



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization

# Executive Board

Hundred and eighty-seventh session

# 187 EX/36

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Item 36 of the provisional agenda

## **RELATIONS WITH INTERNATIONAL NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS, FOUNDATIONS AND SIMILAR INSTITUTIONS**

### **SUMMARY**

The Director-General submits this document to the Executive Board pursuant to 174 EX/Decision 31, 177 EX/Decision 57, 183 EX/Decision 13 and 34 C/Resolution 59, 185 EX/Decision 33 and 186 EX/Decision 31, and in accordance with the Directives concerning UNESCO's relations with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the Directives concerning UNESCO's relations with foundations and similar institutions.

There are no additional policy implications of a financial or administrative nature.

Action expected of the Executive Board: decision in paragraph 5.

## INTRODUCTION

1. Under the item: “Relations with international non-governmental organizations, foundations and similar institutions”, the Executive Board is invited to examine two separate issues. First, the new “Directives concerning UNESCO’s partnership with non-governmental organizations” in document 186 EX/37, summarized in Part I of this document. Second, the revision of the terms of reference of the Committee on International Non-Governmental Organizations set out in Part II. Part III is a brief report of the most recent “NGO Day”, held in June 2011 on the theme of water.

### I. NEW DIRECTIVES CONCERNING UNESCO’S PARTNERSHIP WITH NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS (NGOs)

2. The Director-General, having included the new “Directives concerning UNESCO’s partnership with non-governmental organizations” on the agenda of the 36th session of the General Conference, was also requested by the Executive Board to submit to the General Conference the comments made thereon at the Board’s 187th session and at previous sessions (186 EX/Decision 31). Document **36 C/48** – New Directives concerning UNESCO’s partnership with non-governmental organizations – is therefore submitted to the Board for consideration in document **187 EX/37** so that it may, in particular, be discussed by its NGO Committee, including with representatives of UNESCO’s NGO partners. The new directives set out a simplified framework in which the partnership UNESCO wishes to maintain with NGOs may develop under the most favourable conditions. They aim to develop a genuine partnership culture allowing UNESCO to legitimize its action, achieve its objectives and make them more visible. They make NGOs official partners in both the formulation and the implementation of the Organization’s programmes. They will help to facilitate the emergence of organizations representative of civil society, and their interaction at international level, in those parts of the world where they are weak or isolated. Any comments or recommendations made by the Executive Board to the General Conference on this proposal will be compiled in an addendum to document 36 C/48.

### II. EXAMINATION OF THE TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE COMMITTEE

3. Pursuant to 185 EX/Decision 33, the NGO Committee is requested by the Executive Board to examine “the scope of its current terms of reference with a view to including other actors in civil society”. After discussing the matter at its 186th session, the Board decided “to examine at its 187th session a draft proposal for the revision of the terms of reference of the Committee on International Non-Governmental Organizations, taking into consideration its debate at the 186th session, the relevant decisions adopted in the context of the follow-up to the independent external evaluation of UNESCO and the policy framework for strategic partnerships” (186 EX/Decision 31). In this regard, the Chair of the NGO Committee wished to convene an informal working group on 7 July 2011 to examine, before the Board session, proposed **revised terms of reference**, developed in keeping with the Organization’s new orientations on partnerships with various civil society actors. The Chair’s proposal, annexed hereto, was sent on the same day to States members of the Committee so that their comments could be collected and they could have several months to consider the proposal before the session. The Committee will thus be invited to discuss the issue and propose the adoption of the revised terms of reference to the Board.

