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Consideration of reports submitted by the Secretary-General

Activities of the Department of Global Communications: strategic communications services

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report, prepared in accordance with General Assembly resolution [74/92](#) B, provides a summary of the key advances made by the Department of Global Communications, from July 2019 to January 2020, in promoting the work of the United Nations to the global audience through its strategic communications services.

The strategic communications services subprogramme, one of three subprogrammes of the Department, which is implemented by its Strategic Communications Division, develops and implements strategies for communicating United Nations messages on priority issues. The Division also manages the Department's network of field offices, the United Nations information centres. In addition, as the secretariat for the United Nations Communications Group and its task forces, the Division works to strengthen the coordination of communications throughout the United Nations system.

The activities under the other subprogrammes of the Department, namely, news services, and outreach and knowledge services, are described in separate reports of the Secretary-General ([A/AC.198/2020/3](#) and [A/AC.198/2020/4](#), respectively).

* [A/AC.198/2020/1](#).



I. Introduction

1. In its resolution [74/92](#) B, the General Assembly took note of the reports submitted by the Secretary-General on the activities of the Department of Global Communications, submitted for consideration by the Committee on Information at its forty-first session ([A/AC.198/2019/2](#), [A/AC.198/2019/3](#) and [A/AC.198/2019/4](#)) 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 strategic communications services.
3. The Department's activities in the area of strategic communications services are described in the present report, which includes an overview of its thematic campaign activities, a summary of its communications campaigns on key issues, and a briefing on the activities of the network of United Nations information centres and their role in the United Nations development system reform.
4. The Department's strategy throughout the reporting period was aimed at providing authoritative information on priority issues, highlighting solutions to key challenges on the agenda of the United Nations and engaging audiences, compelling them to take action. The Department has been measuring the impact of its work and is committed to strengthening that impact. Applying these interconnected approaches, the Department's efforts were geared towards advancing the Organization's mandate in multiple ways. Content was calibrated to reach different target audiences, from international media organizations to students cleaning beaches and rights activists advocating for an end to violence against women and girls. Efforts at Headquarters were aimed at global audiences, deploying campaigns mainly on the Department's digital platforms and using new technologies for artificial intelligence-supported audience engagement and action. United Nations information centres, working closely with resident coordinator offices as a result of the United Nations development system reform, were instrumental in adapting content and outreach materials to local contexts and audiences, as well as providing strategic communications support to United Nations country teams.

II. Communications campaigns

A. Sustainable development

5. The Department's communications strategies on sustainable development and climate change advocate for accelerated action on the Sustainable Development Goals at the global, national and local levels, highlighting the urgent need for increased ambition and showcasing available pathways and solutions. The decade of action for the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030, launched by the Secretary-General in January 2020 and further amplified by civil society partners, garnered strong social media engagement, with broad support at the local and global levels by United Nations information centres, resident coordinator offices and United Nations system entities. Ongoing initiatives, such as the Sustainable Development Goals Media Compact, the Sustainable Development Goals media zones and the ActNow campaign, allowed the Department to forge new partnerships, shine a spotlight on best practices, localize engagement and inspire individual action.
6. The high-level week of the seventy-fourth session of the General Assembly provided a major communications opportunity, with five Sustainable Development Goal-related summits promoted under the overall theme of "Action for people and planet: 1 week, 5 summits, 17 Goals". Extensive media outreach, including through

webinars with field offices, background briefings for media representatives in the field and the wide dissemination of a comprehensive information package containing key messages, facts and figures in the lead-up to the summits, succeeded in leading the narrative on the summit topics and generating strong media coverage, which provided fresh impetus for climate action and Sustainable Development Goal implementation. Extensive global coverage of the 2019 Climate Action Summit convened by the Secretary-General and the Youth Climate Summit at the beginning of the week was followed by significant coverage of the Sustainable Development Goals Summit, the high-level meeting on universal health coverage, the High-Level Dialogue on Financing for Development and the high-level meeting to review progress made in addressing the priorities of small island developing States through the implementation of the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway by major media outlets including the BBC, CNN, the *New York Times*, *The Economist*, Foreign Policy, National Public Radio, Reuters, *El País*, Yahoo News, Xinhua, *The Jakarta Post*, *Arab News* and Prensa Latina.

7. Members of the Sustainable Development Goals Media Compact from around the globe, including *Asahi Shimbun*, Deutsche Welle, SBS Australia, Channels TV (Nigeria), Phoenix TV and Euronews, contributed to strong media coverage in relation to the Goals during the General Assembly high-level week and the high-level political forum on sustainable development in July. The Sustainable Development Goals Media Compact, launched by the Secretary-General in 2018 to leverage the influence of news and entertainment companies for advancing sustainable development, has grown from 31 founding members to 75 members, spanning 80 countries across four continents. Among the latest additions are CNN Philippines, NHK Enterprises (Japan), Elshinta Radio (Indonesia), Sparknews and the Sky Group. Compact members receive a monthly dedicated editorial package from the Department, including data, interviews and stories of impact, inspiring their coverage related to the Goals.

8. The Sustainable Development Goals media zone organized during the high-level week allowed the Department to amplify voices from Governments, civil society and the private sector highlighting actions and solutions driving progress in achieving the Goals through live-streamed discussions moderated by journalists from 20 influential media outlets, including Al-Jazeera, CNN, the BBC World Service, *National Geographic*, Associated Press, the South African Broadcasting Corporation, Public Broadcasting Service and SoundCloud, and Sustainable Development Goals Media Compact members such as Phoenix TV, *Scientific American*, Deutsche Welle and Channels TV. The 46 sessions, featuring more than 140 speakers, attracted close to 40,000 live and on-demand online video views and generated about 25,000 engagements with the “Sustainable Development Goals Live” hashtag (#SDGLive) on social media. The Sustainable Development Goals media zone was also organized, in collaboration with the PVBLC Foundation, during the high-level political forum on sustainable development in July and the Web Summit in Lisbon in November.

