United Nations

REPORT OF THE SIXTH CONFERENCE
OF MOU UNIVERSITIES

Sixth conference of the network of universities that signed a memorandum of understanding with the United Nations on cooperation in preparing candidates for language competitive examinations

UNITED NATIONS LANGUAGE PROFESSIONALS TODAY AND TOMORROW

Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey (California, United States of America)

2-3 May 2019

REPORT OF THE SIXTH CONFERENCE
OF MOU UNIVERSITIES[*]

Contents

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[*] The present report can be downloaded as a PDF file from DGACM's website.

I.   AIMS AND THEME OF THE CONFERENCE

1.   On 2 and 3 May 2019, the Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey hosted the sixth conference of the network of universities[1] that had signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the United Nations on cooperation in preparing candidates for language competitive examinations.

2.   The conference aims to bring together representatives of the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management and the MoU universities[2] in order to:

(a) Review collaboration within the MoU community and suggest new approaches so as to continually strengthen and improve the network of MoU universities;

(b) Provide an opportunity for partners within the MoU network to compare initiatives and methods in the fields of language professional training, training of trainers, outreach and communication for training programmes, joint training activities and other related projects, and to synthesize those efforts where possible;

(c) Discuss and agree on methods and practices to create and strengthen the relationship between the academic training of language professionals and the needs of employers, specifically international organizations.

3.   The theme chosen for the sixth conference was "Preparing United Nations language professionals for the challenges of today and the future". The conference aimed to facilitate:

(a)   The exchange of views among participants on the status of cooperation between the United Nations and partner universities;

(b)   The updating of MoU universities on new characteristics of the United Nations language competitive examinations;

(c)   The presentation of the skills required to successfully pass the competitive examinations or serve as a United Nations language professional;

(d)   The introduction of MoU universities to lesser-known disciplines at the United Nations;

(e)   The exchange of information between the United Nations and MoU university participants on:

(i)   United Nations training material for interpreters;

(ii)   Artificial intelligence, machine translation and other technological advances for translators;

(iii) Remote training;

(iv) Current challenges in training language professionals.

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[1] The first conference was hosted by the University of Salamanca (Spain) in May 2011; the second by the University of Mons (Belgium) in May 2012; the third by Shanghai International Studies University (China) in April 2013; the fourth by Herzen State Pedagogical University (Russian Federation) in April 2015; and the fifth by United Nations Headquarters in New York in April 2017.

[2] Universities that have signed an MoU with the United Nations are referred to as "MoU universities".

II. PARTICIPANTS

4.   A total of 53 registered participants attended the conference in person (see annexes II and III to the present report):

(a) 34 representatives of 18 MoU universities and 3 remote practicum agreement[3] universities, located in 13 countries;

(b) 19 representatives of the four United Nations Headquarters duty stations and the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA).[4]

III. AGENDA

5.   In accordance with the recommendations made at the third MoU conference, DGACM representatives reported on the pedagogical assistance provided by United Nations staff at the four Headquarters duty stations and ESCWA in 2017 and 2018 and on internships in language services and success rates in United Nations language competitive examinations.[5] The host presented a summary of the wide range of activities conducted under the MoUs during the same period. DGACM representatives presented updates to the examinations and shared insights into how to prepare for those examinations and for service at the United Nations as a translator in general. DGACM staff members from various duty stations also made presentations on précis-writing and editing, including spoken-word editing. A discussion on the status of the implementation of the MoUs was organized on 2 May 2019 to enable an exchange of views between representatives of the United Nations and of MoU universities. On 3 May 2019, four moderator-led panel discussions were held. The topics were:

(a) United Nations material for training interpreters;

(b) Artificial intelligence, machine translation and other technological advances, and their impact on how translators are trained;

(c) Remote training, including its advantages and disadvantages;

(d) An overview of the context in which MoU universities operated and its implications for cooperation under the MoUs.

6.   In addition to the opening and closing segments, plenary meetings and panel discussions, the agenda included two social events offered by the host institution: a dinner on 2 May 2019 for all

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[3] See annex I for a full list of MoU universities.

[4] Twelve representatives were from New York, three from Geneva, one from Nairobi, two from Vienna and one from ESCWA.Although not under the same budgetary umbrella as the conference services in New York, Geneva, Vienna and Nairobi, ESCWA participates in the MoU network through its support for Saint-Joseph University, also headquartered in Beirut.

[5] Three reports, on internships, training and informational outreach, and language competitive examinations, respectively, had been circulated to all participants before the conference.

participants in the conference, and a reception on 3 May for all participants in the Monterey Forum (held on 4 and 5 May at the Middlebury Institute) and the conference.

7.   The conference was conducted in five of the six official languages of the United Nations. With the assistance of its interpretation students, the Middlebury Institute provided interpretation from or into Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish, as needed.

8.   The full agenda and hyperlinks to the statements and presentations delivered at the conference can be found in annex IV to the present report.

IV. PROCEEDINGS

1. OPENING REMARKS

9.   Welcoming remarks for the opening plenary meeting were delivered by Laura Burian, Dean of the Graduate School of Translation, Interpretation and Language Education of the Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey, by Jeff Dayton-Johnson, Dean of the Middlebury Institute, and by Catherine Pollard, Under-Secretary-General for General Assembly and Conference Management.

10.   Ms. Burian, addressing the conference in English, welcomed the recent announcement that three Middlebury Institute students had won the Saint Jerome Translation Contest, a success that she attributed to the collaboration with the United Nations on the training of language professionals. She expressed her gratitude to the United Nations for providing the Institute's students with training and internship opportunities and expressed thanks to all participants for attending the conference, which was expected to serve as a forum for exchanging views on the successes and challenges of the network. She also invited participants to visit the exhibit on the birth of modern interpretation at the Nuremberg trials, which was on display at the Institute for the duration of the conference and the subsequent Monterey Forum.

11.   Mr. Dayton-Johnson, addressing the conference in English, highlighted that 2019 was an auspicious year for the Middlebury Institute to host the conference as it marked the tenth anniversary of the signing of its MoU with the United Nations and the fiftieth anniversary of the Institute's translation and interpreting programme. He complimented the United Nations outreach programme, which provided enhanced training for the Institute's students and faculty, and expressed his wish that new types of collaboration would come to fruition as a result of the conference.

12.   Ms. Pollard, addressing the conference in English, expressed thanks to the Middlebury Institute for organizing the conference and recalled the objectives of the outreach programme, which were to bridge the gap between academic training and the exigencies of the workplace and to train a new generation of language professionals to take up the challenge and meet the United Nations selection criteria. Solving that equation was essential to the continued provision of high-quality conference services, which were at the core of the multilateral system. She noted that the cooperation between the United Nations and MoU universities had expanded over the previous two years, and that the activities conducted under the

MoUs continued to diversify. In accordance with the recommendation from the fifth conference, remote activities had complemented rather than replaced face-to-face activities. She updated participants on the modalities of the language competitive examinations, which were proving effective in securing applications from the most suitable candidates. She then presented new forms of collaborative arrangements with universities, which were intended to support specific succession-planning needs and achieve greater diversity in language services. Such arrangements included remote practicum agreements, which had been signed by eight universities, including three MoU universities, and associated membership agreements, the first of which was expected to be signed with Belgrano University on the margins of the conference. In concluding, she invited MoU university representatives and United Nations staff to avail themselves of the opportunity afforded by the conference to exchange views on the outreach programme.

2. UPDATE ON MoU NETWORK ACTIVITIES

13.   Two presentations were delivered under the agenda item. The first was given by Carole Maisonneuve, Public Information and Multilingualism Officer in the Office of the Under-Secretary-General in DGACM in New York, and covered quantitative data from the United Nations perspective. The second was by Renée Jourdenais, Professor at the Middlebury Institute and Coordinator of the conference, and examined qualitative data from the university perspective.

14.   Ms. Maisonneuve, addressing the conference in French, noted an increase of 26.9 per cent in the number of interns hosted by United Nations language services between 2017 and 2018. MoU university students or graduates consistently accounted for more than 75 per cent of all interns hosted, and the figure had continued to rise over the period, reaching 77.6 per cent in 2018. Interns in the United Nations language services came from a range of MoU universities: 16 in 2017 and 15 in 2018. All United Nations language disciplines[6] had hosted interns during the biennium. Some universities had supplied interns for several disciplines, others for several languages. Information about the geographical distribution of the interns was also provided.

15.   With regard to pedagogical and informational assistance, she noted an increase of 41.82 per cent in the number of outreach activities between 2017 and 2018, translating into an estimated increase of 95.65 per cent in staff time devoted to such activities. In total, 47.35 per cent of all outreach activities conducted by DGACM at the four Headquarters duty stations and ESCWA in 2017 had been dedicated to cooperation with MoU universities; that figure had been 58.5 per cent in 2018. She also described how the methods of delivery of pedagogical and informational assistance had evolved over the reporting period, with a significant increase observed in both on-site activities at a United Nations duty station (325 per cent) and remote activities with participants at a third-party location (491.2 per cent).

