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Draft report

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Addendum

Programme questions: proposed programme budget for 2025

(Item 3 (a))

Programme 24 Global communications

1. At its 8th meeting, on 16 May 2024, the Committee considered programme 24, Global communications, of the proposed programme plan for 2025 and programme performance in 2023 ([A/79/6 \(Sect. 28\)](#)).

Discussion

2. Delegations expressed appreciation and support for the mandate and work carried out by the Department of Global Communications to raise awareness about the work and the ideals of the United Nations, including the Department's efforts to raise public awareness of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, promote multilingualism and counter hate speech, misinformation and disinformation.

3. A delegation expressed appreciation for the Department's thematic focus on sustainable development, climate change, peace and security and human rights. Support was also expressed by a delegation for the completion of thematic projects, the provision of news services and the increase in online availability of official resources.

4. Several delegations underscored the importance of promoting multilingualism and the equal treatment and representation of the six official languages of the United Nations and expressed appreciation for the focus placed by the Department on this area. The important role played by the network of United Nations information centres in promoting multilingualism was also highlighted by some delegations.



5. A delegation noted that multilingualism was a founding principle of the United Nations and that all United Nations information services should respect multilingualism as a primary task. The same delegation drew attention to the inconsistent translation and interpretation of online resources into the six official languages of the United Nations and highlighted that those resources available through the United Nations website (www.un.org) and United Nations Web TV were complete only for the English language, which was counter to maintaining the principle of multilingualism and prevented broader access to global audiences. Another delegation expressed appreciation for the efforts made by the Department to increase access to United Nations Web TV and United Nations news services.

6. A delegation recalled that the General Assembly resolutions on multilingualism were considered biennially, and that the most recent version had been adopted by the Assembly in June 2022. The same delegation sought information and updates with regard to the draft resolution to be considered by the Assembly in 2024.

7. With regard to information integrity, several delegations expressed appreciation and support for the work undertaken by the Department to build trust among global audiences and to deliver accurate, impartial, balanced and objective news and information in a timely manner. Some delegations expressed appreciation for the Department's efforts to combat misinformation and disinformation, xenophobia, prejudice and hate speech.

8. A delegation expressed the view that challenges related to hate speech, misinformation and disinformation were rising and that those challenges posed risks to staff and personnel working in United Nations operations and missions around the world. The same delegation expressed its support for the work undertaken by the Department of Global Communications in cooperation with the Department of Peace Operations to address misinformation and disinformation in peacekeeping settings and noted the upcoming Protection of Civilians Week, during which an event would be held on the harmful effect of misinformation, disinformation and hate speech on civilians.

9. Another delegation expressed the view that challenges related to the digital divide and growing inequalities had negatively affected the information landscape and had generated unequal access to timely, trustworthy and multilingual information. The same delegation called upon the Department to enhance its efforts to counter misinformation, disinformation, fake news and hate speech and noted that the development of global principles for information integrity on digital platforms, in consultation with Member States, warranted priority attention.

10. Some delegations welcomed the Department's efforts to develop global principles on information integrity. A delegation expressed its support for translating the principles into tangible results and improvements. Another delegation thanked the Department for holding an inclusive and open consultation process on the global principles with all stakeholders, including Member States, the private sector and civil society. The view was expressed by another delegation that the work undertaken with regard to the development of those principles was not transparent and raised many questions among Member States.

11. Questions were raised by delegations regarding the work undertaken by the Department with regard to information integrity and to countering hate speech, misinformation and disinformation. A delegation requested that the Secretariat elaborate further on how the Department's efforts in that area had been reflected in the proposed programme plan for 2025. The same delegation sought clarification regarding the role played by United Nations information centres and other communication units across the United Nations system in leading and shaping the Organization's efforts to promote information integrity. The delegation encouraged

the Department to undertake a holistic assessment of means to strengthen and complement capacities on information integrity across the system.

12. A delegation enquired about the challenges faced by the Department in securing trust in United Nations messaging and in combating misinformation and disinformation. Another delegation sought the views of the Secretariat on how further innovations in technology might aid in the distribution of information by the United Nations global news services and in efforts to combat misinformation and disinformation.

13. Questions were raised by delegations regarding the overall strategy of the Department. A delegation enquired about the impact of the evolving social media landscape on the Department's work and strategy, as well as the potential risks and opportunities emerging from the use of artificial intelligence. The same delegation sought clarification regarding whether the Department measured the overall public profile of the United Nations and requested additional information on how the Department measured such sentiments among target stakeholders and on the current assessment of the United Nations public profile.