9. In addition to the main United Nations social media accounts, the Department promotes the Sustainable Development Goals through the dedicated GlobalGoalsUN accounts, the number of followers of which continues to grow. At the end of 2019, the @GlobalGoalsUN Facebook account had 337,000 followers, an increase of 52,000 from 2018, and the Twitter account had 319,000 followers, an increase of 44,000 from 2018. Engagement on the “Global Goals” hashtag (#GlobalGoals) used by the Department saw a spike in September, with 3.5 million engagements, up 60 per cent from the previous month.

10. The multilingual Sustainable Development Goals website (www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment) became the most-viewed website within the un.org domain, with more than 25 million page views over the course of the year. During the high-

level period alone (20 September to 1 October), the Sustainable Development Goals website received 1,183,250 views, up from 913,600 during the same period in 2018.

11. Since its release in September 2016, the “SDGs in Action” mobile application, produced with GSMA (<https://sdgsinaction.com>), has been downloaded more than 114,000 times. The application provides information about the Sustainable Development Goals in all six official languages of the United Nations. The number of downloads increased from an average of 3,300 per month in 2018 to 5,860 per month in 2019.

12. The Department provided extensive communications support to the launches of several flagship United Nations reports, including the Secretary-General’s annual *Sustainable Development Goals Report* in July, the *World Social Report 2020* and the *World Economic Situation and Prospects 2020* report in January, which all garnered strong media coverage. The launch of the Global Investors for Sustainable Development Alliance by the Secretary-General in October was covered by the *Financial Times*, Agence France-Presse, Reuters, Yahoo Finance and many other outlets.

13. The Department also worked closely with partners within and beyond the United Nations system to promote the Internet Governance Forum in November, as well as multiple international days, including those related to the eradication of poverty and the elimination of violence against women and those related to youth, persons with disabilities, universal health coverage and toilets.

14. United Nations information centres were instrumental in mobilizing key audiences to act on the Sustainable Development Goals around the world. For example, a multifaceted campaign brought the Goals to millions of Ukrainians in their own language. Eighteen celebrities, who have a combined 7 million followers on social media, each featured a Goal, reposting photos and messaging from the campaign. *Elle* magazine also featured the influencers and information on the Goal they chose and the reasons why. To amplify the messaging, photos relating to the campaign were exhibited in a Kyiv shopping and entertainment complex, reaching 700,000 people, in the metro, which has 3.5 million monthly passengers, and at the Parliament. The campaign was launched by the United Nations information centre in Kyiv, in partnership with the United Nations country team and the resident coordinator office.

15. Also in September, an estimated audience of 385 million households in 71 countries learned about the Sustainable Development Goals through 14 short videos that were produced by the United Nations Information Service in Geneva and aired on France24.

B. Climate change

16. The Department worked closely with the Executive Office of the Secretary-General to promote the Climate Action Summit and the Youth Climate Summit in September. Through strategic guidance and messaging, as well as content production, digital promotion, the engagement of influencers and United Nations information centres and the coordination of United Nations system partners, the Department played a key role in publicizing the goals and outcomes of the summits. A series of press briefings by the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General on Climate Change was organized, aimed at building interest in the Climate Action Summit. Each briefing was attended by up to 40 reporters and significant coverage was generated that fuelled momentum in advance of the Summit.

17. The multilingual website for the Climate Action Summit attracted 576,578 page views during the high-level period alone (20 September to 1 October), contributing to a 39 per cent increase in the number of unique users of un.org websites, to 3.5 million during that period.

18. On social media, the “Climate action” hashtag (#ClimateAction) had nearly 5 million engagements on Twitter and Instagram in just one week (19–25 September), largely driven by the student activist Greta Thunberg and influencers such as Leonardo DiCaprio and Aidan Gallagher.

19. The ActNow campaign, aimed at mobilizing people around the world in the lead-up to the Climate Action Summit, saw more than half a million individual climate actions logged through the campaign’s chatbot during 2019. From recycling to driving less, eating meat-free meals and using less water, young people registered their actions, signalling to world leaders that it’s time to act.

20. In a new collaboration with the art sector, the Department partnered with the non-profit organization Art 2030 to feature *Breathe with Me*, a participatory art installation for climate action, connecting dignitaries at the United Nations with the public in Central Park in New York. The installation resulted in strong public engagement and was covered by Agence France-Presse, France24, CBS New York and Artnet, among others.

21. The Department also rendered extensive support to amplifying the findings of key reports on climate change, including the *Special Report on Climate Change and Land* and the *Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate* of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the “Greenhouse gas bulletin” of the World Meteorological Organization, the *Emissions Gap Report 2019* of the United Nations Environment Programme and the “Report of the Secretary-General on the 2019 Climate Action Summit and the way forward in 2020”.

22. For the twenty-fifth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, held in Madrid in December, the Department used its digital platforms and media outreach to promote the Secretary-General’s participation and keep the spotlight on the initiatives announced at the Climate Action Summit, while supporting the work of United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the wider United Nations system aimed at strengthening the implementation of the Paris Agreement.

23. The United Nations information centres worked to inspire action on climate change. For example, five young climate innovators whose work helps to mitigate climate change and take forward the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development showcased how individual actions could bring about change when they joined 300 youth and the Deputy Secretary-General in a dialogue organized by the United Nations information centre in New Delhi. The presentations by the innovators inspired a youth audience on social media, generating 8,000 engagements and trending on Twitter for over four hours.

24. In September, the United Nations Regional Information Centre for Western Europe partnered with the European Union to promote the “European Union beach clean-up” campaign, which resulted in 850,000 kilograms of marine litter being collected. The biggest climate action event ever, involving 26 schools in Ostend, kickstarted the campaign in Belgium. The network of schools will reach 8,000 students over the course of a school year, with classes and workshops on the Sustainable Development Goals, the importance of clean seas and respect for the environment.

