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## Committee on Information

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### Consideration of reports submitted by the Secretary-General

## Activities of the Department of Global Communications: outreach and knowledge services

### Report of the Secretary-General

#### *Summary*

The present report, prepared in accordance with General Assembly resolution [75/101](#) A-B, provides a summary of key advances made by the Department of Global Communications from July 2020 to January 2021 in promoting the work of the United Nations to a global audience through its outreach and knowledge services.

The outreach and knowledge services subprogramme, one of three subprogrammes of the Department, is implemented by its Outreach Division. It works to enhance understanding of the role, work and concerns of the United Nations and to encourage the exchange of ideas and information in support of the goals of the Organization. The Division does this by engaging with multisectoral stakeholders to amplify the work of the United Nations, empowering youth and generating support for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development through advocacy and outreach initiatives that promote concrete action at the local, regional, national and global levels.

The activities under the other subprogrammes of the Department, namely, strategic communications services, and news services, are described in separate reports of the Secretary-General ([A/AC.198/2021/2](#) and [A/AC.198/2021/3](#), respectively).

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\* [A/AC.198/2021/1](#).



## **I. Introduction**

1. In its resolution [75/101](#) A-B, the General Assembly took note of the reports of the Secretary-General on the activities of the Department of Global Communications, submitted for consideration by the Committee on Information at its forty-second session ([A/AC.198/2020/2](#), [A/AC.198/2020/3](#) and [A/AC.198/2020/4](#)) and requested the Secretary-General to continue to report to the Committee on the activities of the Department.
2. The Department hereby submits the information requested on outreach and knowledge services.
3. The present report provides an overview of the strategic direction of the Outreach Division and highlights activities undertaken to reach out to an even wider range of constituencies, in particular given the expanded online opportunities derived from the outbreak of the global coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and the concomitant scaling back of traditional in-person events held at United Nations Headquarters and around the world. Through strategic and sustained partnerships, innovation and the embrace of technological innovation, the Department dramatically expanded and intensified its ability to reach people everywhere through creative, compelling and innovative collaborations during the pandemic, in the context of the loss of revenue suffered as a consequence of the imposition of physical distancing protocols at United Nations venues. Unless otherwise indicated, the report covers the activities of the Department for the period from 1 July 2020 to 31 January 2021.

## **II. Developing increased understanding and support for the work of the United Nations**

4. A vast range of constituencies compose target audiences for outreach activities and content that promote the United Nations all over the world. Civil society and its representatives, including academic institutions, students, schoolteachers and university professors, artists and creators, the private sector, associations, local communities as well as policymakers in government, are vital recipients of information that help spread the ideals of the Organization. This is particularly important during the COVID-19 pandemic as the Organization commemorates its seventy-fifth anniversary in parallel with the promotion of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as well as its core activities and ideals in the areas of peace and security, climate change and its environmental consequences, the plight of a growing number of refugees, the empowerment of women and youth, and the promotion of human rights and good governance.
5. During COVID-19, the Department pivoted to and expanded its outreach online and in a multiplicity of languages to the global community with the objective of contributing to increased understanding and support of the Organization's ideals and work. The aim is to generate interest among audiences through publications (print and digital), websites, special and commemorative events and conferences, involvement with local communities in cultural and professional gatherings, briefings, visitors' services and educational materials, and engagement with celebrities in the arts and sciences.
6. The Department's multiple outreach arms were also put in service to promote and amplify Verified, the initiative that is the central plank of the Secretariat's wider COVID-19 communications response initiative, and its Pledge to Pause campaign. Verified has already reached more than 1 billion people worldwide with critical public health information and guidance while combating misinformation. This effort will

continue as Verified increasingly pivots to communicating about vaccine equity, access and confidence.

7. Verified-specific content, in multiple languages, was shared regularly by the Department's Civil Society Unit with its roster of more than 1,000 associated non-governmental organizations and civil society entities; by the Publications and Editorial Section, through its social media accounts; by the Messengers of Peace in the form of dedicated social media content; and by the United Nations Academic Impact programme through its newsletter to more than 10,000 subscribers.

8. To further support civil society engagement in United Nations processes during COVID-19, the United Nations Non-Governmental Liaison Service initiated a survey on COVID-19 misinformation that collected 400 responses from civil society representatives in 80 countries. The analysis of the responses and trends captured over time were shared with the World Health Organization, other United Nations entities and Verified to support United Nations efforts to disseminate facts based on science.

9. The Dag Hammarskjöld Library organized a webinar in August 2020 on how libraries globally contribute to the efforts against misinformation. Speakers included academics and librarians from Bangladesh, Mexico and South Africa, as well as a representative of the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions. There were 90 participants, including delegates, United Nations staff, depository librarians and members of the public.

10. The Department also engaged with partners in support of Verified. In September 2020, it collaborated with the creators of Hello Kitty on a special feature video, released on Hello Kitty's YouTube channel, in support of the Pledge to Pause campaign. The video is available in English, Japanese and Portuguese and has generated more than 40,000 views on YouTube alone.

### **III. Expo 2020**

11. Activities and programming planned to take place at Expo 2020 in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, were postponed by a full year owing to COVID-19. The new dates for the Expo are 1 October 2021 to 31 March 2022. The pandemic compounded funding challenges from extrabudgetary sources and therefore hampered the ability of the United Nations to create an interactive exhibit and staff a dedicated pavilion at the level previously envisaged. The United Nations continues to work with Expo organizers to coordinate its presence through impactful activities and programming focused around the Sustainable Development Goals and key international days.