14. A delegation recalled paragraph 28.7 on partnerships and noted the references to cooperation between the Department and an array of partners, including from civil society, academia, the media and the private sector. The same delegation requested additional information about the partners with which such cooperation was being carried out.

15. Several delegations expressed support for the efforts made by the Department to promote inclusion and accessibility. A delegation noted the Department's efforts to convert communications into accessible formats, including Braille, audio recordings and sign language videos, as well as over 150 local languages. The same delegation also expressed appreciation for the focus placed by the Department on implementing a gender perspective in its operational activities, deliverables and results, and expressed the view that the representation of women in communications across media products was essential to empowering women, promoting gender equality and meeting the goals of the Organization. The delegation opined that such a focus on inclusion also played a central role in combating the spread of misinformation and disinformation.

16. A delegation called upon the Department to further increase the representation of women and young people in website content. Another delegation recalled paragraph 28.10, on the balanced presence of women and men, as well as a multidimensional representation and portrayal of women and men, in all of the Department's products, campaigns, events and activities. The same delegation expressed its full support for the equal representation of women and men in the work of the United Nations, while opining that the promotion of a gender perspective should not become a defining element in the work of the Organization and programmes as a whole.

17. Delegations noted the importance of multilingual and geographic diversity in the work of the Department. Clarification was sought by a delegation on the efforts currently undertaken by the Department in that regard, while expressing the view that there was a need for a review of policies and practices across the United Nations to determine whether existing policies had an impact on staff members of a particular race or ethnic or national origin.

18. With regard to subprogramme 1, Campaigns and country operations services, delegations welcomed the work of the Department in providing reliable crisis communications, activating crisis communication cells and ensuring coordination on communications across the United Nations system. A delegation also thanked the

Department for its work on crisis communications undertaken in Gaza, the Sudan and Ukraine. Delegations also expressed support for the communications campaigns undertaken by the Department on the 2030 Agenda, as part of the Sustainable Development Goals Summit, held in 2023, and in the lead-up to the Summit of the Future, to be held in September 2024.

19. Clarification was sought by a delegation regarding paragraph 28.22, under subprogramme 1, which contained a reference to the establishment of a new website in the area of peace and security in 2024. The same delegation requested information on the mandates under which the work in that area had been authorized.

20. With regard to subprogramme 2, News services, delegations expressed appreciation for the Department's efforts to utilize multimedia digital communication to reach global audiences across platforms. A delegation thanked the Department for its work on the United Nations websites, its coverage of General Assembly, Security Council and Economic and Social Council plenary meetings in all six official languages of the United Nations and its photo and audiovisual archives.

21. Another delegation sought clarification regarding figure 28.VI, under subprogramme 2, on why the planned target for 2025 was lower than the target for 2024. The same delegation recalled table 28.3, under the same subprogramme, and requested information on progress made in ensuring coverage for United Nations meetings and press releases in the six official languages of the United Nations.

22. With regard to subprogramme 3, Outreach and knowledge services, a delegation welcomed the Department's strategic and streamlined approach to partnerships, while opining that such an approach enhanced the Department's ability to target and deliver its message to a wider community. Another delegation noted that, according to paragraph 28.43 (a), under the same subprogramme, the Department planned to engage in advocacy with a broad range of academic institutions, students and educators, and sought clarification regarding which educational institutions the Department planned to work with.

23. Another delegation noted the work of subprogramme 3 in organizing outreach programmes on the Holocaust, with a special focus on young people, and emphasized the educational role played by the United Nations in promoting awareness of the Holocaust among future generations. The same delegation noted that General Assembly resolution [76/250](#) on Holocaust denial was not reflected in the proposed programme plan for 2025 and sought additional information on the activities of the United Nations outreach programme on the Holocaust, in the context of Holocaust denial and distortion.

24. The importance of sport in promoting the values of the United Nations was emphasized by a delegation. Recalling result 1 under subprogramme 3, on the "Football for the Goals" initiative, the same delegation enquired as to whether other sports, beyond football, had been used in the past, or were planned to be used, for such outreach initiatives.

Conclusions and recommendations

25. **The Committee recommended that the plenary or the relevant Main Committee or Main Committees of the General Assembly, in line with Assembly resolution [78/244](#), consider the programme plan for programme 24, Global communications, of the proposed programme budget for 2025 under the agenda item entitled "Programme planning" at the seventy-ninth session of the Assembly.**