C. Human rights

25. In 2019, Nelson Mandela International Day marked 101 years since the birth of the former South African president. Following the official commemoration in the General Assembly on 18 July, 120 United Nations staff and delegates volunteered at

a community culinary centre that offers healthy, accessible cuisine to residents of one of the most marginalized neighbourhoods in New York City. Organized in collaboration with the Office of the President of the General Assembly and the New York City Mayor's Office for International Affairs, the volunteer activity has established itself as a much-appreciated annual event that creates positive links between the United Nations community and its host city. More than 15 United Nations information centres also organized events and activities to commemorate Nelson Mandela International Day, including those in Antananarivo, Brazzaville, Dakar, Harare, Lagos, Nigeria, Lusaka, Manila, Moscow, Nairobi, Pretoria, Tehran and Yaoundé.

26. The Department worked with the Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect to promote a special event marking the International Day of Commemoration and Dignity of the Victims of the Crime of Genocide and of the Prevention of This Crime (9 December). In addition to a panel discussion, the event included a photo exhibit entitled "Champions of prevention", telling the stories of activists' work on the prevention of genocide and other atrocities.

27. The Department collaborated closely with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) throughout the year to promote the rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Human Rights Day was marked on 10 December with the theme "Youth Standing Up for Human Rights". In addition to commemorative events organized at United Nations Headquarters and the United Nations Office at Geneva, events and activities to mark Human Rights Day were conducted by more than 20 United Nations information centres, including those in Antananarivo, Asunción, Brazzaville, Bujumbura, Dakar, Dar es Salaam, United Republic of Tanzania, Dhaka, Islamabad, La Paz, Lagos, Lomé, Lusaka, Moscow, Nairobi, New Delhi, Ouagadougou, Port of Spain, Pretoria, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, Tehran, Vienna and Yangon, Myanmar.

28. In Brazil, young people living in favelas were inspired to recognize themselves as human rights advocates and changemakers as a result of a campaign by the United Nations information centre in Rio de Janeiro, the resident coordinator office, OHCHR and the non-governmental organizations "Observatório das Favelas". The collaboration involved photo workshops with youth from the Maré region; their work to promote Human Rights Day and the Sustainable Development Goals was displayed at the World Non-Formal Education Forum. The United Nations information centre in Rio de Janeiro also conducted a social media campaign with the images, which reached nearly 6,500 people across Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

29. To raise the profile of the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples (9 August), the Department worked with Twitter to promote an emoji based on the visual identity designed by the United Nations. Some 120,000 tweets in English, French, Portuguese and Spanish featuring the emoji were posted between 8 August and 17 September. The hashtag "Indigenous Peoples Day" (#IndigenousPeoplesDay) was used the highest number of times, for more than 44,000 tweets, followed by the "Pueblos indígenas" hashtag (#PueblosIndigenas), for more than 29,000 tweets, highlighting the engagement of Spanish-speaking audiences. A retweet by Pope Francis (@Pontifex) was subsequently retweeted more than 5,300 times.

30. The Department also continued to promote the International Decade for People of African Descent, including through a screening of the documentary film *Larger Than Africa* and a panel discussion at United Nations Headquarters on 2 October, the International Day of Non-Violence, in collaboration with the Remember Slavery programme and a civil society network, the Most Influential People of African Descent, to amplify the mutually reinforcing mandates and expand the audience base. To continue highlighting gender as a cross-cutting issue, the Department, in

collaboration with OHCHR, provided an updated version of the booklet “Women and girls of African descent”, in English, French and Spanish.

31. Partnering with the Women’s Committee of Uzbekistan, the Office of the Prosecutor-General of Uzbekistan, opinion-makers, bloggers and social media activists, the Department’s field office in Tashkent launched an online campaign as part of the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence campaign, initiated by the United Nations Communications Group in Uzbekistan, to advocate for behaviour change and stimulate discussions related to gender-based violence and violence against women.

32. The Department worked on the multilingual promotion of the International Year of Indigenous Languages, led by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), adding branding in Estonian, Gaelic and Romanian to the branding already available in the six official languages of the United Nations as well as Hindi, Kiswahili and Portuguese.

33. The Department collaborated closely with the Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect to promote the United Nations Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech, launched by the Secretary-General on 18 June as the United Nations system’s response to alarming trends of growing xenophobia, racism and intolerance, violent misogyny, anti-Semitism and Islamophobia around the world. The Department participates in the work of the Working Group on Hate Speech, which was set up to develop ways aimed at mobilizing action to achieve the Strategy’s goal of combating hate speech. The United Nations system in Cameroon, supported by the United Nations information centre in Yaoundé, connected civil society groups, women leaders and Christian and Muslim clerics to counter instances of hate speech and promote peace throughout the country.

D. Special information programme on the question of Palestine

34. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution [73/20](#) on its special information programme on the question of Palestine, the Department held its annual International Media Seminar on Peace in the Middle East in Ankara, Turkey, in September 2019. The event was organized in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey. The seminar provided a platform for engaging in discussions on media-related issues connected to the situation in the region. It was attended by journalists, media experts, diplomats and members of academia from, among others, Israel, Turkey and the United States of America, as well as the State of Palestine.

35. The Department also organized its annual training programme for Palestinian journalists from 4 November to 6 December at United Nations Headquarters, with one week in Washington, D.C. Seven Palestinian journalists from Jordan, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic, as well as Gaza, Jerusalem and the West Bank, participated, bringing the total number of journalists benefiting from this annual training programme to 203 since it was first held in 1995. They attended a series of meetings with senior United Nations officials, diplomats, academics and representatives of non-governmental organizations and think tanks. They also visited major media organizations such as Al Jazeera, Democracy NOW!, CNN, YouTube and Google News. In addition, the journalists attended a hands-on training course focusing on multimedia, online and digital tools and technologies.

36. In cooperation with the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, the Department provided communications support for the observance of the 2019 International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, on 29 November. The commemoration, held at United Nations Headquarters on 27 November, included a special meeting of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the

Palestinian People, followed by an exhibit on the theme “Palestine: the most universal of national causes”. The exhibit consisted of pictures of and quotes by well-known public figures who have expressed solidarity with the Palestinian people. Many United Nations information centres and offices around the world also organized various activities to commemorate the International Day.

