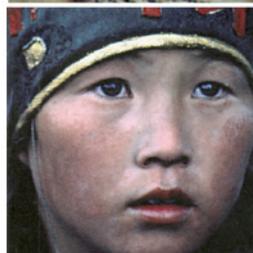
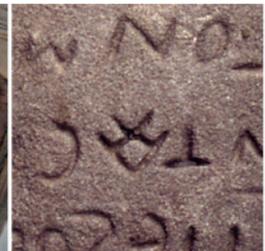




United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

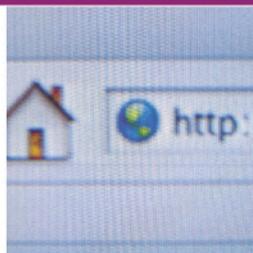


Information for All
Programme



INTERNATIONAL MEETINGS ON MULTILINGUALISM IN CYBERSPACE 2008–2014

FINAL DOCUMENTS



Russian Committee of the UNESCO Information for All Programme
Interregional Library Cooperation Centre

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Compiled by Evgeny Kuzmin

International Meetings on Multilingualism in Cyberspace (2008-2014). Final documents. –
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This brochure compiles the final documents of international meetings on the preservation and
promotion of languages and linguistic and cultural diversity in reality and cyberspace, held in
the frame of the UNESCO Information for All Programme in 2008–2014

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Lena Resolution

Final document of the International Conference on Linguistic and Cultural Diversity in Cyberspace (Yakutsk, Russian Federation, 2 –4 July, 2008)

The participants of the International Conference on Linguistic and Cultural Diversity in Cyberspace (Yakutsk, Russian Federation, July 2–4, 2008),

1. *Recalling* the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, adopted at the 31st session of the UNESCO General Conference in 2001, which says that “cultural diversity as a source of exchange, innovation and creativity is just as indispensable for humanity as biological diversity for Nature, and is a treasure shared by the entire human race”,
2. *Recalling further* the Recommendation concerning the Promotion and Use of Multilingualism and Universal Access to Cyberspace, adopted at the 32nd session of the UNESCO General Conference in 2003,
3. *Taking into account* the key documents of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) – Declaration of Principles and Plan of Action (first phase in Geneva, 2003) and Tunis Commitment and Tunis Agenda for the Information Society (second phase in Tunis, 2005) – which all emphasize the importance of the preservation of cultural and linguistic diversity and suggest a set of measures necessary to achieve this goal,
4. *Emphasizing* the need to continue preserving multilingualism because languages are stores of a rich and vast amount of human heritage and knowledge, as well as necessary instruments for social life, the expression and dissemination of social and cultural traditions, self-identification and preservation of human dignity of their speakers,
5. *Recognizing* that the dissemination of multilingual information on the history, languages and culture of different nations contributes to the promotion of tolerance and mutual understanding and guarantees a peaceful sustainable development of the contemporary civilization,
6. *Taking into account* that the current absence of certain languages in cyberspace contributes to the widening of the already existing digital information gap,
7. *Considering* that the already existing information and communication technologies offer new opportunities for the preservation of linguistic and cultural heritage for equal and universal access to knowledge,

-
8. *Bearing in mind* the messages of the Director General of UNESCO at the occasions of the International Year of Languages in 2008, the World Day for Cultural Diversity, for Dialogue and Development on May 21, and the International Mother Language Day on February 21,
 9. *Thanking* the Director General of UNESCO for his message at the opening of the current International Conference on Linguistic and Cultural Diversity in Cyberspace,
 10. *Thanking also* the Government and the people of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) for their hearty hospitality, which ensured the success of the Conference,

Consider it necessary:

- a. to use every opportunity to promote the preservation of linguistic and cultural diversity in cyberspace and elsewhere;
- b. to stress the importance of implementing the Recommendations of:
 - the World Summit on the Information Society (Geneva, 2003, and Tunis, 2005),
 - the International Conference “UNESCO between Two Phases of the World Summit on the Information Society” (St. Petersburg, 2005), in particular Action Line C8 (Cultural Diversity and Cultural Identity, Linguistic Diversity and Local Content), and
 - the thematic meeting on “Multilingualism for Cultural Diversity and Participation of All in Cyberspace”, organized by UNESCO in preparation for the second phase of the World Summit on the Information Society (Bamako, Mali, 2005);
- c. to invite the UNESCO Intergovernmental Council of the Information for All Programme to examine the possibility of creating an expert group on multilingualism in cyberspace;
- d. to suggest to UNESCO and MAAYA (World Network for Linguistic Diversity) to convene a World Summit on Linguistic Diversity in Cyberspace;
- e. to support the ACALAN (African Academy of Languages) and MAAYA initiative for a World Forum on Multilingualism.

