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United Nations Disarmament Information Programme

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report provides an overview of the activities of the United Nations Disarmament Information Programme carried out by the Office for Disarmament Affairs. The Programme continues to publish print and electronic versions of the two-part *United Nations Disarmament Yearbook*, available on its website (www.un.org/disarmament), which is the main means of disseminating information. It is an important repository of information where Member States, conference participants, non-governmental organizations and the general public can access daily updates of documents and statements, including video messages. The Office continues to facilitate the participation of civil society in disarmament-related meetings and conferences and collaborate closely with non-governmental organizations. The present report also provides details on the many contributions made by the Department of Global Communications in support of the Organization's work on disarmament.

* A/75/50.



I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 73/79, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit to the Assembly at its seventy-fifth session a report covering the implementation of the activities of the United Nations Disarmament Information Programme by the United Nations system during the previous two years and the activities of the Programme contemplated for the following two years. The Programme is administered by the Office for Disarmament Affairs, in collaboration with the Department of Global Communications, in particular on information campaigns focused on disarmament-related events and conferences.

2. The objectives of the Programme reflect the orientation of the Office, guided by the priorities of Member States, as set out in the resolutions and decisions of the General Assembly.

3. The Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs has prioritized the advocacy of disarmament and non-proliferation issues with Member States and civil society, including through the recognition of the vital contributions of the media, think tanks and civil society organizations in frequent and in-depth interactions with them.

4. For the reporting period up until the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, in the area of nuclear weapons and their delivery systems, priority was accorded to commemorating the International Day against Nuclear Tests (29 August) and the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons (26 September); the eleventh Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, held in New York on 25 September 2019; and the third session of the Preparatory Committee of the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, held at United Nations Headquarters from 29 April to 10 May 2019.

5. As the COVID-19 pandemic developed, the Office adapted its working methods and substantive activities to continue operations to fulfil its mandates and advance the Secretary-General's Agenda for Disarmament.¹

6. During these challenging circumstances, the Office remained committed to providing unbiased, up-to-date and relevant information on multilateral disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control through its website and social media channels. The Office also continued its work on upcoming publications, including the forty-fourth annual edition of the *United Nations Disarmament Yearbook*.

7. The Office, under its #Youth4Disarmament initiative, continued efforts to engage, educate and empower young people through online resources, including e-newsletters and the development of a dedicated website for young people.²

8. The COVID-19 pandemic has affected milestone disarmament events and meetings scheduled for the first half of 2020, which have either been cancelled or postponed. These include the postponement of the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which was planned to be an opportunity to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the Treaty's entry into

¹ United Nations, Office for Disarmament Affairs, "The United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs remains active and committed – How the Covid-19 pandemic is affecting the work of disarmament", and "The United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs continues to fulfil its mandate and support Member States – Latest message on how COVID-19 is impacting multilateral disarmament and arms control", messages from the Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, 3 April and 4 June 2020, respectively.

² The www.youth4disarmament.org website will become available later in 2020.

force and the twenty-fifth year since its indefinite extension. States parties to the Treaty decided that the Review Conference would take place as soon as circumstances permit, and no later than April 2021.

9. In the area of conventional weapons, the General Assembly postponed the seventh Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, originally scheduled for June 2020, to a date in 2021 that has yet to be decided.

10. The Office stands ready to support States parties when conditions allow for suspended meetings and events to be implemented and to resume the corresponding relevant activities of the United Nations Disarmament Information Programme.

11. Funding for the Programme continues to be derived from the regular budget and extrabudgetary resources, in particular the voluntary trust fund for the Programme. The status of the trust fund as at 31 December 2019 is contained in the annex to the present report. During the reporting period, the trust fund continued to benefit from the generosity of Member States and private donors. The Office is grateful for the generous donations and support it has received.

II. Information resources

A. Publication programme

12. The *United Nations Disarmament Yearbook*, the flagship publication of the Office, was offered in English to all United Nations delegations in two parts. The first part, on resolutions and decisions, was disseminated during the proceedings of the Disarmament Commission, and the second part, on the major disarmament issues of the prior year, was distributed to all delegations participating in the work of the First Committee.

13. The Occasional Papers series contain expert input from individuals, panels and seminars sponsored by the Office. The following were disseminated free of charge on the website:

- Occasional Paper 32, October 2018, entitled *The Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons on the Dark Web: A Study*,³ on the scale and scope of arms trafficking on the dark web, illustrating the range of weapons traded, market prices and most common transit routes. The Paper contains a discussion of the implications of this growing phenomenon for law enforcement agencies and policymakers, highlighting the key role that firearms control measures continue to play in the presence of new forms of trafficking.
- Occasional Paper 33, October 2019, entitled *United Nations Efforts to Reduce Military Expenditure: A Historical Overview*⁴ provides a historical survey of efforts within the United Nations to reduce military spending. It highlights the United Nations Report on Military Expenditures, which continues to promote transparency on military matters, as well as the opportunity that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development presents for promoting a new common understanding of the relationships between disarmament and development.

³ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.19.IX.1.

⁴ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.20.IX.1.

