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PHYSICAL OPEN CONSULTATION OF THE COUNCIL WORKING GROUP ON INTERNATIONAL INTERNET-RELATED PUBLIC POLICY ISSUES
(CWG-INTERNET)

Brief Summary of the Online Open Consultation and Physical Open Consultation
(November 2024 – January 2025)

# 1 Introduction

The 2016 Council instructed the CWG-Internet to produce a brief summary of the Open Online Consultation and Physical Open Consultation Meetings:

a) ITU secretariat should prepare a brief draft summary of the written contributions to the online open consultation and the discussions during the physical open consultation meeting,

b) Stakeholders present at the physical open consultation meeting should agree on the brief summary,

c) Submit brief summary, without edits, to the next CWG-Internet for inclusion as an Annex to the Chairman’s report.

d) CWG-Internet should consider and discuss the open consultation brief summary.

# 2 Online Open Consultation on "The role of public policy in promoting multilingualization of the Internet"

**2.1** An Online Open Consultation was conducted from November 2024 to February 2025 on the topic of "The role of public policy in promoting multilingualization of the Internet". During this consultation, 12 responses were received from a variety of stakeholders and regions. The responses provided rich inputs, sharing different views with regard to the two specific questions:

 *“*The role of public policy in promoting multilingualization of the Internet

 1 What could ITU and its members and other stakeholders do to ensure that the Internet becomes more multilingual in nature and thus accessible for more of the global population?

 2 What are the benefits and challenges of multilingualization of the Internet, including through universal acceptance of Internationalized Domain Names (IDNs), or the lack thereof, in terms of technical, economic, security, cultural and capacity-building?”

The meeting appreciated and thanked all stakeholders who responded to the online consultations.

**2.2** A compilation of the summaries received directly from the individual online submitters, including relevant comments made by participants during the meeting, can be found in the Annex of this document, as well as in the published compilation Document [OPCWGINT-12/2](https://www.itu.int/md/S25-OPCWGINT12-C-0002/en).

# 3 Open Consultation on “The role of public policy in promoting multilingualization of the Internet "

**3.1** The twelfth Physical Open Consultation, on the topic of “The role of public policy in promoting multilingualization of the Internet”, took place on 11 February 2025 with over 200 registered participants. The Vice Chair - European Region, Mr. Nigel Hickson, was Acting Chair on behalf of the Chair of CWG-Internet, Mr. Wojciech Berezowski, who joined the meeting remotely.

**3.2** Mr Seizo Onoe, Director, Telecommunication Standardization Bureau, opened the meeting and welcomed the participants. He thanked them for their continued support of the work of the CWG-Internet and highlighted the relevance of the topic of this consultation. In his opening remarks, Mr Onoe also highlighted the need for multistakeholder collaboration and continued commitment towards promotion of a multilingual Internet to make digital opportunities accessible for everyone.

**3.3** The Chair of CWG-Internet, Mr Wojciech Berezowski, thanked the Director for his presence and support for the meeting. He commended the valuable inputs received through the contributions submitted by diverse stakeholders and thanked the participants for contributing to the consultation. He invited the Acting Chair to conduct the meeting.

**3.4** The Acting Chair presented the Agenda and welcomed Ms. Pitinan Kooarmornpatana, Internationalized Domain Name Program Director, ICANN, Mr. Jaco du Toit, Chief, Universal Access to Information and Digital Inclusion Section, Communication and Information Sector, UNESCO and Dr. Rajesh Sharma, Technical Expert & Counsellor, Permanent Mission of India to UN, Geneva as special experts for a panel discussion on the topic of the open consultation. The multi-stakeholder panellists engaged in a robust discussion on the key policy opportunities and challenges relating to multilingualization of the Internet and also shared their perspectives on the role that stakeholders can play to ensure that the Internet becomes more multilingual in nature and thus accessible for more of the global population to promote multi-stakeholder participation on the subject*.*

**3.5** Participants thanked the panellists for participating in the meeting and contributing their expertise to the consultation. Some participants asked questions relating to the issue of addressing aboriginal languages in the context of multilingualization of the Internet, achieving universal acceptance with a user-centric focus, and the plans for ICANN’s upcoming Universal Acceptance Day. A participant also supported a panellist’s comments regarding reviewing existing ITU indices from the perspective of multilingualization and emerging technologies, as well as encouraging ITU members to consider how matters relating to multilingualization of the Internet could be placed on the agenda of the upcoming ITU World Telecommunication Development Conference 2025*.*

**3.6** After the panel discussion, compilation Document [OPCWGINT-12/2](https://www.itu.int/md/S25-OPCWGINT12-C-0002/en) was presented to the meeting and the Acting Chair invited various stakeholders to take the floor to present their submitted views.

