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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-8/3-E** |
| **21 December 2017** |
| **English only** |

**Report by the Group on study and evaluation   
of the translation procedures**

**Introduction**

Council 2017 agreed to request the Deputy Secretary-General to preside over an internal committee, reporting to Council through the CWG-LANG, on alternative translation arrangements based on the proposal from the United Arab Emirates ([C17/108](https://www.itu.int/md/S17-CL-C-0108/en)).

The group has been established with the following terms of reference:

In collaboration with the Directors of the three Bureaux, and in consultation with the Council Working Group on Languages and the ITU regional offices:

1. Study the most economically effective solutions for the provision of translation and simultaneous interpretation services at an appropriate cost, while maintaining quality of service in general.
2. Investigate the use of approved external bodies and centres to translate ITU documents, in collaboration with Member States and regional offices.
3. Study the practice of other United Nations organizations in this regard.
4. Submit a report to the Council at its 2018 session on implementation of this proposal.
5. Submit a comprehensive report to the 2018 Plenipotentiary Conference containing recommendations on this subject.

Remote participation is made available for the Regional Offices to participate.

The group is composed of representatives of each Bureau, the General Secretariat Departments and the Regional Directors. This document provides a status report on the work of the group and invites CWG-LANG to offer its comments.

The group has dealt with the following issues:

1. Categorization of documents for quality assessment
2. Update on UN organizations management of web pages
3. Status of pilot projects on automatic translation, web content management, translation of webpages by Member States, remote interpretation
4. Guidance on management of events using interpretation services
5. Practice of other United Nations organizations

**1 Categorization of documents for quality assessment**

All documents published by the ITU must meet certain minimum quality standards. In particular, they must:

* be drafted in correct and grammatical language
* be clear and concise
* in general, conform with the relevant provisions of a Document Service Policy.

Nevertheless, it should be recognized that documents have different audiences, purposes and “shelf-lives”. The topics of documents also range from the mundane to the politically sensitive. In these circumstances, it is not practical or reasonable indiscriminately to devote the same level of attention, time and resources to all documents, all the more so when we recall that our aim is to produce *effective* documents.

For the purpose of setting appropriate quality standards for documents, these are divided into three groups in terms of their “quality sensitivity”:

* High quality sensitivity
* Medium quality sensitivity
* Lesser quality sensitivity

The quality standards of specific documents are identified below.

The quality sensitivity standard of a document should not limit its quality. The fact that a document is regarded as having “low quality sensitivity” does not mean that it should be of low quality. It may, in fact, and should, where possible, be of high quality.

The implications of quality sensitivity standards relate not to the document itself, but rather to the manner in which it is produced. In other words, the identified quality sensitivity of a document would be reflected in the C&P’s internal processing and production of the document, taking account of the resources available to it at the time of production, as illustrated in the following tables.

**Document preparation**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Quality sensitivity level** | **Project management** | **Drafting** | **Editing** | **Internal review** |
| High | This activity is essential in all drafting projects, regardless of quality sensitivity. It is here that quality standard policy in respect of document preparation is applied, and that the process is managed to ensure compliance with content, length, deadline and presentation requirements, which should not be affected by different levels of quality requirements. | Requires excellent technical and drafting skills. Must be monitored while in progress to take timely remedial measures. May involve intermediate submissions, successive drafts, etc. | Essential, regardless of drafting quality. Should compensate for any technical or drafting deficiencies, and ensure that the original document is suitable for publication. | Essential, and should not be delegated to other than a senior official. Should, where appropriate, involve consultations with other units. |
| Medium | Requires good technical and drafting skills. May require monitoring. | Required only if needed to compensate for technical or drafting deficiencies. | Advisable, but may be delegated to an expert. Can be replaced by adequate prior briefing of Author. |
| Lesser | Requires a clear understanding of the document’s purpose. | Required only if needed to compensate for significant drafting deficiencies. | Discretionary or cursory. |

