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| **Council Working Group on the Use of the six official languages of the Union  12th meeting – 18 January 2022** |  |
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|  | **Document CWG-LANG/12/5-E** |
| **27 January 2022** |
| **English only** |
| Report by the Chairman of the Council Working Group on the use of the six official languages of the Union (CWG-LANG) | |
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| **Summary**  This document contains the annual report of the Chairman of the Council Working Group on Languages (CWG-LANG) to the Council, pursuant to Resolution 154 (Rev. Dubai, 2018) and Council Resolution 1372 (Rev. 2019).  **Action required**  This report will be submitted to the 2022 session of Council for endorsement.  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  **References**  [*Report by the Secretary-General*](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-RCLCWGLANG12-C-0002/en)*;* [*Resolution 154 (Rev. Dubai, 2018)*](https://www.itu.int/en/council/Documents/basic-texts/RES-154-E.pdf)*;* [*Council Resolution 1372 (Rev. 2019)*](http://web.itu.int/md/S19-CL-C-0138/en) |

1. **Opening of the meeting and approval of the agenda (Document** [**CWG-LANG/12/1(Rev.1)**](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-RCLCWGLANG12-C-0001/en)**)**

1.1 The meeting was opened by the Chair of CWG-LANG, Ms Monia Jaber Khalfallah (Tunisia). After welcoming the delegates, she submitted the draft agenda for approval. The agenda was approved as submitted.

1.2 The floor was given to the ITU Secretary-General, Mr Houlin Zhao, who highlighted the emergency measures implemented to ensure the safety of personnel and delegates as well as business continuity in the context of the "new normal". He reiterated the importance of CWG-LANG for the Union and its membership, and acknowledged the content of the meeting’s agenda, namely the key issue of multilingualism, the updated measures and principles for interpretation and translation in ITU, the review of alternative translation procedures, including Neural Machine Translation (NMT), and the reflection on how to improve the efficiency of the governance processes in ITU and better support ITU meetings and sessions.

1. **Report by the Secretary-General (****Document** [**CWG-LANG/12/2(Rev.1)**](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-RCLCWGLANG12-C-0002/en)**)**

2.1 Participants received detailed information on the evolution of the budget for translation of documents into the six official languages of the Union as well as on the actual expenditures related to language services since 2011. As requested by CWG-LANG, information was also submitted on the evolution of translation volumes per language since 2011. Translation volumes continue to reflect equality of treatment of all six ITU official languages.

2.2 Responding to a question on the origin of savings in translation and interpretation for 2021, the secretariat confirmed that the postponement of major meetings had an impact on such savings, as well as the fact that the figures for 2021 were as of 10 November, so the budgetary year had not ended yet at that time.

2.3 CWG-LANG expressed satisfaction at the efforts deployed in search of potential savings, efficiency and innovation in order to respond to PP Resolution 154 (Rev. Dubai, 2018) and Council Resolution 1372.

2.4 The secretariat reported on the outcome of ITU’s participation in interinstitutional meetings (IAMLADP and JIAMCATT) as regards the procedures adopted by other international organizations inside and outside of the United Nations system. ITU keeps abreast of procedures and IT tools adopted by other international organizations and adapts its business model and procedures to the best practices resulting from such interaction.

2.5 CWG-LANG took note of the information provided and commended the secretariat for its efforts in improving working methods and the cost-effectiveness of conference services.

2.6 The secretariat presented the initiatives undertaken by the General Secretariat and the three Bureaux in order to increase efficiencies and cost savings on the implementation of Resolution 154 (Rev. Dubai, 2018) and Council Resolution 1372 (Rev. 2019). These include the reviewed measures and principles for interpretation and translation in ITU agreed upon by the different Advisory Groups and the Secretariat. Other initiatives include those concerning NMT, computer-assisted translation tools, remote interpretation and cooperation with the ITU Coordination Committee for Terminology (ITU CCT).

2.7 Information was also provided on the progress made on the implementation of measures and principles for translation and interpretation adopted by the Council in its 2014 session; these have been systematically implemented by the secretariat and are used as a benchmark in the delivery of translation and interpretation services for ITU conferences, meetings, documents, and publications. Furthermore, TSB continues to translate Recommendations approved under the Alternative Approval Process (AAP) within the limits of the available translation budget, and in accordance with requests received from the linguistic groups and ITU-T study groups.