16.   Turning to the language competitive examinations, she noted that the success rate of MoU university graduates in the seven examinations conducted during the reporting period had been comparable to the overall success rate observed since 2012. In 2017 and 2018, 52.08 per cent of all rostered candidates in the examinations had been MoU university graduates, representing 52.45 per

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[6] These include copy-editing, editing, précis-writing, translation, verbatim reporting and interpretation.

cent of all rostered candidates since 2012. However, significant disparities had been observed across languages and disciplines over the period. To enable comparisons within the MoU network, success rates by university were presented, together with results by regional groups, highlighting the continued gap in qualified candidates from Africa and from Latin America and the Caribbean among rostered candidates.

17.   Presenting details of the performance of MoU university students in the student category of the 2017 and 2018 editions of the Saint Jerome Translation Contest, she provided information on the number of prizes received and the number of languages in which students from each university had competed. The roles of the stakeholders in the outreach programme were also presented:

> (a)   The outreach focal points for interpretation and translation served at each duty station and represented the local head of conference management;

> (b)   The MoU coordinators for interpretation and translation were assigned to a specific university to coordinate activities with all duty stations;

> (c)   The university focal points served as liaison officers for the United Nations at their university.

18.   Before closing, she invited all partner universities to connect with DGACM through its social media channels, which were an important source of information on opportunities in DGACM.

19.   Renée Jourdenais, addressing the conference in English, presented the university perspective on the activities that had been conducted under the outreach programme in 2017 and 2018, many of which had been geared towards the language competitive examinations and the preparation of students to sit them. She provided detailed information on how questions or materials had been included in MoU university curricula over the reporting period, and an overview of the United Nations activities in which university students and/or faculty members had participated, such as internships, dummy booth practice, the Saint Jerome Translation Contest, student volunteer participation in United Nations conferences, and university staff participation in the training working group of the International Annual Meeting on Language Arrangements, Documentation and Publications. She also highlighted that MoU universities and United Nations staff had been providing mutual assistance, with the latter delivering outreach activities to MoU universities and some of the former providing free online or on-site access to United Nations staff for university courses, conferences and events. She concluded by presenting activities within the MoU network, including support for promoting events and opportunities across the network, cross-participation in events held by partner universities, the delivery of master classes with visiting trainers from partner universities, the provision of exchange programmes and the implementation of collaboration projects.

3. UPDATE ON THE UNITED NATIONS COMPETITIVE LANGUAGE EXAMINATIONS

20.   Two presentations were delivered under this agenda item. Anne Lafeber, Senior Reviser with the English Translation and Editorial Service in DGACM in New York and Examination Coordinator for the Documentation Division, gave a presentation on United Nations competitive examinations for language posts in the documentation chain. Mélida Buendía, Senior Spanish Interpreter and Outreach Focal Point

for interpretation in DGACM in New York, then delivered a presentation on competitive examinations for interpreters.

21.   Ms. Lafeber, addressing the conference in English, presented the changes introduced in the examinations for language posts since 2017. The examinations were being conducted fully remotely, supporting increased test accessibility and validity, and were also combined for translators, editors, verbatim reporters and production editors. Although that allowed the Organization to organize fewer examinations, it was estimated that the new modalities had resulted in twice the number of applicants for each examination. There were many benefits for candidates. For example, they did not have to travel to examination centres or sit multiple examinations for the respective roles, and successful applicants had access to multiple career opportunities at the United Nations. However, that resulted in more screening and scoring work for the Organization. Detailed information was also provided on the nature, structure and modalities of the segments of the selection process, including its specificities by language.

22.   She gave details of the online testing platform developed by the Office of Human Resources at the United Nations to deliver remote examinations, including the conditions under which the second part of each examination was conducted in a proctored environment to ensure test integrity. The skills required to pass the examinations were also described, with particular emphasis on solid drafting skills in the target language, as well as on time management, stamina and consistency across multiple tasks and time.

23.   As a result of the multiple changes implemented over the preceding years, the number of applicants had soared and the overall pass rate had subsequently decreased. However, the share of MoU university graduates among rostered candidates had remained stable. In terms of demographics, the rostered candidates were typically in their thirties and predominantly women, with variations across languages. In concluding, she presented the main channels of communication through which universities and applicants could keep abreast of the launch of any new examinations. Those channels included the United Nations careers website, the United Nations Language Careers portal and the social media platforms of DGACM.

24.   Ms. Buendía, addressing the conference in English, presented an update on the competitive examinations for language posts in interpretation. She indicated that examinations were organized whenever the Organization needed to attract new talent to fill vacancies. All interpretation examinations consisted of six speeches lasting between 8 and 10 minutes each and of increasing difficulty, generally to be interpreted by candidates from their two passive languages into their main language. In the Chinese and Arabic booths, however, applicants were asked to interpret from and into their main language.

25.   During the examination, candidates were expected to demonstrate certain skills, such as comprehension of the source language, accuracy in rendering the speech in the target language and ability to keep up with the speed of the speaker, edit redundancies and construct complete sentences. Good diction and delivery were also required. The main criteria used when marking examinations were accuracy, delivery and mastery of the target language, in all of which candidates were expected to achieve a passing grade.

26.   She stated that greater cooperation among duty stations in organizing examinations had been observed in the previous few years. Candidate screening, speech selection, marking and competency-based interviews had increasingly been conducted through cooperation across duty stations. She also

described the selection process, from pre-screening to the administration of the examination itself to interviews. The examination was conducted anonymously. Examination centres were opened at the four Headquarters duty stations and other select locations on the basis of the presence or proximity of applicants.

27.   She presented the success rates for the past six competitive examinations for interpreters,[7] which ranged from 1.5 per cent for the Chinese examination to nearly 20 per cent for the Russian examination. The discrepancies were the result of various factors. She also described the challenges faced by applicants during examinations. The primary challenge was the speed of delivery, which averaged 149 words per minute. Additional factors included the diversity of accents and registers in use and the variety of subject matter covered. She indicated that the feasibility of administering the examination remotely in the future was being assessed in a pilot project.

28.   In the ensuing discussion, Harry Dai, Deputy Dean of the Graduate Institute of Interpretation and Translation at Shanghai International Studies University, expressed concern that the increasing number of applicants for the Chinese interpretation examination did not appear to translate in terms of the number of rostered candidates. Recalling examples of qualified graduates from his university who had been screened out in the early stage of the competition, he enquired about the role that MoU universities could play in ensuring that the most suitable candidates reached the final stages of the examination.

29.   In response, Ms. Buendía explained that many factors came into play on the day of the examination, one of which was applicant nervousness. An added stress factor for Arabic and Chinese interpreters was the fact that they worked from and into their main language. It was critical for applicants to have strong English or French skills, as delegates in the conference room would rely on their interpretation into those languages to understand remarks delivered in Chinese.

30.   Sarah Bordes, Director of International Development at the Institut de management et de communication interculturels, enquired about the structure of the interpretation examination, which entailed six exercises of 8 to 10 minutes each and therefore appeared more demanding than the current standard in the profession, which was to perform shifts every 30 minutes. She also asked about the criteria being used to preselect candidates to sit the examination.

31.   Marie Diur, Chief of the Interpretation Service at the United Nations Office at Geneva, explained that the structure of the examination was consistent with the established standards because the six exercises were conducted in two blocks of 30 minutes each, with an intervening 30-minute break. With regard to preselection criteria, applicants were expected to have earned a degree in interpreting or gained a minimum of 200 days of experience as an interpreter. Responding to the question from Mr. Dai, she indicated that, given the high number of applications, candidates for the Chinese examination had been invited to participate in a preselection test, which consisted of translating a written text. The preselection criteria that were currently in use would continue to be reviewed.

32.   Changshuan Li, Deputy Dean of the Graduate School of Translation and Interpretation at Beijing Foreign Studies University, enquired about the possibility of relaxing the criteria regarding the main

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[7] The success rate is based on the number of rostered candidates versus the number of candidates invited to the examination.

language of education, which had resulted in suitable candidates from South-East Asia being screened out.

33.   Noting that more than 3,000 applications had been received for the most recent Chinese translation examination, Ms. Lafeber stated that the matter would be brought to the attention of the Office of Human Resources at the United Nations.

4.   PREPARING STUDENTS FOR UNITED NATIONS EXAMINATIONS

34.   Alexandre Skourikhine, Senior Reviser in the Russian Translation Section at the United Nations Office at Geneva and MoU Coordinator for translation for Lomonosov Moscow State University, delivered a presentation on the way in which students were trained for competitive examinations relating to the documentation chain, while Sheila Shermet, Senior Interpreter in the English Interpretation Section in DGACM in New York and MoU Coordinator for interpretation for the Middlebury Institute, presented an analysis of successful candidates in United Nations interpretation examinations and the reasons for their success.

35.   Mr. Skourikhine, addressing the conference in Russian, gave an introduction on outreach activities conducted by his section in recent years to prepare students for the examinations. Such activities had been delivered either on-site or remotely and included sight translation, group translation, translation assignments with individual feedback, classes on research methods for translation, and analysis of mock examinations. Mock examinations were particularly effective in preparing students not only technically but also psychologically and helping them to identify the most relevant online resources and computer-assisted translation tools for the purpose of the examination. When reviewing assignments, trainers assessed the following criteria in particular:

(a) Accuracy of the translation: no mistranslations, no omissions, no unnecessary additions, no shifts of emphasis;

(b) Rules of the target language: for example, spelling, hyphenation, spacing, typos, punctuation, grammar, syntax;

(c) Terminology: use of the same terminology throughout the text, with the recognition that the same word could be translated in different ways in the United Nations;

(d) Style: adjustment to United Nations style, which might vary considerably between documents;

(e) Functional criteria: technical non-linguistic errors.