**Document production – Translation**

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| **Quality sensitivity level** | **Referencing** | **Editing** | **Revision** | **Multilingual Checking** |
| High | Required | Required | Required whether translated by junior or senior translators | Required |
| Medium | Required | Optional | Required when translated by junior translators | Optional |
| Lesser | Optional | None | Optional | None |

**Document production – Text processing**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Quality sensitivity level** | **Lecture à deux** | **Proofreading** | **Consultation with editor/reviser** |
| High | Required | Required | Required |
| Medium | Required | Optional | Optional |
| Lesser | Required | None | None |

**Indication of quality sensitivity levels for translations**

Services are encouraged to indicate the quality sensitivity of the document for which they are requesting a translation. When selecting the level, it should be borne in mind the fact that:

* the translation itself will anyway be of high quality,
* the translation process and resources used, and hence the cost of translation, will depend on the quality sensitivity level that is selected.
* Cost and speed

In general, it is up to the service requesting the translation to decide if they wish for their document to go through the referencing, editing, revision or multilingual verification stages, depending on factors such as budget, life span of the document, intended audience, sensitiveness of the content and desired translation delay.

It is not convenient to assign a default quality-sensitivity level to each of the existing ITU document types, as each document type may be used for different purposes. It would, however, be expected that legal framework documents and documents related to treaty meetings be assigned a High quality-sensitivity level, that documents related to obligations and rights or those with financial or policy content be assigned at least the Medium level, and that documents with narrative content can be assigned the Lesser level.

**2 Update on UN organizations management of web pages**

For information on what other similar organizations do and benchmarking, ITU is an active member of the International Annual Meeting on Language Arrangements, Documentation and Publications (IAMLADP) and of the Joint Inter-Agency Meeting on Computer-Assisted Translation and Terminology (JIAMCATT). IAMLADP is an international forum and network of managers of international organizations employing conference and language service providers. The annual meetings bring together managers from over 80 member organizations to share knowledge and experiences and discuss subjects of common interest.

IAMLADP’ Working Group on Language Services mandate is to exchange information and develop good practices in regard to common challenges facing the language services of member organizations in the fields of interpretation, translation, editing, précis-writing and all related activities.

In the framework of IAMLADP’s Working Group on Languages, ITU launched a new topic for discussion: how IAMLADP organizations deal with Web translation/Publication. To date, only two replies were received, but members indicated that they were very interested in this topic and were planning to look into it in depth.

**3 Status of pilot projects on automatic translation, web content management, translation of webpages by Member States, remote interpretation**

**Remote interpretation**: The Group discussed the lessons learnt from the remote interpretation pilot which was conducted on the occasion of ITU TELECOM in Bangkok in 2016. A second trial will be arranged in Q1 2018 at a small-scale event in a region, an event at which interpretation services would not normally be offered. The technology provider “Interprefy” that conducted the first trial will be requested to conduct another trial again free of charge, and other potential suppliers will be contacted. The group has also updated the guideline on management of events using interpretation service so as to optimize the use of interpretation resources.

**Pilot project for the translation of webpages with the help of some administrations:** In order to make this methodology cost effective and timely, further effort is necessary to improve the quality of the translations to avoid the necessity of further processing by the ITU translation sections, and rely on the responsible Member States itself to verify whether the quality is sufficient and if so to post the translated webpages directly themselves on the ITU website. CWG-LANG is asked to consider this and if supported to propose this to Council as a trial. A disclaimer would be placed on the pages translated in this way.

**Use of external sources for translation – The optimum mix: categorization of documents for externalization**. 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.

**Automatic translation:** ITU has already made available the automatic translation neural system developed in collaboration with WIPO, and is evaluating two other commercial AT Tools available on the market. A company in Latvia and another in China have expressed interest in carrying out trials.

**4 Guidance on management of events using interpretation services**

A guidance document for organizers of meetings to help them optimize the use of interpreters has been developed, for example drawing attention to the fact that a meeting is categorized as a meeting regardless of whether it is 20 minutes or 3 hours long (which is the maximum). There is a daily rate which is the same whether there is one or more meetings during the day, based on a maximum of 6 hours.