Suggest in particular,

- f. to invite all interested organizations and private persons to contribute to the UNESCO website “Languages Matter!”, dedicated to the International Year of Languages, and to the discussion forum “Communication and Information”,

- organized by UNESCO as a follow-up to the decisions of the World Summit on the Information Society in Action Line C8 (Cultural Diversity and Identity, Linguistic Diversity and Local Content), by placing information on their own projects in support of linguistic diversity;
- g. to invite the national committees of the UNESCO Information for All Programme to elaborate indigenous and minority linguistic programmes promoting linguistic and cultural diversity in cyberspace;
 - h. to call the attention of governmental and other organizations regulating television, radio and mobile telephones environments to the necessity of considering the opportunity of using the latest technologies for broadcasting in minority languages during the media switch to digital broadcasting;
 - i. to continue searching for fair and balanced solutions between the international copyright and intellectual property legislation and regulatory frameworks for the formation of digital libraries responsible for cultural and linguistic diversity;
 - j. to increase support for libraries, museums and archives in the access to and preservation of multilingualism and dissemination of information representing cultural and linguistic diversity;
 - k. to promote the elaboration and dissemination of relevant free/libre open source software, fonts and other technical means necessary for the use of languages in cyberspace;
 - l. to promote the elaboration and dissemination of a unified and universally accessible set of fonts and diacritic marks supporting the languages of all cultural groups in the Russian Federation, along with Unicode enhancements as necessary;
 - m. to continue promoting the activities aimed at documenting, preserving and developing languages, mainly minority languages, through the latest information technologies;
 - n. to continue promoting the elaboration of multilingual thesauri and dictionaries and the inclusion of minority languages into internationally accepted thesauri on cultural heritage such as UNESCO, HEREIN, ICONCLASS, Getty, Garnier etc.;
 - o. to continue the study of ethical aspects of the preservation of linguistic and cultural diversity in cyberspace, and their consideration in the activities aimed at preserving and promoting such diversity;
 - p. to step up activities for the introduction, promotion and enhancement of minority languages in the educational systems and the expansion of their appli-



cation and use (in the government sector, the sphere of research and art, on television, radio, etc.);

- q. to suggest to the participating countries the monitoring of language diversity on the Internet;
- r. to extend international cooperation with all interested organizations including the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA), the Conference of Directors of National Libraries (CDNL) and the International Indigenous Librarians Forum (IILF);
- s. to invite the Government of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) to consider establishing a competence centre for the study and promotion of multilingualism in cyberspace and for sharing its experiences with the world at large.

Yakutsk Call for Action A Roadmap towards the World Summit on Multilingualism (2017)

PREAMBLE

The 2nd International Conference on Linguistic and Cultural Diversity in Cyberspace was held in Yakutsk, Russian Federation, from July 12 to July 14, 2011 in the framework of the Russian chairmanship in the UNESCO Information for All Programme. The event was organized by the Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation, Commission of the Russian Federation for UNESCO, UNESCO, Russian Committee of the UNESCO Information For All Program, the North-Eastern Federal University, the Interregional Library Cooperation Centre, MAAYA World Network for Linguistic Diversity, and Union Latine.

The Conference which held several working sessions and plenary meetings gathered over 100 participants from more than 30 countries and all continents. It was attended by leaders and experts of intergovernmental and international nongovernmental organizations, government bodies, agencies and institutions of culture, education, research, information and communications, representatives of private sector, civil society and the mass media.

The conference tackled the three major themes dealing with 1- Instruments for language preservation and promotion in cyberspace, 2- Institutes to promote linguistic and cultural diversity, and 3- Creating positive environment for the promotion of linguistic and cultural diversity in cyberspace.

A roadmap towards the World Summit on Multilingualism has been proposed and approved by the participants.

I. Achievements since the Lena Resolution (Yakutsk, Russian Federation, 2008)

Lena resolution was adopted at the 1st conference on Linguistic and cultural diversity held in 2008 proclaimed by the UN the International Year of Languages. It introduced the idea of holding the World Summit on Multilingualism and supported a series of initiatives. Since then, several activities have taken place including the *Bamako International Forum on Multilingualism 2009* (BIFM), the creation of the *Centre to Advance Multilingualism in Cyberspace under the North-Eastern Federal University* (Russian Federation), the *development of DILINET project on indicators of linguistic diversity in cyberspace* by MAAYA and partners, and the *preparation of the 2nd International Conference on Linguistic and Cultural Diversity in Cyberspace* (July 2011, Yakutsk).

II. The roadmap to the World Summit on Multilingualism (2017)

We, the participants and organizers of the 2nd international conference on Linguistic and Cultural Diversity in Cyberspace, inspired by the Lena Resolution and Bamako commitment on universal multilingualism, invite all interested individuals and organizations concerned in linguistic and cultural diversity support and promotion to participate in the preparation of the World Summit on Multilingualism. We therefore propose the following roadmap.

