work closely with all relevant Secretariat departments, including the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the Department of Field Support, the Department of Political Affairs and the Office for Disarmament Affairs, as well as with United Nations peace operations, on strategic communications and communications support. In coordination with its partners, the Department was implementing a communications strategy for the forthcoming Sudan referendums in January 2011; it was also working closely with the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire on communications for the presidential elections in Côte d'Ivoire scheduled at the end of October 2010 and with the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan in promoting and clarifying the Organization's role in the September 2010 parliamentary elections. The Department would continue to plan for the transition of United Nations peacekeeping radio stations as the potential basis for future independent nationwide broadcasters, following the withdrawal of peacekeeping operations.

20. In the area of human rights, the Department had worked closely with United Nations system-wide partners, especially the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. In respect of the human rights of women, the Department continued to coordinate the transition communications task team of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women). It had also supported the communications and public information efforts of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Sexual Violence in Conflict and had initiated a radio campaign with Radio Okapi in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and other peacekeeping radio stations on ending sexual violence against women.

21. In recent months, the Department had made advances in the use of new and social media as additional and complementary tools to its traditional operations, enabling it to vastly expand its outreach. For the General Assembly's high-level meetings and general debate, it had developed a completely redesigned multimedia website, on which all of the Department's products had been consolidated on a unified page. For the first time, United Nations Radio's

Arabic, Russian and Spanish Units had posted videos of speeches in their respective languages, while the English and Portuguese Units had placed live webcast links of events on their websites. The United Nations website had received nearly 1 million page views during the first week of the general debate, and the website created for the High-level Plenary Meeting on the Millennium Development Goals in six languages had received over 90,000 page views on each day of the event. During that period, the United Nations News Centre had broken new records in terms of numbers of stories produced per day.

22. The Department maintained accounts on all major social networks, including YouTube, Facebook and Twitter. He himself was an occasional blogger on the *Huffington Post*, where he discussed specific United Nations priorities from a more informal angle. The Department was also developing a new United Nations e-book collection, to be launched in 2011, which would initially feature as many as 1,000 United Nations e-books. The International Media Seminar on Peace in the Middle East, held in July 2010 in Lisbon, had for the first time examined the role of new media in fostering peace in the region. It had also focused on the role of Israeli and Palestinian women in achieving peace and security in the Middle East.

23. The Department's efforts to deepen its engagement with civil society were yielding excellent results. More than 1,700 delegates representing some 260 NGOs from about 70 countries had participated in the Department of Public Information/Non-Governmental Organizations Conference on Global Public Health, held in Melbourne in August 2010. The Department's recent practice of holding the annual NGO conference away from Headquarters had resulted in a more diverse coalition of NGO partners from around the world, dedicated to raising awareness about the United Nations.

24. In November 2010, the Department would launch the Academic Impact, an initiative aimed at bringing the ideas and proposals generated by institutions of higher learning into the global arena, including the United Nations system. More than 400 institutions in 87 countries were already members of that global network.

25. The Department's outreach to young people was also yielding results. University students from more than 50 countries in all regions of the world had come together in August 2010 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, to participate in the second Global Model United Nations

Conference organized by the Department on the theme "Towards an Alliance of Civilizations: Bridging Cultures to Achieve Peace and Development". The Department had initiated a range of activities to promote the International Year of Youth and to ensure the direct engagement of young people in key issues on the United Nations agenda. United Nations information centres had devised innovative outreach programmes involving local youth and civil society. A community initiative called "From One Generation to the Next: What Can We Learn from the Holocaust?" had been organized, involving university students, parents, grandparents and Holocaust survivors.

26. The Department was constantly trying to find creative methods, both formal and informal, to promote multilingualism and linguistic diversity in all areas of its work, including through the United Nations information centres. As the coordinator for multilingualism in the Secretariat, he was personally concerned with the issue. The Language Days were an example of the different ways in which the Department promoted the official languages of the United Nations among the diplomatic community and United Nations staff. Providing information in all six official languages on the United Nations website remained a difficult challenge, however, since the resources available for translation of informational materials had not kept pace with the increase in United Nations activities. The Department's efforts to enlist the support of institutions of higher learning for pro bono translations had strained its capacity to monitor the quality of the outsourced materials. The Department was considering other options, including the use of new technologies.

