



# General Assembly

Distr.: General  
10 February 2020

Original: English

---

## Committee on Information

### Forty-second session

27 April–8 May 2020

Item 7 of the provisional agenda\*

### Consideration of reports submitted by the Secretary-General

## Activities of the Department of Global Communications: news services

### Report of the Secretary-General

#### *Summary*

The present report, prepared in accordance with General Assembly resolution [74/92](#) B, provides a summary of key advances made by the Department of Global Communications from July 2019 to January 2020 in promoting the work of the United Nations to a global audience through its news services.

The news services subprogramme, one of three subprogrammes of the Department, is implemented by the News and Media Division. Its objectives are to support the United Nations through high-quality, relevant and timely information products covering the Organization's work and priorities across multimedia platforms in multiple languages and to increase the geographical range and frequency of the use of its products by media outlets and other users. The Division also manages the United Nations website and the Organization's historic audiovisual and photo libraries and provides a range of information products and services.

The activities under the other subprogrammes of the Department, namely, strategic communications services, and outreach and knowledge services, are described in separate reports of the Secretary-General ([A/AC.198/2020/2](#) and [A/AC.198/2020/4](#), respectively).

---

\* [A/AC.198/2020/1](#).



## I. Introduction

1. In its resolution [74/92 B](#), the General Assembly took note of the reports of the Secretary-General on the activities of the Department of Global Communications, submitted for consideration by the Committee on Information at its forty-first session ([A/AC.198/2019/2](#), [A/AC.198/2019/3](#) and [A/AC.198/2019/4](#)) and requested the Secretary-General to continue to report to the Committee on the activities of the Department.
2. The Department hereby submits the information requested on news services.
3. The present report covers the services provided by the News and Media Division of the Department of Global Communications and highlights the multilingual multimedia production and ongoing reforms that have resulted in increased outreach to larger audiences in more places. The Department is using multiple platforms to engage with young people, communicate the priority issues of the Organization and empower people to take action through information, including by means of social media, the Internet, video, photography, print, television and radio. It has also mainstreamed the use of multilingualism with respect to the websites managed by the Department and other content it creates, whether for digital or traditional media platforms.

## II. Overview

4. The Department of Global Communications produces and distributes timely, accurate and balanced news and information products for global audiences and for partners across mass media, including audio, print, television and digital platforms, in the six official languages of the United Nations, as well as in Kiswahili and Portuguese. On the basis of extrabudgetary contributions received from the Government of India, the Department has added Hindi as a language in which it provides full multimedia service; and a pilot programme began in April 2018. In the management and delivery of its news services and products, the Department adheres to the priorities and guidance of the Committee on Information, including by conducting regular impact assessments and evaluations, producing materials in formats that are suited to diverse audiences and developing partnerships with media organizations and other amplifiers to strengthen support for the activities of the Organization, with the greatest transparency.
5. Over the past year, since the forty-first session of the Committee, the Department has maintained its strong commitment to multilingualism across its platforms and ensured that the use of new and emerging technologies did not overshadow that of traditional communications tools, such as radio, audio programming, television and video, in formats that support access by smaller broadcasters. The Department also increased its efforts to communicate with younger audiences by creating innovative content and distributing it using both traditional and new communication mediums.

## III. Digital

### A. United Nations website

6. Audiences visiting the main United Nations website ([www.un.org](http://www.un.org)) continued to grow and to demonstrate increasingly deeper engagement in the work of the Organization throughout 2019.

7. In the first 10 months of the year, un.org received more visitors who viewed more pages and spent more time on the website than ever before during the corresponding 10-month periods since 2009, when the United Nations started gathering data on its website audiences using Google Analytics.

8. Between 1 January and 31 October 2019, un.org reached more than 47.8 million users in the six official languages of the United Nations, an increase of more than 26 per cent compared with the same period in 2018 (see fig. 1). During the same period, audience engagement with un.org also increased, with the site registering over 154 million page views. This equates to an increase of almost 20 million page views on the corresponding period in 2018, a rise of more than 14 per cent (see fig. 2). Visitors to un.org also stayed on the site longer than they did in 2018, with total visit duration over the year to 31 October 2019 measured at 3.3 million hours, as opposed to 2.8 million hours during the same period in 2018 (see fig. 3).

Figure 1

**Audience reach (January–October)**

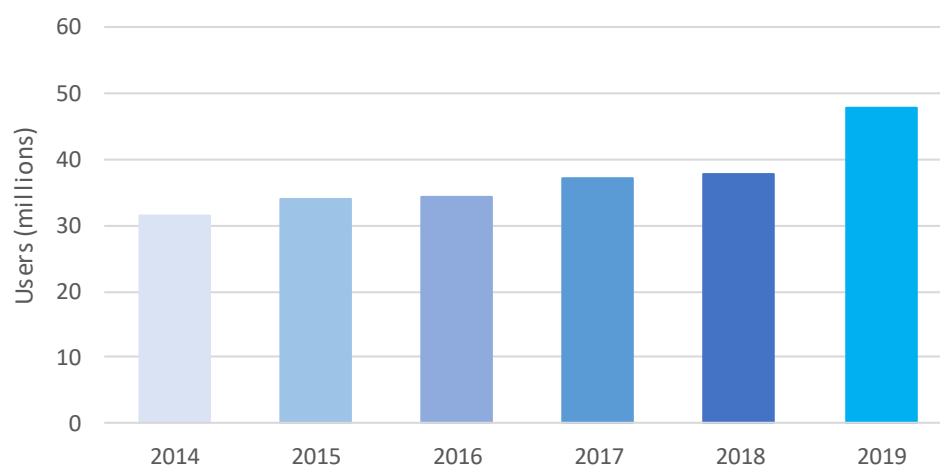


Figure 2

**Engagement as measured in page views (January–October)**

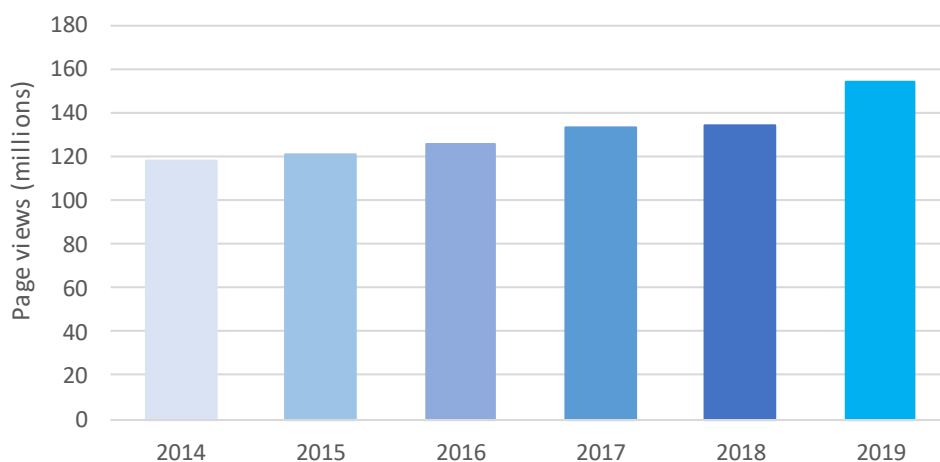
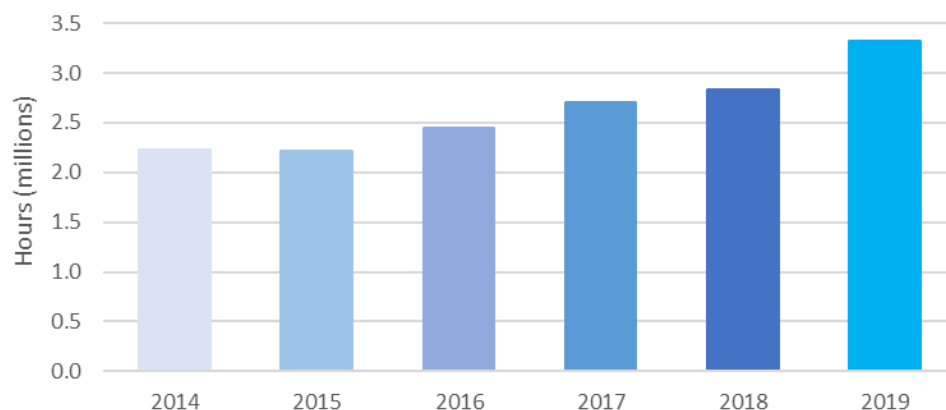


Figure 3  
Engagement as measured by visit duration (January–October)

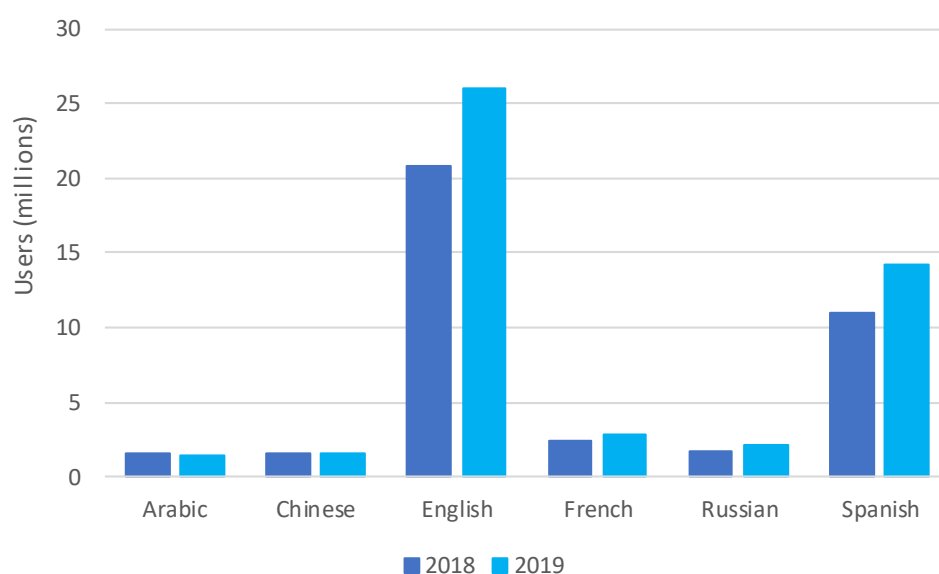


9. Areas of un.org that drove the overall high audience growth on the website included:

- “Global issues”, which measured a growth of 99.2 per cent in page views
- “Climate change”, which measured a growth of 1,052.2 per cent in page views
- “Sustainable Development Goals”, which measured a growth of 55.5 per cent in page views.

