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Activities of the Department of Public Information: strategic communications services

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report, prepared pursuant to General Assembly resolution 66/81, summarizes the key advances made by the Department of Public Information from July 2011 to February 2012 in promoting the work of the United Nations to the global audience through its strategic communications services.

Strategic communications services, which is one of three subprogrammes of the Department and implemented by its Strategic Communications Division, is responsible for devising and implementing communications strategies on priority issues and providing communications support for key United Nations events and initiatives.

Activities of the other subprogrammes of the Department — news services and outreach services — are described in separate reports of the Secretary-General (A/AC.198/2012/3 and A/AC.198/2012/4).



I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 66/81, the General Assembly took note of the reports of the Secretary-General on the activities of the Department of Public Information submitted for consideration by the Committee on Information at its thirty-third session (A/AC.198/2011/2-4) and requested the Secretary-General to continue reporting to the Committee on the activities of the Department.

2. In the same resolution, the General Assembly called upon the Department to provide specific information on a number of its activities. The Bureau of the Committee on Information advised the Department to present the requested information in three parts, in accordance with the three subprogrammes of the Department: strategic communications services, news services and outreach services. The Department is also guided by the priorities of the United Nations for the period 2012-2013 set by the Assembly in its resolution 65/244.

3. The present report,¹ which considers the strategic communications activities of the Department, addresses thematic communications campaigns in such areas as peacekeeping, violence against women, the Millennium Development Goals, climate change, human rights, the question of Palestine, the International Year of Youth, the World Summit on the Information Society and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) (sect. II), and examines the role and activities of the network of United Nations information centres (sect. III).

II. Communications campaigns

A. Strategic approach of the Department

4. The strategic approach of the Department of Public Information entails identifying its communications priorities in advance, outlining an annual workplan that involves all components, including the global network of United Nations information centres, and ensuring the optimal use of available resources by collaborating with all partners, including Secretariat departments and United Nations system entities. In addition to targeting traditional media by preparing background materials, press briefings and media interviews, the Department uses social media platforms to promote United Nations messages, news stories, campaign materials and behind-the-scenes, engaging, real-time content. Use of these interactive platforms broadens the reach of the messages of the United Nations and contributes to the overall transparency and accountability of the Organization.

5. Between July and December 2011, the number of followers of the main Twitter account (in English) of the United Nations increased by over 250,000 followers, reaching a total of more than 640,000 followers. According to Klout, a social media monitoring service, the Organization's Twitter account generates actions and discussions among its followers with nearly every message. Klout indicates that, in addition to having an impact on general issues linked to the United Nations, the Twitter account is particularly influential on the following topics: climate change, food security, human rights, the situation in Libya and the question of Palestine.

¹ Unless otherwise indicated, the present report covers the activities of the Department for the period from July 2011 to February 2012.

Another service, RetweetRank, lists the United Nations Twitter account as one of the top 10,000 accounts of the 100 million accounts in existence, which means that the account is in the top percentile of all accounts worldwide.

6. Keeping abreast of the latest social media tools, the Department launched new United Nations profiles on Google Plus, Storify and Tumblr in 2011. The Department continues to explore how best to expand the reach of these tools in as many languages as possible within limited resources. Currently, 24 information centres have Facebook accounts, 17 have Twitter accounts and 12 have YouTube accounts. In addition to Departmental accounts in the six official languages, and thanks to the information centres, accounts are also maintained in Czech, German, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Slovak and Slovenian, among other national languages.

7. As part of its strategic approach, the Department coordinates its system-wide communications work through the United Nations Communications Group, which is composed of communications focal points from the entire United Nations system. In addition, more than 100 United Nations communications groups are active at the country and regional levels. The Department also leads active inter-agency communications task forces on the Millennium Development Goals, the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development to be held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 20 to 22 June 2012 (Rio+20), sustainable development issues and climate change.

B. Thematic campaigns

1. United Nations peace operations

8. The Department continued its close cooperation with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the Department of Field Support and the Department of Political Affairs to promote and backstop United Nations peace operations, including through the following activities:

(a) Coordination mechanisms such as the public information working group involving the Departments of Public Information, Peacekeeping Operations and Political Affairs and the newly established joint web editorial board of the Departments of Public Information and Peacekeeping Operations met regularly to discuss general communications policy and mission-specific issues, as well as to review priorities, strategic objectives and content management issues related to the peacekeeping digital sphere. In addition, the Department of Public Information participated in the work of various integrated task forces and working groups led by the Departments of Peacekeeping Operations and Political Affairs;

(b) The United Nations peacekeeping website, which underwent a major graphic and information architecture redesign in 2011, is now available in all six official languages. Through joint online thematic communications campaigns of the Departments of Public Information and Peacekeeping Operations, which are a regular feature of the new website, and the increased use of social media, the Departments highlighted and explained the multiple challenges facing modern peacekeeping, thus building further support for this core activity. In November 2011, for the first time ever, the peacekeeping website surpassed 700,000 page views over a 31-day period;

(c) In the context of field support, the Departments of Public Information and Field Support continued to assist peace operations in improving locally maintained mission websites. Twenty-two peacekeeping and special political missions adopted the content management system template, with some missions using Arabic, French and Portuguese in addition to English. The Department of Public Information, at the request of the relevant special political missions and in coordination with the Departments of Political Affairs and Peacekeeping Operations, participated in an assessment mission to the United Nations Political Office for Somalia and the United Nations Office to the African Union to assist those offices with their digital engagement strategy and presence.

