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Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

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CONSOLIDATED REPORT ON THE MEASURES TAKEN BY MEMBER STATES FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RECOMMENDATION CONCERNING THE PROMOTION AND USE OF MULTILINGUALISM AND UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO CYBERSPACE

SUMMARY

Pursuant to 33 C/Resolution 54, by which the General Conference requested each Member State “to prepare and submit to the Secretariat a first report on the action taken to implement this Recommendation by the end of the month of January 2007, and subsequently once every four years with effect from that date”, the Director-General hereby submits to the Executive Board, before submission to the General Conference for consideration, a first consolidated report, which has been prepared on the basis of an analysis of the replies provided in accordance with the Guidelines for the Preparation of Reports which were sent to all Member States (ref.: CL/3798 of 27 June 2006).

Decision proposed: paragraph 31.

BACKGROUND

1. The Recommendation concerning the Promotion and Use of Multilingualism and Universal Access to Cyberspace was adopted on 15 October 2003 by the General Conference at its 32nd session.
2. At its 33rd session, in October 2005, the General Conference, after considering that it was important to establish a system of reports on measures taken by Member States to implement this Recommendation, requested each Member State to prepare and submit to the Secretariat a first report on such measures by the end of the month of January 2007, and subsequently once every four years with effect from that date (33 C/Resolution 54).
3. By the same resolution, the General Conference also requested the Executive Board to transmit to it at its 34th session a consolidated report on the measures taken by Member States for the implementation of this Recommendation, together with the Executive Board's observations or comments and any observations or comments that the Director-General might wish to make.
4. It should be recalled in this connection that the submission by Member States of reports on the action taken by them upon the recommendations adopted by the General Conference is provided for under Article VIII of the Constitution. Examination by the Executive Board of such reports is provided for by the Rules of Procedure concerning recommendations to Member States and international conventions (Article 18).

CONSOLIDATED REPORT

5. This document is submitted to the Executive Board pursuant to 33 C/Resolution 54. Following the adoption of the resolution, the Director-General, by a letter dated 27 June 2006 (ref. CL/3798, copy in Annex I), invited Member States to transmit to the Organization their reports on the implementation of the Recommendation concerning the Promotion and Use of Multilingualism and Universal Access to Cyberspace by 31 January 2007.
6. By means of a reminder dated 30 October 2005 (ref. CI/INF/UAP/BR/2006/220, copy in Annex II), the Assistant Director-General for Communication and Information also encouraged Member States to prepare and submit to the Organization by the fixed deadline a full report prepared in accordance with the Guidelines prepared for that purpose and sent to Member States together with the above-mentioned letter from the Director-General.
7. As at 31 January 2007 the Secretariat had received 23 reports from the following Member States: Algeria, Australia, Belgium, Bhutan, Bolivia, Canada, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, France, Georgia, Hungary, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Malawi, Mexico, Namibia, Qatar, Russian Federation, Slovakia, Turkey and Zimbabwe.

Elements for reporting on the specific provisions of the Recommendation

Development of multilingual content and systems

8. In the light of some of the reports received, the absence of the issue of multilingualism from the strategic action plans of State institutions and from national debates continues to be a key problem in promoting a genuinely multilingual cyberspace. Furthermore, additional technical supports (guides to online translation and dictionaries, specific text correction and automatic translation software, and so on) should be made available to users to that end.
9. Other replies reported on definite progress in this field. For instance, several States (Australia, Canada, Egypt, Georgia, Hungary, Latvia, Malawi, Namibia, Russian Federation) stated that they had strengthened their efforts to promote multilingualism by adopting appropriate policies and strategies to maintain and promote linguistic and cultural identities.

10. Particular attention was paid to the promotion of linguistic diversity. In Colombia, programmes have been put in place for the promotion of cultural and linguistic diversity, in particular through developing communication and broadcasting strategies for indigenous peoples. Likewise, the Government of Canada supports community programmes by means of the Aboriginal Languages Initiative. Bolivia is also introducing policies to develop indigenous knowledge and languages. Teacher-training is emphasized as an important stage in this endeavour, as is the production of appropriate teaching material in indigenous languages (PROEIB Andes programme). For Egypt, linguistic diversity is a cultural asset and a “window” for disseminating cultural traditions and experiences (Eternal Egypt project).

