



105th Session

EB105.R6

Agenda item 7.2

27 January 2000

The use of languages in WHO

Language diversity in the Secretariat and in the publications of WHO

The Executive Board,

Having examined the report by the Director-General on languages for communication in WHO (document EB105/20), submitted following the substantive debate on the issue at the Fifty-second World Health Assembly;

Considering that the universality of the organizations of the United Nations system is based on, among other things, language diversity and equality among the official and working languages chosen by the Member States;

Recalling the resolutions and rules governing language arrangements at WHO, especially resolution WHA50.32 on respect for equality among the official languages and resolution WHA51.30 on making WHO governing body documents available on the Internet;

Emphasizing that language diversity reflects cultural diversity, is a factor in development, dialogue and peace and an essential element in multilateralism and the democratization of international society;

Convinced of the importance of respect for the diversity of cultures and the plurality of international languages for improving health policies in the world, especially in the developing countries, and for giving all Member States access to information and to scientific and technical cooperation,

1. COMMENDS the measures announced by the Director-General to promote language diversity, and especially:

- (1) the return to full reimbursement of language courses for staff;
- (2) the updating and enrichment of the WHO Internet site to make it accessible in more languages;

- (3) the publication of the *Bulletin of the World Health Organization* and of the World Health Report in a larger number of languages;
 - (4) the expansion of interpretation services in order to attract the competent experts to technical consultations;
 - (5) the appointment of a senior staff member as coordinator of measures to promote language diversity;
2. CALLS ON the Director-General to continue to examine the question of languages and to seek additional measures such as the publication of the World Health Report in the six official languages;
3. REQUESTS the Director-General to keep the governing bodies regularly informed of the evolution of the situation of language use in the Secretariat and in publications at WHO.

Seventh meeting, 27 January 2000
EB105/SR/7

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