### **IV. Engaging with the public and students: guided tours and briefings**

12. The pandemic resulted in all four headquarters duty station complexes closing to the public by mid-March and all staff in visitors' services working remotely. Since the physical closure of United Nations offices, all four visitors' services at United Nations headquarters duty stations moved swiftly to refocus to offer a range of virtual and online tours and briefings, both live and pre-recorded. In Geneva, a limited number of tours were offered to pre-booked groups in August and September, before the renewed lockdown. All duty stations developed tours and other products aimed at specialized groups (e.g., children and teachers) or focusing on specific topics, such as climate change, counter-terrorism and gender.

13. The four visitors' services continue to strengthen their internal cooperation and regularly arrange for joint briefings and the sharing of resources. With a strong focus on storytelling and engaging audiences, all four now offer virtual and online tours and briefings. Over the reporting period, about 350 online tours or briefings took place, reaching a total of approximately 10,000 participants.
14. The Visitors' Service in Geneva produced a 360-degree film on the Palais des Nations, which is available on the website, [ungeneva.org](https://ungeneva.org), together with additional tour-focused short films. It also continued to provide in-person protocol tours to visiting dignitaries and representatives of Member States.
15. The Visitors' Service in Nairobi developed a children's tour and a special exhibit on the United Nations in Africa – the first of its kind – to be launched once the compound reopens.
16. In New York, the Visitors' Service offers a range of thematic virtual tours, as well as facilitating briefings by United Nations experts through the United Nations Speakers Bureau. One of the benefits of the virtual format is an expanded global reach, as tours and briefings were provided to groups across the United States of America, as well as from China, Colombia, Chile, Ethiopia, Germany, Mexico, Peru, the Republic of Korea, Switzerland and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. The topics requested for briefings most frequently focused on human rights, especially in relation to racism and xenophobia, as well as on refugees and the Sustainable Development Goals. Regardless of the topic, speakers frequently received questions related to the work of the United Nations on COVID-19 and how the Organization is addressing the pandemic.
17. In cooperation with an educational NGO, Teach SDGs, the visitors' services in New York arranged a series of webinars for teachers and educators on peace and security, development and human rights, providing tailor-made lesson plans and hands-on suggestions for engaging students from primary school through university. Around 900 educators from all regions participated in the webinar series and provided excellent feedback in a subsequent survey. The webinars were repeated for the World Federation of United Nations Associations Model United Nations session, held in November.
18. The Visitors' Service in Vienna adapted annual special programmes for young people to current conditions. An off-site summer holiday programme for young children with the theme of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations (148 participants in July) was held, and special online school tours were organized for the "Long Day of Flight" programme (75 participants on 2 October), in cooperation with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. In addition, the Visitors' Service in Vienna produced seven #GlobalGoals video tours for YouTube.
19. Multilingualism is central to all visitors' services operations. Guided tours and briefings are offered in all six official languages in Geneva, New York and Vienna. Nairobi offers tours in English, Chinese, French and Spanish, as well as in some non-official languages. Across the four duty stations, tours are offered in more than 20 languages (the six official languages, as well as Bulgarian, Czech, Dutch, German, Hebrew, Hindi, Hungarian, Italian, Japanese, Kiswahili, Korean, Portuguese, Romanian, Slovak, Turkish and Urdu).

## **V. Enhancing, empowering and strengthening the voice of young people**

### **A. Office of the Envoy of the Secretary-General on Youth**

20. The Office of the Envoy of the Secretary-General on Youth spearheaded the Organization's advocacy on youth issues while adapting its programme delivery in the context of COVID-19. While some events were postponed, many were held online, allowing for broader participation and engagement of youth from all regions of the world. For example, more than 4,000 young people participated in a virtual town hall meeting and a youth plenary meeting, and 550 survey responses and 800 essays were submitted by young people for the #LeadTheNewNormal essay competition. The inputs informed the declaration on the commemoration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations (General Assembly resolution [75/1](#)) adopted by Member States. These discussions with young people as part of the broader global dialogues held in connection with the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Organization contributed to a revision of the elements paper and the inclusion of a more prominent recognition of the role of young people in shaping the future of the United Nations and the multilateral system, with a commitment made by Member States in the declaration that "we will listen to and work with youth".

21. A key milestone in the advocacy efforts and associated social media campaign on youth, peace and security led by the Office of the Envoy of the Secretary-General on Youth was the adoption of Security Council resolution [2535 \(2020\)](#) in July, which will serve as a foundation to operationalize the youth, peace and security agenda. In line with the resolution and the call to action on human rights of the Secretary-General, the Office rolled out a research project on the protection of young people in the context of civic spaces to be published in 2021.

22. The Office supported the Climate Action Team established by the Secretary-General in launching the Youth Advisory Group on Climate Change, which was announced in July. Together with the Climate Action Team, the Office reached out to leading NGOs, foundations, and youth-led and youth-focused movements working specifically to advance climate action. The Office worked with the Climate Action Team to set up a nomination process, review nominees and, with the help of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Environment Programme and the Executive Office of the Secretary-General, recommended seven young leaders, who were ultimately invited by the Secretary-General to join his Youth Advisory Group. Its seven members bring young people's voices into high-level decision-making and will advise the Secretary-General on his approach to climate action through 2021.

23. For International Youth Day, on 12 August 2020, the Office organized a month-long social media campaign, #31DaysofYOUth, to celebrate the world's largest generation and feature the Organization's work with and for young people as well as young people's engagement for global action. The Office asked young people to share their stories in any form they liked on how they are changing the world and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. The hashtag #31DaysOfYOUth was used more than 9,200 times throughout the duration of the campaign.

