



**Statement by Ambassador Aamir Khan, Deputy Permanent
Representative of Pakistan -Chair of the Committee on
Information 45th Session of the Information Committee
(April 24, 2023)**

**Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates, ladies, and gentlemen,**

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you all to the opening session of the United Nations Committee on Information. As the Chair of this esteemed committee, it is my privilege to address you today.

I appreciate the honor that member states have conferred on Pakistan to chair this committee and I hope that our joint work will be successful and productive.

I would like to express my gratitude to the members of the Bureau, the Secretariat, and Ecuador as an outgoing Chair of the Committee for their work during the past sessions.

On this Occasion, I also welcome the new Vice-Chairs and Rapporteur of the Committee as well as new member- Estonia admitted to the Committee on Information.

Presiding over this committee, I am also comforted by the fact that the Department is led by the Under Secretary General, Ms. Melissa Fleming, who always provides valuable insight and input to the Committee.

Excellencies,

Pakistan is assuming the Presidency of the Committee on Information for the second time.

With the support of the Member States of Pakistan's initiative, the General Assembly, for the first time, adopted resolution 76/227 entitled "Countering Disinformation for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms", on 24 December 2021.

Later, 'Group of Friends' on Countering Disinformation was launched to advance the multidimensional response to counter all forms of disinformation, including in the context of the Covid-19 Pandemic.

Last Year, as G77 Chair, Pakistan played a productive role in bringing a consensus-based resolution in the Committee on Information.

I look forward to the close working relationship with the Department of Global Communication ensuring that the Committee continues to deliver on its important mandate during Pakistan's chairmanship of the Committee.

Excellencies,

As we gather here today, the world is facing an unprecedented triple-crisis – the COVID-19 pandemic, the existential threat caused by climate change and the inter-related shocks to food, fuel and finance that are aggravated further by existing and new conflicts.

In this situation, the role of our Committee in combating the multitude of challenges and ensuring the accurate and timely information is critical.

Over the coming days, we will be discussing a wide range of issues: the role of the media in shaping public opinion, the importance of bridging the digital divide, the need to combat disinformation, hate speech and on how to confront the harmful or misleading content.

As we embark on this journey together, I believe it is essential to focus our efforts on some of the most pressing issues facing our world today.

First, we must ensure the integrity of information. In today's fast-paced, interconnected world, the spread of disinformation is causing economic discontent and destabilizing societies. As Chair, I will promote fact-based information and fight against the spread of false information.

Second, we must combat hate speech. Today, digitalized platforms misused by bad actors, are causing social unrest and fanning tensions within and among societies. We must intensify our efforts to address problematic content and create more tolerant and inclusive society.

We will also be exploring ways to promote access to information for all, including marginalized communities including migrants, refugees, IDPs and those living in areas affected by conflict or natural disasters.

Third, as we work towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, we must persevere and renew our commitment to meeting these goals despite challenges posed by Covid-19. SDGs shall remain a topmost priority at the SDG Summit in September this year.

Fourth, We must confront the existential threat of climate change. Catastrophic flood in Pakistan last year, the terrible earthquake hitting Turkiye and Syria this year and the threat posed by rising sea water and desertification are its serious manifestations. Our information systems should promote the exchange of information and best practices to accelerate the bold climate action.

Fifth, we must end fragmentation of our information system. A system that is cohesive, appreciates diversity and enhances the understanding of the principles of the UN Charter should be our priority.

Sixth, we must address technological divide and the lack of access by developing countries to reliable, factual, and multilingual information. We must address theses gaps and create a fair, equitable and resilient global information landscape.

Bridging the digital divide and achieving universal connectivity by ensuring access to broad band and data for all is critical.

It will enable people to make informed decisions, participate in democratic processes, and contribute to the building of inclusive, peaceful, and just societies.

It is the cure to the pandemic of disinformation and hate speech.

Excellencies,

Considerable work has been initiated by the Department of Global Communication to combat disinformation and hate speech; it is this Committee's work to guide it further.

We will begin the General Debate and consideration of the reports of the Secretary-General tomorrow. Following that we will begin negotiations in its open-ended working group on the text of the draft resolutions titled: Questions related to Information.

I hope this year the deliberations at the United Nations will provide us with an opportunity to review SG's proposal for the development of the "code of conduct for information integrity on digital platforms".

I encourage participation in this process and meaningful contribution.

I thank you.