11. In Slovakia, stress is placed on training information professionals to develop and disseminate content in the official language and minority languages. Lithuania, in conjunction with the Council of Europe, has prepared policy guidelines for the application of multilingualism in schools, while the State Commission for the Lithuanian Language is developing programmes and activities enabling information technology to be used to preserve the cultural and linguistic heritage.

12. Some States consider that the development of language processing computer tools requires substantial research and development aid in order to fund the instruments that are essential for improving such tools: creation of digitized language corpuses, evaluation of the performance of the tools, and so on. In France, the Technolanguage project, launched in 2003, aims to meet these needs. New teaching tools are being prepared and regularly placed online by Belgium (French Community Ministry) and Zimbabwe, which has launched several dictionaries and websites specializing in language promotion online.

Facilitating access to networks and services

13. The Member States overwhelmingly recognize the need to promote access to the Internet as a service in the public interest and legislative measures have been adopted to that end by the Russian Federation (Federal law adopted in July 2006 on information, information technology and information protection, with a special section on the right to access information) and by France, with the blueprint and programming law on the future of schools of 23 April 2005 concerning the acquisition by all young people of information and communication technology (ICT) skills. Likewise, since November 2006 Qatar has been implementing a law regulating the information and communication technology sector and, among the approaches mentioned in this context, the Teacher Online project, which involves sending lessons on mobile telephones, is described as having considerable potential.

14. Several Member States have introduced annual action plans to encourage community Internet use. Thus, in Lithuania, more than 300 public Internet access structures have been opened and in Colombia the creation of some 1,490 Internet access points has been encouraged by the Ministry of Communications. Other specific examples include the “OUSRATIC, a PC in every household” initiative which aims to enable every Algerian family to have the means of Internet access, and projects to create Internet centres and clubs and cyber cafés (Bhutan, Egypt, Latvia, Turkey, Zimbabwe).

15. In addition, measures have been taken in most of the Member States which submitted a report to open up isolated locations and rural areas so that the whole of their territory is covered by the telecommunications network. Thus, in Mexico the Government is continuing its efforts to extend network access to the regions, paying particular attention to users in indigenous language communities. In Bolivia, the Government has launched a project for educational community computer centres in order to integrate ICT training and application into the national education system.

16. The reports submitted also underscore the close link between basic education and ICT access. Literacy remains a significant factor and an absolute prerequisite for making progress in the digital inclusion of communities and Namibia’s report explicitly stresses that education is the

key sector in developing a participatory form of access to cyberspace. In Colombia, the programme “Computers to educate” aims to give all public education institutions ICT access, including in rural areas and among indigenous communities. For the same reason, projects to create educational and cultural portals have received institutional backing (Australia, Belgium, Bolivia, Latvia, Turkey).

17. Various programmes have been implemented to train disadvantaged citizens in ICTs and specific measures taken for the benefit of vulnerable groups (persons with disabilities, ethnic minorities, and so on).

18. In some States (Russian Federation, Slovakia) infrastructure development has been one of the main priorities in the computerization strategy. The question arising for some countries is not so much access as the quality of the services provided and in particular network speed and security. In that perspective, several States (Canada, Colombia, Japan, Latvia) have launched broadband programmes for rural development. The programmes are intended to help local communities devise and implement action plans for the development of the broadband infrastructure. Their priorities include support for local communities, such as indigenous, rural or remote communities, in overcoming geographical, social and economic obstacles to broadband access.

