LACRALO

LACRALO's Paper on the Draft Language Services Policies and Procedures Document published on May 18th, 2012

June 4th, 2012

Introduction

On May 18th, 2012, ICANN's Language Services Department published the Draft Language Services Policies and Procedures paper.

The paper was developed in six phases:

1. A draft report was presented for initial consultation and feedback from the Translations Committee and ICANN senior executives on January 30 2008, and a public comment period was held in March 2008.

2. A full time translation coordinator was hired on December 15 2008.

3. Guidelines for language services providers and standard approaches to technical terms and acronyms were developed in March 2009.

4. An initial language services budget was created in FY2011; the first comprehensive language services budget was implemented in FY2012.

5. A second public comment period will be held in May 2012.

6. The Board Committee on Public Participation will submit the policy to the ICANN Board with its recommendation in September 2012.

As implicit in its title, the document is intended to establish policies and procedures related to all language services - translation, simultaneous interpretation, teleconference interpretation, transcription (after-the-fact audio files) and scribing (Real Time Transcription, RTT).

It is in the same direction and continuing with our commitment to participate and assist the development of ICANN policies, that in 4 th June 2012, Sergio Salinas Porto, ALAC Member by LACRALO submitted for public comments within the region, a document to be adopted as the LACRALO statement and will sent it to ALAC for discussion under the principle of bottom-up. Once the public comment period was finished, we are sending this document where LACRALO makes its contribution in this draft document which contribute with the valuable and essential multilingualism and multi-stakeholder model.

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The At-Large LACRALO community commends all and every effort made by ICANN to provide language services intended to facilitate access to ICANN and participation in its work for those who do not speak or are not fluent in English.

These services are essential to achieve excellence within ICANN's multistakeholder model.

We agree with the draft document on the fact that meetings, documents and information must be available in multiple languages, since this enables many Internet end users to learn about issues addressed by multiple constituencies, as well as to express their views and make their voices heard beyond common forums where Internet end users express their views collectively.

We understand that language services are not only in the interest of the target population, but also increase ICANN's effectiveness and significant impact as a global organization immersed in society.

We are aware that this also creates genuine and equitable involvement opportunities, especially for Internet end users from developing Spanish or French speaking countries who had no access to higher education and to a language other than their mother tongue.

This should be taken into account when speaking about language services, an international organization and a multistakeholder model.

We agree that English is ICANN's working language.

The policy should entail the provision of translation and interpretation services in the six UN languages - currently, Arabic, Chinese (Simplified), English, French, Russian and Spanish - as needed.

Necessary resources must be allocated to this end.

We understand that it is important for us to be able to communicate in meetings and teleconferences, as it is also important to have translation services into the UN languages available as part of ICANN's common practices. This enables the multiplication of documents that will be subject to debate, as well as documents that have already been approved. In turn, this renders an outreach tool readily available to the entire ICANN community.

We agree with the draft document that "If the UN amends its official languages, ICANN will consider whether to adopt the change." We see this as a very good sign of wider diversity within ICANN.

Language Policy Vision

In line with the Language Services Department, we understand that "…The goal of the Language Services Policy is to ensure that ICANN operates as a highly effective global organization, providing high-quality, consistent, timely, and cost-effective services, reflecting current usage of technical terms by native speakers." Also, we understand the Language Services Department's long-term vision that, by the end of calendar year 2015, ICANN will offer translation and interpretation automatically or on demand.

• in the six official United Nations Languages. Criteria for granting exceptions (either to provide

additional or fewer translations) will be explicitly spelled out.

• for all core documentation and documents to be addressed by constituencies with members speaking a language other than English, main public meeting sessions, and Supporting Organization and Advisory Committee conference calls.

•in five abridged versions of the English website, with a focus on its main components and sections that are subject to public debate.

We commend the initiative of having a complete and updated Internationalized Domain Name, translation and online definition glossary. It pleases us to see the English glossary is in alphabetical order, which is still not the case in the remaining languages foreseen on the web site (http://www.icann.org/general/glossary.htm).

As regards translation, and in line with our previous considerations, core documents, as well as documents subject to public debate or used to provide advice, should be a translation priority, so as to increase expediency and fairness in the engagement and participation of Internet end users.

In the case of teleconference interpretation, the requirement of having a minimum of three (3) speakers in need of interpretation has been met to date. Spanish and French speaking community members suggested lowering that threshold to two (2) speakers. We ask that this suggestion be taken into account, as it would ensure the engagement of different regions in several teleconferences with the aim of helping the Internet community.

In those cases where simultaneous teleconference interpreting were not possible, we would welcome the call transcripts in French and Spanish.

As regards electronic translation tools applied to e-mails, we believe these tools are not advanced enough to produce consistently accurate, high-quality translations. LACRALO is a significant example, where electronic translation tools have hindered, rather than enabled, the comprehension of messages in both languages. Therefore, we expressly recommend that the use of these tools should be interrupted until there is an alternative that will guarantee a minimum standard of acceptable translations.

We see a significant step forward in that ICANN will consider the translation of a document into any language other than the six UN languages (with a sufficient rationale).

We feel positive and optimistic about the creation of a Multilingualism Awareness Program, and about the invitation to community members to help monitor the quality of translations.

We also feel positive about a web-based platform to manage the validation review cycle, which will bring about noticeable performance and development improvements in this area.

The above suggestions and views are submitted for their debate and adoption.