2.8 The secretariat reported on the areas of interest for the implementation of Resolution 154 (Rev. Dubai, 2018) over the period 2019-2022, as identified by the CWG-LANG, concerning the review of ITU documentation and publication services with a view to eliminating any duplication and to creating synergies; possible measures to reduce the size and volume of documents and achieve greener meetings; the implementation in ITU of the United Nations system objective of multilingualism; necessary measures for equitable use of the six languages on the ITU website in terms of multilingual content and user-friendliness; possible measures to reduce, without sacrificing quality, the cost and volume of documentation; statistics on use, download and purchase of the different language versions of ITU documents and publications; and respect of deadlines for the submission of contributions that require translation to conferences, assemblies and meetings of the Union.

2.9 CWG-LANG took note of the information provided in relation to the areas of interest for the implementation of Resolution 154 (Rev. Dubai, 2018) over the period 2019-2022, as identified by CWG-LANG.

2.10 CWG-LANG also proposed considering setting deadlines for the posting of translated documents in all languages in advance of meetings and conferences.

2.11 The secretariat reported on the work of the Group on Study and Evaluation of the Translation Procedures, chaired by the Deputy Secretary-General, contained in Annex II of the Report of the Secretary-General. Members received updated information on the different pilot projects conducted in 2021. These included:

a) **Machine translation**: A pilot project using NMT with human post-editing to translate ITU web pages is nearing its end. Translators have been trained in the use of SharePoint and WordPress to translate pages directly in these platforms. The NMT translation tool developed in-house, called ITU Translate, has been improved by further training the ITU engine, including support for new engines.

b) **Web content management**: Currently, ITU is migrating systems to a more dynamic and functional website hosting platform. This new website hosting will be combined with an asset management tool that ITU is currently defining. Its business requirements will strengthen site support management and enable machine learning automation and human translation, which is expected to cover a range of web products including daily blogs and articles, publications and events in the members’ area.

c) **Remote interpretation**: Since the pandemic, C&P Interpretation Service has been providing remote interpretation in different modes, mainly the Remote Simultaneous Interpreting (RSI) hub, with a few events being serviced by RSI in home-dispersed mode.

2.12 In terms of ITU’s adaptation to the COVID-19 environment it was noted that all planned ITU meetings have been successfully organized virtually which would not have been possible without the professionalism and resilience of ITU staff. As to the challenge of preserving the multilingual character of these virtual meetings, all mandated translations have been delivered on time in all six official languages despite the disruption and difficult circumstances caused by the restrictions linked to the pandemic.

2.13 The secretariat then reported on the practice of other UN organizations which acknowledge the crucial role of state-of-the art web-based technologies and close collaboration between conference and language services and IT teams for the success of remote or hybrid operations.

2.14 CWG-LANG took note of the information provided and commended the secretariat for its efforts on the study and evaluation of alternative translation and interpretation procedures.

2.15 The secretariat reported on the review of the measures and principles for interpretation and translation in ITU. According to the action plan adopted by the Group on Study and Evaluation of Alternative Translation Procedures in 2020, the Sector advisory groups and the General Secretariat have reviewed and approved changes and updates to the measures and principles for interpretation and translation in ITU, as contained in the table of Annex III of the Report of the Secretary-General.

2.16 One delegation expressed a concern that not all PP webpages may be translated into all languages and requested to consider improving the formatting of the table.

2.17 CWG-LANG endorsed these updates and proposed that the Council:

* adopt the updated measures and principles for interpretation and translation in ITU as contained in document [C22/INF/7](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-CL-INF-0007/en).

2.18 The secretariat presented the Policy Framework on Multilingualism in ITU contained in Annex II of the Report of the Secretary-General. It was developed based on the recommendation of the UN Joint Inspection Unit in its 2020 report on Multilingualism in the UN system (JIU/REP/2020/6) and the decision of Council-21. It contains the working definition of multilingualism, and provides principles, goals and objectives of multilingualism. Summary of discussion on this topic is provided in clause 4, below.