- Occasional Paper 34, November 2019, entitled *The Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention: 20 Years of Saving Lives and Preventing Indiscriminate Harm*,⁵ describes the achievements and shortfalls of the first 20 years of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, which entered into force on 1 March 1999.
 - Occasional Paper 35, April 2020, entitled *Rethinking Unconstrained Military Spending*,⁶ features analytical pieces considering the impact of military expenditures on security, as well as gendered perspectives in rethinking military spending, the relationship between military spending and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and lessons learned from economic conversion movements.
14. The Office continued to produce UNODA Update (www.un.org/disarmament/update/), a quarterly e-publication highlighting recent activities as well as related online materials from the Office and elsewhere.
15. The Office publishes the *Civil Society and Disarmament series* within the context of the General Assembly resolutions on the United Nations Disarmament Information Programme and the 2002 United Nations Study on Disarmament and Non-proliferation Education. The series provides a forum for the views of civil society to inform debate on topical issues of disarmament, arms limitation and security. The following publication was issued during the reporting period:
- *Advocacy by Non-governmental Organizations to Strengthen the United Nations Programme for Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons*,⁷ explores recent work by the International Action Network on Small Arms to counter the misuse, diversion and illicit proliferation of small arms, light weapons and their ammunition. The volume emphasizes statements and briefing papers issued by the Network's member organizations in the context of the Third United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.
16. The 2017/18 and 2018/19 editions of *Programmes Financed from Voluntary Contributions* were issued in October 2018 and October 2019, respectively. The widely disseminated annual report illustrates how the Office has achieved specific results through donor partnerships.
17. In July 2018, the infographic *How weapons control fosters development* was released, summarizing the contributions that disarmament and arms regulation can make in achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, specifically its target to significantly reduce illicit arms flows.
18. In October 2018, the Office published *Aide-Memoire: Options for reflecting weapons and ammunition management in decisions of the Security Council*, which clusters past Security Council action regarding weapons and ammunition management and suggests further options. It seeks to assist in particular those Member States serving on the Security Council in accurately and comprehensively reflecting state-of-the-art practices into relevant drafts of the Council's decisions.

⁵ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.20.IX.2.

⁶ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.20.IX.4.

⁷ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.19.IX.2.

19. On 8 November 2018, the Office launched the biannual bulletin “Saving Lives”. Available in English, French and Spanish, the bulletin is a resource for national authorities on good practices in arms control.⁸

20. In February 2019, the Office published *Hypersonic Weapons: A Challenge and Opportunity for Strategic Arms Control* to raise awareness of the implications of the pursuit by several nuclear-armed States of novel long-range strike options. It includes overviews of the current state of technology; possible implications for international peace and security and existing and future arms control and disarmament efforts; and approaches that States may pursue to address those challenges in a multilateral context.

21. In March 2019, *Utilizing the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines in Conflict-Affected and Low-Capacity Environments* was published by the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR), a key research partner of the SaferGuard knowledge resource management programme. It offers practical information and guidance on improving ammunition stockpile safety and reducing risks in ammunition storage and processing facilities in conflict-affected and low-capacity environments, extracting essential elements from the Guidelines.

22. In March 2019, the Office published *A Guide to Developing National Standards for Ammunition Management*. Published by the SaferGuard programme as a practical support guide for applying the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines, it aims to assist State authorities in the development of national standards for ammunition management and towards implementing those standards across State institutions. French and Spanish translations were published in December 2019.

23. In March 2019, the booklet *Critical Path Guide to the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines* was launched. Published by the SaferGuard programme as a practical support guide for applying the Guidelines, it clarifies how the measures within the Guidelines are to be interpreted and applied in practice and explains technical concepts. French and Spanish translations were published in December 2019.

24. In June 2020, the Office published the paper *The Militarization of Artificial Intelligence* with the Stanley Center and the Stimson Center. The publication includes a workshop summary and discussion papers from a series of discussions convened by the three organizations and examines the military applications of artificial intelligence and their possible adverse effects on international peace and security.⁹

25. The Office offers a series of concise, two-page fact sheets on the various topics it addresses. Every year the Fact Sheets on Disarmament Issues are updated.¹⁰

B. Website

26. The number of visitors to the website remained high throughout 2019 and 2020, with over 2 million total unique visits. Over 75 per cent of the total visits arrive at the website via search engines. Users going directly to the website URL accounted for the second largest number of visitors, approximately 15 per cent. The remaining visitors came from referrals, social media, email and other sources. The website remains popular with visitors in the 18-34 age group, accounting for about 66 per cent of traffic during the reporting period.

⁸ See www.un.org/disarmament/2018/10/23/savinglives-issue1.

⁹ Available at <https://front.un-arm.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Stanley-Stimson-UNODA-2020-TheMilitarization-ArtificialIntelligence.pdf>.

¹⁰ See www.un.org/disarmament/factsheets/.

C. Podcasts

27. On 8 March 2020, in celebration of International Women's Day 2020, the Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs discussed her views on advancing meaningful participation and inclusion of women in disarmament decision-making processes in a podcast as part of the *Disarmament Today* series.