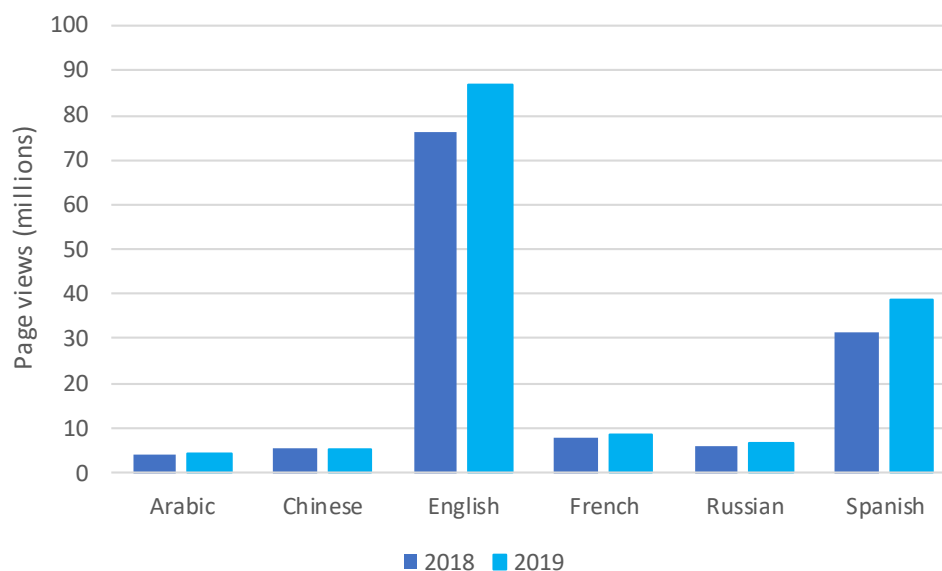
10. Growth in reach was most notable in the English and Spanish versions of the website. Together, they added more than 8.5 million users during the first 10 months of 2019 (see fig. 4).

Figure 4  
Total reach by language (January–October)



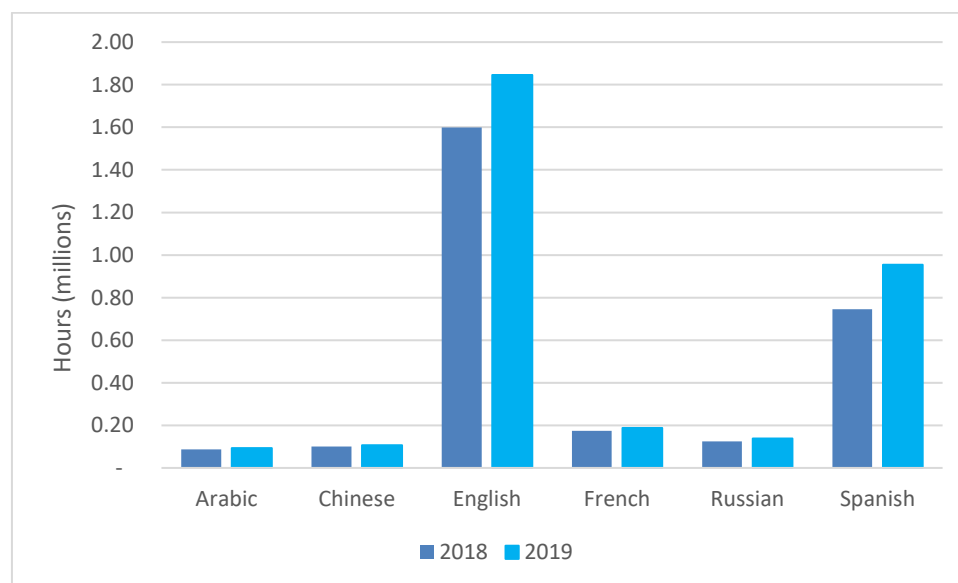
11. The growth in overall engagement as measured by page views remained stable (see fig. 5). The Spanish and Russian versions of the website showed the largest proportional increases in page views at 24 per cent for Spanish and 17 per cent for Russian.

Figure 5  
Engagement by language as measured by page views (January–October)



12. There was an increase in audience engagement across language versions in terms of the time users spent on the site (see fig. 6). The biggest proportional increases were observed for Spanish, with a 28 per cent increase in total number of hours spent, and in English, with a 15 per cent increase.

Figure 6  
Engagement by language as measured by visit duration (January–October)



13. English and Spanish continued to draw the largest share of the total audience. Both languages increased their audience share during the first 10 months of 2019 (see figs. 7 and 8).

Figure 7  
Audience share by language  
(January–October 2018)

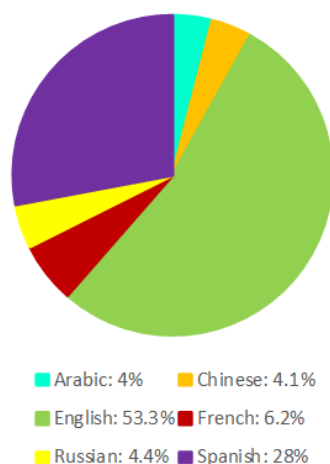
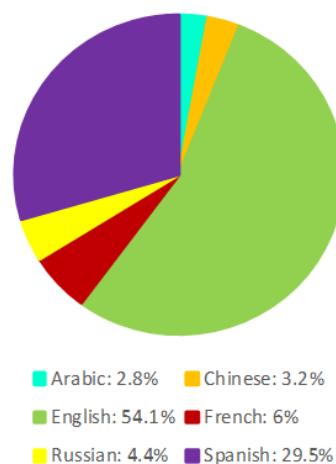


Figure 8  
Audience share by language  
(January–October 2019)



14. The Department released a redesigned home page in the six official languages in September 2019. As the main portal of the United Nations, the un.org home page sets the standard for the Organization's digital identity. It portrays the full scope of the work of the United Nations and adheres to the highest standards of language parity, accessibility and usability. The new un.org home page offers a more immersive and engaging experience. It is based on a more intuitive information architecture that lets visitors find content quickly and easily, and to identify and engage with content that matches their interests.

15. As part of the redesign of the un.org home page, a more advanced technological platform (known as the UN-2 platform) has been developed in cooperation with the Office of Information and Communications Technology. It creates a more efficient and uniform approach to website hosting and design and is now being used for additional sites and pages such as those for United Nations observances, conferences, campaigns and communications activities.

16. During the reporting period, the Department also developed and launched several new multilingual websites and web pages within un.org in line with strategic communications priorities. Those included a website dedicated to advocating and improving access to science, technology and innovation in the world's least developed countries ([www.un.org/technologybank](http://www.un.org/technologybank)).

17. To raise awareness of the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy, a website was launched in the six official languages that explains the Strategy in all formats accessible to people with disabilities and gives the benchmarks used for assessing progress and accelerating change regarding disability inclusion ([www.un.org/disabilitystrategy](http://www.un.org/disabilitystrategy)).

18. During the reporting period, a fully redesigned multilingual website of the Office of Counter-Terrorism was launched ([www.un.org/en/counterterrorism](http://www.un.org/en/counterterrorism)). New websites were also launched for the Ethics Office ([www.un.org/en/ethics](http://www.un.org/en/ethics)) and the Office of Administration of Justice ([www.un.org/en/internaljustice/oaj](http://www.un.org/en/internaljustice/oaj)). Also, a dedicated multilingual portal was launched for the five summits that were held at the start of the high-level week of the General Assembly ([www.un.org/en/summits2019](http://www.un.org/en/summits2019)). The portal was the central online location for coverage and information about the summits. To accompany it, a website was launched to promote individual action on climate change as part of the ActNow campaign ([www.un.org/en/actnow](http://www.un.org/en/actnow)).

19. Also during the reporting period, a campaign website was developed under the title “A4P: Our core agenda for peacekeeping” (for the Action for Peacekeeping initiative, available at [www.un.org/en/A4P](http://www.un.org/en/A4P)), “Mental health matters, a healthy workforce for a better world” ([www.un.org/en/healthy-workforce](http://www.un.org/en/healthy-workforce)) and “United Nations system code of conduct” ([www.un.org/en/content/codeofconduct](http://www.un.org/en/content/codeofconduct)). The site on preventing sexual exploitation and abuse was enhanced with interactive charts showing United Nations system-wide data on allegations ([www.un.org/preventing-sexual-exploitation-and-abuse/content/data-allegations-un-system-wide](http://www.un.org/preventing-sexual-exploitation-and-abuse/content/data-allegations-un-system-wide)).

20. The site of the outreach programme entitled “The Rwanda Genocide and the United Nations” was also completely redesigned and enriched with multimedia assets ([www.un.org/en/preventgenocide/rwanda](http://www.un.org/en/preventgenocide/rwanda)).

21. Websites for nine new United Nations observance days were launched in the six official languages:

- World Braille Day (4 January): [www.un.org/en/events/brailleday](http://www.un.org/en/events/brailleday)
- International Day of Education (24 January): [www.un.org/en/events/educationday](http://www.un.org/en/events/educationday)
- World Pulses Day (10 February): [www.un.org/en/events/pulsesday](http://www.un.org/en/events/pulsesday)
- International Day of Multilateralism and Diplomacy for Peace (24 April): [www.un.org/en/events/diplomacyday](http://www.un.org/en/events/diplomacyday)
- International Delegate’s Day (25 April): [www.un.org/en/events/delegatesday](http://www.un.org/en/events/delegatesday)
- World Food Safety Day (7 June): [www.un.org/en/events/foodsafetyday](http://www.un.org/en/events/foodsafetyday)
- International Day of the Celebration of the Solstice (21 June): [www.un.org/en/events/solsticeday](http://www.un.org/en/events/solsticeday)
- International Day Commemorating the Victims of Acts of Violence Based on Religion or Belief (22 August): [www.un.org/en/events/victimsofreligiousviolenceday](http://www.un.org/en/events/victimsofreligiousviolenceday)
- International Day for Universal Access to Information (28 September): [www.un.org/en/events/informationaccessday](http://www.un.org/en/events/informationaccessday).

