



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

ERI/NAC/ME/10-10/026

Paris 26 Oct. 2010

Original: English

Informal Meeting of National Commissions

for UNESCO during the 185th session of the Executive Board

Friday 15 October 2010

8.40 a.m. to 10 a.m.

Room VI (Fontenoy).

CONTENT

Page

Summary Report	3
Agenda.....	6
List of participants.....	7

Informal Meeting of National Commissions for UNESCO during the 185th session of the Executive Board

(Friday 15 October 2010 at 08:40 – 10:00 in Room VI)

SUMMARY REPORT

1. At the invitation of Mr Eric Falt, Assistant Director-General for External Relations and Public Information (ADG/ERI), an informal breakfast meeting of National Commissions for UNESCO was held on 15 October 2010. It was organized to review the recent activities and to exchange information relating to National Commissions. The meeting was chaired by Mr Luis Ramallo, President of the Spanish National Commission and the Chairperson of the Coordinating Group of National Commissions. More than 60 participants, representing over 40 National Commissions from all regions as well as the UNESCO Secretariat, took part in the meeting (**Annexes:** The agenda of the meeting and the list of participants).

2. In his opening remarks, Mr Eric Falt informed the participants of the recent establishment of the new ERI Sector (following the integration of the former BPI into the former ERC) and its priorities. Mr Falt stated that one of his objectives as ADG/ERI was to contribute to the strengthening of UNESCO's relations with National Commissions. He expressed satisfaction that National Commissions were involved in all levels of UNESCO's action, its outreach to civil society as well as in its governance (for instance, 16 out of 58 members of the current Executive Board are either Chairs or Secretaries-General of National Commissions). He also commended National Commissions' initiatives and efforts in promoting the North-South-South cooperation, such as the Partnership with Africa and the Euro-Arab Dialogue. Noting that over 170 National Commissions took part in the DG consultations on the draft 36 C/5, Mr Falt thanked the host Member States (Morocco, Republic of Korea, United Kingdom, Uganda and Trinidad and Tobago) for their hospitality. Referring to the deliberations in the current session of the Executive Board, Mr Falt stressed that the Secretariat and Member States need to work together to strengthen the status and operational capacities of National Commissions. In that connection, he suggested that an evaluation of the performances and best practices of NatComs as well a comparative study of national cooperating networks of other UN sister agencies could be undertaken. He concluded by saying that the transformation of UNESCO into an efficient, visible and truly intellectual entity would perhaps entail also the transformation of its National Commissions.

3. Mr Amir Piric, Chief of the Evaluation Section (IOS/EVS), spoke about the Independent External Evaluation of UNESCO (IEE), which submitted its report to the Executive Board (Document 185 EX/18). Mr Piric briefly explained several steps which enabled the external evaluators to prepare their report (including the consultations with National Commissions) with the help of extra budgetary funding. In replying to the questions posed by the participants, he explained that in the IEE report the added value of National Commissions was examined in the context of UNESCO's wider network of civil society partners and intellectual/scientific communities. He said that while there was a clear understanding of the importance of National Commissions, there were nevertheless several National Commissions, which were short of resources and capacities.

4. During the ensuing exchange of views, the representatives of several National Commissions (e.g. Egypt, Uzbekistan, Slovenia, New Zealand, Brazil, Sri Lanka, Mali, Congo, Serbia, Latvia, Greece, Germany, Uganda, Tunis, Norway, Costa-Rica, France, Canada, United Kingdom, Spain, etc.) took the floor to make the following remarks and suggestions:

General remarks

- **The importance of National Commissions as national cooperating bodies of UNESCO is undeniable.** They represent a unique network and a comparative advantage for UNESCO within the UN. They assure the sustainability of UNESCO's action in Member States. These fundamental principles must be respected by all members of the Secretariat. The Organization should make the most of them, especially in strengthening its cooperation with them.
- **The role of National Commissions as “privileged” counterparts of UNESCO and the focal points in each Member State needs to be clarified,** especially with regard to their participation in programme execution as stipulated in UNESCO's administrative manuals. It was noted that although the direct responsibility for programme execution remained within the Secretariat, including its Field Offices, National Commissions should continue, wherever appropriate, to be involved in programme delivery via contractual arrangements.
- **The report of the Independent External Evaluation of UNESCO does not sufficiently focus on the role of National Commissions.** The report and its recommendations essentially touch on the need to strengthen the capacities of National Commissions but it does not elaborate on the participation and contribution of National Commissions in UNESCO's wide-ranging action and its presence in the field.
- **In many countries, especially where UNESCO is not a resident agency, National Commissions are often considered “to be UNESCO” by local populations.** Furthermore, the Organization and its objectives are known at the national level largely thanks to the work of National Commissions.
- The existing rules and regulations of UNESCO stipulate that **the Secretariat should keep National Commissions informed of any activity taking place in their country or involving their nationals.** Unfortunately, these provisions are sometimes not respected, especially by UNESCO Field Offices, which in consequence causes confusions and frustrations.
- The status of National Commissions should be carefully examined in the context of the larger reform within the UN system and UNESCO's participation in the “UN Delivering as One” process in which National Commissions are also invited to play a role. **The coordination and cooperation between National Commissions and UNESCO Field Offices in this regard must be improved.**
- **One of the efficient ways of strengthening the operational capacities of National Commissions is to involve them in programme execution.** By implementing concrete activities and projects, National Commissions can build efficiently their capacities, gain experience and obtain credibility and recognition.
- **The cooperation among National Commissions, especially within the North-South-South context, should be further expanded,** as one of the efficient ways of promoting international cooperation and capacity-building of National Commissions.