28. UN News published a podcast in which a Political Affairs Officer talked about what he said were the dangerous effects of rising international tensions between the Russian Federation and the United States of America on bilateral arms control.

III. Information activities

A. Conferences, panel discussions and other information activities

29. In cooperation with the Government of the Republic of Korea, the Office organized the seventeenth Republic of Korea-United Nations Joint Conference on Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Issues, held on Jeju Island, Republic of Korea, on 5 and 6 December 2018. The Conference addressed the challenges facing the nuclear non-proliferation regime and nuclear disarmament, with a focus on the roles of international organizations and mechanisms, including the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

30. The eighteenth Republic of Korea-United Nations Joint Conference on Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Issues was held in Seoul on 13 and 14 November 2019. Around 30 representatives from Governments and intergovernmental organizations, research institutes, academia and non-governmental organizations participated. At the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, participants addressed the prospects and building blocks for the Review Conference.

31. A large number of side events were organized separately and jointly by permanent missions to the United Nations, non-governmental organizations, think tanks, UNIDIR and the Office on the margins of the meetings of the First Committee during the seventy-third and seventy-fourth sessions of the General Assembly; and the third session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Additional information on many of these events is available on the website of the Office.

B. Events

32. As part of its outreach efforts, the Office continued to organize and host a range of meetings, seminars and events, including the following:

33. In July 2018, the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs inaugurated the new United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, where she launched the project in Madagascar and Togo on technical assistance for physical security and stockpile management, and the marking and destruction of small arms, light weapons and related ammunition.

34. On 6 August 2018, to mark the seventy-third anniversary of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima, Japan, the High Representative introduced the Secretary-General's Agenda for Disarmament to a large gathering that included survivors of the atomic bombing. The event was co-organized by the Hiroshima Office of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research and the Office for Disarmament Affairs.

35. On 6 November 2018 and 5 November 2019, public high-school teachers from across New York City took part in training and strategy sessions at Headquarters on how to engage effectively with their students on disarmament-related topics. The educators were part of a day-long workshop that civil society advocates have hosted annually since 2012 in partnership with the Office. The event was organized by Hibakusha Stories, an initiative of Youth Arts New York, which seeks to inspire action for disarmament among younger generations by helping them understand the first-hand experiences of the *hibakusha*, or survivors of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.
36. On 30 July 2019, officials from the Office for Disarmament Affairs gave a briefing to students from the thirty-seventh Chinese Youth Diplomatic Advanced Training Programme of the Centre of the United Nations and International Organizations during their visit to United Nations Headquarters, discussing key elements of the Secretary-General's Agenda for Disarmament.
37. On 8 September 2019, in celebration of the fortieth anniversary of the Vienna International Centre, the building opened its doors to over 3,000 guests. With its dedicated stand on disarmament, promotional posters and educational videos, the Office for Disarmament Affairs in Vienna engaged with visitors on topics related to nuclear disarmament, the management of conventional weapons and the Secretary-General's Agenda for Disarmament.
38. On 9 December 2019, the Permanent Mission of Kazakhstan to the United Nations, with the support of the Office, hosted a session of the nuclear discussion forum on the theme "Outcomes of the first session of the conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction".
39. On 28 May 2020, the Office co-organized a virtual event on the challenges and opportunities of the Tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, together with the Center for Nonproliferation Studies and the Center for Energy and Security Studies.
40. More information on these and many other events held during the period under review is available as part of the UNODA Update series, available from www.un.org/disarmament/update.

C. Exhibitions

41. Exhibitions continued to be an important means of carrying out advocacy and delivering disarmament-related information at conferences and other events.
42. On 18 July 2019, which is Nelson Mandela International Day, the Permanent Missions of Norway and South Africa to the United Nations unveiled a sculpture entitled "The Best Weapon" during the dialogue for peace celebration, hosted at Headquarters. It stands as a symbol of diplomacy, a desire to create more understanding and achieve dialogue between those on opposite sides of discussions. The title of the sculpture comes from Nelson Mandela's famous quote that "the best weapon is to sit down and talk", which is inscribed on the piece.
43. On 26 November 2019, the Office welcomed the addition of a watch, a bracelet and an ingot made from "humanium metal" to the United Nations Permanent Exhibition at Headquarters. Humanium metal, made by the non-governmental organization (NGO) IM Swedish Development Partner, is made by melting down illicit firearms from regions affected by armed violence and turning them into non-lethal commodities for peace.

D. Media

44. In the reporting period, the High Representative and senior staff of the Office participated in interviews with a range of international media outlets.
45. Interviews and press briefings with the High Representative and senior staff of the Office covered topics ranging from the state of affairs of disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation, the protection of civilians from urbanized warfare, artificial intelligence and its impact on weapons technology, women in disarmament and gender and arms policies, and the Review Conference on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.
46. The High Representative took part in two informal media briefings: one on 31 October in Tokyo, on the margins of the Daiwa Capital Markets Conference; and the other on 26 November in the Hague, the Netherlands, as part of the urgent appeal for a nuclear weapons-free world. Other officials of the Office for Disarmament Affairs participated in a briefing about disarmament-related matters for young international media representatives and journalists participating in the Reham Al-Farra Memorial Journalism Fellowship.
47. The High Representative continued to write a column for the *Mainichi Shougakusei Shimbun*, a Japanese newspaper for elementary school children, published as a subpaper by a major broadsheet.
48. During the reporting period, the Office issued eight press releases to communicate key issues and activities, available on the website of the Office (www.un.org/disarmament/pressreleases/).

