



UN NEWS CENTRE

With breaking stories and
newswire products from



UN increasingly using social media to publicize its work, senior official says



Kiyoo Akasaka, Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information

27 April 2011 – The United Nations Department of Public Information (DPI) is increasingly harnessing social media and the Internet to disseminate key messages about the work of the world body, the department’s head told a UN committee today.

Kiyoo Akasaka, Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information, [told](#) the opening of the latest session of the Committee on Information that the recent popular uprisings across North Africa and the Middle East illustrated the power and reach of social media tools.

“The logic and pace of communication in our times makes it essential that we increasingly use the Internet and social media to implement UN communications campaigns on a range of issues, including the MDGs [Millennium Development Goals], climate change and violence against women,” Mr. Akasaka said.

“We are using these tools to inform and update journalists about key events at the UN, and to build better informed and more inclusive online communities and coalitions for change.”

He cited the UN’s presence on YouTube, where the Organization’s videos have been viewed more than 2.5 million times, and the Flickr website, where UN photographs have been viewed at least a million times in the past two years.

UN e-books and other publications are also increasingly available on mobile distribution services such as the Kindle, the Apple iPad and Sony's e-book Reader, he said.

In his address the Under-Secretary-General outlined DPI's efforts explain the multi-faceted work of the UN and its many subsidiary bodies.

He noted that the department is using new technologies, such as social media and the Internet, to promote multilingualism at the UN.

UN Information Centres (UNICs) around the world have produced information material on the work of the world body in more than 150 languages, and maintain websites in 29 languages.

But Mr. Akasaka warned that many of the UNICs are facing budgetary pressures, and he called on countries that host such centres to consider providing them with either rent-free premises or subsidized rent.

He added that other forms of support would also be useful, such as providing DPI field offices with access to facilities to translate and print UN publications in national and regional languages at no cost.

“For our part, we are examining ways to reduce set expenditures by changing the ways UNICs operate, and by reducing the size of our premises in some cases. We will continue to look for creative ways to ensure the effectiveness of our field offices.”

The committee, which was originally established in 1978 and is now comprised of 113 Member States, is tasked with examining UN public information policies and activities and promoting the creation of a more just and more effective global information and communications order.

News Tracker: past stories on this issue

[UN now better equipped to publicize its work, says head of information committee](#)