Specific suggestions

- The National Commissions need a more formal inter-regional platform to engage in inter-regional interaction, in addition to the current regional mechanisms (e.g. quadrennial conferences, consultations on C/4 & C/5, informal regional meetings during the General Conference, etc.). While the efforts in holding informal meetings on the margins of the Executive Board sessions are appreciated, **there is a clear need to formalize such meetings, so that (1) more time could be secured for deliberations and debates**

and (2) the observations and recommendations made therein could be adequately followed-up.

Note. Several participants regretted that there was no sufficient time to discuss all items on the draft agenda of the informal meeting, which lasted about an hour.

- **A working group of selected National Commissions (one representative per each region) can be set up to reflect on how to prepare and organize future interregional meetings of National Commissions.** Such a group could work via emails with the help of the NAC Section.
- There could be a **half or one day meeting during sessions of the Executive Board for discussion on issues relating to National Commissions.**
- The strengthening of National Commissions' capacities is a shared responsibility of Member States and the UNESCO Secretariat. **The Director-General should send a new circular letter to Member States with a strong message on the added value of National Commissions and on the need to strengthen them.**
- **Clear criteria should be set to assess the efficiency of National Commissions.** To that end, the National Commissions should regularly prepare the annual reports of their activities and send them to UNESCO. Each National Commissions should decide itself on the format for its reports.

5. In his reply to the above remarks, Mr Jacques Rao, DIR/ERI/RSC, stated that this type of meetings and discussions with National Commissions were always useful and constructive. He assured the participants that as in the past, the Secretariat would prepare the minutes of the discussions and send it to all National Commissions. He said that the Secretariat was committed to study the proposals expressed by the participants (e.g. the move from informal meetings of NatComs during the Executive Board into **a more formal gatherings**; providing more time for debate as well as adequate premises/facilities for future meetings; creating **an interregional platform** for interaction; considering the role of National Commissions in the new field network and the UN Delivering as One process, preparation of the DG's circular letter to governments; requesting **annual reports** from National Commissions on their activities; etc.) and to explore the possibility of implementing them. He also encouraged the participating NatCom officials to share their constructive views, addressed to the Secretariat, also with Executive Board members and relevant government officials. Finally, he indicated that the ERC/RSC/NAC Section will follow-up on the idea of setting-up a small representative working group of National Commissions to advise on the implementation of these proposed changes.

6. Mr Xiaolin Cheng, Chief, ERI/RSC/NAC, underscored that the NAC Section was currently finalizing, in collaboration with donor countries, several activities to promote the North-South-South cooperation among National Commissions and to contribute in their capacity-building. In that connection, he informed the participants of the upcoming events and training programmes, including an interregional forum on the rapprochement of cultures and the usual interregional seminar for new Secretaries-General of National Commissions (early next year).

7. The participants paid tribute to Ahmed Sayyad, former ADG/ERC as well as to Mr Walter Lerouge, former President of the Flemish National Commission (now Honorary President of the Flemish National Commission), and Mr Harry Reeves, former Secretary-General of the UK National Commission, for their dedication to UNESCO's ideals and for their contribution in strengthening National Commissions' worldwide network.

* * *

Informal Meeting of Presidents and Secretaries-General of National Commissions for UNESCO on the occasion of the 185th session of the Executive Board

(Friday 15 October 2010, 9-10 am, Room VI, Fontenoy Building)

The purpose of this meeting is to review the recent activities and to exchange information concerning National Commissions

Agenda

1. **Establishment of the new Sector for External Relations and Public Information (ERI)** and the new Sector's focus and priorities – brief intervention by ADG/ERI
2. Report on the **Independent External Evaluation** of UNESCO (IEE) – brief intervention by Mr Amir Piric, Chief, IOS/EVS
3. Main outcomes and assessment of the recent **Regional Conferences** of National Commissions and of the **Director-General Consultations** on Draft 36 C/5
4. Strengthening the **liaison mechanisms** with National Commissions
5. **North-South** and North-South-South cooperation and partnership among National Commissions
6. Upcoming Fora/Workshops and **Training Seminars** for National Commissions
7. Other business

list of confirmed Participants / Liste des participants confirmés

**Informal Breakfast Meeting of National Commissions for UNESCO /
Petit-déjeuner informelle de travail des commissions nationales pour l'UNESCO**

