

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

EXECUTIVE BOARD
117th Session
Provisional agenda item 8.2

EB117/25
9 January 2006

Reports of the Joint Inspection Unit

Previous reports: implementation of recommendations

Report by the Secretariat

1. The present document details, in the Annex, progress made in implementing the recommendations of the report of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) entitled “Multilingualism and access to information: case study on the World Health Organization”, submitted to the Executive Board at its 115th session.¹ Information is presented in the format of the tracking chart devised by the JIU Secretariat.² The paragraphs below provide additional information on related, but broader, issues of multilingualism in WHO, debated by the Board at its 115th session.³

2. With regard to dissemination of material in languages other than the official languages of WHO, the Secretariat arranges for many translations into numerous languages.⁴ Since adoption of resolution EB105.R6 on use of languages in WHO, consideration is being given to framing a policy on distribution of material in the major languages of the world.

3. Under the auspices of the Publishing Policy Review Group, major languages have been mapped to show which ones can convey essential messages to the greatest number of people. The language data, provided by a not-for-profit organization, indicate which languages or groups of languages are similar enough to allow mutual understanding, thus further spreading the word. This resource is a useful tool in preparing strategies for public-health communications. The Secretariat can provide advice on the targeting and prioritizing of languages, for specific health issues and geographical areas.

ACTION BY THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

4. The Board is invited to note the report.

¹ Document EB115/24.

² See document EB115/23.

³ See document EB115/2005/REC/2, summary record of the twelfth meeting, section 2.

⁴ See document EB103/20.

ANNEX

IMPLEMENTATION OF APPROVED/ACCEPTED RECOMMENDATIONS

JIU/REP/2003/4: Multilingualism and access to information: case study on the World Health Organization

JIU recommendation number	Approved ¹ or accepted ²	Unit responsible for implementation	Official in charge of implementation	Timetable	Expected impact of implementation	Remarks
<p>Rec. 1: The World Health Assembly could:</p> <p>Rec. 1(a): better define the expectations of Member States with regard to the implementation of resolution WHA50.32 (1997) on respect for equality among the official languages, by being more selective about the information products to which the Secretariat should give priority, taking into account both existing provisions relating to multilingualism and budgetary constraints;</p>	<p>Accepted in part</p>	<p>Evidence and Information for Policy (EIP)</p>	<p>Assistant Director-General/EIP</p>	<p>Rec.1(a): mostly implemented. Since January 2005, the top-level pages of the WHO web site (www.who.int) are available in all six official languages, and the volume of content so available has increased. That content now includes news releases, the media centre, information on disease outbreaks, features (e.g. fact files and photo stories), governing-body documentation and the World Health Day site;</p>	<p>Rec.1(a): wider and more rapid access to WHO's technical information and publications in multiple languages;</p>	<p>Rec.1(a): high-impact publications are now issued in all six official languages, with multilingual pages on web site; there is access to scientific publications in multiple languages for developing countries through the WHO Library.</p>

¹ Recommendations approved by legislative organs.

² Recommendations accepted by executive heads without legislative action.

JIU recommendation number	Approved ¹ or accepted ²	Unit responsible for implementation	Official in charge of implementation	Timetable	Expected impact of implementation	Remarks
<p>Rec.5: The Director-General should, after having heard the views of the different departments concerned, both at headquarters and in the regional offices:</p> <p>Rec.5(a): update the evaluation of current processes and practices in respect of online publishing with a view to determining the most appropriate ways and means of improving access to information and the multilingual content of the Organization's web sites, and report thereon to the governing bodies within the framework of the plan of action referred to in recommendation 1(b);</p>	Accepted	EIP	Assistant Director- General/EIP	<p>Rec.5(a): completed: detailed policies and guidelines for publishing on the WHO web site have been made available on WHO's Intranet. The guidance includes an editorial style guide for the web site, image guidelines, a draft domain name policy and a copyright notice. A policy is currently being drafted for multilingual content on the WHO web site that will define which content should be published simultaneously in all six official languages and which content can be published in any of the six languages. Further improvements will be included in the proposals to be submitted to the governing bodies;</p>	<p>Rec.5(a): easier and more professional development of content by WHO staff for web-based information;</p>	

JIU recommendation number	Approved ¹ or accepted ²	Unit responsible for implementation	Official in charge of implementation	Timetable	Expected impact of implementation	Remarks
<p>Rec.5(b): draw up uniform rules, in the form of an administrative circular, setting out general instructions for online publishing, duly taking into account the potential for linkage between the sites maintained at headquarters and those of the regional offices, and between WHO sites and those of other bodies.</p>	Accepted	EIP	Assistant Director-General/EIP	<p>Rec.5(b): an information note will be issued to all staff members defining the unit responsible for this area of work, outlining policy and providing contact information for follow-up.</p>	<p>Rec.5(b): clarification of policy and process ownership for on line publishing, including contact information for follow-up.</p>	