



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization
Organisation
des Nations Unies
pour l'éducation,
la science et la culture

Director-General's Consultation with Member States and National Commissions for UNESCO of the Europe and North America Region on the Preparation of the Medium-Term Strategy for 2014-2021 (37 C/4) and the Programme and Budget for 2014-2017 (37 C/5)

9 – 12 September 2012
Radisson Blu Carlton Hotel, Bratislava, Slovakia

Main messages and recommendations from the Regional Consultation of the Europe and North America Region, Bratislava, September 2012

1 Introduction

We welcome the preliminary proposal of the Director-General contained in Document 190 Ex/19 Part I. It can be considered as a major breakthrough, which takes into account key developments and challenges articulated by Member States and National Commissions. It is a proactive, forward looking and solid basis for a streamlined and more effective programme and a more agile UNESCO. It is essential that these proposals including streamlining efforts and the prioritisation of Freedom of Expression are implemented.

2 Freedom of expression

In line with the UNESCO Constitution and UNESCO's leading role within the UN system, Freedom of Expression and Freedom of Media are core topics, which must be part of the Mission Statement and a stand-alone main priority appropriately reflected in the structure, resources and output.

3 Structure

The organisational structure based on the C/4 will need to be streamlined, fit for purpose and focussed on delivery.

4 Education

Education needs to feature at the top of the post 2015 agenda and the integrated MDG/SDG development framework, which will give UNESCO's work more impact and therefore more visibility.

5 Science

The majority of the participants welcome the merging of the two science Major Programmes. It is essential that the merger is implemented in a well planned and efficient way in order to create a more effective, focused and successful science sector.

6 Inter-sectoral Platforms

The meeting strongly welcomes the deletion of the Inter-sectoral Platforms, whilst recalling that the inter-sectoral approach should be strengthened throughout UNESCO's work.

7 National Commissions

The unique network of over 195 National Commissions for UNESCO, ensuring UNESCO's presence in all Member States and connecting the Organization to civil society, adds a special dimension to UNESCO's work and it has to be used to its full potential.

8 Youth Participation

Change the way UNESCO works for and with youth based on analysis, reviews and needs assessments of the work undertaken in this area.



Austrian, Hungarian and Slovak
Commissions for UNESCO





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Final Report

Participants

1. 44 Member States and National Commissions for UNESCO in the Europe and North American Region attended the Consultation. Representatives of the Faroe Islands and Botswana and the representative of NGO Coordination Committee took part as observers. Officials from the UNESCO Secretariat also participated in the meeting (see list of participants in Annex VI).

Introductory Session

Welcome

2. Prof. Ľudovít Molnár, the President of the Slovak Commission for UNESCO, opened the Consultation and expressed that he was happy to see all the participants in Bratislava.
3. Mr. Peter Burian, State Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic, welcomed participants to Bratislava. He highlighted the unifying element of the river Danube that brought the Troika organizers (Austria, Hungary and Slovakia) together to hold the Director's General Consultation of the Europe and North America Region in Bratislava. He invited all participants to make best use of the fact that the Consultation brought together Member States, National Commissions and the representatives of the Secretariat. He stressed the importance and the relevance of the Consultation for the future of UNESCO.
4. On behalf of the hosting National Commissions, the President of the Austrian Commission for UNESCO, Ms. Eva Nowotny welcomed all the participants to Bratislava and expressed her satisfaction that the organizers had succeeded in assembling so many participants. She highlighted the excellent cooperation within the Troika organizing countries and expressed her thanks for financial and intellectual support given by several National Commissions for UNESCO of the ENA region. Furthermore, she welcomed the representatives of the Secretariat and invited them to take active part in the discussions.



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Minisztériuma
Ministry of Human Resources



MINISTRY
OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC

5. Mr. Hans d'Orville, Assistant Director-General for Strategic Planning conveyed greetings from the Director-General Ms. Irina Bokova with the wish for a successful and fruitful meeting. He expressed her thanks to the Governments of the Slovak Republic, Hungary and Austria for hosting this event. Mr. d'Orville mentioned that the Preliminary Proposal by the Director-General 190 EX/19 Part I and II, which was released during the week-end preceding the Consultation, is a first step in the preparation process of the 37 C/4 and 37 C/5, which will be debated and decided by the next General Conference in 2013. Important parts of the process are the 5 Regional Consultation of Member States and National Commissions for UNESCO. For Africa and Asia and the Pacific they took place in June and for Latin America and the Caribbean and the Arab States Region will be held later this month. He also turned the attention of the participants to the fact that the new type of questionnaire with both qualitative and quantitative and ranking dimensions has found a large and a positive response. A detailed analysis of the responses is accessible on line as are all the individual responses by Member States, NGOs and IGOs.