A guidance note is also being prepared for delegates taking ILO’s as a reference.

**5 Practice of other United Nations organizations**

JIAMCATT reports to IAMLADP’s Working Group on Language Services, and is a community of interested professionals from both UN and non-UN organizations, seeking to harness technologies and share knowledge to help streamline the translation and interpretation processes.

Through IAMLADP, 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. For the latest information on the practice in other UN organisations please see the Annex to this document.

ANNEX

**Practice of other United Nations organizations**

Replies to an e-mail poll conducted in August 2014

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| Organization | 1. Does your organization have a formal/informal web language POLICY/regime? | 2. What percentages of pages are available in the different languages? | 3. Who is responsible for the web (content, posting, etc.). Is webposting centralized (has to go through a given unit) or decentralized (anyone can post)? | 4. Is there a mechanism for ensuring that when multilingual pages are updated they are duly updated in all the languages? | 5. Do the language services do the translation? If not, how is it handled? | 6. If so, how is the work structured and budgeted, and how much resources (staff/monetary amount) does it consume? | 7. How do you cope with the added volatility/immediacy of the web (very short deadlines) in relation to traditional documents? | 8. Do you use an “automatic translation” button at all on your website? | Remarks |
| ICAO | ICAO has a formal web policy. However, the language versions are handled through voluntary contributions. For the moment, main pages (levels 0 and 1) are translated in French and Chinese. Spanish will be included shortly. | Not available | Content owners are responsible for web posting in their corresponding sites. These are normally not main pages (levels 0 and 1) therefore not translated. Main pages (levels 0 and 1) are managed by the Web Unit. | There is an agreed process to send for translation updates to the webpages. | Updates to translated webpages are handled as any other regular request for translation services. They submit the request on a word documents showing the changes to the previously translated texts | Until now this has been handled through our regular structure as the effort is not considerable. See also reply to Q5. | Priority is given in accordance to the importance of the subject and the importance of the other already scheduled work. | No. |  |
| UNOV | No formal policy, but the UNOV public website is available in the six official languages and German (with Arabic being launched in the next few week | All pages are available in the languages mentioned in answer 1 | Web posting is centralized; a content master controls what is posted on the website, via a content management system. For Arabic, Chinese and Russian the content master works with members of the relevant translation sections to update text. | The content master supervises and controls this function. | Yes, UNOV Translation Sections do this. The content master organizes the translation required. | The translations are included in the normal workflow via DCPMS. The translations are prioritized: documentation and publications take preference. | Updated information is uploaded in English first and the translations are implemented as and when they are ready. | No. |  |
| WIPO | We do not have a formal language policy for the website, but WIPO endeavours to publish as much content as possible in the 6 working languages, i.e. Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish.  Portuguese is used since 2000 for promotional material only regarding WIPO-administered treaties, and therefore WIPO’s website offers publications in Portuguese.  The website is made of 6 main subdivisions, and they are in all 6 working languages (IP Services, Policy, Cooperation, Reference, About IP and Inside WIPO).  But some of the contents of those main subdivisions are not in all of the 6 working languages. For instance, under About IP one finds the webpage of the WIPO Magazine, but this publication is only produced in EN, ES and FR.  Under IP Services, one finds the Arbitration and Mediation Center, whose portal is in all 6 languages. But once there, if one wants to find out more about the Uniform Domain Name Dispute Resolution Policy, the webpages on this policy appear only in EN, FR and ES.  In another subdivision, Reference, one can find the meeting documents for all main WIPO bodies. And those documents are all in the 6 languages. In the same subdivision, one finds the WIPO-administered treaties, and they are also in the 6 languages. There is also the WIPO Lex webpage in this subdivision, which is a one-stop search facility for national laws on intellectual property. Its content, though, is not in the 6 languages, but one can consult the language versions of a national law, which are provided by Google Translate.  