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THE POLITICS OF LINGUISTIC AFFINITY

Paper presented by

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1. Language as a federating parameter of international cooperation is a relatively new phenomenon. Today, the multilateral arena comprises a number of international organizations, where Member States have organized themselves around the use and promotion of a particular language. The origins of this feature coincided, by and large, with the end and disappearance of colonialism: especially the colonial powers sought to maintain bonds and rally countries around the use of a particular language, while developing also their common commitment to other values, such as democratic principles and human rights, and sustainable development programmes. The Annex to this document provides an overview of existing international groupings organizations created around the parameter of linguistic affinity (which is work in progress).

2. Since the last decades of the 20th century, the number of international organizations linked to a particular language has grown. The entities concerned are devoted to promoting such language through inter-governmentally designed policies and programmes – but not only. The formation of such “blocs” has also highlighted the important role languages can play in addressing global challenges humanity will face. The designation by the United Nations of 2008 as International Year of Languages is testimony to the importance of multilingualism and an increasing recognition that languages are vital to the economic, social and cultural life of all societies.

3. Linguistically-founded organizations have gained weight over time, becoming both a discussion forum for countries and leading to agreements on more diverse and issues seemingly unrelated to language. Consensus around linguistic issues was clearly perceived to facilitate common action and cooperation in other fields as well. Often, the propagation of common values – such as agreed standards of human rights, political freedom and participatory democracy - or common dislikes provides a sort of glue that can hold an international body together and give it gravity. Even though the scope of an organization’s focus may expand, it nevertheless has retained some balancing linguistic concerns. The commitment to linguistic diversity has thus proved to be rather resilient and sustained.

4. This enrichment of the international scene coincided with a much stronger focus internationally on language issues, which were recognized as part of cultural diversity and a strategic factor in its own right. Languages shape the cultural identity of diverse groups and individuals. Languages are the medium through which cultural memory is transmitted inter-generationally, and serve as an important reference point in today’s world. This orientation ultimately culminated in the adoption of the 2003 UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage. Though languages are being treated in this Convention rather cursorily as a means, it nevertheless injected arguably a boost for its recognition globally by referring to oral traditions and expressions, including language as a vehicle of the intangible cultural heritage. .

5. This trend is complemented by another recent trend whereby linguistic concerns of a more general nature are being introduced into the work of global or regional international organizations, not only of the UN system but also of other intergovernmental organizations, such as the European Union or the African Union. As an aside, intergovernmental organizations are struggling in rendering proper interpretation and translation services for its working (normally two) and official languages (six in the UN and some 20 in the European Union).

6. To realize the human right of freedom of expression, it is important that people can express themselves in their mother tongue as widely and as often as possible and to master other national, regional or international languages. Language is also a catalyst for actions that can contribute to the preservation of tangible and intangible cultural heritage. It further helps to promote access to knowledge. Without strong policies to foster linguistic diversity in all aspects of a nation's life – one of the four principles/pillars recognized by the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) – in schools, administration, law and in the media, the world risks denying hundreds of thousands of people globally the basic right to engage in public life, debate and participatory democracy.

7. The above trend has been accompanied by another development, triggered by globalization and the concern about a movement towards linguistic uniformity, whereby multilateral organizations with a very broad security and development remit have increasingly emphasized the critical role of languages in its own right and as a vector of development and international cooperation. Organizations like the United Nations, UNESCO, the African Union, the Arab League and ALECSO, the European Union and the Council of Europe all have adopted landmark decisions pertaining to languages.

