



**Statement by Bangladesh delegation
to the UN at the 38th Session of the Committee on Information
27 April 2016**

Thank you, Madam Chair, for giving me the floor. I'm delivering the Statement on behalf of the Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Bangladesh.

Let me assure of the substantive support of my delegation in your endeavors as Chair of this important Committee. My delegation aligns with the statement made yesterday by the Chair of the G-77 & China.

2. I would also like to convey to Ms. Cristina Gallach, Under Secretary General for Communication and Public Information and her team our deep appreciation for her relentless efforts to establish meaningful communication between the UN and the peoples around the world especially to raise awareness of sustainable development, UN peacekeeping operations, counter-terrorism and different international days of global importance.

3. In this context, I would like to take the opportunity to reflect on the day-long programme that was recently organized by the DPI to observe the World Autism Awareness Day. As Member States are aware, the Government of Bangladesh under the leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, since 2010, has been implementing a unique "Bangladesh Model" to build social awareness for disabled persons especially autism and to ensure rights of the persons with disability. We are privileged to play a role in the event, as DPI invited Ms. Saima Wazed Hossain, the Chairperson of the National Advisory Committee on Autism in Bangladesh and member of the WHO's Advisory Panel on Mental Health as an expert panelist. We appreciate DPI for giving us the opportunity to share the "Bangladesh Model" on autism that is being replicated regionally and beyond.

4. I would also like to welcome and thank the Secretary General for the three comprehensive reports on the activities of the DPI to develop communication strategies for better propagation of the news and outreach services across the world to ensure free flow of information which Bangladesh believes in strongly. The DPI has been playing an important role to disseminate information that is generated every day at the UN through internet as well as through traditional media to 7.2 billion people of the world. This is a major achievement of DPI, and we commend them for that. We're sure, the DPI is monitoring regularly the work of the UNICs across the world including Bangladesh

especially to promote multilateralism. Collecting feedback from the users of audiovisual services on a regular basis from across the world would be useful for the DPI to ensure effective communication.

5. This point brings me to the issue of “Digital Divide”. The Geneva Declaration of Principles and the Geneva Plan of Action on WSIS flagged that least developed countries need special attention in their efforts to establish telecommunication infrastructure. In Tunis Agenda of 2005, the need of coordinated assistance for LDCs in the area of infrastructure for ICT was reiterated. It was highlighted that relevant parties, i.e., service providers should be encouraged to provide commercial internet service in LDCs at affordable cost, considering the constraints faced by these countries. The Istanbul Programme of Action (IPoA) for LDCs, adopted by the UN Member States in 2011, set specific target of significantly increasing access to telecommunication services and to strive for providing **everyone** in the least developed countries affordable access to the Internet by 2020. This has been reinforced in 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and as the target 9.c of 2030 Agenda, it has become one of the early-harvests that need to be achieved.

6. Bangladesh, however, has reached the average of the developing world in this regard. 37 per cent people in my country are now using the internet as a result of implementation of the policy of “Digital Bangladesh”, envisioned and led by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

7. Bangladesh has also been active to ensure freedom of press. The Constitution of Bangladesh as framed by the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in 1972 within a year of our great Independence guarantees freedom of expression. The Government of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is utmost sincere to ensure the rights of the people. The media in Bangladesh is enjoying complete freedom. Her Government in 2011 scrapped the Code of Criminal Procedure provision for directly issuing arrest warrant against journalists, writers, and others for writing or saying anything defamatory.

8. Let me share with you an interesting set of data. In Bangladesh, every day, 428 media-listed newspaper are being published and 172 of them are from Dhaka, the capital. The present Government, so far, awarded licenses to 32 new private TV channels and 24 FM and 32 community radio stations and framed Journalist Welfare Trust Act in 2014 for providing aid to distressed journalists. The Government passed “Right to Information Act” and the Information Commission remains vigilant to ensure the rights of rural people also.

9. As a final point, we would like to draw attention of all of you to Bangla, the primer language of about 300 million people around the world. UN Member States are aware of the sacrifice of Bangalees for their mother language that was recognized by

UNESCO in 1999 and 21st February has been declared as the International Mother Language Day. We look forward to working with the DPI and DGACM to observe the Day in UN in New York annually to reinforce the importance of preserving mother languages around the world, and promoting multilingual education. Our government has set up International Mother Language Institute. We wish to engage in collaboration with interested partners to conduct research on evolution and status of mother languages as well as building up comprehensive archives of all living and endangered languages. We also appreciate the activity of UN weekly Radio program in Bangla and my delegation would advise DPI to consider more activities in digital formats in Bangla including broadcast daily news through UN Radio Bangla.

10. Finally, Madam Chair, Bangladesh stands ready to work further with the DPI and the Committee in pursuit of these goals to ensure that we can fulfill the commitment made by our leaders here in New York, the commitment that no one will be left behind.

I thank you.