



UNITED NATIONS

DEPARTMENT FOR GENERAL ASSEMBLY
AND CONFERENCE MANAGEMENT



DGACM

Harmonizing
the Actions
of Nations

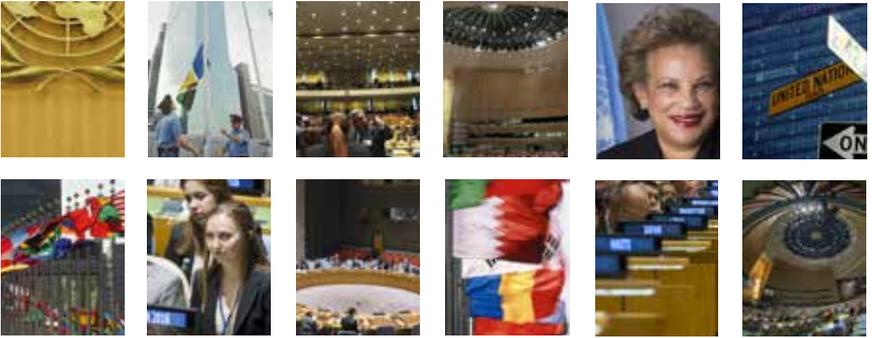


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About DGACM

With over 1,000 staff at United Nations Headquarters in New York and almost 2,000 worldwide, including conference management staff at the United Nations Offices at Geneva (620), Vienna (174) and Nairobi (65), the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management (DGACM) is the largest in the United Nations Secretariat. Those of us who work in DGACM are committee secretaries and research staff, meeting planners and protocol officers, translators, revisers and verbatim reporters, interpreters and editors, proofreaders, graphic designers and printers, conference officers and administration staff, and more.

Our work is central to the mandate and functioning of the United Nations as an international forum within which representatives of Member States and other groups meet to deliberate on the major questions facing the world today and to propose answers to those questions. Our mission is to facilitate and enhance dialogue and cooperation among Member States and, by doing so, to contribute to the realization of the objectives of the United Nations and the Sustainable Development Goals.

DGACM's success depends on the professionalism, dedication, teamwork and sometimes the personal sacrifice of its staff members. We come from all corners of the world, with diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds. However, as international civil servants, we share one defining character: we are motivated by the noble purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. Often working behind the scenes, DGACM staff make a quiet but essential contribution to the work of the United Nations.







Ms. Catherine Pollard
Under-Secretary-General

Ms. Catherine Pollard assumed the office of Under-Secretary-General for General Assembly and Conference Management on 1 December 2015. She was appointed as the Coordinator for Multilingualism by the Secretary-General on 17 December 2015.

Previously, Ms. Pollard served as Assistant Secretary-General for General Assembly and Conference Management beginning September 2014. Before joining DGACM, she was Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management as of 2008. While in that position, she represented the Secretary-General on human resource management issues, providing advice on wide-ranging strategies and policies. She led human resources reform initiatives and the introduction of new policies during her tenure, including as Co-Chair of the Chief Executive Board/Human Resources Network for the United Nations common system.

Prior to joining the Office of Human Resources Management, Ms. Pollard was Chief of Staff in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, and prior to that, she served as the Director of the Peacekeeping Finance Division in the Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts.

Ms. Pollard's career at the United Nations began in 1989 when she worked with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) as the Chief of National Execution Projects. In 1993, she joined the Department for Peacekeeping Operations and then worked as Chief Budget Officer for the United Nations Operations in Yugoslavia and Central Headquarters. Thereafter, she served as Chief of the Budget and Finance Section of the United Nations Volunteers.

Ms. Pollard brings a proven track record of valuable experience in conference management as well as in financial, human resource and general administrative management. During her 26 years with the United Nations, she acquired a solid foundation of the United Nations culture, organizational and operational structures, global initiatives and reform efforts in accordance with the Secretary-General's priorities and strategies. In each of her assignments at senior levels, she has helped to effect real improvements in management practices, moving away from the status quo.

Born in 1960, Ms. Pollard holds both a bachelor's and a master's degree in accounting from the University of the West Indies, Kingston, Jamaica.



