

## Program and Budget Committee

### Fifteenth Session

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#### POLICY ON LANGUAGES AT WIPO

*document prepared by the Secretariat*

#### I. INTRODUCTION

1. In recent years, a number of WIPO Member States have expressed the desire to have more extended language services in the activities of the Organization, particularly in connection with the language coverage of the documentation that is prepared by the Secretariat for certain WIPO official meetings.
2. Similar concerns are regularly aired within the United Nations (UN) and its affiliated bodies as well as other international organizations. At WIPO as elsewhere, the aspiration to have the widest possible language coverage (whether in respect of interpretation, documentation, publications or, in more recent years, databases and web sites) is not only heavily resource-intensive (and therefore can be met only to the extent to which available resources so allow) but also must be balanced with quality considerations.
3. It was with these concerns in mind that, in the draft Program and Budget for 2010/11 (Program 27, Conference and Language Services), despite the decline in available revenue, the Director General proposed to extend the languages of documentation for the Intergovernmental Committee on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore (IGC) from English, French and Spanish to all the official languages of the UN (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish) and that documents for other committees would follow as financial and human resources permitted.
4. At its 14<sup>th</sup> session in September 2009, the Program and Budget Committee (PBC) recommended, and the 2009 session of the Assemblies of the Member States of WIPO agreed, that the Secretariat should carry out an analytical study on the availability of documents for all WIPO Committees in the six official languages of the UN and that such

a study should be submitted to the next session of the PBC (see document A/47/3 Add., page 16, Program 27).

5. Recognizing that the question of the use of languages needed to be dealt with in a comprehensive manner to reflect the multiple dimensions of the Organization, the Director General has proposed, within the framework of the Medium-Term Strategic Plan (MTSP) 2010-15, that the Organization should apply a strategy of "*Elaborating a comprehensive language policy, developed in consultation with Member States, which responds to the needs of Member States and is financially sustainable, covering meeting documents, publications, interpretation, and the WIPO website*" (see document WO/PBC/15/10).
6. The present document is a first contribution to the development of that policy and to the definition of the related resources. It examines what is considered to be the most urgent issue as identified by the PBC in 2009, namely the use of languages for documentation for WIPO Committee meetings.
7. The Secretariat will subsequently prepare further studies addressing the other areas of language usage identified in the MTSP, namely publications, interpretation, the WIPO web site, and any other WIPO documents not yet covered elsewhere.
8. Information collected by the Secretariat on relevant practices of other international organizations is also reflected in this document. The Secretariat looked in particular at the information gathered within the framework of the "International Annual Meeting on Language Arrangements, Documentation and Publications" (IAMLADP). IAMLADP membership includes the United Nations, other organizations of the UN system and inter-governmental and supra-national organizations, including several European institutions.

## II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE USE OF LANGUAGES AT WIPO

### **Working Languages versus Official Languages**

9. While most international organizations including the United Nations and its affiliated bodies make a legal distinction between the notion of "working languages" and that of "official languages", the constitutional texts of WIPO do not define the term "official languages" and refer only to "working languages".
10. Article 6(2)(vii) of the Convention Establishing the World Intellectual Property Organization provides that the General Assembly shall "*determine the working languages of the Secretariat, taking into consideration the practice of the United Nations*".
11. The WIPO General Rules of Procedure establish that "*documents intended for the various bodies shall be drawn up in English and French*" and that "*the Director General may, in so far as he considers it advisable and practicable, decide that certain documents shall be drawn up also in Spanish or Russian, or in both of those languages*" (Rule 40). Similarly, Rule 51 stipulates that the Director General shall decide on the language or languages in which documents intended for subsidiary bodies shall be drawn up, and Rule 46 defines those bodies as "*those committees or working groups that may be established by the Director General in implementation of the program of the Organization or of any Union*" and whose task "*shall be to make suggestions or give advice on any subject within the competence of the Organization or of such Union*".
12. In practice, at WIPO the notion has been developed that a "working language" is any language that is used by staff for any of interpretation, documents, publications or correspondence as explained by the Secretariat in a document issued in 1999 analyzing the possibility of introducing the use of Portuguese for certain purposes at WIPO (document WO/GA/24/4 Rev.).

