

COUNCIL
120th session
Agenda item 21

C 120/21/2
30 May 2018
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SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA ITEMS

Arabic language interpretation services

Note by the Secretary-General

SUMMARY

Executive summary: This document provides information about the possible provision of interpretation services for the Arabic language at sub-committee meetings

Strategic direction, if applicable: 1

Output: Not applicable

Action to be taken: Paragraph 7

Related document: C 120/21/1

Background

1 Interpretation services into the Arabic language were first introduced at IMO in 1983 on a stepped basis, as agreed by the Council at its forty-eight session in June 1982 (C 48/13 and C 48/SR.3). Following that decision, Arabic language interpretation services started for the Assembly in 1983, for the Council and the Technical Cooperation Committee in 1984 and for all committees, except for the FAL Committee, by 1986 (C 49/11 and C 49/D).

2 In 2008, the requirements for the entry into force of the amendments to the IMO Convention adopted on 7 November 1991, which aimed at institutionalizing the Facilitation Committee (FAL), had been met (refer to documents C 100/16 and C 100/SR.4) and Arabic language interpretation services were expanded to include the FAL Committee meetings.

3 In order to facilitate the discussion at C 120 on the possible provision of Arabic language interpretation services at sub-committees meetings, the Secretariat has prepared the relevant information on the financial implications and the necessary time for preparation, for the Council's consideration. This is consistent with rule 18 of the Council's Rules of Procedure, which requires that:

"The Secretary-General shall report to the Council on the technical, administrative and financial implications of all substantive agenda items submitted to the Council, before they are considered by that body."

Financial implications

4 Based on the current rates applied for interpretation and according to the established practices at IMO, it is estimated that the cost of providing interpretation services into the Arabic language would be approximately £10,000 for each sub-committee meeting. This estimate is based on the recruitment of three interpreters for eight plenary sessions with full interpretation over a five-day meeting. It has to be noted that this cost estimate will vary depending on the interpreters' rate of pay as per the AIIC-UN agreement* and on their place of residence, as both elements have an impact on costs.

5 In view of the above, the provision of Arabic language interpretation services for all seven sub-committees would represent an additional total cost of approximately £70,000 per year.

Necessary time for preparation

6 The introduction of Arabic language interpretation services for sub-committee meetings will require the Secretariat be given sufficient time to prepare the recruitment of interpreters. In this regard, for planning purposes, contracts for interpreters are usually negotiated six-months in advance of a meeting in order to ensure all commitments are readily in place. Furthermore, interpreters need an appropriate amount of time to prepare for sub-committee meetings where discussions are of a technical, highly specialist nature.

Action requested of the Council

7 The Council is invited to note the above information provided in its deliberation on the proposal for the provision of Arabic language interpretation services for sub-committee meetings as contained in document C 120/21/1.

* Agreement between the United Nations Common System/Chief Executives Board for Coordination and the Association internationale des Interprètes de Conférence, regulating the Conditions of Employment of Short-Term Conference Interpreters.