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| **Council 2017 Geneva, 15-25 May 2017** |  |
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| **Agenda item: PL 1.7** | **Document C17/12-E** |
| **14 March 2017** |
| **Original: English** |
| Chairman of the Council Working Group on  the use of the six official languages of the Union (CWG\_LANG) | |
| Report by the Council Working Group on Languages | |

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| Summary  This document contains the report of the Chairman of the Council Working Group on Languages, pursuant to Resolution 154 (Rev. Busan, 2014) and Council Resolution 1372, as revised in 2016.  Action required  The Council is invited **to endorse** the report.  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  References  [*Report by the Secretary-General*](https://www.itu.int/md/S17-RCLCWGLANG7-C-0002/en)*;* [*Resolution 154 (Rev. Busan, 2014)*](http://www.itu.int/pub/S-CONF-PLEN-2015)*;*  [*Council Resolution 1372 (Rev. 2016*](https://www.itu.int/md/S16-CL-C-0126/en)*)* |

1. **Opening of the meeting and approval of the agenda**

1.1 The Council Working Group on Languages held its seventh meeting on 1 February 2017, at ITU Headquarters. The meeting was chaired by Mr Fayçal Bayouli, from **Tunisia**.

1.2 The Chairman of CWG-LANG opened the meeting and, after welcoming delegates present and those who were participating remotely, gave the floor to the ITU Deputy Secretary-General, Mr Malcolm Johnson, who spoke on behalf of the ITU Secretary-General, reiterating the importance of the CWG-LANG for the Union and its membership, and acknowledged the meeting’s agenda, with the submission of the Secretary-General’s report through CWG-LANG.

1.3 Mr Johnson briefly explained the work conducted since the last Council on the multilingual aspects of the website publication.

1.4 After thanking Mr Johnson for his intervention and presence at the meeting, the Chairman presented the draft agenda, which was adopted without modification.

1. **Report by the Secretary-General** (Document CWG-LANG/7/2)

* ***Evolution of the budget for translation of documents into the six official languages of the Union since 2010***

2.1 An annex showing the accrued figures for the 2010-2016 period was included in Document CWG-LANG/7/2. The secretariat explained that, this year, figures provided corresponded to the overall cost of the translation service (i.e. including all tasks associated to translation such as text processing, documents control, terminology and referencing, web publication, etc.). It was reiterated that equal weight continues to be given to all six languages, as evidenced by statistics on the number of pages translated into each language. It noted, further, that considerable savings have been realized over the last six years.

2.2 The representative of Canada suggested that figures provided related to the evolution of the budget for translation be presented showing a breakdown of costs for translation and associated services.

2.3 *CWG-LANG acknowledged the usefulness for future reports of a breakdown of budgetary figures for translation services related to three items, i.e. cost of translation, cost of associated services, and total cost, and commended the secretariat for the good work and the savings achieved*.

* ***Procedures adopted by other international organizations inside and outside of the United Nations system and benchmark studies on their costs of translation***

2.4 Benchmarking activities are routinely conducted in the scope of two major broad inter-agency forums in which ITU participates actively, namely the IAMLADP (Annual Meeting on Language Arrangements, Documentation and Publications) and JIAMCATT (Joint Inter-Agency Meeting on Computer-Aided Translation and Terminology). ITU participates actively in such efforts, and is represented in IAMLADP’s three main working groups and in seven of its ten task forces.

2.5 As regards interpretation, the system-wide Agreement governing the hiring of short-term interpreters by the UN agencies, signed by the UNCEB and AIIC (International Association of Conference Interpreters), will be up for renovation later this year, and ITU has engaged actively in the negotiations for the redrafting of the Agreement under the leadership of the UN DGACM. Participants inquired as to what would be the expected results of such negotiations. The secretariat responded that it was not yet in a position to report on the specific outcome of the negotiations, but indicated that the aim of these was to try to reduce the overall cost of interpretation services on the basis of the new configuration of meetings and the use of new technologies. Highlights of the new Agreement would be summarized in the next report.