13. In line with the above, the report published by the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) in 2003 under the title "*Implementation of Multilingualism in the United Nations System*" (JIU/REP/2002/11) cited the above notion and stated that, based on this definition, in 2003 the working languages of WIPO were Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish, and also Portuguese under specific conditions.
14. With respect to Portuguese, the 2000 session of the Assemblies of the Member States of WIPO decided that this language would also be used at WIPO to (i) have promotional material produced in Portuguese regarding WIPO-administered treaties; (ii) develop the Portuguese part of WIPO's website for publications in Portuguese; and (iii) provide, as necessary, Portuguese interpretation for diplomatic conferences and for the General Assembly, the specific arrangements to be at the discretion of the Director General, who would also be encouraged to seek voluntary contributions in respect of this provision (document WO/GA/26/10, Agenda Item 19).
15. Furthermore, there are significant multilingual aspects to the services that are offered by the Organization to the private sector through the PCT, Madrid and Hague systems, and *via* the services of the WIPO Arbitration and Mediation Center. As an example, international applications under the PCT may be filed in any language which the receiving Office accepts for that purpose. Given the continuing expansion of the geographical coverage of the PCT system, PCT operations are at present conducted by the Organization in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, German, Japanese, Korean, Portuguese, Russian and Spanish. These aspects are not addressed by this document.

### III. CURRENT LANGUAGE COVERAGE FOR DOCUMENTATION FOR WIPO OFFICIAL MEETINGS

16. For the purposes of this document, the Secretariat has divided WIPO official meetings into three categories:
  - (i) meetings of WIPO Main Bodies (Governing Bodies including the WIPO General Assembly, the WIPO Coordination Committee and the Assemblies of the various Unions);
  - (ii) meetings of WIPO Committees (subsidiary bodies including Standing Committees, Permanent Committees and the like);
  - (iii) meetings of the various Working Groups established by certain subsidiary bodies or by the main bodies to deal with specific technical issues.

The current language coverage for these three categories of meetings is shown in Table 1.

**Table 1**  
**Categories of WIPO Official Meetings and Use of Languages**

|   | E | F | S | A | C | R |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| <b>MAIN BODIES (GOVERNING BODIES )</b>  |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| General Assembly  | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| WIPO Conference   | X | X |   |   |   |   |
| Coordination Committee  | X | X |   |   |   |   |
| Berne Union Assembly and Executive Committee  | X | X |   |   |   |   |
| Budapest Union Assembly   | X | X |   |   |   |   |
| Hague Union Assembly  | X | X | X |   |   |   |
| IPC Union Assembly  | X | X |   |   |   |   |
| Lisbon Union Assembly   | X | X | X |   |   |   |
| Locarno Union Assembly  | X | X |   |   |   |   |
| Madrid Union Assembly   | X | X | X |   |   |   |
| Nice Union Assembly   | X | X |   |   |   |   |
| Paris Union Assembly and Executive Committee  | X | X |   |   |   |   |
| PCT Union Assembly and Technical Cooperation Committee  | X | X |   |   |   |   |
| PLT Assembly  | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| STLT Assembly   | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| Vienna Union Assembly   | X | X |   |   |   |   |
| WCT Assembly  | X | X |   |   |   |   |
| WPPT Assembly   | X | X |   |   |   |   |
| <b>COMMITTEES</b>   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Program and Budget Committee  | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| Committee on Development and Intellectual Property  | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| Intergovernmental Committee on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore  | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| Standing Committee on Copyright and Related Rights  | X | X | X |   |   |   |
| Standing Committee on the Law of Patents  | X | X | X |   |   |   |
| Standing Committee on the Law of Trademarks, Industrial Designs and Geographical Indications                    | X | X | X |   |   |   |
| Standing Committee on Information Technologies (from 2010 - Committee on WIPO Standards)                        | X | X | X |   |   |   |
| Advisory Committee on Enforcement   | X | X | X |   |   |   |
| <b>WORKING GROUPS</b>   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Patent Cooperation Treaty Working Group   | X | X |   |   |   |   |
| IPC Committee of Experts  | X | X |   |   |   |   |
| IPC Revision Working Group  | X | X |   |   |   |   |
| Nice Union Ad hoc Working Group   | X | X |   |   |   |   |
| Working Group on the Development of the Lisbon System (Appellations of Origin)                                  | X | X | X |   |   |   |
| Working Group on the Legal Development of the Madrid System for the International Registration of Marks         | X | X | X |   |   |   |
| Working Group on the Review of Rule 3(4) of the Regulations under the Singapore Treaty on the Law of Trademarks | X | X | X |   |   |   |
| Working Group on Audit Committee Related Matters  | X | X | X |   |   |   |
| Intersessional Working Group of the IGC   | X | X | X | X | X | X |

#### **IV. CURRENT LANGUAGE COVERAGE AND VOLUME OF DOCUMENTATION FOR WIPO COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

17. In compliance with the mandate set out in the 2010/11 Program and Budget as approved by Member States: "*publication in all official WIPO languages of all working documents, studies and publications of WIPO committees*" (Program and Budget for the 2010/11 Biennium, page 170), the present document will focus on documentation for "Committees" as identified in Table 1.