1. **Contribution from the Russian Federation – Draft revision of Resolution 154 (Document** [**CWG-LANG/12/3**](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-RCLCWGLANG12-C-0003/en)**)**

3.1 The representative of the Russian Federation submitted a proposal for the revision of Resolution 154 by including items that are common for all ITU Sectors, thus allowing for a significant reduction or even suppression of the relevant Sector resolutions on the use of the languages of the Union on an equal footing, i.e. ITU-R Resolution 61, ITU-T Resolution 67 and ITU-D Resolution 86. The Russian Federation asked the other participants to provide inputs so as to submit a comprehensive text for the revision of Resolution 154 to the forthcoming Plenipotentiary Conference.

3.2 Several delegations expressed their support in principle for the streamlining of Sector resolutions on languages. Consideration could be given to a new item proposing to publish bi-annually a document containing all new terms and definitions approved at ITU, and the corresponding budget allocations.

3.3 CWG-LANG took note of the contribution and invited Member States to contribute to the revision and update of Resolution 154 at the next Plenipotentiary Conference later this year.

1. **Contribution from the Russian Federation – Comments on the report by the Secretary-General (Document** [**CWG-LANG/12/4**](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-RCLCWGLANG12-C-0004/en)**)**

4.1 The representative of the Russian Federation submitted a proposal to accelerate development of the OneITU website, providing concrete proposals, prototypes and timelines. Inequalities in the use of all the official languages on the current ITU website were also noted. The secretariat should provide details on when the OneITU website will be available. Regarding the Policy Framework on Multilingualism in ITU, it was noted that its main goal cannot just be to raise awareness of the principles and importance of multilingualism throughout the Union. A further suggestion was to add a goal on the implementation of multilingualism throughout ITU as part of the OneITU approach, including the OneITU website.

4.2 Responding to queries on the development of the OneITU website, the secretariat informed participants that the results of consultancy projects on design and information hierarchy were being reviewed and incorporated into the technology and content of the OneITU website. Some elements and content have already been migrated to the new Wordpress platform; web guidelines, analytics tools and prototype testing have been developed and are being deployed.

4.3 Regarding the lack of available multilingual pages for Council 2022, these pages were accessible through other entry points, but the homepage entry point was inadvertently not updated. Depending on the user entry point, the Council 2022 pages in multiple languages may or may not have been seen. As soon as this issue was identified, it was corrected on the homepage entry point.

4.4 One delegation established a difference between the concept, aims and content of multilingualism in the JIU report, and the practical implementation of multilingualism in ITU, where equal footing in the use of the six official languages has not yet been achieved.

4.5 Upon the request of one delegation the secretariat provided information on the current situation with the terminological database as well as the link to BR and TSB terminology ([itu.int/go/terms](file:///C:\Users\Will\Downloads\itu.int\go\terms)).

4.6 CWG-LANG supported the proposals contained in the contribution from the Russian Federation; took note of the information provided by the secretariat on its efforts for the harmonization of Sector websites in the six languages of the Union; expressed its concern that the Council-22 website was initially only available in English, requesting that this issue be addressed before Council-23; and requested that PP-22 webpages be available in all languages as soon as possible.

4.7 CWG-LANG proposed amending the Policy Framework to i) emphasize implementation of multilingualism throughout the activities of the Union as the overall goal and in line with the mandate of ITU; ii) add as a goal the implementation of multilingualism as part of the OneITU approach including the OneITU website; and iii) stress the utmost importance of the equal treatment of the six languages of the Union.

4.8 CWG-LANG endorsed the draft Policy Framework, as amended, and requested that the secretariat develop administrative and operational guidelines for the implementation of the Policy Framework. It proposed that the Council:

* approve the Policy Framework on Multilingualism in ITU as amended document [C22/53](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-CL-C-0053/en).

1. **Any other business**

5.1 The secretariat was requested to provide a four-year report summarizing the outcomes of CWG-LANG meetings in 2019–2022, to be presented to Plenipotentiary Conference in 2022.

1. **Closure of the meeting**

6.1 The Chair thanked the participants for their valuable contributions and their support, the Secretary General, the Chief of C&P and his team, the technical support team and the ITU secretariat as a whole, for the excellent work accomplished and the support provided to herself and to the meeting.

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