# 4 Summary of discussions during the Physical Open Consultation

**4.1** Stakeholders present at the meeting agreed on the brief summary of the twelfth Virtual Meeting – Physical Open Consultation of CWG-Internet, as included below:

**4.2** Participants thanked the CWG-Internet for organizing this open consultation and for considering the contributions made to the consultation, while also commending the active participation of different stakeholders and the valuable inputs submitted to this open consultation.

**4.3** A participant commended contribution 3 for promoting universal acceptance and inclusion through the lens of policymaking for universal access and usage of the Internet, encouraging members of the CWG-Internet to consider the contribution. Another participant also expressed support for this contribution, commenting on the matter of technical solutions for Variants for IDNs and highlighting the IETF for this work as well as ongoing discussions on this topic*.*

**4.4** A participant expressed appreciation for contribution 6, emphasizing that it raises important issues, particularly from a regional perspective, where the majority of the population is young and facing challenges relating to the deployment and use of information and communication/emerging technologies, socio-economic development, unemployment and economic growth. The participant encouraged ITU to consider the issues raised in the contribution more deeply, particularly in the CWG-Internet.

**4.5** A participant expressed support for contribution 7, thanking the contributor for their work to build universal and meaningful connectivity, and highlighted the successes and challenges noted in the document, with particular emphasis on the importance of Member State collaboration and the key role of the technical community.

**4.6** The meeting invited CWG-Internet to have a substantive discussion on the outputs of the open consultation, and suggested that the Secretariat share the contributions and compilation Document [OPCWGINT-12/2](https://www.itu.int/md/S25-OPCWGINT12-C-0002/en) also with the relevant Study Groups and projects and programmes in the three ITU sectors and the General Secretariat.

# 5 Closing

**5.1** In closing, the Acting Chair of the meeting thanked all stakeholders who sent submissions and participated in the open consultation discussions, and encouraged the CWG-Internet to consider the received responses and the fruitful discussions of this meeting. He also expressed his thanks to the Elected Officials for their presence and support and the Secretariat and remote moderator for their efficient assistance during the meeting.

**5.2** The participants thanked the Acting Chair for his efficient management of the Physical Open Consultation. The participants also thanked the Secretariat for their effective organisation of the online consultation and of the physical open consultation and the remote moderator for the efficient support.

