

**MULTILINGUALISM AND ACCESS TO INFORMATION: CASE STUDY OF  
THE INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION ORGANIZATION**

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**ACRONYMS**

<b>APAC</b>	Asia/Pacific Regional Office
<b>ATM</b>	Air Traffic Management
<b>CNS</b>	Communications/Navigation/Surveillance
<b>ESAF</b>	Eastern and Southern African Regional Office
<b>EUR/NAT</b>	European and North Atlantic Regional Office
<b>FAO</b>	Food and Agriculture Organization
<b>ICAO</b>	International Civil Aviation Organization
<b>ICT</b>	Information and Communication Technology
<b>IMO</b>	International Maritime Organization
<b>JIU</b>	Joint Inspection Unit
<b>MID</b>	Middle East Regional Office
<b>NACC</b>	North American, Central American and Caribbean Regional Office
<b>SAM</b>	South American Regional Office
<b>SARPs</b>	Standards and Recommended Practices
<b>SARS</b>	Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome
<b>SLED</b>	State Letter Electronic Distribution System
<b>TCB</b>	Technical Co-operation Bureau
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>USOAP</b>	Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme
<b>WACAF</b>	Western and Central African Regional Office
<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organization
<b>WSIS</b>	World Summit on the Information Society
<b>WTO</b>	World Tourism Organization

## SUMMARY: OBJECTIVE, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

**OBJECTIVE: To evaluate the conditions allowing the implementation of multilingualism in the International Civil Aviation Organization in order to provide the different target audiences with better access to the information made available to them**

### General policy issues (Chapter I)

A. Except for the final clause of the Convention on International Civil Aviation (Chicago, 1944) which addresses the authentic texts of the Convention, no other reference is made in the Convention to the languages in force in ICAO. However, the issue of languages and the impact of multilingualism have been considered on many occasions both by the Council and by the Assembly. In addition to the three working languages used at the beginning (English, French, Spanish), Russian, Arabic and Chinese have been added progressively. The relevant Assembly Resolutions have established as a foundation of ICAO's language policy, on the one hand, the principle of parity and quality of service for all the working languages, and, on the other hand, the principle of simultaneous distribution of publications and documentation in all the working languages and according to the conditions determined by the Assembly and the Council (paragraphs 6 to 14).

B. There is however a gap between the stated policy on multilingualism and the actual practice in the Organisation, and the situation could deteriorate due largely to increased budgetary constraints which ICAO will face in the future. A Strategic Action Plan was adopted by the Council in 1997 and it will be updated for submission to the 35th Session of the Assembly. It is aimed at improving effectiveness, transparency and accountability. Member States will therefore have a framework allowing them, on the one hand, to take into account the degree of priority that they wish to give to the improvement of multilingualism within ICAO and, on the other hand, to ensure better accountability on the part of the Secretariat with regard to the results achieved in relation to those anticipated (paragraphs 15 to 28).

### RECOMMENDATION 1

**The Council and the Assembly of ICAO may wish to:**

- a) Better define the expectations of Member States regarding the implementation of the relevant Assembly Resolutions concerning language parity and simultaneous distribution of publications and documentation in all the working languages;**
- b) Provide guidelines to the Secretary General on how the Organization's public information and communication policy should evolve in the future, taking into account the identity and the nature of its audience, as well as the most suitable languages and information media to have a better impact;**
- c) Invite the Secretary General to submit, for possible consideration within the Strategic Action Plan and future Programme Budgets, performance indicators related to pre-defined objectives in relation to access to information with a view to better meeting the needs of the different target audiences in the recognized languages;**

**d) Decide that, in addition to the funds allocated from the Regular Budget, the ICT Fund created by Assembly Resolution A33-24 could continue to be used to fund the above-mentioned objectives, and, in that regard, request the Secretary General to continue seeking voluntary contributions to supply the Fund both from Contracting States and from partner organizations.**

## **Management issues (Chapter II)**

C. Within the framework of human resources management, the policy of posting vacancy notices does not provide all candidates with equal access to information related to the qualifications and the specific requirements for the posts to be filled, or to general information on the conditions of service of the Organization (paragraphs 29 to 32).

### **RECOMMENDATION 2**

**In close consultation with the Regional Directors, the Secretary General should ensure that all the specific information contained in the vacancy notices, as well as relevant information on the conditions of service of ICAO, are distributed at least in each of the languages, for which a perfect command has been indicated as being essential for the post to be filled. Such a policy should be extended to Technical Co-operation posts, including information made available on the TCB website.**

D. The public information policy, as defined in Assembly Resolution A1-15, remains relevant and deserves to be better taken into account, both in the choice of the most suitable media to reach the different target audiences and in better use of all possible external contributions (paragraphs 33 to 44).

