

***PLEASE CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY***

Fifth Committee  
10<sup>th</sup> formal meeting  
13 November 2019, 10 a.m.  
Conference Room 3  
Agenda item 138: Pattern of conferences

**Statement by Mr. Movses Abelian, Under-Secretary-General  
for General Assembly and Conference Management**

Distinguished Chair,  
Distinguished delegates,

1. During its 2019 substantive session the Committee on Conferences considered the report of the Secretary-General on the pattern of conferences contained in document A/74/121.
2. The report has been prepared pursuant to resolution 73/270 and responds to the mandates addressed to the Secretary-General. It also provides information on procedures and activities relating to the pattern of conferences in New York, Geneva, Vienna and Nairobi in 2018.
3. In 2018, DGACM serviced about 35,000 meetings, a 3 per cent increase from 2017. These include the increasing proportion of non-calendar meetings – accounting for 75 per cent of all meetings in New York and Geneva – which continues to place heavy constraints on the resources allocated to servicing mandated calendar meetings. I would like to inform the Committee that the administrative instruction ST/AI/416 regulating the use of premises at UNHQ has been updated and issued as ST/AI/2019/4.
4. The overall utilization rate of interpretation resources increased slightly from 81 to 82 per cent, and the percentage of meetings of regional and other major groupings provided with interpretation services increased from 79 to 83 per cent. Our goal is that both Member States and the Secretariat should strive to make meetings planning a collaborative exercise, through which workload forecast would be ensured and resources would be utilized as efficiently as possible.
5. All duty stations continued to apply the integrated global management rule – an efficient approach to assembling teams to service meetings away from headquarters, thereby achieving considerable efficiencies.
6. As regards documentation, the Department gave utmost importance to the timely submission and issuance of documents for all intergovernmental bodies, including the Fifth Committee. In 2018, globally, 90 per cent of documents were submitted by author departments on or before the deadlines. Compliance by the Secretariat with the four-week processing deadline for documents that were submitted on time and within word limits increased slightly from 97 to

98 per cent. Compliance with issuance deadlines increased yet again, to 94 per cent, continuing the upward trend from the 51 per cent recorded in 2013. The translation productivity continued an upward trend which is due to the increased use of eLUNa and self-revision.

7. Past issues with filling vacancies in the language services have been addressed. The introduction of fully remote combined examinations for translators, verbatim reporters and copy preparers/proofreaders has been very successful in attracting record numbers of applicants, especially from less well-represented regions, and yielded sufficient numbers of candidates to meet the anticipated staffing needs over the next three years. Through its outreach activities, the Department has continued to foster its relationships with universities and educational institutions.

8. Regarding accessibility, all duty stations continued to actively support efforts to increase services such as sign-language interpretation, live and remote captioning, provision of assistive devices, on-demand Braille printing, and accessible seating. In New York, renovation work in the General Assembly Hall facilitated enhanced access for persons with disabilities. Together with resolution 73/341 on the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly, which provides modalities to accommodate the seating of representatives with disabilities, these measures represent tangible steps in ensuring dignified participation in the intergovernmental work.

9. The strategic priorities of the Department as established by the Member States remain the same: continuous improvement of its products in terms of multilingualism, quality, timeliness, cost-effectiveness, accessibility and sustainability. Achievement of these goals is enabled by continued innovation in technology and organization of work; measures to attract and retain qualified professionals; and emphasis on client orientation.

10. I would like to highlight some of the key ongoing projects: eLUNa, a computer-assisted translation tool which was developed in-house and within existing resources; e-deleGATE which aims to improve, harmonize and unify existing e-services for delegations through a single secure platform; the one-stop-shop portal, a web-based application for organization of meetings, providing meeting requestors with easy access to all meeting services; and Indico which is a meeting participant registration tool already certified to become part of Umoja Extension 2.

11. Our focus, however, remains on the skills and knowledge of our staff, and artificial intelligence is effective only if it complements human intelligence. We continue to actively stimulate learning, knowledge sharing and creativity, human communication and brilliance.

12. My colleagues and I look forward to our interaction. Thank you for your attention.

\*\* \*\* \*\* \*