19. Specialized government structures have been set up (Malawi) to reply to questions about access to networks and services and several Member States have created local and national mechanisms to facilitate universal Internet access by means of more affordable telecommunication and Internet costs. The measures taken include the efforts by Côte d’Ivoire to encourage investment and the reduction of financial obstacles to the use of ICTs such as taxes and customs duties on computer equipment and the significant efforts made in Japan and Algeria regarding Internet pricing, which has been cut thanks to the coordinated efforts of telecommunications operators and Internet access and service providers. Other countries are still seeking a solution to the very high cost of Internet services and the report submitted by Mexico indicates that it is among the most expensive countries in terms of telecommunications, which is an obvious brake on people’s use of the network.

Development of public domain content

20. Legal measures have been taken in some States (Australia, Latvia, Slovakia, Turkey, Zimbabwe) to ensure free access to information in the public domain. Other legislative measures adopted cover the development of public domain content and personal data protection. Australia has launched, for example, cultural heritage preservation programmes in digital form and the Egyptian Government has created a computerized framework for bringing together online more than 700 different services of the Egyptian administration.

21. In France, the availability of public data free of charge has been established in principle by the government action programme for the country’s entry into the knowledge society (PAGSI). Thus, the National Library of France has placed online on its website Gallica a collection of more than 80,000 digitized works that are freely accessible to the public. Bolivia continues to place educational and scientific content online so as to facilitate the work of teachers and students and Colombia has launched a specific policy (Agenda de Conectividad) aimed at improving access by citizens to the sources and content of information produced by the national government and local bodies (the programmes “Territorial Government Online”, “Government Intranet”, and so on).

22. Some States have encouraged the use of free software (Australia, Russian Federation) and lines of analysis and action have been proposed (Belgium) to promote more effectively the development of public domain content, such as simplifying administrative regulations and documents, communicating to users and raising their awareness, optimizing education management, developing new tools, defining a human resources training strategy, improving data collection and management, and so on.

Reaffirming the equitable balance between the interest of rights-holders and the public interest

23. The vast majority of governments are continuing to assess the impact of technological change on matters of copyright and public access. Several States consider that copyright in cyberspace comes within the legal capacity to improve existing legislation and that as a result new texts should be prepared and put into effect in order to cope with the constantly evolving risks and challenges in this field (Australia, Malawi, Egypt, Hungary, Japan, Latvia, Russian Federation, Turkey, Zimbabwe).

24. Thus, a new law on information technology and freedom was adopted by the French Parliament on 15 July 2004 introducing legal concepts adapted to the new forms of data processing emerging from the information society and digital economy. It also strengthens the rights and protection of individuals and raises the level of obligations incumbent upon those responsible for data processing. In August 2006 France also published a law on copyright and related rights in the information society (Law No. 2006-961, known as the DADVSI Law) which transposed the European directive on the harmonization of certain aspects of copyright and related rights in the information society.

25. The replies submitted stress the importance of copyright education (Algeria, Slovakia, Zimbabwe) and one of the specific aims of the above-mentioned Algerian OUSRATIC initiative is to encourage Internet users to respect intellectual property and copyright and related rights.

26. Another aspect emphasized in the reports concerns the access to and use by schools of works freely and legally available online. The Canadian report for instance states that many organizations for the collective management of rights and digital content providers offer licences for access, legal reproduction and communication of works available online.

CONCLUSION

27. Some definite progress has been made in terms of Member States becoming more aware of the importance of the Recommendation concerning the Promotion and Use of Multilingualism and Universal Access to Cyberspace in the development of knowledge societies. Administrative, policy and legislative measures have been taken by Member States at various levels to facilitate the application of its provisions. Nevertheless, additional efforts will have to be made to further mobilize the various institutions at the national level in order to achieve its objectives.

28. According to some replies, the activities and measures taken by Member States have not always been deliberately designed to apply the Recommendation, but even so a significant number of them contribute directly or indirectly to its implementation.

29. Several States stated that the activities carried out to give effect to the Recommendation were initiated and fully fit within the process of building an information society and were a concrete response to the appeal launched by the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS).