9. The Department of Public Information worked closely with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to provide the United Nations Mission in the Sudan (UNMIS) with strategic communications support in the lead-up to the referendum in July, including by following up on the implementation of the recommendations of the field assessment mission it had carried out in 2010 and the drafting of a Headquarters communications strategy. The Department of Public Information continued to coordinate and plan strategic communications activities with partners — the Departments of Peacekeeping Operations, Field Support and Political Affairs, as well as others in the field — in the wake of the referendum in the Sudan, the drawdown of UNMIS and the start-up of two other United Nations peacekeeping operations: the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) and the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA). In cooperation with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the Department of Public Information ran a promotional campaign to highlight the role of the United Nations in the Sudanese peace process and, following the establishment of UNMISS and UNISFA, developed and hosted dedicated websites in all six official languages.

10. The Department of Public Information worked closely with the Department of Political Affairs on the Organization's response to developments in Libya by participating in the integrated preassessment planning process for a United Nations mission in Libya, which included analysing the Libyan media landscape, providing input to planning documents and drafting staffing justifications and draft budget submissions covering equipment and travel needs for a public information component. In the initial stages of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya, the Department initiated, developed and maintained a dedicated website in English and coordinated the preparation of an Arabic version. In addition, the Department provided strategic communications guidance to United Nations spokespersons and offices around the world on the Organization's response to the crisis in the country.

11. The Department of Public Information continued to work with the Department of Political Affairs to provide communications support for the Organization's activities in the area of peacemaking, conflict resolution and conflict prevention. The Department undertook a special communications effort to promote the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Preventive diplomacy: Delivering results" (S/2011/552) and the subsequent Security Council deliberations on the subject. Interdepartmental discussions with the Department of Political Affairs on ways to increase the level of communications support to special political missions intensified. In addition, a significant portion of the annual publication of the Department of Public Information entitled "United Nations peace missions 2011: year in review" was dedicated to developments in areas where field missions led by the Department of Political Affairs were deployed.

12. The Department of Public Information produced a regular background guidance document for the United Nations system on the crisis in the Horn of Africa and the Organization's response to the crisis, thus helping United Nations officials and spokespersons around the world to be better equipped to address the issue. The document also contained useful links to relevant statements, press releases and websites produced by the United Nations.

13. For the thirtieth anniversary of the International Day of Peace, the theme for 2011 was "Peace and democracy". The Day was devoted to strengthening the ideals of peace and paying tribute to the many individuals who speak out in favour of the issue. The Department produced a dedicated website that featured messages of the Secretary-General, a downloadable poster and bookmark, and a selection of videos. United Nations information centres, services and offices promoted the Day's theme globally through educational and public awareness activities. Special events were held in Ankara, Baku, Beirut, Canberra, Dar es Salaam (United Republic of Tanzania), New Delhi, Brussels, Vienna and other cities. The Day was also observed in a number of peacekeeping operations and special political and peacebuilding missions worldwide.

2. Disarmament

14. In the field of disarmament, in addition to promoting and covering disarmament-related conferences and meetings, the Department worked with the Office for Disarmament Affairs to observe the annual International Day against Nuclear Tests by producing a dedicated website in all six official languages promoting the ban on nuclear tests as a crucial step towards creating a safer world. Targeting youth, the Department and the Office also held a month-long social media "Poetry for peace" contest to raise awareness about nuclear disarmament. For the contest, Facebook fans listened to the testimonies of atomic bomb survivors and wrote poems on their impressions. The project elicited 741 poems and 2,762 "likes" on the main page; individual poems received their own "likes" as well. In February 2012, an "Art for peace" social media contest was launched for young people in three age categories, ranging from 6 to 17 years. Youth were encouraged to view nuclear disarmament videos online, to imagine a world without nuclear weapons and to submit their ideas to a dedicated website so that viewers could vote on their favourite submissions.

3. Counter-terrorism

15. Working closely with the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force Office, the Department promoted the implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and provided communications support to the Task Force and its working groups. The counter-terrorism web portal (un.org/terrorism/index.shtml) serves as the gateway to a wide range of activities undertaken by the Organization to combat terrorism. The web page of the Task Force was redesigned to make it more appealing and user-friendly. The News Centre also carries a news focus page on "combating terrorism" with the latest news, statements, resolutions and reports on counter-terrorism.

16. The Symposium on International Counter-Terrorism Cooperation, held in New York on 19 September 2011 and webcast by the Department, included a media round table side event that was organized by the Department in coordination with the Task

Force. A commemorative session of the General Assembly marking the tenth anniversary of the events of 11 September 2001 was also webcast by the Department.

17. The United Nations information centres were involved in the implementation of the communications strategy on counter-terrorism. The information centres in Nairobi and Windhoek provided communications support to regional workshops on the implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy that took place in July and October. In addition, the Department mobilized the resources of the United Nations Information Service in Vienna and the Representative of the Department at the United Nations office in Almaty to support the holding of three expert group meetings and a ministerial meeting organized by the United Nations Regional Centre for Central Asia and the Task Force to produce an action plan for the implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy in Central Asia.

4. Millennium Development Goals

18. The Department worked closely with the relevant substantive offices and United Nations system partners to sustain momentum on the Millennium Development Goals. As Chair of the Communications Group Task Force on the Millennium Development Goals — comprising some 30 United Nations partners, the Department continued to facilitate information-sharing and joint planning across the United Nations system on a wide range of events and activities.

