

### Thirteenth plenary meeting of the 38th session of the General Conference

Friday 13 November 2015 at 3.20 p.m.

President: Mr Stanley Mutumba Simataa (Namibia)

#### 1.1 The President:

Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen, colleagues, welcome back to the plenary. I declare open the thirteenth plenary meeting of the General Conference. With the meeting of today we will start examining the reports of programme commissions and committees. Before we do that, I would like to inform you that the Bureau of the General Conference held its fourth meeting this morning and the Bureau fielded progress reports on the work of the commissions and committees, and I am pleased to inform you all that their work is fully on schedule. I also have the pleasure to inform you that there will be no plenary meeting tomorrow, Saturday 14 November 2015, and I believe that this will allow all of us, including all of us here, to have a well-deserved rest and be prepared for the Leaders' Forum that will commence on Monday.

1.2 As you know this morning the Nominations Committee held polling for a second round of votes for the last remaining vacant seat for group V(b) for the Executive Board. I believe that the Chairperson of the Nominations Committee has information that needs to be conveyed to us. Your Excellency, you have the floor.

#### Election of Members of the Executive Board (*continued*):

#### 2. Mr Worbs (Chairperson of the Nominations Committee):

Thank you, Mr President. Unfortunately I have to make an announcement which will not please most of you. The number of votes cast does not correspond to the number of signatures on the electoral record. Rule 11 of Appendix I of the Rules of Procedure reads as follows: "When the Chairperson of the Meeting has opened the ballot box the tellers shall check the number of envelopes. If the number is greater or less than that of the voters the Chairperson of the Meeting shall be informed and he or she shall then declare the vote invalid and announce that it is necessary to reopen the ballot. Unfortunately this is our situation and a new vote has to be held. As tomorrow there is no meeting of the General Conference, we have two options. One would be today – technically it is possible. I was informed by the Secretary that it could be held today between 4 p.m. and 6 p.m. It has to be again in Room IV. The alternative would be to go forward to Wednesday, because on Monday and Tuesday we have the Leaders' Forum. I understand that the Ambassadors of the two countries concerned are not very happy about Wednesday. So from my side and the Secretariat's side, it would be possible technically to do it today between 4 p.m. and 6 p.m. Thank you, Mr President.

#### 3. The President:

Thank you very much Your Excellency. Let me now invite the Legal Adviser just to confirm the validity and the applicability of that Rule and also to confirm whether indeed the elections are possible today, because it is our intention to do whatever needs to be done following the unfortunate events strictly in accordance with the rules that govern us as an Organization. Madam Legal Adviser, you have the floor.

#### 4. Legal Adviser:

Thank you very much, Mr President. I just wanted to confirm, as has already been advised to you by Ambassador Worbs, the invalidity of the vote which took place earlier today and the consequent need to conduct that vote again. I can confirm that there is no legal impediment to holding the ballot today, later this afternoon.

#### 5. The President:

Thank you very much. That being the case, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, you are therefore kindly invited to go and cast your vote in Room IV from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. today and please let us do it correctly. I again appeal to please let us do it correctly to avoid contaminating the outcome of this last vote. Results will, however, be announced at the end of our plenary session on Monday, but at the same time we will also display the results electronically. I think we are together on that. Thank you very much.

#### Item 13.1: Venue of the 39th session of the General Conference

#### 6. The President:

Ladies and gentlemen, I now invite you to examine item 13.1 which concerns the venue of the 39th session of the General Conference. As you can see in document 38 C/45 the Executive Board has already made a recommendation on this matter through 197 EX/Decision 22.3. I would like to ask if the General Conference wishes to adopt the draft resolution contained in paragraph 6 of document 38 C/45 which proposes to hold the 39th session of the General Conference at the Headquarters of the Organization here in Paris. Are there any objections to this proposal? I see none. *It is so decided.* Thank you very much.

#### Report of the APX Commission

#### 7. The President:

Your Excellencies, let us now examine the report of the APX Commission which is contained in document 38 C/90. The Chairperson of the Committee, Mr Mathew Sudders, will present this document. Ambassador Sudders, you now have the floor.

#### 8.1 Mr Sudders (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) (Chairperson of the APX Commission):

Thank you very much, Mr President. Mr Chair of the Executive Board, Madam Director-General, Excellencies and distinguished colleagues, it is with pleasure that I submit to you the report on the work of the Commission for

Financial, Administrative and General Questions, Programme Support and External Relations (APX Commission) of the 38th session of the General Conference.

8.2 The APX Commission considered 27 items from 4 to 9 November 2015. The Commission's report, document 38 C/90, includes only the draft resolutions that the Commission recommends to the General Conference for adoption. The following items were adopted without debate: item **3.5** on the adoption of the budget ceiling was not debated again as it had already been adopted in the Joint Commission, item **4.1**, **4.17**, **4.24**, **5.6**, **5.7**, **8.1** as well as the Report by the Governing Board of the UNESCO Institute for Statistics on the activities of the Institute in 2014-2015, **9.3**, **9.4**, **9.5**, **10.2** and **10.3**.

