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|  | **Document CWG-LANG-14/2** |
| **15 December 2023** |
| **English only** |
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| Contribution by the secretariat |
| PURSUANT TO RESOLUTION 154 (REV. BUCHAREST, 2022) AND RESOLUTION 1372 (C15, LAST AMENDED C19) |
| **Purpose**This report provides an update to the Council Working Group on the use of the six official languages of the Union (CWG-LANG) on the implementation of Resolution 154 (Rev. Bucharest, 2022) regarding the use of ITU’s six official languages on an equal footing in accordance with Council Resolution 1372, as revised in 2019. **Action required**The Council Working Group is invited to **note** the report and **endorse** its Annexes.\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**References**[*PP Resolution 154 (Rev. Bucharest, 2022)*](https://www.itu.int/en/council/Documents/basic-texts-2023/RES-154-E.pdf)*;* [*Council Resolution 1372 (Rev. 2019)*](http://web.itu.int/md/S19-CL-C-0138/en) |

1. **Evolution of the budget for translation of documents to the six official languages since the 2018 Plenipotentiary Conference**

As requested by the Plenipotentiary Conference, budget figures for translation and interpretation services are hereby submitted ([Annex 1](#Annex1), Table 1), divided into three categories: translation and associated-service budget and expenses; interpretation-service budget and expenses; and total language-service budget and expenses. As requested by the ITU Council Working Group on languages (CWG-LANG), Annex 1, Table 2, to this document includes information on the translation volumes per language over the same period, with translation volumes reflecting the equality of treatment of all six ITU official languages. The tables in Annex 1 will be updated to include figures for 2023 in a revised version of this report in January 2024.

1. **Procedures adopted by other international organizations inside and outside the United Nations system**

ITU participates actively in the International Annual Meeting on Language Arrangements, Documentation and Publications (IAMLADP) and its working groups and task forces, including the International Annual Meeting on Computer-Assisted Translation and Terminology (JIAMCATT). In line with the principal conclusions of IAMLADP and JIAMCATT in 2023, ITU is engaging with working groups and task forces on interpretation-specific matters; publishing and digital content; machine translation management; digital solutions for conference services and virtual meetings; accessibility of meeting services; and sustainable meetings.

1. **Initiatives undertaken by the General Secretariat and the three Bureaux to increase efficiencies and cost savings in the implementation of Resolution 154 (Rev. Bucharest, 2022) of the Plenipotentiary Conference and Council Resolution 1372 (C15, last amended C19)**

**3.1 Implementation of measures and principles for translation and interpretation**

The [document C22/INF/7](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-CL-INF-0007/en) on measures and principles for translation and interpretation in ITU, which was reviewed by Sector advisory groups and the General Secretariat and updated and endorsed by the Council at its 2022 session, has been systematically implemented by the secretariat as a benchmark for the delivery of translation and interpretation services for ITU conferences, assemblies, meetings, documents, webpages and publications. The document will be reviewed and updated as necessary by the Sectors and Sector advisory groups following any changes arising from the endorsement of the guide to current and future practices in the implementation of multilingualism.

**3.2 Implementation of the United Nations system objective of multilingualism and the Policy Framework on Multilingualism**

Following the approval of the ITU Policy Framework on Multilingualism by the Council at its 2022 session, the secretariat developed a guide to current and future practices in the implementation of the policy in line with the recommendations of the report of the Joint Inspection Unit of the United Nations System on multilingualism in the United Nations system (JIU/REP/2020/6), which was presented to CWG-LANG in its October 2023 meeting. The guide includes current and future processes and practices in implementing multilingualism throughout the organization and proposed staff guidelines on the use of machine translation for webpages and publications. It will be presented to CWG-LANG in its January 2024 meeting for further discussion prior to Council 2024.

**3.3** **Use of new technologies in translation services**

The General Secretariat is continuing to develop and improve the ITU Translate neural machine translation tool. Developments include training the tool further on ITU data; making use of additional commercial translation engines; working to integrate the tool as the default option for all new WordPress pages; caching automatic translations in each language to decrease costs; introducing an auto-translate button to enable the user to access additional pages in the chosen language where available without having to launch the translation tool again; and extending access to the post-editing function to selected ITU staff members to enable real-time editing of any machine-translated page.

An updated version of the ITU Translate tool has been deployed on an increasing number of General Secretariat and Bureaux webpages on both SharePoint and WordPress platforms and work is continuing on integrating the tool into the master template of the SharePoint platform so that all ITU pages not currently translated by the professional translation team can be accessed in all six languages via machine translation.

ITU Translate has been used in a beta version for machine translation of conference documents at Council 23, the October cluster of Council Working Groups and the ITU-T MyWorkSpace and was also presented to, and used by, delegates to ITU-D Study Groups. ITU Translate for Word documents produces formatted, locked automatic translations to allow all language versions of documents not yet officially translated or available only in the original language.

ITU translators continue to make use of ITU Translate internally for segment, document and website translation, alongside computer-assisted translation tools such as eLUNa and UNTERM, the United Nations system terminology database. The gDoc 2.0 document workflow management application has been implemented as part of ITU’s approach to align working methods with those of other United Nations agencies and international organizations.

**3.4 Use of new technologies in interpretation** **services**

Remote simultaneous interpretation has been implemented for certain ITU meetings with remote participation. Cloud-based artificial intelligence (AI) interpretation solutions have also been tested and are being evaluated for quality and suitability for certain ITU meetings, noting that the quality of AI-based interpretation is not yet sufficient for use in official ITU meetings. The Interpretation Service continues to evaluate the feasibility of new modes of providing interpretation, identifying cost-effective solutions and the best possible quality of interpretation. A proposed strategy under development includes categorization of events and meetings with different interpretation needs.