19. The Department coordinated the launch, at multiple sites, of the *Millennium Development Goals Report 2011*, which showed, through the latest statistics and analysis, that although significant strides had been made to achieve the Goals, the world's poorest were being left behind. The global launch, which was held in Geneva on 7 July in the presence of the Secretary-General, was covered by international media; some 20 regional and national launch events organized by the information centres, country teams and partner agencies of the United Nations generated extensive media coverage.

20. Posts about the report on the Facebook page dedicated to the Goals were viewed more than 20,000 times and posts on the information centres Facebook page were viewed more than 16,000 times. In addition, a Twitter campaign involving Goodwill Ambassadors Angelique Kidjo, Lang Lang and Yuna Kim, among others, brought the report's key messages to young people around the world. An interview with the lead author of the report garnered the interest of 10,000 fans on Facebook.

21. The Department continued to support communications efforts for the "Every woman, every child" health initiative of the Secretary-General by covering the frequent visits made by the Secretary-General to clinics during his travels and promoting a special event, held at United Nations Headquarters on 20 September, entitled "Saving the lives of 16 million". The Department also continued to support communications efforts for the Secretary-General's Millennium Development Goals Advocacy Group, including by creating a new website (un.org/millenniumgoals/advocates) to highlight the Group's activities.

22. Building on past successes, more than 20 United Nations information centres mobilized citizens to stand up and take action against poverty and to support the Millennium Development Goals between 15 and 17 October — the International

Day for the Eradication of Poverty — with events involving schoolchildren, businesspeople, sports fans, farmers and concert artists. Information centres carried out many other innovative projects to promote the Goals. The information centre in Dar es Salaam organized a series of radio interviews with local students to show how important the Goals were to them. To reach illiterate populations, the information centre in Ouagadougou produced a musical video clip and radio programmes about the Goals in local languages that were aired widely on national television and community radio stations. The information centre in Yangon produced and circulated a video entitled “Scoring the Millennium Development Goals in Myanmar”, which featured athletes from a football club in a poor part of the city.

23. The number of followers of the Department’s dedicated Facebook and Twitter accounts on the Millennium Development Goals, which used the tagline “We can end poverty”, increased to more than 26,000 for Twitter (from 10,000 a year ago) and more than 18,000 for Facebook (from 8,000 a year ago). The website on the Millennium Development Goals (www.un.org/millenniumgoals) — a portal featuring links to the work of all the United Nations agencies on the Goals — continued to be updated regularly, attracting about 7,000 visits every day.

24. In July, the Department worked with the youth programme of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs to promote the High-level Meeting on Youth and numerous side events. Key messages were developed for the Meeting, focusing in particular on the issue of youth employment. The Department produced press materials, conducted targeted media outreach activities and organized a press conference attended by the first-ever United Nations Youth Champion, Monique Coleman. Numerous national and regional media outlets covered the meeting. The Department also promoted the High-level Meeting on its social media platforms, posting content that proved popular. More than 900 clicks on the web page of the High-level Meeting resulted directly from links provided through the United Nations Twitter account, which also led to close to 700 click-throughs to the Department’s set of behind-the-scenes photographs of the Meeting on Flickr. In addition, over 1,500 click-throughs were made on International Youth Day tweets posted through the United Nations Twitter account during the Meeting.

5. United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development

25. Building momentum for Rio+20 was a top priority for the Department in 2011 and early 2012. As Chair of the inter-agency Communications Group Task Force on Rio+20, the Department regularly brought together some 20 United Nations partners to discuss a common strategy, develop joint communications products and coordinate messaging and activities.

26. To help people worldwide better understand sustainable development and encourage people to share their ideas for a sustainable future, in November the Department launched a global campaign entitled “Rio+20: The Future We Want”. The campaign is supported by a multilingual website (un.org/sustainablefuture) that links to the official Conference website (uncsd2012.org/rio20/) and to the campaign’s online platform where people can contribute their ideas. The launch of the campaign, which was attended by the Secretaries-General of the United Nations and of the Conference, as well as representatives of youth and non-governmental organizations, received positive media coverage. The campaign was also launched

in Brazil and in Belgium, where the United Nations regional information centre in Brussels, in partnership with major European newspapers, invited people to participate in a competition to create an advertisement on water-related issues on the theme “The future we want: drop by drop”.

27. In close collaboration with the Rio+20 secretariat, the Department and its information centres promoted the intergovernmental process and set up media interviews for senior officials. In addition, together with the Executive Office of the Secretary-General, it helped launch the report of the High-level Panel on Global Sustainability in January 2012 (un.org/gsp/report).

28. On other sustainable development issues, information centres around the world mobilized to observe the International Year of Forests and raise awareness of forests as a critical resource. Working with many partners, the centres organized numerous activities, including photography contests, film festivals, exhibits and projects that involved students planting thousands of trees.

6. Climate change

29. As Chair of the inter-agency Communications Group Task Force on Climate Change, the Department regularly brought together some 20 United Nations partners to discuss a common strategy, develop joint communications products and coordinate messaging and activities, including for the seventeenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, held in Durban, South Africa, from 28 November to 9 December 2011. During the session, the Department, in close collaboration with the secretariat of the Convention, played a lead role in promoting the event through United Nations Radio broadcasts, News Centre stories and original daily reporting posted on the United Nations climate change website (un.org/climatechange), which was substantially overhauled and redesigned prior to the session. The session was covered extensively by the media and its conclusion was prominently reported across the world by all major news organizations. The meeting also generated a great deal of coverage on the issue of climate change, its causes and potential solutions.

