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

Dissemination of information on decolonization during the period from April 2018 to March 2019

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report, prepared in response to General Assembly resolution [73/122](#) of 7 December 2018, provides a general overview of the activities undertaken and supported by the Department of Global Communications previously known as the Department of Public Information, to disseminate information on decolonization, with particular emphasis on the options for self-determination available for the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories. Unless otherwise mentioned, it covers the period from April 2018 to March 2019.



I. Introduction

1. The General Assembly, in paragraph 2 of its resolution [73/122](#), considered it important to continue and expand its efforts to ensure the widest possible dissemination of information on decolonization, with particular emphasis on the options for self-determination available for the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories. To that end, it requested the Department of Public Information, subsequently renamed the Department of Global Communications, through the United Nations information centres in the relevant regions, to actively engage and seek new and innovative ways to disseminate material to the Non-Self-Governing Territories. In paragraph 3 of the same resolution, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to further enhance the information provided on the United Nations decolonization website and to continue to include the full series of reports of the regional seminars on decolonization, the statements and the scholarly papers presented at those seminars and links to the full series of reports on the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. In paragraph 4, the Assembly requested the Department to continue its efforts to update web-based information on the assistance programmes available to the Non-Self-Governing Territories. In paragraph 5, it requested the Department of Political Affairs, subsequently renamed the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, and the Department of Global Communications to implement the recommendations of the Special Committee and to continue their efforts to take measures through all of the media available, including publications, radio, television, the Internet and social media, to give publicity to the work of the United Nations in the field of decolonization.

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

3. The present report, prepared in response to the above-mentioned resolution, covers the period from April 2018 to March 2019.

II. 2018 Pacific regional seminar on the implementation of the Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism

4. The Special Committee organized its annual Pacific regional seminar in Saint George's from 9 to 11 May 2018. The seminar was held with a view to accelerating action in implementation of the Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism (2011–2020), on the occasion of the Week of Solidarity with the Peoples of Non-Self-Governing Territories.

5. The Department of Global Communications deployed a press officer from its Meetings Coverage Section in New York to cover the seminar. The press officer worked closely with the Decolonization Unit, issuing daily press releases, which were disseminated through the Department's various communications platforms.

III. Coverage of issues before the General Assembly

6. During the reporting period, the Department issued a total of 41 press releases in English and French, covering meetings, statements and hearings relating to the work of the United Nations on decolonization, including by the General Assembly

and its Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee), and the Special Committee.

7. The Media Accreditation and Liaison Unit disseminated information about meetings and events on decolonization through regular media alerts and provided accreditation and liaison support to media representatives wishing to cover the work of the United Nations on decolonization. The Media Documents Centre also distributed statements and resolutions relating to those meetings to journalists and members of the media.

A. United Nations website and social media

8. The Department maintained and updated the website on the United Nations and Decolonization (www.un.org/en/decolonization) in the six official languages, adding pages for the new sessions of the Special Committee and the annual regional seminar. During the period from January through December 2018, more than 196,000 users visited the website. The table below shows the United Nations decolonization website traffic in 2018, by language:

<i>Language</i>	<i>Sessions</i>	<i>Users</i>	<i>Page views</i>	<i>Pages per session</i>
Arabic	9 756	6 447	12 797	2.15
Chinese	7 061	2 640	10 189	5.27
English	214 171	113 816	276 858	2.40
French	24 088	14 435	30 367	2.17
Russian	9 028	6 018	11 279	1.99
Spanish	90 414	53 446	117 454	2.04
Total	354 518	196 802	458 944	2.67

9. The Department also provided guidance with regard to branding, multilingualism, accessibility and the process of migrating data, given that the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and the Office of Information and Communications Technology undertook a project aimed at revamping the decolonization website during the reporting period.

10. Activities and issues relating to decolonization were also highlighted through the “Global issues” section of the www.un.org website: (<https://www.un.org/en/sections/issues-depth/decolonization/index.html>).

11. The Department’s multilingual social media accounts promoted issues relating to decolonization, including news updates and the history of the Trusteeship Council. They also helped in driving traffic to the decolonization web page on the Organization’s main website and to other related web pages and events by posting information of note and the related links.

B. United Nations News

12. The Department’s multimedia United Nations News operation, in the six official languages, plus Kiswahili and Portuguese, continued to produce a wide range of multimedia coverage around the subject of decolonization, including special features and an overview of the work of the Fourth Committee. The eight language units covered the opening of the 2019 session of the Special Committee and the Secretary-General’s opening statement, in which he noted that decolonization had been a central

aspect of his previous political life, and recalled the colonial past of his native Portugal and the very strong feeling of solidarity between the Portuguese democracy movement and liberation movements in Angola, Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique. In addition, quotes from and video clips of the Secretary-General's statement to the Committee were tweeted from the official Twitter account of the United Nations, highlighting, for example, the importance of listening to the voices of the peoples in Non-Self-Governing Territories.