E. Securing Our Common Future: An Agenda for Disarmament

49. *Securing Our Common Future: An Agenda for Disarmament*, launched by the Secretary-General in May 2018, was promoted in many events and statements by both the Secretary-General and the Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs.
50. The Secretary-General detailed the content of the Agenda at the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, in commemoration of the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, at the Nagasaki Peace Memorial Ceremony, and at various meetings of the General Assembly.
51. The High Representative widely promoted the Agenda in her engagement with the international press and in statements delivered at a range of events and meetings.
52. Coinciding with the first anniversary of the Agenda, the High Representative discussed its impact in an interview with *Global Connections Television*.
53. On the second anniversary of the launch of the Agenda, the High Representative issued a statement. The Office implemented a week-long communications plan, issuing a series of social media posts and infographics highlighting the notable achievements made towards the implementation of the Agenda. On 28 May 2020, the Office for Disarmament Affairs in Vienna hosted a webinar on the progress made with respect to the Agenda, which was attended by recipients and alumni of the Scholarship for Peace and Security of the Office and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, as well as representatives from international organizations and civil society and representatives of Permanent Missions in Vienna.

F. Social media and opinion editorials

54. Throughout the reporting period, the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs published seven opinion editorials in influential newspapers and policy blogs, highlighting actions that Member States and the public could take in a manner consistent with the Organization's disarmament goals.

55. An editorial entitled "Building Peace in Societies Affected by Small Arms", co-authored with the Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations, Jean-Pierre Lacroix, advocated for actions at the local, national, regional and international levels to rein in threats from uncontrolled small arms.

56. The editorial entitled "Advancing Disarmament within the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" was published in the *UN Chronicle* in August 2018, and highlighted partnerships and collaborations that advance the Sustainable Development Goals by promoting long-term peace and security through effective disarmament and arms control.

57. An opinion piece entitled "Changing mindsets can save women's lives in Latin America" was featured in *La Estrella de Panamá*, pressing for action to prevent armed violence against women and girls.

58. The editorial entitled "Responsible Innovation for a New Era in Science and Technology" addressed the need for closer cooperation between policymakers and technical experts to diminish risks from technological change without stifling innovation.

59. In "Protecting civilians in combat zones", the High Representative advocated for urgent action to protect civilians from unacceptable harm caused by the urbanization of warfare. It was published in *The Express Tribune* in May 2019.

60. The editorial entitled "Let's not forget: gender needs to be at the heart of arms policy", published in celebration of International Women's Day 2019 in *Friends of Europe*, explored how women are powerful agents for peace and vital contributors to disarmament objectives.

61. "Conflict and COVID are a deadly mix" was co-written with the United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Mark Lowcock, and the Director-General of the International Committee of the Red Cross, Robert Mardini. In the article, the authors reiterated the Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire and the joint appeal by the United Nations and the International Committee of the Red Cross to avoid the use of explosive weapons in populated areas, amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

62. The Office continued to disseminate information actively to the diplomatic community, NGOs and the general public through its social media accounts. Adding to the Office's social media presence, and to reach a younger audience, the Office launched its Instagram account in 2019.

63. To optimize its online presence and to inform and engage the general audience and the disarmament community alike about relevant developments and events, the Office produced and disseminated videos on disarmament-related topics through its website and social media channels.

64. On 1 October 2018, the Office launched a video-explainer of the Agenda for Disarmament: Securing Our Common Future.

65. On 30 October 2019, A video was published on UN News that documented the "Youth Champions for Securing our Common Future" event, organized by UNODA and the NGO Peace Boat.

66. On 7 January 2020, the High Representative shared her views in a video on the importance of global cooperation as part of the global campaign commemorating the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations.

67. On 6 March 2020, coinciding with International Women's Day, the Office released a video highlighting the High Representative's take on women in disarmament.

68. On 17 March 2020, the Office published a video about the event entitled "74 Years of Nuclear Disarmament and the Contribution of Youth beyond 2020", at which 70 young people discussed the challenges and opportunities for nuclear disarmament with experts at the United Nations.

G. Youth engagement

69. In the reporting period, the Office promoted and advanced its youth engagement activities substantially.

70. In April 2019, the Office hosted three events focusing on youth engagement. The first event was a "knowledge exchange" in which young professionals from the Office's New York and Geneva offices, as well as its three regional centres for peace and disarmament, shared ideas for future projects. For the second, the Office hosted a discussion with the NGO Peace Boat on the issue of nuclear disarmament. For the third event, the Office's interns presented an exhibit on military expenditure and the Sustainable Development Goals at the media zone dedicated to the Goals of the Economic and Social Council Youth Forum.

71. In the week marking International Youth Day, in August 2019, the Office launched its #Youth4Disarmament initiative, which connects young people with experts to learn about international security challenges, the work of the United Nations and becoming involved in disarmament.