30. The system of reports on the Recommendation is a useful exercise that enables Member States to gauge the impact of commitments undertaken in this field and to adjust their national programmes, strategies and policies as necessary. For UNESCO, it means using the information gathered to provide the effective support that Member States need to develop high-quality programmes directed towards the promotion of multilingualism and universal access to cyberspace which lie at the heart of the mandate laid down in its Constitution.

PROPOSED DRAFT DECISION

31. After examining this document, the Executive Board may wish to adopt the following decision:

The Executive Board,

1. Recalling 33 C/Resolution 54,
2. Having examined document 176 EX/22 concerning the reports and replies received in the first consultation of Member States on the application of the Recommendation concerning the Promotion and Use of Multilingualism and Universal Access to Cyberspace,
3. Thanks the Director-General for his efforts to facilitate the establishment of a system of reports on measures taken to implement this Recommendation, in particular through the elaboration of Guidelines for the Preparation of Reports by Member States to the General Conference;
4. Takes note of the fact that only 23 Member States submitted reports for this first consultation;
5. Recalls that the submission by Member States of periodic reports concerning the application of the recommendations adopted by the General Conference is an obligation enshrined in the Constitution;
6. Further recalls that the periodic consultation of Member States on the application of the aforementioned Recommendation is intended to enable the Organization to assess the extent to which Member States are implementing that instrument as well as the obstacles they encounter;
7. Reaffirms the importance of the Recommendation and of its application by Member States so that the provisions adopted in this standard-setting document may become a reality for all;
8. Recommends to the General Conference that it invite those Member States that have not yet done so to take measures to implement the Recommendation;
9. Notes in addition that the consultation has provided useful information on the measures taken to implement the Recommendation, which Member States may use to promote its application in the future;
10. Invites the Director-General to transmit to the General Conference at its 34th session the consolidated report on the measures taken by Member States for the implementation of this Recommendation, together with the Executive Board's observations or comments and any observations or comments that the Director-General might wish to make.



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

176 EX/22
Annex I

ANNEX I

Ref.: CL/3798

Subject: **Reports by Member States to the General Conference on Measures Taken to Implement the Recommendation concerning the Promotion and Use of Multilingualism and Universal Access to Cyberspace**

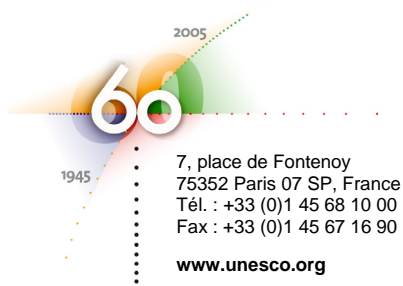
Sir/Madam,

Pursuant to Articles 15 and 16.1 of the Rules of Procedure concerning recommendations to Member States and international conventions covered by the terms of Article IV, paragraph 4, of the Constitution and in conformity with 32 C/Resolution 41 of the General Conference, I transmitted to you, in February 2004, a certified copy of the above-mentioned Recommendation. I also formally reminded Member States of their obligation to submit it, within a period of one year from the close of the session of the General Conference at which the Recommendation was adopted in 2003, to their competent national authorities, bodies, target groups and other entities interested in matters dealt with therein, in order to give effect to it in national legislation and policies.

As you are aware, at the 33rd session of the General Conference, Member States agreed to establish a system of reports on measures taken to implement this Recommendation (33 C/Resolution 54). During the debate on this item, the representatives of Member States emphasized again the importance of promoting and supporting multilingualism and equitable access to information and knowledge, especially in the public domain, and reiterated their conviction that UNESCO should play a leading role in this field.

Thus, the General Conference requested each Member State to prepare and submit to the Secretariat a first report on the action taken to implement this Recommendation by the end of the month of January 2007, and subsequently once every four years with effect from that date.

The General Conference also requested the Secretariat to provide clear guidelines to Member States for the submission of their reports, which are enclosed herewith. Further assistance in the process of preparation and follow-up of the reports may also be provided upon request.