27. Significant progress important progress had been made towards providing the network of United Nations information centres, with safe and secure connectivity with Headquarters and other offices in the United Nations system, and improving the physical safety and security of staff of the centres. The Department was devoting considerable resources, including from its operational budget, to strengthen security in the field; but security was costly, and there had also been a decline in the level of voluntary government contributions which had had a marked impact, especially in cases where such contributions funded the salaries of information centre staff. He appealed to those Member States that hosted a United Nations

information centre to consider either providing the centre with rent-free premises or subsidizing the rent.

28. The Department's strategic approach to the rapid changes in communications throughout the world was based on the renovation of its operational infrastructure and the use of new information and communication technologies. The Department's dialogue with the Committee on Information on the policy and programmatic aspects of its activities had been important in guiding its work and the intersessional meetings in March and September 2010 had provided additional opportunities to exchange views on recent developments. During the following week, the Department would launch a new discussion forum for Member States and high-level United Nations officials that would provide an opportunity for a direct exchange of views on questions of international importance.

29. As part of its commemoration of United Nations Day, the Department of Public Information was involved in the UN4U programme, under which Under-Secretaries-General, Assistant Secretaries-General and other officials were visiting high schools in New York, as well as mobilizing United Nations information centres in many countries around the world, in an effort to inform young people about the work of the United Nations. The short film that was about to be shown was being used as part of that programme.

30. *A film about the work of the United Nations was projected.*

Interactive dialogue

31. **Mr. Belkheir** (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that the question of Palestine was a central issue in the work of the United Nations. Unfortunately, some of the related links on the United Nations website did not appear to be working in some languages. He asked whether the booklet published by the Department of Public Information entitled "The Question of Palestine and the United Nations" was solely the work of the Department or whether it had been prepared in coordination with concerned parties. He was concerned to note, for example, that the very first chapter of the booklet opened with a reference to the establishment of a Jewish home in Palestine. The Department should be aware that not only did its information reach millions of people, but it had also become a reference source for writers and academics.

32. There had recently been reports of a United Nations flag being burned in front of the headquarters of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti. He asked whether United Nations news services had covered the incident, since he had not been able to find any information about it. Further details would be appreciated.

33. Turning to the issue of dialogue among civilizations, he asked whether the Department was considering drafting a code of conduct for the media, in particular with regard to attacks against the religions of others. Such a code need not be binding and would not infringe on freedom of expression, but would merely reflect an expectation of the same kind of respect people showed towards one another in their daily lives.

34. **Mr. Akasaka** (Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information) said that the booklet on the question of Palestine and the United Nations had been produced a number of years earlier and revised in 2009. There had been consultation with other relevant departments and with the parties concerned. Every effort had been made to ensure that the information was accurate and impartial. If any part was considered incorrect or inappropriate, the Department was prepared to revise the booklet if necessary.

35. He had no information about a flag-burning incident in Haiti but would look into it.

36. A code of conduct for journalists might be difficult for the Department to establish and was perhaps a matter for journalists themselves. In the case of journalists accredited to the United Nations, there had been some discussion of a code with regard to the handling of press conferences, but as far as he was aware no actual code had yet been drafted.

37. **Mr. Uspenskiy** (Russian Federation) said that the Department had made great progress in expanding its outreach activities through new online media. He would be interested to know more about progress with the traditional media and whether the Department had faced any difficulties in developing new partnerships in that regard.

38. **Mr. Akasaka** (Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information) said that the Department had been successful in expanding its outreach activities in both traditional and new media, trying to make the best possible use of all the tools

available to it. With regard to the traditional media in particular, the challenges it faced were in keeping up with new technologies. United Nations Headquarters did not have the capacity to maintain its own radio station so instead, the Department produced programmes — in all six official languages plus Kiswahili and Portuguese — that were made directly available to radio stations across the world through the United Nations website. To try to ensure their dissemination, memorandums of understanding had been signed with an increasing number of radio stations in many countries and regions. If better technologies and greater resources were made available, the Department would be able to expand its outreach to other places, particularly conflict zones and areas where radio stations or Government controls hindered the broadcast of United Nations radio programmes.