Formal opening and election of the bureau

6. The meeting was opened by Prof. William John Morgan, President of the UK National Commission for UNESCO. Mr. Morgan noted that after the last Consultation for the ENA Region held in London in 2010, many new challenges have emerged, with demanding task for UNESCO. He appreciated the new format of the Consultation with Member States and National Commissions for UNESCO together. He proposed Ms. Eva Nowotny, President of the Austrian Commission for UNESCO as chair of the meeting. This was adopted by acclamation.

Ms. Eva Nowotny took over as chair and proposed Mr. Ľudovít Molnár, President of the Slovak Commission for UNESCO, and Mr. Miklós Réthelyi, President of the Hungarian Commission for UNESCO as vice chairs, which was accepted. Ms. Kerstin Lundman, Deputy Secretary-General of the Swedish National Commission for UNESCO, was elected rapporteur.

Adoption of Rules of Procedure and Agenda

7. The rules of procedure and the agenda of the meeting were adopted.

Overview of the planning process and introduction to the 37 C/5 by the UNESCO Secretariat

8. Mr. Hans d'Orville, Assistant Director-General for Strategic Planning made a presentation of the new 37C/4 (the new planning and programming cycle of 8 years for the Medium-Term Strategy) and the 37C/5 (4 years for the programme part of the Programme and Budget). This shift expresses an alignment with the planning of the UN. The elaboration of the 37 C/4 and 37 C/5 is a working process which has started already at the 36th General Conference (Leaders' Forum and Youth Forum/Thematic Debates; etc.). The comprehensive information about the working process including the UN context (UN Education Agenda, Oceans Compact, International Scientific Advisory Board to the UN Secretary-General and the UN System) can be found in the 190 EX/19, Part I and II. In the process leading up to the next General Conference the Director-General will propose a more strategic and more focused programme ready early in 2013. The Director-General is keen to counteract the fragmentation of the previous programme, in part by proposing merging elements from various sectors. A merger between Natural and Social Sciences is one example of the attempt

to move to a more logical structure. The 190 Executive Board meeting will deliberate these issues.

9. In the following debate 21 Member States took the floor.
10. Many speakers underlined that the document is courageous and contains answers to many questions raised in the past, it has a new focus and it shows how UNESCO can work closer to the UN system which was considered to be positive. Many saw this document as a first step, which needed to be followed by many more.
11. Many interventions discussed the position and the role of the Organization's work on the freedom of expression, the media and the safety of journalists. They questioned whether the new proposal would diminish the importance of UNESCO's work in this field. A move to Culture might lead to that these freedoms could be regarded as more relative, since the relative approach unfortunately is common within the field of culture.
12. Several participants spoke up for TVET (Technical and Vocational Education and Training), and questions were raised whether the 1989 Convention on Technical and Vocational Education is still valid.
13. It was underlined that in Education UNESCO should provide wide analyses and approaches rather than working with each part of the system separately.
14. In the face of a merger between natural and social sciences the importance of ethics in science must find stronger position; it is a unique UNESCO responsibility in the UN system. The importance of Open Access was underlined.

It was proposed that Youth can be a streamlined intersectorial focus present in all sectors without being a global priority.

15. Participants welcomed the coming analyses of the Category II Institutes and Centres, and hoped that their tasks would become closer related to the core mission of UNESCO.
16. Mr. d'Orville thanked the speakers for their in-put and for all the positive comments on the improvements made in the document. The Director-General will elaborate on this document at the 190th Session of the Executive Board. He underlined that the Director-General has no intention to diminish the role of the Organization's work on the freedom of expression, the media and the safety of journalists and also underlined the importance of the World Press Freedom Day.
17. Mr. d'Orville underlined that it is too early to discuss the resulting structural changes, which might be a result of the proposals in the document. He informed the meeting that one of the four MLAs of the Science Programme will be dedicated to ethics. If Youth is to be made a new global priority is to be discussed in October.
18. Mr. d'Orville welcomed any ideas on how the Director-General could encourage the Member States to enforce their National Commissions for UNESCO.

