Fifth Committee

12th formal meeting

Monday, 6 November 2017

Second part of the morning/Conference Room 3

Agenda item 139. Pattern of Conferences A/72/32, A/72/116, A/72/561
Introduction & general discussion

Statement of Ms. Catherine Pollard
Under-Secretary-General for
General Assembly and Conference Management

Distinguished Chair,

Distinguished members of the Fifth Committee,

1.   Good morning. It is a pleasure to be with you today to discuss the

pattern of conferences. My colleagues and I are happy to interact with you

on developments in the field of conference management and to discuss the

way forward in this area and receive your guidance and recommendations.

In September, we met with the Committee on Conferences and then with

the ACABQ, and today I look forward to conferring further with you.

2.   Conference management is an ever-changing area with many

challenges, requiring continuous innovation. We are continuing to improve

and modernize our work in the translation services so that we can handle

the increased workload by leveraging our investment in technology, which is

also driving changes in working methods. The increased use of eLUNa, a computer-assisted and machine translation platform developed in-house, and the consolidation of UNTERM as the global United Nations terminology portal to facilitate the use of harmonized official terminology and improve quality and consistency across documents and languages have both led to improved working methods and higher quality. Another cutting-edge technology is now entering its implementation phase. The Pipeline Visualization Tool was designed and developed by colleagues in Geneva as an interactive data interface that provides decision support to managers of document management and processing units. It enables them to see the current and projected workload superposed on the available and projected workforce, based on standards of productivity. It allows for reviewing and prioritizing the processing of documents, and helps to identify critical periods when the engagement of contractual services is required to assist with the workload.

3. While the tool improves the predictability of document delivery and ensures accountability for meeting deadlines and the timely issuance of documentation, a new improved version of the conference management dashboard, gData, has been released. The usability and relevance of existing gData reports and dashboard displays are significantly enhanced to meet requirements by analysing the historical trends in workload and providing a

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global and comprehensive overview. We will continue to adapt this and the other systems, always with the aim of improving our services.

4.   With the successful outcome of a project piloted in 2016, a new contractual workflow model was fully implemented in the Documentation Division in New York, whereby contractual work is now being assigned by the individual language services rather than through the centralized and administratively heavy model used for many years before. This became possible thanks to the introduction of new documentation management tools designed by DGACM. Further efficiency gains were realized, notably faster processing time, increased utilization of in-house capacity, improved quality assurance for outsourced jobs and the redeployment of the Contractual Translation Unit staff to other services in need of additional resources.

5.   The harmonization of policies, practices and standard operating procedures across duty stations remains prominent on our agenda. The global steering group created for this purpose has continued to produce specific and sound policy recommendations in meetings and documents management and interpretation.

Distinguished members,

6.   In terms of meetings, we have made progress with the one-stop-shop project that will provide a single entry point for requesting meeting services and other events through an easy-to-use self-service interface, as well as streamlined business processes that will enhance coordination among all service providers. We aim to deploy it in 2018.

7.   The eDelegate portal project will provide all necessary information to Member States in an easy-to-use and secure portal. The portal, which has either provided or is providing unified access to delegates for several Secretariat e-services, has replaced and automated the previous time-consuming manual submission process, saving time and resources for the missions and the Secretariat.

8.   DGACM is revamping the *Journal of the United Nations* in conformity with resolution 71/323, so as to have it issued in the six official languages throughout the year. The new, modernized *Journal* will be a fully online version with a user-friendly interface, widely accessible across web browsers and platforms, desktop applications and mobile devices, and will also be accessible to persons with disabilities. Whereas the paper version will continue to be available, the website will have a range of new features, including hyperlinks and the ability to search information.

9.   Committed to mainstreaming accessibility requirements in its work and operations, DGACM expanded its activities to improve the accessibility of conference services by upgrading assistive devices and taking steps to standardize the planning and recruitment of sign language interpreters. Over the next few months and into 2018, we will be working with the Department of Management and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs to address physical accessibility in the meeting rooms, including the General Assembly Hall.

Distinguished members,

10.   As I informed the ACABQ, our interaction goes far beyond the sessions at which the pattern of conferences and section 2 of the budget are taken up. DGACM colleagues work unceasingly to ensure that you receive your documents on time so that your programme of work runs as smoothly as possible. I can assure you that ACABQ and Fifth Committee documents continue to have the highest priority in the documentation processing chain, and we work very closely with the respective secretariats in this regard.

11.   My colleagues and I are looking forward to our interaction and dialogue today and during the informal sessions. Thank you.

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