72. To mark the launch, the Office organized a dialogue with and for youth on the theme "Artificial intelligence and its implications on international peace and security", examining the implications of artificial intelligence, its role in modern warfare, its strategic implications and the moral and ethical questions linked to its weaponization.

73. On 11 October 2019, the Office and the international NGO Peace Boat co-organized a day programme called "Youth Champions for Securing our Common Future", which drew approximately 75 young people between the ages of 18 and 30. The event included a screening of the documentary film "Pictures from a Hiroshima Schoolyard", written and directed by Bryan Reichhardt. The film explores the story of young students in Japan who, in the aftermath of the Second World War, built bridges and confidence through a people-to-people exchange with their American counterparts. The film's message is how we can become positive agents of peace, regardless of circumstances.

74. On 26 November 2019, the Office partnered with IM Swedish Development Partner to host an informative meeting with young advocates to raise awareness about how disarmament and arms control can help save lives and attain the Sustainable Development Goals.

75. By its resolution [74/64](#), entitled "Youth, disarmament and non-proliferation", the General Assembly reaffirmed the important and positive contribution that young people can make in sustaining peace and security and requested the Secretary-General to seek specific measures to promote meaningful and inclusive participation of youth on disarmament and non-proliferation issues.

76. In December 2019, the Office partnered with Cybersecurity Tech Accord to launch the #Apps4DigitalPeace competition. This competition, the first of its kind, aims to stimulate new thinking from innovative young minds by developing technology-based solutions to increase the security and stability of the online environment.

77. On 24 January 2020, the Office engaged with approximately 70 young people in a wide-ranging discussion on youth action for disarmament to mark the seventy-fourth anniversary of the first General Assembly resolution, which established the goal of eliminating nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. The event was organized with the support from the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations. On the day, applications for the YouthChampions4Disarmament programme were opened. Supported by the Government of Germany, the programme offers a full scholarship to 10 young people to receive training in the principles of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control through online courses and a study tour in Vienna, Geneva, Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

78. On 1 June 2020, the first of a series of webinars by the youth-led Steering Committee on Disarmament and Non-Proliferation in Northeast Asia was held under the auspices of the #Youth4Disarmament Initiative. The webinars are part of the joint project by the Department of Peacebuilding and Political Affairs and the Office for Disarmament Affairs that aims to convene a workshop for young people on disarmament and non-proliferation in the Republic of Korea, led by the Steering Committee, in the spirit of promoting intergenerational exchange and the meaningful participation of young people.

H. Activities of the Messenger of Peace for Disarmament

79. In close cooperation with the Office, the Department of Global Communications is the lead office for supporting the activities of the Messenger of Peace Michael Douglas, whose special area of focus is disarmament. During the reporting period, Mr. Douglas undertook a number of activities aimed at mobilizing public support for disarmament efforts.

80. On 21 September 2018, Mr. Douglas participated in the Peace Bell ceremony that is part of the annual observance of the International Day of Peace at United Nations Headquarters, and promoted the 2018 theme, “Climate Action for Peace”, on his social media platforms.

81. On 24 September 2018, Mr. Douglas spoke at Headquarters at the Private Sector Forum on Building and Investing in Peace for All, convened by the Secretary-General and hosted by the United Nations Global Compact.

82. On 23 March 2020, Mr. Douglas shared the Secretary-General’s appeal for a global ceasefire, launched during the COVID-19 pandemic, on his Instagram account and encouraged his followers to support the cause and repost the message.

83. On 3 April 2020, Mr. Douglas joined all the other Messengers of Peace in a joint statement supporting the Secretary-General’s appeal for a global ceasefire and promoted the statement on his social media platforms. The social media posts of the Messengers of Peace generated more than 80,000 engagements.

84. During the reporting period, Mr. Douglas issued a statement on the occasion of the Arms Trade Treaty reaching 100 States parties. Furthermore, he addressed the audience of the Vienna Conference on Protecting Civilians in Urban Warfare through a video message. He also stressed the importance of disarmament in a virtual event

marking the International Day of Conscience, organized by the Sustainable Development Solutions Network.

IV. Cooperation with civil society, especially non-governmental organizations

85. The Office for Disarmament Affairs continues to facilitate the participation of non-governmental organizations (accreditation and registration) at various disarmament-related conferences, and to coordinate their side events and exhibits, as well as their presentations, in various disarmament meetings.

86. To coordinate participation in major conferences, the Office continues to maintain close contact with two major coalitions of NGOs: Reaching Critical Will, which works in the field of weapons of mass destruction and emerging technologies; and the International Action Network on Small Arms, in connection with small arms and light weapons. Those coalitions are instrumental in facilitating the participation of civil society speakers in intergovernmental meetings.

87. A total of 631 representatives from 96 NGOs attended the third session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, held in April and May 2019. In November 2019, 21 representatives of seven NGOs attended the first session of the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction. In the area of information and telecommunications technology, 148 representatives of 112 organizations from civil society, academia and the private sector participated in the intersessional consultative meeting of the open-ended working group on developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security, held in December 2019. A total of 27 representatives from seven NGOs attended the first substantive session of the open-ended working group, held in September 2019.