E. Decolonization

37. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution [73/122](#), on the dissemination of information on decolonization, the Department continued its efforts to promote the issue of decolonization through its various multimedia platforms, in close collaboration with the Decolonization Unit of the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs. Efforts included the ongoing upgrading, updating and maintaining of the website entitled “The United Nations and decolonization” in the six official UN languages.

F. New Partnership for Africa’s Development

38. Between August and December 2019, the Department used its public information tools, including its magazine *Africa Renewal* and the accompanying website, available in Chinese, English, French and Kiswahili, to support the implementation in Africa of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063 of the African Union. The Department promoted the work of the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, the Economic Commission for Africa and the African Union and the African Union Development Agency – New Partnership for Africa’s Development.

39. Ahead of the Climate Action Summit in September 2019, the effects of climate change in Africa and the actions that countries and civil society, especially young people, are taking to tackle those effects were highlighted in the August–November issue of *Africa Renewal*.

40. The December edition provided early insight into the 2020 theme of the African Union, “Silencing the Guns 2020,” and examined current security challenges in Africa and how they are being addressed.

41. In September, the Department used the opening of the seventy-fourth session of the General Assembly to highlight the development priorities for Africa, as set out by African leaders who attended. The Department created a webpage (www.un.org/africarenewal/africaga) to share statements made by African leaders to the Assembly and relevant news. The Department also interviewed top officials from Africa, including the President of Sierra Leone, at the social media and Sustainable Development Goals media zones.

42. The Department redesigned its *Africa Renewal* website to make it more interactive and user-friendly. In a survey carried out in October and November, some 80 per cent of respondents commented positively on the new website. The total number of visits during the period was 1.1 million, 52.4 per cent of whom were women; 38 per cent of visitors to the website were aged between 25 and 34.

43. Growth in the syndicated news features service of *Africa Renewal* remains high. The August–November issue carried 20 articles that were republished in both English and French 258 times in more than 150 media outlets in about 30 countries around the world, including Algeria, Angola, Barbados, Equatorial Guinea, France, Ghana, India, Italy, Madagascar, Morocco, Nigeria, the Philippines, Sierra Leone, Togo, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States.

44. United Nations social media accounts devoted to Africa showed steady growth in the number of users throughout the year. In 2019, the number of followers of the *Africa Renewal* Twitter accounts rose by 4.5 per cent for English, to 105,000, and 8.1 per cent for French, to 80,000. On Facebook, the number of “likes” for the magazine’s pages increased by 5.1 per cent, to 10,700, for the English account and 2.4 per cent, to close to 4,500, for the French.

45. The Department continued to distribute the *Africa Renewal* e-newsletter, which provides a brief overview of new content on the magazine’s website, to its more than 3,800 subscribers.

G. United Nations peace operations

46. The Department continued its close cooperation with the Department of Peace Operations and the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs to promote and backstop United Nations peacekeeping and peacebuilding operations, including through participation in the work of various thematic and country-specific integrated task forces and working groups, led by the substantive departments, on Colombia, Egypt, Libya, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen, among others.

47. The Department, working in cooperation with United Nations peacekeeping operations in the Central African Republic, Cyprus, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti, Lebanon, Mali, the Sudan and South Sudan, as well as in Abyei, in addition to relevant United Nations information centres, conducted outreach to traditional and social media in troop- and police-contributing countries to promote the work of their uniformed personnel serving in those peacekeeping missions. The Department also organized several face-to-face interviews with troops or police personnel in several missions by journalists hosted by United Nations information centres in their home countries.

48. The Department maintained and coordinated updates for the multilingual peacekeeping website. The Department also helped launch new websites for the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti (BINUH), the Office of the United Nations Emergency Ebola Response Coordinator, the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria and the United Nations Mission to Support the Hudaydah Agreement.

49. The Department provided quarterly guidance to peace operations through virtual meetings, including one on social media policy, which was attended by approximately 80 people. The meeting in December 2019 was on the Action for Peacekeeping initiative.

50. The Department worked with the Department of Peace Operations and the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs to support the closure of the United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti and the transition to BINUH in October. The Department also supported, at United Nations Headquarters in September, the hosting of a photo exhibit on 15 years of United Nations peacekeeping in Haiti.

51. The Department worked with the Department of Peace Operations to organize a photo exhibit in October to commemorate the previous 20 years of the protection of civilians mandate in United Nations peacekeeping. The exhibition highlighted the protection work achieved by United Nations civilian and uniformed personnel in 16 peacekeeping operations since the Security Council gave the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone the first protection of civilians mandate, in 1999.

52. The Department used its multilingual communications platforms, social media tools and global network of United Nations information centres to promote the annual

United Nations Police Week in November, including the awarding of the United Nations Female Police Officer of the Year Award.

53. The Department continued to work with United Nations system partners, both at Headquarters and in the field, to promote a better understanding of the political efforts of the United Nations and its humanitarian response in the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen. This included covering the activities of the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria and the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen on various multilingual platforms and disseminating news to media in New York and globally through the United Nations information centres. As the world worked to find solutions to the Syrian conflict, the public was kept engaged on United Nations-brokered face-to-face peace talks in Geneva through a pilot online multimedia newsroom introduced by the United Nations Information Service in Geneva. More than 200 journalists covered the talks in October 2019.

54. The Department supported the Office for Disarmament Affairs in promoting the International Day against Nuclear Tests (29 August) and the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons (26 September), including by updating the relevant websites. In August 2019, the United Nations Information Service in Vienna joined other United Nations agencies in Austria and a Spanish non-governmental organization, Peace and Cooperation (Paz y Cooperación), to promote nuclear disarmament and working together for a safer world.

H. Policy of zero tolerance of sexual exploitation and abuse

55. The Department has continued to implement and update the United Nations communications strategy for combating sexual exploitation and abuse by United Nations personnel in cooperation with the Office of the Special Coordinator on Improving the United Nations Response to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, the Victims' Rights Advocate, the Department of Peace Operations and other United Nations entities. In September, to mark the second anniversary of the high-level meeting on sexual exploitation and abuse and the establishment of the Secretary-General's Circle of Leadership, the Department worked in cooperation with the Office of the Special Coordinator to orchestrate a high-profile social media campaign, which included a video in seven languages, in which the Secretary-General, world leaders, heads of United Nations entities, chiefs of United Nations peace operations and members of the Civil Society Advisory Board reaffirmed their support for and commitment to combating sexual exploitation and abuse. The video was viewed more than 400,000 times and engaged more than 13,000 people through social media.

