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| **Plenipotentiary Conference (PP-18)Dubai, 29 October – 16 November 2018** |  |
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| PLENARY MEETING | **Document 32-E** |
| **29 June 2018** |
| **Original: English** |
| Report by the Council |
| IMPLEMENTATION OF RESOLUTION 154 (REV. BUSAN, 2014) ON USE OF THE SIX OFFICIAL LANGUAGES OF THE UNION ON AN EQUAL FOOTING |

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| Further to discussions held during the 2018 Session of the Council, Document C18/14 on implementation of Resolution 154 (Rev. Busan, 2014) on use of the six official languages of the Union on an equal footing is transmitted to the Plenipotentiary Conference.For information, Summary record of the first Plenary meeting of the 2018 Session of the Council can be found in [Document C18/104](https://www.itu.int/md/S18-CL-C-0104/en). |

Annex: 1

ANNEX

Document C18/14 – Report on implementation of Resolution 154 (Rev. Busan, 2014) on use of the six official languages of the Union on an equal footing

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| **Council 2018Geneva, 17-27 April 2018** |  |
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| **Agenda item: PL 1.7** | **Document C18/14-E** |
| **8 February 2018** |
| **Original: English** |
| Chairman of the Council Working Group onthe use of the six official languages of the Union (CWG-LANG) |
| IMPLEMENTATION OF RESOLUTION 154 (REV. BUSAN, 2014) ON USE OF THE SIX OFFICIAL LANGUAGES OF THE UNION ON AN EQUAL FOOTING |

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| **Summary**This document contains the final report to Council 2018 of the Council Working Group on Languages (CWG-LANG), pursuant to Resolution 154 (Rev. Busan, 2014) and Council Resolution 1372.**Action required**The Council is invited to **examine** the final report of the Council Working Group on Languages, **endorse** the recommendations and transmit to PP-18, as appropriate.\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**References**[*Resolution 154 (Rev. Busan, 2014)*](https://www.itu.int/pub/S-CONF-PLEN-2015)*;* [*Council Resolution 1372*](https://www.itu.int/md/S15-CL-C-0107/en) |

**1. Background**

1.1 PP-14 adopted Resolution 154 (Rev. Busan, 2014), on use of the six official languages of the Union on an equal footing. In *instructs the Council* 5of the resolution, it mandated "*to maintain CWG-LANG, in order to monitor progress and report to the Council on the implementation of this resolution*".

1.2 At its 2016 session, the Council elected Mr Faycal Bayouli (Tunisia) as Chairman of the group. At its 2017 session, the Council confirmed the appointment of six Vice-Chairmen reflecting the six official languages, namely: Arabic – Ms Sameera Belal (Kuwait); Chinese – Mr Cai Guolei (China); English – Mr Paul Najarian (USA); French – Mr Frédéric Paruta (France); Russian – Mr Vladimir Minkin (Russian Federation); Spanish – Ms Blanca Gonzalez (Spain).

1.3 Since PP-14, CWG-LANG has resumed its work of monitoring progress on the basis of detailed reports by the secretariat on the implementation of languages. In accordance with Resolution 1372, it has operated mainly by correspondence and through informal consultations with “*all Member States of the Union, in particular those representative of and reflecting one or more of the six official languages of the Union*”.

1.4 To conclude its work and formulate recommendations to Council-18, CWG-LANG held four formal meetings, open to all Member States, on 5 October 2015, on 26 February 2016, on 1 February 2017, and on 16 January 2018. The documentation of those meetings can be found on the group’s [webpage](http://www.itu.int/en/council/cwg-lang/Pages/default.aspx). The full reports of the CWG-LANG meetings during the 4-year cycle are contained in documents [CWG-LANG/5/3](https://www.itu.int/md/S15-RCLCWGLANG5-C-0003/en), [CWG-LANG/6/3](https://www.itu.int/md/S16-RCLCWGLANG6-C-0003/en), [CWG-LANG/7/4](https://www.itu.int/md/S17-RCLCWGLANG7-C-0004/en), and [CWG-LANG/8/6](https://www.itu.int/md/S18-RCLWCGLANG8-C-0006/en).

**2. Recommendations**

2.1 CWG-LANG makes the following proposals to the Council in regard to each provision of Resolution 154 (Rev. Busan, 2014):

1. **Use of the six official languages on an equal footing**

2.2 With regard to the fundamental objective of ensuring equality of treatment of the six official languages, CWG-LANG noted the significant progress made and expressed appreciation to the secretariat for its efforts. It proposes that the Council instruct the secretariat to continue its efforts with the aim of progressively moving towards full equality of treatment in the future.

