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| **Council 2019 Geneva, 10-20 June 2019** |  |
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| **Agenda item: PL 1.6** | **Document C19/12-E** |
| **8 March 2019** |
| **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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| 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. 2016).  Action required  The Council is invited **to endorse** the report.  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  References  [*Report by the Secretary-General*](https://www.itu.int/md/meetingdoc.asp?lang=en&parent=S19-RCLCWGLANG9-C-0002)*;* [*Resolution 154 (Rev. Dubai, 2018)*](https://www.itu.int/en/council/Documents/basic-texts/RES-154-E.pdf)*;* [*Resolution 140 (Rev. Dubai, 2018)*](https://www.itu.int/en/council/Documents/basic-texts/RES-140-E.pdf)[*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/9/1**](https://www.itu.int/md/meetingdoc.asp?lang=en&parent=S19-RCLCWGLANG9-C-0001)**)**

The meeting was chaired by the Chair of the Council Working Group on Languages, Ms Monia Jaber Khalfallah (Tunisia). She opened the meeting and, after welcoming delegates present and those who were participating remotely, submitted the draft agenda for approval. The agenda was approved as submitted.

The chair then gave the floor to the ITU Secretary-General, Mr Houlin Zhao, who reiterated 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/9/2**](https://www.itu.int/md/meetingdoc.asp?lang=en&parent=S19-RCLCWGLANG9-C-0002)**)**

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. Translation volumes continue to reflect full equality of treatment of all six ITU official languages. Translation operations continue to show consistent savings, with actual disbursements revealing savings of as much as 14% for 2018.

2.2 CWG-LANG expressed various views with regards to 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. Some delegations questioned the value added of savings in the situation of too little progress achieved in the provision of basic translation services in all six official languages; others questioned the capacity of the ITU secretariat to introduce innovations such as internationally acclaimed neural machine translation services in order to speed up and improve the efficiency of translation services.

2.3 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. Dubai, 2018) and Council Resolution 1372.

2.4 The secretariat reported on the outcome of ITU’s participation on inter-institutional meetings (IAMLADP and JIAMCATT) as regards the procedures adopted by other international organizations inside and outside of the United Nations system. ITU follows and takes note of the procedures and IT tools adopted by other IOs and strives to do what it can to adapts its business model and procedures to the best practices resulting from such interaction

2.5 The secretariat also reported on the recent round of negotiations on the Agreement between the UN/CEB and the AIIC, which did not reach an agreement. Participants requested information as to the scope of the agreement being negotiated and its potential repercussion on ITU’s interpretation budget; the secretariat informed that, basically, the negotiations concerned remuneration rates and working conditions for interpreters, and that these negotiations were conducted at the level of the entire UN system. The CWG-LANG will be informed of budgetary consequences as soon as a final agreement is reached.

2.6 CWG-LANG took note of the information provided and shared various assessments of the capacity of the secretariat to improve the working methods and cost-effectiveness of conference services.

2.7 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 2 of the Report of the Secretary-General. Members received updated information on the different pilot projects conducted in 2018, i.e. remote interpretation, the use of external sources for translation, machine translation, and automatic captioning. The secretariat also reported on the pilot project for the translation of webpages with the help of some administrations; in this respect, the secretariat thanked the Member States involved (Argentina, Tunisia, Russian Federation, and China). Once the final assessment is performed, the secretariat will consider submission of a proposal to turn the pilot project into a regular project and to establish a proper workflow and budget. The Administration of Tunisia expressed its willingness to assist also for translation into Arabic.

2.8 Information was also provided as to new pilots being considered, and the secretariat requested the advice and proposals from Member States as to possible new pilots to be undertaken.

2.9 CWG-LANG took note of the information provided while some delegations questioned the clarity and transparency of the evaluation procedures of the pilot projects. One delegation invited the secretariat to develop a list of clear criteria and then to evaluate the incoming pilot projects against each other on the basis of the listed criteria, in an open competition that would ensure the best RoI.

2.10 CWG-LANG proposes that:

* A detailed plan for pilot projects related to alternative translation, interpretation and captioning procedures for the next two or four years be submitted to C19, including a calendar, relevant benchmarks and budgetary provisions required for its implementation).