7. Ending violence against women

30. The Department promoted the “UNiTE to End Violence against Women” campaign of the Secretary-General, working with the campaign secretariat and partners in the United Nations system. It produced communications and branding guidelines in order to increase coherence in messaging and branding across the United Nations system. The Department was heavily involved in planning and promoting the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, on 25 November 2011, focusing on promoting the role of youth as leaders in preventing and ending gender-based violence, and in activities around the “16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence” campaign. The Department updated and developed new press and campaign materials. The key message emphasized in its materials for the media — the need for resources for the United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence against Women — was picked up prominently in the coverage. A short video entitled “Youth voices on ending violence against women” was produced and launched ahead of the Day. The regional information centre in Brussels spearheaded a successful competition, in partnership with major European newspapers, to design an advertisement on the issue of violence against women. Both in the lead-up to the

International Day and throughout the “16 Days of Activism”, the Department highlighted ending violence against women and girls on its social media platforms and promoted UNiTE campaign products. Content was also disseminated on Twitter and Facebook by several information centres.

8. Question of Palestine

31. In close consultation with the Department of Political Affairs and the Committee on the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, the Department of Public Information revised and updated the permanent exhibit on the question of Palestine at the United Nations. While building on the existing text, the revised exhibit provides updated information and includes new graphic elements and a timeline. An accompanying DVD includes additional photos and archival video footage. The exhibit was formally launched by the Chair of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People on 29 November, on the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. With seed money provided by the Committee and the Department, the exhibit was translated by information centres into several languages, including Bahasa Indonesian, French, Greek, Hindi, Kiswahili, Japanese, Russian and Persian.

32. The information centres carried out a variety of activities in commemoration of the International Day. The information centre in Dar es Salaam organized a photography exhibit and video presentation in collaboration with the Embassy of Palestine. The information centre in Jakarta produced the permanent exhibit in Bahasa Indonesian and displayed it on 30 November at Atma Jaya Catholic University in Jakarta and at Universitas Prof. Dr. Moestopo (Beragama). The information centre in Mexico City arranged a week-long exhibition at the Instituto Matías Romero, which is the diplomatic academy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mexico. The information centre in Moscow joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, the Embassy of Palestine and the Mission of the League of Arab States in organizing a commemorative meeting. The United Nations Information Centre in Pretoria partnered with the Department of International Relations and Cooperation of South Africa and the Embassy of Palestine to organize a panel discussion and an exhibit.

33. For the sixteenth consecutive year, the Department hosted its annual training programme for Palestinian media practitioners, from 31 October to 2 December 2011. The five-week programme, in which participants spend four weeks at Headquarters and one week in Washington, D.C., aims to strengthen the skills and capacities of young Palestinian journalists and to expose them to the work of the United Nations, especially with regard to the various activities and programmes that affect the lives of the people in their region. In addition to hearing briefings by senior United Nations officials, the journalists took part in a series of workshops aimed at honing their skills as radio and television journalists. Working with a small team of professionals, the participants in the 2011 programme developed a multimedia website and produced short videos based on briefings. A total of 144 Palestinian media practitioners, including the nine radio and television journalists who participated in 2011, have so far taken part in the programme.

9. Human rights

34. The Department extensively promoted the theme “Combating racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance” throughout the second half of 2011, including at the High-level Meeting of the General Assembly to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, held in New York on 22 September. For this event, an anniversary website and an information kit were developed in the six official languages. The kit included press releases and factsheets on the highlights of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, on the anniversary theme, “Recognizing victims”, and on people of African descent. An online, print and social media campaign entitled “Let’s Fight Racism” was developed in the six official languages and launched the day before the High-level Meeting. An op-ed by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights was placed in 17 media outlets in eight languages with the assistance of the information centres. An online campaign video was viewed more than 17,000 times and the website, which was promoted through Twitter, was viewed more than 9,000 times within the first month. A dedicated campaign page on Facebook received more than 17,000 impressions on the day of the launch.

35. The information centres also conducted campaigns at the local level, including:

- (a) In Brazil, Portuguese-language adaptations of the Department’s print materials;
- (b) In Panama, a billboard campaign;
- (c) In Mexico, an interactive social media campaign for youth;
- (d) In Zambia, a theatre/drama production on combating xenophobia.

36. For Human Rights Day 2011, the Department worked in conjunction with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) to develop and implement the “Celebrate Human Rights” campaign, highlighting the role of social media in promoting and protecting human rights. The campaign had the following elements:

(a) The “30 Days, 30 Rights” campaign was conducted on Twitter, Facebook and Weibo in English, French, Spanish and Chinese, to inform people about and engage them on the 30 articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. On Weibo, the campaign received 6.6 million views over 30 days. On the French and Spanish Facebook pages, the campaign generated considerable feedback and comments, increasing user engagement on average by 250 and 300 per cent, respectively;

(b) The first-ever live global conversation with the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights was organized on 9 December at United Nations Headquarters, with the Department providing promotional and logistical support using social media. More than 1,000 questions were collected and sorted by the Department in advance. In addition to having a live audience of over 100 people, the event was webcast live in English, Arabic and Chinese and streamed live on Facebook. The “#AskRights” hashtag for the event received 27 million impressions by more than 7 million people on Twitter. The Department reached out to the Organization’s messengers of peace and goodwill ambassadors, who also tweeted

about the event. A video message and Twitter question were arranged by Paulo Coelho, a Messenger of Peace. In addition, the Department covered the event live through social media (Twitter, Facebook, Weibo and Flickr);

(c) The Department provided logistical and promotional support for a celebratory event with the High Commissioner and other senior United Nations officials and diplomats, as well as a press conference with the High Commissioner held on the same day;

(d) An op-ed by the High Commissioner entitled “The Tunis imperative” was placed in 21 media outlets in 17 countries, in 10 languages, with the assistance of United Nations information centres.

