



A39-WP/524
P/53
4/10/16

ASSEMBLY — 39TH SESSION

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ON AGENDA ITEM 26

(Presented by the Chairman of the Executive Committee)

The attached report on Agenda Item 26 has been approved by the Executive Committee.

Note.— After removal of this covering sheet, this paper should be inserted in the appropriate place in the report folder.

(3 pages)

Agenda Item 26: Multilingualism at ICAO

26.1 At its eighth meeting, the Executive Committee considered three working papers (A39-WP/43, 355, 357) under the agenda item “*Multilingualism at ICAO*”.

26.2 A39-WP/43 contained the report of the Council outlining the measures implemented to promote multilingualism in ICAO through parity and quality of services, optimization of available resources, adherence to UN best practices related to language services and through the development and use of enhanced technical tools.

26.3 This report also presented the current situation in the delivery of language services and the significant reduction in funding for language services since 2008. Despite budget cuts, the Secretariat has been able to ensure parity of language services and to maintain and even enhance the volume and the quality of translation, interpretation, and publications services. Notwithstanding the efficiencies achieved, the level of budgeted resources has had an impact on ICAO’s ability to promulgate timely information in all the languages and the provision of full interpretation services for certain meeting categories.

26.4 The Committee noted that the draft budget proposal for the 2017-2019 triennium as presented in A39-WP/46 provides the same funding level for language services as for the present triennium; and that the Organization will implement measures to manage demand to achieve efficiencies through business reengineering, enhanced planning, increased accountability, a transformation of the end-to-end process from document production through final dissemination.

26.5 WP/355, presented by Colombia on behalf of the 22 Member States of the Latin American Civil Aviation Commission, highlighted the need for documentation that supports safety and other important areas of work of the Organization to be available in all official languages. The paper recommended that new methods and procedures, including incorporating support from the ICAO Regional Offices, be explored to enhance efficiency and ensure that the Organization can continue to provide quality services to its Member States.

26.6 WP/357, presented by the Russian Federation, reported that language services within ICAO were being reduced to the detriment of non-English speaking countries and requested that the Assembly be invited to take a number of steps, as outlined in paragraph 5 of WP/357, aimed at reinforcing Assembly resolutions already in force on this matter, including the importance of multilingualism as key to ICAO work and requirements with a view to ensuring fair access to and full participation in all of the Organization’s legislative bodies in keeping with Article 37 of the Chicago Convention, which underscores the uniformity of aviation standards and procedures.

26.7 Several Member States took the floor to support multilingualism as a fundamental principle to achieve ICAO goals. Some highlighted the need for availability of documentation on both a timely basis and concurrently in all ICAO working languages, mainly but not exclusively those related to the implementation of SARPS and PANS and to safety and security measures. It was also noted that multilingualism should not just be considered as an expenditure, but also as an investment into the development of a safe and secure global civil aviation environment. Other Member States discussed the budgetary impact of ensuring that manuals related to the implementation of standards were available on a

timely basis in all ICAO working languages, and requested that the level of outsourcing be further reassessed taking into consideration the best practices of other similar UN organizations.

26.8 The Committee recognized that language services are an integral part of every ICAO programme, that they are essential to all Strategic Objectives of the Organization and to the global implementation of SARPs and PANS, and that they are a key requirement of the No Country Left Behind (NCLB) initiative. It also acknowledged the support provided by Argentina, China and Saudi Arabia for the translation of the ICAO websites into the Spanish, Chinese and Arabic languages, respectively.

26.9 Having considered A39-WP/43, 355 and 357, and in light of the discussions, the Committee recommended that the Assembly:

- 1) Request the Council to closely monitor the implementation of the policies and decisions it has adopted to enhance efficiency and effectiveness on language service matters, recognizing multilingualism as a fundamental principle to achieve ICAO goals; and
- 2) Request the Council to further analyse and reassess the resources required to ensure that ICAO documentation related to the implementation of standards is available on a timely basis in all ICAO working languages, and to further review the level of outsourcing required for these objectives, whilst taking into consideration the best practice of other similar UN organizations.

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