Address by the President of the General Conference of UNESCO

19. H.E. Katalin Bogyay, President of the General Conference of UNESCO stressed that the ENA Region needs to join efforts in order to set UNESCO's priorities in a way that best mobilizes its resources in response to the current and emerging global challenges. The Consultation process is an important contribution to the new strategic direction of UNESCO. Given the strategic reform framework for the Organization the follow up of the Independent External Evaluation of UNESCO and the recommendations of the Executive Board Ad Hoc Working Group are of great

importance and guide to build stronger synergies with all parts of the UN family. Ms Bogyay reminded that this process, initiated by the General Conference, involves a tremendous amount of work carried out in between the Sessions by the Executive Board and the Secretariat. The diversity of stakeholders involved embodies the greatest asset of UNESCO – the plurality of ideas, world-views and cultures. Nevertheless, she also emphasized that each Member State should speak with one voice for the internal harmony of the Organization. She closed her remarks with thanks to the Slovak and Austrian co-organizers and wished all the participants real communications and real discussions.

Debating Session

Discussion on the Draft Recommendation on the 37 C/5 as of 29 August 2012 and the Document 190 EX/19 Part I as of 7th September 2012

20. Ms. Eva Nowotny opened this session by stressing that the organizers had attempted to involve all participants in the preparation process. The main advantage of postponing this Consultation to September is that for the first time ever the participants are able to discuss based on the results of the questionnaire, to which 33 Member States of the ENA Region have submitted answers to UNESCO. Furthermore, the new format of the Consultation with both Member States and National Commissions should lead to a greater commitment. Therefore the results of the Consultation should reflect the common position of the ENA Region. To finish her intervention she quoted the International External Evaluation: 'Member States, while emphasizing the need for 'greater focus', have themselves contributed to the current lack of coherence both by funding decisions (e.g. reducing regular budget contributions while increasing extra budgetary resourcing) and by lobbying to sustain weak programmes or introduce incoherent activities.' She invited the audience to focus on the 'big picture' and to put less important issues aside.

Recommendation on the 37 C/5

21. Ms. Eva Nowotny introduced the facilitator of the Open Space Session, Mr. Christoph Mandl.
22. During the planning phase Member States and National Commissions had given priority to eight strategic issues they wanted to discuss in depth at the Consultation.

General observations

23. UNESCO needs to be better focused, do fewer things better and more effectively. Its role as a think tank has been underlined by several participants.
24. UNESCO, with its Member States, must ensure the quality of UNESCO branded activities via rigorous and transparent evaluations and review procedures.
25. The 4 year programme cycle allows a mid-term evaluation of the programme and budget
26. Most participants were in favour of the preliminary proposal of the Director General contained in Document 190 EX/19 Part I regarding maintaining the two global priorities Africa and Gender. Many participants spoke for Youth to be considered to be included as a third element.

Peace, intercultural dialogue and human rights

(For group discussion summaries see Annex I)

27. UNESCO's work in this field must build on its Charter by creating circumstances for dialogue in and through UNESCO's areas of competence by practical mechanisms and tools. Working methods here should include the use of already existing networks and programmes and of coordination and cooperation with the UN.

Youth

28. Active inclusion and participation of young people in planning and execution of UNESCO's programmes and activities at the Headquarters and in the field. Change the ways UNESCO works for and with Youth, based on analyses and review as well as assessment of the work undertaken in this area so far. A Task Force consisting of Member States, National Commissions for UNESCO and youth organisations can be established to facilitate this.

Structure

29. The group expressed the general dissatisfaction with the current structure of the 37 C/5 document.
30. The organisational structure needs to become more flexible so that UNESCO can address challenges in a problem and results oriented manner. For example, when international or intergovernmental programmes are established this should be made on the basis of UNESCO's core priorities.

Major Programmes

31. Most participants were in favour of the preliminary proposal of the Director General contained in Document 190 EX/19 Part I regarding the proposed overall strategy.
32. Group D suggested to replace Major Programmes by Programme Areas, Thematic/Programmatic Approach or something similar.
33. Sunset clauses, as recommended by the Independent External Evaluation (IEE) and approved by the Executive Board and the General Conference, are generally requested. International cooperation based on normative instruments (especially the three most ratified culture Conventions from 1972, 2005 and 2003) require a different time frame and modus operandi than work programmes. Thus, the timeframe and length of programmes need to be designed according to their objectives and based on evaluation by competent bodies.

