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THIRD CONSOLIDATED REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION BY MEMBER STATES OF THE 2003 RECOMMENDATION CONCERNING THE PROMOTION AND USE OF MULTILINGUALISM AND UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO CYBERSPACE

OUTLINE

Source: Resolution 36 C/Resolution 58, 197 EX/Decision 20 (VII).

Background: In accordance with the procedures adopted in 2007 for the monitoring of the implementation of UNESCO conventions and recommendations for which no specific institutional mechanism is provided (177 EX/Decision 35 (I)), the governing Bodies have adopted a multi-stage procedure for the monitoring of the implementation of these standard-setting instruments, including the Recommendation concerning the Promotion and Use of Multilingualism and Universal Access to Cyberspace (2003).

Purpose: Pursuant to 36 C/Resolution 58 and in compliance with the timetable for 2014-2017 of work of the Committee on Conventions and Recommendations of the Executive Board (CR) on the implementation of these standard-setting instruments (195 EX/Decision 15) and 197 EX/Decision 20 (VII), the Director-General submits to the 38th session of the General Conference the third consolidated report on the implementation of this Recommendation.

Decision required: Paragraph 33.

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. At its 33rd session, in October 2005, the General Conference, requested each Member State to prepare and submit to the Secretariat a first report on such measures by January 2007, and subsequently once every four years with effect from that date (33 C/Resolution 54).
2. Two consolidated reports have already been submitted to the General Conference at its 34th and 36th sessions. 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, as well as under Article 17 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. Furthermore, the Executive Board adopted, at its 177th session, a multi-stage procedure for the implementation of UNESCO conventions and recommendations for which no specific institutional mechanism is provided, including this 2003 Recommendation (177 EX/Decision 35 (I)). In compliance with the timetable for 2014-2017 of work of the Committee on Conventions and Recommendations of the Executive Board (CR) on the implementation of these standard-setting instruments for whose monitoring the Board is responsible (195 EX/Decision 15), this third consolidated report is submitted to the 38th session of the General Conference.

THIRD CONSOLIDATED REPORT

3. Following the adoption of 36 C/resolution 58, the Director-General, by a letter dated 9 June 2014 (ref. CL/4059), invited all Member States to transmit to the Organization their reports on the implementation of the Recommendation by 10 December 2014. By a letter to all National Commissions for UNESCO, dated 16 October 2014 (ref. CI/INF/UAP/IKB/rp/14/261), the Deputy Director-General also encouraged Member States to prepare and submit to the Organization their reports by the fixed deadline.
4. Some responses have been received after this deadline and as at 31 January 2015 the Secretariat has received in total 22 reports from the following Member States: Algeria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Burundi, Canada, Central African Republic, Egypt, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Iraq, Japan, Jordan, Lithuania, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Nigeria, Romania, Slovakia, Spain and Sweden.

Elements for reporting on the specific provisions of the Recommendation

Development of multilingual content and systems

5. The majority of the Member States, which submitted reports for the reporting period, had taken concrete measures to support the preservation, access and utilization of lesser-used, national and foreign languages online and offline by integrating new forms and functions of ICTs and media (Belgium, Burundi, Central African Republic, Egypt, Germany, Hungary, Iraq, Japan, Jordan, Lithuania, Mexico, Monaco, Nigeria, Romania, Slovakia, Spain and Sweden).
6. Many countries have established institutional infrastructures with clearly defined responsibilities, allocated human and financial resources for the implementation of the normative instruments and technical standards. These actions include promotion of linguistic diversity through ICTs and media such as Public Service Broadcasting (PSB) in Belgium, Bulgaria, Germany, Hungary, Nigeria, Romania, Slovakia, Spain and Sweden. The legal actions are also in compliance with the normative instruments also established by the European Union (EU), International Telecommunication Union

(ITU) and technical standards set by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN).

7. The reports also indicate that national actions in the subject area are closely linked to the digital agendas and ICT strategies (Belgium, Bulgaria, Germany, Jordan, Lithuania, Nigeria, Spain and Sweden). Those agendas include concrete steps towards development of information and knowledge societies. For the implementation of these agendas, Japan and Jordan have relevant legislative frameworks on electronic transaction, ICT strategy and e-content, and Lithuania prepared guidelines for language development using ICTs. Some other countries (Central African Republic, Nigeria and Spain) established clear priorities for making ICTs available and accessible in multiple languages.

8. Number of ongoing initiatives aimed at enhancing access to information in minority languages on discrimination legislation or public information on available e-services and content. For instance, Slovakia adopted a national plan for Inclusion of Linguistic Minorities and special attention was paid in Sweden to ensure that health and medical care related data would be available in minority languages and public institutions.