Mr. Movses Abelian
Assistant Secretary-General

Mr. Movses Abelian assumed the office of Assistant Secretary-General for General Assembly and Conference Management on 7 March 2016.

Mr. Abelian brings over 25 years of experience in peace and security issues and conflict resolution as well as extensive expertise leading, supporting and managing complex portfolios and intergovernmental processes, including the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Executive Boards of United Nations Funds and Programmes.

As Director of the Security Council Affairs Division since April 2011, Mr. Abelian served as the Secretary of the Security Council and provided substantive advice to the President and members of the Security Council and its subsidiary bodies on matters related to the Security Council's work, practices and procedures. Mr. Abelian also has several years' experience in management, including programme planning and budget, having previously worked as Secretary of the Administrative and Budgetary Committee of the General Assembly (Fifth Committee) and the Committee on Programme and Coordination at the United Nations.

Prior to joining the United Nations, Mr. Abelian was the Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Republic of Armenia to the United Nations (1998-2003) and Deputy Permanent Representative (1996-1998). During his diplomatic career, Mr. Abelian served in various capacities including as the Chairman of the Fifth Committee (1998); Vice-Chairman of the United Nations Disarmament Commission and Special Negotiator for the United Nations Peacekeeping Scale Financing Reform (2000); President of the Executive Board of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF); and Facilitator for United Nations Reform during the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly (2002).

Prior to joining Armenia's Foreign Service in 1992, Mr. Abelian worked in academia as Associate Professor at Yerevan State University from 1989.

Mandates

The basic mandates for DGACM are contained in the rules of procedure of the principal organs of the United Nations. Additional mandates are stipulated by resolutions of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), in particular resolutions on the revitalization of the General Assembly, on the strengthening of ECOSOC, on multilingualism and on the pattern of conferences (the latest is A/RES/70/9). Overall, intergovernmental direction concerning the organization and servicing of meetings is given by the General Assembly on the advice of the Committee on Conferences, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 43/222 B.

Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 69/250 and 70/9, the Head of DGACM also assumes the role of Coordinator for Multilingualism, responsible for coordinating the overall implementation of multilingualism Secretariat-wide. The mandate of the Coordinator has been detailed in successive resolutions on multilingualism — resolutions 54/64, 69/250 and 70/9 on pattern of conferences. In addition to requesting the appointment of a senior official to serve as the Coordinator, the General Assembly has given the Secretary-General a broad mandate on multilingualism that is disseminated in a number of resolutions. The mandate stipulates, among other things, that multilingualism is a core value of the Organization and that it is the responsibility of the Secretary-General to mainstream multilingualism in its activities. The Coordinator is supported by a network of focal points throughout the Secretariat.



Vision

The intergovernmental machinery of the United Nations, which provides the framework and basis in the endeavour of harmonizing the actions of nations, operates using multilingual conference management support provided by DGACM on a daily basis. DGACM's vision is to continue to deliver the full range of conference services to the Member States and other stakeholders at the highest levels of professionalism, expertise and cost-effectiveness, and to facilitate their endeavours in advancing the purposes of the United Nations.



Responsibilities

DGACM at United Nations Headquarters and the conference-servicing organizational entities at the United Nations Offices at Geneva, Vienna and Nairobi are responsible for the implementation of the biennial programme plan and the achievement of its objectives.

Guided by General Assembly resolutions 57/300, 66/233 and 68/251, as well as the provisions relevant to conference services of the General Assembly's resolutions on the revitalization of its work and on multilingualism, the biennial programme plan for the period 2016-2017 is aimed at making further progress in integrated global management in order to provide high-quality documents in a timely manner in all official languages, as well as high-quality conference services to Member States at all duty stations, and to achieve further synergies and full-system benefits across the integrated conference-servicing operations at the four duty stations. DGACM continues to provide, in a proactive manner, the intergovernmental and expert bodies it services with technical, procedural and substantive secretariat, protocol and liaison, and conference-servicing support so as to achieve synergies and full-system benefits across the four conference-servicing duty stations.

The Under-Secretary-General for General Assembly and Conference Management is responsible for all the activities of DGACM and for guiding integrated global conference management involving the United Nations Headquarters and the United Nations Offices at Geneva, Vienna and Nairobi, which includes the establishment of conference management policies, practices, standards and procedures, the allocation of resources under the relevant budget section and the global workload and staffing management of the conference management operations in accordance with General Assembly resolution 57/283 B.

