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**Statement by the Under-Secretary-General for Global Communications
Opening of the Fortieth session of the Committee on Information
Tuesday 1 May 2018**

Mr. Chair, Ambassador Jan Kickert,

Dear members of the Bureau of the Committee on Information,

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is my honour as Under-Secretary-General for Global Communications and head of the Department of Public Information to address this Committee for the first time.

At the outset I would like to express my appreciation to all of you for your guidance, support and commitment to the work of the Department – and to me personally since I joined the United Nations in September last year. We welcome this support and look forward to our partnership continuing and deepening.

I would also like to take the opportunity in this setting to acknowledge Maher Nasser for his stewardship of the Department as Acting Under-Secretary-General for much of last year.

Distinguished delegates,

I have the fortune to address you at an auspicious time, as the Department undertakes a process of review and reform. Many of you will already be aware of this from the informal briefing I gave to Committee delegates on 28 March.

The reform has been requested by the Secretary-General and is being conducted in parallel with other reform streams, including development, peace and security, and management.

In the eight months since a centrally coordinated multilingual social media team was established, the number of followers on the main global platforms in the eight languages has increased by two million to 31 million. This rise reflects improvements in all languages. Engagement on our posts is also increasing, thanks in part to the outstanding performance of the live videos and posts from the UN General Assembly VIP Social Media Space in September 2017, which received support from major social media platforms.

~~The UN Secretary-General's Office is currently reviewing the website and associated webpages, that will include in-depth analysis of audience behavior on the site across all languages, to attract even wider audiences. As we move ahead, we are also continuing to digitize the United Nations historical audiovisual records~~

Declaration, branded for the landmark anniversary, has also been produced in all six official languages.

achieving the Goals. This series, which will focus on a different Goal each week, aims to inspire action about the SDGs and showcase what UNAI member institutions are doing to help achieve them.

Looking ahead, we can announce that the sixty-seventh DPI-NGO Conference will be held at UN Headquarters on 22-23 August. The Conference agenda is being finalized and will be shared later this month. Bringing in the voices and diversity of civil society and youth in the work of the UN – as advocates and change agents – is a key priority of the Department.

Distinguished delegates,

I very much look forward to hearing your views, observations and comments this week, as well as your guidance and support in the year ahead. I welcome, specifically, your ensuring that your support in this Committee for the Department of Public Information is equally expressed in the Fifth Committee; that you provide us with mandates that allow us the flexibility to build support for the United Nations in line with modern communications and on the basis of research and analytics; and that you continue to work creatively and share best practices with us for the greatest impact.

I hope you will be able to join us this afternoon for an interactive dialogue as we discuss our partnership further. I also look forward to seeing you on Thursday when we gather here to mark World Press Freedom Day, a cause very dear to my heart. Indeed, just yesterday, 9 journalists were among those killed in a targeted attack in Kabul, Afghanistan. This illustrates the grave dangers that journalists and media workers face every day around the world.

Thank you.
