



WORKING PAPER

ASSEMBLY — 38TH SESSION

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Agenda Item 24 Increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of ICAO

PRESERVING MULTILINGUALISM AT ICAO

(Presented by France and Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Canada,
Egypt, Libya, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A requisite to the well functioning of an efficient multilateralism is the use of several languages on an equal footing and hence the respect of multilingualism. Often, constraints of various nature (budgetary, time, etc.) are pretext to impose one language only in the conduct of the work of the organisation, to the detriment of the efficiency and universal principles of the organisation.

In connection with the preparation of the triennium 2014-2016, the Council of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) has worked on this subject and taken measures aimed at optimising linguistic services in terms of quality as well as productivity. These measures can only move in the direction of an efficient multilingualism within ICAO; in being so, they cannot constitute the sole response by the organisation to this major stake.

This paper underlines the necessity to make sure that each measures decided by the Council is put in place, in particular by the Secretary General and, beyond, to implement a set of practices necessary to the preservation of multilingualism.

Action: The Assembly is invited to:

- a) Reaffirm the need to preserve multilingualism within the works of ICAO;
- b) Support the Council in its general approach searching for efficiency and expenditure control, including in linguistic activity;
- c) Approve measures decided by the Council during its 198th Session aimed at optimising quality and productivity of linguistic services;
- d) Instruct the Council to arrange implementation by the Secretariat, in the day to day execution of works of the Organization, complementary practices described in section 3, in particular, those described under the headings “human resources policy” and communication and external information practice”.

<i>Strategic Objectives:</i>	This working paper relates to all Strategic Objectives.
<i>Financial implications:</i>	*No additional resources required.
<i>References:</i>	

¹ Arab, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish versions provided by France.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 An efficient multilateralism and its well functioning are conditioned, inter alia, by the use of several languages on an equal footing and hence the respect of multilingualism.

1.2 Often, constraints of various nature (budgetary, time, etc.) are invoked to avoid this requirement, to the detriment of the efficiency and universal principles of the organisation. In connection with the preparation of the triennium 2014-2016, the Council of the International Civil Aviation organisation (ICAO) has worked on this subject and decided upon measures aimed at optimising linguistic services in terms of quality as well as productivity. However, these measures can only yield expected gains if they are implemented by the Secretary General through management and organisational reforms. Besides, these measures cannot constitute the sole response by the organisation to this major stake and should be appreciated as being a first step in a policy that promotes and implement multilingualism within ICAO.

1.3 In view of benefits brought about by the multilingualism to the well functioning of an efficient multilateralism (cf. section 2), this paper underlines the necessity to make sure that each measures decided by the Council is put in place, in particular by the Secretary General. It takes the opportunity to recall a set of practices useful to the preservation of multilingualism.

2. THE BENEFITS OF MULTILINGUALISM

2.1 Multilingualism offers a certain number of advantages. In the first place, it allows the promotion of linguistic diversity and the facilitation of the dialogue among partners, allowing them to exchange, by valuing it, their respective expertise. Knowledge and know-how can so be disseminated widely beyond national horizons. By this fact, multilingualism contributes significantly to the efficiency of multilateralism.

2.2 The specific contribution to the latter from multilingualism is the increase in the understanding, by contributors, of multilateral works undertaken and of prospects for adoption of their results, by appropriate fora. Multilingualism is also useful to the national transposition and implementation of results in question, whether they be in the form of high level legal instruments, regulations or standards. As such, it contributes to the principles to which international organisations work, for example, that of harmonisation.

2.3 Multilingualism warrants to professionals of the air transport sector and more widely to citizens access to information and gives them the means of a real appropriation of activities of the organisation. The usage of all official and working languages of the organisation, in compliance with the mandate, shall allow improvements to the quality of communications to the public and guarantee transparency and liability which citizens have the right to expect from international organisations.