Objectives

The overall objectives of DGACM are:

To facilitate, through the provision of procedural and technical secretariat support and authoritative advice, the orderly and effective conduct of the deliberations and follow-up actions of the General Assembly, its General, First, Special Political and Decolonization (Fourth), Second and Third Committees and various subsidiary organs, and the Economic and Social Council and most of its subsidiary bodies, as well as special United Nations conferences; and to assist in the revitalization efforts of the General Assembly and other United Nations bodies including through the substantive servicing of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly and the intergovernmental negotiations on the question of equitable representation and increase in the membership of the Security Council and other matters related to the Security Council;

To ensure the provision of high-quality conference-servicing support to all intergovernmental and expert bodies meeting at Headquarters and at the United Nations Offices at Geneva, Vienna and Nairobi, and other conferences and meetings held under the auspices of the United Nations, taking into account that equal treatment should be given to all established official languages in each organ of the Organization. This includes producing official documentation for the entitled intergovernmental bodies and interpretation of their meetings in all six official languages; and management of all conference-related resources;

To provide protocol, liaison and representational functions for the Secretary-General, host Governments and Member States;

To coordinate Secretariat-wide implementation of various mandates related to multilingualism;

To support the Office of the President of the General Assembly.



Mid- to Long-term Priorities

Guided by General Assembly resolutions, including 57/300 and 70/9, as well as the provisions relevant to conference services of the General Assembly's resolutions on the revitalization of its work and on multilingualism, in its current biennial programme plan for the period 2016-2017 (A/69/6 (Prog.1)), DGACM seeks to improve the deliberation and decision-making processes of intergovernmental and relevant expert bodies and United Nations conferences by providing efficient and effective conference-servicing support. That includes the optimum utilization of capacity for meetings and documentation services, in a globally coordinated manner, while ensuring effective multilingual communication and the equal treatment of all official languages.

To manage the increased workload of meetings and documentation while taking into consideration overall organizational changes in the management of operations, DGACM intends to explore further efficiencies by leveraging technology to increase productivity and lower costs, across all four duty stations. DGACM's ability to develop and implement its goals will depend on the successful and strategic engagement with Member States.



Broad support from Member States and coordination with other Secretariat entities will be required to pursue mid- to long-term priority issues, including the following:

- Further mainstreaming of Integrated Global Management of Conference Services and its possible further development in the context of the overall Global Service Delivery Model;
- Leveraging digital technologies and outsourcing to absorb the increased volume of mandated multilingual documentation within the same budget envelope;
- Developing a road map to implement outstanding multilingualism mandates Secretariat-wide;
- Enhanced training of interpreters and translators based on a capacity succession planning concept to sustain multilingualism mandates;
- Exploring remote conference interpretation as a cost-saving and climate-friendly servicing option.



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Resources

The overall resources proposed for the biennium 2016-2017 for DGACM amounts to \$647,763,000 before recosting, reflecting a net decrease of \$25,747,200 (or 3.8 per cent) compared with the resources for 2014-2015. Resource changes result from four factors: (a) technical adjustments relating to the removal of non-recurrent requirements; (b) new mandates and inter-component changes; (c) resource changes in line with General Assembly resolution 69/264 (further reductions); and (d) resource changes in line with General Assembly 69/264 (efficiencies). The proposed reductions will not have an impact on full and effective mandate implementation.



Trends

Quality, timeliness, cost-effectiveness, sustainability and accessibility with regard to conference services, as well as multilingualism, remain the goals of the Secretariat as it seeks to fulfil the mandates given by Member States. Constant as those goals may be, the context in which United Nations conference services are provided has changed profoundly in recent years, presenting DGACM and the conference-management operations in Geneva, Vienna and Nairobi funded through section 2, General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and conference management, of the programme budget with sizeable challenges. The most indicative of these is the 45 per cent increase, since 2010, in the number of meetings serviced each year, and the accompanying 10 per cent surge in documentation (see figures 1 and 2), with particularly sharp rises, of 23 and 8 per cent, respectively, being recorded in 2015, which resulted in the Secretariat servicing 36,000 meetings and translating close to 250 million words that year.