I. Counter-terrorism

56. The Department continued to provide communications support to the Office of Counter-Terrorism to increase the visibility of its activities and raise awareness of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy as well as advocacy efforts for the rights of victims of terrorism. To that end, the Department produced a documentary on survivors of atrocities committed by Boko Haram living in a camp for internally displaced persons in Cameroon. The Department also promoted the regional high-level conferences organized by the Office of Counter-Terrorism in Nairobi (July 2019), Minsk (September 2019) and Budapest (November 2019) through the United Nations information centres.

57. To mark the second International Day of Remembrance of and Tribute to the Victims of Terrorism (proclaimed by the General Assembly in its resolution [72/165](#)), on 21 August 2019, the Department collaborated with the Office of Counter-Terrorism

in designing a photo exhibition on the theme “Surviving terrorism: the power of resilience”. The International Day was also promoted on United Nations social media platforms.

J. Migration

58. In September, the Department provided communications support to the Department of Economic and Social Affairs to generate press coverage for the launch of the International Migrant Stock 2019 dataset and mobilize the United Nations information centres to promote the dataset. The Department also worked with the International Organization for Migration to promote the Global Migration Film Festival, including through the United Nations information centres.

59. The initiative HackYourFuture, founded to assist refugees to build digital skills for a career in website development, was extensively covered by the United Nations Regional Information Centre for Western Europe during its summer conference in August 2019. The Centre conducted interviews and produced articles, infographics and videos which it subsequently promoted widely on its website and social media platforms covering 22 countries in Western Europe.

III. Information centres and information services

A. Reaching a global audience

60. Through the realignment of its field operations in 2019 to support resident coordinators, the Department is better placed to communicate the global agenda and priorities of the Organization, including advancing the 2030 Agenda, to a local audience and bring the work and achievements of the United Nations country teams to a worldwide audience through its platforms and networks. Integration with resident coordinator offices has also enabled heightened cooperation with all other United Nations entities at the country level, especially in the context of the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework. Prior to the development system reform, the Department’s active field presence consisted of 59 information centres; now, however, the Department provides strategic communications support to all 131 resident coordinator offices, strengthening outreach activities in Member States outside of the network of United Nations information centres and ensuring a much wider global coverage.

61. The Department has worked closely with the Development Coordination Office on all practical aspects of fully implementing the reform across its field offices, including on issues related to the co-location of office spaces, the recruitment of communications staff and the streamlining of reporting lines. As a result, 44 out of 50 United Nations information centres located in countries with resident coordinators have been fully integrated with the resident coordinator office and, of these, 64 per cent are located in the same complex. The Department’s field staff serve as communications officers and advisers for the resident coordinators and work under their direct supervision. In addition, and as part of the integration process, the Department works to provide strategic communications support to resident coordinators in countries without a United Nations information centre. The Department and the Development Coordination Office also collaborated to strengthen regional communications capacity in the Office’s five regional offices.

62. Concurrently, the Department’s own reforms have seen the strengthening of programmatic support for its field offices, as well as enhanced field-based administrative support. The Department also initiated a field-to-field support network

by involving senior directors of United Nations information centres supporting smaller centres and resident coordinator offices in their respective regions or time zones. Consolidating the reform process remains a priority for the Department as it looks to further bolster its field capabilities. The existing network is being reviewed with the aim of further enhancing strategic communications support to the Organization's field offices and the resident coordinators, as well as building global and local capacities that allow for greater emphasis on creating content in multiple media and languages, and in particular the development of stories that will help engage target audiences and inspire them to action.

B. Strengthening the capacity of the United Nations information centres

63. In line with the integration efforts under the United Nations development system reform, the United Nations information centres began migrating their websites to the newly established United Nations country team web platform introduced by the Development Coordination Office, thereby eliminating duplication and creating efficiencies in website management, as well as facilitating unified and coordinated messaging to a wider audience.

64. The Department and resident coordinator offices have also been consolidating their social media platforms by merging the existing accounts of United Nations information centres and United Nations country teams, allowing communications at the country and global levels to be carried out in a more strategic, coherent and effective manner.

65. Appreciating the breadth and complexity of the integration process, the Department, in close consultation with the Development Coordination Office, organized more than 100 one-on-one discussions with United Nations information centre staff and resident coordinators on issues stemming from the development system reform. The process of integration was further facilitated through webinars with the Development Coordination Office and the Department's field staff. Given by subject-matter experts on programmatic and administrative topics, the webinars were aimed at strengthening capacity within the offices. In 2019, the Department held 62 such webinars (41 on programmatic topics, 12 on administrative topics and 9 for training purposes), reaching more than 2,100 participants. Topics included communication priorities, social media, storytelling, the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations, workplan management and administrative reform.

66. In-person and online training opportunities for communications officers in the combined network of the United Nations information centres and resident coordinator offices were also facilitated by the Department. Training focused on enhancing multilingualism and building staff capacity in core areas such as strategic communications, content creation and collaboration, including for visual storytelling and multimedia production, search engine optimization, resource mobilization and partnerships management, and change management.

67. During 2019, the Department reformed the administrative structure of the United Nations information centres to enhance regional support through strengthening capabilities in four locations: Beirut, Dakar, Mexico City and Nairobi. As part of that initiative, eight administrative assistants from those four locations attended a workshop at United Nations Headquarters in July 2019. The reform has allowed for a shifting of resources within the Department from administrative activities to those that support programmatic and strategic communications activities.

C. Multilingualism

68. To engage with audiences around the world in their local languages, the United Nations information centres produce and translate materials for multiple platforms, expanding the impact and reach of the Department in communicating the work of the Organization.