8.3 Mr President, dear colleagues, allow me first briefly to return to item **1.3** "Report by the Director-General on communications received from Member States invoking the provisions of Article IV.C, paragraph 8I, of the Constitution". You will recall that I delivered, at the plenary on Saturday 7 November, a separate oral report on this item, following which the corresponding resolution was adopted. As I had noted then, the Working Group on Voting Rights had made recommendations to the APX Commission on its working methods. These recommendations were: (1) that the General Conference refines the definitions of the conditions that can be invoked by Member States regarding the inability to pay. Some Member States may be faced with conditions, which arise from events prior to the two-year time period set; (2) that the deadline for the submission of communications be reviewed, as the three days after the commencement of the General Conference may not give the Working Group sufficient time to explore possibilities for the payment of contributions. The Working Group therefore suggests that the deadline be set at the first day of the Executive Board session preceding the General Conference; (3) that the Working Group meet one or two months before the expiration of the deadline to give the Working Group more time to discuss with representatives of countries the mechanisms to ensure the payment of their contributions, including the review of existing and proposed payment plans; and finally, (4) the recommendation that membership of the Working Group be extended to two mandates to ensure continuity, and understanding of the rules and procedures.

8.4 Mr President, after discussions in the APX Commission, it was decided that these recommendations will be sent to the Working Group that has been created for governance, which I will speak about later, and to the Legal Committee of the General Conference. They would therefore be able to be considered at the next session of the General Conference.

8.5 Mr President, let me now turn to item **5.4** concerning "Revisions of the Terms of Reference of the Oversight Advisory Committee (OAC)". This item was presented by the representative of the Director-General, noting that the Terms of Reference had been adopted at the 35th session of the General Conference to advise the Director-General on oversight, risk management and internal control of the Organization. The revisions in the Terms of Reference were proposed by the Oversight Advisory Committee themselves and by the Executive Board.

8.6 Member States questioned the appropriateness of having a committee appointed by the Director-General advising Member States on the appointment of the independent External Auditor. It was answered that this revision was a suggestion of the OAC itself, and was intended to enable Member States to seek such advice from the committee, should they so decide. With regard to the composition of the committee and its membership, Member States raised several questions: one Member State noted a potential conflict of interest in that the Director of IOS was involved in the selection panel and the committee can potentially advise on the appointment of the Director of IOS. The representative of the Director-General pointed out that it would only be a single outside member advising the panel on selection, and such expert advice could be very useful. On a suggestion that there be a broader membership of six members to reflect geographical representation, the Member States were informed that the OAC is a committee selected on the basis of individual expertise. The representative of the Director-General added that considerable efforts are made to ensure geographical representation and gender balance among its members. It was also suggested that a two-year appointments may be too short and a consideration of a four-year term was indicated. The representative of the Director-General acknowledged that a longer membership could be appropriate if it was staggered amongst the members to facilitate continuity of the work of the Committee.

8.7 It was also pointed out that Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) is undertaking a review of the internal audit function of the entire United Nations system which will take stock of audit committees across the United Nations and identify best practices. To properly consider the good practices identified in that report, the APX Commission has requested the Director-General to propose a further update to the Terms of Reference of the Oversight Advisory Committee, at the 200th session of the Executive Board in consultation with the Committee itself in order to bring them into line with those of the United Nations Independent Audit Advisory Committee.

8.8 Mr President, the APX Commission then examined item **10.4** on the "Report by the Director-General on the State of the Medical Benefit Funds (MBF)". The representative of the Director-General, in introducing the first part of the document, confirmed that the governance structure of the Medical Benefits Fund had been implemented in line with the decision taken by the General Conference at its last session (37 C/Resolution 85) and that election of members to the new Advisory Board of the Medical Benefits Fund had taken place from 21 to 23 October 2015. The representative of the Director-General then continued to the second part of the report, which addresses the financial situation of the Fund and, in particular, raises the issue of the After-Service Health Insurance (ASHI).

8.9 The financial situation of the Medical Benefits Fund, "the pay as you go scheme", has improved and the reserves as at 30 September 2015 now stands at 17 months of expenditure, in line with the ideal level of 15-18 months as requested by External Auditor. The Director-General's representative then gave an overview of the After-Service Health Insurance (ASHI) liability, which reflects the estimated total future costs associated with providing health insurance to existing retirees and current staff upon their retirement. The liability has increased significantly by 51% to \$1.27 billion as at 31 December 2014. This significant increase is attributable to the change from 4% to 2.3% of the discount rate used in the valuation of the liability. Measures have been taken to address the long-term funding of the liability by introducing a 4% payroll charge applied since 1 January 2015 on extrabudgetary projects, which pay the

salaries of staff who are participants of the Fund. With regards to funding from the regular budget, the Executive Board made a recommendation to this Conference that we approve a 1% charge on staff costs to fund the ASHI liability with effect from 1st of January next year.