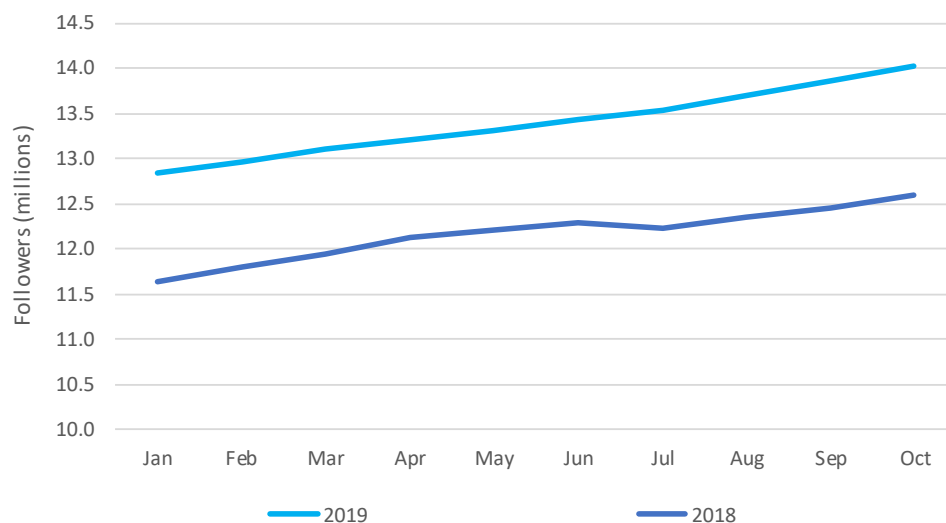
22. In support of the forthcoming seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations, the Department launched a website with extensive background information that contains a toolkit for interested parties to join the global conversation ([www.un.org/un75](http://www.un.org/un75)). Websites were also launched for two major United Nations conferences coming up in 2020, namely the Global Sustainable Transport Conference, to be held in Beijing from 5 to 7 May 2020 ([www.un.org/en/conferences/transport2020](http://www.un.org/en/conferences/transport2020)) and the United Nations Ocean Conference, to be held in Lisbon from 2 to 6 July 2020 ([www.un.org/en/conferences/ocean2020](http://www.un.org/en/conferences/ocean2020)). All three websites were deployed using the new UN-2 platform.

## B. Social media

23. The Department continued to interact with social media followers and provide timely updates in the six official languages of the United Nations, Kiswahili and Portuguese on the work and priorities of the Organization across the major global social media platforms. Steady audience growth across languages was achieved on all influential and widely seen communications platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Snapchat, Flickr, VKontakte, WeChat and Sina Weibo.

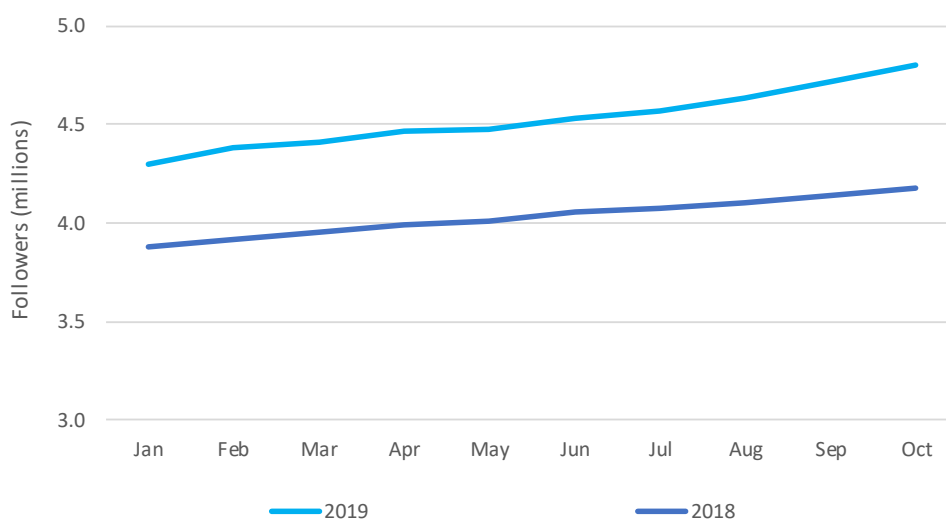
24. The total number of followers of the corporate Twitter accounts, all languages combined, reached just over 14 million in October 2019. Almost 2 million new followers have been added in the year since October 2018 (see fig. 9).

Figure 9  
Number of followers on Twitter (all languages)



25. The number of followers of all corporate Facebook accounts combined in all languages rose by more than 600,000 in the same year, reaching 4.8 million (see fig. 10).

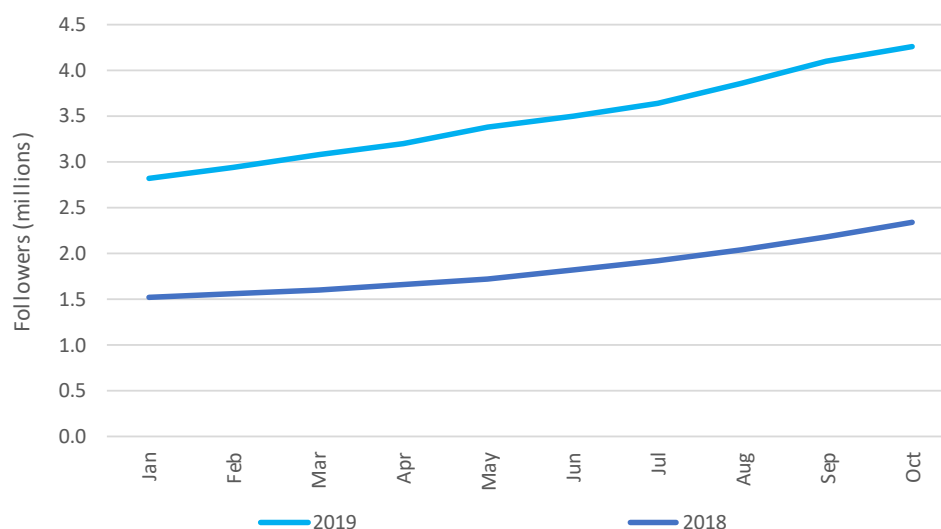
Figure 10  
Facebook, number of followers (all languages)



26. Among all the main global social media platforms, the most striking growth was seen on Instagram, where from October 2018 to October 2019, the number of followers of the corporate account rose by almost 2 million to 4.28 million in all languages, an increase of more than 80 per cent in 12 months (see fig. 11).



Figure 11  
Instagram, number of followers (all languages)



27. Among the most-viewed multilingual social media posts during the reporting period were those focused on the Sustainable Development Goals, the climate crisis, gender equality, human rights (particularly hate speech and discrimination), refugees and migrants, and the work of the United Nations for peace in conflict situations. Raising awareness of the impact of Member States on and their contributions to United Nations peacekeeping operations was an ongoing communications priority.

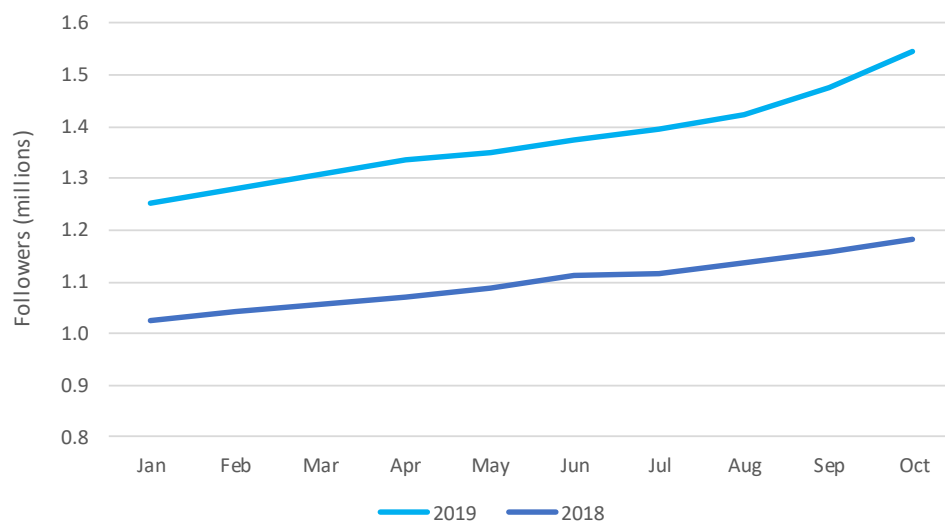
28. The Department was in regular contact with representatives of Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter, Sina Weibo and other platforms about cost-neutral ways to maximize its global outreach and impact on social media platforms. Those included access to special functionalities and tools, partnerships with social media influencers and advice on best practice. For instance, in August, Facebook held a “summit” for key United Nations social media contacts on how best to craft and target content to reach key audiences.

29. During the high-level week of the General Assembly, representatives of Facebook and Instagram helped the social media team to operate the VIP social media space where world leaders and high-level participants created social media content for Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Unique content was created to highlight the priorities of the Organization and those of the leaders attending.

30. During the high-level week, the multilingual content on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram combined achieved 9.4 million engagements. This represents an increase of more than 280 per cent in comparison with the high-level week at the General Assembly in 2018.

