

Introductory remarks to the Organizational Session

Remarks by Ms. Catherine Pollard Assistant-Secretary-General for General Assembly and Conference Management

Thank you Madame Chair.
Distinguished Members of the Committee on Conferences,
Distinguished Observer(s),

At the outset, I would like to extend a warm welcome to the Members of the Committee on Conferences, and to congratulate the distinguished delegate of Uruguay, Ms. Imelda Smolcic, on her election to the position of Chair. DGACM is looking forward to working with you, Madame Chair, as well as with the other members of the Bureau: Ms. Ljija Grgić-Stojanović, Vice-Chair (Bosnia and Herzegovina), Mr. Hiroshi Onuma, Vice-Chair (Japan) and Mr. Yotem Goren, Rapporteur (Israel).

We would also like to convey our appreciation and gratitude to the members of the outgoing Bureau for their contribution to the Committee's work, and to the previous Chair, Mr. Yotam Goren, under whose able leadership the Committee successfully accomplished its programme of work in 2014.

I would like to take this opportunity to apologize for the absence of Mr. Tegegnetwork Gettu, Under-Secretary-General for General Assembly and Conference Management, who was on official business in Russia, and was unavoidably delayed due to unexpected changes in his return flight. But I speak on his behalf and together, we are ready, willing and able to support your work however best we can.

Madame Chair,

As in 2014, in preparing the Secretary-General's report on the Pattern of Conferences for consideration by the Committee at its substantive session the Department is intending to keep the main focus on the terms of reference of the Committee as reflected in the General Assembly resolution 32/72 of 9 December 1977. This will enable the delegates to consider issues of a strategic character, and the Department will make sure that the report is precise, factual and reflecting the tasks entrusted to the Department.

In this regard, we should recall that the General Assembly in its resolution A/RES/69/250 reaffirmed the role of the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly in administrative and budgetary matters, thereby allowing your Committee to focus on the substantive matters pertaining to the Committee's mandate.

Distinguished Delegates,

The Committee's guidance and feedback are invaluable to improving the delivery of services to Member States. The dates of the Committee's organizational and substantive sessions are included in the calendar. In addition, as the Committee's mandate allows it to meet on an "as required" basis, a meeting to review the provisional calendar of conferences and meetings in the economic, social and related fields for 2016-2017 is proposed for 25 June 2015.

All four duty stations in New York, Geneva, Vienna and Nairobi are committed to implementing the actions requested by the General Assembly which will be included in the report of the Secretary-General for consideration at the Committee's substantive session. We in the Department, reiterate our commitment to providing timely and high quality technical and conference services to Member States.

Distinguished Delegates,

Conference management is an ever-changing, ever-evolving area, and you are charged in providing us with advice and input in adapting and adjusting, moving and reinventing as needed. It is not an easy task, but with your guidance, we are all up to the task. On behalf of my colleagues and myself, we offer our sincerest wishes for another productive and successful year. We stand ready to assist you in your work, and we look forward to a fruitful session today for the organizational session, in June to review the provisional calendar, and in September for the substantive session. We wish you good luck in your deliberations today.

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