To Ministers responsible for relations with UNESCO

The reporting process should take into consideration all actions that Member States may have taken in this regard, including those aimed at implementing the relevant decisions adopted at the World Summit on the Information Society.

It is my hope that Member States will recognize the significance of the established system of reports and will take this opportunity to further promote the objectives of this important Recommendation.

Please send your report with the implementation of the Recommendation by 31 January 2007 to Mr Abdul Waheed Khan, Assistant Director-General for Communication and Information, who is at your disposal to provide any additional information in this respect (tel: +33 1 45 68 43 20, fax: +33 1 45 68 55 81, email: aw.khan@unesco.org)

Please accept, Sir/Madam, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Koïchiro Matsuura
Director-General

Enclosures: 1

cc: National Commissions for UNESCO
Permanent Delegations to UNESCO

GUIDELINES FOR THE PREPARATION OF REPORTS BY MEMBER STATES TO THE GENERAL CONFERENCE ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RECOMMENDATION CONCERNING THE PROMOTION AND USE OF MULTILINGUALISM AND UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO CYBERSPACE

Preliminary remarks

These Guidelines are intended to assist Member States in the preparation of the reports on the implementation of the Recommendation concerning the Promotion and Use of Multilingualism and Universal Access to Cyberspace. Adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO in 2003, the Recommendation reflects UNESCO's mandate as set forth under its Constitution, which states that "the wide diffusion of culture, and the education of humanity for justice and liberty and peace are indispensable to the dignity of man and constitute a sacred duty which all the nations must fulfil in a spirit of mutual assistance and concern".

For several years, various resolutions of the General Conference and the Executive Board of the Organization have urged Member States and Associate Members to promote multilingualism and universal access to public domain information for the purpose of education, science, culture and communication. As a result, UNESCO took several proactive measures in order to encourage Member States to support universal access to information and knowledge, and formulate policies and regulatory frameworks which would determine the future orientations of knowledge societies.

System of Reports

Pursuant to Articles 15 and 16.1 of the Rules of Procedure concerning recommendations to Member States and international conventions covered by the terms of Article IV, paragraph 4, of the Constitution and in conformity with 32 C/Resolution 41 of the General Conference, in February 2004, the Director-General transmitted to Member States a certified copy of this Recommendation, formally reminding them of their obligation to submit it, within a period of one year from the close of the session of the General Conference at which the Recommendation was adopted, to their competent national authorities, bodies, target groups and other entities interested in matters dealt with therein.

Further to the amendments made to Part VI of the aforesaid Rules of Procedure, which were adopted by the General Conference at its 32nd session (see 32 C/Resolution 77), Article 17.1 of the Rules of Procedure now provides that it is for the General Conference to decide whether to ask UNESCO Member States to submit reports on the measures taken to implement a specific convention or recommendation, specifying the dates by which such reports have to be received by the UNESCO Secretariat.

Consequently, the 33rd session of the General Conference adopted 33 C/Resolution 54 concerning the establishment of a system of reports by Member States to the General Conference on measures taken to implement the Recommendation concerning the Promotion and Use of Multilingualism and Universal Access to Cyberspace.

By this Resolution, the General Conference requested each Member State to prepare and submit to the Secretariat a first report on the action taken to implement this Recommendation **by the end of the month of January 2007**, and subsequently once every four years with effect from that date.

General indications

Given these reporting obligations, please describe whether any legislative, judicial, administrative or other measures have been taken pursuant to the Recommendation and the extent to which national laws, policies and programmes correspond at present to its provisions. Information

supplied by Member States should indicate how laws and practices comply with the commitments under the Recommendation, describing legal norms as well as the factual situation. The Report should thus depict the constitutional, legal and administrative framework established for the implementation of the Recommendation.

The Report should cover laws and legislative texts adopted by Member States to promote the use of multilingualism and the universal access to cyberspace. It should provide a description of policy measures and programmes implemented to that end, as well as of difficulties encountered in this process. Please highlight the overall results achieved and the obstacles encountered in the process of the implementation of the Recommendation.