24. In September, the Office launched the 2020 class of Young Leaders for the Sustainable Development Goals, who were chosen from among 7,698 applicants from 172 countries. Young Leaders contribute to the resilience of their communities, propose innovative solutions, drive social progress and inspire political change. The 17 Young Leaders advocate for the Goals in ways that are accessible and relatable to young people across different contexts; promote innovative ways of engaging their

audiences and peers in the advocacy and realization of the Goals; and contribute to a brain trust of young leaders supporting the United Nations and partners for key moments and initiatives related to the Goals.

25. The Office hosts the secretariat for Youth 2030, the United Nations system-wide strategy on youth, and spearheads its coordination and implementation. The Youth 2030 scorecard for United Nations country teams, a tool for strategic planning, performance measurement and accountability, was finalized in November and adapted for annual reporting by United Nations country teams, following a field validation in three fast-track countries (Costa Rica, Ethiopia and Uzbekistan). The reporting will help to establish a baseline for the youth strategy and will feature prominently in the first Youth 2030 stocktaking report, as well as in the public-facing dashboard.

26. In response to rising demand among young people for mental health and psychosocial support resources during the pandemic, the Office, in partnership with the United Nations Children's Fund and the World Health Organization, created the #CopingWithCOVID webinar series. The 11-episode series provided a platform for more than 35,000 people to connect amid uncertainty, gain expert advice and voice their demands for integrated mental health and psychosocial interventions, including for young people with disabilities, indigenous young people and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex young people. The Envoy of the Secretary-General on Youth featured the responses of 130 young people and youth organizations about how they were responding to COVID-19 in their communities through her blog series, which aimed at inspiring action and emphasizing the positive role that young people can play in the battle against the pandemic. The Compact for Young People in Humanitarian Action, of which the Office is a leading member, developed an operational guidance note to assist humanitarian actors, youth-led organizations and young people themselves across sectors in their response to COVID-19.

## **B. United Nations Academic Impact**

27. During the reporting period, the United Nations Academic Impact initiative celebrated its tenth anniversary with a series of commemorative events, including a webinar co-hosted with the Millennium Campus Network to recognize the Millennium Fellows, a network of student leaders whose innovative projects are advancing the Sustainable Development Goals on college campuses and in communities in 135 countries. The live event had more than 2,700 attendees and viewers. The initiative also co-hosted a classical music concert with Adelphi University entitled "The future we want" to highlight the critical role of universities in fostering peace and other goals of the United Nations through education.

28. United Nations Academic Impact continued its support of the global conversation for the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations with increased digital outreach and engagement necessitated by the pandemic. Nearly 1,800 supporters of the initiative participated in the seventy-fifth anniversary survey and its members hosted 31 dialogues in multiple languages in 19 countries, engaging thousands of students, faculty and staff in discussions about how to meet the global challenges being faced and how the academic community can contribute knowledge and innovation to advance the Goals.

29. United Nations Academic Impact also hosted eight dialogues entitled "75 for UN75" in Arabic, English, French, Portuguese and Russian. The webinars had 2,700 attendees and, based on post-event surveys, 86 per cent of respondents said that, after participating in a webinar, they better understood the work of the United Nations. Some 84 per cent said they better understood how they could contribute to

the Organization's work, and 88 per cent noted that they planned to take action to help advance at least one of the Goals.

30. The 17 United Nations Academic Impact Sustainable Development Goal hubs continued research, education and outreach on the Goals, with activities that ranged from conducting surveys aimed at assessing the pandemic's socioeconomic impact to providing responses to the COVID-19 policy briefs issued by the Secretary-General. They supported teachers with online resources, carried out awareness-raising campaigns related to the Goals, launched tree-planting initiatives and hosted international virtual conferences and seminars. In addition, the hubs were active in the preparations for major events and initiatives in 2020, such as the United Nations Food Systems Summit and the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development, hosting public forums with relevant stakeholders and preparing academic events to increase interest around such issues among the public.

31. The hubs also partnered with various United Nations entities, such as the United Nations Children's Fund and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, to disseminate global reports; they served as a conduit for campaigns, initiatives and outreach of the Secretariat to college campuses; and they collaborated with local governments to provide academic expertise. The hub for Goal 14, for example, launched a research vessel for an expedition that will circumnavigate the globe until 2023, with student sailors conducting research while learning about ocean science and collecting data to measure the impact of pollution and climate change. The hubs have collaborated with each other through academic discussions and the exchange of research, amplifying their work to reach thousands of people beyond their campuses and opening spaces for reflection on pressing issues with the participation of scholars and practitioners.

32. In January 2021, United Nations Academic Impact launched its redesigned website (<https://un.org/academicimpact>), available in all six official United Nations languages, with robust multimedia content and original series, such as "We are indigenous", featuring indigenous voices to raise awareness of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and combat stereotypes, and a series on disability and higher education, which highlights the contributions of intellectuals with disabilities to the world of academia and explores ways to build a truly inclusive learning environment. The website aims to be a multilingual showcase of the important contributions of students, researchers and the academic community to the work of the Organization and encourage these stakeholders to continue applying their innovation and expertise to solving global challenges.

### **C. Model United Nations programmes and youth and educational outreach**

33. The Department's programme, "The real United Nations: an interactive briefing series for Model United Nations", was moved online, which expanded its reach in numbers and geographic representation. A briefing in August was attended by 101 participants from 24 countries: Bangladesh, China, Ecuador, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Jamaica, Japan, Kuwait, Maldives, Mexico, Nepal, Netherlands, Philippines, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Singapore, Spain, Sri Lanka, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United States and Viet Nam.