69. The United Nations information centres published information in 106 languages, as well as in Braille, including:

(a) Translations of the icons of the Sustainable Development Goals into 103 languages,¹ an increase of 57 per cent from 2018, potentially enabling 300 million more people to learn about the 2030 Agenda in their own language;

(b) Digital content shared across websites and social media platforms, with 34 out of 58 United Nations information centre websites including content in local languages, and 32 languages used locally across various social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, VKontakte and Aparat;

(c) Radio and television programmes produced and/or broadcast in a variety of local languages and official languages of the United Nations.

70. As of August 2019, visitors to the United Nations Office at Geneva could take guided tours in Dutch and Greek and, in September, for the first time, guests who are deaf or hard of hearing could take tours in French and International Sign. The United Nations information centre in Dhaka published the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in Chakma, the first indigenous language in Bangladesh, in addition to the Bangla version, while the “Go Goals” game of the United Nations Regional Information Centre for Western Europe, which promotes awareness of the Sustainable Development Goals among children, is available in 16 languages and has been downloaded more than 40,000 times over the past year. The United Nations information centre in Kathmandu produced a video on the Sustainable Development Goals in Nepali Sign, for hearing-impaired persons.

71. Communicating using national languages has been the aim of a project initiated by the United Nations information centre in Dakar, in partnership with the National University of Dakar. Cataloguing the usage of these, mainly oral, languages unlocks the potential to reach millions in West and Central Africa. The information centre has tapped into this potential, producing podcasts and social media cards that adapt United Nations campaigns to the communications landscape of the region.

D. Strategic communications support to United Nations country teams and United Nations entities

72. The integration of the United Nations information centres and the resident coordinator offices has enabled enhanced collaboration between the United Nations family at the country level for more strategic, coherent, coordinated and impactful

¹ Afrikaans, Amharic, Armenian, Azerbaijani, Bahasa Indonesian, Bafut, Bangla/Bengali, Bangwa, Basaa, Basque, Belarusian, Bemba, Burmese, Catalan, Chechen, Chopi, Czech, Danish, Dioula, Dutch, Ewondo, Faroese, Filipino, Finnish, Frisian (Frysk), Fulfulde, Galician, Georgian, German, Greek, Guarani, Gujarati, Gulmacema, Icelandic, Ila, Hausa, Hindi, Hungarian, Igbo, Italian, Japanese, Kaonde, Kiswahili, Kituba, Lala, Lamba, Lingala, Lozi, Lunda, Luvale, Malagasy, Mambwe, Maori, Marathi, Mari, Mbunda, Moore, Namwanga, Ndebele, Ngoni, Nkoya, Northern Sami, Norwegian, Nsenga, Nyanja, Persian, Pidgin English, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Quechua, Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, Shona, Shupamum, Sinhala, Siswati, Slovak, Slovene, Soli, Swedish, Tagalog, Tamazigh, Tamil, Tatar, Telugu, Tigrigna, Tonga, Tsonga, Tumbuka, Turkish, Turkmen, Twi, Ukrainian, Urdu, Venda, Vietnamese, Wolof, Xhosa, Yakut, Yoruba and Zulu.

communications. United Nations information centres continued to take the lead on strategic messaging of United Nations issues and priorities at the local level, collaborating with sister agencies and other partners. The cooperation between United Nations information centres, individual United Nations entities, regional organizations and other partners has seen a wider reach of key audiences and amplification of priority issues.

73. Strategic platforms have been used to include target audiences in local conversations and actions, adapted from the bigger global agenda, thereby building a sense of public ownership and responsibility in important areas of concern. In addition, engagement by the United Nations information centres with different partners has opened new channels of coordinated communications and maximized the impact and visibility of key issues for better results through the pooling of communications resources and the leveraging of each other's strengths. Such collaboration has reached many, diverse audiences through different platforms, underlining the spirit of inclusivity envisioned in the 2030 Agenda.

74. Volunteering to help those in poverty and donating to non-governmental organizations were just some of the actions brought about by the communications campaign entitled "Take a step", which was coordinated by the United Nations information centre in Beirut and the United Nations Communications Group in Lebanon. The integrated campaign was aimed at motivating people to make a positive change in their communities to achieve results relating to the Sustainable Development Goals in Lebanon. One highlight of the campaign, undertaken in partnership with a local bank, was a public relations initiative focusing on poverty that was launched on social media, reaching over 1.5 million people. The video, with English subtitles, shows people using the bank's cash dispenser and finding that they are able to withdraw only \$4, before realizing it is part of a campaign highlighting that \$4 a day is what many people in Lebanon must live on. As a result, 25,400 people were engaged and inspired to take an action to address poverty in the country. Many people shared information on the actions they had taken or on the non-governmental organizations they had helped. Many people also downloaded the guide entitled "How to take a step", produced by the United Nations information centre in Beirut.

75. The United Nations information centre in Mexico City led the United Nations country team at the Day of the Dead parade, one of the biggest processions in Latin America, with 800,000 participants and 3,000 artists. The United Nations participation, led by the Resident Coordinator, capitalized on the power of culture and art to demonstrate how individuals can contribute to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals through their personal actions. The celebration holds great significance in the life of the indigenous communities of Mexico and the day is inscribed in the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

76. To engage South Africans in the Sustainable Development Goals and call them to action, the United Nations information centre in Pretoria, the United Nations Communications Group and the United Nations Wellness Team joined the 2019 edition of the "MTN Walk the Talk with 702", a walking event in Johannesburg that attracted more than 55,000 people, including families and corporate and charity teams, and reached many more through social media platforms. In the Congo, a visit to Pointe-Noire by the UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador for East and Southern Africa, Yvonne Chaka Chaka, increased support from the business community for programmes for less-privileged and indigenous children. The visit was the result of a joint communications plan of the United Nations information centre in Brazzaville and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

77. The popular "Ciné ONU" (UN Cinema) programme of the United Nations Regional Information Centre for Western Europe included several dozen film

screenings followed by panel discussions with representatives of European Union member States and United Nations partners on key United Nations priorities in Brussels and other European capitals, galvanizing support for the Organization among key stakeholders and the general public. Within the same framework, the Director of the Centre addressed the Council Working Group for the United Nations, seeking to strengthen understanding of the importance of communication on United Nations values, including multilateralism, among European Union member States.