##### **Language Coverage**

18. As shown in Table I, documentation for the PBC, the Committee on Development and Intellectual Property (CDIP) and, from 2010, the IGC is already available in the six official languages of the UN. It is noted also that the report of the Audit Committee, even though this committee is not assimilated to the category of committees examined here, is provided in all six languages when submitted to the PBC.
19. Language coverage is determined by decisions taken by Member States or by specific decision of the Director General pursuant to Rules 40 and 51 of the WIPO General Rules of Procedure. For instance, PBC documents were initially available only in English, French and Spanish. However, the Director General decided to extend language coverage to include Arabic, Chinese and Russian. Since the establishment of the IGC in 2001, documents have been made available only in English, French and Spanish. However, in the draft Program and Budget for 2010/11 the Director General proposed (and the Member States agreed) that as of 2010 these documents would be made available also in Arabic, Chinese and Russian.

##### **Volume of Documentation**

20. The JIU report of 2003 emphasized that the volume of source text documentation has a direct bearing on the workload of translation services and on their capacity to contribute to strict adherence to rules governing the simultaneous distribution of documents in all prescribed languages within the approved deadlines.
21. For reference, the term "source text" is used to designate the text in which the original version of a given document is drafted by the Secretariat. A "page" is defined as comprising 330 words, in line with common practice within the UN system.
22. Indeed, at WIPO, one of the critical factors for determining the ability of the Secretariat to extend the language coverage of documentation for meetings is the volume of source text to be translated on a yearly basis, in terms of both the number of documents as well as the number of pages to be translated.
23. Table 2 shows the number of documents and related number of pages of source text that the Secretariat prepared from 2007 to 2009 to service the work of the above Committees.

**Table 2**  
**Volume of Source Text by Committee (2007-2009)**

| Committee  | 2007         | 2008         | 2009         | Average Pages/ Doc. |
|--|--------------|--------------|--------------|---------------------|
| Program and Budget Committee (PBC)   |              |              |              |                     |
| <i>Total Number of Documents</i>   | 40           | 19           | 22           |                     |
| <i>Total Number of Pages</i>   | 940          | 833          | 1,186        | 37                  |
| - Audit Committee (AC) for PBC   |              |              |              |                     |
| <i>Total Number of Documents</i>   | 5            | 4            | 5            |                     |
| <i>Total Number of Pages</i>   | 62           | 68           | 75           | 15                  |
| Committee on Development and Intellectual Property (CDIP) (prev. PCDA)   |              |              |              |                     |
| <i>Total Number of Documents</i>   | 7            | 15           | 28           |                     |
| <i>Total Number of Pages</i>   | 303          | 505          | 985          | 36                  |
| Intergovernmental Committee on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore (GRTKF) (IGC) |              |              |              |                     |
| <i>Total Number of Documents</i>   | 33           | 47           | 38           |                     |
| <i>Total Number of Pages</i>   | 1499         | 1454         | 585          | 30                  |
| Standing Committee on Copyright and Related Rights (SCCR)  |              |              |              |                     |
| <i>Total Number of Documents</i>   | 13           | 12           | 27           |                     |
| <i>Total Number of Pages</i>   | 225          | 617          | 1621         | 47                  |
| Standing Committee on the Law of Patents (SCP)   |              |              |              |                     |
| <i>Total Number of Documents</i>   | 0            | 9            | 10           |                     |
| <i>Total Number of Pages</i>   | 0            | 942          | 412          | 71                  |
| Standing Committee on the Law of Trademarks, Industrial Designs and Geographical Indications (SCT)                           |              |              |              |                     |
| <i>Total Number of Documents</i>   | 18           | 17           | 17           |                     |
| <i>Total Number of Pages</i>   | 363          | 584          | 368          | 25                  |
| Standing Committee on Information Technologies / Committee on WIPO Standards (SCIT/CWS)                                      |              |              |              |                     |
| <i>Total Number of Documents</i>   | 20           | 24           | 13           |                     |
| <i>Total Number of Pages</i>   | 186          | 430          | 237          | 15                  |
| Advisory Committee on Enforcement (ACE)  |              |              |              |                     |
| <i>Total Number of Documents</i>   | 10           | 0            | 14           |                     |
| <i>Total Number of Pages</i>   | 155          | 0            | 190          | 14                  |
| <b>TOTAL</b>   |              |              |              |                     |
| <i>Total Number of Documents</i>   | <b>146</b>   | <b>147</b>   | <b>174</b>   |                     |
| <i>Total Number of Pages</i>   | <b>3,734</b> | <b>5,433</b> | <b>5,658</b> |                     |
| <i>Average Number of Pages per Document</i>  | <b>26</b>    | <b>37</b>    | <b>33</b>    | <b>32</b>           |

