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Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples

Dissemination of information on decolonization during the period from April 2020 to March 2021

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report, prepared in response to General Assembly resolution [75/121](#) of 10 December 2020, provides a general overview of the activities undertaken and supported by the Department of Global Communications to disseminate information on decolonization, with particular emphasis on the options for self-determination available for the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories. Unless otherwise mentioned, it covers the period from April 2020 to March 2021.



I. Introduction

1. The General Assembly, in paragraph 2 of its resolution [75/121](#), considered it important to continue and expand its efforts to ensure the widest possible dissemination of information on decolonization, with particular emphasis on the options for self-determination available for the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories. To that end, it requested the Department of Global Communications, through the United Nations information centres in the relevant regions, to actively engage and seek new and innovative ways to disseminate material to the Non-Self-Governing Territories. In paragraph 3 of the same resolution, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to further enhance the information provided on the United Nations decolonization website and to continue to include the full series of reports of the regional seminars on decolonization, the statements and scholarly papers presented at those seminars and links to the full series of reports of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. It also stressed that the Department of Global Communications and the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs continue to be jointly responsible for maintaining and enhancing the United Nations decolonization website. In paragraph 4, the Assembly requested the Department of Global Communications to continue its efforts to update web-based information on the assistance programmes available to the Non-Self-Governing Territories. In paragraph 5, it requested the Department of Global Communications and the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs to implement the recommendations of the Special Committee and to continue their efforts to take measures through all of the media available, including publications, radio, television, the Internet and social media, to give publicity to the work of the United Nations in the field of decolonization.

2. In fulfilling its mandate, the Department of Global Communications worked closely with the Decolonization Unit of the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, among other relevant United Nations offices and entities.

3. In order to overcome some of the challenges brought about by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, including restrictions on holding in-person meetings and activities, the Department of Global Communications deployed its various online tools and platforms to ensure that the work of the United Nations on decolonization received maximum publicity and promotion.

4. The present report, prepared in response to the above-mentioned resolution, covers the period from April 2020 to March 2021, unless otherwise indicated.

II. Coverage of issues before the General Assembly

5. During the reporting period, the Department of Global Communications issued a total of 22 press releases, in English and French, covering meetings and statements relating to the work of the United Nations on decolonization, including by the General Assembly, its Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) and the Special Committee.

6. For journalists seeking to cover the work of the United Nations on decolonization, the Media Accreditation and Liaison Unit of the Department of Global Communications disseminated information about relevant meetings and events through regular media alerts and provided accreditation and liaison support. The Media Documents Centre distributed statements and resolutions relating to those meetings to journalists and members of the media.

A. United Nations websites and social media

7. The “Global issues” section of the United Nations website (www.un.org/en/global-issues/), maintained by the Department of Global Communications, continued to feature the issue of decolonization in the six official languages of the United Nations (www.un.org/en/global-issues/decolonization). During the reporting period, the pages in that section were viewed a total of 100,052 times, a 40 per cent increase in page views compared with the previous year.

8. In the “Observances” section of the United Nations website, the page for the International Week of Solidarity with the Peoples of Non-Self-Governing Territories (25–31 May; www.un.org/en/observances/non-self-governing-week) was viewed a total of 7,503 times during the reporting period.

9. The social media accounts of the United Nations maintained by the Department of Global Communications continued to promote issues relating to decolonization in the six official languages, as well as in Portuguese, Kiswahili and Hindi. The social media accounts were also used to cover related meetings, events and observances. The accounts helped to drive traffic to the decolonization web pages by providing the necessary links in their social media posts, thereby ensuring that the audience had more detailed information about the Organization’s work in the area of decolonization.

10. During the reporting period, the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs continued to maintain and update the “United Nations and Decolonization” website in the six official languages (www.un.org/dppa/decolonization) and worked with the Office of Information and Communications Technology to upgrade the website to a new branding standard (known as “UN2”), in line with the guidelines of the Department of Global Communications. From January to December 2020, the site received a total of 112,767 views in the six official languages.

11. In the context of the changes in the working methods of the Special Committee during its 2020 session, in view of the extraordinary circumstances brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs continued to keep the general public informed of activities relating to decolonization, in particular those of the Special Committee, the Fourth Committee, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly, through the “United Nations and Decolonization” website.

12. On 20 October 2020, the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs unveiled a video animation in English on the topic of “United Nations and decolonization, from the past to the present”. The seven-minute video was promoted on the “United Nations and Decolonization” website, and on the online platforms of the Department of Global Communications, including United Nations Web TV, YouTube and Twitter, and disseminated through the Department’s network of United Nations information centres, resident coordinator offices, peace operations and relevant regional organizations. The animation was also shared with global United Nations personnel through the United Nations intranet, iSeek. Following the launch of the video, the “United Nations and Decolonization” website received a record 27,700 visitors in October, which is double the number of visitors it received in October 2019. In support of multilingualism, the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs is in the process of translating the video into the other five official languages.