Annex : International Organizations created around Linguistic Affinity

Groupings	Members	Establishment	Main Objectives	Main Programmes devoted to Languages
<p>Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries (CPLP)</p>	<p>8 Member States Angola, Brazil, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, Portugal, São Tomé and Príncipe and Timor-Leste</p> <p>3 Associate Members <u>Equatorial Guinea</u>, <u>Mauritius</u>, <u>Senegal</u>,</p>	<p>1996</p> <p>with biannual Heads of State and Government meetings (most recent was held in July 2008 in Lisbon)</p> <p>“The Portuguese language: a common heritage and a global future”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To create initiatives aimed at consolidating and promoting the Portuguese Language and to encourage its member countries to ratify the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions. ▪ To facilitate joint political and diplomatic actions by its Member States, in order to strengthen their presence within the international arena. ▪ To improve bilateral and multilateral cooperation among Member States, especially in the following areas: health, education, agriculture, public administration, technology, science, defence, communications, justice, public security, culture, sports and media. ▪ The Organisation’s programmes also seek to assist with issues addressing MDGs linked with the following issues; providing education for all, the eradication of poverty, the promotion of gender equality, reduction of infant mortality rate, improving maternal health, combating HIV/AIDS and promoting sustainable development. 	<p>CPLP has the developed the following programmes devoted to languages:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Portuguese Language Census - a project designed to map the number, proficiency and challenges of Portuguese speakers in the world. 2. Digital School and University - a project which will use the Internet to promote home-based education in member states, especially in areas far removed from learning centres. 3. Portuguese language observatory-provides services in translation, information and statistics on the world population of Portuguese speaking countries, ethnological studies, and information on the use of the Portuguese language on the internet. It promotes teaching of the language, and links to libraries and literature sources. 4. The International Institute of Portuguese Language (IPL) – which is charged with advancing linguistic cooperation. 5. The Three spaces Language Initiative –focuses on promoting linguistic diversity in the world. At the most recent meeting on 21 April 2008 in Lisbon, the organisation agreed to encourage linguistic diversity from early childhood in order to encourage citizens to become multilingual. It was also decided that each Member State should introduce multilingual approaches in schools and facilitate teacher training in the area. 6. Prizes- the Prix Fernando Mendes, is awarded to a master's or doctoral thesis, which contributes to the promotion of Portuguese language in the world.

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Organisation internationale de la Francophonie (OIF)	<p>55 Member States <u>Albania, Andorra, Belgium, French Community of Belgium, Benin, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, New Brunswick, Quebec, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Dominica, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, France, Gabon, Greece, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Laos, Lebanon, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Moldova, Monaco, Morocco, Niger, Romania, Rwanda, Saint Lucia, São Tomé and Príncipe, Senegal, Seychelles, Switzerland, Togo, Tunisia, Vanuatu, Vietnam, Cyprus, Ghana</u></p> <p>13 observers Austria, Croatia, Géorgia, <u>Lithuania, Mozambique, Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia, Ukraine, Serbia, Hungary</u></p>	<p>1970</p>	<p>The Organization seeks to strengthen and promote French as a communication tool and cultural vehicle. These efforts compliment the organization's commitment to multilingualism and its efforts to preserve and highlight cultural and linguistic diversity. The organization encourages solidarity and the pooling of resources among countries committed to the French language.</p> <p>The Parliamentary Assembly of La Francophonie, contributes to promoting peace, democracy and support for the rule of law and human rights by focusing on preventative measures. It provides members with access to its network of intergovernmental, institutional, academic and non-governmental organizations with the intention of building national capacities, resolving conflict and providing support for ending crises.</p> <p>To support education, training, higher education and research, the organization enables Member States to provide all children with access to a full primary school education It further promotes teaching, training and research which leads to employment and promotes the French language in schools.</p> <p>The Organization contributes to sustainable development through cooperation in poverty reduction within Francophone states. It is also committed to integrating Francophone developing least developed countries into the global economy.</p>	<p>OIF supports countries in the design and implementation of curricula and educational tools. For example, in African education systems OIF supports teaching programmes that link the mother tongues of students and the French language. Some of the organizations and networks that are supported by OIF include the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. International Council of Languages (Cifla) provides information and advice on language policy issues. 2. The International Network of French in the world (Rifram) brings together public institutions and associations of various Francophone states and governments involved in the promotion of French as well as academics and experts concerned with its use and teaching. 3. The International Network of French Language Management (Rifal) promotes research efforts for the development of the French language. 4. The International Network of African Languages and Creole (Rilac) seeks to promote the translation of texts and the training of interpreters/translators. 5. The International Network of French Literature promotes French literature

