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Adoption of the report of the Committee on its fifty-second session

Draft report

Rapporteur: Ms. Imelda Smolcic (Uruguay)

Addendum

Proposed strategic framework for the period 2014-2015

(Item 3 (b))

Programme 24

Public information

1. At its 19th meeting, on 15 June 2012, the Committee considered programme 24, Public information, of the proposed strategic framework for the period 2014-2015 (A/67/6 (Prog. 24)).
2. The representative of the Secretary-General introduced the programme and responded to queries raised during the Committee's consideration of the programme.

Discussion

3. The importance of the use of the six official languages of the United Nations was emphasized, particularly the need to equally disseminate information in all official languages. In this respect, clarification was sought as to what was being done to ensure parity in all six languages.
4. The view was expressed that too much emphasis was being placed on the use of new technology, thereby limiting reach to developing countries with limited access to new technology. The importance of the use of traditional media in developing countries was emphasized, and the view was expressed that the advancements in new technology should complement the use of traditional media.
5. Clarification was sought with regard to the reference made to "social media" in indicator of achievement (b) under subprogramme 1, Strategic communications



services — specifically, with regard to why the indicator was limited to social media rather than including media in general. The view was expressed that there should be equal focus on general and social media. Clarification was also sought as to the measures in place to ensure the accuracy and objectivity of United Nations messages publicized on social media and the web in general.

6. In respect of the reference made to “countries in transition” in indicator of achievement (a) (ii) under subprogramme 3, Outreach and knowledge services, clarification was sought as to whether the reference should reflect the agreed United Nations definition of “countries with economies in transition”.

7. Concern was expressed about the use of the United Nations website to promote visions and concepts that had not been approved by Member States or that represented a partial approach to a particular subject. In this regard, it was emphasized that Secretariat officials should avoid using communication technologies to mobilize public opinion on issues that were still under consideration by Member States.

8. The view was expressed that the proposed strategic framework for the period 2014-2015 did not clearly reflect the priority themes and mandates approved by the General Assembly, but seemed to highlight the priorities of the Secretary-General.

9. The opinion was expressed that coverage of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development should reflect the views of all participating Member States so as to ensure a positive and objective impact. It was also stated that consistency should be maintained in terms of the level of coverage dedicated to thematic issues.

10. Clarification was sought with respect to the types of non-governmental organizations working with the United Nations under the programme, especially those from developing countries. The view was expressed that more work should be undertaken with non-governmental organizations from developing countries and countries with economies in transition.

11. Support was expressed for the work of United Nations Radio, particularly in Swahili and Portuguese. The view was expressed that the programme took into account the linguistic diversity of languages and should strengthen its efforts to reach additional audiences. Support was also expressed for the conduct of press conferences that were impartial and objective in transmitting United Nations messages.

12. Clarification was sought as to the number of United Nations Information Centres in Africa today as compared with five years ago and the reason for the reduced number of Centres.

13. In respect of the objective of enhancing internal communications through iSeek and deleGATE, as reflected in paragraph 24.18 of the programme, clarification was sought regarding the status of this initiative and the activities undertaken to improve its effectiveness.

14. Clarification was also sought as to the status of the digitization of archived materials and the relevance of the Dag Hammarskjöld Library in disseminating information, since most of its processes have been overtaken by other modern forms of media. Clarification was also sought with respect to the impact of the capital master plan on the work carried out under the programme.

Conclusions and recommendations

15. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly approve the programme narrative of programme 24, Public information, of the proposed strategic framework for the period 2014-2015, subject to the following modifications:

Overall orientation

Paragraph 24.1

Replace the first sentence with the following:

“The Department of Public Information is dedicated to communicating to the world the ideals and work of the United Nations; to interacting and partnering with diverse audiences; and to building support for the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.”

Paragraph 24.2

Replace the third sentence with the following:

“Within these three broad priority themes, the Department will seek to underscore the Secretary-General’s emphasis on delivering results, accountability and addressing global challenges for the common good, in full compliance with the mandates given by Member States.”

Subprogramme 1

Strategic communications services

Objective of the Organization

Replace the objective with the following:

“To broaden understanding of and support for the work of the United Nations on the priorities given by Member States, including communications support for United Nations events and initiatives decided upon by them”

Expected accomplishments of the Secretariat

In expected accomplishment (a), replace the phrase “thematic priority issues” with the phrase “priorities decided upon by Member States”.

Indicators of achievement

In indicator (a), replace the phrase “priority themes” with the phrase “priorities decided upon by Member States”.

In indicator of achievement (b), delete the word “social”.

Subprogramme 3
Outreach and knowledge services

Indicators of achievement

Replace indicator (a) (ii) with the following:

“(ii) Increased number of non-governmental organizations from developing countries and countries with economies in transition receiving information from the Department”.
