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RESOLUTION A.1180(33)

**Adopted on 4 December 2023
(Agenda item 20)**

THE ENHANCEMENT OF MULTILINGUALISM AT IMO

THE ASSEMBLY,

RECALLING that Article 1 of the IMO Convention provides that "[t]he purposes of the Organization are [...] [t]o provide machinery for cooperation among Governments in the field of governmental regulation and practices relating to technical matters of all kinds affecting shipping engaged in international trade; to encourage and facilitate the general adoption of the highest practicable standards in matters concerning the maritime safety, efficiency of navigation and prevention and control of marine pollution from ships; and to deal with administrative and legal matters related to the purposes set out in this Article", and "[t]o provide for the exchange of information among Governments on matters under consideration by the Organization",

CONSIDERING that multilingualism is both a value and an asset for the United Nations system and multilateralism; that respect for and promotion of multilingualism strengthen the legitimacy of multilateral action on the one hand and contribute to its effectiveness by promoting understanding within diversity, ownership and action as close to the ground as possible, on the other; and that multilingualism is therefore essential for the execution of the missions assigned to IMO, as it contributes to facilitating the development and implementation of international shipping standards,

RECALLING United Nations General Assembly resolution A/RES/76/268 on *Multilingualism* adopted on 10 June 2022,

RECALLING ALSO that the IMO Assembly, at its thirty-second session, adopted resolution A.1152(32) on *Amendments to the Convention on the International Maritime Organization*, which recognized the need to provide for equally authentic texts of the IMO Convention, including consolidated texts, in the Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish languages, to ensure the authoritative interpretation of the Convention in all the six official languages of the Organization. Resolution A.1152(32) amended Article 81 by replacing the words "of which the English, French and Spanish texts are equally authentic" with "of which the Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish texts are equally authentic",

RECALLING FURTHER that the Rules of Procedure of the Assembly provide in rule 28 that the official languages of the Organization are Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish, and that the working languages shall be English, French and Spanish; that rule 29 of those Rules of Procedure states that "[s]peeches at the Assembly and its subsidiary bodies shall be made in one of the official languages and will be interpreted into the other five official

languages"; that rule 30 of the Rules of Procedure states that "[a]ll supporting documents to agenda items of the Assembly and its subsidiary bodies shall be published in the working languages", and that "[a]ll reports, resolutions, recommendations and decisions of the Assembly and its subsidiary bodies shall be drawn up in one of the official languages and translated into the other five languages"; and that similar provisions were also provided in the rules of procedure of other IMO organs such as the Council (rules 27-29), the Maritime Safety Committee, the Maritime Environment Protection Committee, the Legal Committee, the Technical Cooperation Committee and the Facilitation Committee (rules 23-25),

RECOGNIZING the significant resources and efforts devoted by IMO to the provision of language services in accordance with the translation and interpretation requirements of the rules of procedure of its deliberative bodies,

HAVING CONSIDERED the findings of the report of the Joint Inspection Unit of the United Nations system on Multilingualism in the United Nations system (JIU/2020/6) with respect to IMO, endorsed by the thirty-fourth extraordinary session of the Council,

1 RECOGNIZES the general concern among Member States regarding a persistent tendency towards monolingualism, reflected, among others, in the de facto use of only one language in written or oral communications within the Secretariat, a profusion of groups which work in only one language, the lack of translation of annexes to documents, the lack of translation of circular letters, and the delay in translation of Assembly resolutions; and that this situation runs counter to the objective of parity between the working languages, which is the rule in the United Nations system;

Establishment of a strategic framework for multilingualism

2 WELCOMES the commitment of the Secretary-General, as a response to concerns, to establish a strategic framework for multilingualism, taking into account the observations made by the Council, in particular with regard to the collection of data on respect for multilingualism in the form of an annual report, including the presentation of the required budgetary resources, with a view to ensuring that the recommendations on this issue are implemented;

3 INVITES the Secretary-General to develop during the next biennium such a strategic framework for multilingualism so that progress can be made towards multilingualism by mobilizing all the potential available within the Organization in order to enable it to benefit fully from the diversity it contains.* This requires a coherent and coordinated approach, involving the Organization's governance bodies, Member States and the Secretariat, and covers all activities. The strategic framework for multilingualism should be accompanied by administrative and operational guidelines for its implementation;

4 MINDFUL of the willingness of Member States to work with the Secretariat in order to ensure that this approach meets their needs;

The appointed coordinator or focal point for multilingualism

5 REQUESTS the Secretary-General to coordinate the implementation of the strategic framework at IMO, through the appointed coordinator or focal point for multilingualism in close consultation with Member States;

* This does not exclude addressing other aspects, such as equitable geographical representation.

Documentation and conference services

6 EMPHASIZES the importance of quality and timely translations of documents and good interpretation services, which implies the allocation of adequate financial, human and material resources. Meeting documents should be translated at every stage, without delay for the annexes. Assembly resolutions should be translated at the time of their adoption, without delay. Circular letters should be translated;

7 UNDERLINES the need to avoid the continuation of meetings after working hours without interpretation, and requires the chairpersons to proceed without interpretation only when strictly necessary and always checking lack of objection in the room;

Technical cooperation and partnerships

8 STRESSES the importance of strengthening multilingualism in technical cooperation activities and partnerships in order to improve their effectiveness;

Human resources

9 REAFFIRMS that calls for applications for posts within the Secretariat be published in the official languages, including job descriptions and related documents to ensure the necessary staffing capacity in all the official languages to undertake all its activities;

10 CALLS for the adoption of training policies that encourage officials to continuously upgrade and strengthen their skills in the official languages of IMO, and to provide adequate funding for this purpose;

Communication

11 URGES the Secretariat to provide quality multilingual information provided on all media and platforms used by IMO, and in particular digital media. Press releases should be made available in all official languages without delay. Multilingualism should also be fully introduced in the IMODOCS search engine;

A shared responsibility

12 UNDERTAKES to play an active part in the promotion of multilingualism, of which the Member States are an expression and benefit from. They must therefore contribute to it by having a leading role either as chairs/vice-chairs or as delegates;

13 ENCOURAGES Member States to support the Secretariat in activities requested of it by virtue of this resolution;

14 NOTES with appreciation the commitment expressed by the Secretary-General to implement multilingualism at IMO;

15 REQUESTS the Secretary-General and the Council to report regularly to the Assembly on the implementation of this resolution, as well as to other committees, if appropriate.