### III. OTHER ISSUES RELATING TO COOPERATION WITH NGOS

4. On 27 June 2011, the NGO-UNESCO Liaison Committee staged an “**NGO Day**” on the theme “Water, Source of Life and Universal Human Resource: Cliché and Realities”. The day – opened by the President of the NGO-UNESCO Liaison Committee, Mr Bernard Loing and the Director-General’s representative, Ms Marie-Ange Théobald, Chief of the Section of Non-Governmental Organizations – was well received by participants with discussions around various

key themes. The issue of access to clean water was addressed by Professor Mohamed Larbi Bouguerra, former Professor at the Tunis Science Faculty and former research director at the CNRS. Participants then turned their attention to the question “Freshwater: scarcity or improper use? A precarious balance” and conflicts over water. A number of researchers and academics, as well as NGO and Secretariat representatives and the Ambassador of the Plurinational State of Bolivia to UNESCO, all contributed to the discussion. The diverse viewpoints offered participants an array of outlooks and areas for reflection on this important issue that lies at the heart of action by UNESCO and its NGO partners.

### **Action expected of the Executive Board**

5. After examining the present document, the Executive Board may wish to adopt a decision along the following lines:

The Executive Board,

1. Recalling 174 EX/Decision 31, 177 EX/Decision 57, 183 EX/Decision 13, 34 C/Resolution 59, 185 EX/Decision 33 and 186 EX/Decision 31,
2. Having examined document 187 EX/36,
3. Expresses appreciation for the continued efforts made by the Committee on International Non-Governmental Organizations to strengthen cooperation with NGOs and other civil society actors in UNESCO’s various fields of competence and at the international, regional and national levels;
4. Adopts the revised terms of reference of the NGO Committee annexed hereto;<sup>1</sup>
5. Decides to include an item on the agenda of its 188th session on the amendment of Rule 16 of its Rules of Procedure to take into account the proposed change in name of the Committee.

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<sup>1</sup> The terms of reference will be included in the official texts at the 188th session of the Executive Board.

## ANNEX

DRAFT

### Terms of reference of the Committee on non-governmental partners (23 members)

The Executive Board,

1. Recognizing the important contribution made by non-governmental partners to the preparation and implementation of UNESCO's programme,
2. Taking into account the Directives concerning UNESCO's partnership with non-governmental organizations, adopted by the General Conference at its 36th session, as well as the following resolutions adopted by the General Conference:<sup>2</sup>
  - 21 C/Resolution 7.11 concerning international non-governmental organizations maintaining relations with UNESCO,
  - 33 C/Resolution 92 concerning the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Working Group on relations between the three organs of UNESCO,
  - 34 C/Resolution 59 concerning the Executive Board's sexennial report on the contribution made to UNESCO's activities by international non-governmental organizations,
  - 36 C/Resolution... concerning the follow-up of the Independent External Evaluation's recommendation to open up the governing bodies to civil society inputs and representation,
3. Decides that the terms of reference of its Committee on non-governmental partners shall be as follows:
  - (a) to hold a series of thematic round tables on the involvement of non-governmental partners in the main lines of thrust of UNESCO's action. Organized as open fora, with interactive panels, these round tables should:
    - favour presentations by Members of the Committee, non-governmental partners and invited guest speakers on "good practices" and lessons learned at the international, regional, national and local levels for outreach to and partnership with non-governmental actors;
    - give further impetus to the involvement of youth in the work of NGOs;
    - strengthen coordination and cooperation between non-governmental partners and the National Commissions;
  - (b) to examine once a year, at its spring session, matters within its competence relating to the establishment of relations between UNESCO and non-governmental organizations as stipulated in the above-mentioned Directives, and notably to consider any proposals that the Director-General may submit to the Executive Board for the establishment or renewal of official associate partnership with non-governmental organizations;

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<sup>2</sup> Paragraph to be completed after the 36th session of the General Conference.

- (c) to ensure that the above-mentioned Directives continue to be implemented in a spirit of openness to the relevant actors of civil society, in particular in those parts of the world where civil society remains isolated or fragile;
  - (d) to examine all other relevant questions coming within the purview of the Executive Board in relation to UNESCO's cooperation with non-governmental partners in accordance with the relevant resolutions and decisions of the governing bodies;
4. Further decides to grant a second day of work to the Committee on non-governmental partners.