34. The International Day of Peace was observed in 2020 under the theme "Shaping peace together". A hybrid event at Headquarters included the Peace Bell Ceremony and a youth conference, and was livestreamed as a Microsoft Teams live event and on the YouTube channel of the United Nations and United Nations Web TV. Messengers of Peace Midori, Yo-Yo Ma, Daniel Barenboim, Jane Goodall and Paulo Coelho

delivered statements. A young leader moderated the youth conference, and 14 young leaders from 11 countries gave presentations. Over 2,000 people viewed the event live, and more than 4,000 had viewed the event by the end of October 2020. English subtitles were added to the recorded event to increase accessibility.

#### **D. Reham Al-Farra Memorial Journalists' Fellowship Programme**

35. Owing to pandemic-related travel restrictions, it was not possible to conduct the annual Reham Al-Farra Memorial Journalism Fellowship in its usual format. Instead, a virtual commemorative programme was organized to mark the fortieth anniversary of the programme and engage alumni.

36. The programme attracted 38 alumni from 32 countries, representing all geographic regions. Participants represented eight Fellowship Programme classes from diverse news outlets, spanning print and online newspapers, radio, television or video, social and multimedia formats.

37. Participants were able to take advantage of virtual access to events and activities of the seventy-fifth session of the General Assembly. In addition, a series of tailored briefings with senior United Nations representatives was arranged, including with the Spokesperson for the Secretary-General, the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General on Climate Change and representatives of the International Labour Organization and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women).

38. The programme will continue to engage alumni in an informal network with more interactive events planned for the year ahead.

### **VI. Library services**

#### **A. Steering Committee for Libraries of the United Nations**

39. With the outbreak of COVID-19, the Steering Committee for Libraries of the United Nations enhanced collaboration among United Nations libraries, from information analysis on United Nations documents and the provision of shared remote access to United Nations systems to the digitization of United Nations content based on ad hoc requests and the creation of a collaborative chat service. This cooperation flourished during the pandemic and allowed libraries to not only meet the information needs of Member States and United Nations staff, but also to increase access to important United Nations documents and resources for people around the world.

#### **B. Library, research and knowledge services**

40. During the reporting period, the online chat resource was scaled up to a full-time service. The Dag Hammarskjöld Library conducted 11,065 information and research interactions through chat. It organized 11 online training sessions for 106 participants and 12 one-on-one trainings, while nine videos on United Nations documentation in English, French and Spanish were accessed more than 1,500 times. The "Member States on the record" online database recorded 88,831 views. Research guides and the knowledge base of frequently asked questions, "Ask Dag", are digital resources that were kept up to date, with 109 research guides available in all six official languages, recording a total of 1.3 million views. The 911 sets of frequently asked questions available in English, French and Spanish had a total of 970,060 views, averaging 138,580 views per month.



## C. Digitization and preservation services

41. The Dag Hammarskjöld Library holds approximately 20 million United Nations parliamentary and normative documents available only in print. Some 3 million have been identified as “important”.<sup>1</sup> Out of the 3 million important documents, the Library has digitized around 500,000 United Nations documents and publications (some 6.4 million pages), including core Security Council documents and official records of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Trusteeship Council. There remain another 2.5 million old, important print documents awaiting digitization, of which 1 million are currently in dire condition.

42. In response to General Assembly resolutions [52/214](#), [71/262](#), [72/19](#), [73/270](#) and [74/252](#), as well as to paragraphs 390, 398 and 405 of the report of the Board of Auditors on the financial report and audited financial statements of the United Nations for the year ended 31 December 2018 ([A/74/5 \(Vol. I\)](#), chap. II) and paragraphs 118, 122 and 124 of the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the recommendations of the Board ([A/74/323](#)), the Department prepared a project proposal to outsource digitization, including pragmatic metadata creation, of 1 million old, deteriorating and important United Nations documents and publications. For the 1.5 million old, important United Nations parliamentary and normative documents that are not in dire condition and would still need to be digitized, the Department will continue to employ in-house resources to digitally preserve them.

43. The Department will require additional funding to cover a five-year implementation period to achieve the full preservation of what are deemed the important 1 million print parliamentary and normative documents before the knowledge they represent is lost to history. The preservation proposal prepared at the request of the Board of Auditors in 2019 includes the outsourcing of the digitization of 1 million documents and the pragmatic metadata creation; the introduction of a digital preservation system, the first on such a scale in the Secretariat; and the evolution of the current digital repository into a robust, second-generation system, including modern, diversified electronic services, such as repository metrics and analytics. Upon completion of the project, five decades of the deliberations of Member States at the United Nations will become available online for the first time in the history of the Organization.

## D. Digital and curation services

44. The Dag Hammarskjöld Library continued to provide access to reliable information resources for Secretariat staff and delegates in support of the Organization’s efforts to fight misinformation about the COVID-19 pandemic. On average, more than 24,000 authoritative electronic books and articles were consulted per month. Since the beginning of the pandemic, 1,030 unique users benefited from accessing resources held by the Library remotely.

## E. Outreach and community engagement

45. The Dag Hammarskjöld Library contributed to the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations with an online exhibit featuring 75 United Nations documents that

<sup>1</sup> The Advisory Committee [on Administrative and Budgetary Questions] was informed, upon enquiry, that “important” United Nations documents consisted of the official records of major United Nations organs, including resolutions, meeting records, reports of committees, commissions and other major bodies, budgetary and financial reports and reports of preparatory meetings for major United Nations conferences (see [A/66/7](#), para. VII.19).

mark key achievements of the Organization. The exhibit was launched in June 2020 and has received 18,100 views in the reporting period. In addition, the Library launched a new book series entitled “Why it matters” and published its first electronic book in the series, entitled *75 Milestones in International Cooperation*, on 26 October 2020 ([www.un.org/en/whyitmatters](http://www.un.org/en/whyitmatters)).

