

168th Session of the Council

Item 18: Progress Report on Multilingualism at FAO

1. Multilingualism permeates FAO in a myriad of transversal dimensions, from the goods and services provided to Members, to the governance of the Organization, its communication products, and its Human Resources.
2. Since taking office, the Director-General has intensified the commitment and attention to multilingualism at FAO. Similarly, the 166th Session of the Council welcomed FAO's reinvigorated commitment to multilingualism, and endorsed its approach to further strengthening of the same, including through implementation of recommendations of the report of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU)¹ of the United Nations on multilingualism.
3. The 166th Session of the Council also requested that an update be presented at its next main session. Accordingly, document CL 168/18 entitled *Progress Report on Multilingualism at FAO* is hereby submitted to the Council on the progress of work and results achieved so far, and continued measures for strengthening multilingualism at FAO, in five main areas.
4. First, the ongoing development of a strategic policy framework for multilingualism, which will be submitted in final form for adoption by the Council at its 170th Session, following an iterative and inclusive process. The strategic policy framework is aimed at providing a holistic and practical guidance to enhancing multilingualism in FAO.
5. Second, appointment of an FAO Coordinator for Multilingualism, which was promulgated by Director-General's Bulletin no. 2021/32, and who will lead *inter alia* efforts in developing and implementing the strategic policy framework.
6. Data on language products and services will be reported in a comprehensive manner in the Programme Implementation Report 2020-21. This includes the surge in translation and interpretation services for meetings; and delivery of language products gearing up dissemination of FAO's expertise and specialized knowledge, such as the revamped FAO main website and translation of the E-learning Academy training and educational courses.
7. Furthermore, digital innovations and language technologies, including multilingual knowledge databases, such as AGROVOC²; innovations such as the new FAO Resolutions and Constitution Portal to improve quality of digital storage and referencing; and performance testing being undertaken on innovative document translation and processing technologies.
8. Finally, the Human Resources of FAO, where policies for enhanced language skills cover the span from recruitment, through employee service, and to talent development. Comprehensive information and data in this regard is reported to the Council annually through the first main session of the Finance Committee dedicated to FAO matters.
9. Members are invited to take note of the update on multilingualism at FAO, and offer any comments they deem appropriate.

¹ JIU/REP/2020/6, Multilingualism in the United Nations system

² <http://www.fao.org/agrovoc/home>

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