8.10 On the concern expressed on the increasing financial obligations and queries on whether the liability was due to the fact that the Fund provides coverage for retirees and their dependants, Member States were informed that the Medical Benefits Fund does indeed provide such coverage for retirees and their dependants, in line with United Nations-wide practice and this is due to the difficulty former staff members have to integrate national schemes upon retirement. It was highlighted that only dependants already enrolled during the active participation of the staff member are eligible for after-service coverage.

8.11 Member States stressed the need to mitigate the risks as highlighted by the recent IOS report, and requested an audit of the Fund to be made by the External Auditor. A number of participants of the Fund have also made such a request. Further, on the concern regarding the increase in the ASHI liability and the reasons why this has grown significantly, the principal reason was as mentioned due to the impact of the discount rate. The underlying liability would actually have decreased if the discount rate had remained the same. Member States queried how other United Nations agencies are dealing with the ASHI liability and how UNESCO can finance it.

8.12 The representative of the Director-General stated that other United Nations agencies are dealing with the very same issues. An ASHI Working Group was set up by the General Assembly to study the current situation among United Nations organizations and come up with long-term solutions. As outlined in the introductory part, UNESCO has taken measures to address this issue. However, the current proposal of 1% would not be enough. In fact, we would need to have a proposal of 8%. The representative of the Director-General also said that \$12 million is set aside in the 38 C/5 as the proposed UNESCO contributions for retirees. The creation of a tripartite committee composed of Member States, the administration and participant representatives to find “home-grown” solutions to our liability to contain costs was suggested and approved. It was agreed by members of the APX Commission that this tripartite committee will also consider the eventual recommendations of the External Auditor.

8.13 Turning to item **10.1** concerning “Staff Regulations and Staff Rules”, the representative of the Director-General explained that Regulation 12.2 requires the Director-General to report to each session of the General Conference, which Staff Rules have been introduced or amended to implement the Staff Regulations. In this regard, the Director-General introduced amendments, in the course of the biennium, to the following provisions: Performance reports, following the introduction of a new performance assessment policy and maternity leave, to harmonize provisions on leave for breastfeeding purposes with the United Nations common system. Furthermore, Regulation 12.1 of the Staff Regulations provides that the Regulations may be supplemented or amended by the General Conference subject to the maintenance of the acquired rights of staff members.

8.14 It was recalled that the Executive Board, at its 197th session, having examined the IOS Audit Report on recruitment, requested the Director-General to implement the action plan for each recommendation and to propose any amendments to the Staff Regulations, which would be necessary to implement those audit recommendations.

8.15 Reservations were expressed on two points: firstly, the priority consideration given to staff members in the recruitment process. Such a provision was questioned, insofar as the best candidate should be selected, whether internal or external. Secondly, the rationale behind the ability for the Director-General to limit certain posts to internal candidates as well as the priority given to staff members in the service of other United Nations agencies, again stressing that only the best candidates should be selected. It was explained that this would be, in the case of downsizing, to ensure that staff members whose posts are abolished have priority in applying and being considered for other posts. On the priority to staff of other organizations of the United Nations for vacancies in UNESCO, it was confirmed that this is a standard provision in other organizations and that, if this were removed, UNESCO staff would no longer benefit from the possibility to be considered for posts in other United Nations organizations on a reciprocal basis.

8.16 It was emphasized that the staff regulation, as amended, would in fact guarantee that the best candidate would be selected, as posts would be advertised internally and externally at the same time for one month. It was highlighted that at equal competence, and equal competency only, staff members should have priority consideration for posts, as they must be able to advance in their career.

8.17 A minor amendment was also made to staff regulation 4.5.3 in order to clarify the term tenure in relation to the position of the Legal Adviser. The clarification was thought to be necessary following the provision of external legal advice in 2013 wherein it was noted that the use of the term tenure had not been consistent, and that a clarification would be appropriate. With the amendment, it is now clear that all decisions relating to the persons employed in the posts in the regulation will be subject to consultation with the Executive Board. Following the good practice introduced by the Director-General in formally consulting the Executive Board on the appointment of the Director of IOS, Member States also decided to embed this practice in the regulation to cover the Director of IOS and the Ethics Officer. This regulation remains strictly limited to those posts where independence was felt to be essential for the functioning of the post. The Executive Board decides separately, prior to recruitment, on the terms of reference and contract durations for those posts.

8.18 Turning now to item **10.3** concerning the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund and the appointment of Member States’ representatives to the UNESCO Staff Pension Committee for 2016-2017, this was taken without debate. Six (6) Member States volunteered to serve as members, Brazil and Kenya offered continuation of service and the Philippines as a new member, alternates will be Oman, Libya and Canada and they will serve 2016-2017.

8.19 The APX Commission then examined item **11.2** on the “Mandate of the Headquarters Committee”, wherein they reiterated its mandate and continuing importance.

