



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization

Organisation  
des Nations Unies  
pour l'éducation,  
la science et la culture

Organización  
de las Naciones Unidas  
para la Educación,  
la Ciencia y la Cultura

Организация  
Объединенных Наций по  
вопросам образования,  
науки и культуры

منظمة الأمم المتحدة  
للتربية والعلم والثقافة

联合国教育、  
科学及文化组织

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**BRAINSTORMING MEETING OF THE COORDINATING GROUP OF  
NATIONAL COMMISSIONS FOR UNESCO**

**Friday, 29 January 2010,**

**From 9.30 a.m to 6.00 p.m**

**Room VI, Fontenoy**

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## BRAINSTORMING MEETING OF THE COORDINATING GROUP OF NATIONAL COMMISSIONS FOR UNESCO

### FINAL AGENDA

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The Meeting was chaired by Mr Luis Ramallo, President of the Spanish National Commission of Cooperation with UNESCO and Chair of the Coordinating Group of National Commissions for UNESCO

**09:30-10:00**

#### **Opening of the Meeting**

- Welcoming Remarks by Mr Ahmed Sayyad, ADG/ERC
- Designation of the Rapporteur
- Adoption of the Agenda and Timetable
- Introduction of the participants

**10:00-11:00**

#### **First Session: How can UNESCO enhance its intellectual role by taking advantage of the National Commissions' input?**

With the participation of Mr Hans d'Orville, ADG/BSP

#### **Questions to be addressed by the participants include:**

- What is to be an international intellectual organization in the present world?
- How can UNESCO enhance its intellectual role and increase the impact of its action at national, sub-regional and regional levels? How National Commissions can better participate in and contribute to this process?
- How to further strengthen National Commissions' contribution in the promotion of UNESCO's ideals and image as an intellectual organization in each country and around the world?

**Note:** The participants were divided into three working groups.

**11:00-11:15**

Coffee break

**11:15-13:00**

**Continuation of the first session**

**13:00-15:00**

Lunch

**15:00-16:30**

**Second Session: How can UNESCO support National Commissions' role and capacity in this context?**

**Questions to be addressed by the participants include:**

- What are the main challenges confronting National Commissions in their interaction with UNESCO and within their respective countries? What measures should be taken and new practices be introduced by UNESCO and its Member States to address these challenges?
- What steps should be taken to build necessary capacities and to increase credibility and effectiveness of National Commissions in each country?
- How to strengthen collaboration between the Secretariat (Headquarters and field offices) and National Commissions as well as partnership among National Commissions in the process of decentralization and UN country programming?
- How can the Regional Consultations on the Preparation of the Draft 36 C/5 and Quadrennial Conferences of National Commissions be better organized with an improved format to enhance their impact? What would be supplementary topics to be discussed in addition to C/5 related items?
- How to make the training seminars for National Commissions more relevant and effective?

**Note:** The discussions were held in Plenary.

**16:30-16:45**

Coffee break

**16:45-17:45**

**Continuation of the second session**

**17:45-18:00**

**Presentation of main conclusions by the Rapporteur and closure**

## One-day brainstorming meeting of the Coordinating Group of National Commissions for UNESCO Réunion de réflexion du Groupe de coordination des commissions nationales pour l'UNESCO

UNESCO Headquarters 29 January 2010 / Siège de l'UNESCO 29 janvier 2010

### List of participants / Liste des participants

Members (or alternate) of the Coordinating Group/Membres (ou suppléants) du Groupe de coordination

	Country/Pays	Name/Nom	Title/Titre
1	<b>Belgium</b>	Mr Walter Lerouge	Chairperson of the Flemish National Commission
2		Mr Jan De Bisschop	Secretary-General of the Flemish National Commission
3		Mr Marien Faure	Secretary-General of the French speaking and German speaking Commission
4		Ms Emmanuelle de Foy	Belgian National Commission
5	<b>Benin</b>	Mr Irénée Fidégnon Boko	Secretary-General
6	<b>Dominican Republic</b>	Ms Nikaully Vargas	Secretary-General
7	<b>Kuwait</b>	Mr Abdullatif Al Baijan	Secretary-General
8		Ms Nouf Alfalah	Programme Specialist
9	<b>Morocco</b>	Ms Mina El Mghari	Secretary-General
10	<b>Netherlands</b>	Ms Els Jacobs	Secretary-General
11	<b>Pakistan</b>	Mr. Saqib Aleem	Secretary-General
12	<b>Republic of Korea</b>	Mr Taeck-soo Chun	Secretary-General
13	<b>Spain</b>	Mr Luis Ramallo	President

