



7TH MoU CONFERENCE



Statement by Rola Dashti
Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and
Executive Secretary of ESCWA
Opening of the seventh MoU Conference
Online, 17-19 May 2021

Greetings from Beirut, the city of pluralism; from the United Nations House, a crossroads of cultures and languages.

It is a pleasure to address you at this joint Conference between the United Nations and the MoU universities, at a time when prevailing circumstances have significantly altered our working methods. However, our determination to promote multilingualism in communication and dialogue remains steadfast.

This Conference is not just a meeting between an international organization and academic institutions. Rather, it is an embodiment of our belief that multilingualism is a core value underpinning mutual respect and pluralism; and that through knowledge and hard work, we can transform our world.

My dear colleague, Movses Abelian,
Dear United Nations colleagues,
Distinguished partners,

This year, ESCWA has had the honour of organizing, in collaboration with DGACM, the seventh MoU Conference between the United Nations and the MoU network of universities that train language professionals for competitive language examinations.

These examinations are the pathway for talented linguists to join the United Nations, by showcasing their skills, knowledge and innovative capacity to enrich our peace, security and development mandate.

Since our mission is constantly evolving, it is imperative to continually search for ways to coordinate between United Nations work requirements and academic training.

Which is what ESCWA has been doing for years.

ESCWA trains university students in editing, translation, and proofreading. Our language professionals visit universities to coach students, and ESCWA offers internships within our language team. Despite the challenges of the past two years, we have used the tools available to us, renewed our approach, and succeeded in continuing this valuable initiative remotely.

Ladies and gentlemen,

At ESCWA, we have great confidence in our language professionals.

We entrust them to mould our ideas in structure and in substance, and convey them to an infinitely diverse audience with myriad priorities.

Our language professionals are entrusted with the Commission's image, and they have a say in what is displayed on its website.

With them, we paint the identity of ESCWA through ideas, words, shapes and colours.

Unquestionably, they were the first to adapt and innovate to ensure continued effective communication between the United Nations and the world. They were the first to overcome the obstacles of the past two years, which have witnessed more transformations and challenges than the past decades. Under the innovative guidance of DGACM, they developed alternative tools for translation and interpretation, to ensure that our work could continue uninterrupted.

The United Nations aims to bridge the gap between science and application, between knowledge and practice. There is no better forum than this to work towards that integration, and towards a success story where academics and language professionals are pioneers of change and innovation.

In conclusion,

I wish this Conference every success, and I look forward to future collaboration between ESCWA, DGACM and MoU universities – collaboration that effects positive change in communication and dialogue through the power of multilingualism.

Thank you.