POLICY FRAMEWORK ON MULTILINGUALISM IN ITU

I. Introduction

Considering the paramount importance of multilingualism in the work of the United Nations, the UN Joint Inspection Unit, in its 2020 report on Multilingualism in the UN system (JIU/REP/2020/6), recommended that executive heads of the United Nations organizations prepare a strategic policy framework for multilingualism, accompanied by administrative and operational guidelines for its implementation, and submit this for adoption by the end of 2022.

The Council Working Group on Languages (CWG-Lang) endorsed this recommendation and in its report to Council 21 (Document [C21/12](#)) requested *"the secretariat to follow-up on JIU's recommendations on supporting the implementation of multilingualism in communications and knowledge-sharing, focusing on the multilingual content of the official websites and social media accounts globally."*

Council 2021 approved the CWG-Lang report by correspondence as part of the package of Council Working Group (CWG) reports.

II. Definition

For the purpose of this policy framework, multilingualism is defined as the ability of individuals and the capacity of organizations to communicate verbally and in writing in multiple languages[1].

III. Principles

a) ITU observes, respects and upholds the six UN languages in its work in furtherance of the promotion of linguistic diversity
b) Multilingualism is a means of improving the efficiency, performance and transparency of the Union.
c) Language competences contribute to the mobility, employability and personal development of ITU staff.
d) ITU takes all necessary measures to guarantee the use of the six official languages of the Union on an equal footing.
e) ITU must take measures for implementation of all resolutions, decisions and recommendations of its governing bodies establishing language arrangements.
f) ITU is responsible for integrating multilingualism in respect of the six official UN languages into its day-to-day activities on an equitable basis, to the extent possible within available resources.

IV. Goals and Objectives

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[1] Multilingualism in the United Nations system, [JIU/REP/2020/6](#)

Goals

1. The principal goal of an ITU policy framework on multilingualism is to ensure the effective implementation of multilingualism throughout all activities of the Union to the extent possible, raising awareness of the principles and importance of multilingualism throughout the Union.

2. Integrating multilingualism into the activities of the Secretariat will result in making conscious and deliberate language choices on the basis of an analysis of the applicable mandates, client needs and the resources available.

3. This framework should set out the necessary measures to be adopted and implemented by the Union, including the relevant guidelines to support the implementation of multilingualism throughout the Union as part of the "One ITU" approach, including the One ITU website, within existing resources and on an equitable basis (including in formats accessible to persons with disabilities and specific needs).

4. Through these guidelines and measures, the framework on multilingualism should contribute to the growth and sustainability of the actions of the Union.

Objectives

1. To accommodate the language needs of ITU's international constituents, within the available financial resources, to ensure an adequate dissemination of their work, policies and regulations at the regional and global levels.

2. To outline the responsibilities of the various stakeholders, including the ITU Focal Point for multilingualism, the network of Sector focal points, the Web Editorial Board, ITU leadership, senior managers, and ITU staff at large.

3. To raise awareness between the secretariat and Member States on multilingualism-related matters and ensure continuous dialogue between these stakeholders.

4. To ensure that the relevant global content created by ITU, including websites, videos and publications, are in line with the multilingualism requirements in force.

5. To work towards expanding the use of languages on the ITU Website in order to reach more local audiences, noting that this may be critical in times of emergency.

6. To strengthen collaboration on multilingualism-related matters within the UN Common System in order to build knowledge about best practices and lessons learned in relation to the implementation of multilingualism.

7. To enhance intersectoral collaboration on accessibility and digital accessibility issues with respect to multilingualism by leveraging internal knowledge and expertise.

8. To ensure that multilingualism is reflected in ITU policies.

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