8.20 Closely linked to the above, the Commission moved on to item **11.1** concerning the “Report by the Director-

General, in cooperation with the Headquarters Committee, on managing the UNESCO complex”, which was introduced by the President of the Headquarters Committee, His Excellency, the Ambassador of Bangladesh, who informed the Commission on the overall work accomplished by the Committee since that last General Conference, in particular the approval of separate office rental scales that include a provision for long-term maintenance and conservation, including the mechanism for accumulating reserves for financing long-term maintenance and conservation of the Miollis and Bonvin buildings. He also explained that the Committee continues to follow-up on current and future renovation projects at UNESCO at Headquarters. The committee is continuing its consideration of a number of ongoing items, in particular the UNESCO auxiliary services and will conclude those issues with success and report back to the Executive Board.

8.21 The representative of the Director-General provided additional elements on projects including the renovation of Room X, the Forward Security Post, the optimization of space and the renovation of building VII with a view to it being rented to UNEP. The regrouping of the Secretariat to the Fontenoy site has now freed up space in the Bonvin building for rent following the adoption of a rental scale and the guidelines put in place by the Headquarters Committee.

8.22 The representative of the Director-General stated the report raised particular attention to the actions already taken or to be taken to ward off further degradation of the Headquarters buildings and in spite of budget restrictions the Secretariat continued to take palliative actions to avoid further risks. In the light of the risks the Secretariat in collaboration with the Headquarters Committee have begun to consider a more sustainable and structural plan and identify financing options for the conservation of the Miollis and Bonvin sites. This will be the object of the work of the Headquarters Committee and the Secretariat in the upcoming biennium.

8.23 There were some concerns regarding IT security related to Permanent Delegations and tenants, the Commission was reassured that the IT security for all tenants was ensured.

8.24 The Commission also took note of the urgency of works required by the Miollis and Bonvin sites. It was also stated that the rental of conference rooms should be paid and that the rental scale adopted by the Headquarters Committee should be applied and that the use of rooms should no longer be on a free basis. The revenue of room rental should serve for renovation. The representative of the Director-General confirmed that the Secretariat would be presenting the Headquarters Committee with guidelines for room tariffs, based on full cost recovery and also introducing a provision for maintenance and conservation.

8.25 The representative of the Director-General replied that to date €940,000 out of the \$1.2 million loan had already been reimbursed and that the final amount would be reimbursed in 2016-2017. A steering committee has been established for the renovation of Room I and this was created following a previous recommendation of the External Auditor. This Committee would include two (2) Headquarters Committee members as observers.

8.26 With regard to item 3.1 on the “Methods of preparing the budget, budget estimates for the 2016-2017 and budgeting techniques”, the Commission briefly discussed the concepts, which had been introduced throughout the current biennium at Executive Board session through Budget Orientation Debates.

8.27 The representative of the Director-General made a brief presentation on the budgeting techniques used to prepare the 38 C/5 for 2016-2017. The Commission was reminded that the preparation of the Draft 38 C/5 document started with the Director-General’s Preliminary Proposals submitted to the 195th session of the Executive Board in autumn 2014, wherein the Director-General presented three scenarios, namely: Zero Real Growth with a scenario of \$682 million; Zero Nominal Growth with \$653 million scenario; the Zero Nominal Growth Plus scenario of \$667 million.

8.28 After examining the Director-General’s Preliminary Proposals, the Executive Board requested the Director-General to prepare the 38 C/5 based on two scenarios namely the Zero Nominal Growth Plus scenario of \$667 million and the Zero Nominal Growth scenario of \$653 million together with their corresponding expenditure plans of \$518 million and \$507 million, respectively.

8.29 In this regard, the 38 C/5 was presented to the Executive Board for its initial review at the 196th session. The Executive Board had recommended to the General Conference to approve the proposal for the \$667 million and the expenditure plan of \$518 million. The Executive Board at that time also requested the Secretariat to make further refinements to budget allocations for the expected results of the five Major Programmes. This was done and was presented to the General Conference in document 38 C/6 Addendum 2.

8.30 The representative of the Director-General also outlined certain important features of the 38 C/5, namely its continuity with document 37 C/5 Approved, which covers a period of four years 2014-2017. The Secretariat further noted that efforts were made to assign more resources to the five Major Programme in all scenarios, and to respect to the extent possible the priority rankings established by Member States.

8.31 With regard to the constant dollar rate, it was further noted that the following the series of Executive Board decisions, and in light of the fact that the current market euro/dollar exchange rate is very close to the constant dollar rate we use, the Executive Board decided to maintain the rate of 1 US \$ = 0.869 Euro for the 38 C/5 biennium and to examine its revision in the next C/5.

8.32 Member States welcomed the improvements observed in document 38 C/5, and urged the Secretariat to continue the “work in progress” to further improve the implementation of results-based budgeting and the containment of incompressible costs.

8.33 In the light of item 3.1, the APX Commission moved on to item 3.2, “Consideration and adoption of the Draft Budget for 2016-2017, Parts I, III.A, III.B, and III.C.” They were all adopted without debate and Part II.B called for debate only on the section relating to External relations and public information. Several Members of the Commission took the floor to express their views on the proposed draft resolution presented by a Member State.