13. United Nations News also produced material on the Week of Solidarity with the Peoples of Non-Self-Governing Territories, from 25 to 31 May 2018, and stories on specific Territories, including the Falkland Islands (Malvinas).¹ Other decolonization-related stories focused on the Secretary-General's statement reiterating his support for the efforts of the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara to relaunch the negotiation process on Western Sahara and his reference to the 2018 referendum held in New Caledonia in his statement to the Special Committee on 21 February 2019. General stories that explain the work of the Special Committee and on the principle of self-determination are also covered.

14. The Television Broadcast and Facilities Unit and the Webcast Unit provided live and on-demand coverage of United Nations meetings and events on decolonization issues. Photos of those events were published on the website of United Nations Photo. Coverage also included the plenary meetings of the Special Committee (seven meetings); plenary meetings of the Fourth Committee (28 meetings); and a meeting of the organizational session of the Special Committee (one meeting).

15. The Department also disseminated information on decolonization to broadcasters and online publishers by licensing its core products. Efforts included such content as United Nations News stories licensed directly to end users, including broadcasters and publishers, and content licensed to content distributors. In addition, the Department developed technology that enabled automated distribution of relevant and topical video content from its UNifeed video packages to third party online video production platforms and other redistributors.

IV. Visitors Services

16. The issue of decolonization was regularly included in the narrative of the guided tours of United Nations Headquarters. In the Trusteeship Council Chamber, tour guides explained the historical process of decolonization, including the role played by the Trusteeship Council and the work of the Special Committee in the light of the 1960 Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. During the reporting period, more than 253,000 visitors took a guided tour at United Nations Headquarters.

17. The Visitors Services in Geneva, Nairobi, New York and Vienna shared informational materials and conducted briefings on decolonization, including on the roles of the Trusteeship Council and the Fourth Committee and on the progress made in decolonization over the past decades. The number and status of the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories were also provided to visitors, as part of the United Nations guided tours programme. The programme reached more than 420,000 visitors.

¹ A dispute exists between the Governments of Argentina and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland concerning sovereignty over the Falkland Islands (Malvinas) (see [ST/CS/SER.A/42](#)).

V. Dag Hammarskjöld Library

18. The Dag Hammarskjöld Library continued to provide research and information services, including in response to research requests for information relating to the Non-Self-Governing Territories and requests for documents relating to the Special Committee. During the reporting period, two research guides on the Trusteeship Council and on decolonization were translated into Spanish, on documentation relating to the Trusteeship Council documentation relating to decolonization. Both have been made readily accessible and available through the Library's website.

19. Through its retrospective digitization programme, the Library continued to digitize important United Nations documents and make them available to the public through the Official Document System and the United Nations Digital Library. During the reporting period, 18,000 documents (203,900 pages) were digitized, including 3,600 official records and 5,530 petition series documents of the Trusteeship Council. As requested by the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, the Library also digitized 66 documents of the Special Committee issued between 1975 and 1986.

20. During the reporting period, the Library analysed 10,200 United Nations documents and publications, including retrospective work done to enable the curation of documents of the Trusteeship Council and the Fourth Committee, as well as other documents relating to other United Nations bodies on the topic of decolonization. The *Index to Proceedings of the Security Council* (seventy-second year), the *Index to Proceedings of the Economic and Social Council* (2017 session) and the *Index to Proceedings of the General Assembly* (seventy-third session) were completed and posted on the Library's website. In addition, the Library continues to update the database of speeches before the General Assembly, the Fourth Committee and the Economic and Social Council on the topic of decolonization. Those analytical research tools allow for access by theme and geographical subject and easy discovery of United Nations parliamentary documents through the Library's online services.

VI. United Nations publications

21. During the reporting period, the Department of Global Communications published volume 68 (2014) of the *Yearbook of the United Nations* and continued to work on subsequent volumes. With its comprehensive coverage of the annual activities of the United Nations, including those relating to decolonization, the *Yearbook* presented the work of the General Assembly, the Fourth Committee and the Special Committee, as well as general decolonization issues and the support provided by the Economic and Social Council to Non-Self-Governing Territories. The *Yearbook* Twitter account also featured historical items relating to decolonization.

22. The Department also published the Arabic, Chinese, French, Russian and Spanish versions of the 42nd edition of the popular guidebook, *Basic Facts about the United Nations*, which contains historical and current information on decolonization matters.

VII. United Nations information centres and services

23. The global network of 59 active United Nations information centres engaged with high school and university students on the issue of decolonization through presentations on the history of the United Nations and its six principal organs, including the role of the Trusteeship Council. Over 1,200 briefings were conducted

by the information centres during the reporting period, including in Bangladesh, Ghana and Peru.

VIII. Conclusions

24. The Department of Global Communications works together with the Decolonization Unit of the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs to maximize media coverage on issues relating to decolonization and promote the objectives of the Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism. To that effect, the Department continues to deploy its diverse traditional and multimedia platforms to highlight the work of the Special Committee in advancing decolonization and promoting the need for the immediate and full implementation of the 1960 Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples.