*2.6 CWG-LANG requested the secretariat to monitor the impact of the outcome of the negotiations between UNCEB and AIIC toward the future operational budget, and to report to its next session.*

* ***Initiatives undertaken by the General Secretariat and the three Bureaux to increase efficiencies and cost savings on the implementation of Res. 154 and Res. 1372***

2.7 The secretariat updated members on three initiatives taken by the secretariat in response to Resolution 1372, leading to potential savings, efficiency, and innovation.

2.8 Members were notified of the negotiations entered into by the secretariat in connection with a new Document Production System (DPS) in order to buy an existent software developed by UNODC in Vienna. This software needed customization so as to meet ITU needs in terms of documents and publications workflow. This customization was being carried with the interested parties, and the roll-out was expected in 2017.

2.9 The secretariat reported on the tests conducted in order to reduce the use of paper documents by ITU interpreters, and informed that C&P (Conference and Publications Department) was to continue efforts with the interpreters and the Bureaux in search of the optimum “papersmart” balance.

2.10 Consultations had been initiated by C&P with other agencies and internal actors involved with a view to define qualitative and quantitative performance indicators both for translation and interpretation. The secretariat indicated it would be most grateful for any input, comment or contribution in this respect by members of the CWG-LANG.

*2.11 CWG-LANG expressed satisfaction at the efforts deployed in search of potential savings, efficiency and innovation in order to respond to Resolution 1372 and encouraged member of CWG-LANG to provide inputs, comments and contributions to help the secretariat to define relevant performance indicators for translation and interpretation.*

* ***Alternative feasible translation procedures to be adopted by ITU***

2.12 The secretariat updated members on ITU’s current exploration of computer-aided translation and machine translation features. Mention was made of the addition of another pair of languages for the automatic translation project developed in partnership with WIPO. The secretariat stressed that no UN agency relies on machine translation for the bulk of their work. ITU is attentively following up on the results of this project, together with WIPO.

2.13 The secretariat provided an update on the situation regarding translation of AAP recommendations. In the reporting period, TSB had requested the translation of seven Recommendations (191 English pages) into the five languages, according to the specific needs expressed by the membership and within the limits of the budget available.

*2.14 CWG-LANG noted that every effort must be made to ensure that the volume of AAP recommendation pages agreed upon (1,000 per biennium) be honoured and reported on regularly. To this end, CWG-LANG suggested that the Council give instructions to TSB and the General Secretariat to allow for the possibility of using savings obtained in the previous biennium for completing the budget allocated to the translation of AAP Recommendations, so as to meet the agreed volume of 1,000 pages per biennium.*

2.15 On occasion of ITU Telecom 2016, a full remote interpretation pilot test was conducted in English and French. Tests were conducted in partnership with a private company. Results, although promising, were inconclusive due to deficiencies in terms of lapse time of the return signal and voice quality. C&P and IS will therefore conduct further tests in the future on different platforms and technologies.

*2.16 CWG-LANG expressed its appreciation of the efforts deployed and, since the results were inconclusive, supported to the conduct of further tests on remote interpretation.*

2.17 The secretariat then updated members on the pilot project for the translation of webpages with the help of some administrations. The secretariat very much appreciated the cooperation of Member States involved (Egypt, China and Argentina), and informed that further effort would be required to improve the quality of the translations received so as to avoid the necessity of further processing by the ITU translation sections which prevents cost saving and delays the process.

*2.18 CWG-LANG expressed its gratefulness to the Member States involved and, in order to assess the cost effectiveness and efficiency of this approach, instructed the secretariat to engage with said Member States in order to determine what efforts would be required to improve the quality of the translations received, so as to avoid the necessity of further processing by the ITU translation sections.*

* ***Progress made on the implementation of measures and principles for translation and interpretation adopted by the Council in its 2014 session***

2.19 The secretariat reassured members that measures and principles for translation and interpretation adopted by the Council are systematically considered by the secretariat as a benchmark in the delivery of translation and interpretation services for ITU conferences, meetings, documents and publications.