39. In terms of television, the Department had been successful in creating attractive products that had been broadcast through the international media and many had received awards. The short films available through UNifeed in particular had proven popular.

40. Television and radio continued to play an important part, alongside the new media, and the Department would continue its endeavours to expand its coverage and the quality of its products. It was hoped that new television and radio studios would be provided under the capital master plan and the Department had also requested new equipment. With the cooperation of Member States, the Department hoped to be able to do more to expand its whole network.

41. **Ms. Chambers** (Jamaica), commending the Department's efforts to ensure that the *UN Chronicle* was published in languages other than English and French and noting that the online edition had begun to attract more readers, asked whether there had been any increase in subscriptions to the print version and how Member States could assist the Department in increasing readership. With regard to the launch of the Academic Impact initiative, she asked for more details about related events in New York, and also asked how Member States could help more educational institutions in developing countries become involved.

42. **Mr. Akasaka** (Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information) said that subscriptions to the print edition had remained stable, even since the *UN Chronicle* had been made available

online. Since the beginning of 2010, the magazine was being made available online in all official languages but technical challenges, which the Department was working to overcome, sometimes slowed down the publishing of content in some of the languages. Efforts were being made to locate publishers for the print edition in official and non-official languages. He commended the offer of assistance from the Permanent Mission of Bangladesh with regard to locating a publisher for the magazine in Bengali and noted that a Korean pilot edition had successfully been published. Further efforts to widen distribution — both geographically and linguistically — depended on initiatives by Member States; the Department would welcome any offers of assistance in that regard.

43. The Secretary-General would launch the Academic Impact initiative at a concert, to be hosted with support from the Permanent Mission of China, which was bringing over an orchestra for the event. Further details and an application form for any university wishing to join the initiative could be found on the website (www.academicimpact.org).

General debate

44. **Mr. Lambert** (Belgium), speaking on behalf of the European Union; the candidate countries Croatia, Iceland, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey; the stabilization and association process countries Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Serbia; and, in addition, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, said that the European Union was pleased that the High-level Plenary Meeting on the Millennium Development Goals had generated extensive coverage from media around the world. In that regard, he wished to mention the valuable contributions of the Regional Information Centre in Brussels to the successful “WeCanEndPoverty” campaign. The European Union welcomed the Department's outreach activities to publicize the newly established UN Women, the UNiTE to End Violence against Women campaign and the recent communication activities to raise awareness for the fifteenth anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. It encouraged the Department to undertake more initiatives to promote women's issues and to increase its outreach activities for the tenth anniversary of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on Women, Peace and Security.

45. The European Union wished to reiterate the priorities it had outlined during the thirty-second session of the Committee on Information. The first priority was to improve coordination, efficiency and integration of public information activities throughout the entire United Nations system. It was paramount that the Department should make the most strategic and efficient use of available resources. The Department and the United Nations information centres should enhance cooperation with all other United Nations entities at the national and regional levels in order to avoid duplication of work and to speak with one voice. The European Union welcomed the ongoing coordination efforts of the United Nations Communications Group to achieve that important goal. The European Union acknowledged that while traditional means of communication continued to be important to disseminate information on the work of the United Nations, a more effective use of new information and communication technologies would enable the United Nations to reach new audiences and to spread the United Nations messages faster and in a more cost-effective and environmentally friendly manner.

46. The second priority was to continue efforts to streamline the resolution on questions relating to information. A more structured and action-oriented resolution would provide better guidance to the Department of Public Information and would improve its overall efficiency.

47. Thirdly, the European Union attached great importance to multilingualism, an area in which much remained to be done. The European Union urged the Department to identify cost-effective ways to disseminate the United Nations messages in all official languages, for example, through enhanced cooperation between the United Nations information centres, and to expand its partnerships with academic institutions.