24. As Table 2 also shows, in 2008 the number of documents increased by only one per cent compared with 2007, but the number of pages increased by 45 per cent. For 2009 the increases were 18 per cent in documents and four per cent in pages compared with 2008.
25. These sharp increases in the volumes of source text may be partly explained by the fact that certain WIPO Committees have in recent years commissioned exceptionally voluminous studies or surveys as background or information documents (support documents).

#### **Workload of Translation Services**

26. Table 3 shows the translation workload (in number of pages) which the Secretariat would have to handle if the language coverage for WIPO committee meeting documents were to be extended to all six languages of the UN system.
27. The Table provides a checklist of the languages in which documents for the meetings of these Committees were available in 2009 (crosses) or were not available (circles),

followed by the anticipated annual volume and additional annual translation workload that the Secretariat would be required to process for all Committee meetings in the six languages.

**Table 3**  
**Additional Translation Workload If Six Language Coverage for WIPO Committee meetings**

| Committee    | 2009 (X) & Required (O) Languages |   |   |   |   |   | Source Text in 2009 | Translation Volume in 2009 | Forecast Translation Volume All Langs. | Additional Annual Translation Volume |
|--------------|-----------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---------------------|----------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|
|              | E                                 | F | S | A | C | R |                     |                            |  |                                      |
| PBC          | X                                 | X | X | X | X | X | 1,186               | 5,931                      | 5,931                                  | 0                                    |
| AC           | X                                 | X | X | O | O | O | 75                  | 149                        | 373                                    | 224                                  |
| CDIP         | X                                 | X | X | X | X | X | 985                 | 4,923                      | 4,923                                  | 0                                    |
| IGC          | X                                 | X | X | O | O | O | 585                 | 1,170                      | 2,925                                  | 1,755                                |
| SCCR         | X                                 | X | X | O | O | O | 1,621               | 3,242                      | 8,105                                  | 4,863                                |
| SCP          | X                                 | X | X | O | O | O | 412                 | 824                        | 2,061                                  | 1,237                                |
| SCT          | X                                 | X | X | O | O | O | 368                 | 736                        | 1,839                                  | 1,103                                |
| SCIT/CWS     | X                                 | X | X | O | O | O | 237                 | 474                        | 1,186                                  | 712                                  |
| ACE          | X                                 | X | X | O | O | O | 190                 | 379                        | 948                                    | 569                                  |
| <b>TOTAL</b> |                                   |   |   |   |   |   | <b>5,658</b>        | <b>17,829</b>              | <b>28,291</b>                          | <b>10,462</b>                        |

28. As shown in Table 3, assuming that the volume would remain stable, the extension of language coverage for all Committee documents to six languages would represent an increase of 59 percent in the translation volume of Committee documents, and a 26 percent increase in the overall workload of the WIPO Language Division as compared to 2009.
29. However, such additional workload would relate solely to Arabic, Chinese and Russian, representing a 71 percent increase in the workload for these languages. Although not factored into the above volumes, provision may need to be made for an increased work volume for translation into English, given that texts could be received in Arabic, Chinese and Russian when committees work additionally in these languages.
30. For the specific case of the IGC, the above volumes take 2009 as the baseline when the languages used for this Committee were English, French and Spanish. The volumes corresponding to the extension in 2010 of language coverage to Arabic, Chinese and Russian are included in the Additional Volume column in the table.

#### V. RESOURCES AND CAPACITIES FOR TRANSLATION SERVICES

31. In the 2010/11 biennium the resources available for translation services are established in the Program and Budget under Program 27 (Conference and Language Services). The resources estimated to be required for the provision of these services in the 2010/2011 biennium totaled 15.5 million Swiss francs in personnel resources and 2.5 million Swiss francs in non-personnel resources. These resources cover the costs for posts and short-term personnel, as well as the cost of outsourcing to external freelance translators. The translation staff distribution by language is shown in Table 4.