* ***Use of languages on the ITU website***

2.20 Updated figures on the translation of website content were presented. The secretariat reported upon specific measures undertaken in order to comply with the Council’s request reflected in Resolution [1372](http://www.itu.int/md/S16-CL-C-0126/en) (Rev. 2016), where the Secretary-General and the Directors of the Bureaux were instructed “to report to CWG-LANG on the measures taken to ensure on the ITU website in the medium term: i) the publication of new or modified pages in the six official languages simultaneously and ii) equality in terms of functionality and navigation”.

2.21 In response to this request, an Ad-Hoc Group on Multilingual ITU Web was created, chaired by the Deputy Secretary-General and attended by representatives of the three Sectors, the General Secretariat and other staff involved in webpage production; this group agreed on very specific measures for structuring and controlling ITU Web publication so as to improve the ITU Web governance and to provide a set of specific instructions to all ITU Web Editors/Authors aimed at accelerating the translation process. An example of this was reflected in the Annex to document CWG-LANG/7/2, which contained the text of the “Instructions to all ITU Web Editors/Authors” (See [Appendix](#Appendix)).

2.22 The delegate from the Russian Federation raised the issue of the difficulty in navigating through ITU web, in particular with regard to a lack of a common approach in the list of activities and publications for each Sector, and requested that the structure of the web be reviewed in order to facilitate intuitive searches and improve user-friendliness.

*2.23 CWG-LANG commended the efforts of the secretariat and its commitment to promptly respond to the request of the Council, and expected a report on the implementation of the measures agreed* *to improve the ITU Web governance, to review the structure of the website in order to expedite searches by users, and to accelerate the translation process.*

1. **Input from members** (Document CWG-LANG/7/3)

3.1 The Russian Federation presented document CWG-LANG/7/3 on the establishment of an ITU coordination committee for vocabulary in response to [Resolution 67](http://www.itu.int/pub/T-RES-T.67-2016) (Rev. 2016) of the World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly inviting the Council to initiate the review of [Resolution 154](http://www.itu.int/pub/S-CONF-PLEN-2015) (Rev. Busan, 2014) of the Plenipotentiary Conference in order to enable the creation of a single working body within ITU to deal with issues of vocabulary and use of all six languages of the Union on an equal footing.

3.2 In its contribution, which had also been submitted to the Council Working Group on Financial and Human Resources (CWG-FHR), the Russian Federation invited the ITU Council consider the possibility of consulting the Advisory Groups about the opportunity of establishing a single working body, i.e. the ITU Coordination Committee for Vocabulary (ITU CCV), to deal with the vocabulary issues in the interests of all ITU Sectors, based on the existing ITU-R CCV and ITU-T SCV, and incorporating vocabulary specialists of the ITU-D, and to consider a possible single CWG-Lang/ITU CCV chairmanship.

*3.3 CWG-LANG supported the concept of a single body dealing with issues of vocabulary at the level of all ITU, and that such body should include representatives of the secretariat. It also considered that the chairmanship of such body should be distinct from that of the CWG-LANG.*

1. **Other issues**

4.1 The representative of Switzerland mentioned the problem raised by an inaccurate translation of the official response to a query contained in a Circular Letter from ITU, and asked whether it would be possible for the secretariat to request to the Member State the approval, within a very short deadline, of the translation of such responses. The secretariat acknowledged the issue raised and agreed that a solution along the lines described could be found, but always limited to such exceptional cases.

4.2 The delegate of Spain proposed a means for Member States to inform the secretariat of any anomalies it discovers on any webpage. It was pointed out that each page currently does have a “feedback” possibility.

1. **Closure of the meeting**

5.1 The Deputy Secretary-General thanked the participants for their appreciation of the efforts made by the secretariat to improve the use of the six languages on an equal footing, and assured that more efforts will be deployed so as to render the report of the Secretary-General more informative. Otherwise the Deputy Secretary-General expressed that the secretariat team in charge of the website will continue to improve the website pages in all six languages, and will ensure that, once the quality of translations performed by the three Member States participating in the pilot is up to the necessary standards and results in savings for the Union, participation in the pilot project on webpage translation will be opened to other members.

5.2 The Chairman expressed his gratitude to the Chief of C&P and his team, and the ITU secretariat as a whole, for the excellent work accomplished and the support provided to himself and to the meeting, and especially thanked all the participants for their active and constructive participation.