ANNEX

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|  | Date | Submitter(contributions hyperlinked) | Response |
| 1 | 5 January 2025 | [IGF DC Data Driven Health Technologies](https://www.itu.int/en/council/cwg-internet/Pages/display-Oct2024.aspx?ListItemID=5) | **Summary provided in the comment box:** it is critical that ehealth applications and for internet access thereof, to integrate multilingual capabilities, so as to reach All people's for that community's ehealth services. Telemedicine requires linguistic sophistication to be effective for All. Service operators must be able to transcend their services to all linguistic jurisdictions that they claim to service, in fairness for diversity and inclusion. UN SDG 3 for All. Main Section: When we speak of multilingual capacities we must also include accessibility for disabilities, diverse reading and typing skills and so forth. Accessibility must also be for those who only have speaking skills and who use braille. In time we may have "other" languages develop to assist with accessibility. These functionalities are Critical for healthcare service applications, such as telemedicine to reach All. Robotics will bring in other dimensions of exchange between human and machine and we must be open to these types of linguistic developments as well. High-level Domain Names could be represented by a universal character symbol, e.g. for healthcare, there exists, recognizable symbols . These symbols then have a meaning that is not specific to a word in a particular language. It is critical we overcome the linguistic barriers in all it's shapes and forms, first starting with comprehensive translation services, so that we can grow and build for the mandate of the UN SDGs through the GDC together. Specifically I reference SDG3 Health and Wellness for All. |
| 2 | 6 January 2025 | [UK Government (DSIT)](https://www.itu.int/en/council/cwg-internet/Pages/display-Oct2024.aspx?ListItemID=6) | **Text provided in the Comment box:**The UK’s contribution supports making the Internet more multilingual. A more multilingual Internet is shown to bring important benefits to existing and future users of the Internet. These benefits include motivating the unconnected to use the Internet, ensuring all users have meaningful access to the Internet, and increasing online safety. The contribution also recognises the universal acceptance (UA) of Internationalized Domain Names (IDNs) as necessary to achieving a more multilingual Internet. While delivering UA of IDNs is shown to face challenges, ranging from technical obstacles to improving public awareness, the contribution explains how such challenges can be addressed through a multistakerholder approach. The value of a multistakeholder approach to making the Internet more multilingual and accessible is demonstrated by noting the particular strengths and contributions of the International Telecommunications Union, its member states, and other stakeholders. The contribution reminds us how each stakeholder's strengths can be complementary and be used to overcome the different challenges in making the Internet more multilingual and accessible. |
| 3 | 13 January 2025 | [Internet Center - Communication, Space & Technology Commission](https://www.itu.int/en/council/cwg-internet/Pages/display-Oct2024.aspx?ListItemID=8) | **Text taken from the contribution (no summary provided):**1. What could ITU and its members and other stakeholders do to ensure that the Internet becomes more multilingual in nature and thus accessible for more of the global population?1. Extensive collaborative studies and efforts are needed to develop practical technical solutions by changing in DNS protocol to support domain variants for Internationalized Domain Names (IDNs), addressing the issue at the DNS level rather than relying on domain registries to implement solutions.2. Highlight the importance of involving leading technology companies to drive multilingual initiatives, particularly the adoption of Universal Acceptance criteria. 3. Provide support and promoting initiatives that encourage the creation of content in local languages and the development of services that support domains in these languages (e.g., email, hosting, etc.). 4. Activate funds and grants to support innovations and solutions that promote the adoption of local languages in Internet services 5. Respect and support the efforts of governments and communities to adopt their local languages, enhancing and strengthening their national identity2. What are the benefits and challenges of multilingualization of the Internet, including through universal acceptance of Internationalized Domain Names (IDNs), or the lack thereof, in terms of technical, economic, security, cultural and capacity-building?• Benefits:1. Improve Accessibility: IDNs allow users to access domain names in their native scripts(e.g., Arabic, Chinese, Devanagari), This eliminates language barriers, enabling billions ofnon-English speakers to access the Internet more easily.2. increased trust (if IDNs are well-implemented): IDNs in native languages can increaseuser trust in websites, as users may feel more comfortable navigating a domain in theirlocal script.3. cultural preservation.• Challenges:1. Internet applications, hosting platforms, mailing systems, and websites do not handleIDNs in the same way they handle ASCII domains.2. The user experience is suboptimal, making it very difficult for registrants to configureand manage IDNs3. The readability of IDNs, particularly for right-to-left scripts, is inadequate and can lead toconfusion for end users. |
