

**Meeting of the Focal Points for Multilingualism
Thursday, 25 January 2018**

SYNOPSIS

Chair

Ms. Catherine Pollard, Coordinator for Multilingualism
Under-Secretary-General, Department for General Assembly and Conference Management

Attendance

32 Departments and Offices attended (including remotely): DESA, DFS, DGACM, DM, DM/OHRM, DPA, DPI, DPKO, ECA, ECE, ECLAC, EOSG, ESCAP, ESCWA, Ethics office, OAJ, OCHA, OCT, ODA, Office of the Ombudsman and Mediation Services, OHCHR, OHRLLS, OIOS, OLA, OSRSG / Sexual Violence in Conflict, PBSO, UNCTAD, UNISDR, UNITAR, UNOG, UNON, UNOV.

Agenda

1. Welcoming remarks
2. Legislative developments since the previous meeting
3. Raising awareness of multilingualism
4. Nurturing a multilingual workforce
5. Building knowledge
6. AOB and upcoming events

Agenda item 1 – Welcoming remarks

- The Coordinator thanked all entities for appointing focal points and invited those entities overseeing field missions to consider appointing focal points in the field, in particular to collect data.
- An updated list of focal points was circulated to all participants. Entities were invited to designate alternate focal points to ensure business continuity.

Agenda item 2 – Legislative developments since the previous meeting

- Two new international days were adopted by the General Assembly ([International Translation Day](#) and [International Day of Sign Languages](#)). The General Assembly also adopted its annual resolutions on [Pattern of Conferences](#) and [Questions relating to Information](#), with provisions on multilingualism and the role of the Coordinator.
- The General Assembly adopted its [biannual resolution on multilingualism](#). The Coordinator presented the highlights of the resolution.
- The Coordinator gave an update on the current efforts to include a performance indicator on multilingualism in the senior managers' compacts and have the multilingualism requirements reflected in the management reform.
- As the General Assembly recognized again multilingualism as a core value of the Organization, the Coordinator invited relevant stakeholders to reflect this requirement in the UN Competency Framework.
- The Coordinator additionally informed the network of her past briefing to the Management Committee, where she received support to the approach pursued.

Agenda item 3 – Raising awareness of multilingualism

1. Matrix of mandates and recommendations

- A comprehensive matrix of relevant matrix and recommendations was compiled and updated by the Coordinator, with a view to (1) ensuring consistency in messaging; (2) implementing all mandates given by the Member States; and (3) achieving coherence and coordination within the Secretariat. The Coordinator invited all entities to provide feedback.

2. Language-related days

- The Coordinator recalled how important the language-related days were to Member States and encouraged all entities to host or support their celebration. The Coordinator circulated a concept note in this respect, in line with her endorsed terms of reference, to clarify the roles of the various entities and ensure that all such language-related days are celebrated.

3. iSeek page on multilingualism

- The Coordinator submitted a site map for the future iSeek page on multilingualism, which would serve as a structured informational communication channel to improve Secretariat-wide coordination. She invited feedback from EOSG, DPI and other entities.

Agenda item 4 – Nurturing a multilingual workforce

1. Mapping multilingualism benefits

- The Coordinator conducted a mapping exercise to highlight the benefits of multilingualism, for the Organization, its staff and their respective teams. These maps would be used as awareness-raising tools and would be posted on the future iSeek page on multilingualism.

2. Guidelines on language requirements

- The Coordinator recalled that the proposal to develop guidelines to support hiring managers in setting language requirements in job openings had been received positively by Member States.
- The Coordinator presented her draft worksheet on language requirements, which aimed at increasing consistency in the Secretariat, and ensure compliance with past UNGA resolutions on human resources management. The Coordinator invited all entities to provide feedback.
- As part of the discussion, several entities expressed the need to fully integrate the guidelines on language requirements into the human resources processes. An entity also highlighted the need to induce an organizational culture that support the effective use of languages in the workplace.

Agenda item 5. Building knowledge

- The Coordinator recalled the previously reported lack of disaggregated data by language. She also recalled the support received from the General Assembly to build a data collection system.
- The Coordinator presented her template to collect data, which could also be used as part of the senior manager's performance reporting duties. The Coordinator invited all entities to provide feedback.
- As part of the discussion, an entity invited the Coordinator to liaise with entities overseeing human resources and information technologies to identify ways to collect this information.

Agenda item 6 – AOB and upcoming events

- The Coordinator invited all entities to share information on the upcoming language-related days and indicated she would convene another meeting of the network in early spring, to discuss the draft strategic policy framework that she would present to the Management Committee in April. Inputs would be sought in this regard from the focal points in due time.