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Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
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Unies pour l'alimentation
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Продовольственная и
сельскохозяйственная организация
Объединенных Наций

Organización de las
Naciones Unidas para la
Alimentación y la Agricultura

منظمة
الغذية والزراعة
للأمم المتحدة

JOINT MEETING

**Hundred and Seventeenth Session of the Programme Committee and
Hundred and Fifty-seventh Session of the Finance Committee**

Rome, 9-13 March 2015

PROGRESS ON LANGUAGE BALANCE IN FAO'S PRODUCTS

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*This document can be accessed using the Quick Response Code on this page;
a FAO initiative to minimize its environmental impact and promote greener communications.
Other documents can be consulted at www.fao.org*



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1. The initiative to improve and increase a more balanced language coverage of FAO's publication products is driven by the consideration that publishing: a) is an integral part of the Programme of Work and Budget of the Organization; b) constitutes a major activity for professional staff at headquarters and in decentralized offices; c) underpins FAO's core functions; and d) makes a significant contribution to the achievement of the Organization's goals and Strategic Objectives.
2. The aim of this document is to provide an update further to the report provided to the Joint Meeting of the Finance and Programme Committees¹ in November 2014 and subsequently included in CL 150/6 presented at the 150th session of the FAO Council in December 2014.
3. Noting the percentages reported therein with regard to language balance in FAO publications and Web sites, substantive progress has been made to improve language balance of FAO products since November 2014, specifically, to increase Arabic, Chinese and Russian language coverage in publications, Web sites and in terminology.
4. Concentrated efforts have been undertaken by the Office of Corporate Communications (OCC) to improve electronic dissemination of FAO publications in all languages with a specific focus on enhancing language production in the Arabic, Chinese and Russian languages.
5. Concern regarding the quantity and quality of FAO language coverage extends beyond production to the wider issue of decisional capacity and resource availability.

Publications

Arabic

6. Meetings have been held with the Chairperson and members of the Near East Regional Groups, to discuss reinforcement measures to improve both the quantity and the quality of publications produced in Arabic. Contemporarily, FAO has worked with other UN agencies to identify service provision at reduced costs to increase the number of publications produced in Arabic while maintaining high-quality standards. As a result, a worldwide roster of service providers has been established.

Chinese

7. Meetings have been held with the Permanent Representative of China led to the implementation of agreements already in place and the resulting translation of 18 publications currently underway. FAO is working together with the Centre of International Cooperation Service (CICOS) of the Ministry of Agriculture in the People's Republic of China, to upgrade FAO's Chinese publications programme.

Russian

8. FAO has identified commercial and institutional publishers that could support the Organization in the cost-effective production and dissemination of Russian language publications to FAO's intended target audiences. Effective dialogue with the Russian Permanent Representation to FAO is ongoing to discuss ways in which the availability of more information in the Russian language could be strengthened, and specific areas for support of Russian language products have been identified.

9. The implementation of a new Publications Workflow System (PWS) allowing for the overall view of language coverage prior to approval facilitates assurance of the same.

Websites

10. As previously reported, all content on the regional Web sites for Africa; Latin America and the Caribbean; as well as the Near East have been translated respectively to French, Spanish and Arabic.

11. All content of the Regional Office for Asia and Pacific Web site has been translated to Chinese (with the exception of news and events).

¹ JM 2014.2/3

12. All content of the Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia Web site has been translated to Russian. All communication on the REU Web site is published in both English and Russian. News and events are also automatically translated to Russian as they are produced. Russian language capacity is an important criterion in selection of staff for the region and both project documents and communications are increasingly translated into Russian. Editorial capacity in the respective offices has been further enhanced, as noted in document Follow-up to the Evaluation FAO's Regional and Subregional Offices for Europe and Central Asia².

13. Presentations were made to the regional groups during the 150th Session of the Council in December 2014 to highlight the need for consistent and comprehensive messaging through the FAO channels and to report on the status of migration of the regional office Web sites to the new FAO Web site and subsequent language implementation.

14. All new main pages on www.fao.org are now produced in all FAO languages.

Terminology

15. Considerable efforts have been made during the current biennium to establish agreements with universities towards internship for students and young graduates, with a view to strengthening in terminology research in areas related to the mandate of FAO. Thus far, the Organization has concluded agreements with the following academic institutions:

- Herzen State University of Russia, St. Petersburg
- Shanghai International Studies University
- Saint-Joseph University, Beirut
- University of Rome *Tor Vergata*
- University of International Studies, Roma
- University of Bath
- University of Mons
- University of Bologna

16. FAO will also be party to the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to be negotiated between the United Nations Department for General Assembly and Conference Management and universities. This MoU has been established to support students in the preparation of competitive language examinations and to identify prospective candidates for language positions.

17. Good progress has been made in 2014 to increase the number of terms in the FAO Terminological database (FAOTerm). New terms are systematically added in all FAO languages and special projects have been established to reduce the existing gap, notably for Russian, Arabic and Chinese terminology. The percentage of available terms, by languages, as of February 2015, is as follows:

	French	Spanish	Arabic	Chinese	Russian
February 2015	89%	88%	72%	61%	21%
December 2013	86%	66%	43%	39%	12%

18. The Organization has made significant progress in pursuit of language balance of its products, and efforts will continue in regard, including by means of ongoing dialogue and engagement with the membership.

² PC 117/4