## **F. Information systems and repository management services**

46. In response to the impact of COVID-19 on physical access to resources and related workflows, several solutions were developed to ensure business continuity and address the challenges that remote working imposed on recurring operations. During the reporting period, the United Nations Digital Library recorded more than 3.2 million unique downloads. Over 2,000 digital files, including old working papers, policy briefs and publications authored by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the Economic Commission for Europe, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and the United Nations Development Programme were uploaded to the Digital Library and made available online. Innovations in coding allowed the Digital Library to be updated with current and historical content and related metadata records, including over 4,400 digital files and more than 4,300 records from the regional libraries of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific and the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia.

## **G. Information analysis service**

47. During the reporting period, over 13,800 official United Nations parliamentary and normative documents, including 600 COVID-19 policy briefs and related materials, were analysed and added to the Library’s online systems, enabling users worldwide to easily find, access and share official United Nations information and publications in a timely manner. New analytical records of 330 voting records and 10,000 speeches made during meetings of the main deliberative organs of the United Nations were created and made accessible online. The *Index to Proceedings of the Security Council* (seventy-fourth year) and the *Index to Proceedings of the Economic and Social Council* for the 2019 session were produced and posted on the United Nations website. The United Nations Bibliographic Information System thesaurus was migrated to the website, [metadata.un.org](http://metadata.un.org), a new platform to support linked data and semantic web services, including those related to the Sustainable Development Goals.

# **VII. Remembrance activities**

## **A. The Holocaust and the United Nations Outreach Programme**

48. The Holocaust and the United Nations Outreach Programme continued to work with Member States and civil society to further Holocaust education and remembrance in 2020 under the theme, “75 years after Auschwitz: Holocaust education and remembrance for global justice”. The theme reflects the continued importance, 75 years after the Holocaust, of collective action against antisemitism and other forms of bias to ensure respect for the dignity and human rights of all people everywhere.

49. In the light of COVID-19 restrictions, the Programme successfully pivoted to an online programme, with 10 online events, including seven panel discussions, two teacher webinars and the opening of an online exhibition during the reporting period. The use of digital platforms extended the Programme’s outreach both in number and geographic diversity. Collectively, the events were attended by more than 1,000 people

from countries including Australia, Colombia, India, Morocco, Pakistan and South Africa. The United Nations “Exhibits” web page has two Holocaust-related exhibitions, which have been viewed by nearly 3,000 online visitors.

50. The pogrom that occurred in November 1938 was marked by two online events. The first was held on 9 November 2020 and included the launch of an interactive education website, “7 Places” ([www.7places.org](http://www.7places.org)), which examines the histories of seven sites affected by the pogrom. The Under-Secretary-General for Global Communications and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Germany, Heiko Maas, delivered statements and the event was broadcast by the national German public broadcaster, ARD. The second discussion, in which experts from diverse fields explored the topic, “Holocaust education in crisis?: challenges and responses”, took place on 10 November and was organized in collaboration with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

51. The Programme continued activities online in 2021 under the theme, “Facing the aftermath: recovery and reconstitution after the Holocaust”, focusing on the measures taken in the aftermath of the Second World War and the Holocaust to begin the process of recovery and reconstitution of individuals, communities and systems of justice, including challenging the denial and distortion of historical events. Against a global backdrop of rising antisemitism and increasing levels of disinformation and hate speech, Holocaust education and remembrance is even more urgent, as is the development of historical literacy to counter repeated attempts to deny and distort the history of the Holocaust. It also encourages collective action to challenge hatred, strengthen solidarity and champion compassion.

52. To mark the International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust in person at United Nations Headquarters in January 2021, the Programme created a virtual event that reflected the gravity and importance of the occasion and the issue. The pre-recorded event was organized in collaboration with UNESCO and the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance and was broadcast live on United Nations Web TV. It included remarks from the keynote speaker, the Chancellor of Germany, as well as from a survivor, the Secretary-General, the Director General of UNESCO and the Permanent Representatives of Israel and the United States to the United Nations. The Programme also organized a panel discussion with civil society organizations and an online film screening and discussion.

## **B. International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade and the Remember Slavery programme**

53. The Remember Slavery programme is mandated by General Assembly resolution [62/122](#) of 17 December 2007 to mobilize educational institutions and civil society on the subject of remembering the transatlantic slave trade and slavery, in order to inculcate future generations with the causes, consequences and lessons of the transatlantic slave trade and to communicate the dangers of racism and prejudice. Educational activities tie in with the targets of Sustainable Development Goals 4, 10, 16 and 17 and are planned within the framework of the objectives of the global communications strategy to inspire people to care and take action.

54. During the reporting period, the Remember Slavery programme worked with partners, such as UNESCO and Member States, that constitute its steering committee under the theme, “Confronting slavery’s legacy of racism together”. New partnerships were formed with Lehigh University, the Universities Studying Slavery consortium based at the University of Virginia and comprised of more than 60 member universities, and the National Museum of African American History and Culture of the Smithsonian Institution.

55. The programme pivoted successfully to using online outreach, organizing seven online events from July 2020 to January 2021, including discussions, briefings for students and United Nations staff, and a teacher workshop, in partnership with other United Nations entities, such as UNESCO and the United Nations Population Fund, as well as NGOs.

