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**CLOSING REMARKS BY
THE UNDER-SECRETARY-GENERAL FOR GLOBAL COMMUNICATIONS
AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE GENERAL DEBATE
OF THE 40th SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION**

WEDNESDAY, 2 May 2018

Conference Room 1 (CB)

Thank you, Mr. Chair,
Distinguished delegates,

I am grateful for the opportunity to address the Committee as you conclude your General debate for this 40th session. I should like to begin by noting what an enriching and educative experience it has been for me to hear the many thoughtful ideas expressed and the range of

I note the point that has been made by more than one delegation and, indeed, by this Committee itself that United Nations guided tours, in particular, are available in languages spoken by large groups of visitors. We recognize that this is important from both the communications and revenue generation angles.

Several delegations inquired about multilingual meetings coverage. Meetings coverage is labour-intensive. To expand the coverage from the current two languages to six languages would require corresponding increased resources. Hence, in the budget proposal for both 2016-17 and 2018-19, the Secretary-General put forward requests for eight additional posts and related operating expenses in the region of \$1.5 million dollars for external translation to enable the Department to start providing meetings coverage in all the six official languages. The General Assembly did not approve the requests for these and other proposed posts to support multilingualism.

Several delegations inquired about webcast multilingualism. DPI received funds in the 2016-17 budget that the Department prioritized for multilingualism and that allowed the Department to hire five language staff to provide on-demand videos in the six official languages for the plenaries of the General Assembly, Security Council and ECOSOC. When the Department 2018-19 budget was reduced, DPI could not retain those five staff, limiting its ability to provide this service.

As a temporary measure, DPI is still providing on-demand videos of plenary meetings of the Security Council in the six official languages. The title and description of these meetings, however, are only in English, and are not discoverable in the other languages. As we examine how to reform the Department, we are looking at options for a longer-term solution.

Several delegations remarked on language disparity with regard to content on un.org. In line with the General Assembly mandates on multilingualism and with respect to the websites under its own purview, DPI is deeply committed to the production of content in all six official

languages and with maximum adherence to principles of accessibility for persons with disabilities. Content, including multilingual content, is the responsibility of the respective author department. With respect to the websites of different departments of the Secretariat, where author departments are responsible for content, where possible within existing resources, the Department has assisted other sites to achieve a minimum level of multilingualism. This requires a high volume of work, and we continue to seek partnerships with universities to assist. I would like to underline that the 158 websites

Assembly and ECOSOC) and their main committees are fully maintained in the six official languages.

Mr. Chair,

Distinguished delegates,

Many of you remarked on the potential of, and our performance in, global social media. The Committee underlined at its last session the importance, in the implementation of new communication tools such as social networks, that the linguistic dimension be taken into account. Pursuant to this, the Department created social media teams in each of the official languages, as well as in Kiswahili and Portuguese.

One delegation encouraged the use of digital diplomacy and synchronized hashtags. We do make social media materials, including synchronized hashtags, available to Member States for coordinated planning. Our social media team is ready to meet with diplomats when requested for training and to organize special events on digital diplomacy.

One delegation encouraged more planning by geography and age groups. Now that we have a more precise analytics dashboard, we will be looking at how to better reach different audiences. With the combined multilingual social media team, we plan to create materials for specific audiences.

Another delegation inquired about the accuracy of press releases. Our press officers take their work very seriously. Accuracy is paramount. When a factual mistake has been made, it is corrected once it has been brought to our attention. Despite the time pressure and sheer volume of work, only a handful of mistakes have been identified among almost 1,700 meetings summary press releases that were produced in 2017 a testament to the professionalism and dedication of our press officers.

Mr. Chair,

Distinguished delegates,

I hope that I have substantially addressed the thoughts and concerns you have expressed, even as I have taken note of, and benefited from, many more of your remarks. As I said, I look forward to more regular engagement with you, through periodic meetings and brainstorming sessions. I am grateful to all of you for having made my first COI session so substantive and so memorable. My gratitude extends in particular to the members of the Bureau, including especially our Chair. Ambassador Kickert has been unstinting in the time he has made available to this Committee and the Department.

Thank you.