Another example, under IP Services, one gets to the International Patent System portal whose main pages, but not all, are in the 6 languages plus German, Korean, Japanese and Portuguese. This is due to the fact that WIPO accepts patent applications in those additional languages in conformity with the Patent Cooperation Treaty. Yet, another pillar of the Organization, the Madrid System, has a portal with the main pages in the 6 languages, but the deeper you go into it, the content appears only in EN, FR and ES. | We cannot offer a precise figure, but one can roughly estimate that 100% is in EN, 98% in FR, 90% in ES, and 60% in AR, ZH and RU. | Webposting is centralized | There is a service for that, the Web Communications Section. | With the exception of national laws for WIPO Lex (see reply to Q1), the Language Division handles the translation work. | Work for the website appears in the same workflow as meeting documents, and is processed accordingly. | The only short deadlines are the ones for the press pages, and they are short texts. Their translation in the other 5 languages is requested every Thursday by the Web Communications Section, for delivery by the following Tuesday at the latest. | Yes, in the WIPO Lex portal (see reply to Q1). |  |
| WMO | WMO has an informal policy regarding WMO website. Selected pages are translated into the six official languages of the Organization, such as the homepage, the introductory pages of WMO scientific and technical programmes, media centre information, WMO corporate information and WMO meeting pages. Generally speaking, the pages with static content were translated when the website was launched, and updated later on if necessary. | There are no exact figures available, but possibly about 20 per cent of the Web content is translated.  Since WMO has no Content Management System (CMS) for the Web, it is extremely difficult to keep track of the number of pages in any language. | Communications and Public Affairs (CPA) are responsible for the web. The webposting is decentralized: some content is posted by CPA (particularly, information under the “media centre” section and corporate information, i.e. general information on WMO) ; the pages or content translated by WMO language service is posted by the language service itself (there are web focal points per language section); and content regarding WMO scientific and technical programmes in English is posted by the corresponding departments. Though web posting is decentralized, access rights need to be previously given by WMO web master to the designated Web focal point. There can be one or many Web focal points in any department | Yes, however the limited resources available do not allow for an immediate update in all languages. Updates may come at different times for the different languages. | Yes, it is the WMO language service that provides the translation. | The work is budgeted in the Translation Service and also in CPA. It is a separate workflow from translation of documents which take the priority. Usually, it is done by the same translators. It represents approximately 10 to 20% of the translation work per language. There is a written agreement between CPA and WMO language service on how to manage the requests for translating web content and on how to communicate these requests to WMO language service. Unfortunately, the lack of a CMS and resources make it difficult to manage this type of work appropriately. | By having specific translators assigned to the website or, in case of very short deadlines and high importance, by assigning the work to in-house translators. However, since the translation of web content is not considered a top priority, web translations are published usually late, except for urgent and important information. | Yes. "Google translate" is available throughout the WMO website. |  |
| UNHQ (DPI) | DPI strives to ensure that all web content produced by the Department is maintained in all official languages.  Web Service Section (WSS) work to maintain key web pages on UN.ORG in the six official languages and News Service Section (NSS) and UN Radio likewise ensure language parity is maintained on the UN News and UN Radio websites.  In addition, the UN Radio website is available in Portuguese, Kiswahili, Urdu, Hindi and Bangla.  The web multilingual guidelines published by WSS can be accessed here : [www.un.org/en/webgovernance](file:///C:\Users\sherbini\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary%20Internet%20Files\Content.Outlook\AY1MV88I\www.un.org\en\webgovernance) | Nearly all web pages for which News and Media Division (NMD) are responsible for are maintained in all official languages. We do not have the exact percentage but it would be very high. It should be noted that not all web pages under UN.ORG are the responsibility of DPI. The degree of language parity of web pages maintained by other departments varies considerably. | Decentralised posting is supported by FTP. Some degree of centralised posting is nearly always required in order to support language parity. For example, the 1540 security council committee post their own English content, but Web Services Section posts the content in the other five languages. | The coordination is done via email messages at present. WSS is adopting Drupal CMS technology will will allow the automation of the notification process for language updates | In terms of organisational responsibility, WSS do not translate the web content ; translations