Meanwhile, there has been a steady reduction in DGACM's biennial budget appropriations, as shown in figure 3 in nominal terms, indicating an even greater reduction in resources in real terms. This has limited the flexibility required to handle unplanned additional workloads in particular. Nevertheless, the Secretariat managed, in 2015, not only to maintain, but also, in almost all cases, to improve its performance in every key indicator. DGACM strives to manage its operations as strategically as possible to meet the needs of Member States, the diminishing resources and increasing workload occasioned by new mandates notwithstanding. The increased workload affects all duty stations.



Trends in workload

Figure 1. Total number of meetings held at all duty stations

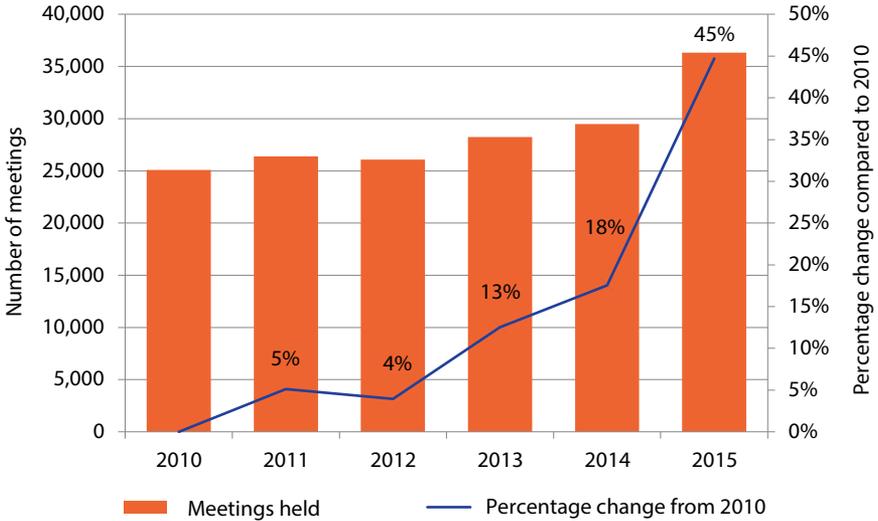
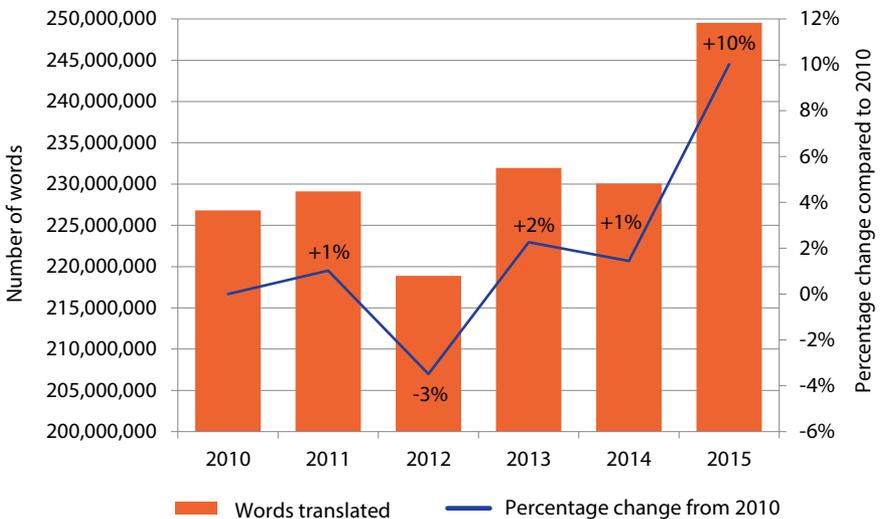
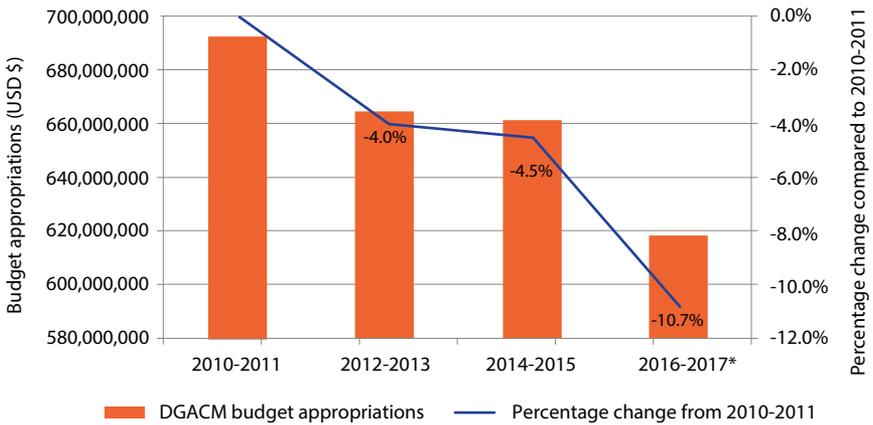


