

Chinese Language Day at the United Nations, 15 April 2025

Remarks by Mr. Movses Abelian, Under-Secretary-General for General Assembly and Conference Management and UN Coordinator for Multilingualism

Excellency [Fu Cong],
Distinguished guests, colleagues,

Zao shang hao (Good morning)!

It is both an honour and a pleasure to join you today, in my capacity as Under-Secretary-General for General Assembly and Conference Management and United Nations Coordinator for Multilingualism, as we celebrate Chinese Language Day 2025 — a moment once again to revel in the cultural richness and beauty of Chinese, one of the world's oldest languages.

Each year, Chinese Language Day provides a valuable opportunity to reflect on the cultural heritage and global influence of the Chinese language.

From the timeless wisdom of Confucius and Laozi, to the lyrical brilliance of Li Bai and Du Fu, from the graceful strokes of Chinese calligraphy to the melodic traditions of Chinese opera, the Chinese language and culture have made lasting contributions to our shared human story. Today's activities give us a glimpse into this remarkable legacy — where poetry, rhymes, romance, art and song intertwine to tell the story of a living language and the culture it embodies.

Spoken by over a billion people, Chinese is not merely a means of communication — including here at the UN — it is also a vessel for philosophy and artistry, and a bridge between past and future. Its enduring wisdom continues to offer insight, beauty and inspiration.

As we work towards a more sustainable and inclusive future, we are reminded that language is more than words or characters — it is a meeting point of

cultures, ideas and humanity. This is particularly true in the UN, which is inherently multilingual. Here, multilingualism is essential for enabling multilateral diplomacy and allowing the Organization to fulfil its global mission.

The United Nations Strategic Framework on Multilingualism clearly emphasizes the role of language days as key occasions to honour and promote this core value of our Organization.

So, on this day, and indeed every day, let us cherish the beauty and richness of the Chinese language, along with the other official languages.

Before concluding, I would be remiss not to acknowledge the work of my own Department. At the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management, linguistic diversity is proudly central to everything we do. Language professionals represent the largest proportion of our staff, and their invaluable role in delivering high-quality multilingual conference services, even in the face of current difficulties, actively contributes to the Organization's mission to serve as a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations in the pursuit of the purposes enshrined in the Charter.

I would therefore like to take the opportunity to recognize and thank the Chinese language staff in my Department. Their dedication, alongside their peers in other official languages, is essential to the smooth functioning of the intergovernmental processes at the United Nations. Keep up the great work! *Jiā yóu!*

In my role as UN Coordinator for Multilingualism, I also extend my heartfelt appreciation to all staff who work in Chinese, for their professionalism, skill, and tireless efforts in promoting multilingualism and effective communication, internally and externally.

Xie xie (Thank you)!

Zhong Wen Ri Kuai Le! (Happy Chinese Language Day)