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<p>The Commonwealth (of Nations)</p>	<p>53 Member States</p> <p><u>Antigua and Barbuda, Australia, Bahamas, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belize, Botswana, Brunei, Cameroon, Canada, Cyprus, Dominica, Gambia, Ghana, Grenada, Guyana, Guyana, India, Jamaica, Kenya, Kiribati, Lesotho, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Nauru, New Zealand, Nigeria, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Swaziland, Tanzania, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tuvalu, Uganda, Uganda, United Kingdom, Vanuatu, Zambia</u> (Note: Commonwealth membership entails acceptance of Commonwealth practices and conventions, including the use of the English language as the medium of inter-Commonwealth relations and acceptance of the Commonwealth style of informality and consensus)</p>	<p>18 November 1965</p>	<p>The Organization focuses on two main areas: peace and democracy; and pro-poor Growth and sustainable development.</p> <p>Peace and Democracy- To prevent or resolve conflicts, strengthen democratic practices and the rule of law, and achieve greater respect for human rights. This work is carried out through four programmatic areas: Human Rights, Democracy , Consensus Building and Rule of Law Good Offices for Peace</p> <p>Pro-Poor Growth and Sustainable Development- to develop the national capacity of members through its programmes in Public Sector Development, Economic Development, Environmentally Sustainable Development and Human Development</p>	<p>The Association for Commonwealth Literature ad Language Studies</p> <p>ACLALS was started in 1964 with a conference at the University of Leeds and was officially accredited to the Commonwealth in 2005. Through this accreditation, ACLALS is eligible to apply for continued funding from the Commonwealth Foundation, and to participate in civil society consultations and The People's Forum of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meetings</p> <p>The main objective of ACLALS is to promote and coordinate Commonwealth Literature Studies, organize seminars and workshops, arrange lectures by writers and scholars, publish a newsletter about activities in the field of Commonwealth Literature and hold one conference triennially. Membership in ACLALS is offered through its local branches in Commonwealth countries</p>

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<p>The Organization of Ibero-American States for the Education, Science and Culture</p>	<p>24 Member States:</p> <p>Andorra, Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Chile, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Equatorial Guinea, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Portugal, Puerto Rico, Spain, Uruguay and Venezuela</p>	<p>1949</p>	<p>The Organization contributes to the spread, and preservation of Spanish and Portuguese. It is also dedicated to;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Promoting bilingualism, 2. Improving methods of teaching languages 3. Strengthening mutual understanding, integration, solidarity and peace among the peoples of Latin Americans through education, science, technology and culture. <p>Annually, an Ibero-American Summit is being held since 1991, bringing together Spanish-, Portuguese- and Catalan-speaking Heads of Government and State of Europe and the Americans</p>	<p>The Organization promotes reading in schools, the use of and maintenance of school libraries and the incorporation of information technology in school curriculum.</p> <p>It also encourages the training of students in their native language as well as in foreign languages, and facilitates the loaning of books in coordination with other public libraries to encourage multi-cultural education.</p> <p>To promote culture in development policies, the Organization encourages its Member States to include a cultural component in public administration and management and by encouraging the incorporation of culture components in school curricula.</p>

League of Arab States	Member States: Algeria, Bahrain, Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, Yemen	22 March 1945	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Voluntary association of independent countries whose peoples are mainly Arabic speaking. - The Organizations' main goal is to draw closer the relations between member States and co-ordinate collaboration between them, to safeguard their independence and sovereignty, and to consider in a general way the affairs and interests of the Arab countries. Its stated purposes are to strengthen ties among the member states, coordinate their policies, and promote their common interests. - voluntary association of independent countries whose peoples are mainly Arabic speaking. Its stated purposes are to strengthen ties among the member states, coordinate their policies, and promote their common interests. - The Arab League is involved in political, economic, cultural, and social programs designed to promote the interests of member states. - The Arab League has served as a forum for member states to coordinate their policy positions and deliberate on matters of common concern. 	▪
Arab League Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ALECSO)		25 July 1970	Specialized agency of the Arab league -	

