



HAUT-COMMISSARIAT AUX DROITS DE L'HOMME • OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS
PALAIS DES NATIONS • 1211 GENEVA 10, SWITZERLAND
www.ohchr.org • TEL: +41 22 917 3302 • FAX: +41 22 928 9018 • E-MAIL: secretariat@ohchr.org

30 September 2019

Dear Ms. Valovaya,

I write to thank you for sharing your thoughts and concerns on multilingualism within the United Nations and I fully support your proposal to promote multilingualism within the Organization, especially among the United Nations agencies in Geneva.

In this context, I would like to share with you some of the efforts that we are undertaking in OHCHR to promote multilingualism.

First, OHCHR fully supports and funds language training for its staff both at headquarters and in the field. In 2018, 98 OHCHR staff members benefitted from on-line language licences for all six official languages of the United Nations. Additionally, 263 OHCHR staff members attended face-to-face language training with the Centre for Learning and Multilingualism, United Nations Office at Geneva. The same opportunities continue to be available to staff members. Improved language skills allow our staff, and especially our local field-based staff, to participate in more Office-wide discussions.

As part of our peer learning initiative, bi-monthly coffee briefings are held in OHCHR. The coffee briefings provide a platform for colleagues and stakeholders to share information and updates on their relevant areas of work with their peers. They are conducted in English, French and Spanish, depending on the preference of the speaker.

The OHCHR website is currently in the midst of a three-year overhaul that aims to make it more easily accessible and increase the number of core pages translated into all six official languages of the United Nations.

Please be assured that OHCHR will continue to promote multilingualism and seek out new and more innovative ways of doing so in addition to the activities already mentioned.

Yours sincerely,

Michelle Bachelet
High Commissioner for Human Rights

Ms. Tatiana Valovaya
Director-General
United Nations Office at Geneva
Geneva, Switzerland