

Agenda item: PL 3.5

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Report by the Chairman of the Council Working Group on Languages

IMPLEMENTATION OF RESOLUTION 154 (REV. GUADALAJARA, 2010) ON USE OF THE SIX OFFICIAL LANGUAGES OF THE UNION ON AN EQUAL FOOTING

Summary

This document contains the final report to C-14 of the Council Working Group on Languages (CWG-LANG), pursuant to Resolution 154 (Rev. Guadalajara, 2010).

Action required

The Council is invited to **examine** the report, **adopt** the updated measures and principles for interpretation and translation and **endorse** the recommendations.

References

[Resolution 154 \(Rev. Guadalajara, 2010\)](#); [Council Resolution 1238](#)

1. Background

1.1 PP-14 adopted Res. 154 (Rev. Guadalajara, 2010), on use of the six ITU official languages on an equal footing, which mandated "*to continue the work of the Council Working Group on Languages, in order to monitor progress and report to the Council on the implementation of this resolution*".

1.2 Council-13 elected Mr Imad Hoballah (Lebanon) as Chairman of the group. At its meeting in November 2013, the group confirmed six Vice-Chairmen reflecting the six official languages.¹

1.3 Since PP-10, CWG-LANG has monitored progress on the basis of secretariat reports on the implementation of languages. In accordance with Res. 1238, it has operated mainly by correspondence and consultations with delegations "*representative of and reflecting the six official languages*".

¹ Arabic - Mr M. Boukadoum (Algeria); Chinese - Mr G. Cai (China); English - Mr P. Najarian (United States); French – Ms S. Dorer (France); Russian - Mr V. Minkin (Russian Federation) Spanish - Mr X. Bellmont (Spain)

1.4 To conclude its work and formulate concrete recommendations to C-14, CWG-LANG held two physical meetings, open to all Member States, on 8 November 2013 and on 5 March 2014. The documentation of those meetings can be found on the group's [webpage](#). The full meeting reports are contained in Documents [CWG-LANG/2/5](#) and [CWG-LANG/3/5](#).

2. Recommendations

i) Equality of languages and maximizing language use (*resolves 1*)

2.1 CWG-LANG noted the progress made on ensuring equality of treatment of the six official languages and expressed appreciation to the secretariat for its efforts. It proposes to C-14:

- *to note that very significant and highly commendable progress has been achieved towards use of the six official languages of the Union on an equal footing; and*
- *to recommend that the Union pursue its efforts with the aim of progressively moving towards full equality of treatment in the future.*

2.2 In order to maximize language use, CWG-LANG recognized the need for the secretariat to continue pursuing the relevant operational actions, as well as the need for effective planning and behaviours conducive to cost-effective use of resources and hence maximizing language use.

Accordingly, it proposes to C-14:

- *to further encourage efficient planning, scheduling, organization and time-management for ITU meetings, taking into account the specific constraints of interpretation services;*
- *to encourage timely – and indeed early – submission of contributions and inputs from the membership and the secretariat alike; and*
- *to encourage the Member States and Sector Members to ensure that the different language versions of documents and publications are utilized, downloaded and purchased by the corresponding language communities, for the sake of maximizing their benefit and cost-effectiveness.*

ii) Measures and principles for interpretation and translation (*instructs the Council 1*)

2.3 Detailed measures and principles for interpretation and translation in ITU were adopted by C-09 in [Doc. C09/33\(Rev.1\)](#). CWG-LANG has reviewed and updated them, and proposes to C-14:

- *to adopt the updated measures and principles for interpretation and translation in ITU in [Document C14/INF/4](#).*

iii) Review of ITU documentation and publication services (*instructs the Council 2, 1st subpara*)

2.4 CWG-LANG noted that the review of ITU documentation and publication services has been completed, and proposes to C-14:

- *to note with appreciation that the fundamental review of ITU documentation and publication services has been implemented; and*
- *to decide that structural review be henceforth considered as an ongoing operational objective.*

iv) Timely and simultaneous delivery of ITU documentation and publications (*instructs the Council 2, 2nd subpara*)

2.5 CWG-LANG, while recognizing that *timely and simultaneous distribution of documentation* constitutes a very difficult challenge, and noting with appreciation the significant progress reported by the secretariat in this area, emphasizes that timely and simultaneous delivery of documentation is an important factor for equality of treatment and efficiency of work, and should thus continue to be pursued as a key objective. Accordingly, CWG-LANG proposes to C-14:

- *to note the current situation and measures taken in regard to timely and simultaneous delivery of documentation;*

- *to confirm that timely and simultaneous delivery shall be considered as an important objective contributing to equality of treatment of languages, and should be tracked through appropriate statistics and indicators; and*
- *to call for further efforts in this regard, including on the part of the Member States, in submitting contributions on time, and on the part of the secretariat, in submitting its inputs and updates in good time, and in processing, translating and posting all input documents.*

v) Optimum levels of staffing (*instructs the Council 2, 3rd subpara*)

