

5th MoU Conference  
Panel discussion on “International Organizations and Academia,  
Partners in Sustaining Multilingualism  
in the Service of Peace, Development and Human Rights”  
21 April 2017, 3.30-4.30PM  
Conference Room 2

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

Excellencies,  
Distinguished guests,  
Ladies and gentlemen,  
Dear colleagues

It is my pleasure to open this panel discussion on “International Organizations and Academia – Partners in Sustaining Multilingualism in the Service of Peace, Development and Human Rights”, in my dual capacity as the Under-Secretary-General for General Assembly and Conference Management and the Secretariat-wide Coordinator for Multilingualism. I hope this will help build bridges between the Member States of the UN, and the network of universities that have signed memoranda of understanding with the UN for training of language professionals. We usually refer to this network by a short name, the “MoU network”.

I believe that this panel discussion will provide Member States with a unique opportunity to communicate directly to the training institutions how their needs are evolving and how such transformations impact our requirements as employers of language professionals.

Let me remind our remote participants that we will take questions from Twitter as well and I would request that you use the hashtag of the conference if you would like to participate in the questions and answers.

Please join me in welcoming - and thanking - all our panellists for their time and keen interest in multilingualism, as a core value of the Organization.

I am very pleased today to introduce to you our Panel :

- H.E. Ms. Maria Luiza Ribeiro Viotti, the Chef de cabinet in the Office of the Secretary-General
- H.E. Ms. Sima Sami Bahous, Permanent Representative of Jordan to the UN
- H.E. Mr. Liu Jieyi, Permanent Representative of China to the UN
- H.E. Ms. Inga Rhonda King, Permanent Representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to the UN
- H.E. Mr. François Delattre, Permanent Representative of France to the UN
- H.E. Mr. Andrei Dapkiunas, Permanent Representative of Belarus to the UN
- H.E. Ms. María Emma Mejía Vélez, Permanent Representative of Colombia to the UN

I would like to thank you all for taking the time from your very busy schedules. It is a great honour for us to have you all with us today and we thank you so much for your support to DGACM and all our colleagues in the language services.

Before giving the floor to the speakers, I would like to invite you to watch a brief video to set the tone of the discussion.

**[VIDEO SCREENING]**

I would like to give the floor to the UN Secretary-General's Chef de cabinet, H.E. Ms. Maria Luiza Ribeiro Viotti, who is with us today and will also speak for the Secretary-General.

**[REMARKS BY THE CHEF DE CABINET]**

I would like to thank you Madam Chef de cabinet for the strong call you have delivered and I am now delighted to welcome our first Member State representative. We are hoping that they will share some insights that are specific to their language group. As you probably noticed, we have interpretation services, so feel free to deliver your remarks in any of the UN official languages. Our speakers will take the floor, by alphabetical order of language, starting with Arabic.

So please join me in welcoming Ambassador Sima Sami Bahous, Permanent Representative of Jordan. And, Madam Ambassador, in your remarks, I would invite you to share with us underlining the skills that are particularly needed, in your view, to serve successfully at the UN as an Arabic language professional.

**[REMARKS BY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF JORDAN]**

I thank Ambassador Bahous very much for these insightful remarks and suggestions to us and I thank her very much for the kind comments for the work of the Department and for the staff. Thank you.

I would now like to invite Ambassador Liu Jieyi, Permanent Representative of China to the UN. And Mr. Ambassador, if you could share your views as the representative of a Permanent Member of the Security Council, would you say that this role gives you specific expectations from us in terms of conference services?

**[REMARKS BY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF CHINA]**

Thank you Ambassador Liu for your remarks and suggestions to us. And I can assure you that we want to have practical outcome to be able to move forward in strengthening the network. Now let me introduce Ambassador Inga Rhonda King, the Permanent Representative of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, who is the current Chair of the Fifth Committee, that is the Budgetary and Administrative Committee of the UN General Assembly. And the Bureau of the 5th Committee plays an important role in planning the meetings of the Committee and processing documentation, which is one of our perennial challenges. So Madam Ambassador, as the Chair of the Committee, in your view, what are the most important qualities for a language professional to successfully serve the 5th Committee, either in meetings or in processing its documentation?