9. Concrete legal measures were taken to ensure that the online content, particularly public websites of official authorities and public institutions, are developed, content produced in compliance with the web accessibility standards in several languages and distributed in easy-to-read formats for migrant population and persons with disabilities (Germany, Lithuania and Sweden). The re-use of public information resources in digital formats is done in Finland as per Government's Resolution to improve accessibility. Egypt has adopted the e-Content Strategy to foster cooperation between public and private actors, enhance capacities of local communities to develop content and share their knowledge, build capacities and promote creation of Arabic content on the Internet.

10. Educational programmes are produced and made available online in indigenous, minority and foreign languages for free application by teachers as a supplement to their teaching in those languages (Algeria, Nigeria, Romania, Slovakia, Spain and Sweden). Algeria developed digital map to provide citizens with visual information. Iraq worked in the area of standardization of Arab terminologies across the Arab League in scientific and educational fields. Burundi and Central African Republic have done professional training on literacy and language of instruction issues at different educational levels. Indigenous and minority languages are being taught at schools (Nigeria) and students were encouraged to learn foreign languages in order to increase linguistic competencies (Romania). Slovakia is in the process of making accessible digital versions of textbooks which will be available on the dedicated website.

11. Few countries reported on the recent developments related to the national domain names such as “.br “ in Bulgaria, and also in Arabic (by Egypt and Jordan) domain name registrations were made under “.Masr”. Legal agreements, training of experts, national consultations and methodology were listed as key elements to ensure a smooth functioning of the domain names system (Bulgaria and Jordan).

12. Licensing conditions for the PSBs including production and programming in minority and foreign languages were done in order to place the e-content in those languages online (Belgium, Monaco, Nigeria and Sweden). Radio content exchange ensured between content producers and audience in Mexico. In Belgium, the PSBs provide their programmes in foreign languages containing open subtitles which are useful both for various language users and are accessible to persons with hearing-visual impairments. Furthermore, sign language with audio-commentary for persons with disabilities is used by the PSBs in Belgium and Slovakia.

13. Japan reported on good practices taken to develop digital archives, database services and guides were produced to the digitalization of the paper and access to historical records. Egypt also made a significant progress in the field of documentation and preservation of local cultural heritage through ICTs. Iraq informed about its plans to establish a digital library for use archiving systems.

Facilitating access to networks and services

14. Special initiatives were undertaken to increase broadband connectivity using public Internet access points in public libraries, youth stations, public authority buildings, train stations and commercial Internet access points, and technical improvements in many countries. The access to high-speed Internet is understood as a service of public interest and one of the strategic development priorities (Bulgaria, Egypt, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Jordan, Lithuania, Monaco, Mongolia and Sweden). However, some countries indicated that more investments are needed in order to achieve universal access, provide services and content in cyberspace.

15. To facilitate access to high-speed broadband access, many countries established institutions and networks to coordinate ongoing work, prepared practical guidelines or carried out consultations with users and providers (Egypt, Germany, Hungary, Japan, Jordan, Lithuania, Monaco, Mongolia and Sweden). For instance, National Broadband Network in Jordan connects sites to the network which consists of public schools, health centres and hospitals, government entities, electrical companies' points.

16. Few countries have operating grant schemes to promote the public access points such as libraries, public agencies, IT clubs, Technology Homes, educational institutions and other public places (Egypt, Finland, Lithuania and Sweden) to access information. In Finland and Lithuania, libraries do provide access to cultural and information sources to its citizens online irrespectively to their place of residence and financial standing. Reports indicate that broadcast stations use national languages in their programming (Belgium, Nigeria and Sweden). Furthermore, a pilot process towards digital broadcasting has started in Nigeria.

17. Special legislative frameworks to access public and government records using common open data licenses in order to build enabling environment for transparency, open and good governance were implemented in Finland and Germany. This work was supported by normative frameworks, guiding principles and establishment of open public repositories.

18. Educational networks, particularly created among universities, provide research services to the government agencies, cultural organizations such as museums and archives (Bulgaria, Slovakia and Sweden). Educational cloud services consisting of digital educational resources and applications supported by a large consortium were launched in Finland. Central African Republic acknowledged that technical terminology is still an issue for scientific community.

19. Regional information platform was built in Japan to offer more e-services to the residents through the systems of the different local governments. In countries like Hungary, the law obliges the public sector to offer online access to relevant information and services provided by public institutions and regular evaluations are carried out of public institutions' websites in Lithuania. Consequently, number of new web portals, websites and electronic registers were established, maintained and systematically evaluated.

20. In order to ensure a literate application of information, media content, ICTs and building trust in ICT and Internet, several countries, as a part of their digital policy frameworks, introduced Media and Information Literacy (MIL) in national programmes and projects (Algeria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Egypt, Finland, Germany, Japan and Romania). For instance, for the implementation of the digital agenda,

Germany has taken concrete efforts to integrate the media and information literacy and build capacities of social, charitable organizations within the context of specific projects targeting local communities and young people.