2.11 The secretariat then reported on the use of languages on the ITU website, provided an update on the number of pages translated into the six official languages and informed that the ITU website was to move from SharePoint to a new corporate website platform. Participants expressed their disappointment as to the poor user-friendliness of the ITU website and the use of links that lead in all languages to English texts and the lack of a common web design for all ITU webpages, and the need to provide translation into the six official languages to the WSIS website, which presently is English only, maybe with the financial support of WSIS Stakeholders.

2.12 One participant specifically suggested to include in the mandate of the CWG on languages assistance as regards the review of possible approaches to financing and maintaining a WSIS Forum website, available, wholly or in part, in at least the six official languages of the United Nations, as indicated on Resolution 140 (Rev. Dubai, 2018).[[1]](#footnote-1)

2.13 Responding to these comments, the secretariat informed participants that a new internal group had been created for the design and launch of the new corporate website platform, and that the group was to address issues linked to common web design, user-friendliness of web content including translation of webpages, etc.

2.14 The Deputy Secretary-General assured participants that the issues raised at the CWG meeting would be duly forwarded to this group. As refers to the WSIS website, the secretariat informed that translation of WSIS Forum webpages into the six official languages had already started, and that coordination with other organizations and stakeholders as regards to translation of WSIS material was necessary.

2.15 CWG-LANG proposes that:

* Council 2019 revise the terms of reference of CWG-LANG (Council Resolution 1372) to include assistance as regards the review of possible approaches to financing and maintaining a WSIS Forum website, available in the six official languages of ITU.

2.16 Participants also discussed Annex 1 of the Report, dealing with ‘Areas of interest for the implementation of Resolution 154 (Rev. Dubai, 2018) over the period 2019-2022’. The Annex was endorsed, for submission in the Report of the Chair to C19, adding an item on the issue of translation of WSIS website and documents.

1. **Contribution from the Russian Federation – Proposals for modification of Resolution 1372 (Document CWG-LANG/9/3)**

3.1 The representative of the Russian Federation submitted a proposal for the revision of Council Resolution 1372 (Rev. 2016), in order to take into account Resolution 154 (Rev. Dubai, 2018) and Council Resolution 1386 (2017).

3.2 CWG-LANG proposes that:

* Council 2019 revise Resolution 1372, as reflected in Appendix II to the present document.

1. **Contribution from the Federative Republic of Brazil – Translation procedures in ITU** **(Document CWG-LANG/9/4)**

The representative of the Federative Republic of Brazil submitted a proposal linked to Annex 2 of Decision 5 (Rev. Dubai, 2018) and the importance of optimizing translation services in the ITU with regards to costs and quality of translation. The ITU secretariat should present detailed information on the measures the ITU has been adopting and will adopt in the coming future (i.e., a plan) to ensure the evolution and increase of efficiency of translation procedures in ITU, to support decision-making by the ITU Council on the issue.

1. **Any other business**

The representative of France reported on his contacts with IMO conference services, and welcomed the opportunity for a closer collaboration between IMO and ITU on terminology issues. He announced IMO had granted access to ITU terminology and translation services to their terminological database IMOTERM.

1. **Closure of the meeting**

The Chair thanked the participants for their valuable contributions and their support, to the Secretary General, the Deputy Secretary-General, the Chief of C&P and his team, and to the ITU secretariat as a whole, for their efforts to improve the RoI for the translation services as well as for the support provided to herself and to the meeting.

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appendix I

**Areas of interest for the implementation of Resolution 154 (Rev. Dubai, 2018)   
over the period 2019-2022**

According to the *instructs the Council* of Resolution 154 (Rev. Dubai, 2018), the Council is required to:

1. consider proposals for the adoption by ITU of alternative translation procedures (*instructs the Council* 1);
2. analyze the application of the updated measures and principles for interpretation and translation adopted by the Council at its 2014 session (*instructs the Council* 2);
3. pursue and monitor specific operational measures (*instructs the Council* 3);
4. to monitor the work carried out by the ITU secretariat in regard to providing the six language service units with the necessary qualified staff and tools to meet their requirements in each language, and enhancing ITU's image and the effectiveness of its public-information work, making use of all six languages of the Union (*instructs the Council* 4);
5. to maintain CWG-LANG, in order to monitor progress and report to the Council on the implementation of this Resolution, working in close collaboration with CCT and the Council Working Group on Financial and Human Resources (*instructs the Council* 5);
6. to review, in collaboration with the Sector advisory groups, the types of material to be included in output documents and translated (*instructs the Council* 6);
7. to continue to consider measures to reduce, without sacrificing quality, the cost and volume of documentation as a standing item, in particular for conferences and assemblies (*instructs the Council* 7);

Therefore, as regards implementation of Resolution 154, the areas of interest for the Council over the period 2019-2022 could be:

1. ***Review of ITU documentation and publication services*** with a view to eliminating any duplication and to creating synergies (*instructs* 3)

2. Explore and implement all possible measures ***to reduce the size and volume of documents*** (page-limits, executive summaries, material in annexes or hyperlinks), ***and achieve greener meetings***, when justified, without affecting the quality and content of the documents to be translated or to be published” (*instructs* *the Council* 3) (PP Decision **5**, Annex 2, item 8)

3. Implementation in ITU of the United Nations system ***objective of multilingualism*** (*instructs* *the Council* 3)

4. Necessary measures for ***equitable use of the six languages on the ITU website*** in terms of multilingual content and user-friendliness (*instructs* *the Council* 3)

5. Measures aimed at e***nhancing ITU's image and the effectiveness of its public-information work***, making use of all six languages of the Union (*instructs* *the Council* 4); in this context, to provide assistance in the conduct of a review of possible approaches i for ***financing and maintaining a WSIS Forum website, available in the six official languages*** of ITU, as per Resolution 140 (Rev. Dubai 2018), *requests the Council* 8.

6. Review, in collaboration with the Sector advisory groups, of the ***types of material to be included in output documents and translated*** (*instructs* *the Council* 6)

7. Possible ***measures to reduce, without sacrificing quality, the cost and volume of documentation*** as a standing item, in particular for conferences and assemblies (*instructs* *the Council* 7)

8. ***Statistics on use, download and purchase of the different language versions*** of ITU documents and publications (*invites Member States and Sector Members* 1).

9. ***Statistics on respect of deadlines for the submission of contributions*** ***that require translation*** to conferences, Assemblies and meetings of the Union (*invites Member States and Sector Members* 2).

APPENDIx II

Draft REVISION of RESOLUTION 1372 (C15, last amended C16)

RESOLUTION 1372 (C15, LAST AMENDED C19)

Council Working Group on Languages (CWG-LANG)

The Council,

recalling

*a)* Resolution 69/324, on multilingualism, adopted by the General Assembly on 11 September 2015;

*b)* Resolution 154 (Rev. Dubai, 2018) of the Plenipotentiary Conference, on use of the six official languages of the Union on an equal footing;

*c)* Decision 5 (Rev. Dubai, 2018), on revenue and expenses for the Union for the period 2020‑2023;

*d)* Resolution 1238, on use of six official and working languages of the Union, adopted by the Council in 2005;

*e)* Resolution 1386, on the joint ITU Coordination Committee for Terminology (ITU CCT), adopted by the Council in 2017,

considering

the Report of the ITU Council Working Group on Languages (CWG-LANG) submitted to and adopted by the 2018 session of the Council ([Document C18/12](http://www.itu.int/md/S15-CL-C-0012/en)),

recognizing

*a)* the work accomplished by CWG-LANG, as well as the work by the secretariat to implement the working group's recommendations as agreed by the Council at its 2009-2018 sessions, in particular with regard to the unification of linguistic databases for definitions and terminology and the centralization of editing functions as well as harmonizing and unifying working procedures in the six language services;

*b)* that the ITU website represents an essential tool for Member States, the media, non-governmental organizations, educational institutions and the general public,

recognizing further

the budget constraints facing the Union,

noting

*a)* that the advisory groups of the three Sectors of the Union have regularly reviewed recommendations on appropriate interim changes to working methods and practices in relation to the use of languages with a view to reducing language costs;

