

**Remarks by Mr. Michael Møller
Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva
Arabic Language Day**

Palais des Nations, Room XXI
Tuesday, 15 January 2019
12.30 p.m.

Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,
Friends and colleagues,

As-salam-aleykum! It is my great pleasure to be present today to celebrate the Arabic language and to recognize its richness, its beauty and its importance. I very much regret that due to a long-standing prior engagement I can only be with you briefly. I would like to take the opportunity to thank Ambassador Al-Sammak, Permanent Representative of the League of Arab States and Ambassador Al-Rahbi, Permanent Representative of Oman for their

An essential factor in harmonious communication among peoples, multilingualism is of particular importance to the United Nations. By promoting tolerance, it ensures effective and increases

better outcomes and more involvement. As former Secretary-General Kofi Annan said,

In support of multilingualism, therefore, the United Nations dedicates a day every year to celebrate each of its six official languages and raise awareness of their history and cultural impact. It was decided to celebrate Arabic on 18 December as the day on which the General Assembly decided to designate Arabic as

As one of the most widely spoken languages in the world used daily by more than 290 million people, the Arabic language has also been a pillar of the cultural diversity of humanity. Classical Arabic spread beyond the geography of the Arab world and is now the language of worship for more than 1.8 billion of world population. Its age is estimated to be more than 5000 years and its first written records date back to about 3000 years. It encapsulates a very wi