2.4 It is therefore necessary to preserve multilingualism in international organisations, especially when an increase is observed in all such organisations of the growingly frequent use of a particular language in dispensation of statutes which stipulate, for most organisations, several official and working languages.

2.5 In keeping with measures decided by the Council, and taking into account budgetary constraints of the organisation, this paper aims at inviting the Assembly as well as the Council to make sure that practices, detailed in section 3, are implemented in order to preserve multilingualism as a response to the concerns of efficiency and effectiveness of the organisation and all parties (Secretariat and organs) implementing its work programme.

3. **MULTILINGUALISM PRESERVATION PRACTICES**

3.1 At the outset, it is useful to recall that multilingualism is one of the means for international organisations to fill their objective, this observation applying to ICAO. The linguistic activity must come within the scope of the overall approach for searching efficiency and expenditure control. It cannot be singled out, optimisation of available means and identification of productivity gains not being incompatible with the preservation of multilingualism. It is the responsibility of ICAO to find solutions that will not generate additional costs.

3.2 Concerning practices to be implemented, they are grouped below according to a certain number of headings:

- a) Functioning mode;
- b) Human resources policy; and
- c) Communications and external information practices.

3.3 In doing so, it should be underlined that practices identified below should neither be perceived as a list of requirements nor as specific initiatives. Instead, it is to recall that it is advisable to:

- a) Make sure that each practice should be put in place in the set of rules and procedures governing ICAO;
- b) Take action at the level of rules of procedures, recruitment regulations, training, production of documents, etc.

- Functioning mode

3.4 The functioning mode is an essential element for the efficiency and effectiveness of the organisation. It is recommended to support the decisions taken by the Council during its 198th session aiming at optimising linguistic services. Amongst them, the following ones seem of particular significance:

- a) No interpretation for briefings of the Commission except when the speaker is unable to provide the briefing in English, in which case interpretation services into English would be made available;
- b) No translation of Council working papers not tabled in Council;
- c) Decide the language services to be provided for meetings when the programme of meetings is approved

3.5 A right implementation of measures decided by the Council, would allow to comply better to certain requirements about translation and interpretation and, in particular, to make sure of equal treatment among official languages with regard to translation of documents and interpretation in meetings concerning significant aspects for the works of ICAO. Examples would be the translations of SARPs and PANS, meetings where significant policies are framed. Other measures would consist in:

- a) Making sure that the provision of necessary means concerning translation and interpretation services comes along with the setting up of new institutional bodies; and
- b) Considering possibilities which could be offered by technological development concerning machine translation.

- Human resources policy

3.6 In the field of human resources, the following practices should guide the organisation in its policy and day to day management:

- a) Include the effective command of at least two working languages (in particular for managerial positions and director posts) among the requirements for the recruitment of staff by the organisation;

- b) Offer language training to the personnel and ensure that career development and field assignments take into account linguistic capacity of the staff;
- c) Make sure that mechanisms are implemented for the planning of the replacement of interpreters and translators.

- *Communications and external information practices*

3.7 In order to promote widely, in particular towards the profession and other stakeholders, the works undertaken by the organisation and resulting outcomes, the following practices should be recommended:

- a) Availability, in equal part, in the various ICAO official languages, of the intranet as well as extranet websites and social networks;
- b) Accessibility, as far as possible, of ICAO information and field training tools in the official(s) language(s) of the recipient country;
- c) Consideration by the Secretariat of the public targeted by a document or a communication when choosing the language for initial presentation of the text in question.

4. **CONCLUSION**

4.1 The Assembly is invited to:

- a) Reaffirm the need to preserve multilingualism within the works of ICAO;
- b) Support the Council in its general approach searching for efficiency and expenditure control, including in linguistic activity;
- c) Approve measures decided by the council during its 198th session aimed at optimising quality and productivity of linguistic services;
- d) Instruct the Council to arrange implementation by the secretariat, in the day to day execution of works of the organisation, complementary practices described in section 3, in particular, those described under the headings ‘human resources policy’ and communication and external information practice”.