13. The Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs published an article entitled “Fulfilling the promise of decolonization” in its online magazine, *Politically Speaking*, on the end of the Third International Decade for the Eradication of

Colonialism (2011–2020) and used its Twitter account to promote the activities of the Special Committee.

B. United Nations News

14. During the reporting period, United Nations News covered the opening session of the Special Committee in the six official languages, as well as Kiswahili, Portuguese and Hindi.

15. Throughout the reporting period, United Nations News teams produced varied multimedia stories and features on the occasion of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations and the 100th anniversary of the International Labour Organization. Several of the stories highlighted the important role that the United Nations system has played in supporting dialogue on the decolonization process.

16. The Video Section of the News and Media Division of the Department of Global Communications continued to disseminate information on the important work of the Organization in the area of decolonization. For example, the Section clipped and captioned a sound bite from the address given by the Secretary-General to the General Assembly on 21 September 2020, in which he cited the historic accomplishments of the United Nations in respect of decolonization. The clip was disseminated across social media in both international and English versions.

17. The Department of Global Communications continued to provide live and on-demand coverage of United Nations meetings and events on decolonization issues. Photos of those events were published on the United Nations Photo website. Coverage included the plenary meetings of the Fourth Committee (10 meetings) and a meeting of the organizational session of the Special Committee (1 meeting).

III. Visitors' services

18. Visitors' services in Geneva, Nairobi, New York and Vienna continued to share informational materials and conduct briefings on decolonization, including on the roles of the Trusteeship Council and the Fourth Committee and on the progress made in decolonization over the past decades. The issue of decolonization is regularly included in the narrative of the guided tours, which in New York includes the Trusteeship Council Chamber, and tour guides refer to the work of the Special Committee in the light of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, of 1960. In New York, for example, tours focusing on Black History Month were featured in February, with a particular emphasis on the issue of decolonization and the growing number of independent Member States joining the Organization in the 1960s. Since March 2020, all tours and briefings have been conducted virtually owing to the COVID-19 pandemic.

IV. Dag Hammarskjöld Library

19. During the reporting period, to ensure the widest possible dissemination of information on decolonization, the Dag Hammarskjöld Library created metadata and tags to improve the accessibility of 229 speeches related to decolonization issues made at the meetings of the Fourth Committee during the seventy-fourth session of the General Assembly. The Library also analysed and expanded access to information for almost 6,000 digitized Trusteeship Council documents, including petitions, communications, observations and meeting records.

20. During the period under review, the Library posted monthly tweets informing its 64,400 followers about research tools produced by the Library on the topic of decolonization. The digitization, in 2020, of the large corpus of Trusteeship Council documents and their availability in the United Nations Digital Library was widely promoted across various platforms and communications channels, including iSeek, the e-deleGATE web portal, the Dag Hammarskjöld Library Twitter account, email broadcasts to 350 United Nations depository libraries and professional listservs of the international documents community.

21. In addition, 3,900 historical documents (a total of 13,000 pages) of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee have been digitized. Procedures have been put in place to improve the digital quality of files digitized decades ago.

V. Publications

22. During the reporting period, the Department of Global Communications, in consultation with the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, produced a leaflet entitled “Ten frequently asked questions on the United Nations and decolonization”. The leaflet is available in the six official languages and is available in the “About” section of the “United Nations and Decolonization” website in high-resolution format for printing and educational purposes.

VI. United Nations information centres and services

23. As part of commemorations of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations, the global network of United Nations information centres promoted the Organization’s founding and history, including the issue of decolonization, through an array of communications and outreach activities, including radio programmes in local languages, social media posts and virtual discussions with young people.

24. During the reporting period, the Department of Global Communications, in collaboration with the United Nations information centre in Dakar, produced a one-minute video in English on the topic of “60 years of independence: a wave of independence spread across Africa”. The information centre in Canberra, meanwhile, continues to host a web page entitled “United Nations and decolonization” (<https://un.org.au/useful-links/united-nations-and-decolonization/>).

VII. Conclusions

25. In spite of the challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Department of Global Communications continued to cover and promote issues related to decolonization and the objectives of the Fourth International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism. Working in full cooperation and coordination with the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, the Department deployed its traditional and multimedia platforms to support the issue of decolonization and to highlight the work of the Special Committee in advancing decolonization and promoting the need for the immediate and full implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples.