**Table 4**  
**Language Division Translation Staff (2010/11)**

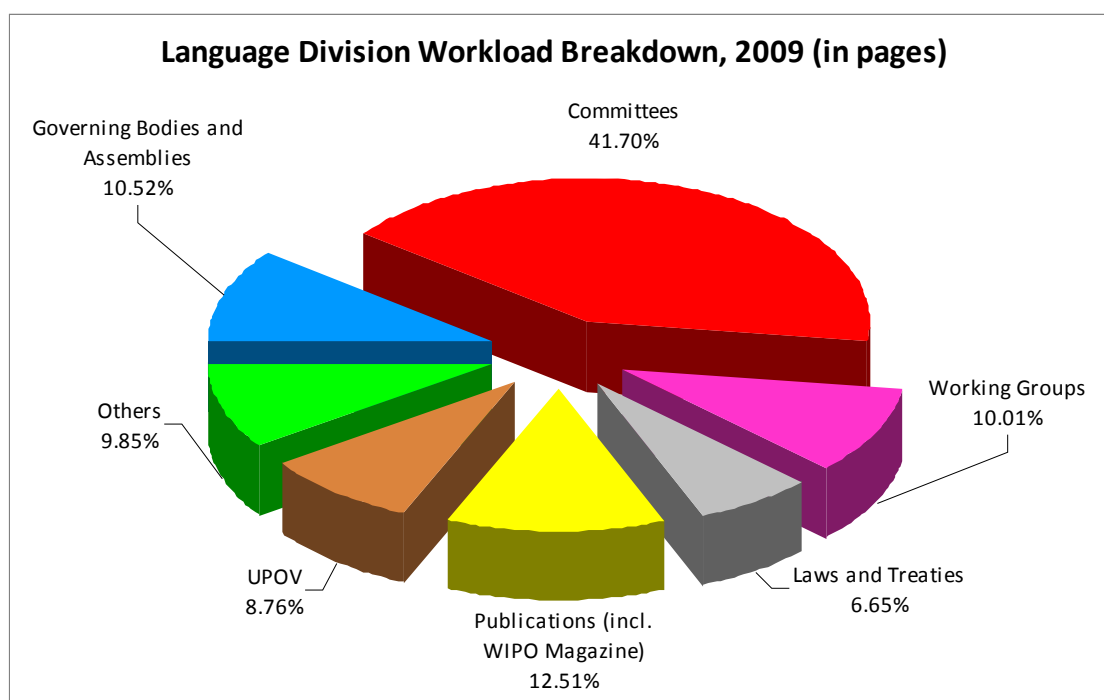
|                             | Staff Translators<br>(incl. Heads,<br>Revisers) | Short-Term<br>translators<br>(FTE*) | Total Translators<br>(FTE*) |
|-----------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Arabic Translation Section  | 2.0   | 1.5                                 | 3.5                         |
| Chinese Translation Section | 2.0   | 1.5                                 | 3.5                         |
| English Translation Section | 2.0   | 0.5                                 | 2.5                         |
| French Translation Section  | 9.0   | 1.0                                 | 10.0                        |
| Russian Translation Section | 2.0   | 1.0                                 | 3.0                         |
| Spanish Translation Section | 5.0   | 2.0                                 | 7.0                         |
| <b>Total</b>                | <b>22.0</b>                                     | <b>7.5</b>                          | <b>29.5</b>                 |

\*Full Time Equivalent

### Workload Capacity

32. The mandate of the Language Division covers all the translation needs of the Secretariat, which include not only documentation for WIPO official meetings, but also the translation of laws, treaties, publications, training materials, web site material, press releases, correspondence, internal administrative texts and memorandums, UPOV documents, and a range of other texts. The Division does not provide translations for the purposes of filings under the PCT, Madrid and Hague systems.
33. WIPO Committee documents represent a significant portion of around 42 percent of this overall workload. Nevertheless, the Division needs to reserve an adequate share of its personnel and non-personnel resources for all other translation work, as illustrated in more detail in Figure 1 which takes as a basis the 13,569 pages of source text that had to be handled in 2009. While 41.7 percent of that volume related to WIPO Committee documents, an estimated 10.5 percent related to Governing Bodies, 10 percent to working groups, 6.7 percent to laws and treaties, 12.5 per cent to WIPO publications and 8.8 percent to UPOV (for which translation work is carried out by WIPO under a special cost recovery arrangement).

**Figure 1**





## **VI. PROPOSED MEASURES TO RATIONALIZE AND CONTROL DOCUMENT VOLUMES**

34. The above-mentioned JIU report also provides information on efforts made by secretariats system wide to reduce the page limits of internally generated documents, concluding that “*reduction in the volume of documentation as well as making papers more concise and focused could be established as important goals to be reached*” (JIU/REP/2002/11, paragraph 109).
35. As an example, in 2001 the UNDP and UNFPA Boards had set a target to reduce the overall volume of documentation in 2002 by 50 percent by fixing page limits of 10 pages for non-financial policy documents, five pages for support papers, four to six pages for country outlines and a maximum of 25 pages for the results-oriented annual reports.
36. The following paragraphs outline a number of measures that, if implemented, could considerably reduce translation workload at WIPO and therefore free up existing resources for the purpose of extending language coverage for WIPO Committee meeting documents.

