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RENEWAL OF CATEGORY 2 INSTITUTES AND CENTRES

SUMMARY

Pursuant to 37 C/Resolution 93, this document reports on the key results of the renewal assessment review of the activities of the Regional Centre for Training and Water Studies in Arid and Semi-Arid Regions in Egypt (RCTWS) under the auspices of UNESCO (category 2), and its contribution to the strategic programme objectives of UNESCO.

Based on the results of the review, the Director-General recommends to the Executive Board to renew the designation of RCTWS as a category 2 centre under the auspices of UNESCO, and to authorize her to sign the corresponding Agreement with the Government of the Arab Republic of Egypt.

Action expected of the Executive Board: Proposed decision in paragraph 14

1. In 31 C/Resolution 18, the General Conference of UNESCO approved the establishment in Egypt of the Regional Centre for Training and Water Studies in Arid and Semi-Arid Regions (RCTWS) under the auspices of UNESCO (category 2). The corresponding Agreement was further signed between UNESCO and the Government of the Arab Republic of Egypt. This Agreement had lastly come to its term and became subject to the renewal.
2. In 37 C/Resolution 93, the General Conference approved the revised Integrated Comprehensive Strategy for Category 2 Institutes and Centres (37 C/18 Part I and the attachments) which applies to all renewals of agreements. UNESCO Cairo Office (UCO) further initiated the review assessment process.
3. UCO, in cooperation with the Secretariat of IHP, IOS, and BSP, managed the review in manners compliant with the guidelines of the ruling Integrated Comprehensive Strategy for Category 2 Institutes and Centres. The Government of the Arab Republic of Egypt fully covered the cost of the review, which took place during 2014. The aim of the review was to provide objective

assessment of the activities of the Centre that would allow an informed decision on whether the current category 2 status should be renewed and the corresponding Agreement signed.

4. The renewal exercise consisted of a detailed review of relevant documents provided by the Centre and UNESCO, in-depth interviews and discussions with relevant stakeholders, collaborators, and beneficiaries and an in-depth analysis and evaluation of the Centre's activities. In addition, an in-depth assessment of the Centre's potential capacities and commitment to contribute to the implementation of the eighth phase of the International Hydrological Programme (IHP-VIII) was undertaken.

5. The Centre developed its strategy which was formulated in accordance with, and in light of the UNESCO IHP-VII (2008-2013) strategic objectives, in the areas of curriculum development, training courses, workshops and seminars, quality assurance and accreditation.

6. Training strategy also addresses the needs that were raised through three regional training needs assessments that were carried out by the Centre for the Arab and sub-Saharan African countries. The activities and outputs of the Centre have been effective in enhancing regional capacity development in the field of water resources and management. Since its establishment in 2002, the Centre has conducted 86 regional training workshops and courses, covering a wide variety of topics ranging from tools applications, technical/operational aspects, scientific, and managerial aspects of water resources. The total number of participants who benefited from regional activities was about 2,430 persons from a wide range of countries from the African and Arab regions.

7. The current activities and functions of the Centre and its services to the Arab region, as well as the Nile Basin region, do have the potential to continue to contribute to IHP-VIII. In addition, the current cooperation between The Netherlands and Egypt titled the "The Netherlands Initiative for Capacity Development in Higher Education-NICHE/EGY-115 Project" (€2M) in collaboration with Maastricht University and UNESCO-IHE, which aims at increasing the capacity of Training Sector for Water Resources and Irrigation (TSWRI) and provide high-quality training for the human resources in the water sector, shall facilitate the Centre with well-trained trainers and shall further increase its potential to contribute to IHP-VIII.

8. The review found that the activities and outputs of the Centre have been effective in enhancing regional capacity development in the field of water resources and management in the Arab region and Nile countries. The Centre has managed, despite challenges outside of its control to maintain an effective regional training programme, to raise extrabudgetary resources in support of its objectives and functions, and to demonstrate resilience.

9. The Centre has many opportunities and strengths that can aid in fulfilling its objectives and functions, namely the excellent infrastructure and facilities, well-trained and experienced trainers, excellent collaborative environment with the National Water Research Center (NWRC) of Egypt, proximity of the Centre to UCO, relevance of the Centre to the training needs of the region and the demographic centrality and accessibility of the Centre.

10. While most of the functions of the Centre have been negatively affected by the unfavourable political environment that has existed in the past few years in Egypt, the Centre's regional training has distinctively survived and performed well during these times, which shows that the technical and human resources systems of the regional component are stable and that the Centre has the potential to greatly impact positively in the region and beyond. The review has established that the Centre has met many of the objectives and defined functions and has the potential regional role of capacity development in water resources. However, the Centre's contribution to the region can be considerably enhanced if the constraints and challenges are addressed and the recommendations of the review are implemented adequately.

11. The review identified the following major administrative challenges and constraints and recommended that the Centre: (a) re-activate the Centre's Governing Board; (b) update the current Centre strategy with a clear regional dimension and translate it into an action plan that is well-aligned to IHP-VIII and specific regional needs; (c) strengthen relationship between the Centre and the IHP National Committee; and (d) institutionalize, train, and guide dedicated staff on preparing the annual reports and documentation to UNESCO in view of the IHP category 2 centre's obligations.

12. The review recommended that UNESCO renew the category 2 status under the auspices of UNESCO of the Centre.

13. A draft renewal Agreement has been drawn up in compliance with the model agreement contained in document 37 C/18 Part I. The online version of the draft Agreement as well as the renewal assessment review report is available for consultation on the webpage of the UNESCO Natural Sciences Sector.

Proposed decision

14. In light of the above, the Executive Board may wish to adopt the following decision:

The Executive Board,

1. Recalling 31 C/Resolution 18 and 37 C/Resolution 93,
2. Taking into account document 37 C/18 Part 1 and the attachments thereto,
3. Having examined document 196 EX/14,
4. Notes the Director-General's recommendation that the designation of the Regional Centre for Training and Water Studies in Arid and Semi-Arid Region (RCTWS), based in Egypt, as a category 2 centre under the auspices of UNESCO be renewed;
5. Confirms that the RCTWS has performed satisfactorily as a category 2 centre under the auspices of UNESCO;
6. Encourages the Government of the Arab Republic of Egypt to ensure the RCTWS' greater contribution to the implementation of the strategic objectives and priorities of UNESCO and its International Hydrologic Programme, including in strengthening the provision of policy advice, capacity-building in the Arab States and Africa region and the promotion of the South-South cooperation;
7. Invites both the Government of the Arab Republic of Egypt and the Regional Centre for Training and Water Studies in Arid and Semi-Arid Region to strengthen the promotion of synergies, complementarities of activities and "best practice" exchanges between RCTWS and other institutes and centres established under the auspices of UNESCO and working in same priority area, in supporting the increased impact and relevance of category 2 network cooperation at regional, subregional, interregional and global levels;
8. Decides to renew the designation of the Regional Centre for Training and Water Studies in Arid and Semi-Arid Region as a category 2 centre under the auspices of UNESCO;
9. Authorizes the Director-General to sign the corresponding agreement.