36.   He also presented some tips shared with participants by his section during training sessions and some final thoughts on the outcome of those outreach efforts for students, for MoU universities and their faculty and for the United Nations.

37.   Sheila Shermet, addressing the conference in English, gave a presentation explaining why interpretation candidates failed United Nations examinations. Basing her analysis on her practical experience as a United Nations interpreter, a former interpretation school faculty member, a marker of competitive examinations and freelance tests, and a trainer for MoU university students, she highlighted gaps in training and ways to improve candidate performance. She claimed that, just as "clear passes" in

United Nations examinations, "borderline passes" shared some similar features. Candidates achieving clear passes were accurate in their interpretation. They projected confidence, were resourceful in solving problems, processed the message to translate the intent and maintained a high register throughout their interpretation. Conversely, candidates achieving borderline passes made omissions or missed details or nuances. They also had difficulty maintaining a high register and remaining accurate when speeches were delivered at high speed or contained a greater density of information. Generally, they did not appear in control and did not inspire confidence. She attributed those observations not to a lack of academic qualifications but to a lack of practice, which affected candidate performance, especially in stressful situations in which psychological aspects were at play.

38.   She suggested addressing such gaps directly so as to prevent them from spiralling out of control. Employing a comparison to a learner driver, a musician and a chess player, she insisted on the critical importance of greater exposure to real-life situations, under strict time limits, and to practice in general, which supported the development of automaticity in interpretation. In specific terms, she suggested using the same materials repeatedly to practice different interpreting angles and increasing the level of difficulty gradually. She also recommended focusing on strategies to cope with high-speed speeches, such as damage control techniques for elements such as numbers and names. With regard to the structure of learning programmes, experience showed that longer programmes yielded better results in United Nations examinations. For shorter programmes, it was suggested that additional practice of at least 10 hours per week be incorporated into the curriculum.

5.   A TOOLKIT FOR TEACHERS TO PREPARE STUDENTS FOR UNITED NATIONS TRANSLATION: WHAT SHOULD IT CONTAIN?

39.   Ana García Álvarez, Training, Outreach and Gender Affairs Coordinator in the Documentation Division in DGACM in New York and Outreach Focal Point for translation at United Nations Headquarters, addressing the conference in Spanish, presented the concept of a toolkit aimed at better preparing students for translation at the United Nations. Such a toolkit would also improve the information available to universities, enhance the role of teachers in promoting United Nations translation and generally increase the impact of outreach activities.

40.   The MoU network would be involved at every stage of development of the toolkit. The co-design phase would consist of brainstorming sessions during the current conference, and consultations would subsequently be held with volunteer universities. In the pilot phase, the toolkit would be tested by volunteer MoU universities and their feedback analysed. In the roll-out phase, which was expected by March 2020, the toolkit would be distributed to all MoU universities.

41.   She suggested that the toolkit contain three sections comprising skills required for United Nations translation, methods for acquiring those skills and a compilation of relevant resources, respectively. Seven skills had been listed tentatively, together with the related training activities for acquiring them. The compilation of resources should support the development of those skills.

42.   In the ensuing discussion, Yao Bin of the School of English and International Studies at Beijing Foreign Studies University asked whether the toolkit would cover interpretation and suggested that the materials could be classified into different levels of difficulty if that were the case. Ms. Álvarez

responded that it was currently intended to support the training of translation students but could be expanded to other disciplines in the future. Nicole Maguire, Chief of the English Translation Section at the United Nations Office at Geneva, stated that the Office had already classified its texts according to level of difficulty, and that they could be shared as a contribution to the toolkit.

43.   Patricia Meehan, Secretary of International Relations at the National University of Córdoba, welcomed that initiative and asked whether it would be supplemented with feedback from the United Nations after the roll-out date in order to assist universities in determining whether they were on track. Ms. Álvarez responded that feedback would be encouraged during the conception phase in particular. The Documentation Division would assess whether feedback could also be accommodated after the launch of the toolkit.

44.   Daniel Linder, Associate Professor at the University of Salamanca, indicated that his university was already running a similar programme. He offered to share its content with the United Nations and invited other MoU universities to do the same, where applicable. Ms. Shermet recommended that the resources be classified by origin or duty station and by topic, in addition to difficulty level. Steven Wonnacott, Teaching Fellow at the University of Bath, also underlined the benefit of making such resources easily accessible by language. Irina Shokina, Head of the Department for International Cooperation and Internationalization at Moscow State Linguistic University, suggested including information on assessment criteria in the toolkit. All the comments were duly noted by Ms. Álvarez.

6.   PRÉCIS-WRITING AT THE UNITED NATIONS

45.   Ita Wardell, Senior Reviser with the English Translation and Editorial Service of the Documentation Division in DGACM in New York, and Nicole Maguire, Chief of the English Translation Section at the United Nations Office at Geneva, delivered a joint presentation in English on the importance of précis-writing at the United Nations. After defining précis-writing, they explained that summary records, which were produced by précis-writers, were official documents that constituted the permanent records of the relevant United Nations bodies. By providing a clear, concise and accurate picture of the proceedings, the records also helped to document how decisions were taken and served as the institutional memory of the Organization. In addition, they were used as reference documents to facilitate the in-session work of committees and enable those unable to attend a meeting to be better informed about the issues discussed and decisions taken. The presenters provided further information about the bodies in Geneva and New York that were entitled to summary records and gave details of the practical steps taken by précis-writers before, during and after meetings to complete their assignments. They also shared resources useful for training language professionals in précis-writing, such as the United Nations Editorial Manual,[8] the Dag Hammarskjöld Library, the digital recordings portal of the United Nations Office at Geneva, the United Nations webcast video portal[9] and the United Nations Language Careers portal. They concluded their presentation with facts and figures from the United Nations offices in New York, Geneva and Vienna highlighting the respective workloads in the discipline.

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[8] Available online in English at https://www.un.org/dgacm/en/content/editorial-manual.
[9] Available online at http://webtv.un.org/.

46.   During the discussion, Changshuan Li of Beijing Foreign Studies University asked about the recurring use of the passive voice in précis-writing, which made translation into other languages difficult. Ms. Wardell responded that concordance among language versions was guaranteed through meetings with representatives of three to four language sections. Ms. Meehan of the National University of Córdoba asked whether summary records were produced only in English. In response, it was indicated that all summary records were first drafted in English in New York, while in Geneva around 10 per cent were initially drafted in French. Alexa Alfer of the University of Westminster acknowledged that universities were facing difficulties in training language professionals to undertake précis-writing and enquired about the training process for new recruits to the United Nations. Ms. Maguire responded with further details of the skills required to serve as a précis-writer and the steps taken by new recruits to meet the standards. Recalling that précis-writing was included in the competitive examinations, she expressed regret that some qualified translation candidates failed the examination owing to inadequate training or understanding of the specificities of précis-writing.

7. THE IMPORTANCE OF EDITING SKILLS

47.   Sarah Scott, Editor with the Editorial Control Unit of the Publishing and Library Section at the United Nations Office at Vienna, delivered a presentation in English on the importance of editing skills, explaining what editing skills were, why they were important and how they could be incorporated into the curriculum. Editors at the United Nations undertook various tasks, such as correcting grammar, punctuation, capitalization and spelling, ensuring that terminology was accurate, checking dates, names and titles, ensuring that texts were understandable and translatable, resolving ambiguities and editing footnotes and other references.

48.   To assume such responsibilities, editors needed strong knowledge of the source language and good translation skills. They also had to have an eye for detail and be capable of critical thinking. Excellent research abilities were also required, as were diplomacy and negotiation skills, sound judgement and information technology expertise. Noting that such skills were generally similar to those required for other language disciplines, she underscored that many editors at the United Nations had a background in translation. In fact, the related nature of the two professions had been recognized, with the Organization including an editing exercise in the combined examinations. Consequently, students with editing skills in the target language were better prepared to take the examinations or secure an internship at the United Nations. In New York, for example, the English Translation and Editorial Service offered combined internships, with interns successively honing their editing, précis-writing and translation skills. Successful candidates of the combined examinations with editing skills were also better positioned for career options at the Organization, including at the regional commissions.

49.   To teach editing skills to their students, MoU universities were invited in particular to emphasize the importance of possessing an excellent knowledge of the main language and train students in strengthening their client relationship skills, which were critical in a multicultural and multilingual environment such as the United Nations. The use of style guides, such as the United Nations Editorial Manual, in translation and revision classes was also encouraged. In conjunction with those efforts, the Organization had also stepped up its support for partner universities through the provision of remote presentations and editing workshops to universities.

50.	Jesse Browner, Chief of the English Verbatim Reporting Section in DGACM in New York, addressed the conference in English to explore the challenges of editing the spoken word, which was the role of his section. In opening his presentation, he stated that verbatim reports were in-extenso records produced in the six official languages for three United Nations bodies, namely, the Security Council, the Disarmament and International Security (First) Committee and the Disarmament Commission.