Figure 2. Total number of words translated by all duty stations



Budget appropriations 2010-2017

Figure 3. Budget appropriations for DGACM



* Initial appropriation figures, with final figures to be released in 2018.



Meetings Management

The total number of meetings held at the four duty stations in 2015 increased by 23 per cent compared with 2014, from 29,497 to 36,316. In 2015, the overall utilization of allocated meeting services was 80 per cent, as in 2014, notwithstanding an increase of 10 per cent in the number of meetings programmed and an increase of 8 per cent in the number of meetings held. Both New York and Geneva showed a sustained improvement from 2010 to 2015, while utilization remained above 80 per cent in Vienna and Nairobi (see figure 4). These positive results were achieved through continued efforts to work closely with the secretariats of calendar bodies on refining their programmes of work and adjusting their interpretation requirements, which resulted in a reduction of 31 per cent in the number of cancellations and an improvement of 14 per cent, since 2014, in the number of minutes lost as a result of a late start or an early ending of a meeting — the two main factors affecting service utilization.

Provision of interpretation services to meetings of bodies entitled to meet “as required”

As shown in figure 5, the number of meeting requests from “as required” bodies remained high in New York in 2015, although fewer meetings were requested by the General Assembly and the Security Council than in 2014. Almost all (97 per cent) of the requests were met. In Geneva, 100 per cent of “as required” meeting requests, all from the Human Rights Council, were met.



Provision of interpretation services to meetings of regional and other major groupings of Member States

In New York, both the number of such meetings requested and the number of requests met increased by 12 per cent between 2014 and 2015 (see figure 6). The decline in the percentage of requests met in 2014 and 2015, compared with 2013, was brought about by the increasingly high volume of requests from bodies entitled to meet “as required”, including the six new sanctions bodies established since 2010, and by the extension of sessions of calendar bodies, such as the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and the Second and Fifth Committees. It is to be noted that, as interpretation services in New York were increasingly consumed by meetings of “as required” bodies, and as calendar bodies became more efficient in their utilization of conference services, fewer cancellations were made, which in turn reduced the interpretation services available for meetings of regional and other major groupings of Member States, which were serviced on an “if available” basis.

In Geneva, the proportion of requests from regional and other major groupings of Member States that were met in 2015 was 76 per cent, as in 2014. The number of such requests, however, increased significantly: the number received rose by 37 per cent and the number met by 25 per cent.

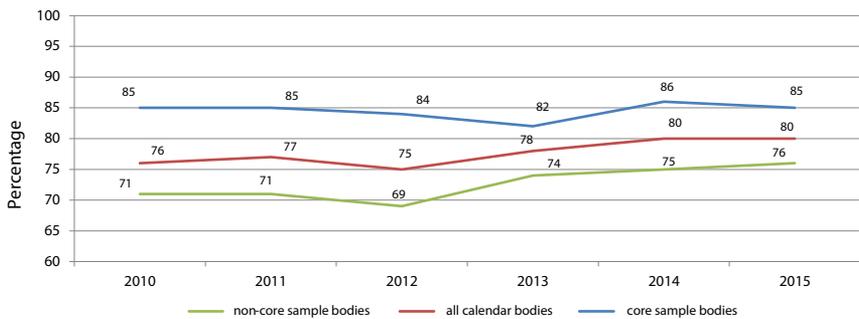
In Vienna and Nairobi, the number of meetings of regional and other major groupings of Member States requested is statistically negligible.

