

## **DPI STATEMENT – UN SPACE MEETING 29 OCT 2018, CR8, UNHQ , NEW YORK**

(Peter Dawkins, DPI Representative)

Colleagues, thank you very much for inviting DPI to your meeting today.

Partnerships are absolutely vital if DPI is to achieve its global communications objectives.

Working with partners allows DPI to ramp up its technical capacity (for example working with social media platform providers such as Facebook and Twitter), to amplify our messaging on core UN issues such as the Sustainable Development Goals (you will now see aircraft decorated with SDG branding flying the skies of the world) and to engage with key targeted audiences that can relay and amplify our messages to their own constituencies (such as the international academic community and the NGO / Civil Society global network).

### **UN.ORG**

The UN website, UN.ORG, is a powerful platform for online public engagement. It is the most popular website amongst the websites of the UN family and engenders deep and meaningful interactions, with an average web page dwell-time of 2 minutes 12 seconds (high by industry standards, which is usually less than a minute).

UN.ORG reaches approximately 44 million unique visitors a year and generates just under 160 million pageviews annually. The audience is predominantly in the younger demographic. Access via mobile devices is increasing, especially in emerging markets such as India and China. Analysis indicates a distinct public interest in learning more about the work of the UN and how the UN can help address today's global challenges and issues.

As the preeminent online fully owned and controlled voice of the UN system, UN.ORG is the ideal online platform to present the public with the full story of the ongoing work, mission, priorities and history of not only the UN Secretariat but also the entire UN system more broadly.

This should, and does, include the work of the United Nations on outer space affairs.

Multilingualism is an important part of the mandate of DPI and we strive to ensure full language parity in our communications initiatives.

Each year we celebrate International Day of Human Space Flight (resolution A/RS/65/271) and produce a dedicated website in the six official languages of the UN. Similarly, the Department produces a dedicated website for World Space Week (4 to 10 October), again in the six official UN languages.

UNISPACE+50, in June earlier this year, was covered quite extensively by DPI who published a range of stories such as “the Talents of Women in space are vital to imagining the future”, “The UN helping Kenya to become a space nation”, “using space technology to build a better world”, “using miniaturized satellite fleets to help sustainable development on earth” and Scott Kelly’s flagship address where he stressed that the world we live on “is our only planet”.

As we reflect on a fruitful and productive partnership already in place between DPI and UNOOSA, we stand ready to look at opportunities to further develop the partnership between our offices where DPI can bring the messages of UNOOSA and UN SPACE to a global audience in multiple languages.

As DPI embarks on its reform process, becoming the Department of Global Communications, we envisage creating a brand new UN.ORG. Regular visitors to UN.ORG will notice how the product has changed in recent years and is now closer to reaching its goal of being a magazine type product that showcases and inter-relates the many dimensions of the work of the United Nations.

As we develop this product we hope to ensure that the UN's work on space related activities receives the prominent attention it deserves.

## **UN PARTNERSHIPS**

Now I would like to describe one of our more recent partnership programs and while not quite launching our messaging into outer space we are certainly reaching the upper atmosphere.

Xiamen Airlines is an example of an airline that has partnered with the United Nations to promote the UN's messaging and the SDGs. This is a new, innovative and exciting area of partnerships led by my colleague Fang Chen who has more details and would be happy to speak to you in more detail in the break.

To create awareness about the goals, the airline has painted the exterior of its aircraft in a SDG livery.

Officials from both organizations attended a ribbon-cutting ceremony at the North Charleston Boeing plant where Boeing 787-9 Dreamliner bearing the message of the SDGs was unveiled. The event garnered enormous primetime news and media coverage.

News networks, websites, newspapers, and social media platforms shared insights of the event with their audience. According to the initial data from Xiamen Airlines' Media Report on UN's SDGs Livery Craft, dated 1 February 2018, coverage reached over 1 billion people.

***I repeat 1 billion people.*** These are not insignificant numbers.

Television coverage was measured at 400 million; in addition to WeChat and Weibo's 50 million reach, international social media platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram audiences were estimated at 100 million people.

With the help of Xiamen Airline's established reputation and brand's strong desire for becoming a "global image ambassador for the SDGs", the event received wide coverage by major news networks, predominantly in China, Asia Pacific, and North America; aircraft delivery ceremony was broadcasted on CCTV-4, with a rating of 0.28 and estimated audience of 3.64 million. Xinhua Net, China Daily, China.org, Asia Pacific Daily were among many others to show great interest in covering the event, highlighting the impact of brand's initiative to partner with the UN.

In addition to the SDGs Airplane, Xiamen Airlines features UN multimedia programming dedicated to the SDGs and other Special Communication Campaigns in its in-flight entertainment, VIP airport lounges, and in-flight magazine. Peacekeeping PSAs and a PSA dedicated to General Debate (UNGA 72) had a reach of over 3 million each.

On October 24, 2018, Xiamen Airlines held an event dedicated to celebration of the UN Day. Passengers were invited to participate by taking photos with posters displaying SDGs and other promotional items. The interior of the aircraft was decorated with the SDGs logo and UN messages.