**3.5 Terminology work in ITU**

The ITU Coordination Committee for Terminology (CCT) is continuing its work in harmonizing terminology and definitions within ITU, based on proposals submitted by ITU study groups in English. The revised workflow has improved efficiency and ensured that terms and definitions discussed during CCT meetings are translated by the General Secretariat and validated by CCT. All terms and definitions validated by CCT are included in the online ITU Terms and Definitions database. C&P also include these terms and definitions in UNTERM, where ITU is responsible for the ICTs and telecommunication domains. The CCT website has been made accessible via the General Secretariat page in addition to the CWG-LANG webpage in line with the decision taken at the CCT meeting in September 2023, and work is progressing on streamlining access to all documents from this site.

Terminology work is also undertaken by C&P on a regular basis in all six official languages to support the needs of the language sections; this work is reflected in UNTERM. A proposal inviting interested Member States to collaborate with C&P on terminology was submitted to and approved by CWG-LANG in its October 2023 session. Consequently, circular letter  [CL23/45](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-SG-CIR-0045/en) was issued, inviting all Member States to recommend suitable entities willing to collaborate with C&P on terminology.

**3.6 Harmonization of ITU websites in the six official languages, incorporating multilingualism into communications, knowledge exchange and social media**

As noted in information document CWG-LANG-14/4on the progress of website harmonization provided in response to a Member State request, the ITU Secretariat strategy is to make the ITU website more secure, searchable, multilingual, harmonized and user centric. The objectives are to secure business continuity, member- and user-friendliness and cost savings. The proposed steps from Q1/2024 to September 2026 include: 1) establishing project and web governance; 2) identifying the information architecture and taxonomy as well as cleaning up and archiving pages and content, where applicable; 3) executing front- and back-end development and creating pages. The project has the support of the ITU leadership, and the ITU Coordination Committee has agreed to proceed with the new website project.

The work on an ITU-wide website is to be considered in the context of the ITU Transformation Roadmap. The web project team will work with the transformation team on a data-informed information architecture, ITU-wide web governance and change management.

**4. Additional actions following revision of Resolution 154 (Rev. Bucharest, 2022)**

The General Secretariat and Bureaux are working to establish an ITU-wide mechanism to publish any contribution for an ITU event in its original language no later than three days after receipt. Member States are encouraged to make use of the conference proposals interface (CPI) and its guidelines to accelerate the publication of documents in the six languages of the Union and ensure compliance with official templates and accuracy of authoritative texts.

Efforts continue to ensure all ITU policy documents and other documents providing guidance on intellectual property rights in ITU are available in all six languages. The General Secretariat monitors the quality of interpretation and translation services, including implementing delegate surveys following major ITU conferences and events. Levels of satisfaction with translation and interpretation in all languages remain high.

The secretariat places great importance on achieving greener meetings. Service Order 22/07, on ITU paperless guidelines, has been revised to increase environmental sustainability, enhance efficiency, and reduce costs in ITU operations by conducting paperless conferences and meetings and minimize the printing and physical distribution of ITU publications.

A set of optimized templates has been developed to generate publications in accessible and platform-independent formats, including an application programming interface which will give access to HTML publications to increase content reach and availability. The secretariat continues to monitor the use of publications via statistics on the downloading and purchase of publications in different languages to inform future decisions on the use of machine translation.

The secretariat further notes the issues raised by delegates at CWG-LANG 2023, including provision of interpretation services, Member State interest in working with ITU-D on activities in non-official languages through the Regional Offices, and the importance of local languages in ensuring accessibility, meaningful connectivity, and inclusivity.

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**Table 1. Evolution of language-service budget and expenses (in 000 CHF), 2018-2022**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **2018** | **2019** | **2020** | **2021** | **2022** |
| Translation & associated-service budget | 13 468 | 14 488 | 13 048 | 12 999 | 16 189 |
| Actual translation & associated-service expenses | 12 098 | 13 223 | 12 252 | 12 541 | 14 706 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Interpretation budget | 2 435 | 3 457 | 1 408 | 1 392 | 2 910 |
| Actual interpretation expenses | 1 852 | 2 698 | 1 338 | 1 522 | 1 957 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Total language-service budget | 15 903 | 17 944 | 14 455 | 14 390 | 19 099 |
| Total actual language-service expenses | 13 950 | 15 922 | 13 589 | 14 063 | 16 663 |
| *Savings* | *1 953* | *2 023* | *866* | *328* | *2 436* |

**Figure 1. Evolution of language-service budget and expenses (in 000 CHF), 2018-2022**

**Table 2. Evolution of translation volumes per language (pages)[[1]](#footnote-1)[1], 2018-2022**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Language** | **Translation volumes/year (pages)** |
| **2018** | **2019** | **2020** | **2021** | **2022** |
| Arabic | 8 083 | 8 892 | 8 400 | 7 843 | 8 962 |
| Chinese | 8 732 | 9 030 | 8 818 | 7 717 | 9 240 |
| English | 1 611 | 2 044 | 1 827 | 1 608 | 1 339 |
| French | 8 586 | 10 173 | 8 811 | 8 531 | 9 800 |
| Russian | 8 050 | 8 706 | 8 463 | 7 501 | 8 202 |
| Spanish | 8 135 | 8 928 | 8 215 | 8 072 | 9 174 |
| **TOTAL** | 43 197 | 47 773 | 44 534 | 41 272 | 46 717 |

**Figure 2. Evolution of translation volumes per language (pages), 2018-2022**

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1. [1] One page equals 330 words. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)