10. International Year for People of African Descent

37. To promote the International Year for People of African Descent, the Department developed a multilingual website with videos, activities and resources. It collaborated with OHCHR to develop an exhibit highlighting the contributions of people of African descent around the world. The exhibit, entitled “The African continuum: celebrating diversity, recognizing contributions of people of African descent”, was launched at United Nations Headquarters in October at an event featuring musicians and dancers from the African diaspora and visual artists and photographers who contributed their work to the exhibition. The Department is currently working with OHCHR on the production of a publication featuring highlights of the exhibit.

11. New Partnership for Africa’s Development

38. As part of its efforts to focus global attention on issues critical to Africa’s development, the Department continued to strengthen and expand its promotion of the aims and achievements of the NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency. This was done in close collaboration with the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, the Economic Commission for Africa and the secretariat of the NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency. To help the Agency mark its tenth anniversary, in October 2011, the Department worked with staff from the Agency and the Office of the Special Adviser to plan events at Headquarters and prepare information products. The Department developed and devoted a special section on its Africa Renewal Online website (un.org/ecosocdev/geninfo/afrec) to the tenth anniversary that included articles on NEPAD that had been published over the previous decade in the Department’s magazine *Africa Renewal*. Other anniversary events in which the Department was actively engaged included a high-level panel discussion on the theme “NEPAD and the Millennium Development Goals: progress, challenges and the way forward”, which featured the Deputy Secretary-General, a public lecture by the NEPAD Chief Executive Officer, a joint press briefing and several individual interviews by the panellists.

39. *Africa Renewal* continued to provide the basis for much of the work done by the Department to promote NEPAD activities. The focus of major features published in the August and December 2011 editions of the magazine included women’s empowerment, the food crisis, HIV/AIDS, the Millennium Development Villages and the role of social media and information and communications technologies. Those two editions of the magazine also featured exclusive interviews with senior officials of the NEPAD Agency. In addition, a special edition of *Africa Renewal*

devoted to women's advancement was published, with the support of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women).

40. In 2011, the *Africa Renewal* syndicated short features service, through which short articles (800-1,000 words) are produced and placed in major media outlets worldwide, witnessed a strong growth in the number of articles republished. Between July and October 2011, 27 short feature articles were published 637 times in 243 different media outlets in Africa and around the world. Features were published in 45 countries. The short features service was launched in response to the request made by the General Assembly for more information on the NEPAD Agency to be made available to broader audiences.

41. The Department continued to expand its social media activities on its Africa Renewal Online website, which hosts not only an electronic version of the magazine, but also additional content on Africa produced by the Department or other entities of the United Nations system, including podcasts from United Nations Radio. The number of visitors to the website grew from an average of 30,000 per month in July 2010 to about 60,000 per month in November 2011.

Africa Renewal Online statistics

<i>Month</i>	<i>Visitors</i>		<i>Page views</i>	
	<i>2010</i>	<i>2011</i>	<i>2010</i>	<i>2011</i>
July	33 211	23 766	42 635	32 573
August	35 506	28 934	59 151	40 450
September	47 977	37 276	62 407	51 021
October	52 656	47 797	87 454	64 039
November	59 571	52 061	98 237	68 198
December	53 307	40 014	67 167	53 637

Note: Figures are for the English-language website only.

42. The English-language Twitter account linked to the Africa Renewal Online website had more than 9,300 people and organizations following it and the French language Twitter account had more than 5,290 followers. There was also an increased focus on and therefore an exponential growth in the Department's Africa Renewal Online Facebook page, with the number of followers increasing from around 400 in 2010 to more than 1,200 by the end of November 2011.

43. The Department has also seen a steady growth in the number of subscribers to its e-mail newsletter in HTML format, which provides an overview of new content on the Africa Renewal Online website. The newsletter is sent to media organizations and the public.

III. Network of United Nations information centres

A. Background

44. The global network of United Nations information centres continued to serve as the “public face and voice” of the Organization, communicating with local audiences in their languages and idioms. The centres carried out numerous priority communications campaigns at the local and regional levels and provided communications support to senior United Nations officials in both crisis and non-crisis situations. They actively participated in the work of the United Nations country teams, including in the preparations for the United Nations Development Assistance Framework. Where information centres do not exist, the Department shared communications guidance with resident coordinators. The network currently comprises 52 information centres, including the regional office in Brussels, 2 information services and 8 information components of United Nations offices. The establishment of an information centre in Luanda is pending.

B. Communicating with local audiences

1. Communicating in local languages

45. In addition to working in the six official languages, in 2011 the United Nations information centres produced print publications in and translated information materials into 39 local languages. Websites were maintained in 29 of those languages. The languages used are Armenian, Azeri, Bahasa Indonesian, Bangla (Bengali), Belarusian, Czech, Danish, Dutch, Finnish, Fulfulde, Georgian, German, Greek, Guaraní, Hindi, Hungarian, Icelandic, Italian, Japanese, Joola, Kazakh, Kirundi, Moore, Myanmar (Burmese), Norwegian, Persian (Farsi), Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Sinhala, Slovak, Slovenian, Swahili (Kiswahili), Swedish, Tamil, Turkish, Ukrainian, Urdu and Uzbek.

