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UNITED COMMUNICATIONS

The newly inaugurated Room XIX at the United Nations' Palais des Nations in Geneva puts an easy to operate user experience and clear communication at the heart of international diplomacy. **Reece Webb** has more.

Room XIX, a conference room in the United Nations office in Geneva was donated by the state of Qatar and reopened with a lavish inauguration ceremony in November 2019 following a 12-month renovation period.

Conference room experts, Media Vision, provided the room's turnkey AV project delivery after seeing off competition in a tender process launched by the project's architect and design consultant Peia Associati. With six months on site to deliver a world class conference and interpretation experience, the company worked on a tight schedule through dusty building works to deliver the project on time.

A room for making decisions with global impact needs to carry an equal gravitas. Upon stepping through the doors into the newly inaugurated conference room, visitors are instantly drawn to the domineering sight of a 9x4m 1.5-pixel pitch Leyard LED videowall overlooking the sprawling conference room. The scale of the room cannot be understated, with the main conference area requiring 44km of cabling under the floor. The

capacity of the new Hall of Qatar is 800 seats making this hall for plenary assemblies the largest room of the UN Geneva, with the most advanced technical specifications.

For a room of international importance, the brief was very specific about the space's requirements. Giampiero Peia, architect and president of Milan-based Peia Associati, clarified: "There was a drive to establish new standards of inclusiveness in the organisation including a brand new concept of language interpretation booth, wheelchair accessibility at most seats, and individual screens which were easy to use featuring Braille for the accessibility of blind and visually impaired users."

A total of 330 customised TAIDEN multimedia terminals, provide the backbone of Room XIX, with a screen available at every seat as Jack De Keyser, vice president of Media Vision Europe explained: "The conference systems are customised for the UN with 12-in screens. We approached TAIDEN with the client's requirements and they followed the tender specifics, including a full HD monitor with four video selection buttons so

that users can choose what is displayed on the screen.

"We can show the camera feed with one button, an on-screen presentation on the other and we also have an info button which is mostly for the speak and request list so that the user can follow who is speaking and who will be the follow up speaker."

The scale of the project presented its own unique challenges as De Keyser elaborated: "We have hundreds of screens fed at the same time by the AMX SVSi system. It requires complex and large-scale routing and switching but AMX has risen to the challenge."

There are two E Ink nameplates at each desk, one at the front allowing for easy identification during conferences, and a smaller one on the user's side to assist with navigation as delegates are guided to their seat. These nameplates can also be used to send global messages to delegates from the control room, or even individual messages. "If a delegate has the floor and is speaking too quickly, the interpreter can use a button that will display a 'please speak slowly' message on this delegate's individual nameplate."

Kit List

Audio	Blackmagic Teranex standards converters
Apart loudspeakers	Extron Dante interface
Shure BETA 58A microphones	Leyard TVF series videowall
TAIDEN digital congress systems, E-Ink nameplates, interpreter units	Panasonic 4K PTZ cameras, 4K broadcast cameras
Video	SmartDesign adjustable screen mounts
AMX N-1000 encoders/decoders	Sony FW-43BZ35F displays
Analog Way Multi-layer switcher	

The conference systems include a card identification feature and a channel selector, with the UN requiring a European socket, a Swiss socket and a USB charger for smartphones present on each conference system.

For the main wing of the room, a gooseneck microphone connector is featured. A customised model in the press wing swaps the gooseneck connector for an XLR connector to allow for the recording of audio in any selected language.

Flexibility and ease of use formed the basis of the UN's requirements as De Keyser said: "The video distribution for the conference units is done by AMX SVSi, as that is HDCP compliant and our TAIDEN monitors are also HDCP compliant, you have no problems when a narrator is coming with their own device or if you want to run a movie. The room is completely HDCP compliant."

On the podium, users have a 14-in screen because of the inability to see the Leyard videowall behind them.

The room is also serviced by two Panasonic AKU-B300 4K cameras. De Keyser: "We were the first to install these because they they were brand new at the time. These cameras have a zoom

lens from Fujinon allowing for 46 times zoom."

Above the main auditorium, a Panasonic projector displays the logo of the United Nations, with the projector able to be connected to a PC for when the room is used by another institution, allowing third party logos to be displayed.

Above the main conference area is a visitor's gallery and control room, with an AMX touchscreen central command panel, and TAIDEN conference management system software that includes a layout to allow for the individual opening and closing of microphones.

A TAIDEN mixing table allows for the creation of pre-set volume settings for individual speakers to automatically kick in when their microphone is activated.

De Keyser explained: "The operator can identify if a speaker is too quiet and increase the volume. When the microphone is closed but later reopened, the settings will remain in memory, with up to 4,000 'memories' able to be saved."

For an international organisation like the UN, accurate and timely communication in a plethora of languages was a top priority and the interpreter booth suite in Room XIX is no

exception. De Keyser said:

"They have the newest TAIDEN interpreter console with seven relays and three output buttons, that conforms to the latest ISO norms. Each interpreter has their own individual monitor with four source selection buttons so they can choose to see the camera, a powerpoint presentation or the speak and request list."

The facility also features its own dedicated sign language interpretation booth, purpose-built for the interpretation of spoken language to sign language. De Keyser: "The sign language booth in Room XIX is a world's first. The interpreter uses a TAIDEN infrared receiver to listen, and stands in front of the 4K camera, facing a 43-in Sony display adjustable for different heights. They can select visual presets from an AMX touchscreen. The video is then sent in a picture in picture on the large Leyard screen or as a full screen source on the individual monitors at each desk.

"Room XIX has certainly been our most ambitious and challenging project since our European expansion in 2014, but also a real source of inspiration for future projects," concluded Annabelle Zabetian, president of Media Vision.