48. The principles of freedom of the press and freedom of information, which were of great importance for achieving transparency and openness in governance and in combating corruption, were reaffirmed every year by the General Assembly in its resolution on "Questions relating to information". Unfortunately, over the past year, far too many journalists worldwide had been censored, jailed, kidnapped or killed for their work. The European Union strongly condemned attacks against journalists and reaffirmed that it was the collective responsibility of the international community to put an end to those

tragic events and to hold the perpetrators responsible for their crimes. Freedom of expression was a universal right which must be protected.

49. **Mr. Al-Saiyani** (Yemen), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, stressed the importance of the close cooperation and partnership between the Department and the Committee on Information. The Group of 77 and China fully supported the work of the Department in its continued campaigns on issues of importance to the international community. Since many countries in the developing world still lacked the resources and technical means to access information regarding the United Nations, the Department had the challenging task of reaching out to the widest possible audiences.

50. The Group of 77 and China emphasized the importance of the Department's special information programme on the Question of Palestine in support of the efforts to achieve a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East, in accordance with international law and the relevant resolutions of the United Nations. The annual training programme for Palestinian media professionals from the Occupied Palestinian Territory was one of the many useful elements of the programme which should be further enhanced and reinforced.

51. The Group of 77 and China urged that all possible measures be taken to strengthen the United Nations information centres and pledged their full support to their work. The centres were vital in bridging the gap between the developed and developing countries in terms of access to information and communication technologies.

52. The Group of 77 and China stressed the need for the United Nations websites to be available in all official languages and urged that more resources and efforts be allocated in order to achieve full linguistic parity. At the same time, it was important that traditional media, including both radio and print, should continue to be used in disseminating information about the United Nations, as traditional media had been and still were the primary means of communication in many developing countries.

53. **Ms. Miranda** (Peru), reaffirming her country's commitment to freedom of expression and of the press, said that all Member States must guarantee respect for the freedom of expression and access to information,

even in situations of conflict or of post-conflict reconstruction.

54. Peru appreciated the progress made by the Department of Public Information in the area of strategic communications and its activities related to core United Nations themes, including the recent establishment of UN Women. While contributing to knowledge about and understanding of the United Nations, those activities laid the groundwork for greater engagement with United Nations goals. An example of progress in the field of peacekeeping operations was the transfer of responsibility for radio transmissions from the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone to a public service body in that country.

55. Her delegation welcomed the growing use of local languages in United Nations information centres and their expanded links with new actors and the use of new communication media. New technologies and media were an increasingly important part of communication strategies and should help to close the gap in access to them that existed between developed and developing countries. Her Government was grateful for the Lima information centre's active support of Peru's training centre for the personnel of peacekeeping operations through lectures on pertinent legal aspects and on relations between military and police personnel and the press. At the same time, her delegation believed that greater efforts should be made to consolidate a system of national information centres capable of disseminating the message of the United Nations in a comprehensive, inclusive and coordinated manner. Adequate resources must be allocated so as not to undermine effective and efficient management or the information mission itself.

56. In the light of the importance of multilingualism and efforts to promote language parity, her delegation urged that press releases and statements related to open meetings should be released not only in the two working languages of the Secretariat but in the six official languages of the United Nations.

57. **Mr. Saripudin** (Indonesia) said that Indonesia welcomed the efforts made by the Department of Public Information to improve and expand the dissemination of United Nations information materials, particularly United Nations Radio programming, not merely in the official languages of the Organization but also in other languages. His delegation was particularly pleased that the inclusion of local materials in weekly

United Nations radio programming had begun with materials in the Bahasa Indonesia language. Information materials would be more widely disseminated and accepted, however, if there were higher levels of local involvement and content in their production. The active engagement of the network of United Nations information centres was essential in that effort. He commended the useful work being undertaken by the United Nations Information Centre in Jakarta in partnership with local authorities and civil society.

58. As a troop-contributing country, Indonesia recognized the vital importance of disseminating information highlighting United Nations peacekeeping success stories and providing accurate, impartial and timely information on the activities of United Nations peacekeepers. Indonesia was pleased at the expanding cooperation between the Department of Public Information, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the Department of Field Support and the Department of Political Affairs in projecting the work of peacekeepers; continued coordination and collaboration in that regard would enhance the image of the Organization in the eyes of the world, as well as the effectiveness of peacekeeping missions.