2.3 In this regard, CWG-LANG proposes that the Council:

* encourage efficient planning, scheduling, organization and time-management for ITU meetings, taking into account the specific constraints of interpretation services;
* urge the secretariat to continue the search for improvements in order to respond to PP Resolution 154 (Rev. Busan, 2014) and Council Resolution 1372.
* encourage timely – and indeed early – submission of contributions and inputs from the membership and the secretariat alike; and
* call the membership to ensure that the different language versions of documents and publications are utilized and downloaded, and encourage the purchase of publications by the corresponding language communities, for the sake of maximizing their benefit and cost-effectiveness; and
* encourage Member States to review the text of Resolution 154 in order to update and streamline its content.
1. **Analysis of the adoption of alternative translation procedures**

2.4 The translation of documents is provided by C&P, using either internal staff (permanent, fixed term and short-term) or external collaborators (individuals, companies and organizations), or a combination of the two, with a view to ensure timely delivery, cost effectiveness and required quality levels. As refers to outsourcing of translation work, most organizations in the UN family tend to prefer contracting with individuals (who are sometimes also on occasion recruited on short-term staff contracts), with some recourse to agencies.

2.5 ITU has been exploring several alternative translation procedures with the aim of streamlining processes and reducing cost while maintaining the high quality level required by members.

2.6 There have been over the period 2014-2017 several pilots conducted in this area:

1. C&P pilot project to translate webpages by **Member States that would be willing to commit to the provision of web translation** services through a special agreement with ITU.
2. An automatic translation neural system developed by WIPOin partnership with ITU **to allow the automatic translation** of text in some languages, and the establishment of a pilot project to test a similar system developed by a private company in 2018.

2.7 As regards the automatic translation system used by C&P, all language pairs are now available and translators have the possibility to use it in their translation work.

1. **Group on Study and Evaluation of the Translation and Interpretation Procedures**

2.8 Council-17 decided to establish an internal committee of the Union, chaired by the Deputy Secretary-General to consider the implementation of the best and most economically effective solutions to the provision of translation and simultaneous interpretation services at an appropriate cost, while maintaining quality of service; to study making use of approved external sources to translate Union documents; and to submit, through CWG-LANG, a report to the Council at its 2018 session and to the 2018 Plenipotentiary Conference. In response to this, the secretariat created the **Group on Study and Evaluation of the Translation and Interpretation Procedures**, which held three meetings between October and December 2017 (see document [C17/108](https://www.itu.int/md/S17-CL-C-0108/en)).

2.9 CWG-LANG acknowledges all the efforts by the secretariat aimed at assessing the feasibility and value of alternative translation and interpretation procedures and the planned trials of machine translation, machine captioning, and remote interpretation, and proposes that the Council:

* note with appreciation the outcomes of the different pilot projects conducted over the period;
* consider authorizing the secretariat to conduct a trial for the translation of webpages with the help of some administrations, in which the responsible Member States would verify themselves[[1]](#footnote-1) whether the quality of translation is sufficient and, if so, the secretariat would directly post the translated webpages on the ITU website;
* in case these trials have a significant budgetary implication to the ITU, the budget requests for these trials should be indicated for Council’s approval;
* urge the secretariat to continue its efforts to assess the value of machine-translation and machine captioning; and
* urge the secretariat to continue its trial of remote interpretation.
1. **Analysis of the application of the updated measures and principles for interpretation and translation adopted by the Council at its 2014 session** (*instructs the Council* 2)

2.10 The measures and principles for translation and interpretation, as adopted by the Council in 2009 and revised in 2014, are monitored and systematically used by the secretariat as a basis for determining and delivering translation and interpretation requirements for ITU conferences, meetings, documents and publications, and will continue to be followed.

2.11 As requested by CWG-LANG, budgetary figures for translation services since 2010 were submitted as below, broken down in three items: cost of translation, cost of associated services, and total cost.

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|  | **2010** | **2011** | **2012** | **2013** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** |
| Translation budget | 9,581,423 | 8,655,905 | 9,030,507 | 8,188,442 | 9,860,763 | 9,819,529 | 8,249,744 | 8,432,974 |
| Associated services budget | 6,732,789 | 6,633,103 | 5,901,474 | 5,545,850 | 5,841,177 | 5,841,094 | 5,645,752 | 5,716,247 |
| **Total Translation budget** | **16,314,211** | **15,289,009** | **14,931,981** | **13,734,291** | **15,701,940** | **15,660,623** | **13,895,496** | **14,149,220** |
| Interpretation budget | 3,011,402 | 2,116,911 | 4,396,547 | 1,943,702 | 3,242,056 | 3,743,931 | 2,027,299 | 2,228,510 |
| **Total Language services budget** | **19,325,613** | **17,405,920** | **19,328,528** | **15,677,993** | **18,943,996** | **19,404,554** | **15,922,795** | **16,377,730** |
| **Actual spending** |  **17,281,464**  |  **16,831,837**  |  **18,203,894**  |  **13,778,584**  |  **16,110,043**  |  **16,474,229**  |  **13,749,273**  |  **13,750,291**  |
| **Savings** | **2,044,149**  | **574,083**  | **1,124,634**  | **1,899,409**  | **2,833,953**  | **2,930,325**  | **2,173,522**  | **2,627,439**  |