56. On 1 December 2020, the programme supported the “Peace through music” concert with global musicians, organized by the United Nations Population Fund in partnership with the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations, the NGO, Playing for Change, and Facebook. The event reached more than 4 million people. On 14 January 2021, a discussion entitled “Unfinished conversations” was held in partnership with the National Museum of African American History and Culture on themes such as “In slavery’s wake: a global curatorial project” and the “Slave wrecks project”.

## **VIII. Internal communication, knowledge solutions and design**

### **A. iSeek and Delegate**

57. During the reporting period the United Nations intranet, iSeek, published more than 500 stories, both in English and French, and approximately 2,500 global and local announcements on United Nations events, initiatives and management priorities. The dedicated COVID-19 resource page ([iseek.un.org/coronavirus](https://iseek.un.org/coronavirus)) received approximately 25,000 page views during the reporting period.

58. As requested by the Committee on Information, iSeek launched a new version of Delegate on the UN-2 platform ([un.org/delegate](https://un.org/delegate)) in August 2020, with iSeek stories and announcements, a new design in line with United Nations branding and new content for Member State delegates at other duty stations.

### **B. Graphic Design Unit**

59. The Department’s Graphic Design Unit provided visual communication and graphic design solutions for information campaigns, conferences and publications across Secretariat departments. In support of the global communications strategy, the Unit focused on the branding of the Organization and all relevant collateral materials. Moreover, it created branded templates as a new approach to streamline design jobs by adopting a visually unified look. The approach was applied to support urgent requests from the Executive Office of the Secretary-General for 32 COVID-19-related reports, policy briefs and press releases. The Unit also designed social media and web graphics, brand identities, animations, special emblems, posters, signage and a variety of promotional items. During the reporting period, the Unit completed more than 200 design products for virtual and in-person high-level events and campaigns, including the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations, the seventy-fifth session of the General Assembly, the Sustainable Development Goals, climate action, the International Day of Peace, Nelson Mandela International Day and the United Nations summit on biodiversity. The Unit supported multilingualism by creating logos in the six official United Nations languages, as well as in Portuguese and Kiswahili, for a range of projects.

## **IX. Relations with civil society organizations, special events and exhibits**

### **A. Civil society**

60. To ensure continued engagement from civil society constituents during the pandemic, the Civil Society Unit moved its briefing and events programme to online platforms, which enabled wider participation for speakers and audiences from around the world. The Unit implemented 12 activities, which resulted in at least 30,000 views on social media platforms, including Twitter, Instagram and Facebook.

61. The Unit, in partnership with the Department's Civil Society Youth Representatives Steering Committee, organized six youth-led online events during the reporting period to engage and empower young people. The events were broadcast on multiple social media platforms, such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, and served as a space for young people to share regional updates and their perspectives and experiences as champions for youth engagement for action on such global issues as COVID-19, racial equality, climate change, reflections on the celebration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations, and the decade of action to deliver the Sustainable Development Goals. In observance of International Youth Day, a two-day programme included a virtual main event and five regional conversations on social media platforms in Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and North America, which garnered approximately 18,000 views across Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. To promote multilingualism, the Latin American conversation with Mexican actress Esmeralda Pimentel was conducted in Spanish and received 12,000 views on Instagram.

62. Given the crucial role civil society plays in the global response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Civil Society Unit initiated a call for stories highlighting the efforts by civil society to act on science, share solutions and inspire solidarity. The responses received included 600 activities shared in 100 countries. In celebration of the anniversary of the United Nations, 75 civil society COVID-19 response stories were posted online and promoted on social media ([un.org/civilsociety](https://un.org/civilsociety)). Aligned with this initiative, an online event was organized with civil society organizations entitled, "Inspiring global action: reframing responsibilities to one another and our communities during the COVID-19 pandemic". The outcomes of the campaign included broad increased awareness about the work of civil society organizations within communities to address the many needs exposed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **B. United Nations Non-Governmental Liaison Service**

63. The integration of the United Nations Non-Governmental Liaison Service into the Department in 2018 has resulted in over 18,000 civil society representatives from thousands of entities, representing over 130 countries, participating in United Nations high-level meetings and multi-stakeholder hearings, including the preparatory meeting for the 2020 United Nations Ocean Conference and the Beijing+25 multi-stakeholder hearing of the 25-year review of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, which were held in 2020. In addition, a coordination platform that brings together expertise from civil society focal points from across the United Nations system to exchange ideas and strengthen advocacy efforts was established and meets monthly.

## **C. Exhibits**

64. Following the closure of United Nations Headquarters to visitors, all in-person public engagement with exhibits in the public gallery areas ceased. The Exhibits Unit pivoted to produce 15 online exhibitions in connection with priority issues and international days dedicated to specific themes, including “Our beautiful ocean”, in connection with World Oceans Day (Goal 14); “Sexual violence in conflict: youth speak out through the arts”, featuring artwork by young people of various backgrounds (Goal 5); “One day, I will”, documenting the hopes and dreams of children trapped in humanitarian crises (Goals 1, 4 and 10); and “Voices on the wind”, featuring the voices of refugees for the seventieth anniversary of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

65. A virtual exhibit produced for the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations, “#TheWorldWeWant”, was a collection of 75 photos curated from more than 50,000 images from over 130 countries. It was a creative response to the Secretary-General’s call to hear directly from the peoples of the world about their vision for the future. These 15 exhibits were viewed more than 46,000 times on the United Nations “Exhibits” website, with 230,000 social media engagements across platforms, up from 40,000 in 2019.