2.6 CWG-LANG, noting the information provided by the secretariat on the determination and implementation of an optimum mix of staffing (fixed, temporary and outsourcing), proposes to C-14:

- *to note with appreciation that close to optimum levels of staffing for the six languages on an equal footing have been implemented;*
- *to instruct the secretariat to pursue continuous review and improvement of the mix of staffing as part of its ongoing operational activity; and*
- *to recommend that increased outsourcing be pursued, where appropriate, and subject to maintaining the required high quality, recognizing that outsourcing suppliers should possess expertise and specific knowledge of the subject matter*, especially for technical texts.*

**Consideration may be given to using the expertise from the relevant study groups.*

vi) Judicious use of ICTs (*instructs the Council 2, 4th subpara*)

2.7 CWG-LANG, noting the information provided by the secretariat on the range of ICT tools for language services implemented, including the status of work on machine translation, and that ITU continues to keep up to date, notably through joint international/inter-agency bodies, proposes to C-14:

- *to note with appreciation the status of the use of ICTs in language and publications activities in ITU;*
- *to instruct the secretariat to continue to implement judicious and efficient use of ICTs, as an ongoing operational objective; and*
- *to recommend that the secretariat continue to explore the use of machine translation as a preliminary phase of the translation process, with post-editing by experts, including an assessment of its cost effectiveness.*

vii) Size and volume of documents (*instructs the Council 2, 5th subpara*)

2.8 CWG-LANG, stressing that shorter, more concise and focused documents are important elements for improving documentation and enhancing efficiency, including from the point of view of translation and multilingualism, proposes to C-14:

- *to note with appreciation the measures taken to reduce the size and volume of documents in ITU;*
- *to instruct the Sector advisory groups to review the types of material to be included in output documents and translated, and to continue to consider measures to reduce the cost and volume of documentation as a standing item, in particular for conferences and assemblies;*
- *to urge Member States and Sector Members and instruct the secretariat to continue to seek and implement appropriate measures, without sacrificing quality of service, to reduce the size and volume of documents; and*
- *to recommend that appropriate indicators on the size and volume of different types of documents be developed and tracked, in order to monitor progress and provide an incentive for ongoing improvements.*

viii) Terminology (*instructs the Council 3, 1st and 2nd subparas*)

2.9 CWG-LANG, noting that the Chinese and Russian terminology projects are completed and the terms entered in the database, whereas similar work in Arabic is still outstanding, proposes to C-14:

- *to note with appreciation the work done by the membership and the secretariat on terminology, and commend the successful implementation of the Chinese and Russian terminology projects; and*

- *to instruct the secretariat, with close participation and collaboration of the Member States concerned, to implement the Arabic terminology project foreseen by Council, using the funds already allocated for that purpose.*

2.10 For more effective integration of terminology work ITU-wide, CWG-LANG proposes to C-14:

- *to recommend that the work of CWG-LANG, the ITU-R Coordination Committee for Vocabulary (CCV) and the ITU-T Standardization Committee for Vocabulary (SCV) be coordinated, including through joint meetings of the three groups, as appropriate.*

ix) Editing (instructs the Council 3, 3rd subpara)

2.11 In the light of the secretariat's report on editing, CWG-LANG proposes to C-14:

- *to note that the centralization of editing has been implemented.*

x) Working procedures (instructs the Council 3, 4th subpara)

2.12 In the light of the secretariat's report on working procedures, CWG-LANG proposes to C-14:

- *to note with appreciation that the harmonization of working procedures in the six languages has been implemented; and*
- *to instruct the secretariat to ensure that the same working methods continue to be used for all six languages.*

xi) Image and public-information work (instructs the Council 3, 5th subpara)

2.13 Underlining the importance for ITU's image and outreach of public information material, and the website in particular, CWG-LANG welcomed the progress made on the website and in areas such as multilingual webcasting, multilingual participation, ITU News, press releases and promotional materials. Nevertheless, more work needs to be done towards greater multilingualism on the ITU website and rectifying technical language-related issues. Accordingly, CWG-LANG proposes to C-14:

- *to note with appreciation the progress made in the use of the six languages for public-information work in ITU;*
- *to decide that the issue of the use of six languages on the ITU website – in terms of both multilingual content, quality, design, harmonization and navigation within and between language pages – be addressed as a matter of priority in the light of the concerns expressed by the language representatives; and*
- *to request that the texts of vacancy notices be issued as far as possible, and where appropriate, in all six languages in order to enhance outreach, recruitment and equitable geographical distribution.*

3. Revision of Resolution 154

3.1 CWG-LANG considered proposals in regard to the revision of Resolution 154. A draft revision of Resolution 154 is provided in [Document C14/INF/10](#), in order to facilitate Member States' preparations for PP-14.

4. Conclusion of work for the current PP cycle

4.1 CWG-LANG expresses its appreciation to the Chairman for his excellent and efficient leadership, and to the secretariat for its untiring efforts in the languages domain and for the detailed and transparent data and information provided in its written and oral reports.

4.2 The Chairman thanks the Vice-Chairmen, the group as a whole and the secretariat for their constant commitment and support.