- 2012: Experts meetings and consultations in various regions of the world
- 2013: Ministerial conference on Multilingualism
- 2013: Proposing a draft resolution on the World Summit on Multilingualism to the UNESCO General Conference. Possible creation of an international commission to prepare a Report on multilingualism
- 2014: Possible adoption of a draft resolution on the World Summit on Multilingualism by the UN General Assembly based on the Report
- 2015-2017: Thematic meetings and regional conferences to prepare for the Summit
- 2017: World Summit on Multilingualism

All the stakeholders (governments, international organizations, private sector, and civil society including the academia and research community) are encouraged to commit themselves in preserving and promoting linguistic and cultural diversity worldwide and invited to contribute to the success of the World Summit on Multilingualism which could lead to the adoption of an international Charter on the governance of linguistic diversity in the world.

Third International Conference
“Linguistic and Cultural Diversity in Cyberspace”
Yakutsk, Russian Federation 28 June – 3 July 2014

FINAL REPORT and FINAL DOCUMENT

The Third International Conference “Linguistic and Cultural Diversity in Cyberspace” was convened in Yakutsk, Russian Federation, from June 28 to July 3, 2014. This Conference is part of the activities of the UNESCO’s Information for All Programme (IFAP) and is an important contribution to the implementation of the decisions of the World Summit on the Information Society (Geneva, 2003, and Tunis, 2005).

The Conference was organized by the Russian Committee of the UNESCO Information for All Programme, the North-Eastern Federal University in Yakutsk and the Interregional Library Cooperation Centre with the support of the Government of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), the Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation, the Federal Agency for Press and Mass Communications of the Russian Federation, the Commission of the Russian Federation for UNESCO, and in cooperation with UNESCO.

This interdisciplinary forum was attended by leading experts from 48 countries: specialists working in the fields of science, culture, education, communication and information, researchers on philosophical, sociological and anthropological issues emerging from the growing use of Internet and other ICTs, representatives of international and national governmental and nongovernmental organizations, governmental policy makers in the field of knowledge societies development, managers of ICTs and media programmes from the private sector and civil society institutions, as well as executives from Russia’s various governmental bodies.

The Conference was built on the recognition of the importance of cultural and linguistic diversity in the digital world. It addressed political, cultural, social, ethical and technological aspects of activities aimed to support and develop linguistic and cultural diversity. The discussions focused on policies, standards and tools necessary to ensure linguistic and cultural diversity safeguarding and preservation and on specific tools for promotion of multilingualism.



To accomplish their work the participants held two plenary sessions and eight sessions of four specific thematic sections:

- Section 1. ICT for linguistic and cultural diversity in cyberspace.
- Section 2. Socio-cultural aspects of linguistic diversity in cyberspace.
- Section 3. Preservation of linguistic and cultural diversity in cyberspace: national vision and experience.
- Section 4. Education for preservation of linguistic and cultural diversity in cyberspace.

Creation and implementation of policies to develop and preserve languages and identification of the best practices in these areas of activities were the conference crosscutting issues.

In conclusion of their work, participants of the Conference thanked the organizers and supporters of the event and adopted the final document – **Yakutsk Declaration on Linguistic and Cultural Diversity in Cyberspace.**

Yakutsk Declaration on Linguistic and Cultural Diversity in Cyberspace

*Final document of the Third International Conference
“Linguistic and Cultural Diversity in Cyberspace”
Yakutsk, Russian Federation
28 June – 3 July 2014*

Preamble

The participants of the Third International Conference “Linguistic and Cultural Diversity in Cyberspace” are conscious that:

An overwhelming majority of peoples in the world have no statehood and sovereignty. As a rule, their languages are not the state languages of their country of residence because a majority of countries are multi-ethnic and multilingual. Even in the most beneficial situation, when the government and the larger, dominant ethnic entities display the utmost care of ethnic and linguistic minorities, most of languages are marginalized to varying extents. They develop or decline in the shadow of a major and fitter language dominant in its country and used in all spheres – political, economic, educational, cultural, scientific, etc.

The relationship between language and culture is one of interdependency. No language can develop outside the culture of the ethnos that created and speaks it. Culture is a function of language, and language is a vector for culture; no one exists without the other. Every time we talk about culture we are addressing language, and every time we look upon language we are reaching culture through it.

The linguistic and cultural diversity of humankind is the tip of an “iceberg” that includes cultural identities, the sense of belonging to a community, personal rootedness, intangible heritage, popular life-crucial knowledge and achievements over the centuries, proper interpretation of local content and much more.

