



WORKING PAPER

ASSEMBLY — 40TH SESSION

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Agenda Item 18: Multilingualism at ICAO

ICAO POLICY ON LANGUAGES SERVICES

(Presented by Paraguay supported by the Member States of the Latin American Civil Aviation Commission (LACAC)² and by the Community of Civil Aviation Authorities of Portuguese-Speaking Countries³ (CAACL⁴))

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The present working paper focuses on the importance of multilingualism because of its transversality to all the activities carried out by ICAO. In this regard, the availability of publications and documents that are available in all the official languages of the Organization is essential because of the language barrier's repercussions, hindering access to information and acquiring knowledge.

This is fundamental considering the vision, mission as well as the strategic objectives and global plans of ICAO, which have been reflected in several Resolutions of the Assembly. The commitment to multilingualism is not the exclusive responsibility of the Member States and is a fundamental objective of the Organization to have elements that give a dynamic response to the needs of translation and interpretation.

Action: The Assembly is invited to:

- a) support multilingualism in all ICAO documents, publications and work;
- b) review budget allocations and mechanisms that increase efficiency to ensure that ICAO can continue to provide effective services to all its Member States;
- c) continue to implement decisively the actions formulated in Resolutions A24-21, A37-25, A39-22 and A39-23 of the Assembly and follow up on the activities aimed at their fulfilment; and
- d) evaluate and analyse other considerations in this regard that are considered necessary.

<i>Strategic Objectives:</i>	This working paper relates to all the Strategic Objectives and all Supporting implementation strategies.
<i>Financial implications:</i>	N/A
<i>References:</i>	<i>Convention on International Civil Aviation – Doc 7300</i> <i>ICAO Publications Regulations – Doc. 7231</i> <i>A38-WP/403; A39-WP/46</i> <i>Assembly Resolutions in Force (as of October 6, 2016) – Doc 10075: Resolution A37-25 ICAO Policy on Language Services</i> <i>United Nations A/RES/69/250</i>

¹ English and Spanish versions provided by Paraguay

² Aruba, Belize, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Equator, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)

³ Angola, Brazil, Cape Verde, Bissau Guinea, Equatorial Guinea, Mozambique, Portugal, Saint Tomé and Prince and East Timor.

⁴ Comunidade das Autoridades de Aviação Civil Lusófonas (CAACL)

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 ICAO is one of the oldest organizations in the United Nations system and the International Civil Aviation Convention remains a valuable instrument since 1944. In relation to aviation of the future, the forecast of air traffic growth, emerging trends and the dynamic environment in which it operates, it must not be forgotten that, in order to achieve its goals, it is essential that it be a modern, efficient, effective and suitable organization where each party carries out its role.

1.2 Multilingualism is a cardinal principle for its consequent purposes, as has been repeatedly pointed out given that ICAO's objectives of guaranteeing safety, aviation safety and the economic and environmental sustainability of all Member States, it has been a constant since its inception.

1.3 Along these lines, the General Assembly during the Thirty-Ninth Session, in the framework of the Agenda Item "Multilingualism of ICAO", three working papers were examined (A39-WP/43, 355, 357).

1.4 For its part, the Executive Committee in its report of the 39th Session of the ICAO Assembly (A39-WP/524), points out, in relation to Assembly's Agenda Item 26, the need to request to the Council, a close monitoring of the implementation of the policies and decisions taken to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the activities with respect to languages services by ratifying that multilingualism remains a basic principle for the achievement of the Organization's objectives, and continue targeting the budget items as well as the resources pertaining to the availability of documents in all the languages concerning the application of norms, verifying the services contracted externally to achieve said objectives.

1.5 At the same time, assuming the fundamental importance of the application of the principle of multilingualism, after examining Resolution A38-11 during the 39th Session of the Assembly, Resolution A39-22 was adopted, which replaced it and by which:

"4. Reiterates that SARPs and PANS shall be drafted in clear, simple and concise language. SARPs shall consist of broad, mature and stable provisions specifying functional and performance requirements that provide for the requisite levels of safety, regularity and efficiency. Supporting technical specifications, when developed by ICAO, should be translated in all working languages of ICAO in a timely manner and shall be placed in separate documents to the extent possible;"

2. ANALYSIS

2.1 The Languages and Publications Service of ICAO is responsible for the provision of linguistic services and the production of documents and publications of the Organization in all the official languages of the United Nations. Its main responsibilities include: interpretations and translations; publication edition; reference, terminological research; outsourcing; text processing and correction.