51.	He also addressed the challenges and sensitiveness of producing in-extenso records. They were to be published within hours of the end of the meeting and entailed the editing of statements delivered by Member State representatives, often in a very personal style. It was therefore important for verbatim reporters to understand what the speakers meant in order to be able to make the necessary changes, while ensuring that the statements sounded natural and accurate in the target language. Such tasks were highly sensitive, especially when statements were delivered in English, as representatives would often expect the verbatim records to reflect their delivery word for word. Verbatim reporting was different from speech-writing, however, in that a verbatim record was not supposed to read more eloquently than the original delivered by the speaker. Given those multiple variables, in-extenso records were highly labour-intensive, with 80 working hours needed per Security Council meeting hour to produce a record.

52.	While noting that 80 per cent of the skills required for translators and verbatim reporters at the United Nations were similar, he identified certain skills that were specific to verbatim reporting, such as an in-depth knowledge of the related body's procedure, in particular with regard to voting processes in the General Assembly and the Security Council. Such knowledge was not taught in universities and could be learned by new recruits only during the onboarding process. To help students to better understand verbatim reporting, he suggested listening to the United Nations webcast of a meeting while reading its verbatim record. He also indicated that the United Nations could provide sound files to interested MoU universities for training purposes.

53.	During the discussion, the presenters were asked whether the United Nations accepted feedback on the quality of its official records. Mr. Browner confirmed that such feedback was welcome, noting that mistakes were regrettably almost inevitable in view of the continuously increasing workload. Odile Cuvelie of the Dean's Office at the University of Mons asked whether remote training was offered in French by United Nations editors. Ms. Scott responded that the expansion of training to French could be considered.

## 8.	IMPLEMENTING THE MOUS: PERSPECTIVE OF THE UNITED NATIONS INTERPRETATION SERVICES

54.	Marie Diur, Chief of the Interpretation Service at the United Nations Office at Geneva, addressing the conference in French, introduced a video[10] prepared for the purpose of the conference with input from the interpretation services at the four Headquarters duty stations. She then called upon all participants, in particular partner universities, to engage in a conversation with a view to providing suggestions for the future direction of the outreach programme.

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[10] Accessible at http://bit.ly/MoUConf-Interpreters.

55.   To better support remote training, Angelique Antonova, Deputy Director of the School of Interpretation and Translation at Herzen State Pedagogical University of Russia, suggested exploring videoconferencing options to avoid technical difficulties in the future. Such technical issues were particularly detrimental in view of the time difference between Moscow and New York, which reduced the effectiveness of the time spent on training. She also noted that the practice whereby MoU universities were consulted before the designation of an MoU coordinator had been discontinued. In response, Ms. Maisonneuve indicated that the United Nations outreach mechanism had been revised in 2018 and that coordinators were being asked to serve for a maximum of five years. Under the new mechanism, coordinators were nominated unanimously by the four Headquarters duty stations and appointed thereafter by the Under-Secretary-General for General Assembly and Conference Management. They were generally former graduates or teachers from the MoU university under consideration and regarded by the nominating parties as best positioned to coordinate the cooperation with the university. She underscored that the role of the coordinators had evolved under the new mechanism. It was also important to ensure that coordinators wishing to step down could be replaced.

56.   Mr. Dai observed that on-site visits by United Nations staff to Shanghai International Studies University had become less frequent over the previous five years. He suggested taking advantage of home leave to pay regular visits to MoU universities, which would be relatively inexpensive and could be made mandatory. He also proposed exploring options for universities to support the cost implications. He also asked whether access to the interpretation booths in New York could be provided to MoU universities. Responding, Patricia Meehan noted the excellent cooperation with the MoU coordinator for translation, who visited her university whenever in the region, but acknowledged that it might be challenging for coordinators to manage the responsibilities of their role in addition to their regular duties. Jayne Mutiga, Director of the Centre for Translation and Interpretation at the University of Nairobi, suggested reducing turnover among coordinators and decreasing the duration of vacancies between their tenures to ensure the smooth implementation of outreach plans. She also noted that a heavy workload had recently prevented staff of the United Nations Office at Nairobi from visiting the University of Nairobi as regularly as in the past. On the United Nations side, Ms. Diur suggested that universities appoint two university focal points for interpretation and the documentation chain, respectively, to serve as liaisons with the United Nations.

9.   IMPLEMENTING THE MOUS: UNIVERSITY PERSPECTIVES

57.   Angelique Antonova of Herzen State Pedagogical University of Russia, Patricia Meehan of the National University of Córdoba, Daniel Linder of the University of Salamanca and Sarah Bordes of the Institut de management et de communication interculturels briefed the participants on the perspective of MoU universities on the implementation of the MoUs.

58.   Ms. Antonova delivered a presentation in Russian detailing a road map for successfully passing the language competitive examinations, in which she underscored the importance of carefully selecting prospective students using methods such as inviting additional experts from international organizations to participate in the selection process. She also highlighted the need for training programmes aimed at achieving excellence to be closely connected with the professional world in order to equip graduates with the professional skills and knowledge required for conference interpreting and translation. To that

end, those programmes should be practice-oriented and adapt continuously to changes and new trends in the professions, including advances in information and communications technology.

59. Trainers were expected to be familiar with the tasks, working environment and conditions of service in international organizations, as well as with coping techniques, and they should be able to offer other advice to help students to prepare for United Nations competitive examinations. As a result, classes were best taught by practising and experienced conference interpreters and translators with teaching skills. It was also important for trainers to constantly hone their educational skills. Direct on-site and remote training by United Nations language staff members, as well as the participation of such staff as observers in final examinations, was highly valued by MoU universities. It contributed to better adaptation of the programmes to internationally accepted standards and requirements through the development of common evaluation criteria. She also discussed the training-of-trainers component of the outreach programme, which enabled MoU university trainers to learn on the job under temporary contracts, allowing MoU university students to benefit from the knowledge acquired about United Nations practices and receive greater exposure to the Organization in general.

60. On the growth of e-learning opportunities, she noted that readily available technologies had resulted in technical difficulties in the past. High-bandwidth videoconferencing services should offer more reliable communications. United Nations internships had also proved an efficient tool for offering university graduates an invaluable understanding of the Organization's realities. At the end of their internships, some interns had successfully passed the freelance test, which offered them a gateway to the Organization and increased their chances of passing the competitive examinations.

61. In concluding, she highlighted that the outreach programme had proved mutually beneficial to students, graduates and trainers. Interactions within the MoU network had increased not only vertically but also horizontally among universities.

62. Patricia Meehan, addressing the conference in Spanish, gave an overview of the activities that the National University of Córdoba and the United Nations had conducted recently under their ongoing partnerships. At the outset, she recalled that the previous two years had seen the expansion of the bilateral partnership. In addition to a full MoU, which had been extended for an additional two years in 2018, a remote practicum agreement had been signed by both parties, enabling students with disabilities to receive a United Nations experience first-hand without travelling to a duty station. The remote practicants used the same software, corpus and terminology database as United Nations translators and received regular personalized feedback from United Nations staff.

63. In addition to its cooperation with language services at United Nations Headquarters, the National University of Córdoba also cooperated increasingly with the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean. Practical workshops and open talks were organized, and two students from the university had been selected to participate in internships at the Commission.

64. The university had also endeavoured to adapt its programmes by offering a summer workshop on competitive examinations for Spanish, multiple workshops on French for the United Nations and three conferences on translation for the United Nations. She indicated that the university's programmes

increasingly used United Nations resources, such as the Spanish Translation Service blog,[11] UNTERM[12] and the United Nations Official Document System,[13] in its training and in information on United Nations careers in its communication products. Over previous years, the university had also participated consistently in the student category of the Saint Jerome Translation Contest. In addition, the university had supported the training of United Nations staff in 2018 by providing 15 staff members with 40 hours of remotely conducted specialized training.

65. Daniel Linder, addressing the conference in English, presented the Salamanca model of training, which had been used to provide interorganizational training as well as training for undergraduate and postgraduate students since 2008. Some of the international organizations that had participated in the past included the Directorate-General for Translation of the European Commission, the European Central Bank, the European Parliament, the International Atomic Energy Agency, the International Criminal Court and the United Nations Office at Geneva. Support had been received from various institutions for the seminars, such as the Universities Contact Group of the International Annual Meeting on Language Arrangements, Documentation and Publications, and the Iberian Association of Translation and Interpreting Studies. In 2017, an award for the best session by a member of an international organization had been introduced. The eighth seminar on legal and institutional translation for international organizations was scheduled to be held at the University of Salamanca in 2020, focusing on two major areas: accessibility and diversity, and technologies and globalization. It would consist of eight plenary sessions, eight workshops and two round-table discussions.