are provided by the authoring department. On an exceptional basis, WSS may provide courtesy translation but this is not a core duty of the section. WSS do translate web components such as menu navigation, banners, graphics, page footers, forms, site maps etc | The cost of translation is borne by the authoring departments. WSS have worked to establish relationships with universities to provide pro-bono translations for authoring departments. | The need for quick turnaround is managed by having established units to handle the language requirements. WSS has units for each language as does Radio / News . | No, we never use this. The quality of machine translation is nowhere near sufficient quality for publication on an official UN web site | For additional information on the latest GA resolutions relating to multilingualism I am attaching i) COI report with resolutions, ii) the latest Multilingualism Resolution and iii) the latest Multilingualism Report draft (kindly note that this report is yet to be adopted). |
| WTO | Informal policy, agreed with Language Services.  Public Website: everything appears in the 3 official languages, with a few exceptions (presentations for special events, programmes for some symposia or seminars, powerpoint submissions… which are posted in English).  English versions are posted on the site first, and translations are posted when ready. But headlines are translated immediately through an application called Transweb (100 words maximum, immediate translation). | More than 90 per cent of all pages are translated in the other 2 official languages.  Only some old news items have not been translated. | The WebTeam is responsible for all matters relating to the Website, with the Head of Operations, Internet and Intranet, coordinating the webposting and the Head of Editorial, Internet and Publications who can make any editorial change he thinks is necessary. | No multilingual pages but parallel sites for the 3 languages. Usually, link to new documents in case of updating. | Yes. | Web translations are considered as regular work and are financed by the Division regular budget. Same workflow and same translators, except for the team in charge of the Transweb (who translate headlines, etc. on top of their usual work). | See above. As WTO has a relatively important team of translators, it usually copes with the additional workload. | No. |  |
| IAEA | No formal policy. Documents related to the Policy-Making Organs are translated into the 5 langs and posted either on the restricted site (Board documents) or the Public site (General Conference docs and Information Circulars. The IAEA Bulletin is also translated into the 5 langs and posted. Some publications are translated and posted.  The actual web pages as such are not currently translated although our Office of Public Information and Communication (OPIC) has recently issued a vacancy notice for a consultant to decide which web pages should be translated and “to populate these pages with the relevant language content”. The consultant is supposed to coordinate the translation work with the IAEA’s Language Services. It is not at all clear how this would work in practice and whether OPIC actually has the resources to fund the translation. | Close to zero in terms of the actual web pages as opposed to documents/publications being posted in various langs. | Not sure. I think at the moment it is decentralized but OPIC is trying to get things more centralized. | No | See answer to Q1 | Not yet clear | Not yet clear | No |  |
| UPU | Our website is in English and in French generally. When we can post documents or tools in other languages, we do. For example, our development cooperation department produces regional development plans for our various regions. The Latin American plan is in Spanish as well as in English. Same for Arab region and Eastern Europe in Russian.  Our communication tools for World Post Day or the letter-writing competition can be found in various languages.  Our flagship magazine is in seven languages, available on the website in PDF format.  Our member countries wanted us to have a multilingual site, but we showed them that going this route would require more resources and budget and that put an end to the debate for the moment. But as I said, when we can put materials in languages other than English and French, we do. | Half and half. | Communication is responsible for the website and its content. We work with internal clients to put material online. Some staff, because of the technical nature of their work, have rights to put specific documents online themselves, but any copy must be vetted by Communication. | The Web editor monitors this and makes changes and updates appropriately. | We use our internal translation units for translation; some texts are written and adapted by Comms people | Same workflow as the one for translation of documents. We specify when the matter is urgent and the managers of the units make accommodations. | That’s the nature of the work. We need to write quickly, verify info and data and post as quickly as possible when dealing with news items or timely issues. For information on regular web pages, we have more lead time. | No |  |

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