### **RECOMMENDATION 3**

**In close consultation with the Regional Directors, as required, the Secretary General should:**

- a) Evaluate whether the hard copy continues to be the most efficient form for the distribution of publications in the required languages in order to better reach the different target audiences;**
- b) Proceed with the official launch and opening to the public of the French version of the main ICAO website, as developed with funding from the ICT Fund, it being understood that future improvements will be subject to the approval of Recommendation 1 d) above and the availability of resources;**
- c) Review the overall online publication policy in order to identify the documents and the basic information regarding ICAO and/or its activities, the distribution of which in the different working languages would help to strengthen public support for the Organization, and, in that regard, ensure in particular free online access to the Chicago Convention (Doc 7300) and to the Assembly Resolutions (Doc 9790) in the languages in which these documents are available;**
- d) Request webmasters to take more into consideration the possibilities of interaction with the websites of the official services of various Contracting States providing access to**

**information in the civil aviation field, as well as with those of other organizations dealing with topics of common interest;**





## INTRODUCTION

1. In 2002, the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) published a report on the implementation of multilingualism in the United Nations System<sup>1</sup>. Since that first report was general in nature, it was felt appropriate to follow it up with two more specific case studies with the central theme of the link between multilingualism and access to information. A first case study regarding the World Health Organization (WHO) was completed in November 2003<sup>2</sup>. ICAO was selected for the second case study in view of the importance that access to information represents for Contracting States and other target audiences, and taking into account the possibilities for cooperation and coordination between the two organizations in the field of information dissemination.

2. In its above-mentioned general report, the JIU underlined, *inter alia*, that beyond the usual distinction between North and South or between industrialized and developing countries, the dividing line between information haves and have-nots depended on the language(s) of communication used, as language itself has become the "Open Sesame", without which no access to the riches of the Information Age is possible. Reference was also made to the declaration adopted in 1997 by the Executive Heads of the United Nations System organizations which laid the foundation for a universal right of access to information.

3. Access to information was also at the centre of the debate leading to the adoption of the *Declaration of Principles* and the *Plan of Action* during the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) held in Geneva in December 2003. One of the stated objectives is to "develop policy guidelines for the development and promotion of public domain information as an important international instrument promoting public access to information"<sup>3</sup>.

4. The methodology followed consisted in evaluating ICAO's practices regarding the languages used to make information available to its target audiences, and the conformity of such practices with the texts governing multilingualism and/or with the objectives defined in the communication policy of the Organization. The evaluation was done on the basis of a selection of documentation for the governing bodies, publications and the contents of websites maintained both at the Headquarters of the Organization and in the Regional Offices, namely the Asia/Pacific (APAC), Eastern and Southern African (ESAF), European and North Atlantic (EUR/NAT), Middle East (MID), North American, Central American and Caribbean (NACC), South American (SAM) and Western and Central African (WACAF) Offices. In addition, interviews were held with ICAO officials at Headquarters in Montreal and at the EUR/NAT Office in Paris, as well as with representatives of Member States. Due account was also taken of the serious budgetary constraints which ICAO will face in the next few years and which will certainly have a negative impact on the Secretariat's ability to abide strictly by the instructions in force on the use of the languages of the Organization.

5. The Inspector wishes to express his gratitude to all those with whom he had interviews and whose contribution facilitated the preparation of this report.

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<sup>1</sup> JIU/REP/2002/11

<sup>2</sup> JIU/REP/2003/4

<sup>3</sup> Document WSIS-03/GENEVA/DOC/5 (Plan of Action), paragraph 10 a)

## I. GENERAL POLICY ISSUES

### A. Reminder of the rules governing the use of languages in ICAO

#### a) Language parity is a continuous objective of the Organization

6. The Convention on International Civil Aviation (Chicago, 1944) was signed in English which was initially the only language of the authentic text. Successive amendments were made however to the final clause in order to give authentic status to the French and Spanish versions of the Convention, then to the Russian, Arabic and Chinese versions. Although the Protocols relating to the authentic Arabic and Chinese texts are not yet in force, it may be noted in this regard that the authentic texts of the United Nations Charter have remained the same (Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish) despite the subsequent adoption of Arabic as an official and working language.