2.12 Translation volumes continue to reflect full equality of treatment of all six ITU official languages. Translation output between 1 January 2010 and 30 October 2017 in the five languages (excluding English) is reflected in the following graph:

2.13 As regards interpretation, the system-wide Agreement governing the hiring of short-term interpreters by the UN agencies expired at the end of June 2017. Formal negotiations were underway between the UN organizations and AIIC (the International Association of Conference Interpreters) with a view to redrafting the Agreement that would be enforced for five years as of July 2017. Under the leadership of the UN DGACM, ITU articulated with its sister agencies a common framework of measures towards more economical and streamlined provisions. The negotiations were inconclusive and the terms and conditions of the old Agreement are still being applied until a new agreement or a new arrangement is established in the first half of 2018.

2.14 CWG-LANG acknowledges that equality of treatment of official languages is now being effectively implemented and proposes that the Council:

* request the secretariat to continue updating, monitoring and applying these measures and principles; and
* request the secretariat to monitor the impact of the outcome of the negotiations between UNCEB and AIIC toward the future operational budget.

**v) Judicious use of ICTs**

2.15 CWG-LANG notes that ITU completed the change from traditional paper-based referencing to e-referencing, with the aim of streamlining the cross-referencing of documents. By way of online cross-reference checks among ITU documents, the process of identifying and inserting previously translated excerpts in the originals is now greatly expedited, thereby eliminating any duplication of effort while increasing the translators’ output and making ITU greener.

2.16 C&P also introduced a new Documents, Conference and Production Management System (DCPMS) developed by UNOV, an online, transactional, integrated database application, used by the conference management service primarily to generate and store electronic requests for document services, monitor jobs through the linguistic sections, handle electronic requests for services, monitor contractual work, and produce a wide range of statistical reports for all aspects of conference service work.

**vi) Possible measures to reduce the size and volume of documents** (*instructs the Council* 3, 5th subparagraph)

2.17 CWG-LANG, stressing that shorter, more concise and focused documents are important elements for improving documentation and enhancing efficiency, including from the point of view of translation and multilingualism, proposes that the Council:

* recommend that the advisory groups keep reviewing the types of material to be included in output documents and hence translated, and continue to consider measures to reduce the cost and volume of documentation as a standing item, in particular for conferences and assemblies;
* urge Member States and the secretariat to continue to seek and implement appropriate measures, without sacrificing quality of service, to reduce the size and volume of documents; and
* recommend that appropriate indicators on the size and volume of different types of documents be developed and tracked, in order to monitor progress and provide an incentive for ongoing improvements.

**vii) Measures for equitable use of the six languages on the ITU website**

2.18 Council-16, on revising Resolution 1372, instructed the Secretary-General and the Directors of the Bureaux “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”.

2.19 In response to this, 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 webpages production. The group held its last meeting in March 2017 in order to provide specific measures for implementation of the specific instructions to all ITU Web Editors/Authors presented to CWG-LANG at its February meeting.

2.20 As a result of the work of this Ad-Hoc Group, a new Content Management System for translation of webpages, aimed at simplifying content lifecycle processes and allowing content contributors to focus on what they do best in their specific roles, was designed and is currently being used for translation of PP-18 webpages with a view to assessing the IT tool used and its customization to ITU needs.

2.21 CWG-LANG proposes that the Council instruct the secretariat, once the new Content Management System for translation of webpages is finalized, to gradually extend its use to all ITU webpages requiring translation into the six official languages of the Union.

**viii) Terminology databases and Arabic language terminology project**

2.22 In 2016, Members were notified of the entry of 30,000 terms in Arabic into the terminology database of ITU. With that, the project proposed by Council-08 (Document C08/59) for the integration of terminology entries in Arabic, Chinese, and Russian into a single centralized database was concluded well within budget.

**ix) Provision to the six language service units of the necessary qualified staff and tools**

2.23 Through its participation in the International Annual Meeting on Language Arrangements, Documentation and Publications (IAMLADP) and the International Annual Meeting on Computer-Aided Translation and Terminology (JIAMCATT), ITU adapts its business model and procedures to IAMLADP recommended practices in a number of key areas, such as structure and dimensioning of the translation units, optimum mix of fixed/temporary/external resources, outsourcing ratio, etc.

2.24 CWG-LANG proposes that the Council instruct the secretariat to continue its participation in IAMLADP and JIAMCATT meetings and, where appropriate, adapt its procedures to relevant IAMLADP recommended practices.

**3. Future work**

This final report concludes the work of CWG-LANG for the current PP period.

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1. With oversight and assistance by the secretariat [↑](#footnote-ref-1)