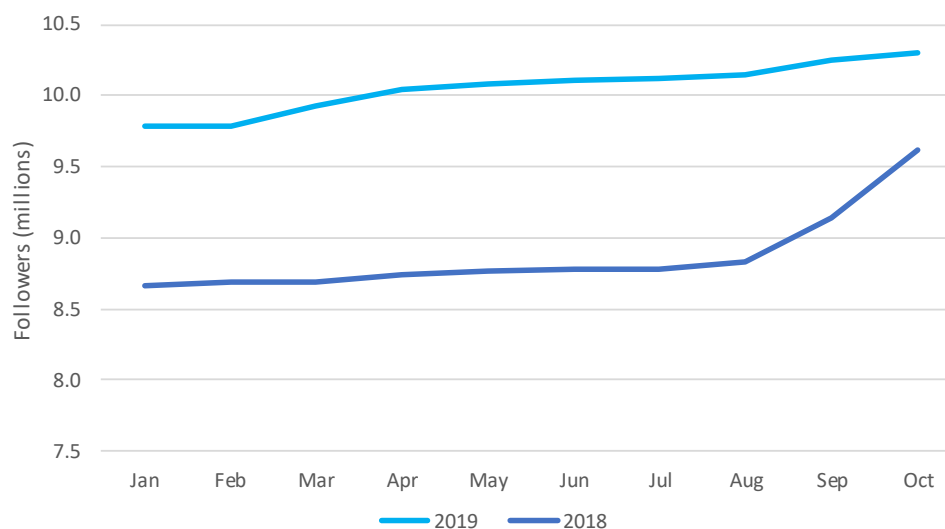
31. In 2019, Twitter became the most-followed platform among our accounts in Arabic with the fastest growth in the total number of followers among the three platforms. Twitter overtook Facebook as the leading platform in Arabic in July 2019. Between August and October 2019, the rate of growth on Twitter for Arabic content increased sharply, resulting in a marked change in the overall growth trajectory (see fig. 12).

Figure 12  
Twitter, Facebook and Instagram, number of followers (Arabic)



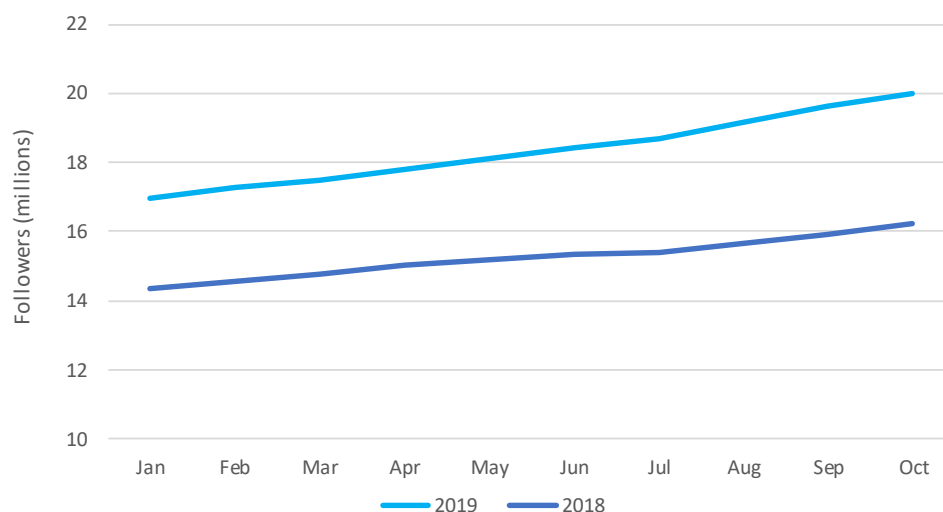
32. Social media content in Chinese continued to attract the second-highest number of followers (see fig. 13). While Sina Weibo continued to drive the larger share of the overall audience on social media, WeChat saw a significant increase in the 10 months to October 2019. The United Nations account gained almost 30,000 new followers, as opposed to 9,000 new followers during the same period in 2018.

Figure 13  
Sina Weibo and WeChat, number of followers (Chinese)



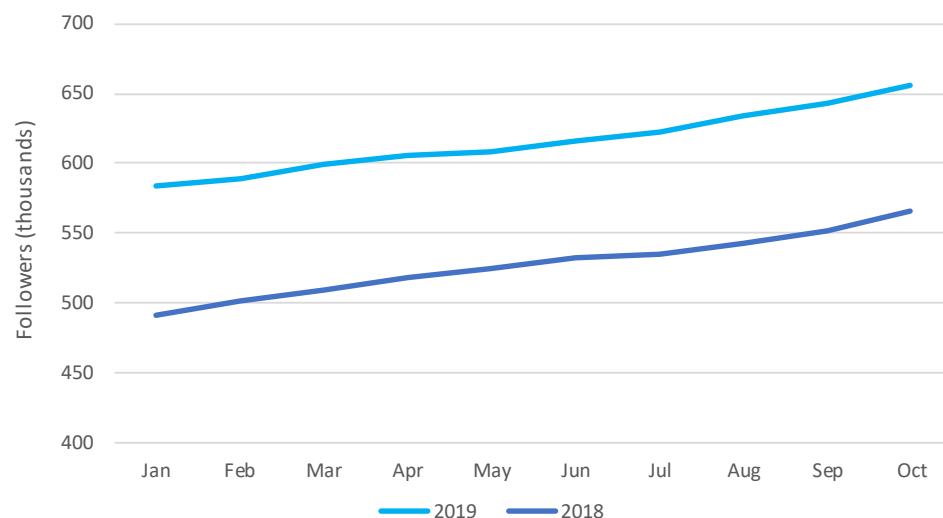
33. Of all the social media accounts of the United Nations, those in English continued to show steady growth rates and attract the largest audience (see fig. 14). Twitter continued to be the largest platform for the United Nations with 11.5 million followers. During 2019, the number of followers on Instagram grew significantly by nearly 1.2 million in the 10 months to October 2019, as opposed to slightly more than 600,000 new followers during the corresponding period in 2018.

Figure 14  
Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat, number of followers (English)



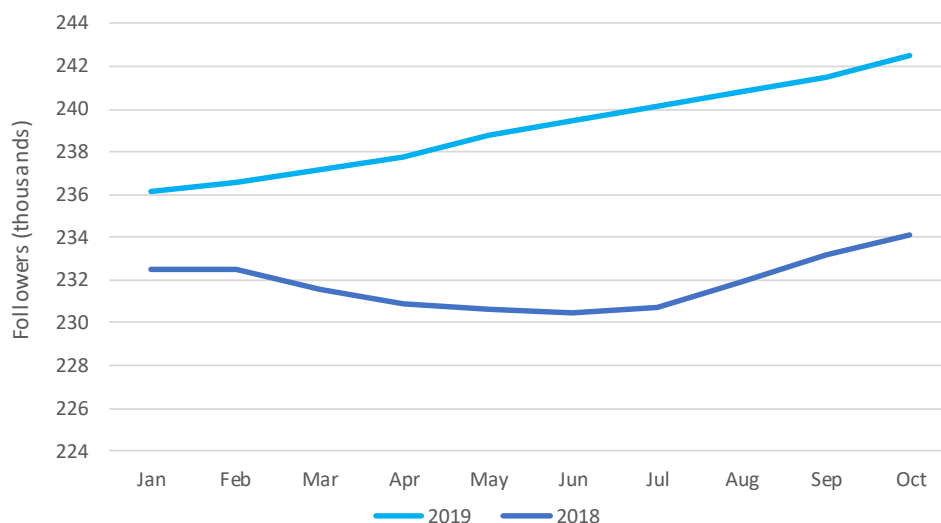
34. In French, the growth in the number of followers has been consistent over the 10 months to October 2019, with the overall growth trajectory paralleling that of the same period in 2018 (see fig. 15). Facebook continued to attract the largest number of followers. Follower rates for Twitter are growing rapidly.

Figure 15  
Twitter, Facebook and Instagram, number of followers (French)



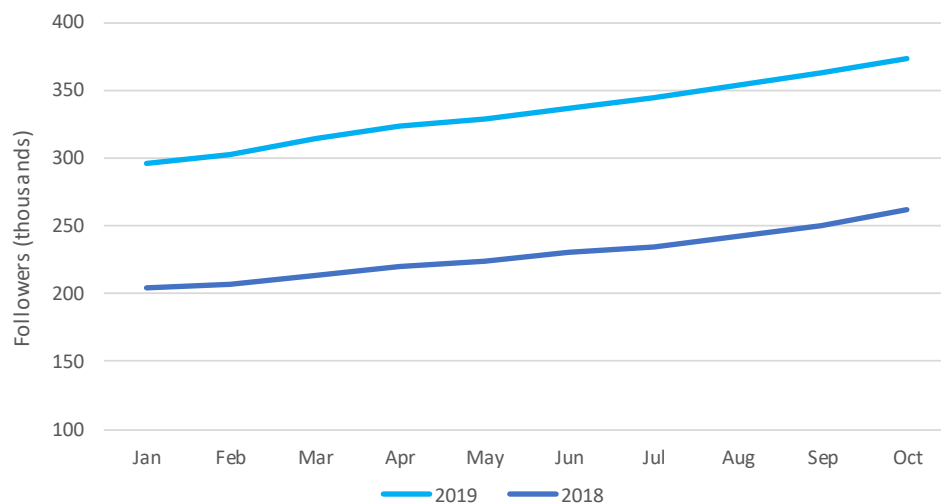
35. While the largest social media audiences in Kiswahili continued to be found on Facebook, overall growth rates were stronger on Twitter and Instagram. In October 2019, the number of followers on Instagram was twice as large as in October 2018 and a steady increase in audiences was noted for all the Kiswahili corporate accounts (see fig. 16).

Figure 16  
Twitter, Facebook and Instagram, number of followers (Kiswahili)



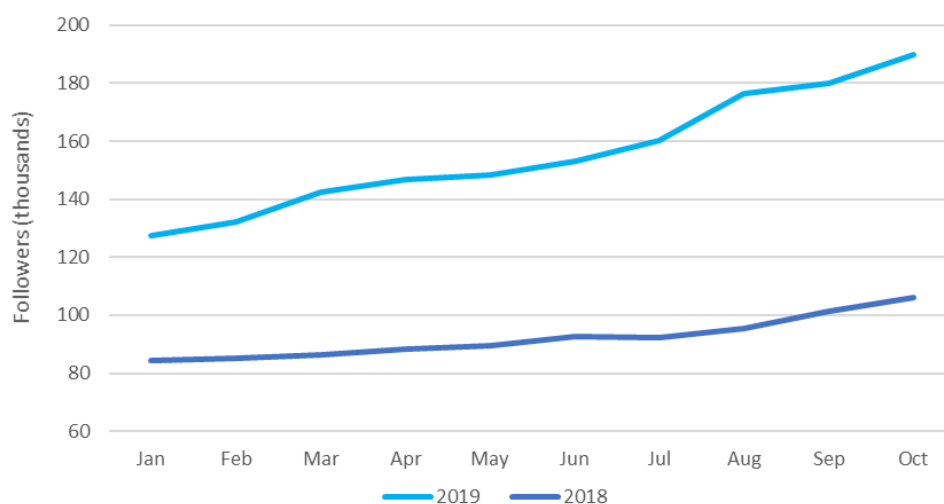
36. While Facebook still represents the largest platform for United Nations social media audiences in Portuguese, the Instagram account has seen significant growth in 2019, with the number of followers in October 2019 standing at almost 200 per cent more than in October 2018. Overall audience rates continued to rise across accounts (see fig. 17).