66. Sarah Bordes, addressing the conference in French, opened her presentation by recognizing that many stakeholders took part in the implementation of the MoUs and underlining the importance of establishing a working relationship between university focal points and the MoU coordinators. She described some of the recent efforts to improve the impact of the cooperation between the United Nations and the Institut de management et de communication interculturels. For example, although training was regularly delivered on-site or remotely by United Nations staff, such training sessions were always thoroughly prepared in advance by faculty staff and students of the institute. Often, graduates of the institute who had recently passed the competitive examinations were also invited to participate. Trainers at the institute regularly used United Nations materials to enable students to familiarize themselves with certain disciplines or the accents heard at the United Nations. Staff of the Organization were regularly invited to participate in preselection tests or final examinations at the institute, in some cases with deliberative authority. She mentioned certain student initiatives, such as the regular participation of students in the Saint Jerome Translation Contest and model United Nations simulation exercises. Students of the institute had established a club called "pair à pair" that aimed to raise awareness of career opportunities in international organizations, including the United Nations. As a result, graduates of the institute who applied to the competitive examinations were better prepared, demonstrated stronger motivation and had a better understanding of the Organization. While students at the institute did not typically aspire to work for the United Nations, those joint efforts had resulted in

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[11] Accessible at https://onutraduccion.wordpress.com/ (for United Nations Headquarters) and https://conf.unog.ch/paginilla (for the United Nations Office at Geneva).
[12] Accessible at https://untermportal.un.org/UNTERM/portal/welcome.
[13] Accessible at https://documents.un.org/.

increasing interest among the students in pursuing such a career. She suggested that the activities be annualized for greater impact so that every class received the same exposure to the United Nations.

10. USING UNITED NATIONS MATERIAL IN INTERPRETER TRAINING: WHICH, WHEN, HOW AND HOW MUCH?

67.   Moderated by Cas Shulman-Mora of the Middlebury Institute, the session included presentations by United Nations staff members Alice Ryckmans, Interpreter at the United Nations Office at Vienna, and Kirill Kasyanov, Senior Interpreter at the United Nations Office at Nairobi, and by MoU university representatives Yao Bin, from the School of English and International Studies at Beijing Foreign Studies University, Alexander Ponimatko, from the School of Translation and Interpreting at Minsk State Linguistic University, and Leire Carbonell Aguero, from the Middlebury Institute.

68.   Alice Ryckmans, addressing the conference in French, noted that, in its cooperation with MoU universities, the United Nations remained mindful that the universities trained language professionals for various markets depending on the geographical location, history and priorities of each university. The outreach programme was not intended to confine MoU universities to cooperation with the Organization alone. Indeed, the United Nations was itself working closely with other possible employers, including the European Parliament and the European Commission, on joint training endeavours, for example the contribution of the United Nations to the European Union speech repository. To introduce United Nations materials into MoU university training, she suggested initially avoiding overspecificity through the use of themes of interest to a variety of students, providing general information on the Organization and its internal operation, sharing information on the location of audio materials in the public domain and providing links to useful resources, for example the PaperSmart portal,[14] where official documents and statements could be found. Those materials could be introduced in the initial phase of the training programme for exercises such as sight translation. She concluded by inviting MoU universities to contact United Nations staff interpreters if support was needed to incorporate United Nations materials into the training.

69.   Kirill Kasyanov, addressing the conference in Russian, suggested using United Nations speeches with full transcripts, such as those delivered in General Assembly plenary meetings or public meetings of the Security Council, to hone the skills of simultaneous interpreters. Those verbatim records, also known as procès-verbaux at the United Nations, were available from United Nations websites, including the Official Document System, which permitted searches by symbol.[15] The United Nations Audiovisual Library[16] was another useful resource, especially as its records could be downloaded in the two weeks following the meeting date. A live broadcast of United Nations meetings was available from United Nations Web TV.[17] Video and audio feeds of general debate statements, with interpretation in all United Nations official languages, were also available from a dedicated website.[18] He stated that those materials

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[14] Accessible at https://papersmart.unmeetings.org/.

[15] Documents of the General Assembly belong to the A series, while those of the Security Council are available under the S series.

[16] Accessible at www.unmultimedia.org/avlibrary/.

[17] Accessible at http://webtv.un.org/.

[18] Accessible at https://gadebate.un.org.

could be introduced at any point of the training process. It was preferable to begin with easier speeches and then introduce more complex content, for example on regional issues, that was delivered at higher speed or covered a wide array of accents. In concluding, he stressed the importance of practice for students to achieve a higher degree of automaticity.

70.   Yao Bin, addressing the conference in Chinese, gave a presentation on how United Nations materials had been used at Beijing Foreign Studies University since 1973, shortly after Chinese had been made a working language of the General Assembly. He also provided background information on training programmes at his university that had been geared towards the United Nations market since the late 1970s. Although such programmes had become more oriented to the Government of China and the private sector over the years, United Nations materials had continued to be used in the teaching programmes. Translation courses at the university currently included a section dedicated to United Nations materials in which reports, international conventions adopted under the auspices of the Organization and other official documents were studied as part of the curriculum. Interpreting courses also frequently used United Nations materials, such as statements delivered at key conferences by Member State representatives, including Chinese officials, and by senior United Nations officials. The School of English and International Studies would soon make further efforts to introduce more United Nations materials into the training process. At the university level, he underlined that efforts were also being made to raise awareness of the Organization through the establishment of a school of international organizations.

71.   Alexander Ponimatko, addressing the conference in Russian, stressed from the outset that Minsk State Linguistic University did not have separate training programmes for interpreters and translators because it considered them to be universal professionals. To train language specialists for international organizations, the university had established a programme based on the requirements shared by the United Nations and in which United Nations materials recommended by the Organization were routinely used. The programme had already yielded some tangible results, with graduates of the university participating in United Nations internships, passing competitive examinations or undertaking other forms of work experience at the Organization. To prepare students, faculty members used United Nations materials such as websites, United Nations Web TV, YouTube channels[19] and press releases.[20] He underlined that podcasts with access to video recordings and simultaneous interpretation were particularly useful for training language professionals. He also noted that United Nations materials were used to build glossaries, and he called for the development of a guide for interpreters, which could be produced with the collaboration of MoU universities.

72.   Leire Carbonell Aguero, addressing the conference in Spanish, presented the structure of the workshop introduced for second-year interpreting students at the Middlebury Institute. The workshop consisted of three distinct parts. The first part covered aspects of the competitive examinations, including the required language combinations, which would influence the selection of a third language; the examination structure; and the type of speeches to be interpreted in the examination. The second part of the workshop addressed how to organize the available information in order to better prepare for the examination. Different options were considered, such as organization by United Nations body, by

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[19] Accessible at www.un.org/en/social-media.
[20] Accessible at www.un.org/press/.

theme or by region, with organization by region useful in gaining knowledge of relevant acronyms and different accents. The third part of the workshop entailed: an examination of the macrostructure of the General Assembly, and its various themes in particular; an analysis of regional questions; and the study of other matters, such as the reform of the Security Council. After the workshop, mock examinations were organized under the same conditions as the competitive examination, namely, the interpretation of three speeches of 10 minutes each, followed by another series of three speeches in the third language, as applicable. As a result of this workshop, applicants to examinations proved to be better prepared and less nervous in examinations. In the future, new workshops could be organized with different approaches, such as a specific theme, region or United Nations body, or with a focus on a particular aspect, such as complex accents or a challenging pace of delivery.

11. How artificial intelligence, machine translation and other technological advances changed how we train translators and what we train them to do

73.   This session was moderated by Adam Wooten of the Middlebury Institute and included presentations from four university representatives: Marie-Paule Chamayou of the École supérieure d'interprètes et de traducteurs, Odile Cuvelier of the University of Mons, Alexa Alfer of the University of Westminster and Nicolay Garboskiy of Lomonosov Moscow State University.

74.   Marie-Paule Chamayou, addressing the conference in French, presented the changes being made to the curriculum for the master's programme at the École supérieure d'interprètes et de traducteurs in view of the evolving trends in the profession. In September 2019, a new course on post-editing was scheduled to open for all graduate students and would be based on tools developed by the European Union in its post-editing training programmes. The school would also double the amount of training hours dedicated to revision while continuing to offer courses on computer-assisted translation. Information and communications technologies courses would be integrated into additional courses, such as courses on localization and on multilingual corpuses in which the available information technology tools would be presented.

75.   Odile Cuvelier, addressing the conference in French, presented the latest advances in the field of artificial intelligence and machine translation, and some of the questions that they posed for training institutions such as the University of Mons. She began by noting that the advances had occurred at such a pace that schools of interpretation and translation had been caught off guard. After presenting the structure of the university's master's programmes, its language combinations and the specializations available to translation students, she highlighted the efforts being made to integrate new technologies into the curriculum. Courses on computer-assisted translation tools were offered to fourth-year students, and some professors used speech recognition tools in their teaching approach.

76.   However, many questions about artificial intelligence and machine translation remained unanswered. For example, it was difficult to predict whether human translation would remain the standard of the profession or be replaced by post-editing. Faculty members also remained unsure as to how revision courses should adapt to the rise of post-editing, which involved revising a machine-translated text. In addition, the question of timing for introducing computer-assisted translation tools to students was an open question. For training institutions based in the European Union, which were

limited to a number of credits towards the completion of the degrees that they offered, the addition of new courses would require others to be sacrificed, resulting in difficult choices for translation schools. It was also anticipated that the generalization of computer-assisted translation would change market standards and could require translators to choose between productivity and quality. In concluding, she noted that it remained unclear whether a good post-editor should also be a good translator. The answer to that question would have profound implications for the training of language professionals.