| 4 | 13 January 2025 | [Ministry of Economic Affairs, The Netherlands](https://www.itu.int/en/council/cwg-internet/Pages/display-Oct2024.aspx?ListItemID=9) | **Text taken from the contribution (no summary provided):**The government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, as one of the stakeholders, appreciates the opportunity to respond to this important CWG Internet Consultation. Since the early days of the Internet, English has been the dominant language and most protocols and applications, including the domain name system (DNS), only supported the Latin script. While this is understandable from a historical perspective, the proliferation of the Internet as a universal technological network means that today two-thirds of the Internet users do not have English as their first language. Multilingualization of the Internet is therefore a necessity, allowing people to absorb information and use the Internet in their own language. As such, multilingualization, in our opinion, is a key enabler for meaningful connectivity.In the last two decades technology has (partially) responded to these needs and we are happy to see that all of the core systems and protocols that enable the Internet have been updated and no longer have a restriction to only use Latin script.Many technical barriers have been lifted and especially in the DNS, we observe a significant uptake in the use of Internationalized Domain Names (IDNs). The Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN), reports that 61 country-code Top Level Domains have been assigned that use non-Latin character sets. An integral part of website and email addresses, this means that in those countries, people no longer require the use of Latin domain names to access and communicate across the Internet.Yet, we observe that actual use of such non-Latin domain names remains low, even in cases where such domains are available under the same conditions and pricing as the equivalent Latin script ISO two letter code.In our opinion a key element to success is raising awareness and building human capacity towards deploying and using a multilingual DNS.ITU could play an important role in supporting members in capacity-building projects and encourage sharing of best practices among members. Specifically, the ITU-D sector could play an important role in the acceptance of IDNs and raising awareness through capacity building, sharing best practices and providing information on IDNs, in cooperation with other stakeholders.The already existing Universal Acceptance (UA) day, on 28 March, provides a great opportunity to raise global awareness of IDNs and draw attention to available capacity building resources. We encourage ITU, its members and all stakeholders to join UA day and participate in an event or organize one.By encouraging meaningful connectivity through multilingualism the internet becomes more accessible, open and inclusive for all of its users, contributing to our efforts to bridge the digital divides. According to WSIS Action Line C8, linguistic diversity is under threat due to the disproportional digital content related to culture, the imbalanced provision of cultural goods and services, and the digital divide of indigenous communities. The universal acceptance of IDNs contributes to linguistic diversity and encourages the use of languages outside of the Latin script. An important challenge for multilingualization is the awareness of IDNs among internet users. IDNs ‘look’ different than the Latin script and are therefore less trusted by users in terms of safety and security. By spreading more awareness of IDNs and encourage capacity building projects one can limit the impact of such presumed risks of IDNs.One of the key objectives of Universal Acceptance is to raise awareness amongst software makers and vendors to ensure technical standards are implemented fully and correctly. This should ensure that IDNs can be used and are represented correctly on all systems.Such awareness is also key to the success of the various programs developed or supported by ITUs development sector that aim to further the digitalization of public services, including DPI.Public procurement programs can be used to incentivize software vendors to include support for a multilingual internet, including support for IDNs. Providing a clear signal to the market, it would reduce the (presumed) risks associated with such investments. |
| 5 | 13 January 2025 | [ARTICLE 19](https://www.itu.int/en/council/cwg-internet/Pages/display-Oct2024.aspx?ListItemID=10) | **Text taken from the comment box:**ARTICLE 19 welcomes the efforts of the ITU to engage in a multistakeholder process by holding this open Open Consultation of the Council Working Group on Internet-Related Public Policy Issues (CWG-Internet) on the role of public policy in promoting multilingualization of the Internet. Multilingualization of the internet is a key element of the ITU’s work on meaningful connectivity and in achieving universal acceptance (UA), which both aid in achieving the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), and specifically SDG 9 “to build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation.” Additionally, as laid out in resolution 48 on “Internationalized (multilingual) domain names,” the ITU has a responsibility to (1.1) promote the universal acceptance of internationalized domain names (IDNs); (1.2) raise awareness of this work and support in engaging stakeholders; and (1.3) build the capacity of stakeholders. However, we emphasize that this work must be undertaken in close collaboration with standards-developing organizations specializing in the management of domain names - the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) - and in the development of technical protocols to ensure the security and stability of the internet’s architecture - the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF), respectively.As outlined in ITU-T resolution 48, intergovernmental organizations have had, and should continue to have, a facilitating role in the coordination of Internet-related public policy issues. We encourage the ITU to work collaboratively with intergovernmental and international organizations in their ongoing efforts to achieve this important goal. Our recommendations for ensuring that the internet becomes more multilingual in nature and thereby more accessible to the global population encompasses the following three categories of actions: (1.1) UA-readiness, (1.2) awareness-raising and (1.3) capacity-building. The benefits of achieving multilingualization of the internet include: serving as a means of achieving broader UN goals, protection of cultural heritage, enabling freedom of expression online, economic and social benefits, and facilitating access to information. However, this does come with its challenges, ranging from technical, institutional and capacity-building challenges.​ |