Figure 17  
Twitter, Facebook and Instagram, number of followers (Portuguese)



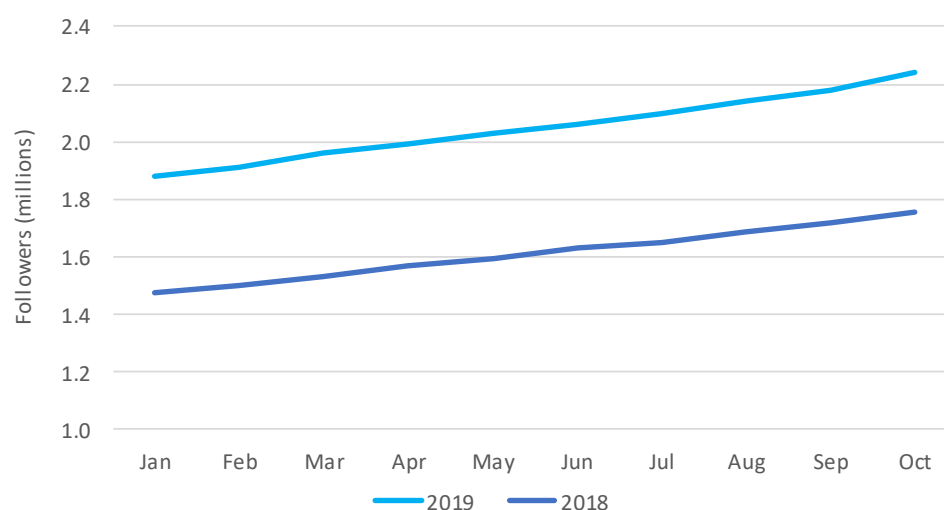
37. For Russian there was audience growth on all platforms (see fig. 18). The largest audience continued to be found on Facebook and the number of followers on that platform in October 2019 was more than double that in October of the previous year. There was also a significant increase in the number of followers on Instagram in 2019.

Figure 18  
Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and VKontakte, number of followers (Russian)



38. Twitter remains the largest platform for the United Nations in Spanish. Audiences continue to grow steadily. In October 2019, the number of followers grew by 200,000 compared with the same month in 2018 to reach 1.3 million. For the Instagram account, which was launched in August 2017, the follower base has started its growth from a much lower level. Nonetheless, the growth rate on Instagram is healthy, with audiences in October 2019 edging towards 310,000, which represents an increase of more than 154 per cent in comparison with October of the previous year. Audience growth rates overall continue to rise steadily (see fig. 19).

Figure 19  
Twitter, Facebook and Instagram, number of followers (Spanish)



#### IV. News and multimedia services

39. The Department has scaled up the projected production of multilingual multimedia content about the priorities of the United Nations and news-related developments across the United Nations system. In doing so it has drawn on audience

preferences and has tailored content to the various platforms on which audiences are active, such as websites, mobile applications and social media platforms. The content has been distributed further by partners in the media and elsewhere. The Department focuses on distribution methods to ensure access to timely, balanced and accurate information in both traditional and new media formats. Through storytelling, reporting and showcased local examples, global audiences can obtain a comprehensive understanding of the work of the United Nations.

## **A. Video and television**

### **Video production**

40. The Department continued to deliver video for news, broadcast and social media and successfully experimented with new formats such as augmented reality, virtual reality and mobile responsive viewing. While maintaining a strong presence on traditional media, the Department also made efforts to reach youth audiences using innovative platforms such as 360-degree videos, producing short pieces for the Instagram IGTV application and partnering with digital media partners during the reporting period. Some videos leveraged “star power” such as that of blogger Camila Coelho from Brazil, who advocates more eco-friendly fashion, and the Harlem Globetrotters basketball team from the United States of America.

41. With the focus in 2019 strongly on climate action, the video team created a virtual reality film during the reporting period under the title “Saving our home”. The film focused on young climate activists in Fiji, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. The film was featured on Facebook and was also shown at the Social Good Summit and screened at a breakfast of Heads of State of the Pacific islands.

42. Increasingly, the Department’s news, social media and video teams are coordinating to produce multilingual content around thematic campaigns. This new approach includes beneficiary-driven storytelling and the sharing of lesser-known facts about the United Nations. In addition, length and format are adjusted to create engaging content for traditional media and digital outlets through the “UN in action” video series, translated into the six official languages. For example, UN Video has produced two documentaries in collaboration with the Office of Counter-Terrorism in which the Lake Chad region is visited and the voices of survivors of terrorist attacks by Boko Haram are amplified.

43. Through social media and broadcast channels, the video team continued to promote the work of countries that contribute troops to peacekeeping missions by sending footage of those missions to broadcasters at an average rate of 30 videos per month, thereby highlighting the peacekeeping efforts of the United Nations around the world.

44. The Video Section promoted the Sustainable Development Goals by creating one video on each of the 17 Goals and sending them to media partners every month. The Section also produced promotional material for the launch of the ActNow bot to encourage people to take action in support of the Sustainable Development Goals. Also, the Video Section created clips of some of the global ambassadors for the Sustainable Development Goals, including the fictional character Hello Kitty, the new ambassador for YouTube and other social media platforms.

45. As part of the Department’s coverage of the General Assembly, the Video Section produced a series of daily news videos under the title “United Nations General Assembly in 74 seconds”, a video for the high-level meeting on financing for development, and a news summary, known as a wrap, on the high-level meeting on

the Sustainable Development Goals that was shared on UN News and on the social media channels of the United Nations.

### UNifeed

46. UNifeed continued to be a key source of important footage for broadcasters around the world, delivering timely broadcast-quality video from United Nations Headquarters in New York, from peacekeeping missions and from more than 30 partner agencies, funds and programmes.

47. The increase in the number of UNifeed packages aired by broadcasters around the world in 2019 as compared with 2018 was exceptional (see figs. 20 and 21 for a year-on-year comparison of “hits” or broadcasts).

48. In September 2019, UNifeed materials were aired by broadcasters around the world more than 20,000 times, which was a record for the team and represented an increase of 93.1 per cent compared with September 2018. From January to November 2019, UNifeed stories were used by broadcasters more than 112,000 times, compared with 75,000 times during the same period in 2018, an increase of 49 per cent. The use of those materials was mostly accounted for by broadcasters in the Middle East (33 per cent of the total) and Europe (30 per cent).

Figure 20  
UNifeed, number of hits by month

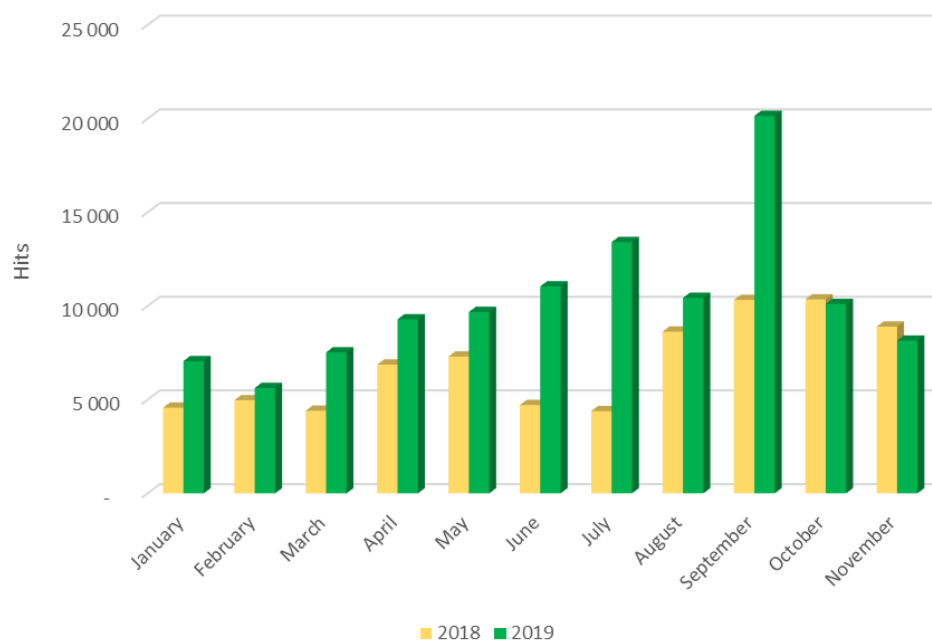
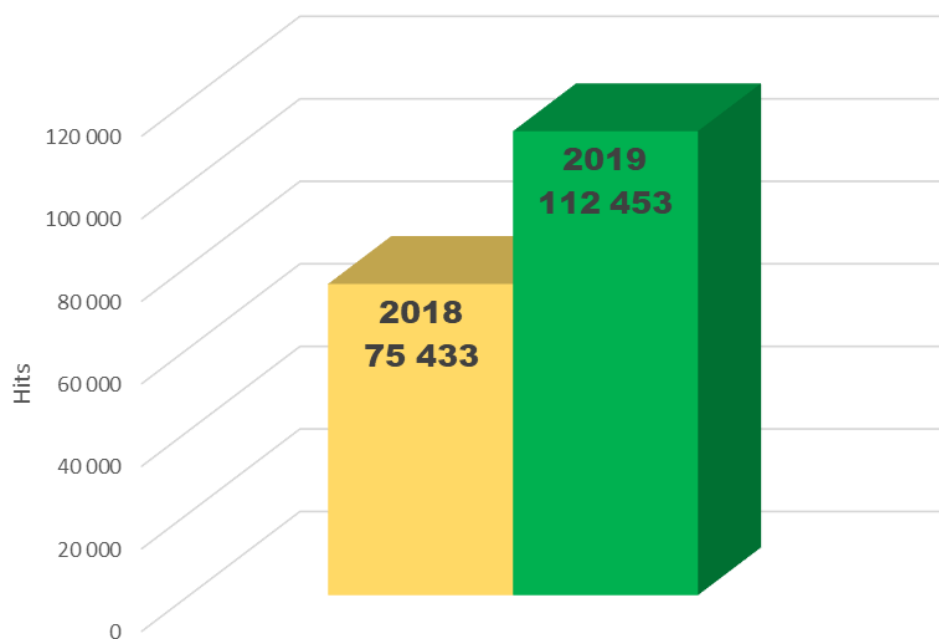


Figure 21  
UNifeed, number of hits by year



### Webcast

49. The webcast service ([webtv.un.org](http://webtv.un.org)) continued to reach wide and diverse audiences, including youth audiences, on its own digital platforms and by providing live streaming on YouTube, Facebook and Twitter. Some 63 million people from 225 countries and territories watched live and on-demand streaming coverage of meetings held at the United Nations in 2019 across platforms, an increase of 25 per cent compared with the previous year.

