

**Meeting of the Focal Points for Multilingualism
Wednesday, 7 December 2016**

SYNOPSIS

Chair:

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

Attendance:

28 Departments and Offices attended (including remotely) this meeting of focal points: CTED, DESA, DFS, DGACM, DM, DM / OHRM, DPA, DPI, DPKO, DSS, ECA, ECE, ECLAC, ESCAP, ESCWA, OAJ, OCHA, ODA, Office of the Ombudsman and Mediation Services, OHCHR, OLA, OSRSG/CAAC, UNCTAD, UNEP, UNISDR, UNITAR, UNOG, UNON.

Agenda:

1. Opening remarks
2. Developments since the 3 May meeting
3. Role and responsibilities of the focal points
4. Draft report of the Secretary-General on multilingualism
5. Proposed programme of work for 2017
6. Any other matters

Synopsis:

The second meeting of the focal points under the leadership of the Coordinator for Multilingualism addressed both procedural and substantive matters.

On the procedural side, the meeting resulted in a better understanding of the focal points regarding the applicable mandates, the expectations, including in the upcoming year, and their role as focal point.

On the substantive side, the draft report of the Secretary-General on multilingualism, its supplementary information and the non-paper of the Coordinator¹ were presented by the Coordinator. The various recommendations contained in the draft report (relating to cross-cutting matters, human resources management, conference management, information and communication, budgetary resources, procurement) were discussed.

¹ Ahead of meeting of the focal points, the Coordinator drafted and circulated to within the network of focal points a non-paper "Update on the work of the Departments and Offices in implementing multilingualism", which provides an overview on the status of implementation of multilingualism in the Secretariat.

Regarding the programme of the work for 2017, the Coordinator would propose a draft Secretary-General's Bulletin on multilingualism, and consult thereon with all Departments and Offices in the second trimester of 2017. The Coordinator would also work towards improving data collection per language across the Secretariat and rejuvenating the Language Days at the UN, working closely with the various stakeholders and DPI. The Coordinator, in her capacity as Under-Secretary-General for General Assembly and Conference Management, would also use the upcoming MoU Conference² and the Saint Jerome Translation Contest to showcase multilingualism. To better raise awareness of the importance of multilingualism, DGACM would add a page on multilingualism under its departmental website. Similarly, the Coordinator would initiate a dedicated webpage on iSeek as a tool for sharing information across the Secretariat. As the focal points demonstrated an interest in sharing experience within the network regarding the challenges posed by web translations and innovative tools to overcome such challenges, this matter was added to the programme of work for 2017.

Close cooperation within the network of focal points was expected to implement the programme of work for 2017.

² Fifth Conference between the UN and universities that have signed a memorandum of understanding with the UN on training language professionals