46. The information centres are increasingly using social networking tools to disseminate information, including in local languages. Currently, in addition to 4 official languages, a total of 10 local languages are used on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. The use of local languages demonstrates the multilingual nature of the work of United Nations information centres and their ability to communicate with local audiences in the languages they understand.

2. Placement of op-eds by United Nations information centres

47. United Nations information centres are well placed to arrange the publication of op-eds by the Secretary-General and other senior officials in local media outlets owing to their knowledge of the local media and long-standing working relationships with them.

48. For example, the op-ed of the Secretary-General entitled “The clock is ticking”, which was prepared prior to the meeting of the Group of 20 held in Cannes, France, in November 2011, was placed in *Le Monde* by the regional information centre in Brussels. Other information centres around the world placed the op-ed in a number of other media outlets, including in Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Mexico and Romania.

3. The United Nations Information Centre in Luanda: an information centre for Lusophone countries in Africa

49. Preparations for the establishment of the United Nations Information Centre in Luanda are well under way. At the Department's request, the United Nations Resident Coordinator in Luanda met with the Minister for Social Communications of Angola, who is responsible for the project. Furthermore, the Department is following up with representatives of the Government of Angola. Remaining issues include the identification and construction of premises and the finalization of a host-country agreement and other logistical arrangements. Once in operation, the centre is expected to further strengthen the ability of the United Nations to engage Portuguese-speaking audiences throughout Africa.

C. Regional communications initiatives

50. The United Nations information centres in Brussels, Mexico City and Pretoria continued to carry out region-wide communications campaigns and activities, focusing on such themes as the "UNiTE to End Violence against Women" campaign, climate change and human rights.

51. Building on the success of its first Europe-wide advertising campaign against poverty in 2010 and in support of UN-Women, in 2011 the regional information centre in Brussels focused on mobilizing creative action to stop violence against women. It launched an advertising competition open to the public in 48 European countries in partnership with the United Nations information centres and services in Europe, as well as with major European newspapers. Creative community organizations, private entities and numerous foundations were brought on board. The general public was also engaged through an open vote for a special prize. As part of the International Year of Youth, an additional prize was created for youth entries. Social media — Facebook and Twitter — were major tools in promoting the campaign, which generated 2,700 entries from 40 countries.

52. In preparation for Rio+20, in December 2011 the regional information centre in Brussels launched its third advertisement competition, which is expected to run until World Environment Day 2012. The theme of the competition, which focuses on water, is "The future we want: drop by drop". While maintaining its established partnerships with civil society and business groups, as well as media outlets and United Nations information centres, the regional centre teamed up for the campaign with the United Nations Environment Programme, OHCHR and the Nordic Council of Ministers, which offered to donate the competition's first prize.

53. In 2011, the United Nations Information Centre in Pretoria initiated a video production project called "African voices on climate change". Information centres in sub-Saharan Africa submitted short video clips on perceptions of climate change in the region, with a special emphasis on its everyday impact on the livelihoods of communities. The information centre in Pretoria then produced a five-minute video that was disseminated through different websites of the information centres in sub-Saharan Africa and shown at the seventeenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The centre also organized, in collaboration with the secretariat of the Convention and the Department of International Relations and Cooperation of South Africa, a workshop for journalists that was held prior to the seventeenth session. Information officers

from the centres in Accra, Antananarivo, Dar es Salaam and Ouagadougou participated in the workshop.

54. The United Nations Information Centre in Mexico City organized the Fourth Regional Student Conference on Human Rights, held from 29 November to 4 December 2011, which brought together 50 students aged 15 to 19 from 18 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. The Conference was coordinated with other information centres in the region and the regional and Mexico-based offices of the United Nations Children's Fund, UN-Women, the United Nations Population Fund, OHCHR, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, as well as several non-governmental organizations, some of which were associated with the Department, from Mexico and the Dominican Republic. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mexico and the municipal authorities of Mexico City provided support. The diverse group of participants included students from rural areas, indigenous and other minority communities and youth from mega-cities in the region. Each group brought different perspectives and experiences to the discussions on issues relating to human rights defenders and discrimination.

D. Communications support to United Nations envoys in crisis situations

55. The rapidly changing political dynamics in the Arab region over the past year required local information centres to provide communications support to United Nations envoys. The centres' knowledge of the countries and the region, as well as of the media and local actors, proved to be invaluable for facilitating the role of the United Nations in dealing with the evolving situation, including the occurrence of crises.

56. When the United Nations Support Mission in Libya was established in Tripoli in September 2011, it used the information centre as its base of operations, and the centre's information assistant provided the mission with communications support during the transition phase. The information centre in Cairo continued to provide extensive communications support to numerous visiting senior United Nations officials in dealing with the political upheavals in Egypt.

57. The Director of the information centre in Sana'a played a key role for the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General for Yemen, who frequently visited the country starting in April 2011 to mediate between the parties on the basis of the Gulf Cooperation Council peace initiative, which produced the desired outcome in November 2011. The Director handled media relations for the Special Adviser, helped to correct misconceptions and misinformation on the role and position of the United Nations in mediating the conflict and provided the Special Adviser with other essential support in challenging political circumstances. The information centre also provided logistical support and arranged media interviews for the Special Adviser with international and local media outlets.