8.34 While some Members supported the proposal which was to ensure that regional consultations carried on in a

face-to-face environment, others recalled the discussions held at the last session of the Executive and the financial implications that these consultations would entail. The representative of the Director-General recalled the recent decision adopted at the last session of the Board on the roadmap on the organization of regional consultations on the C/5 document. He also noted the modalities set out in the Action Plan for Enhancing Cooperation of the UNESCO Secretariat with National Commissions and the holding of the annual interregional meeting of national commissions and various other types of National Commission meetings.

8.35 Following the debate, the APX Commission recommended to the General Conference that it adopt the resolution proposed without amendment while emphasizing the importance of face-to-face meetings, as it seemed imperative to increase the interaction between Headquarters and National Commissions through regional consultations and other means. Eventually, all decisions under this item were adopted without amendments.

8.36 In discussing item 3.4 concerning the "Preparation of the Draft Programme and Budget for 2018-2021", the representative of the Director-General gave a brief presentation of the major phases of the preparation of the Programme for that period. The 38th session of the General Conference resolution will set the stage for the Secretariat to launch the preparation of the future Programme and Budget, guided by the strategic orientations and the views expressed by the Member States. Consultations will continue over the new biennium, through an online questionnaire, e-discussions and during the Executive Board session, leading up to the adoption of the Draft 39 C/5 at the 39th session of the General Conference.

8.37 Member States highlighted the importance of UNESCO's normative role, as well as its role in providing upstream policy advice, and the need for greater focus on all forms of inequality and discrimination, including gender equality. Member States also mentioned priority issues such as the multidisciplinary mandate of the Organization, the presence in the field, the need for the Organization to become fit for delivery and to play an effective role in supporting Member States in implementing the 2030 Agenda. It was also noted that more strategic guidance was needed on how to bring these questions forward, such as striking the right balance between the normative and operational activities in the process for developing the next programme and budget. While all Member States commend the implementation of results-based budgeting, they also stressed that the application of such techniques had to fit the programmes to which they were applied.

8.38 It was underlined that when the discussions concerning the preparation of the 39 C/5 began, the diversity of programmes that are at the core of UNESCO has to be taken into account in their evaluation. It was noted that not all were quantifiable in the short term. It was further noted that Major Programmes such as the Social and Human Sciences have to be considered in the light of their role as regards effective social inclusion, reduced inequality and poverty eradication.

8.39 Mr President, the APX Commission debated item 5.1 on the "New format of reporting to the Executive Board on Programme implementation". The representative of the Director-General when introducing the item indicated that in response to the concerns expressed at the last session of the Executive Board regarding the length of the document and level of details, the Bureau of Strategic Planning (BSP), in close cooperation with programme sectors and Knowledge Management and Information (KMI) Systems had streamlined and simplified the system and consequently the length of the online report from SISTER would be reduced by about two thirds, while retaining essential information for Member States' decisions.

8.40 The representative of the Director-General recalled that this work initiated three years ago resulted from consultations and collaboration between the Secretariat and the Governing Bodies. It was further recalled that through 195 EX/Decision 4 Part V, the Executive Board had introduced the Programme Implementation Report (PIR) to be presented at every spring session and the Strategic Result Report (SRR) to be presented every four years. Accordingly, the first Programme Implementation Report (PIR) was presented at the 196th session of the Executive Board and the SISTER Online Report was presented at both the 195th and 197th sessions of the Executive Board.

8.41 The representative of the Director-General specified that in response to calls for further linking Part I and Part II of the EX/4, work would be engaged with BFM along those lines whilst maintaining the integrity of the two parts of the EX/4. It was indicated that in pursuit of streamlining and simplification and in light of the current elaboration of the PIR and SRR reports, the Secretariat proposed to revert to a cumulative report for the Programme Implementation Report (PIR). As such the coverage of the PIR would be coherent with UNESCO's internal IT systems and thereby decrease the reporting burden on the Secretariat and facilitating Member States discussions.

8.42 Some Member States further indicated that if the SISTER Online Report had to be maintained for the autumn session of the Executive Board, a written executive summary should accompany it. As an alternative to the SISTER Online Report, the representative of the Director-General proposed that Programme ADGs deliver a brief summary of key trends orally, thereby facilitating the discussions at the autumn sessions of the Executive Board.

8.43 As regards item 9.5 on "The level and administration of the Working Capital Fund", the Members of the APX Commission endorsed without debate the recommendation of the Director-General concerning the authorized level for 2016-2017 and the use of its resources.

8.44 Turning to item 5.3 on the "Revision of the Financial Regulations for Special Accounts", the representative of the Director-General presented the approach for the implementation of the External Auditor's recommendation following the audit of the Emergency Fund.

8.45 On a query on the possibility of decentralizing some of the Special Accounts listed in the document, the representative of the Director-General informed Member States that nothing in the Financial Regulations of Special Accounts prevents decentralization and that it is in the mandate of each Sector to decide on the decentralization as part of their management. It was further mentioned that there is already one Special Account managed by the field.