7. Except for the above-mentioned final clause, the Chicago Convention does not make any reference to the language regime applicable to ICAO. The issue of the Organization's working languages has been addressed in a pragmatic manner by the Assembly, which approved at its very first Session in May 1947 a resolution establishing the accountability of the Council for the implementation of the language policy applicable to the use of English, French and Spanish for deliberations, documents and publications. In 1951, the Council then decided to entrust to the Secretary General the task of issuing the *ICAO Publications Regulations* (Doc 7231) in which are defined the languages of the publications of the Organization.

8. The adoption of Russian as a working language was decided upon by the Assembly at its 18th Session and it became effective at the start of 1972. It was much later that the Assembly requested the Council and the Secretary General to take the necessary measures to progressively strengthen the interpretation and translation services in Arabic<sup>4</sup> and Chinese<sup>5</sup>. It also requested the Council to ensure that the use of these two languages within ICAO would reach the same level as the other languages of the Organization within specified deadlines, i.e. "by the end of 1998" for Arabic, and "by the end of year 2001 within the resources of the Organization" for Chinese.

9. The introduction of new working languages entails obviously an increase in the costs of the language services. The Council and the Assembly have studied the practical problems related to the extension of multilingualism on several occasions. For its part, the Joint Inspection Unit had also considered the issue in a report published in 1977<sup>6</sup>. It is therefore quite knowingly that in Assembly Resolution A31-17 (Level of services provided in the working languages of ICAO), the Assembly expressed the view, *inter alia*, that "the provision and introduction of adequate levels of service in the working languages of ICAO pursuant to the relevant Assembly resolutions and decisions is highly important to the worldwide dissemination of ICAO documentation, in particular the Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs), and to the proper functioning of the Organization and its standing bodies". The Assembly therefore resolved "that parity and quality of service in all working languages of ICAO be the continuous objective of the Organization" while specifying that "the introduction of a new language should not affect the quality of service in the other working languages of the Organization"<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> Resolution A29-21

<sup>5</sup> Resolution A31-16

<sup>6</sup> JIU/REP/77/5

<sup>7</sup> Resolution A31-17, operative clauses 2 and 3

**b) Communication and public information policy**

10. At its very first Session, the Assembly adopted Resolution A1-15 (Public information policy in ICAO) in which it recognized that " the International Civil Aviation Organization is dependent for its continued existence upon the active participation of Contracting States, and that the participation, in turn, is influenced to an appreciable extent by the support of public opinion in Contracting States". By that Resolution, the Assembly decided, *inter alia*, that the Organization's public information policy should be directed: "primarily toward ensuring that individuals and groups directly concerned with international civil aviation are kept informed of the activities and aims of the Organization" and secondly "toward the general public of Contracting States as a whole, within the limitations of the budget and as far as practicable in cooperation with the public relations organization of the United Nations, with a view to obtaining the widest publicity for the Organization's activities"<sup>8</sup> .

11. The ICAO *Publications Regulations* contain the different definitions regarding the publications and documentation of the Organization and the languages in which they must be distributed. According to Article II, "publications" means "any printed material issued by the Organization". An updated version of the *Publications Regulations* is under preparation and it will include electronic documents in the new definition.

**c) The rule of simultaneous distribution of documents and its implications**

12. In Assembly Resolution A24-21 (Publication and Distribution of Documentation), the Assembly expressed the view that "it is of capital importance to recognize effectively that, for publications and documentation, the agreed working languages are of equal importance in all fields and aspects of the life of the Organization". It also felt that "there must be a fair and equal opportunity for all user States to consult the documentation produced by the Organization, in the various agreed working languages". Consequently, the Assembly adopted "simultaneous distribution in all the working languages of ICAO as a principle of policy for the publications and documentation of the Organization according to the conditions determined by the Assembly and the Council"<sup>9</sup>

13. The practical implications of the principle of simultaneous distribution should be underlined. By its resolution 36/117 B of 10 December 1981, the General Assembly of the United Nations decided "that documents shall be given effective simultaneous distribution in sufficient time in the official and working languages of the organs of the United Nations". In a recent report<sup>10</sup>, the Secretary-General recalled that this rule means that "no language version of a particular document, including its original language version, is to be released for dissemination until all other prescribed language versions are available for distribution."<sup>11</sup> This rule has been reiterated by the General Assembly in several subsequent resolutions and it applies both to documents in hard copy and to those distributed in electronic format. In an evaluation of the United Nations Official Document System (ODS)<sup>12</sup>, the Joint Inspection Unit concluded that the rule of simultaneous distribution was not always fully adhered to and it recommended that it be more strictly applied. The recommendation was strongly supported by the UN Administration<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Resolution A1-15, operative clause a)

<sup>9</sup> Resolution A24-21, operative clause 1

<sup>10</sup> A/C.5/56/12

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid*, paragraph 3

<sup>12</sup> A/58/435

<sup>13</sup> A/58/435/Add. 1, paragraph 3

14. As far as ICAO is concerned, strict implementation of the rule of simultaneous distribution following the interpretation made by the United Nations would obviously have serious repercussions on the current practice of the Organization and would require substantial resources to be made available from the Regular Budget for timely translation in the different languages required. It is therefore up to Member States to determine the extent to which the Secretariat must adhere to the requirements of Assembly Resolution A24-21.