2.2 Maintaining a commitment to multilingualism is imperative from a political and operational point of view. The Organization deals with regulatory frameworks and civil aviation rules, and it is important that translations for Member States remain a priority. Interpretation services are provided in six languages for the meetings of the Assembly, the Council, the Air Navigation Commission, the Air Transport Conferences, the Diplomatic Conferences and Symposia. It is noted that ICAO is limiting translation services depending on the category of meetings.

2.3 Although it is recognized that multilingualism is a fundamental pillar, however, not all publications are translated according to the documentation published on ICAO NET. It is noted that some important documents that address technical, operational and planning aspects have not yet been translated, not giving application to the provisions of Document 7231 – *ICAO Publications Regulations*, which establishes that all Manuals and Circulars will be presented in the official languages of ICAO (Article VII – Languages).

2.4 It is of concern that the general budget allocated to financing corresponding to language services corresponds to scenarios with the same level of funding in the two previous triennium, which may pose a risk for multilingualism, affecting the ability to respond to increases in the demand for Translate services.

2.5 While progress has been made with respect to support services during the 2017-2019 triennium in combination with an increasingly paperless environment, since 2008 ICAO has witnessed an increase in the volume of translation and service interpretation.

2.6 Consequently, it is considered that multilingualism should not be affected by budget constraints and it is necessary for ICAO to find mechanisms to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of language services, with which this important objective is guaranteed and there are no long delays in the availability of documentation in all languages adopted by ICAO.

2.7 On the other hand, within the Latin American Civil Aviation Commission (LACAC) the Portuguese language is used and accepted as a working tool in meetings.

2.8 In addition to the above and the need for improvement in the services of the ICAO's six official languages, the members of the CAACL expose in their meetings, repeatedly, as well as at meeting held in 2015 with the President of the Council of ICAO and the General Secretariat of the Organization, the problems faced by not having their language as one of the ICAO official languages. The difficulty of understanding the documents and the discussions of those who take part in the meetings results in a decrease in the ability to contribute, positioning, compliance with the guidelines and the application of the Rules and Regulations of the ICAO. As a way to mitigate these problems, Brazil and Portugal have translated the Annexes to the Chicago Convention. Both countries have established a timetable and their goal is to translate all the Annexes by the end of 2020.

2.9 Portuguese is the 6th language in number of speakers in the world. The nine countries that have Portuguese as their official language have a combined population of 275 million people that populate four continents. In Latin America, 33% of the population speaks Portuguese. In this way, LACAC and CAACL understand that ICAO should strive to, beyond improving the quality of the services in the official languages, also support the Portuguese-Spoken countries in the translation of documents and in the interpretation in ICAO's meetings, taking into account the context of budgetary constraint of the Organization.

3. CONCLUSION

3.1 In light of the above analysis, it can be concluded that the efforts should be directed towards evaluating any potential loss in the assurance of the institutional quality of the Organization, especially considering the technical aspects and the precise nature of the materials that are translated taking into account that Member States should have a perfect understanding of the documents coming from ICAO.

3.2 Given that language services are an integral part of every ICAO's program, these services are essential for the fulfilment of all Organization's Strategic Objectives and for the correct worldwide application of SARPs and PANS.

3.3 Language services are also a fundamental requirement of the No Country Left Behind (NCLB) initiative and ICAO's communications with Member States.

3.4 The implementation of the actions formulated in the Resolutions of the Assembly set out in advance, and the follow-up to the activities aimed at their fulfilment, must be a constant.

3.5 It is essential that language services be provided in all the different languages recognized by ICAO, without making any exception in the various means of communication and/or dissemination of information established by the Organization. An adequate service undoubtedly contributes greatly to the achievement of the ICAO's objectives, as well as the support of the Organization in the actions of translation and interpretation before the Portuguese-Spoken Countries.

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