APPENDIX

**Instructions to all ITU Web Editors/Authors**

**Introduction:**

The following instructions are obligatory requirements for ITU staff involved in creating and maintaining a webpage, microsite,[[1]](#footnote-1) or other related web property under the ITU brand. A key objective of these instructions is to limit the number of pages/sites on the ITU.int website which have been proliferating at an unmanageable rate resulting in a drop in quality, consistency, branding, and style. These instructions work on the presumption that the ITU website must be coherent and consistent right across all aspects of the site i.e. one website for one ITU.

The purpose of these instructions is to achieve full consistency in these three key areas:

1. Webpage creation
2. Multilingualism applied to the web
3. Translation process
4. **Creation of a webpage**

When creating a webpage the web author must have an answer to the most basic questions - is there a need for a webpage? Clear criteria for deciding to create a webpage must be defined and agreed to avoid proliferation of webpages or duplication of efforts with existing translations.

Who can create a webpage? [Definition of roles and responsibilities have been outlined and agreed by the ITU’s Web and Editorial Board in 2014 and can be referenced on the ITU intranet](https://intranet.itu.int/gs/spmd/web-guidelines/Pages/roles.aspx).

1. **Multilingual content**
   1. Multilingualism must be incorporated from the very beginning of any website project and should not be considered a mere translation exercise.
   2. Content authoring officers must ensure that content on their website is made available in all of the six Union’s official languages and must know in particular where they are obliged to have content in all six languages. For the regional pages, translations should be always be made available in the relevant official UN language of the region.
   3. A language ‘bar’ must be used to ensure users can navigate easily between the six official languages.
   4. Links must always lead to the language that they point to. It is not acceptable to have a link pointing to a page in another language only to find a message indicating it has not been translated to that language. The link should indicate it leads to a document in another language.
   5. Dynamic and streaming content from RSS feeds, Twitter, etc. must be linked to a level 2 page, indicating that such content appears in the language it has been generated and is not translated.
   6. Webpages can never mix languages into a jumble of different translations. All pages must be completely in the language expected by the user.
   7. Ensure that any acronyms being used are being used in the correct language.
   8. Banners and logos must not contain letters as a design element, nor should design elements be used as letters since they are difficult to adapt across languages.
   9. Translations must adhere to the highest standards. Machine translation is not acceptable for the ITU website, nor translations made by persons with only some knowledge of the language.
   10. When drafting content, authors must adhere to the ITU House Style Manuals for issues like the use of capital letters, acronyms, etc. The ITU terminology database known as [TERMITE](http://www.itu.int/terminology) must be used as the standard for ITU terminology.
   11. Footers and disclaimers must be in the official language selected.
   12. Contact pages and queries must be directed to the substantive offices and indicate the language(s) in which they operate.
   13. All (relatively) static content such as: About Us, Bios, Areas of Action, Regional Offices etc. must be in all six languages without exception.
   14. All pages shall have a back link option to the corporate home page of ITU.int in the respective language.
2. **Translation process**

Editorial instructions:

1. Limit the number of words per webpage to [330] words.
2. All content of the webpage must be accessible for translation (including banners, logos and slideshows).
3. Avoid all pictures, “labels” and graphics with text embedded in them in image format: These images cannot be edited to translate its content.
4. Webpages that are in the six languages must be as stable as possible.
5. Authors shall avoid creating pages for content that already exists in document form (Official Documents, Reports, Publications, etc.).
6. A unified page format shall be used whenever possible (Study Groups, Focus Groups, Workshops, and other groups; regular meetings (GSS, Telecom, etc.)).
7. Reliable work forecasts must be established (indispensable to fulfill the Council’s mandate).

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1. In ITU a microsite is understood as a website dedicated to a specific campaign, event or initiative which is not built on the ITU SharePoint CMS and/or incorporated into the corporate website but sits apart. An example would be the [ITU150 website](http://itu150.org/home/) developed with WordPress or the [Broadband Commission](http://www.broadbandcommission.org/Pages/default.aspx) which *is* built with SharePoint *but* has a separate identity and URL although fully developed and maintained by the ITU web team. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)