50. With the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management and with the Office of Information and Communications Technology, the Department of Global Communications has been exploring technological options for generating basic multilingual metadata that could help with the availability of on-demand webcast videos in the six official languages of the United Nations. The Department of Global Communications will continue to work with the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management to explore translation technology as it evolves so as to determine when it might be a cost-effective solution that meets the Department's needs.

### United Nations channel on YouTube

51. The number of subscribers to the United Nations channel on YouTube increased by 85 per cent in 2019 compared with the previous year, reaching 615,000. During the same period, the channel received about 31 million views, an increase of 41 per cent compared with the previous 12 months. Some 120 million minutes of video were viewed through the channel, an 80 per cent increase in watch time compared with the previous year. Audience engagement was also high and users gave thousands of comments.



### Live coverage, television broadcast and facilities

52. The Department's service UNTV continued to broadcast live coverage of meetings and events at United Nations Headquarters in New York. The coverage included the plenary meetings of the General Assembly, meetings of the Security Council, all high-level meetings, special events and photo opportunities with the Secretary-General to more than 480 broadcast agencies and clients around the world. During the high-level week of the seventy-fourth session of the General Assembly, broadcasters used more than 2,000 hours of meetings and events from the UNTV feed, compared with 1,700 in 2018, an increase of 17.64 per cent.

## B. News and feature coverage

53. The multilingual UN News portal showed exponential growth during the reporting period compared with the same period in 2018. More than 22 million pages were viewed in all languages by mid-November 2019, compared with 14.37 million page views from January to December 2018 (see fig. 22).

Figure 22

### UN News, page views

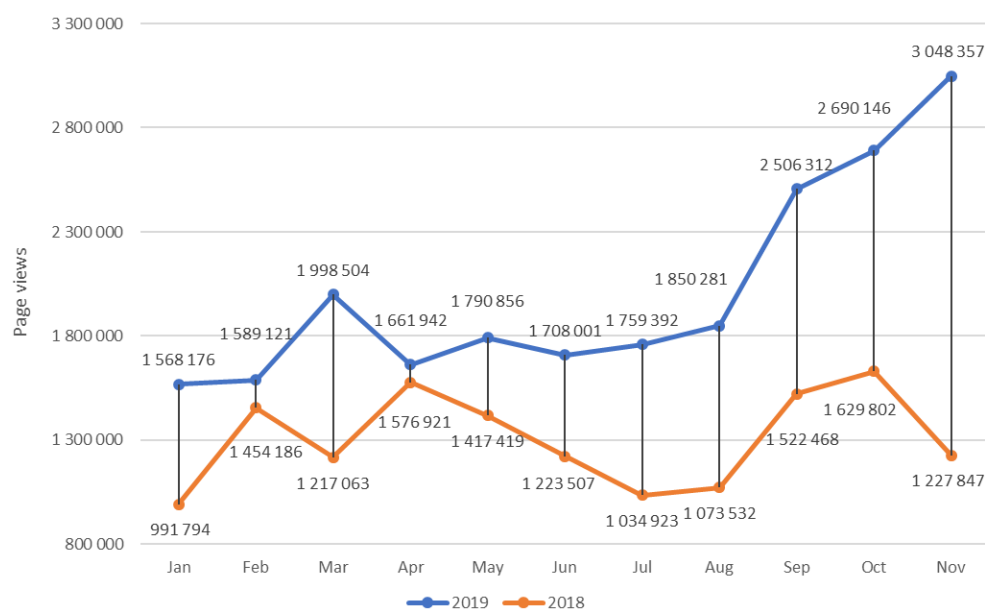


Figure 23  
UN News, number of users

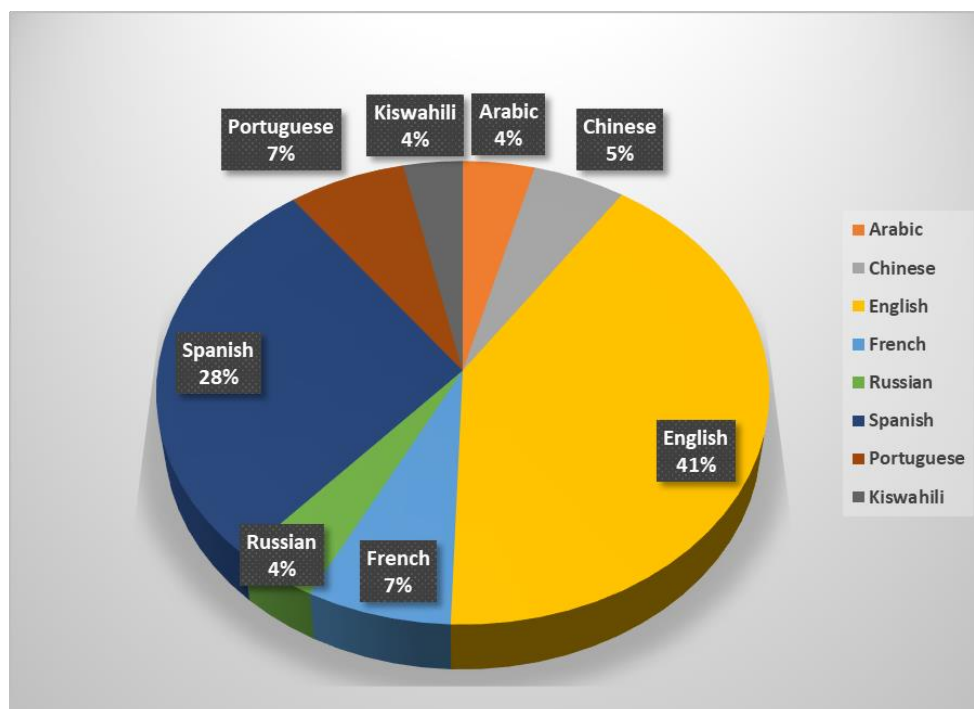


54. The monthly total number of users for September 2019 broke records. Detailed coverage of the high-level week at the General Assembly and the five summit meetings held during it reached 2.5 million users, as opposed to 1.5 million in 2018 (see fig. 23).

55. The growth in the number of users from January to November 2019 surpassed 200 per cent, climbing from 690,000 in January to just under 2.1 million in November 2019. UN News continued to be referenced, copied and posted, and distributed further by media partners in different languages and shared by important influencers including activists, politicians and celebrities.

56. The increases in the UN News audience were due in part to the practice of creating clear explanatory materials, which demystify complex processes, and to the fact that UN News gives local colour to global issues while always serving as an authoritative and balanced source of news. UN News is also the portal through which the Organization's global work is presented in multimedia content, as well as in podcasts and other audio content, and from which that content is shared on social media and in RSS feeds. The multilingual UN News portal is the site on which global audiences find comprehensive information on the work of the United Nations, be it on peace, development, human rights, climate action or the Sustainable Development Goals, among other issues. Moreover, in line with our emphasis on solutions-oriented journalism, the stories showcase how the United Nations is making a difference and how individuals, local communities and authorities are contributing to the realization of the objectives of the United Nations while bringing about positive change. The share of languages has changed, with Spanish showing exponential growth and Portuguese increasing its share (see fig. 24).

Figure 24  
UN News, page views by language (2019)



57. In September, an updated UN News application was released with better visuals, user-friendly live video coverage of events and a daily offer of videos in multiple languages. The updated application matched a distinct new trend in audience viewership; for the first time, the number of mobile users of UN News exceeded the number of desktop users. In some languages, more than 75 per cent of the visitors now access the website from mobile devices. The shift towards more social media-friendly multimedia content continued to attract younger news consumers, those between 18 and 34 years of age, who constitute the majority of UN News users.

58. UN News increasingly used Google Analytics and search engine optimization tools to test headlines and look at story angles when planning content. Thanks to strategic 24/7 dissemination of news on social media platforms, the number of followers on social media increased significantly during the year. Some 650,000 followers were added in the high-level week alone as content was being shared with audiences by region and language based on optimal timing, prioritizing time-sensitive reporting and contributing to the coverage of issues that were trending and being discussed on a variety of platforms.

59. Audience interest in climate action accounted in large measure for a sustained spike in page views starting in September and resulting in more than 3 million page views in November, when news consumption traditionally dips. The climate crisis featured prominently in the top 20 stories during the latter part of 2019 and UN News produced regular features showcasing sustainable development in action.

60. UN News Arabic grew by 15 per cent during the reporting period, with a total of 394,000 page views from July through mid-November. During the reporting period, the Arabic team launched a series of features spotlighting the work of the Main Committees of the General Assembly, which was well received by audiences. Another story that was well received during the period covered the announcement by UNHCR

that scholarship applications would be accepted from refugees living in Kurdistan Region in Iraq under the Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative.