## **B. A gap between principles and practice**

15. In spite of the legislative decisions recalled above and depending on the working languages of the Organization that they use, it must be recognized that all the target audiences of ICAO are not equal when accessing information provided by the Organization in documents, publications or websites. These inequalities are particularly striking for documents disseminated online.

16. ICAO has an Intranet called ICAO-NET which allows access to the State Letter Electronic Distribution (SLED) System in the six working languages. Although documents of the Council and its subsidiary bodies are distributed first in hard copy in the different working languages, some corresponding electronic versions are accessible on the ICAO-NET under Council Documentation, with priority being given to the English, French and Spanish versions of working papers for the Council, the Air Navigation Commission and the Standing Committees. All the documentation provided since the 171st Session of the Council is currently available in six languages.

17. Assembly documents are accessible online on the public website of the Organization in the languages in which they have been published. Within existing resources, documents of the 32nd Session of the Assembly (22 September to 2 October 1998) were for the first time made available online in real time (while the Session was on) and they are all in English. For the 33rd Session (25 September to 5 October 2001) only three documents out of a total of 426 were accessible in the six languages, while 346 were available in all the working languages, except Chinese. Full services in Chinese will be provided starting from the 35th Session of the Assembly. According to the policy in force, statements or proposals made by Member States are published only in the language of submission. Some documents mentioned above are only available in one (generally English), or two and sometimes three languages. Documents for the 34th Session (Extraordinary) are all available in the required languages.

18. All the information on the Technical Co-operation Programme website<sup>14</sup> is accessible exclusively in English, including vacancy notices and requests for candidatures to replenish the roster.

19. A review of the websites of the Regional Offices is contained in the Annex. With the exception of the website of the SAM Region<sup>15</sup> which provides an option for access in English and Spanish, all the other websites have their home page in English. The predominance of English in the documentation accessible online varies from one website to another, but the SAM website seems to be the most respectful of the principle of parity. On the WACAF website<sup>16</sup>, it was found that, out of 33 documents related to a coordinating meeting of ATM/CNS services attended by representatives of 14 States including 6 French-speaking countries, only the provisional agenda was available in both English and French.

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<sup>14</sup> <http://www.icao.int/icao/en/tcb>

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.lima.icao.int/>

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.icao.int/wacaf/>

20. For documentation related to different meetings, it is in the final resort up to the participants to make do with situations not in line with the principles in force. In view of the particular context of ICAO, it would however be advisable to better define the expectations of Member States regarding the scope of the resolutions establishing the principles of parity and simultaneous distribution. As for the objectives of Assembly Resolution A1-15, and in particular the support expected from public opinion, their full implementation requires that the language diversity of the audience concerned is better taken into account. The information and communication policy would be improved by better defining the identity of this audience and the most suitable languages and communication media at the beginning of the 21st century, so that the largest possible impact is achieved, taking into account available resources [**Recommendations 1 a) and 1 b)**].

### **C. Future prospects**

#### **a) The Strategic Action Plan**

21. The JIU/REP/2002/11 report and the case study of WHO stressed the fact that the prospect for all the information being made available in all the required languages at all times seems illusory in view of the considerable resources that would be required. Similarly, it would be as much illusory to expect significant improvements on the sole basis of the Secretariat's capability to continue "doing more with less", thereby concealing the need for additional resources to ensure better access to information.

22. Except for accepting the status quo, the impact of multilingualism in ICAO should therefore form an integral part of a long-term vision. Besides the points already mentioned in paragraph 20, this vision should take into account in a better manner the opportunities provided by information and communication technologies, the respective roles of the different components of the Secretariat both at Headquarters and in the Regional Offices and the possibilities for interaction and partnership with Contracting States, other United Nations System organizations and in general all interested parties within the civil aviation community.