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Academy of Persian Language and Literature	Representatives are mainly from four countries: <u>Iran</u> , <u>Tajikistan</u> , <u>Afghanistan</u> , and <u>Uzbekistan</u> .	1935	<p>The academy is a government controlled international body presiding over the use of the Persian language in Iran and other Persian speaking countries.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focuses on creating and approving official Persian equivalents for foreign, general or technical terms. • Created an official orthography of the Persian language, titled <i>Dastur e Xatt e Fârsi</i> (Persian Script Orthography). <p>Promotes research on Persian language and literature, other Iranian languages, Persian heritage, Iranology and Iranian culture.</p>	
Cooperation among Farsi-speaking countries	<p>Iran, Afghanistan and Tajikistan</p> <p>Countries have frames their trilateral cooperation as sub-category of the Economic Cooperation Orgnaization (ECO) – which has as other members Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan</p>		<p>A new (sub-)Organisation may be in process of being formed to create new linkages among countries, sharing common bonds of culture and language. Thus far, meetings of Foreign Ministers were held – a summit was held in 2006 and the Foreign Ministers met last in March 2008 in Dushanbe, Tajikistan</p>	

TÜRKSOY Organisation	<p>Member States:</p> <p><u>Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan</u> <u>Kyrgyz Republic, Uzbekistan</u> <u>Turkey, Turkmenistan</u></p> <p>Oberving members Northern Cyprus, Altai (Republic of the Russian Federation – RF), Bashkiria (RF), <u>Bashkortostan (RF), Khakassia (RF)</u> Saxa Yakut, Tatarstan, Tuva and the Autonomous Region of the Gagauz Land in the Republic of Moldova</p>	July 12, 1993	<p>TÜRKSOY is an international organization which seeks to facilitate cooperation between Turkish- speaking countries in the fields of culture and arts, without interfering with the administration of members and their domestic and foreign policies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Envisioning the new balances emerging in international relations, to support the cultural restructuring throughout the region and the world. ▪ To establish friendly relations among the Turkish speaking peoples and nations and to explore disclose, develop, and protect the common Turkish culture, language, history, art, and customs. ▪ To create the necessary atmosphere for enabling the use of a common language and alphabet in the lands of the Turkic World. ▪ To promote scientific explorations that support the common past of the Turkish culture and history. ▪ To facilitate the transfer of the national history, mother tongue language, literature, culture, art, customs, and traditions to future generations. 	<p>Programmatic themes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Organisation aims to develop cultural and artistic relations between Turkish speaking states. It encourages radio and television programs, documentaries, videos, and films which promote the Turkish culture and art. ▪ It supports the organization of performances and festivals involving plays, operas, ballets, music, and folk dances that promote the Turkish culture. ▪ It supports the hosting of seminars on the goals of TÜRKSOY as well as the publication of literature which promote the Turkish culture. ▪ It collaborates with other international organisations involved in cultural and educational activities.
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<p>Cooperation among German speaking countries within:</p> <p>a) the United Nations b) OECD</p>	<p>Concerned Member States:</p> <p><u>Austria, Germany, Switzerland, Liechtenstein</u> (at UN)</p>		<p>a) within the United Nations, the German-speaking Member States agreed to establish a German Language Translation Section, funded by the Member States concerned, mainly to translate resolution of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and other select documents, such as the annual report of the Secretary-General. By ths, varying terminologies used by the different countries were harmonised and officialised under the umbrella of the United Nations;</p> <p>b) b) OECD has established a Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI), with a steering committee, that is made up of high-ranking officials from Germany, Austria and Switzerland, who are in charge of conducting regional seminars in German related to educational development.</p> <p>The work of the OECD committee is primarily to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss school development problems in the three countries • Create major topics for the countries’ • Select participating scholars and sample case studies • Analyse and disseminate the common and cross-border results from the seminars 	