The dissemination of multilingual information on the history, languages and culture of different nations enriches our ability to analyse facts, events and behaviours thanks to multiple viewpoints contributing to the promotion of tolerance and mutual understanding and a peaceful sustainable development of contemporary civilization. Cultural diversity and multilingualism are enablers of wellbeing and of the successful flourishing of humans.

Languages are stores of a rich and vast amount of human heritage and life-crucial knowledge, i.e. the knowledge necessary for health, well-being, and participation in the local and worldwide community and economy, as well as necessary instruments for social life, the expression and dissemination of social and cultural tra-

ditions, self-identification and preservation of human dignity of their speakers, whether these are native to the territory or migrants.

Urbanization and globalization promote the assimilation of ethnic cultures and challenge their majority status, moving them ever farther into the margins. Knowledge and historical and cultural experience stored by these cultures vanish gradually, and the potential of those cultures and languages is reduced. Cultural and linguistic marginalization is an interrelated and interdependent process. A unique culture vanishes with the death of its languages. Meanwhile forecasts say and UNESCO has been continuously warning that more than half of the currently alive approximately 7,000 languages may become extinct within several generations.

Migration and human mobility have experienced an unprecedented increase over the past few years. For the first time ever in 2010, the majority of the world's population was predominantly urban, and this proportion continues to grow. By 2050, more than 70% of the world's population will live in a city. The high concentration of people in urban settings has resulted in an increasing linguistic diversity, a trend that will continue over the next years.

An increasing number of studies show that a well-planned strategy on managing diversity, including the languages of migrants, can lead to social and economic benefits for the society as a whole. Diversity can also create benefits as it increases the variety of goods, services and skills available in urban environments. The increased level of competences provided by diversity can also foster creativity, innovation and economic growth.

The role of ICTs

The global information society is forming rapidly, and the recent relevant social impact of improvements in Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) makes this a turning point for the preservation of cultural and linguistic diversity.

Ever more people become active users of ICT, particularly of the Internet. It has become an inalienable and essential part of the life of the young majority, due to the extensive opportunities for communication, access to information and knowledge, self-expression, education, leisure and a greatly extended picture of the world. However, Internet services and information are mainly available in the dominant languages and the current absence of certain languages in cyberspace contributes to the widening of the already existing digital information gap. While globalization encourages the merging of cultures and languages into a de

facto standard, at the same time emerging ICTs potentially enable the exploitation of different languages and cultures and the flourishing of new alphabets and writing systems.

One of the main issues that is against the strengthening and diffusion of indigenous languages is that they are languages with no written tradition. In the context of our modern world, only a written tradition allows a language to become recognizable and useful. Cyberspace offers a unique opportunity for creating a writing tradition at low cost and with maximal possibilities of diffusion.

The digital era in which we live nowadays provides a unique opportunity to support the active promotion of well being, inter alia via the enabling of multilingualism and preservation of cultural diversity in cyberspace. Existing ICTs offer new opportunities to promote linguistic and cultural heritage for equal and universal access to life-crucial knowledge.

Being aware, in addition, that the increasing number of social media applications available and accessible may offer a relevant contribution to minority languages and cultural preservation and promotion thanks to services, communities and crowd initiatives, we must support initiatives to encourage them further.

Of course “availability” does not always mean “real use”; free or affordable access to ICTs is still a problem in many areas of the world and for many potential users. However, thanks to smart and mobile solutions both the new generation, and even those previously digitally excluded, have entered the digital age. Furthermore we are aware of the potential opportunities and threats connected to this process.

Guaranteeing linguistic and cultural diversity and the survival of every language and culture must be a common goal for humanity. Institutions ought to make commitments and assume responsibilities in relation to linguistic diversity and coexistence between languages.

Differences of languages and cultures should not create either manifest or hidden artificial obstacles for reasonable and fruitful cooperation among nations. This cooperation should be based on the equal treatment of all parties and it should not be governed by any cultural or linguistic prejudices.

The protection of linguistic and cultural diversity should include promoting and sustaining it in cyberspace, by enforcing digital opportunities for all languages.

Taking into account all the above and recalling the

- Outcomes of the First and the Second International Conferences on Linguistic and Cultural Diversity in Cyberspace (Yakutsk, Russian Federation, 2008 and 2011) as well as the Bamako International Forum on Multilingualism (Bamako, Mali, 2009), the 1st International Symposium on Multilingualism in Cyberspace (SIMC I - Barcelona, Spain 2009), the 2nd International Symposium on Multilingualism in Cyberspace (SIMC II - Brasilia, Brasil 2011) and the 3rd International Symposium on Multilingualism in Cyberspace (SIMC III - Paris, France, 2012);
- Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity which says that “cultural diversity as a source of exchange, innovation and creativity is just as indispensable for humanity as biological diversity for Nature, and is a treasure shared by the entire human race”;
- UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Promotion and Use of Multilingualism and Universal Access to Cyberspace;
- Key documents of the World Summit on the Information Society (Geneva, 2003, and Tunis, 2005) and the Vision for WSIS Beyond 2015 (WSIS+10, Geneva, 2014) which emphasize the importance of the preservation of cultural and linguistic diversity and suggest a set of measures necessary to achieve this goal;

The Conference agrees on the following recommendations:

General framework

Local, regional and central governments should play a wider and significant role in preserving, developing and sustaining local indigenous languages and their cultures by providing, in particular, resources for the development of digital tools, and the promotion of education and literacy for these languages to be present in cyberspace.