The Report should also make clear whether the Recommendation has been broadly disseminated and whether measures have been taken to create greater awareness of the principles enshrined in this Recommendation. It should specify activities developed and supported by Member States for the promotion of this Recommendation.

Elements for reporting on the specific provisions of the Recommendation

DEVELOPMENT OF MULTILINGUAL CONTENT AND SYSTEMS

- Please furnish detailed information explaining what measures have been taken to alleviate language barriers. This information should also cover whether any support has been given to capacity-building for the production of local and indigenous content on the Internet.
- Please describe the measures taken for formulating appropriate national policies on the issues of language survival in cyberspace.

FACILITATING ACCESS TO NETWORKS AND SERVICES

- Please report on national efforts to recognize and support universal access to the Internet as well as to promote access to the Internet as a service of public interest.
- Please describe what mechanisms have been established at the local and national levels to facilitate universal access to the Internet through affordable telecommunications and Internet costs.
- Please indicate the measures taken for encouraging the development of information strategies and models that facilitate community access and support cooperation on ICT among public service institutions.
- What efforts have been made in order to encourage Internet service providers to consider provision of concessionary rates for Internet access in public service institutions?

DEVELOPMENT OF PUBLIC DOMAIN CONTENT

- Please explain the legal and administrative measures adopted to give effect to the provisions of this part of the Recommendation: a) recognizing and enacting the right of universal online access to public and government-held records; b) identifying and promoting repositories of information and knowledge in the public domain and making them accessible by all; and c) promoting and facilitating ICT literacy, including popularizing and building trust in ICT implementation and use.
- Please also provide information on whether open-access solutions and online accessibility of public domain information were advanced and how.

REAFFIRMING THE EQUITABLE BALANCE BETWEEN THE INTERESTS OF RIGHTS-HOLDERS AND THE PUBLIC INTEREST

- Please indicate what action has your Government taken in order to update the national copyright legislation and its adaptation to cyberspace. Please indicate also how was considered the possibility of encouraging rights-holders and the lawful beneficiaries of limitations and exceptions to copyright and related rights protection to ensure that such limitations and exceptions are applied.
- What are the actions planned in your country to give consideration to the development of technological innovations and to their potential impact on access to information?

Final comments

- What efforts has your Government made to establish a system of continuing monitoring of the implementation of the decisions taken at the World Summit on the Information Society and what time-related goals and benchmarks has your Government set in this respect?
- What are, according to your Government, the main issues and new challenges that need to be further addressed for promoting multilingualism and universal access to cyberspace? Please provide a brief description in your final comments.



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
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ANNEX II

Assistant Director-General for
Communication and Information

Ref.: CI/INF/UAP/BR/06/ 219

30 October 2006

**Subject: Reports by Member States on the Implementation of the
Recommendation concerning the Promotion and Use of Multilingualism
and Universal Access to Cyberspace**

Sir/Madam,

I should like to draw your attention to circular CL/3798, dated 27 June 2006 (copy attached), by which the Director-General requested your Government to prepare a first report on the measures taken for the implementation of the Recommendation concerning the Promotion and Use of Multilingualism and Universal Access to Cyberspace since its adoption in 2003, and to submit it to me by 31 January 2007.

In the light of the importance of having a comprehensive understanding of the status of implementation of the above Recommendation, as underlined on various occasions by the governing bodies of UNESCO, I would like hereby to encourage your Government to prepare and submit the requested Report by the fixed deadline, in accordance with the Guidelines sent together with the letter of the Director-General.

I remain at your disposal for any additional information you may need in this respect.

Accept, Sir/Madam, the assurances of my highest consideration.

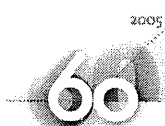
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Abdul Waheed Khan'.

Abdul Waheed Khan

To Ministers responsible for relations with UNESCO

cc: Permanent Delegations to UNESCO
National Commissions for UNESCO

Enclosure: 1 (CL/3798, dated 27 June 2006)



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