61. Audiences following news developments in Arabic were increasingly using digital platforms. There was a consequent sharp increase in followers of the UN News Arabic account on Twitter of some 40 per cent compared with 2018. On Facebook, there was an increase of about 25 per cent in the number of followers compared with the previous year, with substantial engagement by followers. On YouTube, there was an increase of about 20 per cent in the number of subscribers.

62. Compared with the same period in 2018, the UN News Chinese website grew by more than a third, with a total of 547,000 page views from the beginning of July through mid-November. During the high-level week of the General Assembly, UN News Chinese embedded a live webcast of the general debate, which helped to draw more traffic to the website. In 2019, UN News Chinese carried its first live broadcasts on Sina Weibo of the speeches made by world leaders. The remarks made by the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization generated nearly 220,000 views.

63. UN News Chinese, in collaboration with the United Nations country team in China, produced the feature series, “United Nations-China: 40 years”, in which it offered audiences a unique in-depth view of the Organization’s work in China. The series was shared widely on Sina Weibo and WeChat. The Government of China also reposted parts of the series on several of its websites and social media platforms.

64. The UN News English website registered an impressive growth rate of almost 70 per cent, rising to 4.79 million page views from the beginning of July to mid-November. In September and October, for the first time, the UN News English website stayed at more than a million page views for two consecutive months. Also, the average visit duration slightly increased, which shows that audience retention improved. The high-level week saw enormous audience growth, with a 71 per cent increase in the number of users and 53 per cent increase in the number of page views.

65. The prioritization by UN News English of multimedia products and “explainers” for the five summits held during the high-level week resonated with audiences; the number of page views for September rose to almost 1.3 million, more than double the figure for 2018. More broadly, the production of multimedia articles, audio programmes, podcasts, features and photo stories has been attracting audience attention and providing critical coverage of priority topics and most-searched issues on the website such as human rights, peace and security, climate change and health. With almost 200 media partners broadcasting UN News programming across the world, UN News reaches audiences beyond those that read its website, listen to its audio and follow its social media accounts.

66. Stories produced by UN News French garnered 420,000 page views during the reporting period, an increase of 72 per cent compared with the same reporting period in 2018. The French-language team produced a series of video clips showing addresses by Heads of State and Government, and exclusive interviews conducted during the high-level segment of the General Assembly. This proved successful with audiences around the world and was of particular interest to audiences on Twitter. In addition, videos of the Secretary-General making his remarks to the press about the mass public demonstrations under way across the world were extremely popular. The UN News French interview with the United Nations Female Police Officer of the Year, a national of Senegal, was viewed by almost 600,000 people across the team’s social media platforms.

67. Among the top themes covered by UN News French were dignity, social justice, climate, health, children’s rights and young people. Audiences responded positively

when stories on these important issues were shared by influencers on social media. African issues featured prominently among the most popular topics on UN News French. Of the top 50 most popular stories covered during the reporting period, 20 dealt with African issues. Special attention was given to the coverage of francophone African countries. Audiences gave much attention to stories about Burundi, the Central African Republic and Mali, and about peace and security in the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Mali, where the United Nations maintains peacekeeping operations.

68. Many new partners have been contacting the UN News Kiswahili team, including major media groups in the region where Kiswahili is spoken, such as Border TV in Kenya and, in the United Republic of Tanzania, Channel Ten television, which broadcasts countrywide and on satellite, Zenz TV, which is based in Zanzibar, and the Tanzania Broadcasting Corporation. Clouds Media Group, the largest broadcast consortium in the United Republic of Tanzania, started airing the daily news produced by the UN News Kiswahili team in December. New partnerships reflected strengthened cooperation with United Nations offices on the ground. In 2019, subscriptions to the UN News Kiswahili channel on YouTube increased by 111 per cent and the number of impressions on YouTube rose by 150 per cent to 12.2 million.

69. UN News Kiswahili incorporated grass-roots voices in its stories and features by boosting cooperation with news partners, United Nations system agencies, and United Nations information centres, which led to greater audience engagement. Examples of popular features include a story about the empowerment by the United Nations Population Fund of local communities in Zanzibar to educate families on reproductive health and family planning, and a feature about a young entrepreneur in the United Republic of Tanzania who won the World Wildlife Fund Africa Youth Conservation Award for converting agricultural waste into fuel-grade charcoal in a project that also generated jobs. Original interviews produced by UN News Swahili during the high-level week with visiting dignitaries were shared by local and regional media outlets.

70. During the reporting period, UN News Portuguese saw the number of page views rise by 97 per cent and the number of users by 221 per cent in comparison with 2018. UN News Portuguese has been growing its audience by promoting its content through partners and stakeholders, using keywords in titles for search engine optimization and carrying out a monthly analysis of the results. A partnership with the United Nations country team in Mozambique led to a field reporting trip. While in the country, the Department created multimedia news coverage of the visit by the Secretary-General after two cyclones had struck the country back to back. The trip generated a wealth of material such as a video documentary series produced by UN News Portuguese that was released in December 2019.

71. The network of partners of UN News Portuguese includes 400 media organizations worldwide. In October, UN News Portuguese had the UN News RSS feed reconnected with UOL, the largest online content and digital services company in Brazil, which has more than 98 million unique visitors every month. Other partners were Rádio e Televisão de Portugal (RTP) and the Lusa News Agency of Portugal, the main reference sources in providing digital content to mainstream sources of information in Europe, Africa and Asia. The hourly radio news broadcasts on RTP are updated with material produced by UN News Portuguese.

72. During the reporting period, UN News Russian saw its number of page views increase by 60 per cent compared with the same period in 2018. Among visitors to the site are some of the biggest information agencies in the region, which repurpose and reuse the content, bringing it to millions of users. An interview produced by UN News Russian with an activist in Kazakhstan who is combating sexual violence

was used across the region, including by [Informburo.kz](http://informburo.kz) and Central Asia News.Net, two major news agencies. A story on the call launched by the Secretary-General for leaders from the Group of Seven to make a strong commitment and show political will to tackle climate emergency was picked up by Russia Today (RT), which linked to the UN News Russian website. The story was “liked” by 1.6 million users. A large regional news platform in Central Asia, Kazinform, has a new partnership with UN News and has become a major amplifier of content.

73. Based on an impact analysis and the need for client orientation, the UN News Russian team has been tailoring content by giving it a regional angle and in doing so has had a greater impact as demonstrated by audience attention. In August, on-the-ground reporting led by UN News Russian on the former Semipalatinsk nuclear test site in Kazakhstan brought to life the issue of disarmament, a major concern in the region. Coverage of health and climate issues continued to feature among the top 20 stories of UN News Russian during the reporting period. As part of a recent partnership with the United Nations Development Programme, UN News Russian featured stories on women’s rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran and female members of parliament in Kazakhstan, as well as the Convention on the Rights of the Child and World Toilet Day.

74. UN News Spanish has been able to strengthen the message of the United Nations throughout the Spanish-speaking world by more than doubling its audience impact between July and November, from some 1.3 million to 3.2 million page views. With the number of followers of UN News increasing on both Facebook and Twitter, UN News Spanish tweets reached a cumulative total of 6.3 million people and generated 747,000 engagements. Its Facebook posts reached 1.7 million people. Posts by UN News Spanish on Twitter have been retweeted by significant influencers, including Heads of State and United Nations partners.

75. UN News Spanish has been following an approach based on audience-focused communication, with constant attention being paid to search engine optimization, changes in audience preferences and interest, and social media trends, and by tailoring content to those needs in a strategic and time-sensitive way. This approach has shown remarkable results in terms of growth in the number of users and user engagement in Latin America, Spain and the United States.

76. Working closely with United Nations information centres in the region, UN News Spanish has increasingly published interesting interviews and multimedia materials from the ground on its website including stories on, for example, the integration of migrants in Buenos Aires or gender equality in Mexico, and a photo story about the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia and the reintegration of former members of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia-People’s Army (FARC-EP).

## **V. Other services**

### **A. Photo and audiovisual archives**

#### **Digitization and the Audiovisual Library**

77. The digitization of the United Nations audiovisual archives, made possible by the financial support of the Government of Oman, has helped to increase access from around the world to the historic audiovisual collections. Material is being transferred from fragile and obsolete formats into accessible digital formats and uploaded to the Audiovisual Library website. While greater and broader accessibility has been one of the most positive results, the overall aim of the project is to ensure the preservation of uniquely valuable items for current and future research, for reuse in multimedia

productions and for inclusion in educational programming. During the reporting period, approximately 3,000 historic films, videos and audio assets were added to an overall total of 27,500 items digitized. This represents approximately 30 per cent of the historic audiovisual assets to be digitized.

78. Educational and cultural institutions, United Nations diplomatic missions, international media, publishers, broadcast companies and independent producers worldwide have benefited from these historic records. They serve to further disseminate the work of the United Nations to a wider audience around the globe. As a sign of the high interest in archival content that exists, some 8,300 audiovisual files were downloaded from the Audiovisual Library website and 26,000 historic videos were viewed. The United Nations audiovisual archival collections were used in exhibitions, online multimedia projects and for news and media programmes.

### **Photos and the Photo Library**

79. Great interest has been shown in using photos from the United Nations collection on the part of international media, publishers, film-makers, permanent missions, and educational and cultural institutions, as well as by United Nations offices around the world. Photos from the United Nations collection have been used for exhibits, online multimedia projects, social media, presentations and research projects around the world.

80. During the reporting period, approximately 73,000 photos were downloaded directly from the United Nations Photo website. In addition, more than 150,000 photos were distributed by the Photo Library. Some 14,000 photos were captioned and had metadata enhanced for more accurate search results and effective discovery on the web.

81. The Department has started to implement a robust new digital assets management system to manage photos produced around the world, make them more widely accessible and preserve them for future generations.