Intersectoral Platforms

34. Group D fully supports the suggestions contained in 190 EX/19 Part I, Par. 25: 'The adoption of a new approach based on cross-cutting thematic areas would also be better suited to the interconnection multidimensionality and multidisciplinary of today's challenges. At this stage there are no plans to continue the intersectoral platforms, (...)'. Nevertheless the function of intersectoral cooperation must be maintained.

Concentration of resources

35. Resources should be used for the programmes where they generate the greatest effect, especially in education. UNESCO must also address important global issues through local action.

Category II Institutes and Centres

36. UNESCO and its Member States should make more effective use of its Category II Institutes and Centres, with robust quality control.
37. Member States which are the host countries of those Institutes and Centres must assume responsibility for the delivery and effectiveness of those, their convergence with UNESCO's mandate and thematic areas as well as their usefulness in achieving UNESCO's goals. It is also the responsibility of those Member States to evaluate the performance of these Institutes and Centres.

Programme Recommendations

Education for Peace and Sustainable Development as proposed in 190 EX/19 Part I

38. Education needs to feature at the top of the Millennium Development Goals review and the elaboration of the post MDG 2015 agenda. A critical mass of resources is needed at UNESCO in order for UNESCO to lead the global education agenda.
39. The annual Global Monitoring Report on specific educational themes and recent global educational developments should be used also for greater visibility of UNESCO's work as well as for foresight and planning in line with the Main Line of Actions in education.
40. Working methods in line with UNESCO's comparative advantage should be sector wide policy formulation and planning, quality Education for All (EFA) coordination, monitoring and partnership; Education for Sustainable Development as a crucial element of basic and quality education and inclusive education.
41. The existing normative instruments in the field of education need to be reassessed.

Mobilizing the sciences, technology and innovation for peace and sustainable development as proposed in 190 EX/19 Part I

42. Themes: science, technology and innovation policies, oceans and coastal zones and freshwater systems, social impact of global environmental change, youth as actors for societal change and human rights.
43. Most participants were in favour of the preliminary proposal by the Director-General contained in Document 190 EX/19 Part I regarding the merging of the two Science Programmes.
44. Sciences have crucial contributions to make for sustainability, and UNESCO has as unique mandate within the UN in the field of sciences. Therefore, UNESCO should work together with the wider UN family on the follow up of Rio+20.
45. UNESCO's work in the field of Ethics of Science, Science Education and Open Access needs to be strengthened.
46. In order to strengthen interdisciplinary work, the Science Programmes such as the MAB Programme need to be strengthened. A review of the existing scientific programme committees devoted to ethics (IBC, IBGC and COMEST) is needed. UNESCO's work in the International Scientific Advisory Board to the UN Secretary-General and the UN System will be of significance.

Culture as proposed in 190 EX/19 Part I

47. Themes and UNESCO Conventions: tangible cultural and natural heritage, protecting and promoting the diversity of cultural expressions as well as intangible cultural heritage
48. Participants saw the 1972 World Heritage Convention on the Protection of the World's Cultural and Natural Heritage, the 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage as most important, however, operational guidelines need to be revised.
49. Contemporary challenges to the implementation of the World Heritage Convention are threats to the manageability and lack of quality control of sites and questionable credibility of nominations. Dialogue between all stake holders is crucial in this regard.
50. Culture and development should be included in the framework of all conventions especially in the 2005 Convention (Cultural Diversity is an area unique to UNESCO amongst in the UN). The development and collection of cultural statistics, indicators, best practices, and lessons learned from projects should be continued and improved. UNESCO should work together with the UN family to include culture in United Nations Development Assistance Framework and other UN instruments.
51. Preservation of information, including the Memory of the World Programme is important.

