



ASSEMBLY — 38TH SESSION

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Agenda Item 24: Increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of ICAO

MULTILINGUALISM AS ONE OF THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES TO ACHIEVE GOALS OF ICAO AS THE SPECIALIZED UN AGENCY

(Presented by the Russian Federation)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document draws attention of the Assembly to the fact that in spite of the decisions adopted by the ICAO Assemblies and secured by its Resolutions A22-29, A24-21, A37-25, the language services at ICAO are still the matter of a deep concern of ICAO's Member States. This is determined by the steady reduction tendency of quality and volume of language services at ICAO.

Under the slogan of budget expenditures reduction, an extrusion of non-English-speaking countries and experts from the development process of ICAO Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPS) is taking place. This constitutes a deviation from the fundamental principles of the Convention on International Civil Aviation, which provides for the equality of opportunities, as well as a deviation from the United Nations multilingualism principle, which is one of the fundamental principles to achieve goals of ICAO as the specialized UN agency in the field of civil aviation.

Action: Proposed actions by the Assembly are in paragraph 5

<i>Strategic Objectives:</i>	This working paper relates to all Strategic Objectives.
<i>Financial implications:</i>	More efficient use of the ICAO Regular budget funding allocated to the language services, and improving its quality to the level enabling Contracting States to use the ICAO publications in all ICAO working languages.
<i>References:</i>	UN General Assembly Resolution A/RES/65/311 “ <i>Multilingualism</i> ” Doc 9958, <i>Assembly Resolutions in Force</i> (as of October 8, 2010) A37-WP/237, <i>ICAO policy on language services</i> C-WP/13897, <i>Report of the Working Group on Governance and Efficiency (WGGE) Subgroup on Language Services</i> Doc 7231/11, <i>ICAO Publication Regulations</i> Doc 7515/13, <i>The ICAO Financial Regulations</i>

¹ English and Russian versions provided by the Russian Federation.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. The Working Subgroup on language services of the Council's WGGE has been created in accordance with the Council decision, adopted in the course of its first meeting of 196 session on June 11, 2012.

1.2. The Subgroup have done a comprehensive study of existing deficiencies in the field of language services in ICAO and elaborated constructive recommendations on redistribution of available ICAO resources in order to provide acceptable quality and integrity of language services for critically important activities aimed to the fulfillment of mandate determined by the Chicago Convention.

1.3. The Subgroup came to agreement on a possibility to reduce in-house language services for the routine activities of the Council, its Committees and Working Groups for the sake of using the saved resources to improve quality and timeliness of translation of ICAO SARPS and guiding materials, which are essential for ICAO Member States to handle successfully challenges in the fields of flight safety and aviation security. The Subgroup paid special attention to the necessity of language services for ICAO's international meetings and onsite training events, as well as ICAO's panel meetings.

2. THE FURTHER REDUCTION OF LINGUISTIC STAFF IN ICAO DURING TRIENNIUM OF 2014-2016

2.1. The use of an automated translation and, even more, the use of an automated interpretation seems fair to many as a desirable goal, which can provide budget and workforce savings. Meanwhile, the quality side of this process, which is a matter of a deep concern, is ignored intentionally or unintentionally. It is obvious, that in foreseeable future an appropriate quality of translation can be provided only by the highly qualified professional staff proficient in the terminology used in the fields, related to the civil aviation activities.

2.2. However, the practice of further reduction of linguistic professional staff is going on. At the same time, the percentage of outsourced works is constantly rising and presently has reached the level of 42% – record-breaking level among UN specialized agencies. Along with that, the restricted documents, which are subject of limited distribution, are being sent for translation outside ICAO. For example, 70% of ICAO's training materials, **45% of Security Audit Reports** and 60% of Safety Audit Reports **are being sent to the external translators.**

2.3. In the External Audit Report for Year 2012 (C-WP/14031) the External Auditor expressed a concern with regard to the quality of linguistic services (paragraph 6.2.3 of the Report) and made a series of Findings and Recommendations, part of which have not been implemented yet. In particular, it was noted "...the absence of a formal roster of the competence of external translators".

2.4. Nevertheless, a additional reduction of 6 interpreter's positions is going to be introduced by the "Draft budget of the organization for 2014, 2015 and 2016" (Exhibit 1 to 3, A38-WP/57). It should be noted that the cost of the previous 37th Assembly session was raised up to 46% from 731,000.00 to 1,068,000.00 US Dollars due to the reduction of the in-house linguistic staff and due to hiring freelancers whose services are more expensive (C-WP/13418).

3. OUTREACH POLICY OF ICAO AND REDUCTION OF LINGUISTIC SERVICES

3.1. At the present time a number of international symposiums and regional seminars, ICAO panel meetings has not been provided by linguistic services. The Global Aviation Safety Plan has been presented for consideration of the ICAO's Twelfth Air Navigation Conference in English only. The recent Safety Workshop for Directors General of Civil Aviation was held in English only, as well as the ad hoc meeting of the Aviation Security Panel.

3.2. Under the classification adopted by the ICAO Secretariat, meetings of category IV (international seminars and symposiums) in the following triennium will be provided by the linguistic services only “on the cost recovery basis”.

3.3. By the decision of the Secretary General *ICAO Journal*, which has been always issued in the all working languages of ICAO since the first publication in August 1945, **is issuing in English only**, starting from January 2013.

4. CONCLUSIONS

4.1. The previous 37th Session of the Assembly unanimously adopted the Resolution A37-25 "ICAO ICAO Policy on the language services", where it is particularly emphasized that "...multilingualism is one of the fundamental principles to achieve the objectives of ICAO, as a specialized agency of the United Nations ...".

4.2. Under the slogan of of budget expenditures reduction the extrusion of non-English-speaking countries and experts from the development process of the ICAO Standards and Recommended Practices is taking place, which is a deviation from the fundamental principles of the Chicago Convention, which recognized the principle of equality of opportunities.

5. THE ACTIONS OF THE ASSEMBLY

5.1. The Assembly is invited to:

- a) *reaffirm* that multilingualism is one of the fundamental principles to achieve goals of ICAO as a specialized UN agency (resolving clause 1 of the Resolution A37-25);
- b) *recognize* that language services are an integral part of any ICAO programme (resolving clause 3 of the Resolution A37-25);
- c) *request* the Secretary General of ICAO to conduct a planned policy in order to strengthen ICAO's linguistic core staff, including strengthening of the Editorial Unit as an integral element of the Quality Management System in the Language and Publication Branch of ICAO;
- d) *request* the Secretary General of ICAO to revise the criteria and selection procedures of linguistic professionals in order to attract to work in ICAO most qualified staff in the fields related to civil aviation activities;
- e) *request* the Secretary General to place on the ICAO's secure website “the formal roster of the competence of external translators”, which will be accessible to the members of the Human Resources Committee of the ICAO Council;
- f) *request* the Secretary General of ICAO, in accordance with the best UN practices, to undertake in peak periods necessary actions for the partial replacement of outsourced translation by the recruitment of translators on the basis of fixed-term contracts;
- g) *request* the Secretary General of ICAO to conduct a targeted policy in order to reduce the percentage of outsourced translation down to the level comparable with the average level among the specialized UN agencies;
- h) *request* the Council of ICAO to revise and approve prioritization procedures for the publications and documentation of the Organization in cases where it is not possible to comply with the provision of simultaneous distribution in all the working languages of ICAO (resolving clause 1 of the Resolution A24-21);
- i) *request* the Council of ICAO to implement ongoing monitoring of implementation of ICAO Assembly Resolutions.