*b)* the work accomplished by the ITU CCT on the adoption and agreement of terms and definitions in the field of telecommunications/ICTs in all six official languages of the Union,

resolves

1 to continue the work of CWG-LANG, open to all Member States of the Union, in particular those representative of and reflecting one or more of the six official languages of the Union, and to conduct its work mainly by correspondence;

2 to approve the terms of reference provided in the Annex;

3 to instruct CWG-LANG to submit annual progress reports to the Council,

instructs the Secretary-General, in close coordination with the Directors of the Bureaux and with the advice of the Council Working Group on Languages

1 to implement all necessary measures in order to finalize the implementation of Resolution 154 (Rev. Dubai, 2018) within the financial limits of the Union as defined in its budget, while ensuring the required high quality of interpretation and translation;

2 as required by Resolution 154 (Rev. Dubai, 2018), to present annually to the Council and to CWG-LANG, a report on the implementation of Resolution 154 (Rev. Dubai, 2018);

3 to intensify work on harmonization of the ITU Sectors' websites in a manner to ensure use of the six official languages of the Union on an equal footing,

further instructs the Secretary-General and the Directors of the Bureaux

1 to provide all relevant information and assistance to CWG-LANG;

2 to continue to identify and implement the most efficient measures in order to facilitate the implementation of Resolution 154 (Rev. Dubai, 2018) within the financial limits of the Union;

3 to report to CWG-LANG on the measures taken to ensure on the ITU website i) the publication of new or modified pages in the six official languages simultaneously and ii) equality in terms of functionality and navigation.

**Annex:** 1

ANNEX

Council Working Group on Languages   
(CWG-LANG)

Terms of reference

1 to review proposals presented by the members of the Working Group and the General Secretariat, the Directors of the Bureaux and the Sector advisory groups on the annual report submitted by the Secretary-General according to the mandate of Resolution 154 (Rev. Dubai, 2018);

2 to evaluate the current ITU publications policy and procedures as far as the six official languages of the Union are concerned and to propose new cost-recovery and financing mechanisms in accordance with Resolution 66 (Rev. Guadalajara, 2010);

3 to evaluate the processes implemented by the General Secretariat and the Bureaux for the publication of new pages on the ITU website (as well as modifications to existing pages) and, as appropriate, to propose measures to ensure that the pages in question are made accessible to the public in the six official languages simultaneously and are equal in terms of functionality and navigation;

4 to develop recommendations for efficient and effective use of the six official languages of the Union on an equal footing including particular incentives for each linguistic group, based on practical experiences of the Sectors and the secretariat;

5 to analyse the adoption by ITU of alternative translation procedures, in order to reduce translation and typing expenses in the budget of the Union, while maintaining or improving the current quality of translation and the correct use of technical telecommunication terminology;

6 to analyse, including through the use of appropriate qualitative and quantitative indicators, application of the updated measures and principles for interpretation and translation adopted by the Council, taking into consideration the financial constraints, and bearing in mind the ultimate objective of full implementation of treatment of the six official languages on an equal footing;

7 to review results of implementation of operational measures from *instructs the Council* 3, Resolution 154 (Rev. Dubai, 2018), drawing special attention to equitable use of the six languages on the ITU website in terms of multilingual content;

8 to assist in the review of possible approaches to financing and maintaining a WSIS Forum website, available in the six official languages of ITU

9 to coordinate and cooperate with the ITU CCT and the Council Working Group on Financial and Human Resources to improve efficiency of work and to avoid duplication;

10 to monitor progress on the implementation of Resolution 154 (Rev. Dubai, 2018) and to prepare reports for consideration by the Member States and annual session of the Council and a final report for transmission to the next Plenipotentiary conference, as appropriate.

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1. Resolution 140 (Rev. Dubai 2018), *requests the Council* 8: “to examine, with the involvement of the other facilitators/moderators and stakeholders, possible approaches to financing and maintaining a WSIS Forum website, available, wholly or in part, in at least the six official languages of the United Nations (ensuring equal functionality), to invite the secretariat to report to the Council annually on the progress made in this examination and to present a final report to the next plenipotentiary conference”. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)