78. The Department's communications officers in Tashkent, together with the resident coordinator office and the United Nations team in Uzbekistan, led a consultation process with youth leaders and disability groups with regard to the upcoming United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework. It will help shape the new communications strategy for Uzbekistan and alignment around the decade of action and the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations.

79. In partnership with the United Nations family in Austria, the United Nations Information Service in Vienna used the opportunity of the campaign to mark the fortieth anniversary of the Vienna International Centre to highlight the relevance of the Vienna-based organizations to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. The year-long campaign included a "road show", during which United Nations staff and Austrian officials visited more than 40 locations to present their work and engage with new audiences. In addition, the United Nations Information Service produced social media content and videos to introduce Vienna staff; their work reached more than 11,000 followers on Instagram, while an open house day at the United Nations Office at Vienna attracted more than 3,000 people.

80. The United Nations information centres intensified the race on climate action, galvanizing support from the public, including youth, through the ActNow campaign. The United Nations Information Service in Geneva and the popular *Angry Birds* character Red, joined forces on the shores of Lake Geneva to call for concrete action to mitigate climate change ahead of the Climate Action Summit in September 2019. In a symbolic gesture, the iconic fountain in Geneva, the Jet d'Eau, was lit in green to emphasize the need to conserve the environment and reduce carbon footprints.

81. To encourage proactive action on the environment and sustainable living in Japan, the United Nations information centre in Tokyo collaborated with the Hankyu and Hanshin railways on the "SDGs Train" project. With their trains covered in colourful and vibrant imagery highlighting the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, the railways have further expanded their efforts to promote the Goals in their business practices. Most of their trains run on minimal energy (one of their stations has cut its carbon dioxide emissions in half by using renewable energy) and they support nature conservation and sustainable town-building in local communities.

82. The sustainability of the River Nile for the people of 11 African countries was highlighted by the United Nations information centre in Cairo and the United Nations country team in Egypt at a clean-up event on United Nations Day. Migrants, refugees, youth volunteers, United Nations staff and representatives from the Ministry of Environment worked together and removed 1.5 tons of waste – mostly plastic – from the river in the space of just two hours.

83. To advance reforestation and environmental action in the Russian Federation, the United Nations information centre in Moscow worked to harness the potential of young audiences by promoting the winner of the 2019 Young Champions of the Earth Prize for Europe, Marianna Muntianu. Partnering with the United Nations Environmental Programme to showcase her inspirational work, the United Nations information centre produced several videos about Ms. Muntianu and her organization, which have been shared on social media, including by 1,700 users on Twitter, and

generated media coverage, including with Radio Sputnik, Business FM, federal and local TV channels and other media.

84. The United Nations information centres ensured coordinated, coherent and strategic communications and media advice and support during visits by more than 130 high-level officials of the United Nations system and other delegations in 2019. The centres collaborated closely with other United Nations communications staff, including in the resident coordinator offices and the Office of the Spokesperson of the Secretary-General, and with Member States and local media to maximize the impact of the visits.

85. The United Nations information centres in Tokyo, Nairobi and Port of Spain provided communications support for the Secretary-General's official travel to Japan, Kenya and Trinidad and Tobago, respectively. In addition, the Department's office in Asmara cooperated with other offices for the visit of the Deputy Secretary-General to Eritrea. The United Nations information centre in Washington, D.C., supported the visits of heads of departments and agencies and other high-level United Nations officials and facilitated their engagement with key stakeholders in the city, organizing over 60 bilateral meetings, expert round tables and public discussions, and deepening policy influencers' understanding of and appreciation for the work of the United Nations, which in turn helps shape their policy recommendations.

E. Engaging young audience

86. A strategic communications priority for the United Nations information centres is the engagement of youth. An effective way of achieving this is through supporting Model United Nations programmes. The United Nations information centre in Bogotá, together with the Government, organized the annual SimONU Bogotá, with 3,000 students focusing on the Sustainable Development Goals. With support from the French Embassy in Bogotá, the simulations also included, for the first time, the preparation of a report in French. The United Nations information centre also organized, together with the Government, a three-day rural Model United Nations (SimONU Rural) for 200 students and teachers. Aimed at raising awareness of the Goals, it was focused on environmental and rural issues, such as climate change, food security and fracking.

87. Under the aegis of the United Nations Information Service in Geneva, 900 students from 25 countries gathered for the annual Model United Nations in Geneva and launched the Geneva-based commemorations for the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations with a discussion on how to shape the future together. The United Nations information centre in Jakarta collaborated with the Asia World Model United Nations and the Ministry of Environment and Forestry to host a coastal clean-up as part of their programme that was attended by some 1,000 participants from 78 countries.

88. With the aim of inspiring youth to action, United Nations Day was marked in Georgia with activities organized on the theme "Global Goals Generation", featuring contests, public lectures, a photo exhibition and tree-planting, which highlighted many of the Sustainable Development Goals. Inspiring and empowering young girls to break barriers relating to traditional roles, the United Nations information centre in Lagos worked with UNESCO and Green Girl Company to organize the Raising Girls Summit on Girl Child Day. It was attended by 700 participants.

89. For United Nations Day in the Islamic Republic of Iran, youth were inspired to engage in a dialogue on climate change, health and a resilient economy through a digital campaign by the United Nations information centre in Tehran that included bilingual and multilingual videos and a quiz on social media that promoted local actions on global priorities and highlighted the work of the United Nations in the country. In the first week, the campaign received 20,000 views.

90. Together with Agency of Francophonie Universities, UNESCO and the French company Agorize, the United Nations Regional Information Centre for Western Europe launched an international academic online challenge in October entitled “CAMPUS 2030” to support the transition to sustainable campuses. Open to all university students and professors around the world, the initiative has triggered innovative proposals on architecture, energy-saving, refugee integration and accessibility for people with disabilities from 90 teams worldwide, half of which were from Africa.