23. By Assembly Resolution A31-2 (Increasing the effectiveness of ICAO), the Assembly had requested the Council to establish a Strategic Action Plan, which would drive the evolution of the Programme Budget. The Plan was meant to "drive the work programme and associated prioritization and budgetary processes of the Organization into at least the early part of the 21st century" and it is aimed at improving effectiveness, transparency and accountability. The Council initially adopted such a Plan in February 1997 and the Assembly will consider an updated version during its 35th session<sup>17</sup>. Eight strategic objectives (from A to H) have been defined and their implementation raises issues and challenges, including for instance the protection of the health of travellers or the assurance and promotion of public confidence in the stability, safety and security of international air transport. Such themes will certainly imply that the requirements for multilingualism in the ICAO public information policy are better taken into account.

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<sup>17</sup> C-WP/12050

24. The strategic objective H ("Ensure the greatest possible efficiency and effectiveness in the operations of the Organization") provides for a "more clear and precise identification of programmes and priorities, their objectives, expected results and performance indicators." This approach which is the foundation of results- based budgeting should include the impact of the implementation of Assembly Resolutions on multilingualism, duly taking into account all possibilities for financing and interaction [**Recommendation 1 c**].

**b) The issue of resources**

25. In resolution 42/207 of 11 December 1987, the General Assembly of the United Nations expressed its conviction that "in view of the importance consistently attached by Member States to the respect for equal treatment of official languages of United Nations bodies, the provision of adequate conference services is an essential element in the efficient functioning of the Organization". The General Assembly concluded therefore that, "in order to ensure the provision of adequate conference services to the United Nations, the allocation of resources to those services should be sufficient to meet the requirements."<sup>18</sup>

26. As other United Nations System organizations, ICAO has been subjected to budgetary constraints related to the zero nominal growth policy of operating budgets. The impact of these constraints had been mitigated thus far thanks to cash surpluses accumulated over preceding budget years which were used as a complement to fund the Regular Programme. For the next Programme Budget (2005 to 2007) and at least the following two triennia, not only will such surpluses not be available, but additional sources of expenditures are expected in relation to the Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme (USOAP) and the Aviation Security Plan of Action, not to mention inescapable staff costs.

27. The preparation of the Programme Budget for 2005 to 2007 made it possible to highlight in particular the fact that budgetary constraints could jeopardize the complete implementation of Assembly Resolutions related to publications and the distribution of documentation (A24-21) and to the strengthening of the use of Arabic (A29-21) and Chinese (A31-16). Furthermore, the different scenarios for ICAO budgetary prospects through the year 2013 indicate that the Regular Budget alone will not be enough to meet all the requirements for resources for the implementation of the different decisions taken by the governing bodies.

28. The use of extrabudgetary resources and other partnership opportunities will have to continue and be expanded, if need be in more innovative forms. By Assembly Resolution A33-24, the Assembly established an Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Fund. This Fund was to be partly supplied by the interest on the General Fund in excess of the amounts included in the budget under miscellaneous income for the years 2001 and 2002, by the balance of unobligated appropriations at 31 December 2001 and partly by the voluntary contributions which Contracting States were invited to make in cash or in kind to support the ICT. For the use of the ICT Fund, the Secretary General was called upon to "accord high priority to the modernization of financial systems, the enhancement of the ICAO Web Sites and consolidation of file servers"<sup>19</sup>. Although no voluntary contribution was recorded by 31 March 2003, it would be highly desirable that the ICT Fund be maintained and be allowed to continue receiving voluntary contributions not only from Contracting States but also from other partners of the Organization [**Recommendation 1 d**].

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<sup>18</sup> United Nations General Assembly resolution 42/207, Part C, operative clause 3

<sup>19</sup> Resolution A33-24, operative clause 5

## II. MANAGEMENT ISSUES

### A. Human resources management and access to information

29. As a general rule, vacancy notices for posts at Headquarters are published in hard copy and on the website<sup>20</sup> in all the working languages, except Chinese. As the level of services provided in Chinese is not yet at par with that of the other languages, vacancy notices are issued in that language only for posts opened in the Chinese Section. The Application-for-Employment Form that can be downloaded from the ICAO website<sup>21</sup> is trilingual (English, French and Spanish), while information about the specific conditions of service and benefits at Headquarters is available in two languages (English and French) and information on United Nations salaries, benefits and job classification is in one language, English. The latter information comes from a website of the United Nations maintained by the UN Department of Management<sup>22</sup>. The Secretariat of ICAO indicated that work is under way to have available in languages other than English and French the information on conditions of service at Headquarters.

30. Although vacancy notices for posts in the Professional category in the Regional Offices are posted on the main website in the same manner as those at Headquarters, the language requirements for these posts vary depending on the duty station, i.e English only for Bangkok and Nairobi, English and French for Dakar and Paris, English and Arabic for Cairo, and English and Spanish for Lima and Mexico.