| 6 | 13 January 2025 | [Youth Internet Governance Forum Germany](https://www.itu.int/en/council/cwg-internet/Pages/display-Oct2024.aspx?ListItemID=11) | **Summary provided in the contribution:**The Youth Internet Governance Forum Germany advocates for a multilingual Internet to enhance accessibility, inclusion, and cultural preservation. Key actions include promoting Universal Acceptance (UA) of Internationalized Domain Names (IDNs), diversifying digital education, and leveraging AI responsibly. Multistakeholder collaboration, involving governments, businesses, and civil society, is essential to address challenges like low UA awareness and readiness. Youth and cultural heritage are key considerations, with forums like the Internet Governance Forum crucial for advancing these goals. |
| 7 | 13 January 2025 | [ICANN](https://www.itu.int/en/council/cwg-internet/Pages/display-Oct2024.aspx?ListItemID=12) | **Text provided in the comment box:** The Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) submission highlights some of the benefits of a multilingual Internet which include increased digital inclusivity, economic and social opportunities, and the proliferation of local culture. Some of the challenges include technological limitations and the need for updating legacy systems. The submission discusses the progress made through programs like the IDN ccTLD Fast Track Program and the new generic TLD (gTLD) program, which have enabled millions of domain names in various languages and scripts. It also outlines the roles of stakeholders, including governments and International Organizations, in promoting Universal Acceptance (UA) and the need for capacity building to support UA adoption. In summary the contribution emphasizes the importance of Internationalized Domain Names (IDNs) and Email Address Internationalization (EAI) to enable global language communities to navigate and communicate online using their local languages and scripts. |
| 8 | 13 January 2025 | [PolyTechnic College Suriname](https://www.itu.int/en/council/cwg-internet/Pages/display-Oct2024.aspx?ListItemID=13) | **Text provided in the comment box:** I would like to contribute my thoughts on how organizations can strengthen their resilience and sustainability in an era of rapid change. This contribution focuses on three critical areas 1. harnessing digital transformation to improve efficiency 2. embedding sustainability into organizational structures 3. fostering workforce agility through continuous learning and collaboration. Drawing from my experience, I outline practical strategies that decision-makers can implement to navigate challenges and achieve long-term success. In today’s fast-evolving global landscape, organizations face unprecedented challenges that require adaptability, foresight, and innovation. Digital transformation has emerged as a key enabler of operational efficiency and improved decision-making. Advanced technologies such as artificial intelligence, cloud computing, and data analytics offer powerful tools to streamline processes and optimize outcomes. However, successful digital transformation requires more than just adopting technology; it demands clear goals, robust data governance, and a culture that embraces change and innovation. Sustainability is another essential pillar of organizational success. As societal expectations and regulatory pressures grow, sustainability can no longer be viewed as an optional endeavor. Organizations must integrate sustainable practices into their core strategies, such as reducing carbon footprints, optimizing resource use, and adopting circular economic models. These efforts benefit not only the environment but also enhance brand reputation and long-term viability. Setting measurable sustainability goals aligned with global standards and transparently reporting progress are crucial steps in this journey. Equally important is the need to cultivate workforce agility. A skilled, adaptable, and engaged workforce is vital for navigating the complexities of today’s environment. Organizations must invest in upskilling their employees, fostering cross-functional collaboration, and encouraging a culture of continuous learning. Promoting diversity and inclusion further enriches the organizational perspective, enabling teams to address challenges creatively and collaboratively. To achieve these goals, collaboration across sectors is essential. Policymakers, business leaders, and individuals must work together to implement innovative solutions that address these interrelated challenges. By aligning efforts in digital transformation, sustainability, and workforce development, we can create organizations that are resilient, forward-thinking, and capable of contributing positively to society. I am grateful for the opportunity to participate in this consultation and to share these insights. I look forward to seeing how these discussions shape actionable strategies that will drive meaningful progress in our organizations and communities. |