E. Innovative approaches to spreading the United Nations message

58. Various innovative approaches were used by information centres to spread the message of the United Nations, news of its activities and action priorities established by its principal organs and other bodies.

59. The information centre in New Delhi, which covers Bhutan and India, partnered with the Maya Academy of Advanced Cinematics, a leading 3D animation and visual effects training school, to present awards for the best animated films on themes centred on the Millennium Development Goals. More than 1,100 entries were received from all over the world, including from China, France, Germany, Pakistan, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America. Awards were given in 23 technical categories and included a special jury award for a film made by students with hearing and speech disabilities. The Golden Award was won by *Pink Bangles*, a film promoting gender equality, in particular the equal treatment of girls and boys.

60. The information office in Kyiv launched a second annual international drawing contest for school students entitled “Draw for the planet — draw for the future!”. The competition helped improve students’ understanding of climate change and highlighted the importance of clean water, as well as of preserving forests and other natural resources.

61. In an effort to reach out to a younger audience, some information centres approached teachers’ associations as key partners in bringing the United Nations and its work closer to children and young people. The information office in Baku, for example, participated in a conference organized by the Azerbaijan English Teachers’ Association, which brings together more than 700 teachers of English, to explore new possibilities for reaching out to the younger generation on a number of issues, including gender equality and women’s empowerment.

F. United Nations Day, United Nations Week and “UN4U” outreach efforts

62. United Nations Day and United Nations Week, combined with the outreach efforts made in the framework of the “UN4U” programme (“The United Nations works for you”), which is aimed at educational institutions, provide the information centres with opportunities to join forces with United Nations country teams to publicize the work of the United Nations system in the context of the “Delivering as one” initiative.

63. The 2011 “UN4U” campaign in Indonesia, organized by the United Nations Information Centre in Jakarta, consisted of an unprecedented 25 events over 31 days in October attended by nearly 4,800 participants. Many others followed the events by webcast. Most of the participants were under 29 years of age. For the first time, the campaign reached beyond the islands of Java and Bali to Sumatra, Riau and North and South Sulawesi.

64. A survey conducted by the Information Centre revealed that “UN4U” presentations had been overwhelmingly well received and that the great majority of participants credited them with shifting their perception of the United Nations in a positive direction (see figures I and II below).

Figure I
Opinion about the United Nations before the 2011 “UN4U” campaign in Indonesia

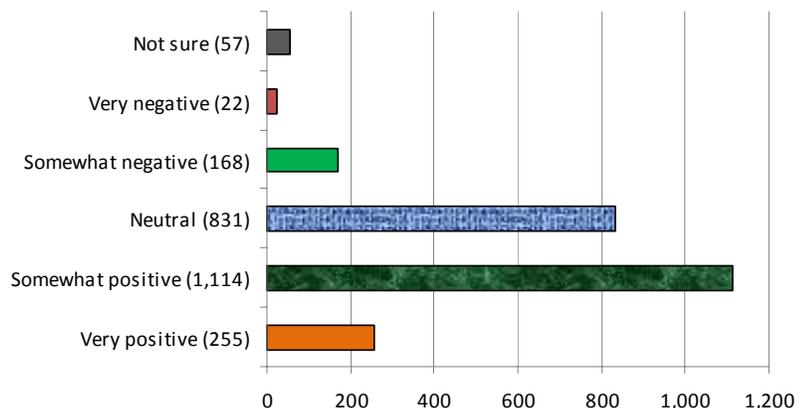
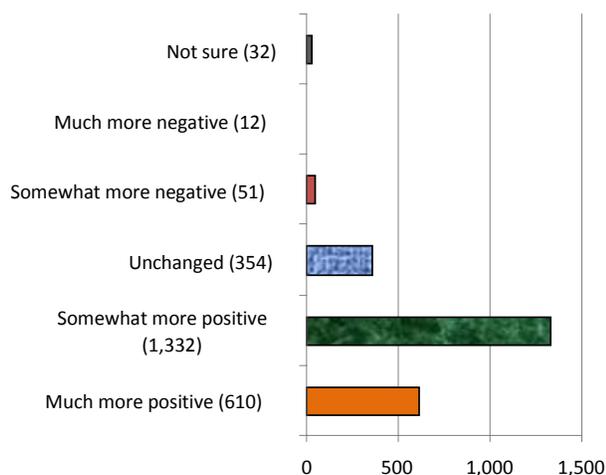


Figure II
Opinion about the United Nations after the 2011 “UN4U” campaign in Indonesia



G. Model United Nations as an educational tool

65. The information centres reach out to thousands of students through Model United Nations conferences. Many centres around the world, including those in Almaty, Ankara, Asunción, Canberra, Dhaka, La Paz, Lima, New Delhi, Port of Spain, Pretoria, Rio de Janeiro, Tokyo and Vienna, provided training and support to Model United Nations conference organizers and students. Some other centres, including those in Tbilisi, Windhoek and Yerevan, organized a Model United Nations conference for the first time. Some also served as adjudicators at such conferences. Many centres provided assistance to the delegates at the 2011 Global Model United Nations Conference, held in Incheon, Republic of Korea.

66. In 2011, the information office in Yerevan, in cooperation with the Armenian United Nations Association, the Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, organized a Model United Nations conference that simulated the work of the Security Council. The conference and the five regional conferences that led up to it were conducted for the first time all over Armenia.

