

ISRAEL

Statement By:

Ambassador Daniel Carmon
Deputy Permanent Representative

**Committee on Information
Twenty-Eighth Session
24 April – 5 May 2006**

26 April 2006
United Nations, New York

Check against delivery

Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, allow me to express my appreciation to you, Ambassador Motoc, for your impressive stewardship as Chairman of the Committee on Information.

I would also like to convey our gratitude to H.E. Mr. Shashi Tharoor for his briefing and his continued leadership over the Department of Public Information during this important period. We congratulate the DPI and the members of the COI for their work this year and express our gratitude to the Secretary-General for his reports on these vital issues.

Mr. Chairman,

I would like to echo other Member States in commending the DPI for its efforts and success in developing a more strategic approach to increase global awareness and understanding of the work of the United Nations.

It is axiomatic that we have entered a new age of information and communication technology, where relevance requires continued technological progress. In this regard we commend the DPI for the many changes it has instituted, such as the accomplishments of the UN Website. That one can view meetings held in this building in a real time video feed from anywhere in the world with Internet access, is truly remarkable and yet fitting for this organization. As a former head of the Department for Information at Israel's Foreign Ministry, which, although a much smaller entity, was in the early 90's the first Foreign Ministry to develop a website, I am personally well attuned to these advancements and commend the DPI for its accomplishments in this field.

Mr. Chairman,

Yesterday the State of Israel and the Jewish world observed *Yom Hashoah*, our day of Holocaust Remembrance. It is therefore only fitting that we take this opportunity to express our praise to the DPI for the positive outcome of the first annual International Day of Commemoration in memory of the victims of the Holocaust, which took place this past January 27th and was commemorated throughout the world, including in Israel.

We are extremely proud of this international endeavor, and were impressed by the creative and comprehensive way in which Under-Secretary General Tharoor and his DPI team prepared these events here at the United Nations. Simply witnessing the response of the hundreds of Holocaust survivors who attended the ceremony in the General Assembly Hall on January 27th, who were so deeply moved and touched, was enough to validate this entire endeavor.

Mr. Chairman, the United Nations was founded on the ashes of the Holocaust, and this ceremony represents the culmination of a series of related activities at the UN. These activities include the seminar on anti-Semitism in June 2004, the Special Session to commemorate the 60th Anniversary of the Liberation of the Nazi Concentration Camps on January 24, 2005, and its accompanying exhibit. The Holocaust Remembrance

Resolution, which the General Assembly adopted last November, represents the first time in history that the General Assembly officially commemorated the victims of the Holocaust, commended the liberators, and saluted the survivors. We stand, Mr. Chairman, on the brink of the moment when the Holocaust transforms from memory into history. It is our duty to pass the torch of remembrance to the next generation, so we never forget the great atrocities that befell the Jewish People. I am honored and humbled by the UN's efforts to mark this tragic moment in history.

I would like also to express our warm anticipation for the outreach programs and educational activities within the UN system and within educational systems in Member States, such as relevant publications, exhibits, seminars, and the use of a dedicated Internet website. The world must learn the lessons of the Holocaust. These educational activities must send a universal message that such atrocities never occur anywhere or happen to any people, ever again.

It is unfortunate that despite all that has been done, incitement still persists. Member States adopted the Holocaust Remembrance Resolution by consensus, a resolution that specifically addresses Holocaust denial. Yet some leaders still project hate rhetoric and Holocaust denial, even on the very eve of the Day of Holocaust Remembrance. In particular, the President of Iran is repeatedly calling, publicly and explicitly, for the annihilation of another Member State, and is in the midst of developing the capabilities to do so. We hope the international community, through these UN educational activities and other efforts, will do its best to promote the message that this organization and the international community will not tolerate incitement by Member States against another Member State, wherever and whenever it may occur. Incitement and hate unfortunately do not remain in the realm of words, but inevitably lead to extremism and terror.

Mr. Chairman,

On another subject, allow me to address a matter of concern, which is part of our continuous dialogue with the DPI, regarding its implementation of the General Assembly resolutions on the Palestinian Information Programme. This program, by its very definition, promotes a one-sided narrative. We recognize Under-Secretary General Tharoor's efforts to make the seminars and materials emanating from the DPI as objective as possible, yet as a result of the Palestinian Information Programme we continue to be the only Member State that is the target of such political bias. Especially in this year of reform, we believe this program should be substituted in due time with a more balanced and constructive joint effort concerning peace in the Middle East, aimed at the promotion of tolerance, peace education, mutual understanding, and the prevention of incitement.

Mr. Chairman,

This May 3rd we commemorate World Press Freedom Day. We would like to reiterate our commitment to a free press and the crucial role it plays in democratic society. We commend the protections given to the practice of a free press, and condemn the

oppressive controls imposed on it in some areas in the world. We urge the DPI to use its resources and energy to foster the former and combat the latter. Indeed people are only as free as the information transmitted around them.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, we reaffirm Israel's commitment to a constructive and cooperative conduct of these deliberations and, we hope, a positive outcome.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.