

Hundred and seventy-fourth session

174 EX/44
PARIS, 12 April 2006
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**REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON
CONVENTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Item 21 Monitoring of the implementation of UNESCO's standard-setting instruments
(174 EX/22 Part I and Corr. (English only), Parts II and III)

1. The Committee on Conventions and Recommendations (CR) considered this item at three public working meetings on 30 and 31 March 2006 with Mr Luiz Filipe de Macedo Soares, representative of Brazil, in the Chair. It met on 11 April 2006 to adopt this report.
2. Pursuant to Rule 16.2 of the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board, the Committee on Conventions and Recommendations elected Mr Owen S.M. Bethel, representative of Bahamas, as its temporary Chairperson.
3. The Committee expressed its gratitude to Mr Davidson Hepburn (Bahamas) who chaired the Committee from the 169th to the 172nd session of the Executive Board for his outstanding leadership and singular contribution to it work.
4. By way of introduction, the Chairperson of the Committee recalled that as early as 2001 the Committee had noted the unsatisfactory implementation of its original mission, namely the practice of reporting on the follow-up to the seven standard-setting instruments of UNESCO that was entrusted to it at the time. In 165 EX/Decision 6.2, the Board adopted various measures to strengthen that part of CR's mandate, one of them prompting the General Conference in 2003 to broaden CR's mandate by entrusting to it the consideration of reports on the standard-setting instruments for which no follow-up mechanism was provided, i.e. eight conventions and 31 recommendations (32 C/Resolution 77). The Executive Board also requested the Secretariat to rationalize the guidelines communicated to Member States for periodic reports having regard also to already existing information monitored by other treaty bodies in the United Nations system as well as by international statistical offices, in particular by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (165 EX/Decision 6.2, para. 9). Following a study carried out by the Committee in 2004 on the strengthening of that part of its mandate, the Board decided at its 171st session that the Committee's work in that area should focus on the following three tasks: (i) to identify, in conjunction with the Secretariat, the priority recommendations in the list of standard-setting instruments; (ii) to propose new procedures specifically for the monitoring of the implementation of the UNESCO conventions and recommendations for which no specific institutional mechanism is provided; and (iii) to formulate harmonized model guidelines for conventions which are monitored by the Committee (171 EX/Decision 27, para. 5(a), (b), and (c)).

5. Subsequently, the Legal Adviser, representing the Director-General, presented the three documents prepared by the Secretariat with the view to facilitating the work of the members of the Committee on each of these questions (174 EX/22 Part I and Corr., Parts II and III) which the Committee considered in the following order.

Identification of UNESCO priority recommendations (174 EX/22 Part I and Corr.)

6. The Committee members considered that it was necessary to select from among the 31 UNESCO recommendations those that should be monitored by CR as a matter of priority. In order to make the selection, the members asked the Secretariat to pursue the examination of all those instruments, in particular those listed in paragraph 7(d), and to provide further information, in particular giving reasons for their continued relevance or otherwise.

Formulation of harmonized model guidelines for conventions which are monitored by the Committee on Conventions and Recommendations (174 EX/22 Part III)

7. The Committee members stated that they were in favour of the approach referred to in the document which took account of the ongoing reform process within the United Nations concerning harmonized guidelines for reporting under international human rights instruments. They considered that the Secretariat should continue to work along those lines for the establishment of the new guidelines. In that connection, they expressed the wish that the United Nations approach should be adapted to the specific features of the Organization and that the Director-General should submit to the 176th session of the Executive Board harmonized model guidelines which should also contain some information on the issues raised by the implementation of UNESCO's standard-setting instruments in order to increase national authorities' awareness on the subject.

Proposed new procedures specifically for the monitoring of the implementation of UNESCO conventions and recommendations for which no specific institutional mechanism is provided (174 EX/22 Part II)

8. The Committee members began their consideration of the summary proposals contained in paragraph 46 of the working document, concerning the Committee's structure. Most of the members were in favour of keeping to the current composition of the Committee, while pointing out that it would be advisable for there to be more experts in the areas concerned on the delegations of States represented on CR. In that connection, some Committee members drew attention to the substantial financial implications of sending several experts, especially for the developing countries. During the debate, many members observed that the new specific procedures should promote dialogue with the competent authorities of the Member States and with the other agencies in the United Nations system (along the lines of the cooperation that existed already between CR and the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations), but should also involve national commissions and non-governmental organizations. The members of the Committee decided to pursue the examination of the proposed new procedures at the next session of the Executive Board. The Committee recalled 33 C/Resolution 92 in which the General Conference invited the Director-General to implement the recommendation concerning the establishment of a focal point within the Secretariat for the purpose of collecting information on the application of all conventions and recommendations adopted by the General Conference and to prepare a comprehensive report thereon to the General Conference at each session.

9. In conclusion, congratulating the Secretariat on the quality of the working documents submitted, the Committee considered it necessary to continue its consideration of the item on the implementation of UNESCO's standard-setting instruments at its next session, a matter calling for

in-depth reflection enabling the Board to submit concrete proposals to the General Conference at its 34th session.

10. After having examined the item, the Committee recommended that the Executive Board adopt the following draft decision:

The Executive Board,

1. Recalling 171 EX/Decision 27, paragraph 5 (a) to (c),
2. Taking into account with satisfaction document 174 EX/22 Part I and Corr., Parts II and III, and the breakdown of the various recommendations done by the Secretariat, and having regard to the report of the Committee on Conventions and Recommendations (CR) on the matter (174 EX/44),
3. Recalling recommendation 25 of 33 C/Resolution 92, by which the General Conference decides that a focal point should be established within the Secretariat with the purpose of collecting information on the application of all conventions and recommendations adopted by the General Conference at each session and preparing a comprehensive report thereon to the General Conference at each session,
4. Invites the Director-General:
 - (a) to pursue the examination of the recommendations listed in paragraph 7(d) of 174 EX/22 Part I and Corr.; and
 - (b) to submit further information to the Committee so that it may identify, among the 31 UNESCO recommendations, those which should be monitored by the Committee;
5. Requests the Committee to continue its consideration of new procedures for the monitoring of the implementation of UNESCO's conventions and recommendations;
6. Requests the Director-General to submit to it at its 176th session proposed harmonized model guidelines based on information provided by the sectors concerned by the eight conventions in question, taking into account the approach of the United Nations with regard to the harmonized guidelines on reporting under the international human rights instruments;
7. Requests the Committee to resume consideration of this item at its 175th session and decides therefore to grant at its next session one and a half extra working days.