8.46 Member States requested more detailed information and additional explanations on the Funds-in-Trust Overhead Cost Account (FITOCA) with regard to the source of income and more specifically on the use of funds, account administration, decision-making with respect to funds allocation as well as an audit of this account. The representative of the Director-General drawing attention to the document presented at the 197th session describing the details on FITOCA, explained the principles relating to this account. The source of income of this account, the flat rate applied to extrabudgetary projects in order to cover indirect variable costs particularly administrative costs in Headquarters and field offices, and the detailed number of posts funded under FITOCA, were noted.

8.47 The representative of the Director-General further indicated that all funds, including all Special Accounts, are audited and included in the financial statements of the Organization. It was noted that in 2011 an external audit on the cost recovery policy and FITOCA was undertaken and that the Secretariat has implemented some of the recommendations, including those related to posts covered under FITOCA.

8.48 Member States asked the Secretariat to explain the difference between the Cost Recovery Special Account and the FITOCA in order to provide them with a better understanding. The representative of the Director-General stated that cost recovery and overheads, including their different components, are regularly presented to the Executive Board as part of the document on resource mobilization and implementation of the action plan for improved management of extrabudgetary projects. It was clarified that cost recovery relates to staff costs of regular programme staff charged to extrabudgetary projects. Such recovery is credited to the Cost recovery account for use by the relevant units within the sector to implement their programmes. Regarding FITOCA, the representative of the Director-General stated that FITOCA covers indirect variable costs, in particular the administrative costs in Headquarters and field offices. It was further stated that this definition was included in document 182 EX/42 that stated the "Programme Support Cost rate would only recover the support costs of Headquarters central services and field office administrative units and that all other costs should be charged directly to projects". This is in line with UNESCO's cost recovery policy.

8.49 Member States requested that FITOCA management and oversight be further discussed by the Executive Board together with a detailed annual report on the use of funds under this account. Member States reiterated their assertion that right from its establishment, FITOCA has been seen as recovering money lent from the regular programme budget to enable the implementation of extrabudgetary projects. They use the term regular programme subsidizing extrabudgetary projects. As such, it was indeed logical, dating back to the establishment of the FITOCA special account, that Member States should guide how the FITOCA resources are allocated and distributed. With this in mind the resolution provides such guidance be given through regular reporting items to the Executive Board.

8.50 The draft resolution on this item was re-examined during the last session, upon the approval of the Member States to take into account the financial and legal implications that the first iteration of the decision. It is to be noted that this decision only affects Special Accounts and does not affect Funds-in-Trusts, including Self-Benefiting Trust Funds. This is particularly important in the case of the largest of those, the Fund for Brazil, which is not a Special Account.

8.51 Mr President, let me now move on to the items related to the financial reports of the Organization. The Financial report and audited consolidated financial statements relating to the accounts of UNESCO for the financial period ended 31 December 2013, and the report by the External Auditor and the Financial report relating to the accounts ending 31 December 2014, and the report by the External Auditor. These are items 9.1 and 9.2 were discussed together. Member States commended the External Auditor of our Organization, Mr Didier Migaud (France), for the high quality of his work. They also expressed satisfaction with his unqualified opinion regarding both accounting periods.

8.52 The External Auditor drew attention of the Commission to the four main audit recommendations: (i) the necessity to amend the financial regulations and rules to ensure that financial statements can be approved on a yearly basis; (ii) to move from the use of a constant dollar rate to a rate closer to economic reality; (iii) to put in place a reliable long-term ASHI funding system; and (iv) to harmonize the accounting practices and IT systems to increase the reliability of the consolidated financial statements.

8.53 The representative of the Director-General highlighted that the audited financial statements are prepared in accordance with International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS) and include all sources of funds of the Organization. The results show net deficits in 2013 and 2014 financial periods. In 2014, the deficit was 40% lower due to improvements on the general fund and extrabudgetary funds. Revenue increased by 0.4% mainly due to the euro assessed contributions converted in United States dollars at a higher exchange rate in 2014. Expenses decrease mainly due to employee expenses and other expenses like foreign exchange losses variation. On performance by segment, the Regular Programme segment recorded a lower deficit of \$35.2 million, compared to \$64.5 million in 2013. This is largely attributable to an increase of revenue (more voluntary contributions and exchange rate variations) and a decrease of expenses particularly a reduction of employee benefit expenses.

8.54 The Organization's overall net assets position, for the first time, is negative compared to a positive balance previously in 2013. Negative -\$241.5 million. This means the Organization has more liabilities than assets. The negative position is attributable to the significant increase in the ASHI liability from \$0.7billion in 2010 to \$1.3 billion in 2014. Outstanding assessed contributions from Member States have also increased from \$72 million in 2010 to \$353 million in 2014.

8.55 On the status of the five (5) outstanding audit recommendations: three (3) of them are subject to resolutions proposed for consideration at this session of the General Conference. On a query about the exchange rate and the frequency of adjustments that would need to be done to adjust the exchange rate, the External Auditor reiterated the necessity to use a budget rate between the euros/USD which is closer to economic reality to avoid all adjustments and inherent risks.

