

Check against delivery

**Remarks by the Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information
Cristina Gallach
International Mother Language Day, New York
Saturday, 20 February 2016**

Shubho Shondha!

És un plaer estar aquí.

Your excellency, Ambassador Masud Bin Momen, Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the United Nations,

Excellencies,

My dear colleagues, Catherine Pollard, Under-Secretary-General for General Assembly Affairs and Conference Management,

Marie Paule Roudil, Director of the New York Liaison office of UNESCO,

What a pleasure to be back this year and with you all for this important Day!

Last year I mentioned that, having grown up in Catalonia, I developed a special appreciation of the importance of knowing one's mother tongue. Catalan was not taught in schools, so we had to learn it from our parents. It was a language that was taught from one generation to the next.

By celebrating and encouraging the use of mother languages, we help to ensure their survival and we strengthen communities.

At the Department of Public Information at the United Nations, we understand as well as anyone that linguistic diversity is a strength.

Our aim in DPI is to tell the UN story to the world, and we do that in as many languages as we can, so that we can connect and engage with people in a language they can understand.

This brings me to the Sustainable Development Goals. All of you here in this room know what they are. Many of you can take credit for them. You shaped them, you negotiated them, and your governments joined others to universally approve them last September.

The task of my Department now is to let every citizen of the world know about the SDGs. The Goals can only succeed if everyone feels they have a direct stake in their success.

In short, we want to be able to project the SDGs in local accents. One way we are doing that already is by translating the beautiful visual icons of the SDGs that you will have seen.

Through partnerships, with help from Member States, NGOs and others, we have managed to translate the icons into more than 30 languages so far, from Armenian to Wolof, and from Hebrew to Farsi, and Bangla as well – thanks to the hard work of the UN Information Centre in Dhaka.

Our hope is that soon everyone will know the SDGs in their own language. I encourage all of you to help us to ensure the Goals are translated into as many languages as possible.

Happy International Mother Language Day!