Governmental bodies at all levels should build professional communities and further develop necessary resources and tools (training courses, higher education courses, educational curricula, preparation of teachers, training for trainers, seminars, research, etc.) to strengthen linguistic and cultural diversity in cyberspace as digital language vitality is only sustainable where the language is spoken and taught. “Digital natives” should not be left alone in the digital arena. They belong to the always-on global communication community. They create their own forms of language to exchange text messages, instant and multimedia messages as an additional legacy for future generations.

This can be done with the help of academia and thinktanks providing the expertise and identifying the best practices on language policies that not only promote all languages and put them on equal footing but also foster dialogue between co-existing languages in specific territories.

The development of natural language processing technologies (Text understanding, Question answering, Information querying, Speech Recognition, Speech Synthesis, (Spoken) Machine Translation and others) is a crucial step for ensuring equal digital opportunities for all languages. Mobile phone, Internet chat and social media interaction should be included in any definition of digital vitality and use of minority languages.

All institutions, organizations, associations and even individuals involved in language development, language planning or language promotion should set up collaborative projects to support lesser spoken languages, with a special attention to

- development of culture-based terminologies;
- production and dissemination of written materials and digital documents in these languages.

Local digital communities (not just read-only material) are also needed for digital ascent. Micro-grants to small communities (literary, theatrical, whatever brings people together) should be provided to document in their native language what they are doing.

Further examination should be made of the:

- identification of all the factors necessary to sustain linguistic diversity;
- link between digital vitality and spoken language vitality;
- impact of digital stillness on a spoken language.

The setting-up of language policies should include the state language, the national/regional language, and also migrant languages, as this is the only way to ensure that all citizens, regardless of their legal status in a territory, can be recognized equally by recognizing the plurality of their languages.

Diversity management of the communities enables a real representation of language minorities to promote stable and sustainable development.

Corpora, the lifeblood of modern computational linguistics, must be unencumbered by Copyright. A research exemption must be enshrined in the legal frame-

work. In addition national projects need to make their corpora not just searchable but also downloadable by ROAMing (randomize, omit, anonymize, mix). Open access to materials collected, as a precondition of funding, must be assured.

The significant part in linguistic diversity is linguistic diversity in scientific production. “Grey” literature naturally incorporates a greater linguistic diversity in scientific production particularly in developing and less developed countries. Promoting “grey” scientific literature can ensure linguistic diversity in knowledge production. Efforts should be deployed to raise the interest of the Academy in “grey” literature and acknowledge the alternative knowledge production it represents.

The open access movement makes scientific publications openly accessible and proposes that they give a greater priority to linguistic diversity so that the production of knowledge in multiple languages is promoted and facilitated, especially life-crucial knowledge.

All publicly funded translations of works should be available under free license for everyone to use and re-use without additional restrictions or exemption from copyright. This should apply both to works that are in the public domain as well as works still being under copyright, so they can be used as soon as copyright to the original work expires. International and national Copyright law systems should be amended in a way to allow all educational, scientific and non-commercial use of global cultural heritage.

In order to promote a widespread positive adoption of the notion of linguistic diversity and a favourable cultural climate that is the precondition for its flourishing, educational and informative tools need to be developed, aiming at correctly informing society at large and at educating the new generations about the value of multilingualism.

Efforts should be made to:

- support, enable and assist the documentation, protection and promotion of regional, minority and endangered languages;
- bring together specialists in specific areas of the world with members of endangered language communities in these areas.

It is very important to ensure long-term preservation of audio and video recordings reflecting linguistic and cultural diversity, specifically of orally transmitted cultures, key elements to ensure demo-anthropological studies. Over the past 60 years, rich collections of such audio-visual recordings have been produced, forming the basis of our present knowledge. Nowadays they can only

be preserved by digitization and proper digital preservation of data. Presently, however, the availability of replay equipment for magnetic audio and video-tapes is dramatically shrinking which may bring digitization programmes to a halt. Adequate measures must be taken to respond to this threat in order to prevent such unprecedented loss of irreplaceable documents of the linguistic and cultural diversity of humankind.

