

INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION ORGANIZATION

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ASSEMBLY - 32ND SESSION

PLENARY

Agenda Item 7: Annual Reports of the Council to the Assembly for 1995, 1996 and 1997

STRENGTHENING THE USE OF ARABIC LANGUAGE IN ICAO (RESOLUTION A29-21, DECISION OF THE 31ST SESSION OF THE ASSEMBLY)

SUMMARY

In this paper, the Council, pursuant to the decision of the 31st Session of the Assembly, presents a report on the implementation of Resolution A29-21.

Action by the Assembly is in paragraph 5.

REFERENCES

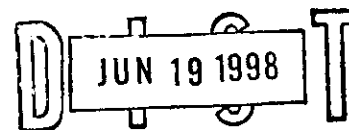
Doc 9662, Assembly Resolutions in force as of 4 October 1995 (A29-21)
Doc 9659, Report and Minutes of the Executive Committee of the 31st Session of the Assembly, paragraph 7:18

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The 31st Session of the Assembly, in the action taken on the subject of strengthening the use of Arabic language in ICAO, *inter alia*:

- reaffirmed its Resolution A29-21;
- directed the Council to intensify its efforts in taking the necessary measures to fully implement Resolution A29-21 by the end of 1998 within the resources of the Organization;
- requested the Secretary General to submit to the Council at the earliest possible opportunity a plan of action regarding implementation of Resolution A29-21 as well as the decision taken by this Assembly;

(3 pages)



- requested the Council to present a report to the next ordinary Session of the Assembly in 1998.

2. PLAN OF ACTION AND PROGRESS REPORTS

2.1 At its 13th meeting of the 146th Session, the Council considered and noted a plan of action regarding the implementation of Resolution A29-21, as requested by the decision taken by the 31st Session of the Assembly, which detailed measures envisaged for the triennium in terms of staffing of the Arabic Section, interpretation and translation services, temporary assistance and external translation. In the action taken thereon, the Council requested the Secretary General, *inter alia*, to keep the plan of action under review in light of progress made, to present a further report on the subject and to keep the Council informed thereafter on a regular basis.

2.2 Two more reports were submitted to and noted by the Council during its 148th and 150th Sessions which outlined progress made in the implementation of the plan of action.

3. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN OF ACTION

3.1 Staffing

3.1.1 In line with the Plan of Action and in keeping with the provisions of the Programme Budget of the Organization for 1996, 1997 and 1998, with effect from 1 January 1996, three Professional posts (two translator/reviser/interpreters and one translator/interpreter) and three General Service posts were added to the establishment of the Arabic Section. These posts were advertised and filled in the course of 1996 and early 1997 which brought the strength of the Arabic Section to the level of the 1996-1997 budgetary provisions, i.e. eight Professional and ten General Service staff.

3.1.2 In January 1998, two more Professional posts and one General Service post were added to the establishment of the Arabic Section and one Professional post to the Interpretation Section, as provided for in the current Programme Budget for 1998. The Secretary General proceeded to advertise two Professional posts (interpreter/reviser/translator), and the recruitment process is in progress and expected to be completed in the second half of the year to reach the budgetary figure of ten Professionals in the Arabic Section. An interpreter/translator post and a General Service post are planned to be advertised in due course in 1998.

3.2 Service - Interpretation and Translation

3.2.1 As was envisaged in the Plan of Action, Arabic interpretation services to the Council were introduced starting with its 149th Session in the fall of 1996 and full translation services starting from its 150th Session. During the current triennium, full interpretation and translation services are also provided for all Divisional-type meetings and conferences, i.e. the Limited Middle East Air Navigation meeting, the Legal Committee, the Statistics Divisional Meeting, the Directors General of Civil Aviation Conference, the AIS/MAP Divisional Meeting, the World-wide CNS/ATM Systems Implementation Conference and the 32nd Session of the Assembly and the Diplomatic Conference, as well as for a number of regional workshops and seminars.

3.2.2 Simultaneous distribution of documentation in Arabic along with the other languages now includes Council working papers, Amendments to Annexes and PANS documents that exist in Arabic, Annual Reports of the Council to the Assembly, Assembly documentation and working papers for meetings that have

Arabic as a working language, as well as all State letters and memoranda from the President and the Secretary General. Full parity of service with the other languages for all these activities has therefore been achieved.

4. FUTURE PLANS

4.1 Using the regular staff as reflected in the establishment of the Arabic Section, supplemented by temporary assistance in both interpretation and translation, as required, services in Arabic will be further extended to progressively include subsidiary bodies of the Council in addition to the services already provided. All major meetings held at or outside Headquarters will continue to have full Arabic Services. The services to technical panels, *ad hoc* groups or technical committees are planned to be provided selectively, depending on the participation of Arabic-speaking members and the relevant decisions of the Council and the Air Navigation Commission regarding the choice of languages, which will also have to take into account the availability of the background technical material in Arabic. It should be noted in this connection that there is still a backlog of highly technical material associated with the work of many panels which will have to be progressively translated into Arabic. A similar situation, i.e. gradual phase-in of translation and interpretation services over a rather considerable period of time for technical panels existed during the introduction and expansion of other languages, e.g. Russian.

4.2 As has been mentioned above, the Secretary General, in order to provide and maintain adequate services on the same level as in the other languages for all the main activities of the Organization, intends to strengthen the regular staff by temporary assistance in both interpretation and translation for which special provisions have been made in the Draft Programme Budget of the Organization for 1999-2000-2001. Recourse to contractual translation will continue to be made and is intended to be increased. This approach is in line with the current trend in all languages and, in fact, throughout the United Nations system, to rely more and more on external translation and free-lance interpretation and to take advantage of new technological developments in the field of computer-assisted translation, voice recognition etc.

4.3 In conclusion, the Secretary General, through a range of measures indicated in paragraphs 4.1 and 4.2 above, intends to achieve, by the beginning of the next triennium, the utilization of the Arabic language on the same level as the other languages for all major activities of the Organization within the resources of the Organization as mandated by Assembly Resolution A29-21 and the decision of the 31st Session of the Assembly subject, however, to constraints associated with providing full services to technical panels and committees as indicated in paragraph 4.1 above.

5. ACTION BY THE ASSEMBLY

5.1 The Assembly is invited to note the contents of this paper.

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