V. Activities of the Department of Global Communications

88. The Department of Global Communications continued to build greater public awareness, understanding and support for the work of the United Nations in the areas of disarmament, arms control, non-proliferation and related fields by promoting and covering the Organization's conferences, meetings, events and observances, including to local audiences in local languages through the work of the global network of United Nations information centres.

A. Multimedia

89. During the reporting period, UN News produced 250 multimedia stories and features on disarmament issues in the six official languages of the United Nations, as well as in Kiswahili, Hindi and Portuguese. It also provided multimedia coverage of key messages and keystone events.

90. In July 2018, UN News produced coverage in the six official languages of the Secretary-General's message welcoming the fiftieth anniversary of the opening for signature of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, and on the anniversary of the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

91. In August 2018, UN News teams covered the Secretary-General's joint press conference in Tokyo with the Prime Minister of Japan, in which the Secretary-General

welcomed talks between the United States and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, as well as Japan's renewed initiative of dialogue on disarmament issues. As of June 2020, the story had received more than 4,700 page views across all UN News languages, and had been viewed 12,000 times on Weibo. UN News teams also covered the Secretary-General's statement at the 9 August 2018 Nagasaki Peace Memorial Ceremony, as well as a meeting held in Geneva on 18 August 2018 of the States parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction.

92. In October 2018, UN News produced a podcast with the Director of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research. Collaborating with the Meetings Coverage Section of the Department of Global Communications, UN News published an "explainer" piece on the work of the First Committee. Other language news teams subsequently replicated that project.

93. In January 2019, all UN News language teams covered the session of the Conference on Disarmament. It also covered the statement by the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) on the Agency's activities to monitor activities around the Yongbyon Nuclear Scientific Research Centre in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, in connection with the International Day against Nuclear Tests. As a collaborative effort between the Government of Kazakhstan and the Russian team of UN News, a special report on the former Semipalatinsk nuclear test site was published in August 2019.

94. All UN News teams covered the high-level meeting of the seventy-third and seventy-fourth session of the General Assembly, coinciding with the commemoration of the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, as well as the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction in November 2019.

95. In 2020, UN News covered a series of Security Council meetings on disarmament-related issues, including a briefing in February by the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs on the impact of small arms and light weapons and the upcoming Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Also, in February 2020, United Nations language teams covered the adoption of the declaration on global nuclear security by ministers and experts attending the International Conference on Nuclear Security, hosted by IAEA.

96. In other multimedia coverage highlights, in January 2020, the Chinese team of UN News interviewed the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva, Tatiana Valovaya, on a range of disarmament-related issues.

97. As part of the extraordinary COVID-19 pandemic coverage, UN News and social media accounts gave prominence to the Secretary-General's appeal for a global ceasefire, which drew significant attention worldwide, producing stories about calls for ceasefires and other measures aimed at laying down weapons.

98. In the reporting period, the Department's video team produced features on disarmament issues. It covered the Secretary-General's December 2019 meeting with Pope Francis, as well as a special feature in May 2019 on the Preparatory Committee. The Department also produced a special feature on the visit of *hibakusha* to Headquarters and their participation in the #Youth4Disarmament event organized by the Office for Disarmament Affairs and the NGO Peace Boat.

99. The Department's UNifeed team produced 45 video packages for broadcasters around the world on disarmament and the work of the United Nations, including on weapons of mass destruction, small arms, non-proliferation and denuclearization.

UNifeed content on disarmament was further disseminated to broadcasters via global redistributor partners, such as the Reuters News Agency, the Associated Press and Wochit.

100. The Department's social media team provided coverage of the work of the United Nations in the areas of disarmament on the Organization's corporate social media accounts in the six official languages, as well as Hindi, Kiswahili and Portuguese, promoting the Organization's conferences, meetings, events and observances and creating customized multilingual materials. The team also regularly posted social media content on disarmament during key events and at times of breaking news.

B. Internet, press coverage, television and radio

101. During the reporting period, the Department's Web Services Section continued to support the work of the Organization in the area of disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation.

102. The Section created and maintained the multilingual, branded and fully accessible website of the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. It updated and maintained the multilingual and fully accessible website of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution [1540 \(2004\)](#). In addition, the team updated the multilingual and fully accessible websites of the following General Assembly mandated international days:

- International Day against Nuclear Tests (29 August)
- International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons (26 September)
- International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action (4 April)
- Day of Remembrance for all Victims of Chemical Warfare (30 November)

103. The Department provided thorough multilingual and multimedia coverage of the open intergovernmental meetings held at United Nations Headquarters, issuing more than 114 detailed summaries in English and French of open intergovernmental meetings relating to disarmament. It also issued 56 press releases in English not related to meetings, on disarmament-related issues, and 40 such press releases in French.

104. The UN Webcast continued to provide live and on-demand streaming coverage of meetings and events related to disarmament. Webcast coverage was made available to global audiences through the UN Web TV website (webtv.un.org), the official channel of the United Nations on YouTube and social media platforms. During the reporting period, over 60 videos related to disarmament were made available on-demand on the UN Web TV website.