At the political level

1. All stakeholders should seek to facilitate the emergence of knowledge societies respecting human rights and values and based on four principles: Promoting freedom of expression in traditional and new forms of media, including the Internet; Access to quality education for all; Respect of cultural and linguistic diversity; and Universal access to information and knowledge, especially in the public domain;
2. UNESCO, especially through its Information for All Programme (IFAP), should pursue in cooperation with relevant UN agencies, IGOs and NGOs the efforts for further development and promotion of ethical, legal and societal principles and norms for preserving linguistic and cultural diversity worldwide, in particular in cyberspace;
3. All stakeholders should encourage governments to enact and implement more effective national policies in support of preservation of linguistic and cultural diversity;
4. All the stakeholders should continue to promote and support the creation and free dissemination of language resources (alphabets, diacritic marks, phonetic language resources, Wikipedia, Wiktionaries, and related technical means (e.g. spell checkers, and generally speaking natural language processors), with specific reference to the use of virtual keyboards), necessary for the use of indigenous and minoritized languages in cyberspace ensuring equal digital opportunities for all languages;
5. UNESCO and its Member States should continue to develop with the relevant IGOs and NGOs policies to enhance the presence (localization and content) of all languages in cyberspace, based on media and information literacy, access to resources and promotion of participation, developing programmes of inclusion of knowledge from languages unrepresented on the Internet, creating a comprehensive and sustainable set of indicators, and promoting a comprehensive view of the digital divide which encompasses the content and linguistic divide;

-
6. Governments should strengthen existing discussion platforms involving all concerned stakeholders in a continuous interdisciplinary debate on preservation of linguistic diversity in the context of current socio-cultural transformations in globalizing information society/knowledge societies;
 7. All stakeholders, especially in academia should develop interdisciplinary research and comprehensive study on the various political, social and cultural challenges especially in education with regard to the preservation of linguistic diversity;
 8. All stakeholders, especially governments, scholars and experts in academia, should develop and strengthen educational and awareness-raising programmes, especially among the youth, to form stronger respect of linguistic and cultural diversity and deeper understanding of the necessity to preserve all languages particularly minority/minoritized ones.

The Conference also especially recommends UNESCO, and other relevant international, regional and national stakeholders, to

- a. develop and propose an international act on global linguistic and cultural diversity in cyberspace as well as in other communication spaces;
- b. stimulate the creation of a worldwide network of competence centres for the study and promotion of multilingualism in cyberspace and for sharing expertise on the subject;
- c. set up a working group representing each continent to identify language policies, initiatives, and digital opportunities that best respect the linguistic reality of the territory;
- d. invite the National IFAP committees to support the development of culture-based terminologies and promote online publication of indigenous and minority history, events, raw data (Newspapers, Books, Radio-TV Broadcast, Videos, etc.), as well as the production and distribution of annotated corpora, lexica, dictionaries, grapheme-phoneme convertors, parallel corpora, etc. allowing for the development of language technologies;
- e. invite the National IFAP committees to create and support a specific action aimed at activating crowdsourcing in order to address autochthonous and minoritized language content digitization (Adopt an endangered language/culture!) and constitute related communities;

- f. emphasize the role of the broader literacy context for digital language ascent (work the chain of literacy);
- g. conduct comparative study on national policies to sustain languages, including linguistic preservation and development in cyberspace;
- h. conduct a survey of the state-of-the-art regarding language resources and technologies for all languages;
- i. set up a clearing-house on language technologies to be used for identifying and assessing digital language development;
- j. start focusing (including through IFAP) on the possibility of using cyberspace as a laboratory for creating writing traditions for endangered and minority languages;
- k. further work on the development of language technologies for minority languages, which can be easily adapted for application from one language to another (easier localization techniques), especially within language families;
- l. ensure the availability of language technologies for the largest number of languages through the cooperation of all stakeholders (Member States and regions, public and private research laboratories, industries) under the general coordination of UNESCO;
- m. design an Index of Digital Language Diversity, as an instrument for measuring the digital language diversity of a given region and for assessing the type of intervention needed to ensure all languages equal digital opportunity;
- n. invite universities in all countries to submit project proposals to international institutions (such as UNESCO Chairs and UNITWIN) to promote multilingualism and cultural diversity in cyberspace;
- o. support the documentation of endangered languages in their area and provide an inventory of existing material;
- p. start working on the modernisation of the existing Atlas of World Languages by using advantages of modern ICTs;
- q. set up fund-raising events and look for possible sponsors of the work in the area.