| 9 | 13 January 2025 | [ISOC France](https://www.itu.int/en/council/cwg-internet/Pages/display-Oct2024.aspx?ListItemID=15) | **Text provided in the comment box:**First, ITU should encourage and greatly strengthen the cooperation between stakeholders, governments, civil society, the technical and academic communities and the private sector in favor of a more multilingual Internet. Internet Society France is engaged in the promotion of universal acceptance (UA) of Internationalized Domain Names (IDNs). We wish to highlight the importance of the internet user. |
| 10 | 13 January 2025 | [National Telecommunications and Information Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce](https://www.itu.int/en/council/cwg-internet/Pages/display-Oct2024.aspx?ListItemID=16) | **Text provided in the comment box:**On 17 December 2024, the governments of Egypt, India, the United Kingdom, and the United States co-organized an Internet Governance Forum (IGF) Open Forum session titled “Challenges & Opportunities for a Multilingual Internet.” The session included opening remarks from Jaisha Wray (NTIA, U.S. Department of Commerce) followed by case study presentations from the governments of India, Egypt, and the United Kingdom, which highlighted both successes and challenges governments face in spurring multilingualism on the Internet across differing geographic and linguistic landscapes. A robust audience Q&A and discussion portion followed. The event emphasized the role for governments in advancing multilingualism on the Internet and highlighted that multilingualism is a foundational requirement to achieve digital inclusion and meaningful connectivity. |
| 11 | 13 January 2025 | [Afnic](https://www.itu.int/en/council/cwg-internet/Pages/display-Oct2024.aspx?ListItemID=17) | **Text provided in the comment box:**AFNIC would like to thanks the ITU and the Council Working Group on International Internet-related Public Policy Issues (CWG-Internet) for the work done and for holding a public open consultation. 1. What could ITU and its members and other stakeholders do to ensure that the Internet becomes more multilingual in nature and thus accessible for more of the global population? In the last twenty years, since the WSIS, the digital transformation of society has been both extensive and increasingly ubiquitous. Building a people-centered, inclusive and development-oriented Information society as envision in the Geneva Declaration of Principles is still a global challenge to be met. To meet this challenge, it is essential to create a favourable environment and to foster a more multilingual and accessible Internet allowing for the meaningful participation and empowerment of both stakeholders and users alike. The use of the 6 official languages of the United Nations within the work of the ITU - interpretation, translation and the use of new and innovative tools - is very important to allow for inclusive and clear communication on key global challenges and issues with culturally and linguistically diverse member.AFNIC, as the French Internet Registry (ccTLD) and French Network information Center, is convinced that promoting multilingualism and a more multilingual internet requires, above all, better cooperation between stakeholders, in order to identify and share best practice and to identify political and technical bottlenecks. ITU, with 194 member states and over 1000 sector members, is a key place to discussing such challenges and share expertise. Improving cooperation with other stakeholders and the technical community, the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN), Standards Developing Organisations, first of which the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF), as well as regional and national organisations such as Country code top-level domain (ccTLD) and Regional Internet Registry is also essential to achieving concrete results and ensure non-ASCII scripts can be used to browse the Internet. Finally, the promotion of a more multilingual internet is a strong use case of a the much needed mutltistakeholder cooperation both at the local and global levels. 2. What are the benefits and challenges of multilingualization of the Internet, including through universal acceptance of Internationalized Domain Names (IDNs), or the lack thereof, in terms of technical, economic, security, cultural and capacity-building? Multilingualization of the Internet plays a key role in creating an enabling environment which is key to building trust in a renewed information society. Culture and linguistic diversity on the Internet help bridge the digital divide and facilite the participation of the widest audience in their own languages and scripts, as well as accessing content in their native language. Implementing Universal Acceptance and building a multilingual Internet requires concrete collaboration between stakeholders and both public policy and technical expertise. As French Internet Registry, AFNIC is engaged in the work of the IETF, ICANN, local and global IGFs, RIPE NCC and concretely working on Universal acceptance eg IDNA2008 (described in RFCs 5890, 5891, 5892, and 5893). Thus, AFNIC registry registration rules for .fr give a list of permitted characters used in French script. The naming charter is pursuant to the provisions of the French Post and Electronic Communications Code and the agreement concluded with the French State (see AFNIC naming policies here https://www.afnic.fr/en/observatory-and-resources/documents-to-consult-or-download/naming-policies/). Universal Acceptance can improve inclusion and accessibility by enabling people to use their script and language of choice when using the Internet. Il can also stimulate innovation and economic growth by allowing for the development of new online services and applications.  |
