Ladies and gentlemen,

Languages, much like people, are worlds unto themselves. In the case of the Arabic language, the following quote by the renowned poet Ahmad Shawqi comes to mind: "*He who filled languages with every charming trait, chose Arabic alone to be beauty incarnate"*.

Arabic Language Day offers us an excellent opportunity to celebrate the exceptional richness, timeless beauty, historical significance, and cultural heritage of "*lughāt al-dād*".

Arabic is one of the oldest spoken languages in human history. For centuries, at the crossroads of exchanges, it has served as a bridge connecting people through literature, music, poetry and philosophy. It was the lingua franca of trade, art and science. Uniting hundreds of millions of people across Arabic-speaking countries and billions of Muslims who use Arabic in their prayers, it remains today – with its myriad accents, dialects and over 12 million distinct words – a rich, vibrant and ever-evolving language. The remarkable abundance of synonyms in Arabic for words such as love, lion and other animal species, the times of the day, the types of rain and many others will never cease to impress me.

Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Fifty-one years ago, 28 years after the establishment of our Organization, the General Assembly decided[1] on 18 December 1973 to include Arabic among the official and the working languages of the General Assembly and its Main Committees. As a result, Arabic became one of our six official languages.

Here at the United Nations, on Arabic Language Day and all other language days, we celebrate cultural diversity and multilingualism, a core value of our Organization. As

[1] Resolution 3190 (XXVIII).

emphasized in our recently launched Strategic Framework on Multilingualism, language days are also occasions to recognize the unique role that languages play in fostering peace, dialogue, understanding and development in today's world.

As a twentieth-century philosopher once said, people, "*in so far as they live and move and act in this world, can experience meaningfulness only because they can talk with*