21. Special institutional, legal and cooperation mechanisms were set to ensure child protection on the web 2.0 era and projects related to ethical, creative and responsible use of the Internet and ICTs in Belgium, Egypt, Germany, Jordan and Lithuania. Research projects targeting youth on radicalization and their involvement in anti-democratic movements and hate speech campaigns were carried out in Sweden with an aim to teach youth to be conscious information and media users. MIL-related teaching materials were produced for teachers, students and librarians as well as institutional networks such as libraries and media associations are actively involved. Some other countries introduced special initiatives encouraging elderly persons, youth and women and girls to use Internet resources (Belgium, Egypt and Japan).

22. Some countries (Finland, Hungary, Japan and Romania) are currently revising their national core curriculum which will include ICT literacy, along with MIL in the context of e-skills required both for teachers and students. Algeria, Egypt, Japan, Lithuania and Mexico through community centres, telecentres, libraries, IT clubs, technical laboratories and Technology Homes increase ICT and digital literacy and provide access to educational materials, particularly to rural and disadvantaged communities. Central African Republic promotes multilingualism through specific literacy programmes for adults and non-formal education for youth, using radios and television facilities for distribution. Belgium, Egypt, Germany, Japan, Mongolia, Romania and Sweden provide public information online in compliance to the web accessibility standards, particularly for users with disabilities and using open solutions.

Development of public domain content

23. Public websites provide more and more information on key policies, programmes and initiatives to the citizens in various languages (Belgium, Germany, Mongolia and Nigeria). Countries such as Nigeria produces more content in major indigenous languages which are made accessible on satellite television in order to project national cultural heritage, values and contribute to socio-economic development. In Belgium, Flemish community, a baseline measurement was carried out on media intelligence with an aim to provide more practical support, access to all sorts of information as new services for end users. Sweden established Open Archives which contain entire programmes in the national minority languages which could be easily used by the public users including teaching purposes. National Library in Jordan had made a large number of documents available on the public website in the line with the government's efforts to establish open and transparent society.

24. In many countries, efforts are ongoing to ensure the digitization of records in order to ensure security, accessibility and creation of conducive learning environment through online repositories (Algeria, Egypt, Germany, Japan, Nigeria, Spain and Sweden). Furthermore, for instance, Japan adopted the Public Records and Archives Management Act, developed search database of the documents and records in its collections and provided access to digital images of historical public documents and records. The web digitization process of print media has begun in Nigeria with an aim to provide access to information on the Internet and preserve programmes in digital forms. In order to facilitate access to cultural and scientific content in digital form, Hungary has extended several public online repositories, including archive of the national broadcasters of films and video content. Spain and Mexico reported on the implementation of the projects using digital technological for educational purposes, sharing quality content and establishing networks among artists, writers and academics.

25. Bulgaria introduced a Public Information Access Act including open data matters. Jordan worked towards the development of a platform for hosting the open data for the public use. Egypt and

Lithuania have initiated Open Data projects in order to make data publicly available and visible, enhance transparency and improve accountability as well as citizens' participation. Romania has initiated a special Initiative Open Government Partnership for dialogues between government and citizens on providing free access to public documents.

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

26. Some countries reported on comprehensive reforms on copyright laws adaptation to the technological progress. More specifically, concrete provisions were done in Finland, Germany, Hungary, Japan, Lithuania, Monaco and Spain by both revising the legal framework and initiating a strategic dialogue with relevant actors to ensure that all publicly-funded information such as scientific data would be accessible to all users in open standards and ensure a balance between the protection of copyright and the public interest rights. Information and memory institutions such as libraries, archives and even public service providers digitized records and made them accessible (Finland, Sweden). Hungary and Japan conducted research studies on copyright in cyberspace and a system has been developed and concrete policy revisions done to facilitate the use of copyrighted works in terms of digitization and networking purposes as well as of preserving the interests of rights-holders and promoting cultural diversity. Burundi and Jordan acknowledged that much more is required in the areas of strategizing, capacity-building and research and development in support to the application of existing copyright and other related laws.

27. Some countries reported that no major changes have occurred in the national copyright legislation or its adaptation to cyberspace, but references are made to certain provisions concerning extended collective licenses for libraries and archives to use works in digital forms. Some exceptions were also approved for people with disabilities (Finland, Hungary, Lithuania and Sweden). Hungary adopted the National Strategy on the protection of intellectual property by putting emphasis on development of legal online services and introduction of new open access related licenses. Slovakia is about to establish a centre to report illegal contents and activities on the Internet and Egypt adopted National Free and Open Source Software Strategy. Burundi also pointed out the intention to establish an institution which would be responsible primarily for the copyright issues. Several countries informed about their interest and ongoing research work on issues related to the Internet safety, Internet privacy and other technological and social aspects, including Free and Open Source Software (FOSS) (Germany and Mongolia).