77.   Alexa Alfer, addressing the conference in English, presented the structure of the master's degree in translation and interpreting at the University of Westminster, which was a one-year specialization programme. She stressed that software tools had been embedded in compulsory modules covering computer-assisted translation, pre-editing, editing and post-editing. Courses were also offered on Trados and other technologies.

78.   To stimulate discussion, she raised questions about the role of training institutions in preparing future language professionals as opposed to the role of recruiting institutions with their onboarding processes. As previous speakers had indicated, training institutions in the European Union were restricted to a maximum number of credits per academic year. The long list of requests received by training institutions from the translation services market and from international organizations was therefore difficult to accommodate. She sought suggestions on how priorities should be set to best meet the needs of potential employers and alleviate the tension between the capacities of training institutions and the wishes of employers.

79.   With regard to artificial intelligence and machine translation, she also expressed concerns over the ageing workforce in translation and interpreting schools, which posed additional challenges for universities when teaching new technologies as part of their programmes. Another difficulty facing institutions such as the University of Westminster was the forthcoming withdrawal of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland from the European Union, which would have an impact on the university's resources at the human, operational, organizational and financial levels.

80.   Nicolay Garboskiy, addressing the conference in French, began his presentation by mentioning that translation and interpreting ranked 265th among professions at high risk of becoming fully automated in the future. Such predictions had implications for training institutions, which should train future language professionals with the tools of the future rather than those of the past. Translators were no longer required to be walking encyclopaedias, but should instead be capable of processing enormous flows of information using the tools at their disposal.

81.   Until recently, translation and interpreting required a full oral and written understanding of the languages involved, but language professionals now also needed to be digitally literate. In that context, it was important to understand the difference between training someone how to translate, and training a future translator, i.e. producing a language professional capable of operating in a digital environment. In concluding, he welcomed the fact that the cooperation between the United Nations and MoU universities had been a two-way street, with United Nations staff supporting the training of future language professionals and MoU universities supporting the training of United Nations staff.

12. REMOTE TRAINING: PROS AND CONS

82.   The session was moderated by Stéphanie Terrien-Cooper of the Middlebury Institute and included presentations from United Nations staff and MoU university representatives: Sheila Shermet and Natalia Kobleva of DGACM in New York, Changshuan Li of Beijing Foreign Studies University and Steven Wonnacott of the University of Bath.

83.   Ms. Shermet, addressing the conference in English, began by recalling the context in which remote training had been initiated, namely, that there remained a shortage of qualified candidates in United Nations competitive examinations for English interpreters, which was not the case for Chinese interpreters. That situation had resulted in very few candidates passing the examinations. Her presentation was based on three of her past experiences with remote training:

(a)   From the United Nations Office at Geneva, she had coached a particularly gifted second-year university student from the Middlebury Institute remotely using recordings made by the trainee, feedback sent by email and in-person contact whenever possible. Such methods had proved helpful in building the student's confidence and improving her performance. The student went on to pass the freelance test and later the competitive examination for English interpreters;

(b)   She had used Skype to coach a freelance United Nations interpreter who was adding Spanish to her language combinations. The trainee interpreted live United Nations speeches and the coach listened to the interpretation and provide feedback over Skype simultaneously. The method had helped to structure the training process and ensure interactivity between the trainee and the coach. However, it had proved more difficult for monitoring progress by the trainee than the use of recordings. Although the trainee had passed the freelance test in Spanish, Ms. Shermet had concluded that it had been a less effective method of providing in-depth training;

(c)   Over the previous eight years, she had participated in hybrid online/in-house pilot training programmes consisting of eight weeks of online training followed by three weeks of intensive in-house training. For the online session, participants had worked on two different speeches per language per week. Both trainers, one per source language of Russian and French, then sent feedback or recordings by email. The intensive in-house training had been hosted at the United Nations during a slow period and therefore did not incur any costs. It had followed the same schedule as regular staff interpreters, namely, six hours of instruction per day, with half a day midweek for preparation, research and rest. Mock conferences and mock examinations had been conducted as part of the training. As a result of the programme, the pass rate for the competitive examination had improved significantly, and many participants had joined United Nations entities as freelance interpreters. The programme had also proved mutually beneficial because 6 of the 10 United Nations staff involved continued to serve as trainers in other capacities. Owing to its dual remote/in-house nature, the programme had also proved highly cost-effective. In terms of lessons learned, it had been agreed that a better approach would be to start with the in-house segment and follow with online coaching.

84.   She then presented the advantages and disadvantages of each method of delivery for both the Organization and participants, with the conclusion that remote/online training was a useful supplement to other forms of training. Although online training was particularly effective for one-on-one coaching or

tutoring, in-person contacts were best to develop trust, support examination preparation and build group dynamics.

85.   Natalia Kobleva, addressing the conference in English, presented the experience of the Russian Translation Service in New York in conducting remote training with a university under a remote practicum agreement. The remote training began in the second semester of the programme, when students had received sufficient foundational training. It consisted of groups of eight students of both translation and interpretation, preselected by the university on the basis of their qualifications and motivation. They participated in one three-hour session every two weeks. Some of the sessions were lectures, while others were practical, with translation assignments sent by email. There were many advantages to that approach. For example, there were no budgetary implications, the United Nations could reach students anywhere, students did not miss sessions even when travelling because they could participate in the programme from anywhere, and sessions could be recorded to support institutional memory. In terms of disadvantages, it was difficult to build rapport with participants in the absence of any visit to the university, problematic for United Nations trainers to stay on track of weekly homework with eight participants and challenging to maintain contact with former participants. Technical difficulties were also observed at times. In concluding, she suggested strengthening interactions with university staff and encouraging them to keep records of the assignments and exercises given to their students. Feedback from faculty members was also welcomed to continue improving the programme.

86.   Changshuan Li, addressing the conference in Chinese, recalled that Beijing Foreign Studies University had concluded a remote practicum agreement with the United Nations in 2018, in addition to the existing MoU. The agreement covered both translation and interpretation. Six students had participated in a six-month training programme for translation, during which they were requested to complete translation assignments. Mentors had then provided their feedback on the quality of the translations. All participating students had submitted positive evaluations of the translation programme. The programme for interpretation students consisted of six remote training sessions conducted before the language competitive examination for Chinese interpreters in 2018. Between 30 and 40 applicants had participated in each session, and two had passed the examination.

87.   Steven Wonnacott, addressing the conference in English, shared the experience of the University of Bath with regard to remote training with the United Nations, focusing on a recent editing lecture and Russian translation workshop given to Bath students. The editing session had consisted of a remote lecture with about 15 students, while the translation workshop had consisted of two groups of four students with Russian and English as the main language of each group, respectively. The students had submitted their homework in advance so that the United Nations trainer could provide collective feedback during the session. He said that that remote training was beneficial because it was more cost-effective and flexible than in-house training. For further improvement of the programme, he suggested considering longer, more interactive and more frequent sessions and requiring careful preparation by the students before the session. Forward planning work would also benefit the programme. In concluding, he expressed an interest in exploring new approaches, such as the hybrid online/in-house programme described by Ms. Shermet, and providing training for United Nations staff in return for their support.

88.   During the discussion, Ms. Shermet, responding to a question about communicating feedback, stressed the psychological aspects of the training process. As it was important to build up the confidence

of trainees, listing every mistake should be avoided. Trainers should instead identify one or two error patterns or recurring problems per session on which a trainee should focus. Both Mr. Li and Mr. Dai touched upon the work of remote practicants and asked whether it helped to save the United Nations time. Ms. Kobleva responded that remote practicants were not assigned real work assignments. Ms. Maguire added that no time saving had been observed. Commenting on the presentations, Ms. Ryckmans suggested holding one-on-one Skype sessions to build rapport. Referring to previous comments on the importance of possessing a perfect command of the target language, Ghina Ithani, Arabic Translator at ESCWA and MoU coordinator for translation at Saint-Joseph University, noted that United Nations trainers were spending a lot of time correcting basic translation mistakes. She invited universities to address that main language problem. With regard to the lack of a personal touch in remote training, Ms. Lafeber noted that millennials routinely used remote technologies for various purposes and so might not see remote training as a barrier to building rapport.

13. CHALLENGES OF TRAINING LANGUAGE PROFESSIONALS TODAY: AN OVERVIEW OF THE CONTEXT IN WHICH MOU UNIVERSITIES OPERATE AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE COOPERATION UNDER THE MOUS

89.   The session was moderated by Renée Jourdenais of the Middlebury Institute and included presentations by four MoU university representatives: Harry Dai of Shanghai International Studies University, Fernando Prieto Ramos of the University of Geneva, Ebithal El Badry of the American University in Cairo and Laura Burian of the Middlebury Institute.

90.   Mr. Dai, addressing the conference in Chinese, said that automated translation had failed to deliver on its promise because it could not match the quality of human translation in relation to complex structures. Nevertheless, the anticipated demise of the profession owing to the rise of machine translation had already shaken the determination of young generations to pursue a language career. Although universities had no difficulty attracting applicants in sufficient numbers, they had begun to struggle to attract adequately qualified candidates. Applicant demographics had changed over the years, in that candidates had previously been more qualified, with several years of experience living in English-speaking countries. It had also become increasingly challenging to attract students to a career at the United Nations. Despite the Organization's prestige, the career path was regarded as less competitive than others. The income of trained interpreters in the Chinese private sector was estimated to be nearly 50 per cent higher than at the United Nations. In concluding, he also presented examples of successful recent collaboration of the Shanghai International Studies Institute with the United Nations, as well as with other international partner organizations.