14	<b>Togo</b>	Mr Akoété Kougblenou	Secretary-General
15	<b>Trinidad and Tobago</b>	Ms Susan Shurland	Secretary-General
16	<b>Uganda</b>	Mr Augustine Omare-Okurut	Secretary-General
17	<b>United Kingdom</b>	Mr Alexander Boksenberg	Chairperson
18	<b>Vietnam</b>	Mr Sanh Chau Pham	Secretary-General

### **Other National Commissions/Autres Commissions nationales**

1	<b>Albania</b>	Ms Eni Jucja	Secretary-General
2	<b>Egypt</b>	Mr Safwat Salem	Secretary-General
3	<b>Finland</b>	Ms Zabrina Holmström	Secretary-General
4	<b>France</b>	Mr Jean-Pierre Régnier	Acting Secretary-General
5		Mme Simone Irsfeld	Permanent Delegation of France
6	<b>Lebanon</b>	Ms Salwa Saniora Baasiri	Secretary-General
7	<b>Oman</b>	Ms Madiha Ahmed Al-Shaibani	Secretary-General
8	<b>Poland</b>	Mr Slawomir Ratajski	Secretary-General
9		Ms Llon Morzol	Natcom
10	<b>Portugal</b>	Ms Manuela Galhardo	Secretary-General
11	<b>Tunisia</b>	Ms Fatma Tarhouni	Secretary-General
12	<b>United Arab Emirates</b>	Ms Khawla Al Mualla	Minister Advisor, acting Secretary General
13	<b>Yemen</b>	Mr Ahmed Ali Hasan Al-Maamari	Secretary-General

**UNESCO**

	<b>Name/Nom</b>	<b>Title/Titre</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Mr Ahmed Sayyad</b>	Assistant Director-General for External Relations and Cooperation (ADG/ERC)
<b>2</b>	<b>Mr Hans d'Orville</b>	Assistant Director-General for Strategic Planning (ADG/BSP)
<b>3</b>	<b>Ms Ann-Belinda Preis</b>	Senior Planning Officer, Division of Programme Planning, Monitoring and Reporting (BSP/PMR)
<b>4</b>	<b>Mr Xiaolin Cheng</b>	Chief, National Commissions Section (ERC/RSC/NAC)
<b>5</b>	<b>Mr Bobir Tukhtabayev</b>	Programme Specialist (ERC/RSC/NAC)
<b>6</b>	<b>Ms Vida Habash</b>	Programme Specialist (ERC/RSC/NAC)
<b>7</b>	<b>Ms Reem Saleh</b>	Assistant Programme Specialist (ERC/RSC/NAC)

## **BRAINSTORMING MEETING OF THE COORDINATING GROUP OF NATIONAL COMMISSIONS FOR UNESCO**

29 January 2010,

UNESCO HQ, Room VI

### **Summary Report**

1. The Coordinating Group of National Commissions met for a one-day meeting to reflect on the role of National Commissions in enhancing UNESCO's intellectual role at the country and international levels. In addition to the core and alternative members of the Coordinating Group, several National Commissions participating in the Meeting of National Commissions Task Force for the Euro-Arab Dialogue (UNESCO HQ, 27-28 January 2010) also attended as observers and contributed to the discussions. The meeting was chaired by Mr Luis Ramallo, President of the Spanish National Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO and Chairperson of the Coordinating Group. Mr Augustine Omare-Okurut, Secretary-General of the Uganda National Commission for UNESCO, was elected Rapporteur (**Annexes:** The final agenda and the list of participants).

2. Mr Ahmed Sayyad, Assistant Director-General for External Relations and Cooperation, opened the meeting. He stated that the meeting's purpose was to engage with National Commissions in a constructive dialogue in order to explore innovative ideas and suggestions on possible measures and policies which UNESCO could adopt. Mr Hans d'Orville, Assistant Director-General for Strategic Planning, also addressed the meeting, outlining major challenges for UNESCO in asserting its intellectual role within the UN system and emphasizing the need to strike a good balance between intellectual and operational activities.

3. During the morning session, the participants were divided into three working groups; the discussions in the afternoon took place in plenary. The main conclusions of those discussions are reflected below.

#### **Session I: How can UNESCO enhance its intellectual role by taking advantage of the National Commissions' input?**

4. Taking into account the complex issues of the present world and the fast changing international environment as well as the on-going reform in the United Nations system and in UNESCO, the Organization shall reaffirm its intellectual role, as outlined in its Constitution. To that end, the following measures shall be taken:

5. Within the UN system, where the majority agencies deal with operational and technical issues, UNESCO shall remain focused on its key functions as a laboratory of ideas, standard setter, capacity builder and policy adviser in its fields of competence in order to promote peace and development.



