



United Nations Industrial Development Organization

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Multilingualism

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Note by the Secretariat

The present document informs on recent developments with regard to multilingualism at UNIDO, thereby updating the report by the Director-General presented to the thirty-seventh session of the Board (document IDB.37/9).

1. Pursuant to the resolution on multilingualism at UNIDO (GC.13/Res.4) adopted by the General Conference at its thirteenth session, a progress report on the implementation of the resolution was presented to the Board at its thirty-seventh session. Following the discussions by Member States during that session, the present document seeks to provide an update on relevant developments in that area since then.

I. Activities developed in-house

A. Advocacy and UNIDO website

2. The Advocacy and Communications Group (ACG) within the Regional Strategies and Field Operations Division has been updating and further developing

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the French language version of the UNIDO website with the help of a consultant. With a view to also developing web pages in other United Nations official languages, ACG prepared terms of reference for a multilingual internship programme as well as a list of potential educational institutions. The Human Resource Management Branch (HRM) is currently conducting a review of the UNIDO internship programme, and the possibility of setting up closer cooperation with educational institutions is being evaluated under such a review.

B. Staff recruitment and training

3. The Organization continued to systematically include in vacancy announcements for Professional positions the requirement for knowledge of other United Nations official languages in addition to English. All vacancy announcements for Professional posts issued in 2010 included that provision. UNIDO also enhanced its efforts aimed at achieving a wide circulation of vacancy announcements to reach as many qualified and possibly bilingual candidates as possible. In addition to publishing the vacancy announcements on the UNIDO website and distributing them systematically to Permanent Missions of Member States, other international organizations, academic institutions and professional associations, the Organization continued publishing its vacancies in external regional media covering Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa and Asia.

4. The new learning policy (Director-General's Bulletin UNIDO/DGB/(M).117 dated 12 April 2010) with the aim of fostering multilingualism, supports staff members in acquiring and improving language skills in the six official languages of the United Nations by financing 100 per cent, instead of previously 50 per cent, of the fees for courses successfully completed at United Nations approved institutions. The policy also provides for reimbursement of staff for the full cost of successful participation in the United Nations Language Proficiency Examination in the six official languages.

C. Information material, technical assistance and training

5. In the last biennium, a number of technical publications, brochures as well as technical assistance and training material, have been translated from English into French and/or Spanish, and depending on the recipient country, into Arabic or Russian. These publications covered all UNIDO technical cooperation areas, including agri-business development; special programmes and least developed countries; business, investment and technology services; trade capacity-building; energy and climate change; environmental management and Montreal Protocol. Translations were funded for the most part from project funds. The Secretariat intends to follow up on developments in this area in the current and future bienniums.

D. Coordination of multilingualism

6. Since the issue of multilingualism was raised at the thirty-sixth session of the Board in 2009, the need for an in-house coordination of activities related to

multilingualism at UNIDO in close cooperation with relevant organizational units, providing advice on all aspects of multilingualism has been emphasized. In this context, a Coordinator for multilingualism has now been designated within existing posts in the Office of the Director-General. The coordinator will also act as point of contact for Permanent Missions and the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) for any questions relating to multilingualism in UNIDO.

II. Developments within the United Nations system

7. In June 2010, UNIDO was one of the organizations taking part in the first phase of a review undertaken by the JIU entitled “Multilingualism in the United Nations system Organizations: Status of implementation”. This review will follow up on the JIU system-wide report JIU/REP/2002/11 on the same subject. The review was initiated with the circulation of a questionnaire to all participating organizations, and will also entail visits by JIU inspectors to different branches in UNIDO. The questionnaire that the UNIDO Secretariat was asked to complete addressed issues such as language examinations, staff language training, access to information, and development of a website towards official language parity. While identifying best practices and recommending actions for further improvement where appropriate, the JIU review will assess the impact of measures undertaken within the United Nations system, thus providing Member States with a comprehensive overview when considering the Secretary-General’s report in 2011 at the sixty-sixth session of the General Assembly.

III. Action required of the Board

8. The Board may wish to take note of the information provided in the present document.