8.56 The External Auditor was also thanked for his work in highlighting the issues regarding the use of the Emergency Fund and the proposal to close it in 2015. Member States agreed with his assessment that the action would

have been premature, and contrary to the relevant regulations. Ultimately, the Emergency Fund was not closed, and its balance is proposed to be used to support the programmes in the next biennium under the ZNG+ scenario. It was pointedly stated that the date of opening of an account is the date of opening an account and no other interpretation is possible or appropriate. It was stressed that the General Conference should duly be informed on any breach of regulations.

8.57 Mr President, the last items on the agenda: item 5.2 on the “Follow-up of the United Nations Joint Inspection Unit recommendations concerning the methods of work of UNESCO’s intergovernmental bodies and the Report by the External Auditor” and item 5.8 on the “Governance and working procedures and methods of the governing bodies” were discussed jointly.

8.58 The External Auditor presented the two documents, recalling the self-evaluation exercise that the Member States submitted themselves to, and the audit methods and scope. The Auditor regretted the absence of a map/cartography of the various governing entities. Member States underlined the urgency to improve governance and supported the creation of an open Working Group, which would examine the recommendations of the evaluation, which would necessitate a more in-depth debate. Member States supported and echoed the draft resolution proposed in this regard.

8.59 Member States suggested topics for future audits to the External Auditor, whilst recalling that the External Auditor retains full independence to choose the topics based on his assessment of what is appropriate. Referring to the organizational change that led to the creation of the Bureau of Financial Management (BFM) combining the former Comptroller’s office and the Budget section, it was suggested that it would be worth verifying that the checks and balances within BFM are still valid considering that the implementation of the budget and deciding on expenditures and the application of accountability framework are now in the same service. Verification was also requested on that the decisions taken by BFM comply with the Regulations, with a particular attention to be given to the FITOCA account.

8.60 Along with an evaluation of the 2011/12 Road map to see whether it was completed, especially in respect to EO/AO reform, an audit of the “conflict of interest” management in the Organization was requested. Further suggestions to the External Auditor were around the “one dollar contracts” in particular on how the individuals are selected for this type of contract and what is the basis for their selection, how they are held accountable, in which sector they are managed, what is their mission and what the real cost is. In other words if there are residency, travel costs, insurance costs or other costs associated with these contracts. Also question was whether these have diplomatic immunity and whether there are any reputational risks to the Organization associated with the use of one dollar contracts and finally on the geographical distribution of such contracts.

8.61 The External Auditor was also requested to make suggestions of priority areas for the investment plan in relation to the new “Invest for efficient delivery” fund that the Secretariat is currently working on. For example, by suggesting the areas where there would be the best “return on investment”. The changes to the travel policy in 2011 were also highlighted and an audit of the impact of the policy and how it was implemented was called for. The External Auditor thanked the Member States for their suggestions and confirmed that a thorough analysis of their input will be made and taken into account to establish the audit plan for the next biennium.

8.62 Mr President, I would like to conclude this presentation by extending my gratitude to all those who have contributed to the success of the debates of the APX Commission. This is my final APX Commission report, after serving four (4) years as serving as the President of the Finance and Administrative Commission in the Executive Board and APX President at the General Conference. I wish to congratulate all Member States on what we achieved in that time with consensus on every decision, including the tough ones like budgets, priorities and governance. But we always had a spirited and usually well informed debate.

8.63 I also wish to thank the Vice-Chairpersons, Mr Karel Komárek of the Czech Republic, Ms Vera Lacoëuille, Saint-Lucia, Mr Joshua Kalinoe of Papua New Guinea, and Mr Sylvanus Makokha of Kenya. I would also like to take this opportunity to express my deep appreciation to the distinguished Delegate of Germany, Mr Stefan Krawielicki, who chaired the Working Group on voting rights. I would also like to extend my thanks to the Chair of the Headquarters Committee, His Excellency Ambassador Islam of Bangladesh, for his presentation to the Commission.

8.64 Mr President, the rapid pace of the discussions and decisions taken in the APX Commission may have surprised some and I do believe that due to the excellent preparatory work, which the Executive Board Members had undertaken, in turn duly assisted ably by the Preparatory Group. As I had suggested at the 37th session of the General Conference and I once again suggest that the General Conference next time schedule two fewer days for the APX Commission, ever more so since the Executive Board will henceforth meet more regularly.

8.65 Now, in further expressing my gratitude I would also like extend my thanks to the Director-General, the Deputy Director-General and all their representatives, in particular to Mr Tang, the Officer in charge of BSP and Mr Le Saux the Deputy Director of BSP, and the Director of IOS; the Legal Advisor; the Director of Human Resources; the Director of MSS; the Director of KMI, the Chief Financial Officer and all the other senior officials who assisted us. My thanks also to our interpreters and translators, conference room clerks, and screen typists. I also take this opportunity to thank everyone who provided me, as the Chair of the Finance and Administrative Commission of the Board over the last two years with their help and advice, especially on the delicate work we undertook to strike a consensus on the budget scenario.