| 12 | 30 January 2025 | [Rwanda Utilities Regulatory Authority](https://www.itu.int/en/council/cwg-internet/Pages/display-Oct2024.aspx?ListItemID=18) | **Text provided in the comment box:**This document highlights the role of the ITU, its Member States, and Stakeholders in promoting the multilingualization of the Internet. The role of the ITU and its members is mostly related to policy advocacy and coordination, promotion of Internationalized Domain Names, Capacity Building and Training, Technical Standardization, public awareness campaigns, and public-private Partnerships. The document also highlights the benefits and challenges of the multilingualization of the Internet. There are benefits associated with the multilingualization of the Internet like improved accessibility, innovation, market expansion, job creation, security, localized interfaces, cultural preservation, diversity, and empowerment. There are also challenges, inter alia, compatibility issues, quality and accuracy of translations, standardization, high costs, limited return on Investment (ROI), phishing risks, digital divide, skill gap, and content creation. |
| 13 | 30 January 2025 | Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie | **Text taken from the contribution (no summary provided):****1. What could ITU and its members and other stakeholders do to ensure that the Internet becomes more multilingual in nature and thus accessible for more of the global population ?**Guaranteeing free expression, equitable access to knowledge and a genuine dialogue between cultures through mutual knowledge and access to a linguistic diversity of content on the Internet, multilingualism is increasingly becoming one of the pillars for the development of an inclusive digital society. Yet many languages are not sufficiently present in cyberspace due to the digital divide and the uniformizing vision of the Web giants. Citizens who don't have access to cyberspace, software tools and digital resources in their own languages risk becoming increasingly marginalized. This is why users' languages should not be an obstacle to accessing the multicultural heritage of humanity available in cyberspace.To promote multilingualism and access to diversified cultural expressions, it is therefore necessary to support the production, accessibility and discoverability in different languages of all national and local online content, respecting the diversitý of peoples and cultures.Multilingualism must be encouraged and defended in international digital policy negotiation and decision-making bodies. ITU could specifically contribute to the French-language training of French-speaking diplomats, experts and professionals involved in the development and implementation of digital policies, while promoting synergies between programs such as « PRIDA » (*Policy and Regulation Initiative for Digital Africa*) of ITU and « D-Clic » of OIF.ITU could also support greater mobilization and more active participation by Francophone players in international events and conferences in the fields such as digital transformation, Internet Governance, AI for Common Goods and reducing the Digital Divide. ITU could also organize or support international events and forums to raise awareness of the importance of a multilingual Internet and share best practices in this area.We also encourage the ITU to support the production of tools and the distribution in various languages (including French) of reference documentation produced by the ITU (guides, status reports, reports, statistical data, etc.). ITU could enhance its collaboration with organizations such as ICANN to promote the use of internationalized domain names (IDNs) and encourage the creation of top-level domains in different languages and writing systems. It is also important to encourage research and innovation in order to create advanced linguistic technologies by integrating and developing machine translation, multilingual speech recognition and natural language processing tools.ITU and its members and other stakeholders could also make a significant contribution to a multilingual Internet by providing technical and financial assistance to developing countries to develop Internet infrastructures and content in their local languages.**2. What are the benefits and challenges of multilingualization of the Internet, including through universal acceptance of Internationalized Domain Names (IDNs), or the lack thereof, in terms of technical, economic, security, cultural and capacity-building?**Multilingualization of the Internet, including through universal acceptance of Internationalized Domain Names (IDNs), offers significant benefits.OIF is convinced that the digital environment must be developed in a way that is inclusive, responsible, supportive, healthy, safe, promotes cultural and linguistic diversity, and puts people firmly at its center. Respecting cultural and linguistic diversity in the digital environment is crucial to achieving effective connectivity for young people, women, minorities and the underprivileged.Contrary to prevailing preconceptions that standards prevent diversity and crystallize the spirit of innovation, we believe, on the contrary, that standardization bodies can provide a means of expression for so-called “minority” languages and cultures.It is crucial to develop and promote the use of standards in different languages, particularly those that facilitate the discoverability of national and local content or any other key area.In terms of cultural, economic and technical benefits, for example, the following can be noted :* Preservation of cultural and linguistic diversity on the Internet.
* Strengthening users' cultural identity through domain names in their own language (Users can choose domain names that reflect their identity or language).
* Enhanced user experience and Improved web accessibility for non-English-speaking users. (Users can access content in their preferred or native languages, creating a more personalized and engaging experience).
* Universal Acceptance (UA) of IDNs can also unlock significant economic potential by enabling more people to fully participate in the digital economy
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