## **X. Highlighting United Nations priorities through the arts and celebrity advocates**

### **A. Outreach to the creative community**

66. The closure of United Nations Headquarters resulted in various creative projects being postponed, including on-location filming for a feature-length documentary on the inner workings of the Organization. The Department shifted its engagement with the creative community to online platforms and launched a series of virtual workshops for content creators in collaboration with the Producers Guild of America. The first workshop, held in August 2020, focused on how producers, directors and writers can collaborate with the United Nations. It was attended by 250 practitioners from the film, television and gaming industries. The second workshop in the series took place in November, with a special focus on climate action and how the creative industry can work with the United Nations to build awareness, change attitudes and inspire action to address the climate crisis. A similar online workshop, targeting a more select audience of leaders in the entertainment industry, was held in collaboration with Sony Pictures Entertainment and the United Nations Foundation in September, ahead of the seventy-fifth session of the General Assembly. It focused on opportunities for partnership between the creative community and the United Nations in amplifying messaging around the Sustainable Development Goals and other global issues.

### **B. Special events**

67. On 22 October, the Outreach Division coordinated the organization of the annual United Nations Day Concert, which, in 2020, was sponsored by the Permanent Mission of Italy to the United Nations. Following physical distancing protocols, fewer than 200 people gathered in the General Assembly Hall to watch the broadcast and hear live remarks from the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and the Permanent Representative of Italy to the United Nations. The concert received over 13,000 live views on United Nations social media accounts. It featured a pre-recorded dance performance by dancer Roberto Bolle, along with other leading

international dancers and the Teatro alla Scala Orchestra under the theme “Reimagine, rebalance, restart: recovering together for our shared humanity”.

### C. Celebrity advocacy

68. The Messenger of Peace programme continued to fulfil a coordinating role for the United Nations system on celebrity advocacy. To amplify United Nations system-wide messaging on the COVID-19 pandemic, the Department produced and shared regular “COVID-19 digests”, which contained consolidated messaging and were distributed to the Messengers of Peace and to Goodwill Ambassador focal points of the United Nations specialized agencies, funds and programmes.

69. An example of the support provided by the Messengers of Peace was their help in amplifying messaging around the Pledge to Pause campaign on misinformation in July. Social media posts by Paulo Coelho, Michael Douglas, Midori Goto, Charlize Theron, Malala Yousafzai, Daniel Barenboim, Jane Goodall and Yo-Yo Ma generated 93,000 engagements on social media in the first week alone. The Messengers of Peace also continued to provide public support for the Department’s other events and initiatives, including the observance of the International Day of Peace, which was held virtually on 17 September under the theme “Shaping peace together”. Messengers of Peace Ms. Goodall and Mr. Ma participated in a live event with students from around the world, while Ms. Goto and Mr. Coelho sent recorded messages. In addition, Messengers of Peace Princess Haya, Mr. Barenboim, Mr. Douglas, Ms. Goodall, Lang, Mr. Ma and Ms. Goto supported the event, with a total of 17 posts on their social media accounts, generating some 280,000 engagements.

## XI. Special publications

### A. United Nations seventy-fifth anniversary commemorative volume

70. For the commemoration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations, the Yearbook Unit produced a publication entitled *Achieving our Common Humanity: Celebrating Global Cooperation through the United Nations*. Available in print and online, the book explores challenges that the Organization has met and initiatives that it has spearheaded to promote collective human progress. This rich tapestry of stories portrays the ways in which the United Nations fights poverty, combats climate change and protects the environment, works to transform conflicts into peace, helps refugees thrive, supports the sharing of the benefits of technology, works to stop the spread of infectious diseases, including the COVID-19 pandemic, and reduce the risk of disasters, and helps render justice for all and ensure human rights.

### B. *UN Chronicle*

71. *UN Chronicle* supported the global communications strategy, publishing original articles on the key priorities of the Organization. During the reporting period, it published 14 articles on the pandemic. Distinguished authors shared lessons learned at the global, national and local levels, and offered solutions for “recovering better”. Academics from United Nations Academic Impact Sustainable Development Goal hubs provided commentary on six of the COVID-19 policy briefs of the Secretary-General.

72. In support of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations, *UN Chronicle* published an article entitled “The Charter of the United Nations after 75 years: personal reflections”, written by the President of the International Court of Justice,

Abdulqawi Ahmed Yusuf, the final article in a series of five celebrating the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Charter. For United Nations Day (24 October), Ms. Goodall, a Messenger of Peace, contributed an article entitled “We all must take action”.

73. *UN Chronicle* carried multiple articles on COVID-19, including one by the Permanent Representative of Morocco to the United Nations on the need for a multilateral approach to dealing with the pandemic and another by a Canadian academic on how the United Nations can use technology to help combat the pandemic’s impacts.

74. *UN Chronicle* saw steady growth in visitors to its website, reaching 5.3 million page views for the period from 1 January to 31 December 2020.

## **XII. Sales and marketing: expanding access to knowledge and information**

75. The Department oversees the distribution of multilingual print and digital United Nations publications as well as the United Nations Bookshops at Headquarters and the United Nations Office at Geneva. This allows new avenues for outreach beyond traditional institutional audiences, in particular with the public, academia and the private sector. The Department focused its efforts on expanding the range of multilingual content for its online publishing platform, the United Nations iLibrary, as well as collaboration with the international publishing industry and academia to promote books targeting core United Nations-related themes and to encourage dialogue with the public. In response to COVID-19, special efforts concentrated on disseminating content related to the pandemic.