A Virtual Observatory for Multilingualism and Digital Language Diversity (possibly as a part of the IFAP Information Society Observatory) should be set up in order to:

1. accumulate reliable and up-to-date data about the presence of the world's languages on the Internet, the availability of digital technologies supporting languages, and of infrastructural conditions enabling presence of languages in the digital world;
2. accumulate publications on academic and civil society projects concerning multilingualism in digital world;
3. closely monitor existing language policies that best respect the linguistic reality of the territories, and the efforts and initiatives taking place worldwide to support multilingualism both offline and online;
4. help identify best practices being developed in each continent;
5. highlight what works best in each geographical location and to monitor the extent to which language diversity is digitally reflected;
6. map the researchers working on the subject and the fields of knowledge.

The Conference finally urges UNESCO and other relevant international, regional and national stakeholders to initiate a preparatory process for a World Summit on Multilingualism as it is highly desirable for the preservation and development of the world's languages and cultures in the epoch of galloping globalization.

This document was produced through a collaborative process involving participants from the following countries - Albania, Argentina, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, Central African Republic, China, Colombia, Czech Republic, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Estonia, Finland, France, Hungary, India, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Macedonia, Moldova, Netherlands, Nigeria, Oman, Peru, Poland, Republic of Korea, Republic of Maldives, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Slovakia, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Sweden, Syria, Thailand, Togo, Turkey, UK, USA.

**International Expert Meeting
on Improving Access to Multilingual Cyberspace**

*28 – 29 October 2014
UNESCO's Headquarters, Paris, France*

**Final Recommendations for the Action Plan
of UNESCO's World Atlas of Languages**

Preamble

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights recognizes the importance of languages that individuals speak and acknowledges it, as essence for the realization of the fundamental human rights and freedoms. Therefore, language should be considered as a key asset by all stakeholders for ensuring sustainable development and peace.

Many linguistic communities remain underprivileged in enjoying and exercising their rights and freedoms, in expressing their views and opinions, and communicating in a most meaningful and effective manner. Speakers of endangered languages require special attention, in particular to have access to education and economic prospects.

The constant technological progress has brought about multiple opportunities for users to access, create and share information and knowledge in various languages, and to benefit from new models of learning and socio-economic development. This progress not only changed the way language communities communicate with each other, but also how they contribute to language documentation, revitalization, monitoring and maintenance. Regrettably, Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) are not evenly spread and made available around the world – there are deep inequalities in terms of universal access. The growing digital divide is even more reinforced by the existing linguistic divide.

UNESCO is convinced that linguistic diversity and multilingualism have a key role to play in fostering pluralistic, equitable, open and inclusive knowledge societies. In this regard, the Organization supports the safeguarding all languages and their inclusion in the digital world – in particular those which are not represented online – and the creation and dissemination of local content on the Internet and mass communication channels.

The Recommendation Concerning the Promotion and Use of Multilingualism and Universal Access to Cyberspace, adopted by UNESCO's General Conference in 2003, is the only normative instrument at the international level, focusing on the promotion of these priorities.

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From 28 to 29 October 2014 at its Headquarters in Paris, UNESCO, in cooperation with the Government of Khanty-Mansiysk Autonomous Okrug-Ugra (Russian Federation), the Permanent Delegation of the Russian Federation for UNESCO and the Russian Committee of the UNESCO Information for All Programme, organized a two-day international expert meeting bringing together leading experts, researchers, and policymakers to discuss the status of linguistic diversity and multilingualism, including in cyberspace, and determine the next concrete step to be taken by UNESCO.

The focus of the discussions was two-fold:

- Further steps for the implementation of the Recommendation Concerning the Promotion and Use of Multilingualism and Universal Access to Cyberspace and an examination of the recommendations of the third International Conference, “Linguistic and Cultural Diversity in Cyberspace”, held in Yakutsk, Russian Federation from 28 June to 3 July 2014;
- Elaboration of a plan of action and initiation of new partnerships to upscale UNESCO’s Atlas of the World’s Languages in Danger to UNESCO’s Atlas of World’s Languages for the monitoring and promotion of the world’s languages online, and strengthen cooperation and knowledge sharing using open and inclusive technological solutions among international, regional and national language institutions.

* * *

We, the participants in the International Expert Meeting on Improving Access to Multilingual Cyberspace,

Fully committed to the promotion of linguistic diversity, according to the UNESCO’s Recommendation Concerning the Promotion and Use of Multilingualism and Universal Access to Cyberspace (2003), the Geneva Plan of Action and Tunis Agenda of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) and the ongoing debate of the post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals,

Recalling that multilingualism is one of the main strategic priorities of the UNESCO Intergovernmental Information for All Programme (IFAP),

Referring to the relevant Resolutions of the General Conference of UNESCO with regard to the promotion of multilingualism and universal access to information,

Convinced that the development of ICTs provides great opportunities to improve the presence of, and access to, languages in cyberspace, but it also presents new challenges for language users,