59. His delegation supported the call for the Department of Public Information to use its worldwide presence to foster dialogue among civilizations and the culture of peace and promote the work of the Alliance of Civilizations. The Department could play a vital role in sensitizing the mass media throughout the world about the need to combat and eradicate the practice of stereotyping in the media. It could achieve those goals by broadening its cooperation with local and international media. The Department should also work with the media to promote tolerance and mutual respect without interfering with their editorial independence.

60. His delegation called on the Department to continue the implementation of its media programme on the Palestinian issue. It was essential to continue to raise international awareness regarding the question of Palestine with a view to supporting efforts to achieve a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East.

61. **Mr. Ciss** (Senegal), stressing the need to strengthen the United Nations information centres and integrate them fully into the Organization's global communications strategy, said that host States must provide financial support for the centres. Senegal had

made space available free of charge to the United Nations Information Centre in Dakar in a beautiful location where it would be possible to set up a regional office for the benefit of French-speaking countries in Western and Central Africa.

62. The Department of Public Information should make every effort to improve the situation with regard to multilingualism and to ensure parity among the official languages of the Organization. Similarly, it was important to improve the quality of information services such as radio, television, press releases and the United Nations website. It was regrettable that tools such as radio, television and print media should still be considered luxuries in most developing countries. A balance must be struck between traditional and new media so as not to accentuate the North-South digital divide; in that regard, the Digital Solidarity Fund should be given greater visibility. His delegation was pleased that the Department was placing more emphasis on the needs of Africa, and in particular on the New Partnership for Africa's Development.

63. Senegal noted with satisfaction that the Department of Public Information was continuing its special information programme on the question of Palestine and encouraged the Department to intensify its efforts in order to promote the exercise of the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to live in a free, independent and viable State. He called on all delegations to support fully all the recommendations and decisions relating to the information programmes on the question of Palestine.

64. His delegation paid tribute to the information and communications professionals who worked day in and day out, often at the price of their lives, to publicize the activities of the United Nations.

65. **Mr. Ouazzani Touhami** (Morocco) said that all the United Nations information centres should adopt new digital technologies in order to provide information effectively, in real time, and should publish their own electronic newsletters and bulletins. The United Nations Information Centre in Rabat was actively involved in keeping the Moroccan public informed of United Nations activities. Following the High-level Plenary Meeting on the Millennium Development Goals, the Rabat Centre had worked with the Moroccan Government to develop a public information campaign on the Goals.

66. The special programme on the question of Palestine should be continued. His delegation expressed appreciation to the Portuguese Government for hosting the International Media Seminar on Peace in the Middle East and focusing the discussions on the role of Israeli and Palestinian women in achieving peace and security in the Middle East. Additional resources should be made available for the training programme for Palestinian journalists, particularly in respect of online media.

67. His delegation attached high priority to multilingualism, which was essential to the work of the United Nations. While it was unfortunate that linguistic parity had not yet been achieved, his delegation was confident that the Department would redouble its efforts and lay a firm foundation for effective communication in the six official languages. The Department should more actively promote cultural diversity and dialogue among civilizations by increasing its contacts with academic institutions. His Government welcomed the Academic Impact Initiative, which had already been joined by some 300 universities from 60 countries.

68. Much remained to be done in terms of keeping the public informed of the Organization's efforts in relation to the maintenance of international peace and security. There should be closer communication between the Department of Public Information, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Political Affairs so as to improve the dissemination of information regarding the Organization's peacekeeping operations.

69. The Department of Public Information should make increasing use of social media so as to make the United Nations more accessible to the peoples of the world. It should expand its partnerships with a view to improving interaction with Member States, the organizations of the United Nations system and civil society.

