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STATEMENT BY

Mr. Chairman,

I thank you for the opportunity to address the 32nd Session of the United Nations Committee on Information.

My delegation wishes to congratulate you and the other members of the bureau on the exemplary manner you have presided over the affairs of the Committee during the past one year. With your able and dedicated leadership, clearly, the Committee is poised for even greater achievements on the road ahead.

Zambia aligns herself with statement by Yemen on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Mr. Chairman,

Information is power. It cuts across all sectors of national and international life. It is unarguable that nations that have effectively used information to their advantage have made tremendous strides in science and technology, medicine, agriculture, commerce, mining, industry and indeed in virtually all aspects of life.

The technological advances witnessed during the century have largely been due to pronounced and correct use of information. Truthful, accurate and balanced information further contributes to transparency, accountability and good and democratic governance.

It is for this reason that Zambia, like the rest of the United Nations family, places high premium on the work of this Committee in promoting the establishment of a new, more just and more effective world information and communication order intended to bridge and strengthen peace and international understanding based on free circulation, wider and balanced dissemination of information.

Mr. Chairman,

To achieve this and other objectives, the role of the United Nations Department of Public Information (DPI), is critical in public information outreach programmes, capacity building of media and other information disseminators and advocacy for and on behalf of members states, on major international issues and challenges such as climate change, Millennium Development Goals and investment, among others.

Zambia also sees the role of the DPI as crucially important in bridging the gulf between developed and third world countries in terms of information communication tools and technologies and balanced coverage and ranking of issues between the two divides.

Mr. Chairman,

The media plays a vital role in facilitating public access to information and the right for individuals and society to express themselves. To this effect, Zambia has taken and continues to take a wide range of measures aimed at achieving country-wide media coverage and information dissemination.

Primary among Government interventions is, the liberalisation of the media industry which has resulted in the resurgence of private owned print and electronic media, which is running vibrantly side by side with the state owned media in the country.

The country now has a fairly large number of newspapers on the market and no less than 40 community radio stations which are making a significant contribution in, bridging the information gap between the urban and the rural populace.

The Government is also taking measures to reform the media industry in line with the present and future challenges of this vital sector.

We have passed the Independent Broadcasting Authority, (IBA), Act, while the Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation, (ZNBC), Act has been amended to transform the national broadcaster into a public broadcaster. Government also plans to take back to Parliament, the Freedom of Information Bill, intended to enhance public access to information.

The process towards media self regulation is ongoing, aimed at developing a

I thank you.