

International Translation Day  
Exhibit “Day-to-Dayness of language  
professionals: Bringing Nations Together”  
28 September 2017, 6:15 p.m.  
1<sup>st</sup> floor of the Conference Building

**Transcript of the remarks by Ms. Catherine Pollard  
Under-Secretary-General for General Assembly and Conference Management  
Secretariat-wide Coordinator for Multilingualism**

Excellencies,  
Distinguished guests,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

Today, we are celebrating International Translation Day, a day to pay tribute to all language professionals and their contribution to fostering peace, understanding and development.

72 years after the founding of the United Nations, the General Assembly in its resolution 71/288 gave credit to those professionals who epitomize multilateral diplomacy and the very fabric of this Organization.

We are grateful to the sponsors of the resolution and all Member States who supported reflecting the immense contribution that language professionals have paid to this Organization, including its very founding in the United Nations legislation.

Language professionals do not render just words, from one language into another one. They render meanings and complex concepts which are embedded into systems of thought built over centuries of history. In so doing, they ensure mutual understanding, which is fundamental to achieving the purposes of our Organization.

Rendering meaning requires expertise and excellent technical skills, in addition to a perfect knowledge of the languages from and into which language professionals work. It also demands an intimate understanding of the historical and cultural factors that are necessarily at play in multilateral diplomacy. And it also requires integrity and neutrality. Today, it is also this code of ethics of the profession that we celebrate.

While technology increasingly supports the work of language professionals, saving costs and time and ensuring efficiency gains, the act of transposing meaning across languages fundamentally remains a human act – and an invisible act, unless a mistake is caught by a recipient. Today we celebrate all the language professionals who have made a point in making their contribution as invisible as it is humanly possible.

I wish to take a moment to thank their Excellencies Mr. Andrei Dapkiunas, Deputy Foreign Minister of Belarus, Ambassador Rybakov of Belarus, Ambassador Aliyev of Azerbaijan, and Ambassador Ataeva of Turkmenistan.

We are greatly appreciative for your enduring commitment to bringing light to the sometimes under-estimated and under-appreciated work performed by language professionals worldwide, through this exhibit and their role in the adoption by Assembly resolution 71/288 on professional translation.

Let me conclude by saying a word about this photo exhibit, which perfectly renders the highest standards of excellence, dedication and modesty that have characterized generations of language professionals. It is my sincere hope that, through this exhibit, language professionals' contribution to the goals of the United Nations will be better recognized and appreciated by all. Indeed, "a picture is worth a thousand words".

I thank you, Excellencies, for your leadership in bringing this exhibition to the UN and promoting language professions in and out the United Nations. And I thank all of you who are present here today. Ladies and gentlemen, without further ado, please join me in welcoming this photo exhibit, where it belongs, at the United Nations.