70. **Mr. Núñez Mosquera** (Cuba) said that for millions of people in the world, survival was more important than being online or having access to information and communication technologies. The hundreds of millions of people who were illiterate could only dream of freedom of expression. They needed the basic tools to be able to form their own opinions, based on information available to them. The United Nations therefore faced many challenges in its goal of disseminating objective, balanced and impartial

information to the broadest possible audience. The gap in access to new information technologies was widening, especially between the North and South. Moreover, the flow of information was controlled by powerful interests that too often spread lies, manipulated history, legitimized discrimination and jeopardized freedom of expression and information. The United Nations had a fundamental role to play in changing that reality and taking practical steps to enable a rational use and broader social ownership of information technologies.

71. The United Nations information centres must continue to play a central role in the dissemination of balanced and objective information that took due account of the needs of their intended audience. His delegation welcomed the General Assembly's decision to establish an Information Centre in Luanda. Once in operation, which Cuba hoped would be soon, it would help to inform Portuguese-speaking African countries about the most important current issues.

72. The use of such broadcast media as radio must remain a priority to help provide information to the large illiterate populations in the countries of the South. His delegation was gratified that the Department of Public Information had continued to extend its network of associated broadcasters and had modified its radio programming to improve quality and increase output in other languages.

73. Cuba had been the target of United States Government radio and television aggression for more than 50 years, in flagrant violation of international law and of the rules and regulations of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU). The illegal transmissions to Cuba contained false and twisted information intended to destabilize and subvert; moreover, they caused interference to the reception of six Cuban television stations that were duly listed in the Master International Frequency Register. At its fifty-third meeting, in March 2010, the Radio Regulations Board of ITU had urged the United States Government to put a stop to that interference. From the outset, Cuba had denounced that aggression in various forums, in particular ITU.

74. The United States Congress spent more than \$30 million a year on the transmission to Cuba of thousands of hours of programming broadcast on different bands, by radio and television. Transmissions were made from military and other aircraft, in violation

of international regulations and of ITU agreements to which the United States was a signatory. Some of the broadcasting stations were owned by the Government of the United States of America and others belonged to or were used by organizations with known links to terrorism. His Government demanded an end to the United States Government's illegal actions, which violated Cuba's sovereignty, dignity and independence.

75. **Mr. Quinlan** (Australia) said that his Government had been very pleased to be able to welcome high-level representatives from the United Nations, including Mr. Akasaka, to Australia in August 2010 for the sixty-third United Nations Department of Public Information/Non-Governmental Organizations Conference on the theme of global health. In addition to hosting the Conference, Australia had supported the participation of up to 22 representatives from developing country NGOs, including, for the first time, NGOs from Fiji, Tonga and Vanuatu.

76. Australia welcomed the efforts made by the Department of Public Information to increase awareness of thematic issues with the aid of better coordinated communications campaigns, particularly the system-wide campaign developed by the United Nations Communications Group task force in advance of the High-level Plenary Meeting on the Millennium Development Goals. On the thematic issue of climate change, he encouraged the Department to continue to work with all relevant United Nations entities to find synergies in communications strategies and help foster a much sharper understanding of that global threat. The work of the Strategic Communications Division was also important in promoting that issue and other thematic issues, including disarmament, peacekeeping, human rights and humanitarian action; that work must be closely coordinated with the activities of the United Nations information centres.

77. The United Nations Information Centre for Australia, New Zealand and the South Pacific, located in Canberra, was fostering cooperation between United Nations offices across the Asia Pacific region and strengthening partnerships with civil society and Government. With little representation from United Nations agencies in large areas of the region, the Centre helped generate greater coverage of United Nations issues.

78. The recent redesign of the United Nations website had improved usability and increased the

capacity to host multimedia content. Australia regarded the Department's willingness to engage with new media and social media tools as a positive step towards greater engagement with youth. However, it also recognized the ongoing importance of traditional media and the work of United Nations Radio and United Nations Television, particularly in countries without easy access to new communication technologies. The Australian Mission, and Australian media outlets, regularly relied on the coverage United Nations Television provided of activities at Headquarters. The work of the Office of the Spokesperson for the Secretary-General was also vital in that regard; that Office should be even more proactive. Australia appreciated the efforts of the Department to cut through the complexity of the Organization's work, through such initiatives as the *Every Day* pocket information card and the UN4U initiative.

The meeting rose at 6.10 p.m.