### **(a) Limiting the Length of Working Documents**

37. The first measure that may be adopted to reduce the translation workload is to introduce a statutory limit to the length of “standard” working documents (excluding support papers and reports which are discussed separately below).
38. Based on information obtained by the Secretariat through IAMLADP, the International Labor Organization (ILO), the World Health Organization (WHO), the Universal Postal Union (UPU), the European Commission (EC) and the European Parliament (EP) all apply page limits ranging from four to 10 pages for certain working documents.
39. As seen in Section IV above, in 2009 the average length of WIPO Committee documents overall was 33 pages. By limiting the length of “standard” working documents to 10 pages, the volume of source text of this category could be reduced by some 25 percent or around 560 pages annually. Adequate flexibility would be provided to allow for the Program and Budget and similar long documents.

### **(b) Introducing a Specific Translation Policy for Support Papers**

40. A second proposed measure to reduce translation workload would consist in introducing a distinction between the above working documents and exceptionally voluminous documents and support papers (studies, surveys, etc.) commissioned with increased frequency by certain WIPO Committees.
41. The Secretariat proposes that while “standard” working documents would be provided in the six languages, exceptionally voluminous documents would be made available only in the original language, with a summary of around 10 pages to be prepared by the Secretariat in all six languages. This second measure would enable the overall volume of text of this type submitted for translation to be reduced by some 720 pages or over 50 percent compared with 2009.

### **(c) Introducing Summary Records In Place of Verbatim Reports**

42. The Secretariat currently prepares verbatim reports for each of the Committees identified in Table 1. This practice is extremely costly in terms of personnel and non-personnel resources (intensive short-term recruitment, overtime and outsourcing costs).

43. A third measure to reduce translation workload, already adopted by the United Nations Office at Geneva (UNOG) and WHO, would consist in replacing the current costly practice of preparing verbatim reports with summary records to be generally limited to approximately 30 pages (compared with 100 to 250 pages for verbatim reports). They would be limited to statements of fact (agenda, participants) and a record of decisions and recommendations. The Secretariat estimates that this measure would enable the overall volume of reports to be reduced by some 70 percent or around 1360 pages per year.
44. In the current biennium, a new digital conference room recording system will replace the present analog system. Upon final installation and testing of the new system, changes to the reporting method may be proposed by the Secretariat that will include the digital recording of proceedings to replace the current practice of preparing verbatim reports. This same system could be extended to the Assemblies of the Member States of WIPO for which the elimination of verbatim reporting combined with electronic records of interventions could result in considerable savings that could be further used towards extended language coverage.

**(d) Setting Caps to Maximum Document Volumes for Each Given Committee Meeting**

45. A fourth measure to control translation workload would consist in setting caps on the total volume of documents prepared or submitted by the Secretariat for any given Committee meeting. This measure could serve as an effective means of ensuring that overall document volumes for a given meeting or Committee remain within certain limits, and would help define an appropriate apportionment of volumes and translation resources among the various Committees.
46. In conclusion, the Secretariat estimates that the combined implementation of the above four measures would enable the volume of source texts submitted for translation to be reduced by some 2640 pages per year, representing a 46 percent reduction compared with 2009, thereby freeing up resources for translation into additional languages with no additional resource requirements. Indeed, resources may be made available for additional translation work relating to, for example, WIPO publications or the WIPO web site.
47. A further important benefit of the above measures would be to facilitate document production and considerably reduce translation time for a given document, thereby leading to more timely delivery of the documents to Member States. This would equally address the recommendation by the JIU referred to in paragraph 20 above.

**VII. PROPOSED MEASURES TO REDUCE TRANSLATION COSTS**

48. A reduction in translation volumes as a result of the measures outlined in the previous Section would be reflected in the cost of translation. Further factors affecting cost include the contract mix (in-house combined with outsourced translation), rationalization of business processes both upstream of, and during, the translation process, and effective use of IT tools. "In-house translation" refers to the translation work carried out by salaried staff and temporary short-term translators and "outsourced translation" refers to the translation work that the Organization contracts out to external translators who are remunerated on the basis of work done
49. As indicated in the Program Performance Report for 2008/09 (document WO/PBC/15/4), the average cost per page of translation decreased to 213 Swiss francs as compared to

an average cost of 227 Swiss francs per page in the 2006/07 biennium, representing a significant reduction with respect to the benchmark of 246 Swiss francs per page established in the 2006/07 Program and Budget.