15 October 2010, 8:45 am - 10:15 am, Room VI / 15 octobre 2010, 8h45-10h15, Salle VI

N°	Name / Nom	Title / Titre	Country / Pays
1	Mr Sidi Mohamed BRAHIM-OTSMANE	Secretary-General	Algeria
2	Mr Aboul Khaleque	Secretary	Bangladesh
3	Ms Emmanuelle de Foy	Natcom Member	Belgium
4	Ms Marcia Donner	Deputy Permanent Delegate	Brazil
5	Mr Felipe Fortuna	Acting Secretary-General	Brazil
6	Mr Ahmed Baba Soulama	Secretary-General	Burkina Faso
7	Mr Axel Meisen	Chair	Canada
8	Mr David Walden	Secretary-General	Canada
9	Mr Gabriel Bokoumaka	Secretary-General	Congo
10	Ms Monserrat Vargas S.	Counsellor Permanent Delegation	Costa Rica
11	Mr Juan Antonio Fernandez Palacios	Chair	Cuba
12	Mr Milan Kuna	Secretary-General	Czech Republic
13	Ms Bodil Mørkøv Ullerup	Secretary-General	Denmark
14	Mr Mohamed El Zahaby	Acting Permanent Delegate	Egypt
15	Ms Lamia Ahmed	Permanent Delegation	Egypt
16	Mr Jean Audouze	Chair	France
17	Mr Lutz Möller	Natcom Programme Officer for SC/SHS	Germany
18	Mrs Sylvia Lutterodt	Secretary-General	Ghana

19	Ms Maria Ekaterini Papachristopoulou-Tzitzikosta	Chair	Greece
20	Mr Mohammed M.Mwinyipembee	Secretary-General	Kenya
21	Ms Dagnija Baltina	Secretary-General	Latvia
22	Mr Mohd Zulkifli bin Mohammed	Secretary-General	Malaysia
23	Mr Youssouf Dembélé	Secretary-General	Mali
24	Mr Dorjbal Dalajargal	Secretary-General	Mongolia
25	Ms Touria Majdouline	Secretary-General	Morocco
26	Mr Nico Evers	Natcom Policy Coordinator	Netherlands
27	Mr Bryan Gould	Chair	New Zealand
28	Ms Elizabeth Rose	Secretary-General	New Zealand
29	Ms Gerd-Hanne Fosen	Secretary-General	Norway
30	Ms Vigdis Lian	President	Norway
31	Mr. Slawomir Ratajski	Secretary-General	Poland
32	Mr Taeck-soo Chun	Secretary-General	Republic of Korea
33	Mr Heewoong Kim	Natcom Programme Specialist	Republic of Korea
34	Mr Grigory Ordzhonikidze	Secretary-General	Russian Federation
35	MS Jasna Zrnovic	Secretary-General	Serbia
36	Ms Vera Pavlovic Loncarski	Natcom member	Serbia
37	Ms Marjutka Hafner	Secretary-General	Slovenia
38	Mr Luis Ramallo	Chair	Spain
39	Mr R.P. Perera	Secretary-General	Sri Lanka
40	Mrs Francesca Gemnetti	President	Switzerland

41	Mrs Madeleine Viviani	Secretary-General	Switzerland
42	Mr Nidal Hassan	Secretary-General	Syria
43	Ms Fatma Tarhouni	Secretary-General	Tunisie
44	Mr Augustine Omare Okurut	Secretary-General	Uganda
45	H. E. Mrs Elizabeth Paula Napeyok	Ambassador, Permanent Delegate	Uganda
46	Mr. W. John Morgan	Chair	UK
47	Mr Ian White	Natcom Member	UK
48	Ms Andrea Vignolo	Secretary-General	Uruguay
49	Mr Alisher Ikramov	Secretary-General	Uzbekistan
50	Mr Ronald Siame Kaulule	Secretary-General	Zambia
51	Mr Josiah Mhlanga	Secretary-General	Zimbabwe

UNESCO Staff

1	Mr Eric Falt	ADG/ERI
2	Mr Jacques Rao	DIR/ERI/RSC
3	Mr Xiaolin Cheng	Chief ERI/RSC/NAC
4	Mr Bert Keuppens	DIR/IOS
5	Mr Amir Piric	Head IOS/EVS
6	Mr Bobir Tukhtabayev	ERI/RSC/NAC
7	Ms Vida Habash	ERI/RSC/NAC
8	Mr Reem Saleh	ERI/RSC/NAC

9	Ms Marie-Noëlle Branet	ERI/RSC/NAC
10	Ms Lydie Ndobu-Mackongo	ERI/RSC/NAC
11	Ms Lamy Cabanillas	ERI/RSC/NAC
12	Ms Hae-Jae Oh	Intern from Natcom Korea