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| **Council Working Group on the use of  the six official languages of the Union**  **Eighth meeting – Geneva, 16 January 2018** |  |
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|  | **Document CWG-Lang-8/2-E** |
| **21 December 2017** |
| **English only** |

**Report by the Secretary-General**

PURSUANT TO RESOLUTION 154 (REV. BUSAN, 2014)  
AND RESOLUTION 1372

The present report, submitted by the Secretary-General through the good offices of the CWG-LANG, aims at updating the ITU Council on the implementation of Resolution 154 (Rev. Busan, 2014) regarding the use of ITU’s six official languages on an equal footing and adheres, further, to provisions in Council Resolution 1372, as revised in 2016.

The Secretariat is pleased to note that steady progress continues to be made on all fronts leading to full, equitable use of ITU’s six official languages, as evidenced below:

1. **Evolution of the budget for translation of documents to the six official languages of the Union since 2010**

As requested by CWG-LANG, budgetary figures for translation services are submitted 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** |

Translation volumes continue to reflect full equality of treatment of all 6 ITU official languages. Translation output figures between 1 January 2017 and 30 October 2017 are as follows

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | Arabic | Chinese | English | French | Russian | Spanish | **TOTAL** |
| Output translation | 6543 | 6595 | 1603 | 6494 | 6393 | 6654 | **34282** |

On average, more than **26%** of the work was outsourced. Language services operations continue to show consistent savings, with actual disbursements revealing savings of as much as **16%** for 2017[[1]](#footnote-1).

**2. Procedures adopted by other international organizations inside and outside of the UnitedNations system and benchmark studies on their costs of translation**

Through its active participation in the International Annual Meeting on Language Arrangements, Documentation and Publications (IAMLADP) and its working groups and task-forces, plus the Joint Inter-Agency Meeting on Computer-Aided Translation and Terminology (JIAMCATT), ITU keeps abreast of procedures and IT tools adopted by other IOs and adapts its business model and procedures to the best practices resulting from such interaction.

The 2017 International Annual Meeting on Language Arrangements, Documentation and Publications (IAMLADP) took place in Bangkok, Thailand, from 19 to 21 June.

IAMLADP members noted that the continuous evolution of technology and working methods calls for a versatile and flexible work force, comprising both permanent and temporary, on-site and off-site, staff. Language staff in particular will increasingly be required to have multiple skills, perform multiple functions and assume multiple responsibilities. The development of technological tools must be driven by the conference services themselves, working in partnership with IT services. Attention of Member States was drawn to the need to provide dedicated resources to their language and conference services so that they can harness the potential of recent technological advances and invest in the tools that will optimize their operations and enable them to fulfil their mandates more effectively and efficiently. IAMLADP members reinstated the importance of multilingualism for Member Organizations and their Member States, and to obtain from the respective Governing Bodies the promulgation of a clear multilingualism policy framework.

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.

**3. Initiatives undertaken by the General Secretariat and the three Bureaux to increase efficiencies and cost savings on the implementation of Res.154 (Rev. Busan, 2014) and Res. 1372**

In 2016, the Secretariat introduced another set of initiatives aiming to increase efficiency and reduce costs while promoting the equitable use of ITU official languages. The Secretariat notes, with satisfaction, that all proposed measures have attained the intended results partly or fully, as noted below:

* The roll-out of the basic version of DCPMS, the **Document Production System** developed by UNODC in Vienna mentioned in the previous report, took place in July 2017. This software is already in use in UN Vienna, UN New York, UNECA in Addis Ababa and UN Geneva for this purpose. The process leading to the customization of the tool, so that it fully responds to ITU’s needs in terms of document and publications workflow, will start early 2018.
* C&P continues the consultations with actors involved and other agencies with a view to define qualitative and quantitative **performance indicators** both for translation and interpretation with regard to productivity, timely delivery, and use of ITU’s Conference Proposal Interface (CPI), among others. DCPMS will be a powerful tool to obtain statistics and to design and implement indicators.

**4. Alternative translation and interpretation procedures**

The Union is constantly evaluating, testing and implementing viable and innovative translation procedures. In addition to outsourcing of translation work to recognized translation companies and freelance translators through calls for tender, significant progress is noted in the areas below:

* With regards to the current **machine translation project** in liaison with WIPO, all language pairs are available and translators have the possibility to use it in their translation work. Also a pilot project has been launched with a Lithuanian private company on English-Spanish neural machine translation, with a view to evaluate quality and usefulness of their machine translation technologies.
* Council-15 had instructed the Secretary-General and the Directors of the Bureaux “to study the **use of remote interpretation** in consultation with CWG-LANG.” (Document [C15/99](https://www.itu.int/md/S15-CL-C-0099/en)). The Group on Study and Evaluation of the Translation Procedures discussed the lessons learnt from the remote interpretation pilot which was conducted on occasion of the ITU TELECOM in Bangkok in 2016 and the possibility of making a second trial in remote interpretation in the coming year (see [C17/XX](https://www.itu.int/md/S18-RCLWCGLANG8-C-0003)).
* **Pilot project for the translation of webpages with the help of some administrations.** (see [C17/XX](https://www.itu.int/md/S18-RCLWCGLANG8-C-0003))
* **Pilot test of a New Content Management System (PP-18 CMS) for translation of PP webpages:** This is an ITU pilot project for simultaneous publication of webpages in the six official languages of the Union, simultaneously and in equal terms of functionality and navigation (ITU Council Resolution 1372).The PP-18 CMS is designed to be a simple yet powerful and flexible Content Management Systems. Its objectives is to simplify content lifecycle processes and allow content contributors to focus on what they do best in their specific roles.

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

The measures and principles for translation and interpretation, as adopted by Council in 2014 and 2016, are systematically considered by the secretariat as a benchmark in the delivery of translation and interpretation services for ITU conferences, meetings, documents and publications.

To this end, all preparatory and in-session documents, including the provisional Final Report, were delivered in the six official languages for the **WTDC-17**. Final versions of the outcome documents for **WTSA-16** were also published in all six languages. A schedule is being prepared for the delivery of all relevant preparatory documentation in six languages for the **PP** in October-November of 2018.

TSB continues to cooperate with C&P to translate **Recommendations approved under the Alternative Approval Procedure (AAP)** within the limits of available budget. In the reporting period, TSB has requested the translation of 55 Recommendations (1639 English pages) into one or several languages according to the specific needs expressed by the membership and within the limits of the budget available.

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| F | | S | | C | | A | | R | |
| Recs | Pgs | Recs | Pgs | Recs | Pgs | Recs | Pgs | Recs | Pgs |
| 14 | 463 | 18 | 551 | 17 | 550 | 14 | 463 | 43 | 1290[[2]](#footnote-2) |

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

As indicated in the previous report, all ‘level 0’ pages are now translated and published in the six languages. Between January and November 2017, a total of 179 webpages have been translated and are currently displayed in all languages. It remains a work in progress.

Council-16, on revising [Resolution 1372](http://www.itu.int/md/S16-CL-C-0126/en), 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”.

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 web pages 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.

As a result of the work of this Ad-Hoc Group, a Pilot test of a new Content Management System for translation of PP webpages was designed and is currently being conducted with a view to assess the IT tool used and its customization to ITU needs.

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

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. Its report is submitted to CWG-LANG in ([C17/XX](https://www.itu.int/md/S18-RCLWCGLANG8-C-0003)).

1. At 23 November 2017. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. These include the 19 Recs translated into Russian out of the savings. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)