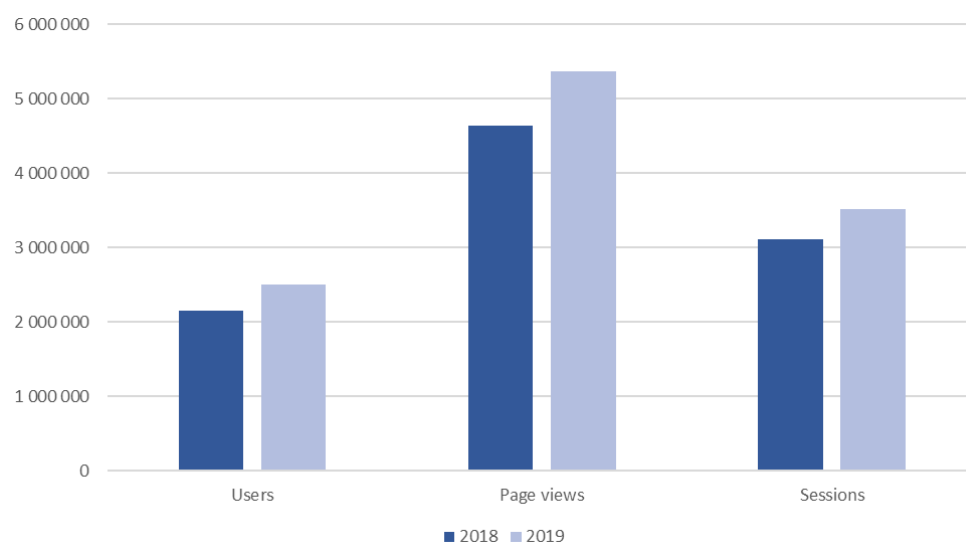
## **B. Meetings coverage**

82. The Meetings Coverage Section continued to provide fast, accurate and comprehensive coverage of all the open meetings of the principal organs of the United Nations and their key subsidiary bodies at Headquarters and abroad, as well as selected press conferences and briefings. These press materials were distributed to a worldwide audience, online and through the global network of United Nations information centres. Between 1 July and 31 December 2019, the Section produced 1,741 press releases, summaries and transcripts in English and French, totalling 10,055 pages.

83. According to data obtained from Google Analytics, the meetings coverage and press release websites in English and French ([www.un.org/press/en](http://www.un.org/press/en) and [www.un.org/press/fr](http://www.un.org/press/fr), respectively) were visited by viewers from some 240 countries and territories during 2019, including remote and sparsely populated territories such as Saint Pierre and Miquelon (France) and Christmas Island (Australia).

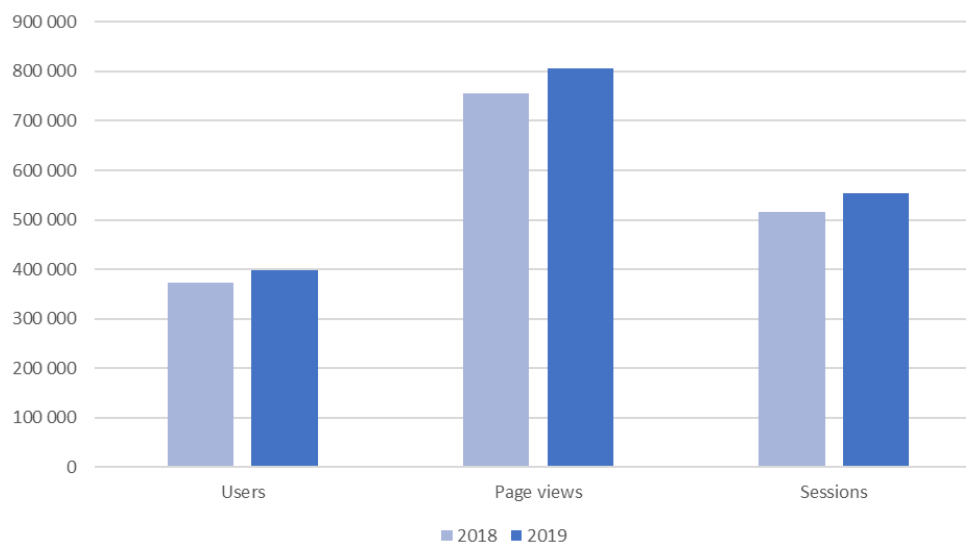
84. In 2019, the English-language site had more than 2.5 million users and 5.37 million page views in 3.5 million sessions. All these figures represented an increase compared with the previous year (see fig. 25). Overall, the number of users of the site increased by some 17 per cent compared with the previous year. The largest audience share was in the Americas.

Figure 25

**Website statistics for the meetings coverage and press release website (English)**

85. The French language site had more than 373,000 users and 756,000 page views across more than 515,000 sessions, also increasing from the previous year (see fig. 26). Overall, users of the website increased by close to 7 per cent compared with the previous year, with almost half of all visitors coming from Africa (47 per cent).

Figure 26

**Website statistics for the meetings coverage and press release website (French)**

### C. Media services: media accreditation and liaison

86. The Media Accreditation and Liaison Unit continues to facilitate coverage by the media of meetings, events and briefings held at United Nations Headquarters. The Unit also assists colleagues and missions with media arrangements and the distribution of information and materials in order to raise awareness among journalists accredited at Headquarters and elsewhere. Between July 2019 and January 2020, the Unit processed approximately 5,000 requests for accreditation, including



during the high-level week of the seventy-fourth session of the General Assembly. In advance of the general debate, the Unit gave briefings and walkthroughs for representatives of the media and Member States, oversaw the temporary media centre and coordinated the use of live positions at Headquarters for international broadcasters. The Unit continually updates the press about briefings, meetings and outreach activities on its website, email and Twitter account. It also shares advisories, statements and reports from across the United Nations system.

## **D. Partnerships**

87. During the reporting period, the Department expanded partnerships with online media outlets across multiple formats and with streaming media platforms carrying UN News audio content and offering UN Video programmes. Traditional outlets now carrying United Nations media content include the Kenya Broadcasting Corporation and Radio Canada International. WNYE in New York airs UN News audio programming, podcasts and interviews. From BRICS TV in South Africa to college radio stations in Spain, multimedia content about the United Nations is reaching ever-growing and highly diverse audiences across platforms.

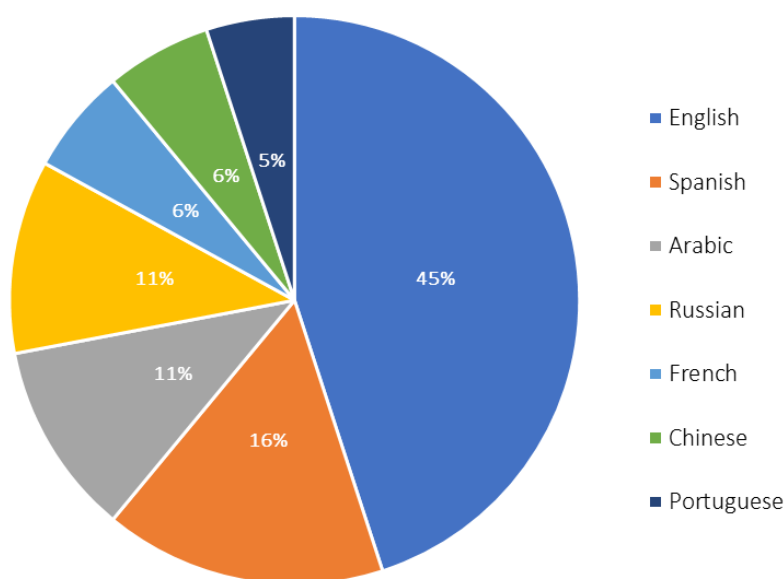
88. Through a partnership with the audio streaming platform SoundCloud, the new youth-oriented UN News podcast entitled “UNcomplicated” was played by more than 155,000 people in its first two weeks, well over SoundCloud’s own benchmark of 30,000 plays for new spoken word content. During the high-level week of the General Assembly, SoundCloud made a playlist for young people with soundbites and interviews it had collected under the title “Sounds of the UNGA”, which reached 9,500 plays in two weeks and has had steady audience growth ever since.

89. In September, the Department attended the annual exhibition of the Airline Passenger Experience Association (APEX EXPO) in Los Angeles, United States, and presented a range of United Nations multimedia content to the airlines and inflight entertainment content service providers. As a result, the Department is currently in discussions with multiple airlines and content service providers from around the globe who have expressed an interest in offering multimedia products to their worldwide client base.

## **E. News monitoring**

90. The Department continued to monitor global media coverage of the United Nations and major international issues related to its mission in the six official languages and Portuguese. A special digital media insights report was produced following the seventy-fourth session of the General Assembly. The General Assembly received almost 58,000 mentions in more than 1,300 top-tier online news sources in the six official languages and Portuguese, 58 per cent of which was focused on the high-level week. Almost half of all the mentions occurred in English-language sources (45 per cent), followed by Spanish, Arabic and Russian (see fig. 27).

Figure 27  
**Percentage of articles on the seventy-fourth session of the General Assembly by language (11–30 September 2019)**



## VI. Conclusion

91. Global interest in the work of the United Nations and a desire for accurate, timely information on world affairs continues to grow. The Department continues to find new ways and approaches to meet that interest and reach and engage global audiences with a view to strengthening support for the work, principles and purposes of the United Nations by producing and delivering balanced news and information materials and making them available through both traditional media and newer web-based and mobile distribution platforms.

92. The Department has an overall orientation towards following a more audience-focused approach to delivering content across formats and using analytics as an integral component in planning, and is enhancing coordination in communication products from conception to production. The Department is committed to developing programmes that cater to the needs of audiences.

93. Across languages and across platforms, audience figures and engagement levels increased during the reporting period. As the Department endeavours to broaden its options for content distribution through partners, third-party and social media platforms, and modern dissemination channels, media outlets around the world are increasingly airing its multimedia news and feature products in the various languages, thus further expanding audience reach.

94. The revamping of un.org started with the release of the new home page in the six official languages of the United Nations and has already borne fruit as users stay on the site longer and delve more deeply into information owing to the site's more user-friendly structure. Work on the revamped un.org will continue in the coming year.

95. Multilingualism remained a priority, with the Department continuing its efforts to strengthen multilingualism across all platforms in the six official languages of the United Nations and, in some cases, in other languages as well. Impact and reach have grown across languages and the Department will continue to explore new technology and collaboration with other departments to further strengthen multilingualism.