

Consultations on the draft resolution on
“the role of professional translation in connecting
nations, fostering peace, understanding and development”
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Agenda item 125
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Conference Room B

Statement of Ms. Catherine Pollard
Under-Secretary-General for General Assembly and Conference Management
Secretariat-wide Coordinator for Multilingualism

Excellencies,
Distinguished representatives,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Please allow me to warmly thank Ambassador Aliyev of Azerbaijan and Ambassador Dapkiunas of Belarus for kindly inviting me and managers of the language services of DGACM to participate in this first meeting on the draft resolution on “the role of professional translation in connecting nations and fostering peace, understanding and development”.

This is actually the first time I have the honour to participate in informal consultations in my dual capacity as Head of the relevant Department – DGACM, which oversees language services – and Secretariat-wide Coordinator for Multilingualism.

I can assure you of my support, and that of my team, throughout these negotiations, as needed. In the meantime, I would like to stress that the United Nations translators feel honoured by this initiative to have September 30 recognized as the International Translation Day.

The immense contribution of linguists to our multilateral system is indeed often overlooked. Yet, translators, and other language professionals who perform their duties behind the scenes, deserve our full attention.

Indeed, none of the purposes of the United Nations could be achieved without their involvement and commitment. They are key to ensuring inclusivity and transparency of intergovernmental process.

Language professionals also deserve our continued attention because our Organization’s future depends on its ability to continue attracting the best linguists, so it keeps on accomplishing its mission. Raising awareness of the general public on language professions would certainly contribute to attracting the best and brightest to the UN.

I would also like to seize this opportunity to highlight that the DGACM in its all four duty stations already celebrates St Jerome, through its annual St Jerome Translation Contest.

The St Jerome Translation Contest Award Ceremony will be held next week, Friday 21st April at 4.30PM in conference room 2. All Member and Observer Missions to the UN are invited to attend and see for themselves how the Department values and nurtures multilingualism, while inducing a positively emulating climate that supports excellence and quality, in line with the rationale of the draft resolution that is being considered. I invite all of you to join us in this celebration and I thank you again, Ambassador Aliyev and Ambassador Dapkiunas for inviting me to take the floor at the opening of these consultations.