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| **Council 2018Geneva, 17-27 April 2018** |  |
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| **Agenda item: PL 1.7** | **Document C18/12-E** |
| **8 February 2018** |
| **Original: English** |
| Chairman of the Council Working Group on the use of the six official languages of the Union (CWG-LANG) |
| REPORT BY THE COUNCIL WORKING GROUP ON LANGUAGES |

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| SummaryThis document contains the annual report of the Chairman of the Council Working Group on Languages (CWG-LANG), pursuant to Resolution 154 (Rev. Busan, 2014) and Council Resolution 1372.Action requiredThe Council is invited **to endorse** the report.\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_References[*Report by the Secretary-General*](https://www.itu.int/md/S18-RCLWCGLANG8-C-0002/en)*;* [*Resolution 154 (Rev. Busan, 2014)*](http://www.itu.int/pub/S-CONF-PLEN-2015)*;* [*Council Resolution 1372 (Rev. 2016*](https://www.itu.int/md/S16-CL-C-0126/en)*)* |

1. **Opening of the meeting and approval of the agenda (Document** [**CWG-LANG/8/1**](https://www.itu.int/md/S18-RCLWCGLANG8-C-0001/en)**)**

In the absence of its Chair, Mr Fayçal Bayouli, the meeting was chaired by the Vice-Chair for Arabic language, Ms Sameera Belal (Kuwait). She opened the meeting and, after welcoming delegates present and those who were participating remotely, gave the floor to the ITU Deputy Secretary-General, Mr Malcolm Johnson, who spoke on behalf of ITU Secretary-General, reiterating the importance of the Council Working Group on Languages (CWG-LANG) for the Union and its membership, and acknowledged the meeting’s agenda, with the submission of the Secretary-General’s report to the Council through CWG-LANG as well as the Report of the Group on study and evaluation of the translation procedures established as requested by Council-17.

1. **Report by the Secretary-General (Document** [**CWG-LANG/8/2**](https://www.itu.int/md/S18-RCLWCGLANG8-C-0002/en)**)**

2.1 Participants received detailed information related to the evolution of the budget for translation of documents into the six official languages of the Union since 2010, as well as the outcome of ITU’s participation on interinstitutional meetings (IAMLADP and JIAMCATT) as regards the procedures adopted by other international organizations inside and outside of the United Nations system and the benchmark studies on their costs of translation and interpretation.

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

2.3 CWG-LANG also expressed satisfaction at the efforts deployed in search of potential savings, efficiency and innovation in order to respond to PP Resolution 154 (Rev. Busan, 2014) and Council Resolution 1372. Therefore, CWG-LANG proposes that the Council:

* Encourage the secretariat to continue the search for improvements in order to respond to PP Resolution 154 (Rev. Busan, 2014) and Council Resolution 1372.
1. **Report of the Group on study and evaluation of the translation procedures
 (Document** [**CWG-LANG/8/3**](https://www.itu.int/md/S18-RCLWCGLANG8-C-0003/en)**)**

3.1 The Group proposed a categorization of documents for quality assessment, and informed on the criteria to be applied at the three stages of documentation process, i.e. project management, translation, and text processing. An update on UN organizations management of webpages, as well as on the guidance provided internally on management of events using interpretation services was provided.

3.2 The secretariat also updated members on the different pilot projects on remote interpretation, the use of external sources for translation, automatic translation (WIPO and a Latvian private company) and automatic captioning (a Chinese private company), as well as on the pilot project for the translation of webpages with the help of some administrations.

3.3 As for the latter, the secretariat very much appreciated the cooperation of Member States involved (Egypt, China, Russian Federation, and Argentina), and informed that, in order to make this methodology cost effective and timely, further effort is necessary to improve the quality of the translations so as to avoid the necessity of further processing by the ITU translation sections, and requested participants to recommend the Council to allow the secretariat to conduct a trial in which the responsible Member States would verify themselves whether the quality is sufficient and, if so, would post the translated webpages directly themselves on the ITU website.

3.4 Participants accepted the principle of a trial. However, concerns were expressed relating to direct publication by Member States.

3.5 CWG-LANG noted the significant progress made and expressed appreciation to the secretariat for its efforts. It proposes that the Council:

* Consider authorizing the secretariat to conduct a trial for the translation of webpages with the help of some administrations, in which the responsible Member States would verify themselves[[1]](#footnote-1) whether the quality of translation is sufficient and, if so, the translated webpages would be directly posted on the ITU website by the secretariat.
* In case these trials have a significant budgetary implication to the ITU, the budget requests for these trials should be indicated for Council’s approval.
1. **Contribution from the Russian Federation** **(Document** [**CWG-LANG/8/4**](https://www.itu.int/md/S18-RCLWCGLANG8-C-0004/en)**)**

4.1 The representative of the Russian Federation submitted a proposal for the revision of Resolution 154, in order to request a report on the implementation of the measures agreed to improve the ITU Web governance, review the structure of the website in order to expedite searches by users, and accelerate the web translation process, and to take into account Council Resolution 1386 on ITU Coordination Committee for Terminology (ITU CCT). The Russian Federation asked the other participants to provide inputs so as to submit a comprehensive text for the revision of Resolution 154.

4.2 CWG-LANG endorsed the request and proposes that the Council:

* Encourage Member States to review the text of Resolution 154 in order to update and streamline its content.
1. **Contribution from People’s Republic of China** **(Document** [**CWG-LANG/8/5**](https://www.itu.int/md/S18-RCLWCGLANG8-C-0005/en)**)**

5.1 The representative of the People’s Republic of China submitted a proposal on promoting the application of AI and other new technologies in the translation and conference services of ITU. It was suggested that the secretariat investigate the possibility that ICT development may make machine translation and machine captioning into reality, and take measures to encourage the application of AI in the translation and conference captioning services in six languages so as to promote the fulfilment of ITU's goal of reducing cost and improving efficiency.

5.2 The Deputy Secretary-General informed the meeting that a trial of AI technology for captioning would start soon.

5.3 CWG-LANG took note of the proposal and urged the secretariat to continue its efforts, in full transparency with the membership, to assess the value of machine-translation and automatic captioning in ITU translation and conference services.

1. **Other issues**

6.1 No other issues were raised by participants.

1. **Closure of the meeting**

7.1 The Deputy Secretary-General thanked the participants for their appreciation of the efforts made by the secretariat to improve the use of the six languages on an equal footing, and assured that more efforts will be deployed so as to render the report of the Secretary-General more informative.

7.2 The Chairman expressed her gratitude to the Chief of C&P and his team, and the ITU secretariat as a whole, for the excellent work accomplished and the support provided to herself and to the meeting, and especially thanked all the participants for their active and constructive participation.

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1. With oversight and assistance by the secretariat [↑](#footnote-ref-1)