Noting that current disparities in technological support for world's languages impede equitable access to information and knowledge, and that language communities without sufficient institutional, financial, political and technological support are becoming further marginalized,

Recognizing that promotion and safeguarding of linguistic diversity is a key asset of humankind, compared to the importance of biodiversity, it should be at the core of contemporary debates in the globalized world as a determining factor in the development of inclusive knowledge societies,

Inviting UNESCO and its Members States and partners to increase efforts for the implementation of the Recommendation Concerning the Promotion and Use of Multilingualism and Universal Access to Cyberspace and of the recommendations of the third International Conference, "Linguistic and Cultural Diversity in Cyberspace", held in Yakutsk, Russian Federation from 28 June to 3 July 2014,

Alsorecalling the importance of upscaling UNESCO's Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger as a central tool for the accomplishment of the above goals, as follows: (i) through the monitoring and promotion of the world's languages; (ii) the provision of comprehensive information about languages to all stakeholders, particularly policy decision-makers; and (iii) by using open and inclusive technological solutions enabling sharing of e-content on languages,

Recommend the present Action Plan to UNESCO for its work on the promotion of linguistic diversity and on the creation of its World Atlas of Languages:

Policy and strategic orientations

1. Member States should formulate and adopt sustainable national language policies on the crucial issue of linguistic diversity and multilingual, including promotion, safeguarding, representation, technological development and use of the world's languages, and the development of national competencies. The establishment of comprehensive language policy frameworks will help to ensure that rights and freedoms of every language user and community are equally respected and protected.
2. Strategies must be designed to promote the learning and teaching of languages using solutions provided by technological and scientific progress. International support and assistance to developing countries should be

strengthened and extended to facilitate the development of freely accessible materials on language education in electronic and open forms and human capital in this area. To this end, Member States should adopt and implement specific policies for the improvement of access to cyberspace for disadvantaged communities who are often carriers and custodians of languages in danger.

3. Member States should encourage technological solution developers and Internet service providers to consider facilitating affordable Internet access in public service institutions, such as schools, academic institutions, museums, archives and public libraries, as a transitional measure towards universal access to cyberspace.
4. UNESCO, its Member States and other relevant stakeholders concerned, should develop training materials and build the capacity of content developers, particularly local content producers and providers, in using sustainable formats that enable universal content sharing.

Development of technological solutions

5. UNESCO and its Member States should encourage research and development on language technology systems/tools with extensive multilingual capabilities, especially with regard to operating systems, search engines and web browsers.
6. Furthermore, efforts should be supported with regard to developing advanced information services, such as those for multilingual information retrieval offering speech understanding, instant machine translation and interpretation and other intelligent linguistic services.
7. Development of multilingual content resources making language technology systems/tools and information services more effective, such as online dictionaries and terminologies, text and speech corpora, should be encouraged.
8. UNESCO, in cooperation with other international, regional and national organizations, should establish a collaborative online platform - UNESCO's World Atlas of Languages, containing a full data on world's languages, policies, regulations, technical recommendations and best practices in this field.
9. Member States and international organizations should encourage the development and application of open access solutions including the formulation of technical and methodological standards, design of sustain-

able formats for information exchange, ensuring portability and interoperability, as well as accessibility of digital public domain information on global information networks throughout its lifecycle, regardless of the technology used when it was originally created.

Strengthening international cooperation and building partnerships

10. UNESCO, its Members States and partners concerned should support capacity-building for the production of local and indigenous content, on the Internet, and foster cooperation especially in favor of endangered language communities.
11. The public and private sectors, research community, the civil society and other stakeholders at large should encourage the creation, processing of, and access to multilingual educational, cultural and scientific content in digital and open forms and work to provide the necessary resources as indispensable measures to alleviate language barriers for a different range of users, including marginalized communities.
12. Inter-agency cooperation within the United Nations system should be reinforced in that respect with a view to building up the existing experience for the benefit of developing countries and disadvantaged communities.

Over the next two-year period

13. UNESCO, in close cooperation with other relevant partners, should establish an Advisory Group for the upscaling of the UNESCO's Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger to UNESCO's World Atlas of Languages. This Group will be composed of professionals and experts within the relevant fields, respecting geographical representation and gender balance.
14. UNESCO, in partnership with other relevant bodies, should develop a mechanism and sustainable tools for monitoring language vitality and for the assessment, promotion and preservation of linguistic diversity and multilingualism, including in cyberspace, applying innovative technological solutions. To that end, UNESCO should revise the existing Language Vitality Index to cover most of the world's languages.
15. UNESCO should further promote multilingualism in the context of the Post 2015 Sustainable Development Goals and on the World Summit on the Information Society outcomes implementation, and also consider the organisation of a World Summit on Multilingualism.