105. In addition to providing broadcasters and journalists with UNTV footage, UNifeed video packages, UN Photo materials and multimedia stories, the Department offered direct assistance to journalists covering disarmament by distributing information on meetings and press events taking place at Headquarters. The Media Accreditation and Liaison Unit continued to work closely with the Office for Disarmament Affairs on media arrangements for events, provided liaison assistance to journalists and informed members of the media about those meetings.

C. Campaigns

106. The Department has been working actively with the African Union, the Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Africa and the Economic Commission for Africa on a communications strategy for the campaign entitled “Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2020”. The Department has also been working with the Office for Disarmament Affairs on the Africa Amnesty Month campaign, targeting selected countries in Africa to encourage people to surrender their illicit guns.

D. Observances of international days

107. United Nations Information Centres and UN News regularly cover International Days, and the un.org team works closely with substantive departments to ensure that the websites on international days are updated in the six official languages, fully accessible and contain the proper United Nations branding.

International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action

108. In April 2019, the United Nations information centres in Beirut, Brussels, Tehran and Tokyo translated the Secretary-General’s message on the International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action into Arabic, Dutch, Japanese and Persian, distributing the material across their respective traditional and social media outlets.

109. The United Nations Office in Kyiv collected an album of selected photos of the United Nations agencies, funds, programmes and partner agencies in Ukraine covering issues of mine risks, demining activities and affected populations. The photographs were exhibited during the commemoration of the International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action in April 2019 in Kyiv and later displayed in Eastern regions of Ukraine. In addition, the Office provided communication support to the mine-action subcluster of the humanitarian country team and, with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, developed a communication campaign on Facebook and Instagram. The Office also developed a quiz on mine awareness that reached more than 32,000 people on Facebook.

International Day against Nuclear Tests

110. In August 2019, the United Nations Information Centres in Ankara, Beirut, Manila, Tehran and Yaounde, as well as the United Nations Regional Information Centre in Brussels, promoted the Secretary-General’s message on the International Day against Nuclear Tests, by translating it into Arabic, French, Persian, Turkish and four Nordic languages and disseminating it widely to their media contacts. The message was also shared on the home pages and social media platforms of the United Nations Information Centres.

111. The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization organized an event at the Rotunda of the Vienna International Centre to mark the International Day against Nuclear Tests in 2019. Speakers included representatives from the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization and the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Kazakhstan to the United Nations.

International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons

112. The United Nations Information Centre in Tehran translated into Persian the full text of the Secretary-General’s message on the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons in September 2019 and issued it as a press release,

which was posted on the website and social media platforms of the United Nations in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

113. The Director of the United Nations Information Centre in Tokyo moderated a commemorative event for the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons (26 September), co-hosted by the Centre and civil society organizations. Together with other speakers, such as the actress Yoshinaga Sayuri, the event was an opportunity to stress the importance of using all outlets to work towards the abolition of nuclear weapons.

114. The United Nations Information Centre in Tokyo subtitled a video “What is the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons?” in Japanese and posted it on the Centre’s Youtube channel. Furthermore, the Centre, together with the Japanese NGO the Network for Nuclear Weapons Abolition, organized a symposium in September 2019 to commemorate the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons at the United Nations University headquarters building. The Centre presented the Secretary-General’s message for the Day together with messages on peace, after which representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Network for Nuclear Weapons Abolition gave presentations.

International Day of Peace

115. The Department organized activities to commemorate the International Day of Peace on 21 September in 2018 and 2019. The Department circulated a countdown message from the Secretary-General, 100 days before the International Day. In his June 2018 message, the Secretary-General noted the call by the United Nations for a 24-hour global ceasefire; and in his June 2019 message, he noted that the United Nations had called upon all nations and people to put down their weapons.

E. Public affairs, civil society and non-governmental organizations

Visitors services

116. During the reporting period, in more than 850,000 guided tours at Headquarters, as well as in Geneva, Nairobi and Vienna, visitors were made aware of the work of the United Nations on disarmament and non-proliferation.

117. As well as highlighting that fact that arms control and disarmament have been priority issues to maintain international peace and security since 1945, the captivating displays, pictures and exhibits on conventional weapons and weapons of mass destruction provide an appealing visual aid to help explain the role of the United Nations in disarmament. Tour guides regularly receive briefings by disarmament experts on topics and activities on the disarmament agenda, including the work of the relevant bodies and offices involved in disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation.

118. In December 2019, for the third consecutive year, senior tour guides from visitors services in Geneva, New York and Vienna travelled to Hiroshima to participate in the annual “Hiroshima Briefing Programme”, an initiative by the City of Hiroshima and the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum to equip visitors services personnel with first-hand knowledge of the destructive effects of the atomic weapons, aiding them to actively promote the United Nations goal of a nuclear-weapons-free world.

119. From June 2018 to May 2020, the United Nations Speakers Bureau organized close to 30 briefings relating to disarmament, reaching an audience of around 1,100.

