

Spanish Language Day at the UN
5 May 2017, 6-8PM
Visitors' Lobby

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

Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,
Dear colleagues,

1. Please allow me to start by conveying my warmest thanks to you Ambassador Gustavo Meza-Cuadra, for inviting me to the celebrations of the Spanish language at the UN, and for bending the rule by allowing me to deliver these remarks in English.
2. Let me also seize this opportunity to thank our hard-working DGACM staff, who every day support you, as Member State representatives, in bridging the gap to reach negotiated outcomes.
3. Today, I too am in need of their assistance as we celebrate the Spanish Language and I thank you, Anyuli Gonzalez Francisco Garcia Hurtado, for your kind help.
4. While we are gathered here this evening to celebrate the Spanish language, it is a universal message that I wish to convey.
5. A message of mutual understanding. A call for respect for diversity and also an invitation to hear the voices of the peoples of the world and respond in a way that they can understand. To leave no one behind.
6. These are, in just a few words, how the Spanish language, a working and official language of the General Assembly, the Security Council and the ECOSOC, resonates to me.
7. As Spanish speakers, you know the risks that the UN would face by surrendering to monolingualism.
8. As I strive to encourage an organizational culture change in the UN Secretariat to better integrate multilingualism into all our activities, I am confident that I can count on your support.

9. Secretary-General Guterres stated recently that we will only be able to overcome the growing trend towards monolingualism by working collectively to establish alliances among speakers of various language groups.

10. I am sure that your group will be a driving force in the General Assembly in this regard, especially when it considers the agenda item on “multilingualism” in the coming weeks.

11. As for me, you can count on my support in encouraging a fairer treatment of all official languages, because multilingualism is not only the corollary of multilateral diplomacy, it is also a core value of our Organization, and a prerequisite to efficiency and effectiveness.

12. With these words, let me conclude and congratulate you, Ambassador Meza-Cuadra, and all the missions involved, on the organization of this important event and your constant support in all my endeavours as Coordinator for Multilingualism.

13. Thank you.