



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

联合国
教育、科学及文化组织

talkmate

TALKMATE
Fluent in Friendship.
2016-2020

全球说
世界最大的在线语言学习平台

The Launch Ceremony of Joint Partnership
“World Atlas of Languages”
and
The Roundtable Discussion
“Language matters for development”

8 July 2016, 1 p.m. – 5 p.m.
Kempinski Hotel Beijing Lufthansa Center
Beijing, People’s Republic of China



Organizers
UNESCO and Talkmate

Context

Language has the capacity to reconcile the ideas and values of people from diverse cultural, social, economic, religious and professional backgrounds. It is a key contributor to dialogue, reconciliation, tolerance and peace. Language matters for sustainable development.

However, the rate of language endangerment and disappearance has increased significantly over the past decades due to rapid social, political and economic transformations in the world. Disappearing language is a cause for serious concern that over 50% of some 6700 languages spoken nowadays are in danger of disappearing. At the same time, there has been a renewed interest in safeguarding linguistic diversity as a vehicle of development. Moreover, the role of cutting edge Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) is growing in language documentation, revitalization and inter-generational transmission. ICTs are vital educational and communication tool helping communities, public and private organizations to provide access to information and knowledge to all citizens.

Since 1993, UNESCO has carried out its Endangered Languages Programme to increase linguistic diversity drawing attention of the international community to the multiple challenges communicates face in terms of language vitality, maintenance and shift. Special efforts were taken to monitor linguistic diversity through its Atlas of Languages in Danger. In 2003, UNESCO's Governing Bodies have adopted a normative instrument entitled "Recommendation concerning the Promotion and Use of Multilingualism and Universal Access to Cyberspace". This encouraged countries around the world to take concrete actions on the development of multilingual content and systems, facilitate access to networks, develop public domain content and reaffirm the equitable balance between the rights-holders and public interest.

By creating online multilingual learning platform and bridging the language speakers and learners to take social responsibility on promotion of linguistic diversity, TALKMATE has been actively engaging in initiatives of safeguarding and teaching global languages.

At UNESCO's Headquarters Chinese President Mr. Xi Jinping said, "*Civilizations have become richer and more colorful with exchanges and mutual learning*". Now more people have realized that the role of language is essential for quality education, economic growth, socio-cultural development and peaceful dialogue among various cultures and civilizations. It therefore is a key component for the creation of truly inclusive, open, diverse and participatory knowledge societies.

Building on the firm foundation to increase linguistic diversity around the world, UNESCO and TALKMATE agreed to cooperate for the implementation of the project entitled "World Atlas of Languages". The overall objective of the joint partnership is to contribute to the safeguarding of the world's linguistic diversity, and the promotion of multilingualism in cyberspace through effective application of ICTs. The global initiative calls for the safeguarding of linguistic diversity by maintaining language resources, increasing accessibility to and dissemination of these items through ICTs, cooperation among institutional networks and civic engagement.

The joint launch event will introduce this new and exciting collaboration which brings together UNESCO and Talkmate to work on the development of the World Atlas of Languages. This launch event will give the opportunity to all interested parties to find out more about the project and upcoming opportunities. Accordingly, the roundtable on "Language matters for development" is held for discussion to assess the current situation of linguistic diversity, identify existing challenges and new opportunities arising from scientific and technological development, and exchange the valuable recommendations with different stakeholders for the development of the World Atlas of Languages.

Agenda

The Launch of UNESCO-Talkmate Partnership “World Atlas of Languages”

Venue: Kempinski Hotel Beijing Lufthansa Center

8 July 2016

13:00 – 13:30 Registration

13:30 – 14:15 The Launch Ceremony of the Joint Partnership

Welcome remarks by the Host of the Event
Ms Marielza Oliveira, Director of UNESCO Office in Beijing

Opening remarks by Mr. DU Yue, Secretary-General, National Commission of the People's Republic of China for UNESCO (tbc)

Welcome address by Mr Indrajit Banerjee, Director, Knowledge Societies Division, Communication and Information Sector, UNESCO

Welcome address by Mr Vincent Wen, CEO of Talkmate

Keynote speech by distinguished guest

14:15 – 14:20 Launch of the Partnership Ceremony

14:20 – 14:25 Group photo

14:25 – 14:45 Refreshment break

The Roundtable Discussion “Language Matters for Development”

14:45 – 17:00 Roundtable discussion on “Language matters for Development”

Moderator: Mr Indrajit Banerjee, Director, Knowledge Societies Division, Communication and Information Sector, UNESCO

Theme 1. Language matters for sustainable development

Theme 2. Digital solutions for promotion of linguistic diversity

Speakers:

- Chinese Government official
- Distinguished Guest
- Ms Irmgarda Kasinskaite-Buddeberg, Programme specialist, Knowledge Societies Division, Communication and Information Sector, UNESCO
- Vincent Wen, CEO of Talkmate
- Representatives from academia and industry
- Representatives from media

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Venue of the launch ceremony and roundtable:

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