Freedom of expression and freedom of media

52. Group B agreed that the proposed Mission Statement in the preliminary proposal by the Director-General contained in Document 190 EX/19 Part I para 17 should include communication after the word culture. The Group proposed this amendment based on the text of the first paragraph of Article I.1. of the UNESCO Constitution.
53. Group B expressed that they were sceptical to a move of the work for freedom of expression and safety of journalist to Culture since many elements within the cultural area unfortunately are regarded as relative, while the freedom of expression is not a culturally relative issue.
54. Group B proposed that the freedom of expression and of the media, safety of journalists become a 'stand alone programme'; with policy issues and advice as working methods.
55. UNESCO should assume a leading role in the implementation of the joint UNESCO Plan on Safety of Journalists and Combating Impunity.
56. UNESCO should initiate a yearly expert report on global developments in media law, the question of impunity, etc.
57. The International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC) should be maintained.

Key note on 37 C/4

58. As an introduction for the discussion of the 37 C/4 Prof. Thomas G. Weiss held a key note presentation 'What future for the United Nations and UNESCO?'. (See Annex II for the text of the speech.)

After the key note participants discussed in groups. Questions raised were answered by Prof. Thomas G. Weiss.

World Café on 37 C/4

59. After a brief introduction to the World Café approach by the facilitator Mr. Christoph Mandl, the participants worked in rotating groups. Due to the lack of time there was no deep discussion of all aspects of the document. However, preparatory work had been done prior to the Consultation on text related to the C/4 before the document of 7 September was available (see Annex V).

60. There were similarities in some of the comments from the groups.

Question 1:

What are the main challenges UNESCO will have to address within its mandate and which of these should UNESCO focus on?

61. Several groups agreed that a lack of a definition of purpose, of focus in priorities and the relevance at global level were challenges. Poor communication, difficulties in finding the right balance between the global approach vs. national sovereignty of Member States were cited as challenges.

62. To find ways to cooperation better with networks such as UNESCO chairs, ASP-net schools etc. was cited as a challenge – some groups summarized this as a need to make better use of the existing tools. A challenge for UNESCO is to find ways to identify emerging global needs and be flexible enough to deal with them.

63. Several groups put the current politicization of UNESCO as a real challenge and a threat.

64. On the role of the National Commissions and all UNESCO networks it was noted that a stronger role for the civil society and more cooperation with the civil society by the National Commissions for UNESCO was a challenge. The National Commissions need to be able to give a solid agenda input and interact more with the Secretariat and the Executive Board. There is a need for more transparency about the work made by the National Commission, it is not always evident that the Secretariat or the Executive Board is fully informed about what goes on there.

65. As for administrative structure: the need for a system of sunset clauses, fewer domains, streamlined administrative procedures and a results focused approach was needed.

Question 2:

What will UNESCO look like, and work in 2021?

66. Many groups identified qualities such as: leaner, younger, more flexible and effective with better management, less political and more expert oriented, an organization, which is a think tank and gives quality policy advice to Member States, promotes the freedom of expression and Open Access.

67. UNESCO should be more visible and focused. It should be a modern organization, which uses contemporary working methods and have a less political and more executive Executive Board.

68. As for the role of National Commissions some identified the need to disengaging them from the Government and give them a 'freer' role.

Summary and closing discussion on 37 C/4

69. Insights from the World Café were presented by working groups (see Annex III).

Presentation and consideration of the Draft Report

70. The Draft Report was presented by the Rapporteur, Ms. Kerstin Lundman.

71. The facilitator, Dr. Christoph Mandl, introduced the consensual method for the recommendations and amendments to the Final Report.

72. Delegates from Member States and National Commissions considered the Draft Report in groups and proposed amendments.

Review of modifications and adoption of the Final Report

73. The Report and the main messages and recommendations of the Meeting were adopted. The Chair, Ms. Eva Nowotny warmly thanked the Rapporteur, Ms. Kerstin Lundman, for her work.

Presentation of the follow-up to the evaluation of the IOS Review of the Cooperation of UNESCO's Secretariat with the National Commissions for UNESCO by Mr. Eric Falt (IOS/EVS/PI/112 Dec 2011) see Annex IV for the text.

Official closure

74. All participants expressed their appreciation and warm thanks to the National Commissions for UNESCO of Austria, Hungary and Slovakia for the outstanding level of dedication, creativity and professionalism with which they had organized this meeting; it was unanimous feeling that this meeting had set new standards for future consultations of this kind.

75. The representatives of the French National Commission for UNESCO expressed their readiness to organize the next Consultation.

76. The president of the Slovak Commission for UNESCO, Mr. Ľudovít Molnár, closed the meeting.