

Ukrainian Mother Language Day:

10 March 2017, 1.15-2.30PM

Conference Room 2

**Statement of Ms. Catherine Pollard
Under-Secretary-General for General Assembly and Conference Management
Secretariat-wide Coordinator for Multilingualism**

Excellencies,
Distinguished guests,
Ladies and gentlemen,

1. At the outset, let me congratulate you, Mister Ambassador, for your leadership in raising awareness of the contribution of mother languages in achieving our common goals. I thank you for inviting me to join my voice to yours on this importance matter.

2. As the UN headquarters is getting ready for the opening of the 61st session of the Commission on the Status of Women, next Monday, I am delighted to take part in a discussion that specifically aims at addressing the interconnection between language and gender.

3. Interestingly enough, most nations keep referring to languages received at birth as the language . This is seemingly a nearly universal feature

4. Beyond this anecdote, you are aware that for the past year, I have made a point of explaining the critical contribution made by multilingualism to achieving the goals of the UN, whether it is international peace and security; development; or human rights. I also believe that we must keep in mind that it is the responsibility of the UN Secretariat to mainstream multilingualism into our activities,

5. In this regard, human rights in general in particular are no exception. As a matter of fact, languages closely intertwined. Women from minority or indigenous language groups face greater barriers to accessing healthcare and quality education; they are also disproportionate 7 MCID 117>BDC Be98tMhnt98tMhnt59uAv1 0 1 199.61 14

6. But languages are also part must be part of the winning equation. Agenda 2030, as the

Indeed, I doubt that any of the goals, and any of the targets on Agenda 2030, could be met without integrating the language component.

7. My deep belief is that languages, as a medium of communication, as a vehicle for our thoughts, our policies, our programmes, our information materials, our reports, our deliberations, are certainly key to achieving the Agenda 2030, and in particular goal gender equality and empowerment of women and girls .

8. This is why the UN Secretariat operates on a daily basis in a myriad of languages, not only in its working and official languages, but also in dozens of local languages that best fit the communities that are supposed to be helped by the Sustainable Development Goals. The UN country team in Ukraine maintains a website in Ukrainian language for instance. Only by reaching out to the target audience in a technologically and linguistically accessible manner will we, collectively, achieve the very purpose of our Organization, and implement the mandates from the Member States to the Secretariat. This is why,