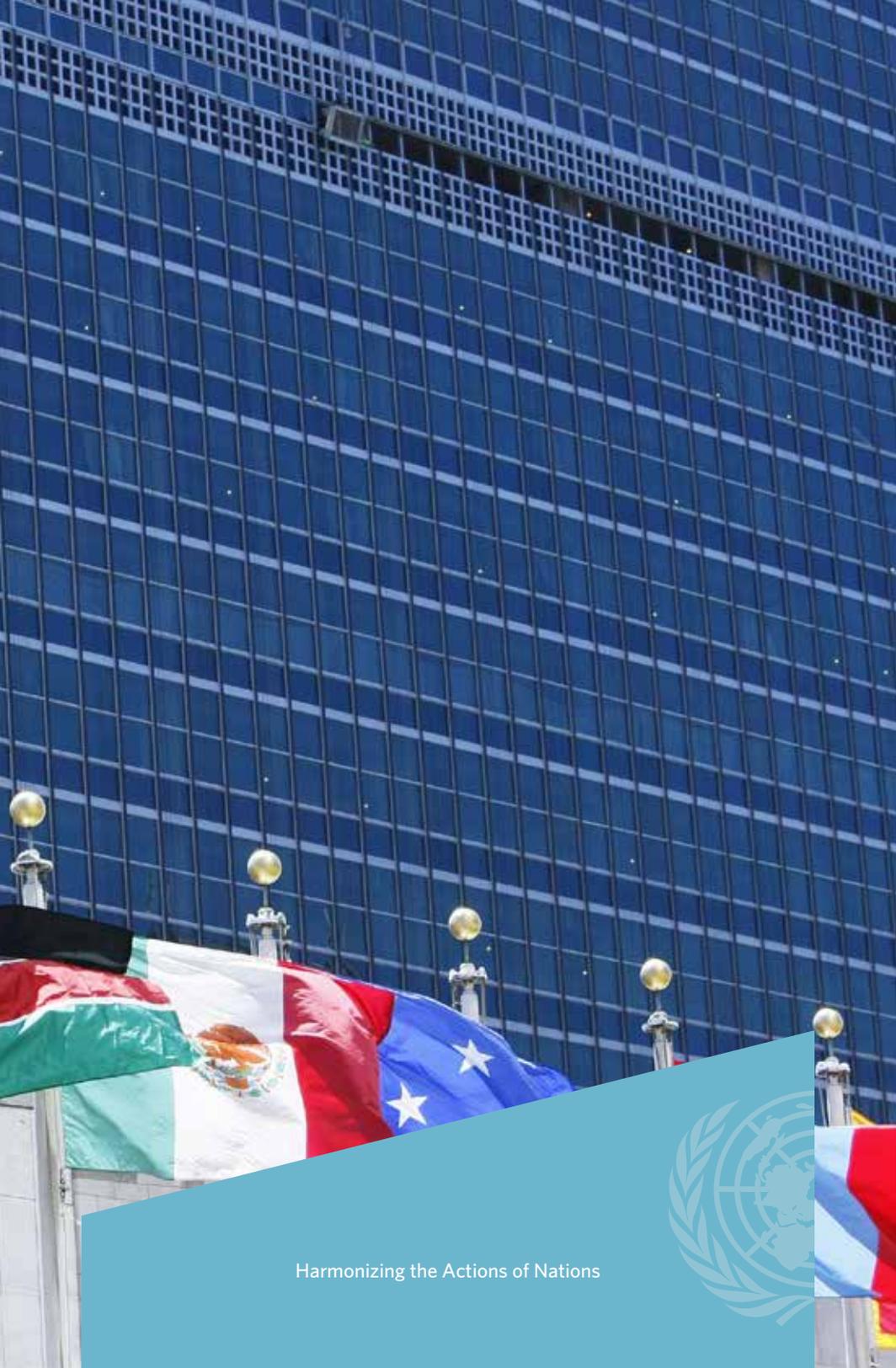


Meetings

Resources Utilization

Figure 4. Average utilization factor of core sample bodies vs. all calendar bodies vs. non-core sample bodies





