

Thematic Meeting on Multilingualism across the United Nations System

“Building Common Understanding through Multilingualism”

Aims

- To discuss how multilingualism facilitates dialogue across Member States, Observer Missions, UN entities, and accredited civil society organizations and brings the United Nations community together, fostering a common understanding of complex issues, and nurturing collective solutions to mutual challenges.
- To present case studies in which multilingual practices enhance international cooperation, facilitate problem-solving, and deepen understanding across differences.
- To highlight established best practices, in complex organizational contexts, in implementing and mainstreaming multilingualism, enabling greater language diversity and achieving linguistic inclusion in support of organizational goals, and to determine if and how such practices can be built upon and amplified.

Organizers

The NGO Committee on Language and Languages and the Study Group on Language and the United Nations together with the Permanent Missions of Andorra, Burundi, Canada, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, and Spain and the Permanent Observer Mission for the International Organization of la Francophonie will hold a special meeting with the theme of *Building Common Understanding through Multilingualism*.

Rationale

Multilingualism has become an increasing priority across the United Nations system, reflected most recently by (a) the Member States’ recognition that multilingualism is one of the UN’s core values, (b) the Joint Inspection Unit in its reports on multilingualism in the UN system (such as [JIU/REP/2002/11](#), [JIU/REP/2011/4](#) and [JIU/REP/2020/6](#)), (c) the General Assembly in its successive resolutions on multilingualism (including resolution [76/268](#)), (d) the President of the General Assembly’s emphasis on fostering peace, prosperity, and sustainability through multilateralism, multiculturalism, and multilingualism, and (e) ongoing efforts under the auspices of the Secretary-General and the UN Coordinator for Multilingualism.

Multilingualism, as an enabler of multilateral diplomacy, is central to the work of the United Nations. Because it is a prerequisite to meaningful dialogue, multilingualism is critical to building understanding and solidarity among people and nations, and to sharing knowledge and identifying common solutions to the challenges the world is facing. Multilingualism is essential for bringing the community of nations together at the point of decision, and for ensuring effective two-way communication at the time of implementation. Adequately addressing language diversity, internally and externally, is also a requirement for leaving no one behind and achieving equal treatment of all. This thematic meeting will assemble Member States, Observer Missions, UN entities, accredited civil society organizations, and scientific experts to share ideas about multilingualism itself, and its multiplying impact in pursuing the goals of the United Nations, including the Sustainable Development Goals.

Format

The four-hour meeting will take place in a virtual environment to maximize opportunities for participation globally. The President of the General Assembly and other senior leaders, Member States, Representatives of the Group of Francophone Ambassadors and of the Group of Friends of Spanish, Observer Missions, UN entities, ECOSOC-accredited civil society organizations with a focus on multilingualism, and scientific experts will deliver statements in relation to the aims of the thematic meeting.

The meeting will take place on 12 June 2023 from 09:00-13:00 EDT/New York via Zoom. Interpretation in the six official languages of the United Nations will be organized by the NGO Committee on Language and Languages using volunteer civil society interpreters. Esperanto interpretation will be provided by the Universal Esperanto Association. The meeting will be recorded and archived online.

Registration

Member States

Member States wishing to attend are asked to confirm participation by 6 June using this [confirmation form](#).

Member States wishing to make an intervention may register for the speaker's list by submitting a 600-word text using this [intervention submission form](#) **no later than 9 June**.

Invited Speakers

Other invited speakers are asked to submit their interventions in the manner described in their letter of invitation.

General Registration

Interested individuals from UN entities, civil society, academia, intergovernmental organizations, among others may register to observe the meeting by completing this [general registration form](#) below no later than 9 June.

Draft Programme

9:00-9:30 *Opening of the Session*

Senior leaders of the United Nations will deliver opening remarks.

9:30-12:45 *Dialogue on Building Common Understanding through Multilingualism*

Statements by Member States, Observer Missions, UN entities, ECOSOC-accredited civil society organizations, and scientific experts will alternate to facilitate the interchange of ideas.

12:45-13:00 *Closing*

Final remarks will be offered by the NGO Committee on Language and Languages and the Study Group on Language and the United Nations