50. Such cost savings were made possible by improved work processes, improved use of IT tools, and a judicious combination of in-house and outsourced translation work.
51. Table 5 below shows the relative share of in-house *versus* outsourced translation on a language-by-language basis for the overall production of the Language Division.

**Table 5**  
**In-house *versus* Outsourced Translation by Language**  
**(in number of pages)**

|              | 2007          |              |               |            | 2008          |              |               |            | 2009          |               |               |            |
|--------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|------------|
|              | Internal      | External     | Total         | Ext.%      | Internal      | External     | Total         | Ext.%      | Internal      | External      | Total         | Ext.%      |
| Arabic       | 2,546         | 517          | 3,063         | 17%        | 3,217         | 687          | 3,904         | 18%        | 3,429         | 1,470         | 4,899         | 30%        |
| Chinese      | 3,399         | 918          | 4,317         | 21%        | 3,139         | 1,323        | 4,462         | 30%        | 3,869         | 1,146         | 5,015         | 23%        |
| English      | 1,024         | -            | 1,024         | 0%         | 2,015         | 526          | 2,541         | 21%        | 2,427         | 1,878         | 4,305         | 44%        |
| French       | 6,987         | 2,637        | 9,624         | 27%        | 7,270         | 2,051        | 9,322         | 22%        | 8,178         | 3,011         | 11,189        | 27%        |
| Russian      | 2,594         | 1,455        | 4,049         | 36%        | 1,732         | 585          | 2,318         | 25%        | 2,431         | 984           | 3,415         | 29%        |
| Spanish      | 5,252         | 3,024        | 8,276         | 37%        | 6,415         | 2,521        | 8,936         | 28%        | 7,548         | 3,980         | 11,528        | 35%        |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>21,803</b> | <b>8,552</b> | <b>30,354</b> | <b>28%</b> | <b>23,789</b> | <b>7,694</b> | <b>31,483</b> | <b>24%</b> | <b>27,882</b> | <b>12,469</b> | <b>40,351</b> | <b>31%</b> |

52. As shown in Table 5, in 2009 the Language Division outsourced almost one third of its overall translation workload (31 percent) while the other two-thirds were handled in-house by staff and short-term translators.
53. Outsourcing has provided a means of augmenting translation capacity, within the allocated non-personnel budget envelope, to respond to peaks in translation demand, to overcome bottlenecks, and to translate excessively long source texts which would occupy in-house staff for a substantial length of time and prevent them from dealing with core business. Translations are outsourced to experienced freelance translators familiar with WIPO documents and activities.
54. On first appearances, the average cost per page for outsourced translation is estimated to be one third of the cost of in-house translation. However, while outsourcing thus appears to be the cheapest way of having translations done, substantial hidden costs that are not reflected in the rates paid to outside contractors must be taken into account. These hidden costs are generated partly by additional administrative and quality-control work, as well as the selection, training and supervising activities carried out by senior specialized language staff. While this overhead cost of outsourcing is not easy to calculate, it is nevertheless not negligible.
55. An important difficulty not to be overlooked is that of finding, training and, most importantly, retaining highly competent freelance translators, particularly for languages such as Arabic, Chinese and Russian, given also that they are in high demand by other international organizations. In all cases, each freelance translator needs to be trained and monitored by internal staff, thus any increase in the external translation workforce will inevitably require some increase in the internal workforce to perform these additional tasks while still being able to maintain essential core capacity.
56. In this context, in an effort to decrease translation costs further in 2006, WIPO organized an international tender to identify suitable translation companies whose cost could have been even lower than the cost of outsourcing to individual translators. As a result of the tender, three companies were selected. However the quality of the translation work performed by these companies fell far short of requirements, and the time required to revise, return and recheck the work offset any potential savings.

57. Another proposed cost reduction measure is to increase productivity through enhanced use of new technologies. Indeed, IT tools, already used in the Language Division, provide opportunities for improving quality and productivity. The 2010/11 Program and Budget makes provision for upgrading such tools as well as for improving existing terminology databases. However, acquisition of such tools entails further investment in customization, training for the users and regular upgrading and maintenance.
58. The various means of reducing translation costs as set out above, whether by means of volume control measures, appropriate use of outsourcing, improved work processes or the use of IT tools, are in themselves sound business practices and at the same time free up existing resources which can then be reallocated to the extension of language coverage for documentation for WIPO Committee meetings.