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Figure 5. Meeting services requested by “as required” bodies in New York and Geneva 2010-2015

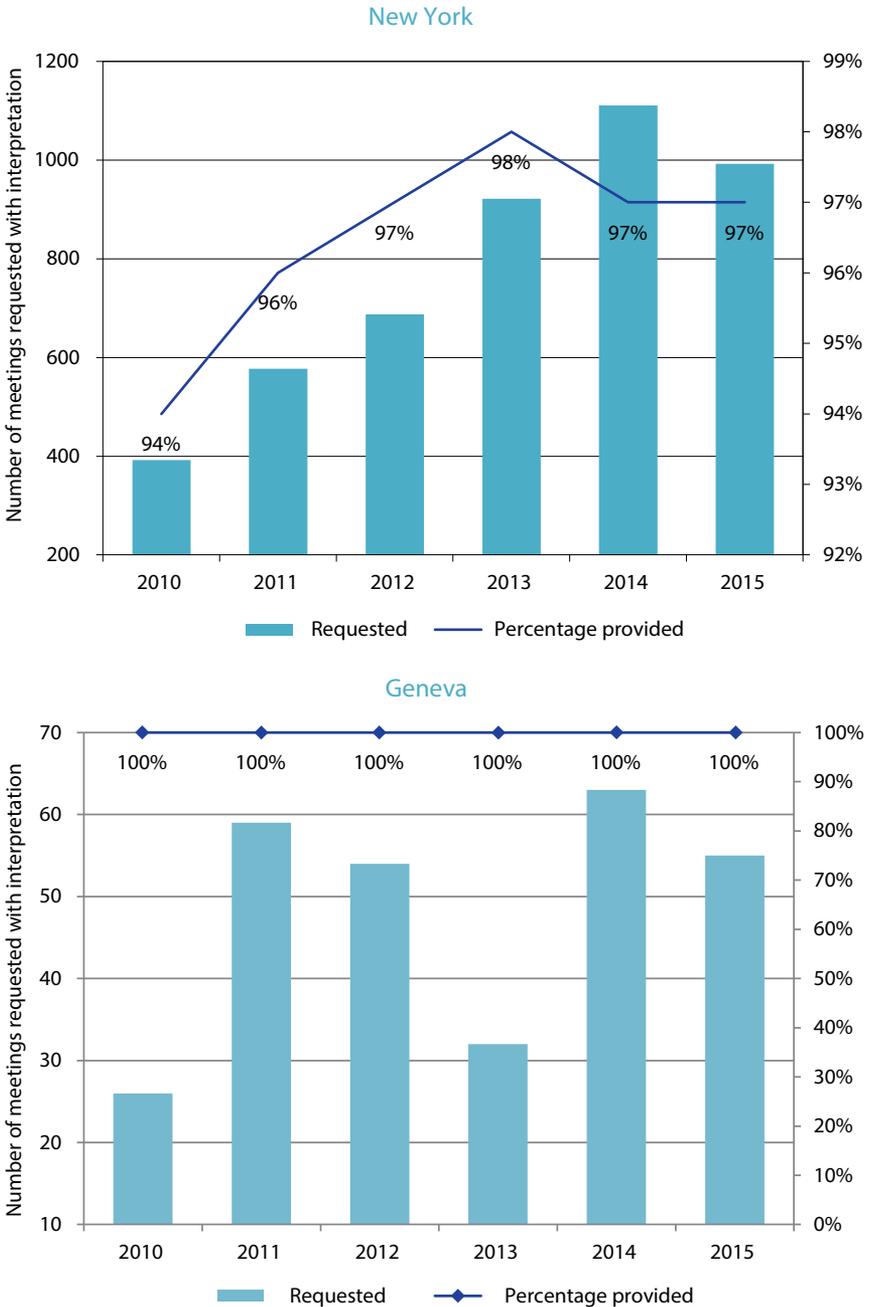
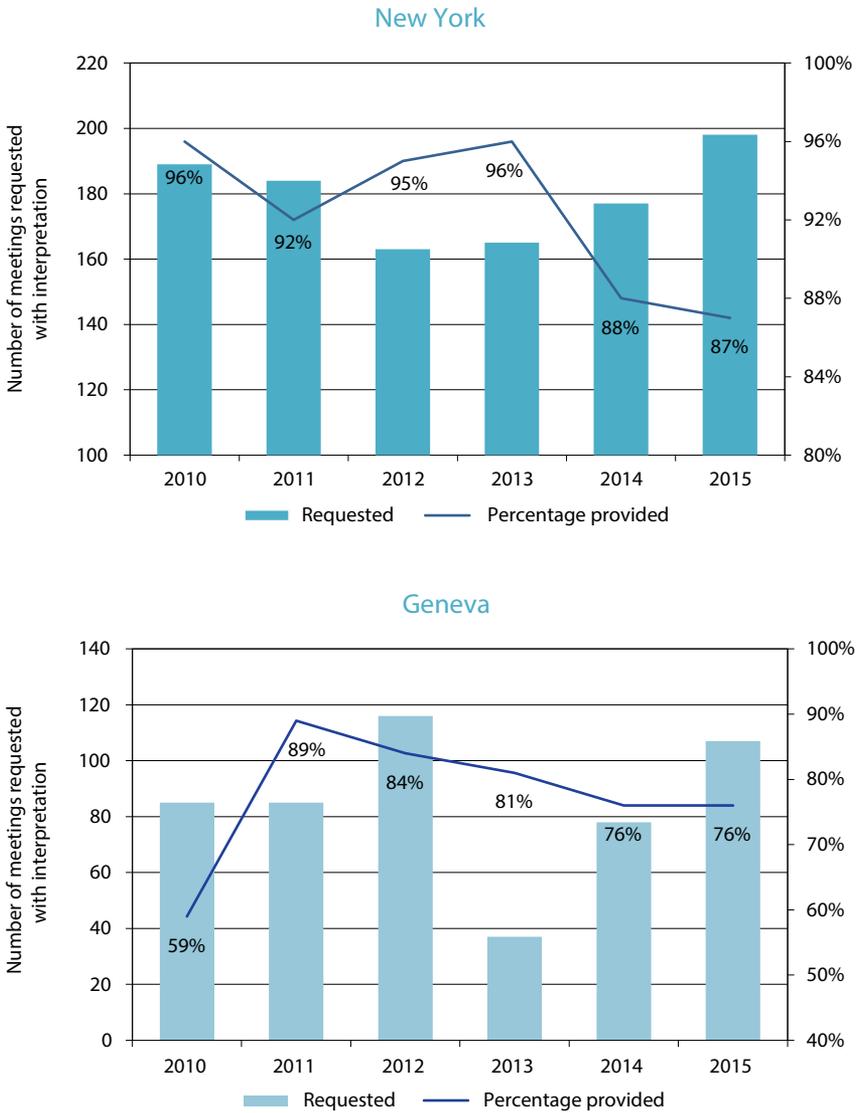


Figure 6. Provision of interpretation services to meetings of regional and other major groupings of Member States in New York and Geneva, 2010-2015



Focus

DGACM continues to focus on advance planning for the effective management of conference services, optimizing workflow, aligning capacity with expected output and paying special attention to the end results and overall performance. Through integrated global management, its administrative and substantive policies, practices and procedures will be further standardized across all four conference-servicing duty stations. The global information technology tools that will be deployed at all duty stations will facilitate the global management of efficient and effective resource utilization and expand the use of electronic tools and processes in conference-servicing operations. The training of staff and targeted outreach to educational institutions that train language professionals will allow DGACM to facilitate the transition of institutional memory and specialized expertise and the adoption of contemporary working methods that take advantage of available technologies. Continued collaboration with other international conference-servicing organizations through the International Annual Meeting on Language Arrangements, Documentation and Publications will ensure the benchmarking of its performance indicators and methods of work with best industry good practices. Those efforts will further enhance the quality, productivity, timeliness and cost-effectiveness of the operations under the programme. Continued analysis of client feedback will be an important tool for measuring performance. DGACM will continue to evaluate and implement risk management strategies so as to reduce the impact of operational crises. Centrally coordinated risk management, assessment and evaluation will facilitate informed managerial decision-making and monitoring.







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