

**General Debate on Committee on Information
(41st Session)**

INDIA STATEMENT

By

**Mr. Deepak Misra
Minister**

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Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, we welcome the assumption of charge by Permanent Representative of Morocco as chair of the Committee on Information and would like to thank the outgoing Chairman of the Committee of Information for providing guidance and leadership to the Committee during the year. India also expresses appreciation for the detailed report on the work of the Committee presented by Department of Global Communication and especially to Ms. Alison Smale, Under Secretary General for Global Communications for the informal briefing provided by her to members on 12th March, 2019. The reports of the Secretary General on the activities of the Department are extensive and detailed, providing a wealth of information.

Mr. Chairman,

2. The United Nations is the culmination of shared efforts of the humankind to jointly address common global challenges and to build sustainable peace and prosperity for all peoples. It seeks to achieve unity of purpose amid the seeming diversity among nations.

3. Genuine multilingualism promotes this unity in diversity, and international understanding, by accepting the importance of communicating to the peoples of the world in their languages, to bring common goals and ideals closer to the people in a more effective manner.

4. Ever since its inception more than seven decades ago, the United Nations has placed emphasis on multilingualism as a basis to promote and strengthen multilateral engagement on global issues. The UNGA Resolution 13 (1) adopted at its first session on 1st February 1946 states that **“The United Nations cannot achieve its purposes unless the people of the world are fully informed of its aims and activities”**.

5. The Department of Public Information (DPI), now renamed as Department of Global Communications, was entrusted with enhancing the UN’s outreach in a range of widely-spoken languages, in addition to those recognized as the UN official languages. The Department of Global Communications has acquitted itself commendably in drawing the UN’s efforts closer to people through its outreach activities. The Programme of Work of the DGC continues to reflect the above purpose.

6. However, of late, the declining financial resources have presented a serious limitation on the ability of the DGC to accomplish its mandated tasks especially through the use of non-official languages. DGC, therefore, needs to look at innovative ways to raise resources beyond the regular budgetary allocations, including through voluntary contributions to continue and expand its global outreach activities, especially in the widely-spoken non-official languages.

7. Such activities have become even more necessary today with the growing understanding of the interconnectedness of challenges as reflected in the adoption of the comprehensive 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and the concepts relating to building sustainable peace.

8. Coming to specific areas of work, the efforts of the Department in creating media zones to ignite a dialogue on sustainable development, as well as to promote dedicated social media accounts is a commendable initiative. Climate change will remain the defining global issue in the coming decades and hence India continues to lay great emphasis on its commitment towards the Paris Agreement. India's initiative in building an International Solar Alliance, which has been joined by 74 countries, is a note-worthy illustration. We welcome the DGC's efforts to promote support for accelerated action on climate change through its campaign on **"A race we can win. A race we must win"** in the run up to the Climate Summit to be held in September 2019.

9. The close cooperation of DGC with DPKO is important and needs to be maintained. India especially appreciates DGC's launch of the multi-lingual & multi-media campaign entitled 'Service and Sacrifice' focusing on individual countries which highlights the contributions of peacekeepers from troop and police contributing countries. This is timely, given the importance of troop and police contributing countries in an environment which has become challenging in recent times.

10. We also appreciate the partnership with the DPKO and DFS in building a redesigned peace-keeping website for an enhanced user experience. Provision of the Mission details in fact sheet updates incorporating figures and statistics in the six official languages is important. DGC may also consider the benefits of developing such updates in the languages of the troop contributing countries to provide more information about their contributions to peace keeping and foster greater involvement.

11. India reiterates support to the UN Academic Impact initiative and is pleased to see that membership of institutions from South Asia has seen an increasing trend. Appreciating the DGC's initiative of highlighting the contributions of Universities to the SDGs, we urge a greater thrust towards working with Universities in Asia. We appreciate the organization of the First United Nations Model Summit by the Education Outreach Section on April 12th which saw the participation of a number of Indian students and who were enriched about the working of United Nations in general.

12. It is heartening to note that there has been an expansion in the number of languages in which UN guided tours are offered. This not only contributes to greater awareness of the UN but also brings in additional revenues. The guided tour has been very popular with Indian tourists to New York and as highlighted by us earlier, we would urge the addition of a guided tour in Hindi, India's official language to facilitate Indian tourists.

To conclude, we would like to place on record India's full support to the DGC and its efforts to project the work of the UN.
