

Committee on Information, opening of the 47th session
Chair's statement delivered by H.E. Rein Tammsaar, Permanent
Representative of Estonia
28 April 2025, New York

Distinguished delegates,

Under-Secretary-General Melissa Fleming,

First of all, I sincerely thank you for electing me as the chair of the committee for the next two sessions. I am committed to fulfilling this role with dedication, and look forward to working closely with the bureau, facilitator, and all delegations.

I count on your constructive engagement to provide the Department of Global Communications with a clear, updated, and achievable mandate. We must strive towards a consensus-based outcome, as is the committee's tradition. While negotiations will be led by our able facilitator on behalf of G77, I remain available to assist and mediate as needed.

Excellencies,

We meet at a time when the information space is increasingly hostile, with the rampant spread of mis- and disinformation and hate speech. It has become difficult to distinguish fact from fiction. These trends have real-life consequences – justifying and inciting violence, eroding trust in institutions, fuelling vaccine hesitancy and denying climate change. The UN itself has come under attack, threatening the safety and security of peacekeepers and hindering the organisation's lifesaving work.

In this context, the UN must serve as a trusted, reliable source of information that resonates with diverse audiences and supports key priorities such as the SDGs and Agenda 2030. This is not an easy task, and I commend the Department of Global Communications, under the leadership of USG Fleming, for their excellent work. You have made a real difference by amplifying real voices, using different languages, tones and platforms to reach people effectively.

I particularly thank the DGC for your work on information integrity, formulating concrete guidelines for a healthier information ecosystem. The next step is to implement the UN Global Principles through concrete actions, and I was glad to note that the department has undertaken several projects in this regard. We are ready to partner in these efforts. Broad buy-in from tech companies, governments

and other stakeholders is essential. Ensuring information integrity is the shared interest of all, and a foundation for achieving the SDGs.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to highlight two more ways to increase resilience to information manipulation – media and information literacy and media freedom. Firstly, media and information literacy empowers people to think critically, identify disinformation, and make informed decisions. These are vital skills, which should be taught from a young age. The UN's work on building information literacy around the world, particularly through the DGC's information centres, is highly valued and should be further strengthened.

Secondly, independent, free and pluralistic media is the backbone of a resilient information ecosystem. It defends against disinformation, propaganda and corruption, fosters accountability and promotes diverse perspectives. Unfortunately, media freedom is increasingly endangered worldwide through censorship, threats and even targeted violence against journalists. According to the Committee to Protect Journalists, a record 124 journalists were killed in 2024. We must do more to protect and support the media, even when the truth they report is sometimes uncomfortable.

Distinguished delegates,

Artificial intelligence introduces both risks and opportunities. It can spread false content at an unprecedented speed, but also offers tools for detecting disinformation and fabricated narratives, and creating engaging multilingual content. The key is to strike a balance that is human-centric and grounded in human rights, in line with the approach we adopted in the Global Digital Compact. I welcome the DGC's efforts to responsibly integrate AI to support multilingual content creation, always with human oversight.

Dear colleagues,

This committee has a vital role to play in guiding the UN's global communications in an increasingly complex information landscape. We must come together to address these challenges because information knows no borders. I look forward to engaging with you over the next two weeks as we work toward constructive and sustainable solutions.

I thank you.