United Nations Information Centres

120. The Department of Global Communications' network of 59 United Nations Information Centres continued to increase awareness and understanding of local audiences in their languages on disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation issues. Activities included online and physical exhibits, organizing symposiums and interviews with high-level officials and distinguished personalities, and the translation of relevant information material.

121. To mark the International Day against Nuclear Tests on 29 August in 2018, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization launched a campaign with the Spanish NGO Paz y Cooperación and invited students aged 17 and under to submit artwork to promote putting an end to nuclear explosions. In 2019, the winning artworks were displayed at an event at the United Nations Office at Vienna, which was moderated by the Director of the United Nations Information Service.

122. In February 2020, the visitors service of the United Nations Information Service in Vienna organized a visit by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan to its exhibition entitled "Towards a world free of nuclear weapons" during the Minister's visit to the Vienna International Centre for the International Conference on Nuclear Security, hosted by IAEA. Following a welcome by the Director of the United Nations Information Service, a tour guide provided an introduction on the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization multimedia installation on nuclear tests. The Information Service covered the visit on social media and shared the posts with the United Nations Information Centre in Tokyo and the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum. The exhibition was installed in 2015 in partnership with the Permanent Mission of Japan to the United Nations and the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

F. Other activities

Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth

123. On 19 February 2020, the Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth participated in a meeting at Headquarters, sponsored by Members States, parliamentarians and parliamentary organizations and supported by the Office for Disarmament Affairs, on the theme "An agenda for disarmament: securing our common future". At the meeting, participants reviewed a draft handbook for parliamentarians to support parliamentary action in support of disarmament for security and sustainable development. The Envoy contributed to mainstreaming the United Nations Strategy on Youth and the youth, peace and security agenda into the draft handbook.

124. During her visit to Japan in February 2020, the Envoy highlighted the #Youth4Disarmament initiative in meetings with young people and policymakers.

125. The Envoy participated in the task force on "silencing the guns" to advocate for the empowerment of young people and to mainstream the Strategy on Youth.

Exhibits

126. The Department hosts an annual exhibit in New York in commemoration of the International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action, organized by the United Nations Mine Actions Service. In April 2019, the theme of the exhibit was "Safe Ground, Safe Homes". The exhibit, originally planned for 2020, was postponed to 2021 owing to the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, a planned exhibit in connection with the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons was also postponed until the Conference convenes.

127. In September 2019, the United Nations Regional Information Centre in Brussels supported the opening of an exhibit on the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the consequences of nuclear proliferation, at which the Centre's desk officer for Germany delivered opening remarks.

Sales and marketing

128. On 5 November 2019, the Department, in close cooperation with the Office of Disarmament Affairs, hosted a "meet the author" event at the United Nations Bookshop with Kathleen Burkinshaw, a Japanese American writer and the daughter of a Hiroshima survivor. Her book, *The Last Cherry Blossom*, based on the life of the author's mother, who was 12 when the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, serves as a resource for teachers and students.

129. Two volumes of the Department's *Disarmament Yearbook* were marketed, sold and distributed through its global network of distributors during the reporting period.

VI. Looking forward

130. The Disarmament Information Programme will continue to support the Secretary-General and the High Representative in their efforts to make effective use of the resources available to be the locus of information about arms control and disarmament, and its dissemination, to educate and generate public understanding of the importance of multilateral action in this area in a factual, balanced and objective manner.

131. The Programme envisages carrying out a diverse portfolio of activities, including the continuation of serial and ad hoc publications; updating and improving its website and social media presence; continuing its "Disarmament Today" podcast series; supporting and promoting exhibits, conferences, and events – especially those in collaboration with Member States; facilitating the participation of civil society in disarmament-related meetings and conferences; enabling the meaningful participation of young people in events related to disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control; and outreach to the general public both directly and through the media.

Annex

Status of the voluntary trust fund for the United Nations Disarmament Information Programme

I. Interim statement of financial performance for the year ended 31 December 2019^a

| | 2019 | 2018 |
|--|-----------------|-----------------|
| Revenue | | |
| Voluntary contributions ^b | 1 000 | 1 000 |
| Investment revenue | 11 279 | 11 574 |
| Total revenue | 12 279 | 12 574 |
| Expenses | | |
| Employee salaries, allowances and benefits | 16 766 | 3 265 |
| Non-employee compensation and allowances | 3 432 | 83 009 |
| Grants and other transfers | — | — |
| Supplies and consumables | 99 | 229 |
| Travel | 22 961 | 3 073 |
| Other operating expenses | 13 000 | 20 403 |
| Other expenses | — | — |
| Total expenses | 56 258 | 109 979 |
| Surplus/(deficit) for the year | (43 979) | (97 405) |

II. Interim statement of changes in net assets for the year ended 31 December 2019^a

| | <i>Net assets</i> |
|--|-------------------|
| Net assets as at 31 December 2018 | 530 162 |
| Change in net assets | |
| Surplus for the year | (43 979) |
| Total changes in net assets | (43 979) |
| Net assets as at 31 December 2019 | 486 183 |

^a The statements were prepared in accordance with International Public Sector Accounting Standards.

^b Includes monetary contributions, contributions in-kind, transfers and refunds to donors.