### **A. In support of the Sustainable Development Goals**

76. In October, the Department collaborated with the 2020 edition of the Frankfurt Book Fair on the campaign “Signals of hope”, which was designed to send a message of international solidarity and to provide a platform for exchanging ideas for a hopeful future, as the Fair was taking place virtually for the first time owing to COVID-19. The Deputy Secretary-General and the Under-Secretary-General for Global Communications were part of the “Signals of hope” online programme. Through its virtual stand, the Department showcased United Nations publications and projects to 200,000 users. The “Bookfest” digital event at the Frankfurt Book Fair, during which the Department streamed a children’s book reading for the Sustainable Development Goal Book Club, garnered 1,500,000 clicks, with viewers from 124 countries.

77. The Department continued to manage the international collaboration on the Sustainable Development Goal Book Club, which was launched in 2019. The initiative brings together international associations of publishers, booksellers, librarians, children’s books and authors to curate a monthly reading list of books about the Goals for children between the ages of 6 and 12 in all six official languages. As of January 2021, 215 books had been featured on the website across all languages and the monthly email updates reach 3,700 subscribers.

78. During the reporting period, the Department launched the Sustainable Development Goals Publishers Compact, an opportunity for players in the publishing industry to sign a commitment and act as champions of the Goals. Compact members commit to 10 concrete actions to advance the Goals and report annually on progress. The Compact was created after a successful collaboration between the United Nations and the International Publishers Association and follows other compacts. As of January 2021, the Compact had 65 signatories from 30 countries.



## B. Social media

79. Efforts continue to expand and reinforce social media efforts to promote United Nations publications. During the reporting period, the number of Twitter followers of the Sales and Marketing Section reached 185,600, and its Facebook “likes” stood at 38,860. United Nations iOS application downloads stood at approximately 137,000 and Google Play application downloads stood at 191,000. The Department appealed to social media audiences by promoting specific publications in connection with United Nations days, events and anniversaries, as well as current events.

## C. United Nations iLibrary and [shop.un.org](https://shop.un.org)

80. During the reporting period, the United Nations iLibrary, a comprehensive collection of knowledge about the United Nations launched in 2016, grew to contain more than 9,000 titles, including flagship and recurrent publications, monographs, working papers, discussion papers and policy briefs, as well as databases, all aggregated from within the Secretariat and bodies of the broader United Nations system. Some 35 per cent of publications on the platform are multilingual (two or more languages in the same book) or translations.

81. The iLibrary provides fully searchable access to the aggregated publications located on a user-friendly and mobile-responsive platform to enable access for any user with an Internet connection. An updated and redesigned iLibrary platform was launched at the end of 2020.

82. The e-commerce platform [shop.un.org](https://shop.un.org) allows for the online sale of print and digital publications and is used to promote new titles that support United Nations priorities, such as disseminating reliable information on COVID-19, the Sustainable Development Goals, human rights, peace and security, climate change, gender equality and migration.

83. The acquisition of COVID-19-related content (excluding policy briefs of the Secretary-General) stood at 82 working papers (includes working papers, policy briefs and research papers) and 20 publications (some monographs, some a part of a series) from agencies, funds, programmes and Secretariat departments. Languages include Arabic, Chinese, English, French, German, Portuguese, Russian and Spanish.

84. Launched in 2019, the accessible e-book programme of the Publications and Editorial Section for visually impaired people grew, with the addition of 20 new titles. Notable publications include *Human Development Report 2019: Beyond Income, Beyond Averages, Beyond Today – Inequalities in Human Development in the 21st Century*, a children’s book on COVID-19, *Report of the Secretary-General on the Work of the Organization 2020*, published in six languages, and nearly a dozen policy briefs on COVID-19 issued by the Secretary-General.

## D. United Nations Bookshops

85. The closure of United Nations premises owing to COVID-19 has posed major challenges to the income-generating sections of the Department, which has resulted in the closure of the United Nations Bookshops, with 100 per cent loss of revenue in physical locations. The situation has been partially mitigated by a transition to online sales of selected merchandise on [shop.un.org](https://shop.un.org).

### **E. *United Nations Guide to Model UN***

86. The *United Nations Guide to Model UN* was launched on 1 September 2020. It is the official guide for participants, student leaders and organizers of Model United Nations conferences and clubs. It offers an overview of the structure, procedures and processes, as practiced in the United Nations, along with tips on how students can best participate in the conferences. Consequently, owing to COVID-19, most Model United Nations clubs around the world are only able to meet virtually, hence this book is an especially valuable and timely resource.

### **F. United Nations Development Business**

87. United Nations Development Business is a subscription-based platform that provides the private sector and academia with access to an aggregated database on contracting opportunities in international development projects. During the reporting period, more than 1,000 active subscribers used the Development Business website to access 11,000 procurement notices and 15,000 contract awards. A revamped and rebranded Development Business platform was launched, offering additional features, enhanced user experience and some automated internal processes, resulting in increased monthly average page views of 323,000, compared with 183,000 in 2019. In line with United Nations priorities and pursuant to General Assembly resolution [57/279](#), Development Business facilitates procurement opportunities for vendors from developing countries and countries with economies in transition. In addition to dedicating a page to relevant resources for the business community to participate in the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, Development Business published 250 procurement notices and 430 contract awards related to projects funded in response to the health, social and economic impacts of the pandemic.

## **XIII. Conclusions**

88. During the reporting period and despite the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, a wide range of virtual outreach activities were organized that underscored the vitality of the Organization's engagement with its diverse audiences. With a focus on multilingualism and a pivot to increased online activities, events, partnerships and the mobilization of young people, the Department provided the world with information on promoting the Sustainable Development Goals, human rights, peace and security, the fight against climate change and the struggle against intolerance and xenophobia, among other subjects. As 75 years of the United Nations are commemorated under the theme, "The future we want, the United Nations we need: reaffirming our collective commitment to multilateralism", the Department continues to devise outreach activities to ensure that no one is left behind.

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