91.   Fernando Prieto Ramos, addressing the conference in Spanish, described two major changes in the profession: market diversification was increasing, and the introduction of machine translation had far-reaching implications for productivity standards, production workflows and the expected profiles of language professionals. As a result, the needs of employers were also evolving, with reduced emphasis on routine tasks, which could be handled by machine translation, and greater emphasis on high-value and other specialized skills, for example thematic expertise in legal, financial, political and other fields, mastery of post-editing software tools, and versatility. Such changes had implications for training

institutions. The University of Geneva had adapted its programmes in 2014 by reflecting new trends in the field, improving high-value skills, maintaining excellent placement rates of its graduates and contributing to innovation by connecting training, professional practice and research. The master of arts in specialized translation was focused on legal and institutional translation and on economic and financial translation, while the master of arts in translation and technology was focused on machine translation and other information technology tools, and the master of arts in translation and specialized multilingual communication covered versatile fields of work such as transcreation, localization and specialized writing. The university's cooperation with the United Nations also reflected these new trends, with a focus on comparative law for translators and interpreters, post-editing, and speech recognition.

92.   Ebithal El Badry, addressing the conference in English, presented the programmes offered by the American University in Cairo. She noted from the outset that the university provided practical training rather than theoretical courses. A new programme in simultaneous interpreting was being designed with the assistance of the MoU coordinator for interpretation, who was serving as the external reviewer. She expressed her university's interest in receiving access to the eLUNa tool in order to better train its students; Trados was currently being used. She was also interested in obtaining more information about other United Nations materials and resources that the university could use. The assistance of the MoU coordinators would be sought to identify such resources. In concluding, she too observed a lack of main language mastery by university students, which was a serious issue.

93.   Laura Burian, addressing the conference in English, presented some challenges faced by the Middlebury Institute and its students and graduates. The institute was a private institution whose tuition fees were high, especially in comparison with European schools. It trained language professionals for a wide variety of career options, including the freelance market. The United Nations and international organizations represented only a small portion of the market, and one in which opportunities were scarce. Different prospective employers meant different training needs. There were separate career paths for each language offered at the Institute. For example, Spanish language professionals were in higher demand in the legal system and in health care. Translation technologies were another challenge for training institutions, which were adapting their programmes to teach foundational translation and interpreting skills initially and introduce technologies later. However, there was no consensus on when and how such tools should be introduced to translation and interpreting students. Faculty members also needed to adapt to those new trends. As technology was constantly evolving, adaptability should also be encouraged to ensure that students adopted new tools as they arose.

14. WORKING TOGETHER: FUTURE PLANS AND FUTURE UNITED NATIONS NEEDS – CONFERENCE OUTCOMES

94.   Carole Maisonneuve read out the draft outcomes of the conference, which had been prepared by a drafting committee composed of a representative of the United Nations (Ms. Maisonneuve) and a representative of the MoU universities (Mr. Dai).

95.   Following the proposal of amendments by the United Nations and MoU university representatives, the conference outcomes were adopted. They are reproduced in section V below.

15. CLOSING

96.   During the closing segment, Ms. Pollard congratulated all participants, in particular those from the hosting Middlebury Institute, on the results achieved and invited MoU universities to participate in the seventh conference, to be held in 2021 at a United Nations duty station to be confirmed after internal consultations were completed.

97.   Renée Jourdenais officially closed the conference and invited all participants to attend the opening reception of the Monterey Forum.

V.   OUTCOMES

The members of the MoU network agree to the following:

On competitive examinations for language posts:

- They welcome the increasing use of social media and direct communications with MoU universities to promote competitive examinations for language posts
- They take note of the request for feedback on the results of competitive examinations and agree to explore the possibility of providing information on levels of performance
- They note with interest that options are being explored to use remote testing in United Nations examinations for interpreters

On training:

- They reiterate the importance of training prospective language professionals in speed-coping techniques in both translation and interpreting in order to increase success rates in competitive examinations
- They emphasize the need for practice by interpretation students to achieve the automaticity required to succeed in examinations
- They stress the need for early introduction to United Nations materials and continuing work with such materials throughout programmes, where feasible
- They welcome the continued commitment by MoU universities to adapt their programmes to the needs of the United Nations, while recognizing the wide variety of career paths pursued by MoU university students
- They recommend introducing editing and précis-writing training for MoU university students to ensure higher pass rates in the combined competitive examinations, such as the examination for English translators/précis-writers, editors, verbatim reporters and production editors, and welcome the assistance being provided by the United Nations in this regard
- They note the opportunities and challenges posed by technological developments in the training of language professionals for international organizations and recommend reviewing this topic periodically at future MoU conferences

On remote activities:

- They welcome the growing use of remote training as a complement to, and not a substitute for, face-to-face outreach activities
- They note the many benefits of remote training, identified by both United Nations staff and MoU university representatives, and recommend looking into remedies to mitigate their shortcomings, such as the identification of reliable digital training platforms

On future cooperation:

- They welcome the development of associated membership agreements with universities that have the potential to meet specific United Nations succession-planning needs
- They note the need for two-way train-the-trainer activities, that is, United Nations staff assisting MoU university teachers by providing information on United Nations requirements and United Nations materials, and MoU university teachers assisting United Nations staff with the delivery of training when they provide master classes, remote coaching and other services
- They welcome the forthcoming development of a toolkit for teachers to prepare students for United Nations translation, and call for its eventual extension to interpretation and other disciplines
- They recommend exploring options, including cost sharing, to support visits by MoU coordinators to the university to which they have been assigned
- They note with appreciation the initiatives taken by MoU universities to support inter-organizational training, as well as the training of United Nations staff members
- They encourage smooth transitions between serving MoU coordinators to avoid any disruptive impact on the cooperation between the United Nations and the university

On MoU conferences:

- They reiterate their recommendation to alternate the holding of the biennial MoU conference at a United Nations duty station and an MoU university, respectively, and decide to hold the seventh conference in 2021 at a United Nations duty station to be announced before 31 December 2019
- They invite MoU universities interested in hosting the eighth conference, in 2023, to inform the Under-Secretary-General for General Assembly and Conference Management of their interest in so doing before 31 December 2019

UNIVERSITY	COUNTRY
Ain Shams University	*Egypt*
American University in Cairo	*Egypt*
Beijing Foreign Studies University	*China*
École supérieure d'interprètes et de traducteurs	*France*
Guangdong University of Foreign Studies	*China*
Herzen State Pedagogical University of Russia	*Russian Federation*
Institut de management et de communication interculturels	*France*
King Fahd School of Translation	*Morocco*
Lomonosov Moscow State University	*Russian Federation*
Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey	*United States of America*
Minsk State Linguistic University	*Belarus*
Moscow State Institute of International Relations	*Russian Federation*
National University of Córdoba	*Argentina*
Saint-Joseph University	*Lebanon*
Shanghai International Studies University	*China*
University of Bath	*United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland*
University of Damascus	*Syrian Arab Republic*
University of Geneva	*Switzerland*
University of Mons	*Belgium*
University of Nairobi	*Kenya*
University of Salamanca	*Spain*
University of Westminster	*United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland*

Report of the sixth Conference of MoU Universities
Monterey, California, USA, 2-3 May 2019   26   DGACM
Updated 5-May-21

First Name	Last Name	Function	Affiliation
Alexa	Alfer	Principal Lecturer in Translation Studies	University of Westminster
Angelique	Antonova	Deputy Director, School of Interpretation and Translation	Herzen State Pedagogical University of Russia
Sarah	Bordes	Director of International Development	Institut de management et de communication interculturels
Jesse	Browner	Chief, English Verbatim Reporting Section	DGACM/Meetings and Publishing Division, New York
Mélida	Buendía	Senior interpreter, Spanish Interpretation Section	DGACM/Meetings and Publishing Division, New York
Laura	Burian	Dean, Graduate School of Translation, Interpretation, and Language Education	Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey
Leire	Carbonell Aguero	Associate Professor	Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey
Marie-Paule	Chamayou	Director, Translation Section	École supérieure d'interprètes et de traducteurs
Odile	Cuvelier	Dean's Office	University of Mons
Harry	Dai	Deputy-Dean, Graduate Institute of Interpretation and Translation	Shanghai International Studies University
Jeff	Dayton-Johnson	Dean	Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey
Marie	Diur	Chief, Interpretation Service	DGACM/Division of Conference Management, United Nations Office at Geneva
Yan	Du	Chief, Chinese Verbatim Reporting Section	DGACM/Meetings and Publishing Division, New York
Ebithal	El Badry	Director, Language Department	American University in Cairo
Nikolay	Garbovskiy	Director, Higher School of Translation and Interpreting	Lomonosov Moscow State University
Ana	García-Álvarez	Training, Outreach and Gender Affairs Coordinator	DGACM/Documentation Division, New York
Zhengmao	Hu	Teacher	Guangdong University of Foreign Studies
Wenxin	Huang	Senior Production Editor, Chief of Chinese Copy Preparation and Proofreading Unit	DGACM/Meetings and Publishing Division, New York
Ghina	Ithani	Arabic Translator	Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)
Renée	Jourdenais	Professor, Coordinator of the Sixth MoU Conference	Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey

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First Name	Last Name	Function	Affiliation
Kirill	Kasyanov	Senior Interpreter, Chief of the Russian booth	DGACM/Division of Conference Services, United Nations Office at Nairobi
Natalia	Kobleva	Reviser, Russian Translation Service	DGACM/Documentation Division, New York
Yulia	Komarova	Vice-Rector for International Cooperation	Herzen State Pedagogical University of Russia
Olga	Kostikova	Deputy Director, Higher School of Translation and Interpreting	Lomonosov Moscow State University
Dmitry	Kryachkov	Head of English Language Department, School of International Relations	Moscow State Institute of International Relations
Anne	Lafeber	Senior Reviser, English Translation Service	DGACM/Documentation Division, New York
Changshuan	Li	Deputy Dean, Graduate School of Translation and Interpretation	Beijing Foreign Studies University
Daniel	Linder	Associate Professor	University of Salamanca
Abigail	Loregnard	Special Assistant to the Under-Secretary-General	DGACM/Office of the Under-Secretary-General, New York
Nicole	Maguire	Chief, English Translation Section	DGACM/Division of Conference Management, United Nations Office at Geneva
Carole	Maisonneuve	Public Information and Multilingualism Officer	DGACM/Office of the Under-Secretary-General, New York
Pamela	Mariño Zegarra	Professor in the School of Translation and Interpretation	Universidad Femenina del Sagrado Corazón
Patricia Verónica	Meehan	Secretary of International Relations	National University of Córdoba, Argentina
Jayne	Mutiga	Director, Centre for Translation and Interpretation	University of Nairobi
Alejandro	Parini	Director, School of Languages and International Studies	Belgrano University, Buenos Aires
Catherine	Pollard	Under-Secretary-General	DGACM, New York
Alexandr	Ponimatko	Dean, School of Translation and Interpreting	Minsk State Linguistic University
Fernando	Prieto Ramos	Dean, Faculty of Translation and Interpreting and	University of Geneva
Alice	Ryckmans	Interpreter, French Interpretation Section	DGACM/Conference Management Service, United Nations Office at Vienna
Sarah	Scott	Editor, English Editorial Control Unit, Publishing and Library Section	DGACM/Conference Management Service, United Nations Office at Vienna

First Name	Last Name	Function	Affiliation
Sheila	*Shermet*	*Senior Interpreter, English booth*	DGACM/Meetings and Publishing Division, New York
Irina M.	*Shokina*	*Head, Department for International Cooperation and Internationalization*	Moscow State Linguistic University
Cas	*Shulman-Mora*	*Associate Professor*	Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey
Alexandre	*Skourikhine*	*Senior Reviser, Russian Translation Section*	DGACM/Division of Conference Management, United Nations Office at Geneva
Stéphanie	*Terrien-Cooper*	*Visiting Professor*	Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey
Dirk	*Verbeke*	*Sales Director*	Herzen State Pedagogical University of Russia
Yinying	*Wang*	*Teaching fellow, Graduate Institute of Interpretation and Translation*	Shanghai International Studies University
Ita	*Wardell*	*Senior reviser, English Translation Service*	DGACM/Documentation Division, New York
Steven	*Wonnacott*	*Teaching Fellow*	University of Bath
Adam	*Wooten*	*Assistant Professor*	Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey
Bin	*Yao*	*School of English and International Studies*	Beijing Foreign Studies University
Ailing	*Zhang*	*Dean, Graduate Institute of Interpretation and Translation*	Shanghai International Studies University
Junfeng	*Zhao*	*Dean, School of Interpreting and Translation Studies*	Guangdong University of Foreign Studies

MoU universities

- American University in Cairo, Egypt
- Beijing Foreign Studies University, China
- École supérieure d'interprètes et de traducteurs, France
- Guangdong University of Foreign Studies, China
- Herzen State Pedagogical University of Russia, Russian Federation
- Institut de management et de communication interculturels, France
- Lomonosov Moscow State University, Russian Federation
- Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey, United States of America
- Minsk State Linguistic University
- Moscow State Institute of International Relations, Russian Federation
- Shanghai International Studies University, China
- National University of Córdoba, Argentina
- University of Bath, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
- University of Geneva, Switzerland
- University of Mons, Belgium
- University of Nairobi, Kenya
- University of Salamanca, Spain
- University of Westminster, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

Remote practicum agreement universities

- Moscow State Linguistic University, Russian Federation
- Universidad Femenina del Sagrado Corazón, Peru

United Nations entities

- Department for General Assembly and Conference Management (New York)
  - Documentation Division
  - Meetings and Publishing Division
  - Office of the Under-Secretary-General
- United Nations Office at Geneva
  - Division of Conference Management
- United Nations Office at Vienna
  - Conference Management Service
- United Nations Office at Nairobi
  - Division of Conference Services
- Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

ANNEX IV - AGENDA, PRESENTATIONS AND STATEMENTS

Presentations and statements are marked with hyperlinks below. They are also available from the MoU conference page of DGACM's website (https://www.un.org/dgacm/en/).

Thursday, 2 May 2019

8:30   **Registration** (499 Van Buren Street, McCone Building, Irvine Auditorium, Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey)

9:15   **Opening remarks**
Laura Burian, Dean of Graduate School of Translation, Interpretation, and Language Education, Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey
Jeff Dayton-Johnson, Dean of the Institute, Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey
Catherine Pollard, Under-Secretary-General for General Assembly and Conference Management and United Nations Coordinator for Multilingualism

9:45   **Update on MoU network activities**
Carole Maisonneuve, United Nations Headquarters, New York
Renée Jourdenais, Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey

10:15   **Group photo**

10:30   **Coffee Break**

11:00   **Update on the United Nations competitive examinations**
Anne Lafeber, United Nations Headquarters, New York
Mélida Buendía, United Nations Headquarters, New York

11:45   **Preparing students for United Nations examinations**
Alexander Skourikhine, United Nations Office at Geneva
Sheila Shermet, United Nations Headquarters, New York

12:30   **A toolkit for teachers to prepare students for United Nations translation: what should it contain?**
Ana García Álvarez, United Nations Headquarters, New York

1:00   **Lunch**

2:30   **Précis-writing at the United Nations**

Ita Wardell, United Nations Headquarters, New York
Nicole Maguire, United Nations Office at Geneva

3:00   Importance of editing skills
Sarah Scott, United Nations Office at Vienna
Jesse Browner, United Nations Headquarters, New York

3:30   Coffee break

4:00   Implementing the MoUs: perspective of the United Nations interpretation services
Marie Diur, United Nations Office at Geneva

4:30   Implementing the MoUs: university perspectives
Angelique Antonova, Herzen State Pedagogical University of Russia
Patricia Meehan, National University of Córdoba
Daniel Linder, University of Salamanca
Sarah Bordes, Institut de management et de communication interculturels

6:00   United Nations MoU dinner *(Hosted by the Middlebury Institute of International Studies)*
Montrio's Bistro, 414 Calle Principal

Friday, 3 May 2019

9:00   Using United Nations material in interpreter training: which, when, how and how much?
Kirill Kasyanov, United Nations Office at Nairobi
Alice Ryckmans, United Nations Office at Vienna
Yao Bin, Beijing Foreign Studies University
Alexander Ponimatko, Minsk State Linguistic University
Leire Carbonell Aguero, Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey
Moderator: Cas Shulman-Mora, Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey

10:00   How artificial intelligence, machine translation and other technological advances changed how we train translators and what we train them to do
Marie-Paule Chamayou, École supérieure d'interprètes et de traducteurs
Odile Cuvelier, University of Mons
Alexa Alfer, University of Westminster
Nikolay Garbovskiy, Lomonosov Moscow State University
Moderator: Adam Wooten, Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey

11:00   Coffee break

11:30 **Remote training: pros and cons**
Sheila Shermet, United Nations Headquarters, New York
Natalia Kobleva, United Nations Headquarters, New York
Changshuan Li, Beijing Foreign Studies University
Steven Wonnacott, University of Bath
Moderator: Stéphanie Terrien-Cooper, Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey

1:00 **Lunch break**

2:30 **Challenges of training language professionals today: an overview of the context in which MoU universities operate and implications for cooperation under the MoUs**
Harry Dai, Shanghai International Studies University
Fernando Prieto Ramos, University of Geneva
Ebithal El Badry, American University in Cairo
Laura Burian, Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey
Moderator: Renée Jourdenais, Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey

3:30 **Coffee break**

4:00 **Working together: future plans and future United Nations needs – conference outcomes**
Carole Maisonneuve, United Nations Headquarters, New York
Harry Dai, Shanghai International Studies University

4:30 **Closing**
Catherine Pollard, Under-Secretary-General for General Assembly and Conference Management and United Nations Coordinator for Multilingualism
Renée Jourdenais, Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey

5:00 **Monterey Forum opening reception**