**[REMARKS BY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF ST VINCENT]**

Thank you Ambassador King for the remarks and also the empathy with the translators that are servicing your Committee. That is deeply appreciated.

Now let me invite Ambassador François Delattre of France to speak. France, like China, is a Permanent Member of the Security Council. And France is also one of the longest serving members of the Committee on Conferences, DGACM's oversight body. In the Committee, France has been a staunch supporter of the network. May I ask you, Ambassador, what objectives does France pursue by supporting the network of MoU universities? How do you see this?

**[REMARKS BY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF FRANCE]**

Thank you Ambassador Delattre for your remarks and your insights and for your support for our work. And I would like to give the floor to Ambassador Andrei Dapkiunas of Belarus. Ambassador Dapkiunas, you have always been a strong supporter of multilingualism and the work of the DGACM. In your view, which competencies should receive special attention in training future language professionals to ensure that we have high quality of conference services?

**[REMARKS BY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF BELARUS]**

Thank you very much Ambassador Dapkiunas, on behalf of the entire Department, for your kind words and recognition of the importance of language professionals with the draft resolution, and we wish you all the best as this is with Member States.

And now last but certainly not least, let me introduce our Spanish-speaker, my dear friend, H.E. Madam María Emma Mejía Vélez, the Permanent Representative of Colombia.

Ambassador, you and I have in common that we are strong advocates of women's empowerment. And I take great pride in the membership of today's panel and its strict gender balance.

As you know, Colombia is part of the Group of Latin America and the Caribbean, GRULAC, and GRULAC has been a long-time supporter of wider geographic diversity in the MoU network. So may I ask you Madam Ambassador how you see diversity impacting the quality of Spanish language services? Would you have any advice to share with the universities so that they could balance conflicting requirements when training young professionals, such as for instance promoting an understanding of regional linguistic specificities, while of course ensuring the overall consistency of the language services? Madam Ambassador, you have the floor.

**[REMARKS BY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF COLOMBIA]**

Thank you Ambassador Mejía Vélez for your insights and your strong support and these excellent ideas, especially on how we can bring more gender perspective into our work with universities. And yes, we know that they are committed to having more young women join the ranks of the linguistic professions. So thank you for your encouragement and support.

**[CLOSING REMARKS]**

We have now reached the end of this discussion and it is my hope that this panel has inspired our MoU participants as much as it has inspired me.

I am sure that the participants will have a better understanding of the changing requirements faced by the language professionals whom they train.

I am sorry but we won't be able to have questions because I think we are challenged by time. It just remains for me to reiterate my warmest thanks to our panellists for all their precious time they have given us. I would like again to thank all of our speakers, the Chef de cabinet, Ms. Maria Luiza Ribeiro Viotti, the Permanent Representative of Jordan, H.E Ms. Sima Sami Bahous; the Permanent Representative of China, H.E. Mr. Liu Jieyi; the Permanent Representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, H.E. Ms. Inga Rhonda King; the Permanent

Representative of France, H.E. Mr. François Delattre; the Permanent Representative of Belarus, H.E. Mr. Andrei Dapkiunas; and the Permanent Representative of Colombia, H.E. Ms. María Emma Mejía Vélez.

We have been very honoured that we could have as many of you Ambassadors with us today and share your precious time with us. It's a great privilege and honour for us as a Department and our participants. So thank you again so much for being with us.

We are about to close this event. We will suspend for a few minutes so our guests can leave us and then I will invite you to remain in the room for those of you who would like to stay to attend the 12<sup>th</sup> St. Jerome Translation Contest Awards Ceremony which showcases our language staff skills.

But before we leave, I would like to invite you to watch another brief message recorded by the Secretary-General specifically for the conference.

**[VIDEO SCREENING]**