31. The Technical Co-operation Bureau (TCB) maintains in three languages (English, French and Spanish) a roster of thousands of names of experts. That roster is replenished from several traditional sources (*inter alia*, candidatures submitted by civil aviation administrations and applications referred by government officials, airlines, ICAO serving or former staff members), but also from a new website accessible in English only<sup>23</sup>. This can only limit access to information for candidates who do not have a command of that language. This situation prevails even for posts where a command of English is not deemed essential. That was the case for instance for a vacancy in Kinshasa (Democratic Republic of the Congo)<sup>24</sup>, for which a perfect command of written and spoken French was said to be essential while a working knowledge of English was considered only as desirable. For another vacancy<sup>25</sup>, a perfect command of English, French or Spanish was mentioned as being essential, and such a formulation should have meant that information about the post is made accessible in each of these three languages.

32. If the Secretariat is indeed determined to adhere to the principle of language parity in its human resources management policy, it should apply uniform rules allowing all potential candidates to have access to all the information related not only to the post to be filled, but also to the general conditions of service of the Organization or those more specific to the duty station. To the extent that such information is relatively static by nature, the need for updating would be minimal once the translation has been made in the different working languages. In that regard, the FAO policy is a case of good practice to the extent that all the information about human resources management is made available equally in all the languages of the Organization [**Recommendation 2**].

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<sup>20</sup> <http://www.icao.int/cgi/goto.pl?icao/en/vacancy.htm>

<sup>21</sup> <http://www.icao.int/icao/en/va/icaof.doc>

<sup>22</sup> [http://www.un.org/Depts/OHRM/salaries\\_allowances/index.html](http://www.un.org/Depts/OHRM/salaries_allowances/index.html)

<sup>23</sup> <http://www.icao.int/icao/en/tcb/TCBvacancyList.html>

<sup>24</sup> Reference FAF/02/003

<sup>25</sup> Reference FRU/02/002

## **B. Management of public information**

### **a) Publications**

33. The *Catalogue of ICAO Publications and Audio-visual Training Aids* (2004 edition) provides a list of the different publications of the Organization and detailed information on the language availability of each publication and the prices for those that are saleable. Most publications are in English, French, Russian and Spanish. Although some publications are available in six languages, the level of services provided in Arabic and Chinese are far from reaching that of the other four languages, well after the deadlines set in Assembly Resolutions A29-21 and A31-16, as recalled in paragraph 8 above.

34. Even though the ICAO Journal generates income through advertising, the distribution of the Journal in hard copy should be subject to a critical review. The Journal has nine issues per year (to be reduced to eight in 2005), in English, French and Spanish, along with a summarized version in Russian with four issues per year. All the available language versions of the Journal are accessible on the main website. The review suggested could take into consideration in particular the degree of satisfaction of the users and the impact of the late issuance of language versions other than English. At the end of February 2004, Issues 8 of October 2003 and 9 of November/December 2003 were still available in English only and the most up-to-date summarized Russian version was Issue 1 of the year 2002. A change of publishers is being considered in order to address the question of delays in the publication of the Russian version. The stated objective of the Journal being to provide “a concise account of the activities of the Organization and . . . additional information of interest to Contracting States and the international aeronautical world”<sup>26</sup>, it may possibly be achieved with greater efficiency and timeliness through other means, at least for some language versions.

35. The main website of ICAO has a link to eCommerce<sup>27</sup> which allows customers to buy with their credit card various publications online, including CD-ROMs. Out of 11 such CD-ROMs, nine are in English only and the other two are quadrilingual (English, French, Russian, Spanish). In addition, a service called ICAO eSHOP<sup>28</sup> available only in English provides online access to different sets of documents of the Organization for an annual fee. The Secretariat considers that multilingualism is a political issue while the sales of publications on CD-ROMs and by the ICAO eSHOP are commercial activities for which the aim is to have the highest possible return on investment. However, as stressed in the main JIU report on multilingualism (JIU/REP/2002/11)<sup>29</sup>, statistics on the changes in the Internet online language populations<sup>30</sup> indicate that the share of English users on the Internet went down from 47.5% in March 2001 to 35.6% in September 2003. Even in terms of potential business, an improved multilingual content should allow a website to reach new clients.