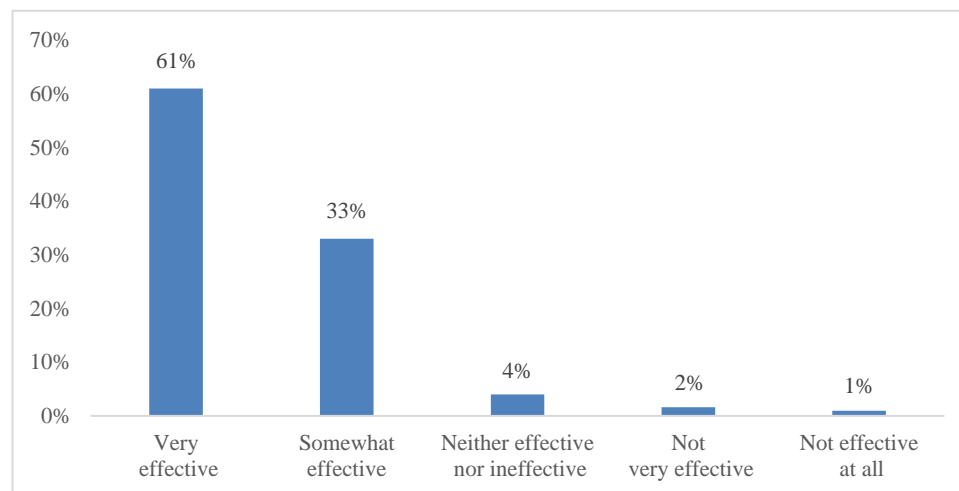
IV. Measuring impact

91. The Department has carried out analysis to measure the impact of its work and will continue to focus on a data-driven approach to evaluate the impact of its outputs to target audiences.

92. The emphasis placed on engaging youth by United Nations information centres is demonstrated by the fact that 75 per cent of respondents to surveys on briefings carried out by the centres were young people, aged between 13 and 24. Collecting feedback directly from end users allows the Department to measure the usefulness, relevance and reach of its products and activities and how its stakeholders are making use of its services. In 2019, United Nations information centres collected 8,000 responses globally, more than 6,000 of which were from students. More than 94 per cent of participants said that participating in the briefings was an effective way to improve their understanding of the work and issues of the United Nations (see figure I). Equally important, the programmes of United Nations information centres significantly improved support for the work of the United Nations, which increased from 74 to 91 per cent (see figure II).

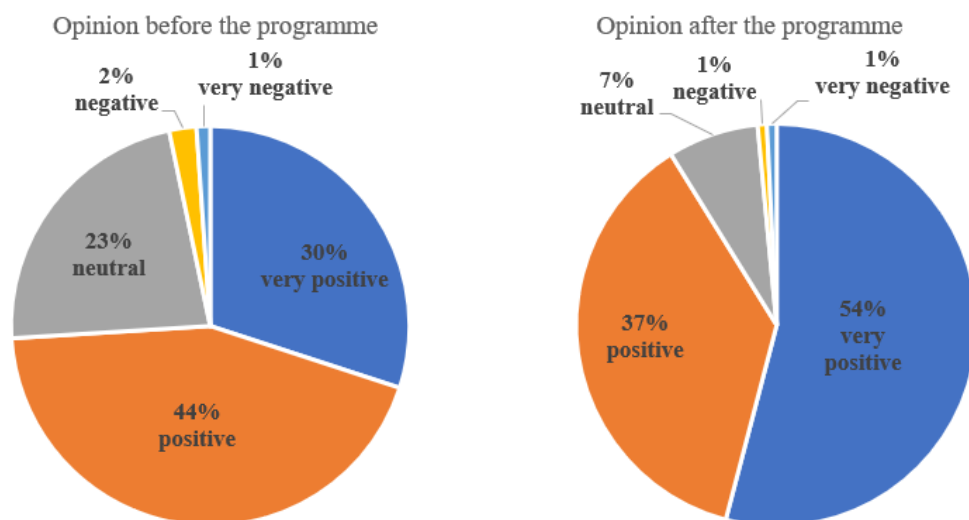
Figure I

Effectiveness of briefings by United Nations information centres, 2019



93. Comparing their opinions of the United Nations before and after participation in the United Nations information centre programmes, almost twice as many participants rated their opinion of the United Nations as “very positive”, while the number of participants with a negative or neutral view of the Organization significantly dropped (see figure II). Many students also said that they had gained a better understanding of how they could have an impact on global issues through individual and collective action.

Figure II
Positive opinion of the United Nations before and after participation in briefings by United Nations information centres, 2019



94. To further position the United Nations as a leading voice on priority issues and sustain the momentum of public support, the Department aims to strengthen its understanding of target audiences and the impact of its communications work. Currently, there is a gap in the Department's ability to measure the impact of its communications efforts across all of its target audiences. Effectively targeting global audiences requires in-depth audience research and an understanding of the audience journey, from interest to action. The Department also needs to visualize those data in clear, compelling ways. Building on best practices, the Department has consolidated its communications measurement and data analytics work and added capacity through up-to-date technology and tools. This will allow the Department to be data-driven in its programme planning, agile in its implementation and deliver streamlined insights on the outcomes of its work.

V. Conclusion

95. The Department supported and augmented campaigns to advance United Nations issues throughout the reporting period, including the Sustainable Development Goals and climate action. It drew on sustained efforts that had begun in 2018, such as the Sustainable Development Goals Media Compact, and used digital outreach and existing multimedia platforms to further promote those issues.

96. The communications campaigns were aimed at improving coherence across the United Nations system through the coordination platform of the United Nations Communications Group, both at Headquarters and at the country level, as led by the Department.

97. United Nations information centres, working in close alignment with the network of resident coordinator offices, expanded the Department's reach and presence and its connection with both local and global audiences. The Department engaged with the peoples of the world, inspiring them to act on issues that have an impact on their futures.

98. Looking ahead, the Department will increasingly develop campaigns and content that highlight solutions and encourage specific actions and that will place a spotlight on where people, Governments and the United Nations are making a positive difference across the United Nations agenda.