#### VIII. EXTENDING LANGUAGE COVERAGE FOR WIPO COMMITTEE MEETING DOCUMENTS: RESPONDING TO DEMAND

59. Table 6 below shows the additional translation cost per year that would be incurred by extending language coverage for WIPO Committee meeting documents to all six official languages of the UN. It is based on the following assumptions:
- a cost per page of 213 Swiss francs (see Section VII above, paragraph 49)
  - a theoretical page length of 330 words (in line with common UN practice, see paragraph 21 above)
  - an average outsourcing volume of one third of the total workload (see paragraph 52 above)
  - staffing of the Language Division as per Table 4 above.

**Table 6**  
**Six Language Coverage for All WIPO Committee Documentation**  
**Comparative Cost per Year**  
*(in thousands of Swiss francs)*

|  | <b>Baseline<br/>2009</b> | <b>Scenario A</b> | <b>Scenario B</b> | <b>A versus<br/>Baseline</b> | <b>B versus<br/>Baseline</b> |
|--|--------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Source Text Volume<br>(in number of pages) | 5,658                    | 5,658             | 3,000             | -                            | <b>-2,658</b>                |
| Translation Volume<br>(in number of pages) | 17,829                   | 28,291            | 15,000            | 10,462                       | <b>-2,829</b>                |
| Yearly Cost<br>(thousands Swiss francs)    | 3,798                    | 6,026             | 3,195             | 2,228                        | <b>-603</b>                  |

60. The estimates in the above table are based on 2009 documentation levels. Should this base level change, for example as a result of a higher number of meetings per year, or other variables, these estimates would need to be revised accordingly.
61. Scenario A shows the volume of source text, translation workload and annual cost that would be generated if all WIPO Committee documents were to be translated into all six languages without implementation of document volume rationalization and control measures. Scenario B shows the same data with implementation of document volume rationalization and control measures.

62. While the implementation of Scenario A would require the allocation to Program 27 of an estimated additional amount of around 2.2 million Swiss francs per year or 4.4 million per biennium, implementation of Scenario B would enable the Secretariat to provide documentation for WIPO Committee meetings in the six languages within the current budget envelope of Program 27.
63. Depending on which of the two possible scenarios is chosen, the timelines for the implementation of this extended language coverage would differ.
- If Scenario A is chosen (no document rationalization and control measures), the implementation of the extended six language coverage is proposed to begin as of 2012, with the proviso that the resource adjustment required by the introduction of the new policy would be factored into the draft Program and Budget for 2012/13.
  - If Scenario B is chosen (document volume rationalization and control measures implemented with immediate effect), the extension of language coverage for documentation for WIPO Committee meetings could be implemented commencing with meetings in 2011.
64. In light of the above, the Secretariat recommends the implementation of Scenario B.

## **IX. TOWARDS A COMPREHENSIVE LANGUAGE POLICY FOR WIPO: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

65. The present document was prepared by the Secretariat as a first contribution to the development of a comprehensive language policy that, in addition to documentation for WIPO Committee meetings, will subsequently also address language coverage for interpretation, WIPO publications, the WIPO web site and any other documents not covered elsewhere.
66. Based on the analysis contained in this document, the Secretariat submits for the consideration of the Member States the following proposals.

### **Proposed Language Policy for WIPO Committee Meeting Documents**

67. It is proposed that:
- (i) the language coverage for WIPO Committee meeting documents shall be extended to the six official languages of the UN (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian, and Spanish) and shall apply to the WIPO Committees listed in Table 1 above and to any committee that may be created in future by decision of the Member States of WIPO and that may be assimilated to the Committees as identified above; and
  - (ii) the policy is to be implemented commencing 2011 subject to the support by WIPO Member States of the document volume rationalization and control measures that are described in Section VI of this document.

### **Proposed Language Policy for Interpretation, WIPO Publications, the WIPO Web Site and Other WIPO Documents**

68. The Secretariat will build on the experience of developing and implementing a language policy for WIPO Committee meeting documents and establish further language policy proposals in respect of interpretation, publications, WIPO web site and other WIPO documents.

69. The Secretariat will factor any resource requirements resulting from these language policy proposals into the draft Program and Budget for 2012/13 or, as need be, the draft Program and Budget for 2014/15. The approval of these Program and Budget documents will determine the timelines for the implementation of the respective language policy proposals.
70. In principle, the Secretariat aims to deploy the various elements of this comprehensive language policy within the framework of the Medium-Term Strategic Plan of the Organization, in other words by the end of 2015.

*71. The Program and Budget Committee is invited to:*

*(i) take note of the information contained in this document;*

*(ii) recommend to the General Assembly the adoption of the policy proposals contained in Section IX above.*

[End of Document]