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<sup>26</sup> <http://www.icao.int/cgi/goto.pl?icao/en/jr/jr.cfm>

<sup>27</sup> <http://www.icao.int/cgi/goto.pl?icao/en/sales.htm>

<sup>28</sup> <http://www.icao.int/eshop/index.html>

<sup>29</sup> JIU/REP/2002/11, paragraph 121

<sup>30</sup> <http://global-reach.biz/>



36. Although the sales of ICAO publications generate substantial revenues (\$3 242 000 in 2002), one should keep in mind that the primary objective of these publications is to disseminate information on the activities of the Organization and contribute to knowledge sharing. With the possible extension of online and electronic publication, it would be appropriate to evaluate whether for some publications, the hard copy continues to be the most efficient. By avoiding duplications, the savings on production costs could be used for improving the coverage in other languages. [**Recommendation 3 a)**]

**b) Management of websites**

37. The annex contains the addresses of the different websites of ICAO. Due to the fact that English is the language of navigation on most of the sites, and depending on the target audience, it could be that the websites concerned do not attract some users despite the improvements in the multilingual content of the websites. It would be ideal to provide navigation language options from the home page (as in the UN main website<sup>31</sup>) or to have by default an English home page with links to other language options even if some links lead to the English text (as in the SAM website already referred to or the website of WHO<sup>32</sup>). At a minimum, a formula should be found indicating that, contrary to appearances, there are several documents accessible in other languages.

38. In this regard, a French version of the main ICAO website has been developed with funding from the ICT Fund. In a working paper submitted to the Council in May 2003<sup>33</sup>, the Secretary General indicated that an amount of US \$510 000 was spent for that purpose. However the official launching (and therefore access to it by the public) has been postponed to an indefinite date, due to uncertainty about the possibility of continued funding after 2004. The Secretariat estimated that \$540 000 would be required for the up-keep of the website during the next three years but it also admitted that the sum mentioned included posts for providing Council documentation and for SLED. Considering that, as indicated in the working paper, a large number of documents have already been translated and priority has furthermore been given to the translation of static or semi-static pages of the English website, the need for updating them should be minimal. This being the case, it would be regrettable, in view of resources already invested, not to proceed with the official launch of the French website, it being understood that future improvements will be dependent upon the continuation of the ICT Fund and the availability of resources [**Recommendation 3 b)**].

39. In accordance with the letter and spirit of Assembly Resolution A1-15, some basic information concerning ICAO which is found on its websites (such as its aims, structure, operating modalities and the results of its activities) should be accessible to as wide a public as possible, and available therefore in the different working languages. The main website contains for instance a heading entitled "Focus on" which is of great interest to the public. It contains subheadings about aviation security and alerts, environment, aviation medicine and the TRAINAIR programme, all of which would deserve wider dissemination.

40. More particularly, the policy of access to the text of the Chicago Convention which is the constituent instrument of ICAO and to the Assembly Resolutions deserves further review. In many organizations, the constituent instrument and the resolutions adopted by the governing bodies are accessible online in the required languages. In ICAO, both the Chicago Convention (Doc 7300) and the collection of

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<sup>31</sup> <http://www.un.org>

<sup>32</sup> <http://www.who.int/en/>

<sup>33</sup> C-WP/12034

Assembly Resolutions (Doc 9790) are saleable publications, in four languages (English, French, Russian and Spanish) and five languages (all the working languages, except Chinese) respectively. Currently, the Convention is accessible on the ICAO-NET and the ICAO eSHOP, while the Assembly Resolutions are accessible on the public website of the Organization in English<sup>34</sup> and indirectly on the French website referred to in paragraph 38 above. However, the Secretariat is of the opinion that putting the Assembly Resolutions online in the other languages would run against its policy not to make saleable publications freely accessible on a public website. It would be thus an exception to the rule if Assembly Resolutions were accessible in English and French. A copy of the resolutions may be obtained by the public upon request and on a case-by-case basis, although the Secretariat admits that this requires a lot of work. The rationale behind this policy has yet to be demonstrated, as it is shown in the table below.

**Table I: Revenues from the sale of Doc 9790**

Language	2002		2003	
	Qty shipped	Net sales (US \$)	Qty shipped	Net sales (US \$)
English	1 326	1 585	162	513
French	332	285	32	0
Spanish	253	433	43	194
Russian	123	0	15	0
Arabic	81	57	4	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2 115</b>	<b>2 360</b>	<b>256</b>	<b>707</b>

Source: ICAO Secretariat

41. For this publication, over ninety-five per cent (95%) of the copies shipped were for free distribution to different beneficiaries (Contracting States, libraries, Secretariat, other organizations of the United Nations System, Regional Offices and participants in different meetings and conferences, etc.) and the sales represent only 0.001% of the total sales of publications. In addition, free access on the Internet does not seem to jeopardize the sales of certain publications in hard copy. Although accessible online from the ICAO website under "Free publications", the *Aircraft Type Designators* (Doc 8643) is a publication for which sales have increased from US \$62 210 in 2001 to US \$160 886 in 2003. ICAO would lose a little on its sales of Doc 9790 in Arabic, Russian and Spanish (sales in these three languages stood at \$684 for 2002 to 2003) but it would definitely gain in credibility where the implementation of the principle of parity is concerned.

