UNO - United Nations Organisation

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Mission

The United Nations Organisation is an international organisation founded in 1945 after the Second World War by 51 countries committed to maintaining international peace and security, developing friendly relations among nations and promoting social progress, better living standards and human rights.

UNHQ in New York, where 192 countries meet to solve international problems in a consensual manner.

Due to its unique international character, and the powers vested in its founding Charter, the Organisation can take action on a wide range of issues, and provide a forum for its 192 Member States to express their views through the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council and other bodies and committees.

Structure

The Charter established six main bodies of the United Nations Organisation: The General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council, the Trusteeship Council, The International Court of Justice and the Secretariat.

The Interpretation Service
The Interpretation Service is part of the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management (DGACM). With more than 1100 staff members in New York and 2200 worldwide, including the conference-serving staff based in Geneva, Vienna and Nairobi, the DGACM is one of the largest departments in the Organisation. The six official languages of the United Nations are: Arabic, Chinese, English, French Russian and Spanish.

**Staffing**

**New York** : 106 staff interpreters (27 Arabic booth, 26 Chinese booth, 21 French booth, 23 English booth, 22 Russian booth, 20 Spanish booth). Staff interpreters work 7 sessions per week (sometimes 8). The Chief Interpreter is D1 and there are 5 P5s per booth. Given the high workload, many freelance interpreters need to be recruited for all the booths. Since January 2010, work has been underway to remove asbestos from the Headquarters building and so the majority of meetings are being held in temporary buildings. The new booths are much more comfortable than the old booths.

**Geneva** : 95 staff interpreters (15 Arabic booth, 15 Chinese booth, 17 French booth, 19 English booth, 14 Russian booth, 15 Spanish booth). Staff interpreters work 7 sessions a week (sometimes 8). The Chief Interpreter is D1, Heads of Booth are P5 and there are several P5s per booth. Many freelance interpreters are recruited all year round. 26 staff interpreters are members of AIIC.

**Vienna** : 22 (5 Arabic booth, 5 Chinese booth, 3 French booth, 1 English booth, 4 Spanish booth, 4 Russian booth). 4 interpreters are members of AIIC. Staff interpreters work 7 sessions a week (6 for Heads of Booth) and freelancers work 8. The Chief Interpreter and the Heads of Booth are P5.

**Nairobi** : 14 staff interpreters (3 Arabic booth, 3 Chinese booth, 2 French booth, 2 English booth, 2 Spanish booth, 2 Russian booth). The Chief Interpreter is P5.

**Work**

**Vienna** : most meetings are technical (space, nuclear, international law, drugs...). All meeting are in simultaneous. The workload is similar for all booths. UN interpreters do not do any translation.

**Geneva** : several UN bodies and agencies are based in Geneva, including the Human Rights Council, The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the Economic Commission for Europe, The Conference on Disarmament, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees. The topics covered are very diverse (legal, humanitarian, political, technical). Interpreters accompany Special Rapporteurs for Human Rights on country missions and travel to work at UN conferences such as meetings of the Framework Convention on Climate Change.

**New York** : Diverse topics are dealt with (political, technical, scientific, legal, humanitarian, environmental, disarmament, gender issues ...). New York is the head quarters of the Security Council so many meetings are linked to its work.

**Nairobi** : UNEP and UN-HABITAT are based in Nairobi, so there are many environmental meetings. Staff interpreters also work for regional meetings and UN conferences around the globe.

**Recruitment Conditions and Benefits**

In order to be recruited as a staff interpreter, a university degree is required and the candidate must pass the UN competitive examination. AIIC members are automatically recruited at P3 level. The
contractual regime has just been changed, formerly contracts were for 2 years of probation and then permanent, now contracts are continuing and renewable.

Benefits: staff interpreters enjoy the following key benefits and allowances:

- Dependency allowances: currently 2 686.00 dollars/year for each dependent family member meeting the criteria;
- Affiliation to the UN Staff Joint Pension Fund;
- Rental subsidy, when recruited or transferred if required;
- Medical insurance.

UN staff members assigned to a duty station away from their country of origin enjoy the following additional benefits:

- Education grant, maximum of 25 949 dollars/school year for each child meeting the criteria;
- Home leave: once every two years, the UN pays travel costs for a staff member, spouse and dependent children to go to the country of origin of the staff member;
- Assignment grant and removal costs upon recruitment and separation payments on retirement.

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**Recommended citation format:**