

**India statement on “Questions relating to information” (Agenda item 56)
at the
Fourth Committee Joint General debate
of the
75th Session of UNGA

Mr. Chairperson,

India would like to thank the Chair of Committee on Information Ambassador Omar Hilale for his leadership in ensuring that the Committee met and discharged its mandated function provided by the General Assembly, despite the challenging circumstances. We also acknowledge the support provided by the Department of Global Communication (DGC) to assist the Committee in its efforts. India welcomes the consensus adoption of the report of the 42nd session of Committee on Information.

Mr. Chairperson,

We are living in a unique information era, where misinformation and disinformation has been spreading faster than facts and news throughout the Internet, social media and other news and communication platforms. This has been more pronounced during the COVID-19 pandemic, when people around the world have been craving for information, checking social media, following news constantly, and discussing the daily statistics about infection rates and deaths. This anxiety and fear of the virus has been exploited through deliberate dissemination of unauthenticated information, unscientific data, fake news and competing narratives across multiple platforms. The need for accurate, impartial and timely information has never been greater before.

In such a desperate situation, it is heartening to see DGC ensuring business continuity and supporting the larger UN system to position the UN as the most authoritative and authentic source on scientific knowledge, best practices, including through the ‘Verified’ campaign.

India commends DGC for its first ever Global Global Communication Strategy, which envisages transformation of the public from being mere consumers of news and information to responsible individuals, wanting to contribute to the shared global challenges. India welcomes this action-oriented approach, which attempts to give a human face to the otherwise sundry-statistics.

India also takes note the attempts made by the DGC to promote multilingualism, notably the appropriate use of non-official languages of the United Nations in its communications during the pandemic. We reiterate that the people of this planet dream, read, hear, watch and gossip in languages beyond the six official UN languages. And so we would like to see DGC’s ongoing global outreach efforts in languages other than official languages strengthened further.

Mr. Chairperson,

UN Peacekeeping missions have been at the heart of the United Nations since its formation. In this regard, India appreciates the Department’s role in spearheading the communication campaign to project

the service and sacrifice of the UN peacekeepers as well as the contribution of countries, who are sending their uniformed men and women, to serve in peacekeeping missions to maintain international peace and security. The assistance provided by DGC to revamp the websites of the Peacekeeping Missions has also added value to this important campaign.

India is concerned by the growing attacks on attacks on UN peacekeepers, which also results from the anti-UN propaganda. We underscore the importance of this critical issue and urge the DGC to work together with Field Missions and tailor its communication strategies accordingly to address it. Maintaining the Peacekeeping websites in local languages would be a useful step further broaden the outreach of this information and achieve the above objective.

As part of its strategic communications, India would also like to see greater focus in the remarkable work done in the area of South-South cooperation in promoting the SDGs and achieving the Agenda 2030. Highlighting such efforts is particularly relevant during the 'Decade of Action'.

Mr. Chairperson,

We take note of the extensive work done by the News and Media Division of the DGC and thank the Division for its support in commemorating the International Day of Yoga and helping the global Yoga community in promoting the message of Yoga to fight social isolation and depression during the pandemic and Yoga's significant role in the psycho-social care and rehabilitation of COVID-19 patients in quarantine and isolation.

The strain on its financial resources requires DGC to look at innovative ways to raise resources beyond the regular budgetary allocations to carry out its mandated tasks especially in non-official languages. In this regard, we are happy to partner with the DGC in evolving a unique model to mainstream and consolidate news and multimedia content through the UN News online portal and social media in Hindi. Within a short period of its commencement, UN's Hindi Twitter account has witnessed a surge in its subscription and it has more than 5 million followers today. We hope to continue this partnership with DGC to enhance the visibility and impact of such efforts.

India welcomes the important role played by the UN Academic Impact in creating a vibrant and diverse network of students, academics, scientists, researchers, think-tanks and many institutions of higher education, which are the new ideas, inventions and solutions to the many global challenges we face emerge. We appreciate UNAI for providing the link between the UN and these important stakeholders. We also appreciate the efforts taken by the Dag Hammarskjold Library to continue its online training programs virtually. We would like to see the return of the full training schedule at the earliest.

Mr. Chairperson,

India assures the DGC of its full support for its various activities and initiatives.

Thank You.