CONCLUSION

28. The importance of the system of reports exercise concerning the implementation of this Recommendation is yet to be fully taken into account by Member States. The low number of contributions indicates that instead of an increased interest and commitment, there is a noticeable regression in reporting compared to the first consolidated report, for which the Secretariat had received 32 responses from Member States in 2007, then 24 in 2011 and only 22 in 2015. In addition, the guidelines provided by the UNESCO Secretariat for the reporting purposes have been used only by a limited number of countries which complicates the analytical phase and limits possibility for the elaboration of a comprehensive corporate response by UNESCO.

29. It is imperative to underscore again that for the reporting mechanisms to be effective, it is indispensable to have the number of Member States participating in the reporting process significantly increased.

30. According to the reports submitted by Member States, some progress has been achieved and certain challenges were observed as follows:

- (a) The need to ensure that Internet remains open, free, diverse and safe for its users and the necessity to further encourage innovation, freedom of expression, universal access to information and participation have been emphasized in most of the Member States' reports. Therefore, it is important to develop appropriate technologies together with the promotion of universal values in cyberspace through Internet governance, development of relevant policies and resources on security, information ethics, access and privacy-related issues, and building capacities in terms of media and information literacy, market regulation and build competencies.
- (b) Recent developments in broadband connectivity at national level not only improved existing infrastructures, but also supported education, information and knowledge sharing, e-business and research sectors. The high-speed Internet is understood as a global good and service of a public interest as well as a key determinant of sustainable development. It is therefore crucial to apply an intersectoral and holistic approach for the development of policies, legislation and partnerships mechanisms where linguistic diversity and multilingualism in cyberspace are of equal significance as other prerequisites.
- (c) Open access strategies and solutions were introduced at national level to facilitate access, digitization, publishing, funding and dissemination of digital information, particularly scientific and public domain information. However, it is not always evident that those online portals, repositories, tools, guidelines and developed solutions take fully into consideration the multilingual aspect. Open access to multilingual information, particular scientific data and research, is a key to the implementation of sustainable development goals as it directly tackles key global contemporary challenges.
- (d) Public service broadcasting continues to be a key information provider in lesser-used and minority languages. Affordable costs and high-speed access to Internet significantly facilitated local and user-generated content dissemination and utilization. It is therefore important to adapt PSB-related practices, structures and resources to the opportunities provided by ICTs and media in digital era.
- (e) Recent technological developments have a direct impact on the intellectual copyright legal mechanisms which needs to be periodically revised and amended in order to make them fully compatible and relevant to digital societies.
- (f) Although tangible improvements were reported to strengthen access to information on the Internet, globally the Internet services in many Member States remained costly, limited in availability and in speed, in particular as concerns remote areas. Consequently, a full range of public services on the Internet were mainly provided to a limited number of the population.
- (g) Often, challenges reported are directly linked to organizational, sociological, and financial aspects. Despite the fact that the majority of Member States have appropriate legal mechanism and institutional network established at national level, a significant number of projects and initiatives could not be implemented due to severe budgetary cuts, low connectivity and lack of appropriate infrastructure.

31. During the debate at the 197th session of the Executive Board, the CR Committee thanked the Secretariat for the prepared quality report and invited all Members States to raise a greater visibility on the importance of the normative instrument at national levels. The reference has also been made by the CR Committee to the international Conference on Youth and the Internet: Fighting Radicalization

and Extremism which was organized in June 2015 which clearly demonstrated relevance of the Recommendation to the current societal realities.

32. After examining this document, the Executive Board invited the Director-General to transmit this third consolidated report to the General Conference at its 38th session, together with its observations and any observations or comments that the Director-General may wish to make.

PROPOSED RESOLUTION

33. In light of the foregoing, the General Conference may wish to adopt the following resolution:

The General Conference,

Recalling 33 C/Resolution 54, 34 C/Resolution 49, 36 C/Resolution 58, and 197 EX/Decision 20 (VII)

Having examined document 38 C/28,

1. *Takes note* that only 22 Member States submitted reports for this third consultation, which represents a decrease in the responsiveness by Member States;
2. *Recalls* that the submission by Member States of periodic reports concerning the implementation of the recommendations adopted by the General Conference is an obligation under Article VIII of UNESCO's Constitution and Article 17 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;
3. *Reaffirms* the importance of this Recommendation and requests the Director-General to intensify actions for the further implementation of this Recommendation in cooperation with the Member States, and the relevant international intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations
4. *Urges* those Member States which have not taken measures to implement the Recommendation to do so;
5. *Invites* the Director-General to submit to the General Conference at its 40th session the fourth consolidated report on the implementation of this Recommendation and *decides* to include this item in the agenda of its 40th session.