42. It would be necessary to review the policy of online publication and the management of websites in order to make available in an equitable manner in the different working languages all basic information, the dissemination of which could help to make ICAO better known and to reinforce the support of public opinion of Contracting States, in conformity with the objectives set by Assembly Resolution A1-15 and the Strategic Action Plan. In that light, access to the Chicago Convention and to the Assembly Resolutions in all available languages should be given free of charge from the main ICAO website [**Recommendation 3 c**].

43. Assembly Resolution A1-15 already counted on the possibilities of cooperation and partnership that ICAO could develop with Contracting States and other partners on public information matters, as well

<sup>34</sup> <http://www.icao.int/icao/en/rssearch.htm>

as the contribution of the Regional Offices in this area. The main website does provide hyperlinks to various websites maintained by governments or international organizations and dealing with civil aviation<sup>35</sup>. It would be useful nonetheless if, on specific issues such as the severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) epidemic which greatly affected air traffic towards certain destinations in 2002, access to information on these subjects in several languages were made available from the ICAO website through hyperlinks under the corresponding headings of selected sites. Such an approach would require increased cooperation and better coordination among different services within the Secretariat, including the Regional Affairs Office.

44. On a completely other level, the JIU/REP/2003/4 report suggested for example that, as WHO had provided online access in English to an excellent publication on travellers' health entitled *International travel and health*<sup>36</sup>, the translation of this publication into other languages could be the subject of a collaborative project involving ICAO, the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and the World Tourism Organization (WTO), with a possible contribution from operators in the field of activities of these three international organizations. At a minimum, the websites of ICAO could make a hyperlink to the above-mentioned website of WHO [**Recommendation 3d**].

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<sup>35</sup> <http://www.icao.int/cgi/goto.pl?icao/en/sites/htm>

<sup>36</sup> <http://www.who.int/ith/>

### Annex: Languages used in the governing bodies and on the websites of ICAO

Bodies and languages in force		URL of websites (Language of home pages)	Remarks
Interpretation	Documentation		
<b>ICAO Headquarters Montreal</b>		Main website <a href="http://www.icao.int">http://www.icao.int</a> (E)	The ICT Fund was used to develop a French version of the website but launching has been suspended.
<b>Assembly:</b> A,C,E,F,R,S	A,C,E,F,R,S		Language regime established under Articles 64 and 65 of the Rules of Procedure
<b>Council:</b> A,C,E,F,R,S	A,C,E,F,R,S		Language regime established under Articles 56 and 57 of the Rules of Procedure
<b>Standing Committees of the Council E,F,R,S</b>	A,E,F,R,S		Language regime established under Articles 37 and 38 of the Rules of Procedure
<b>Regional Offices Headquarters</b>			
Asia/Pacific (APAC) Bangkok	E,C	<a href="http://www.icao.int/apac/">http://www.icao.int/apac/</a> (E)	Under E-documents and Meetings, all documents in E
Middle East (MID) Cairo	A,E	<a href="http://www.icao.int/mid/">http://www.icao.int/mid/</a> (E)	Under Meetings, all documents in E
Western and Central Africa (WACAF) Dakar	E,F	<a href="http://www.icao.int/wacaf/">http://www.icao.int/wacaf/</a> (E)	Message from the Director in E,F. Some documents in E,F, but some others in E only. (15 French-speaking States out of 24)
South America (SAM) Lima	E,S	<a href="http://www.lima.icao.int/">http://www.lima.icao.int/</a> (E)	Home page provides option to access documents in S. Case of good practice for language parity.
North American, Central American and Caribbean (NACC) Mexico	E,S	<a href="http://www.icao.int/nacc/">http://www.icao.int/nacc/</a> (E)	Under E-documents and Meetings, some documents in E and S
Eastern and Southern Africa (ESAF) Nairobi	E,F	<a href="http://www.icao.int/esaf/">http://www.icao.int/esaf/</a> (E)	Most documents in E. Some in E and F.
European/North Atlantic (EUR/NAT) Paris	E, F,R	<a href="http://www.icao.int/eurnat/">http://www.icao.int/eurnat/</a> (E)	E-documents contain 11 documents out of which: - 2 in E, F and R - 1 in E and F - 1 in E and R - all others in E only

A: Arabic // C: Chinese // E: English // F: French // R: Russian // S: Spanish