6. UNESCO, in close collaboration with the National Commissions and in partnership with Member States, shall:

- Make better use of the National Commissions world-wide network,
- make the most of its comparative advantage in advocacy and as an international platform for intellectual cooperation
- identify great challenges in its fields of competence and propose innovative solutions
- put a clear vision on its intellectual role and objectives in the C/4 document
- avoid dispersion of its resources and concentrate its action on a few priority areas
- be “depoliticized” and increasingly attract academia and intellectuals to its activities, especially in addressing key challenges in education, sciences, culture and communication
- give more space and time for intellectual debates and interactions in the Governing Bodies meetings and other international fora
- reduce bureaucracy
- improve its role as coordinator and mobilizer of networks
- use the media and partnerships to promote its image and values

7. UNESCO shall harmonize and enhance its governance at various levels (e.g. Governing Bodies, the Secretariat at HQ and Field Offices, and National Commissions).

#### **Specific proposals and objectives**

- UNESCO shall review the composition and functioning of the Executive Board in the light of the way it used to work in the past (i.e. some members are elected on personal capacities to increase the presence of intellectuals in the decision making process).
- UNESCO shall empower National Commissions to enhance their linkage and outreach to their constituencies and stakeholders in order to associate intellectuals with their daily work at the country level.

#### **Session II: How can UNESCO support National Commissions’ role and capacity in this context?**

8. Participants unanimously welcomed and appreciated the particular emphasis that Mrs Irina Bokova put on the National Commissions since her inauguration on 23 October 2009 as Director-General and her strong will to enhance further UNESCO’s cooperation with them.

9. Though established at national level, National Commissions are part and parcel of and not partners of UNESCO, as enshrined in Article VII of UNESCO Constitution. They are the main interface between Member States and the UNESCO Secretariat and their membership and should play this role.

10. Collaboration between National Commissions and Field Offices shall be improved, especially in the UN Delivering as One process in which National Commissions shall be closely involved in bringing additional intellectual dimension to the UN Country Team

discussions, in accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on Strategic Partnership signed by UNDP and UNESCO in October 2008.

11. Training and capacity-building programmes for National Commissions shall be strengthened, improved and new content and modalities introduced to adapt to their new roles.

### **Main challenges confronting National Commissions**

12. Each National Commission shall be able to mobilize the intellectual communities at the national level, so that it can genuinely act as a platform for intellectual cooperation. At the same time, the partnership among National Commissions shall be reinforced, in order to promote intellectual cooperation and undertake joint projects to add new impetus to UNESCO programmes.

13. To address these challenges effectively, the National Commissions will have to overcome several difficulties, such as:

- Difficulties in involving intellectual communities at the national level, so that the National Commissions can genuinely act as a platform for intellectual cooperation
- Weak and inadequate positioning within government structures
- Difficulties in communicating/interacting with line Ministries, Permanent Delegations and in reaching out to partners
- Limited human and financial resources
- Difficulties in relations with the UNESCO Secretariat, and the Field Offices

### **Specific proposals and objectives**

- Member States shall, in accordance with the Charter of National Commissions for UNESCO, provide National Commissions with adequate human and financial resources as well as legal status, to address the issues of their positioning within national administration, relations with line Ministries and Permanent Delegations.
- The place and role of National Commissions shall be examined as part of the Independent External Evaluation of UNESCO.
- UNESCO shall send circular letters reaffirming the role of National Commissions to (1) Governments; (2) Parliamentarians; (3) UN Agencies; and (4) UNESCO Field Offices.
- A review of the way of conducting DG's Biennial Regional Consultations and Quadrennial Conferences of National Commissions shall be undertaken, in order to explore the possibility of merging them into one meeting.
- UNESCO shall introduce an interregional consultation of National Commissions on the drafts C/4 and C/5, to be held right after five regional consultations and invite to this meeting representatives from each region (preferably, the hosts and rapporteurs of regional consultations) to work out a common position of all National Commissions on the drafts C/4 and C/5.

- The Secretariat unit for relations with National Commissions (currently ERC/NAC) should be strengthened and empowered with additional human and financial resources to reinforce ties with National Commissions and to enhance the interaction between them and the UNESCO Secretariat.
- Cooperation and partnership among National Commissions shall be strengthened, especially through exchange programmes, twinning, coaching and sharing of best practices.

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