67. The information centre in Ankara organized a capacity-development workshop for members of the Model United Nations at Gazi University as a way of introducing the United Nations system to them, prepare them for effective participation in United Nations activities and train them to successfully advocate the priorities of the Organization.

68. Representatives of the information centre in Canberra participated in a panel to discuss ways in which the United Nations communicated its messages at the Asia-Pacific Model United Nations Conference, which was organized by the Australian National University and attended by about 400 students, making it the biggest in the region.

H. Expanding the use of new information and communications technologies

1. United Nations information centre websites

69. The information centres continued to use their websites, in tandem with social media tools, to disseminate information effectively, as gateways to other United Nations sites and as part of communication campaigns. In 2011, over 7 million visits and over 30 million page views were recorded on the centres' websites. The global web page of the United Nations information centres, hosted on the United Nations website and available in all six official languages, remains a convenient gateway to all the websites of the information centres. It also provides detailed contact information and highlights activities of the information centres with blog stories and photographs. In 2011, it registered over 600,000 page views in all languages.

2. Social networking tools and short message service campaigns

70. United Nations information centres continued to use such social networking tools as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Flickr in expanding public outreach and leveraging communications campaigns. Currently, 24 information centres have Facebook accounts, 17 have Twitter accounts and 12 have YouTube accounts.

United Nations information centres with Facebook, Flickr, SMS, Twitter and YouTube

Facebook (24)	Ankara, Baku, Bogotá, Brussels, Bucharest, Buenos Aires, Cairo, Dar es Salaam, Jakarta, La Paz, Lima, Manila, Mexico City, New Delhi, Prague, Pretoria, Rio de Janeiro, Tokyo, Tunis, Vienna, Warsaw, Washington, D.C., Yaoundé and Yerevan
Flickr (4)	Bogotá, Geneva, Jakarta and Manama
SMS (1)	Manama

Twitter (17)	Ankara, Bogotá, Brussels, Buenos Aires, Canberra, Geneva, Jakarta, La Paz, Manama, Mexico City, New Delhi, Pretoria, Rio de Janeiro, Tunis, Vienna, Washington, D.C., and Yerevan
YouTube (12)	Bogotá, Brussels, Buenos Aires, Jakarta, Kathmandu, La Paz, Lima, Mexico City, Rio de Janeiro, Tokyo, Washington, D.C., and Yerevan

3. Mobile applications

71. On 13 September 2011, the United Nations Information Centre in Nairobi launched a mobile telephone campaign entitled “Peace through short text peace messages” to commemorate the International Day of Peace. Messages were sent from 13 September to 31 October 2011 through such service providers as Safaricom, Airtel, Yu and Plus Point.

I. Strengthening communications training and support

1. Online “Writing for the Web” courses

72. Building on the successful experience of providing training to United Nations information staff on writing for the Web, the Department organized two additional long-distance “Writing for the Web” courses in 2011, an initiative that it plans to repeat in 2012. Working with the Office of Human Resources Management, the Department is also exploring the possibility of providing the training in French and Spanish. This long-distance learning format has proved to be an effective way of enhancing the skills of staff in smaller duty stations such as Harare, Lusaka, Prague, Sana’a, Tehran and Yangon, among others.

2. Global meeting of information centre directors

73. With support from the Instituto Humanitare of Brazil, a non-governmental organization, the Department convened a global meeting of its information centre directors in Rio de Janeiro in November 2011. The meeting aimed at engaging information centres in the communications efforts for Rio+20 and “The Future We Want” campaign by: supporting the sustainable development agenda, strengthening interaction between Headquarters and the field and better incorporating the views and concerns of the information centres in the planning process, generating ideas and projects that could be replicated in different parts of the world, learning from each other and sharing best practices.

J. Ongoing challenges

1. Information communication technology needs

74. The network of information centres continues to face the challenges posed by ageing office automation equipment and the lack of a cost-effective, enterprise-level system to access tools, such as the Organization’s Intranet and e-mail system, available at Headquarters. More than half the computers used by the information

centres are at least five years old, well beyond the recommended four-year replacement standard.

2. Security, premises and finances

75. Recent attacks on United Nations premises have led to the introduction of stricter security measures to ensure the safety of United Nations staff and visitors to United Nations premises. This development is having a considerable impact on both the operations and finances of the information centres. The Department has devoted significant resources to meeting local security standards, including from non-security budget lines. In locations where the premises cannot be made security-compliant, as was the case with three information centres in the previous biennium, the Department has to take the time-consuming and often expensive step of relocating the centres. Sharing premises with other United Nations entities is by far the preferred option. However, where this is not feasible, the Department tries to identify smaller and more economical premises. It is expected that half a dozen centres will relocate owing to security concerns in the current biennium, while at least three centres will reduce the size of their offices in order to remain in security-compliant premises.

76. In an effort to strengthen the communications role that information centres can play and thereby enhance their value, in a number of cases, especially where the centre is administered by the United Nations Development Programme, administrative assistant posts have been replaced by knowledge management assistants. In other cases, posts of drivers have been abolished and the centres rely on car services or share such services with the rest of the country team. The Department is considering other ways to maximize the limited financial and human resources at its disposal and rationalize its operations in the field as it looks ahead to the preparation of the proposed programme budget for 2014-2015, bearing in mind the need to fully consult the Member States concerned on any proposals that would alter the current configuration of centres.