## **UN NGO**

The Department of Public Information (DPI) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have a long history of working together. The importance of working with and through NGOs as an integral part of United Nations information activities was recognized when the Department of Public Information was first established in 1946. The General Assembly, in its resolution 13 (I), instructed DPI and its branch offices to:

"...actively assist and encourage national information services, educational institutions and other governmental and nongovernmental organizations of all kinds interested in spreading information about the United Nations. For this and other purposes, it should operate a fully equipped reference service,

brief or supply lecturers, and make available its publications, documentary films, film strips, posters and other exhibits for use by these agencies and organizations.”

The NGO Relations Unit is within the NGO Relations, Advocacy and Special Events Section of the Outreach Division in the United Nations Department of Public Information (DPI). It is mandated to link the Organization with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that are associated with DPI and support the department's efforts to disseminate information on the work and role of the UN.

Task-oriented and driven by people with a common interest, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) perform a variety of services and humanitarian functions, bring citizens' concerns to Governments, monitor policies and encourage political participation at the community level. They provide analysis and expertise, serve as early warning mechanisms and help monitor and implement international agreements, including Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Typically, they are organized around specific issues, such as the UN pillars of peace and security, human rights and development. NGOs promote UN observances and international years and decades established by the General Assembly to focus world attention on important issues facing humanity. Their relationship with offices and agencies of the United Nations System differs depending on their location and mandate.

Over 1,450 NGOs with strong information programmes on issues of concern to the United Nations are associated with the Department of Public Information (DPI), giving the United Nations valuable links to people around the world. DPI helps those NGOs gain access to and disseminate information about the range of issues in which the United Nations is involved, to enable the public to understand better the aims and objectives of the Organization.

Here is one example of how DPI has introduced the NGO community to the Organization's work on outer space affairs (as it happens in this very conference room on 6 Oct 2017)

On that occasion UN Champion for Space and former retired NASA astronaut Scott Kelly and Director of the UN Office for Outer Space, Simonetta Di Pippo joined the Youth Representatives of DPI/NGO-led event to raise awareness about pursuing STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) careers.

At the event titled “Reach for the Stars: Encouraging Youth to Pursue Careers in STEM”, the esteemed speakers had an inspiring conversation with the youth and encouraged young minds to opt for STEM careers, specifically space exploration, to help sustain development processes and build stronger nations.

In this regard, Mr. Kelly pointed out that space exploration serves an inspiration for children and adults alike to achieve the most challenging goals facing humankind. Additionally, Ms. Di Pippo added that her professional career in STEM keeps her motivated to learn and discover something new every day and generally helps her live a better life.

Highlighting the role of international cooperation for successful space missions, Mr. Kelly added that conflicts between countries that seem relevant on Earth seem entirely nonexistent aboard the International Space Station, where communication with colleagues from different nationalities is often a form of life support.

“We rely on each other for physical support, for emotional support, sometimes for our lives,” said Mr. Kelly.

The speakers underscored that space exploration is not only a powerful tool for international diplomacy but they also help development of nations that have been less advanced in those areas before.

Furthermore, Ms. Di Pippo pointed out that involving Member States to support and facilitate education is a long-term objective. This in turn, she added, will ensure that young girls and people from marginalized groups have access to STEM fields.

In concluding remarks, the speakers urged the young audience to continue pursuing their dreams in the field of STEM, with Mr. Kelly remarking, “If you can dream it, you can achieve it.”

## **UN ACADEMIA**

Finally, I would like to briefly describe the work of DPI in partnering with the academic community.

The United Nations Academic Impact (UNAI) is an initiative that aligns institutions of higher education with the United Nations in supporting and contributing to the realization of United Nations goals and mandates, including the promotion and protection of human rights, access to education, sustainability and conflict resolution.

Since 2010, UNAI has created a vibrant and diverse network of students, academics, scientists, researchers, think tanks, institutions of higher education, continuing education and educational associations. There are over 1,300 member institutions in more than 130 countries that reach millions of people in the education and research sectors around the world. Since its inception some thirty international networks of universities and other institutes of higher education and research have endorsed UNAI and encouraged their members to join, representing a global diversity of regions and a thematic wealth of disciplines.

The work of these institutions is vital to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals as they serve as incubators of new ideas, inventions and solutions to the many global challenges we face. United

Nations Academic Impact provides the integral link to these stakeholders to ensure that the international community harnesses the energy and innovation of young people and the research community in service to humanity.

Every subject and discipline can have a UN imprint. We want relevant institutions to recognize this link and, often without additional effort or expense, undertake activities that can directly support United Nations mandates and objectives.

UNAI assists stakeholders in this regard by disseminating information on UN initiatives and activities, providing ideas on how these activities can be applied at the local level on college campuses, in classrooms and in communities, and by providing a platform where university students, academics and researchers can connect and share ideas, research and resources to further the Sustainable Development Goals and other UN mandates.

UNAI has held a number of sessions on the topic of the UN's work on outer space affairs. One such session which was received with great interest by the academic community was a discussion in 2012, held in partnership with NASA, on the International Day of Human Space Flight (12 April).

## **CONCLUSION**

In closing, I hope to have given an outline of the landscape of partnerships being operated by DPI with some connection to the topic of outer space affairs.

It is clear to us in DPI that the peaceful use of outer space will be vital in achieving the SDG's. We therefore look forward to continued partnership and future discussions in this regard.