8.66 Mr President, in particular, I want to thank you for your help and guidance and our productive exchanges and your support to the APX Commission, and last and by absolutely no means least I want to thank the Secretary of the APX Commission, Mr Sachin Bhatt, who has accompanied me, in my work as FA Chair for four (4) years. I also thank from the bottom of my heart his team, Juan, Olive, Eunice, Virginie, Emily and Raihana for their excellent support. Thank you very much.

9. **The President:**

Thank you very much Ambassador Sudders for your comprehensive presentation and for the very able stewardship of the work of the Commission. I believe it was a journey worth travelling. Are there any comments or objections on document 38 C/90? If there are no objections may I assume that the General Conference takes note of the report of the APX Commission and adopts the draft resolution contained in it, subject to the decisions that the General Conference may take on budgetary issues when adopting their Appropriation Resolution for the next biennium. I see no objection. *It is so decided.*

10. **Saint Lucia:**

I am not objecting Mr President. I want to speak after you.

11. **The President:**

You want to speak after the adoption? Thank you very much, Saint Lucia. Let me then invite Saint Lucia to take the floor.

12. **Saint Lucia:**

Mr President, I will not object in your presence. I would just like to thank the Chairperson of the APX Commission for his report and express the gratitude of my delegation for his hard work and commitment to defend the values of the Organization. He has been a consensus builder on most complicated issues such as the one on the budget. The door of his little FA/APX office has always been open to those of us who needed his assistance. Finally, through you, Mr President, I would like to thank Ambassador Sudders, the person, for his great spirit, humour, integrity and courage. Thank you.

13. **The President:**

Thank you very much. Indeed, your President here can attest to that having been a member of the Executive Board. So I wish to congratulate you Ambassador Sudders as Chairperson of the APX Commission and to thank all the members of the Commission for your most efficient work.

**Report of the Education Commission:**

14. **The President:**

Your Excellencies, the item on our agenda for this afternoon is the report of the Education Commission. I would therefore like to give the floor to His Excellency, Mr Alexis Kalenius, Vice-President of the Education Commission, who will introduce the report contained in document 38 C/91 on behalf of the Commission. Sir, you have the floor.

15.1 **Mr Kalenius** (Finland) (Vice-Chairperson of the Education Commission):

Mr President of the General Conference, Madam Director-General, Honorable Ministers, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen. The Education Commission of the 38th session of the General Conference has completed its proceedings and I have the privilege on behalf of the Chair and the Commission to submit to you the main conclusions of our three days of intensive and fruitful discussions, which successfully covered 13 agenda items.

15.2 Ladies and gentlemen, distinguished delegates, let me start by recalling briefly the opening of the Commission on Thursday 5 November. In her opening remarks, the Chair invited the Commission to weigh the significance of this year and all what it represents for the international community, for education and for UNESCO. Significance because of the United Nations' and UNESCO's 70th birthday, and our 70-year continued commitment to build peace in the minds of men and women along with the fundamental role of education in this process.

15.3 The Chair reminded the Commission of how 2015 had been a year calling for reflective and introspective assessments. It is the year where the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the education for all (EFA) goals came to a close. We have all assessed the successes – and the shortcomings – in reaching the targets. But 2015 is the year when countries worked to shape and adopt a new development agenda, concretized in September with the adoption of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

15.4 Education is central to this new sustainable development agenda, with Sustainable Development Goal 4 seeking to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”. Opening our deliberations, we had the benefit of the outcomes of the high-level meeting that took place on 4 November, where Ministers discussed Education 2030 and adopted its framework for action.

15.5 The Chair called upon the Commission to view education not in isolation from other Sustainable Development Goals, but rather encouraged us all to consider that the realization of SDG4 is essential for the success of all the others. The challenge ahead is both to give attention to the complex interrelationships between education and key development sectors and also to determine which education strategies, policies and programmes are most effectively linked to the economic, social, environmental and political priorities of the new sustainable development agenda as a whole.

15.6 Let me now turn to debate 1 and debate 4, which items linked to Education 2030, including the role of UNESCO in the implementation of Education 2030, as well as more programmatic dimensions related to the programme and budget of the Education Sector and the contribution of different stakeholders including youth. Four items were covered under these debates: item 3.4, “Preparation of the Draft Programme and Budget for 2018-2021 (39 C/5)”; item 4.14, “UNESCO’s role in the implementation of the Education 2030 agenda”; item 4.5, “Conclusions of the Youth Forum as regards education”; and item 3.2, on the “Consideration and adoption of the Draft Budget for 2016-2017 for Major Programme I – Education”.

15.7 In introducing these debates, the Assistant Director-General for Education praised the achievements realized during the past two years in charting the Education 2030 agenda. Recalling the long and thorough consultation process and the concerted efforts by the Member States and the global education community to promote a single, renewed education agenda, Education 2030, recognizing the unfinished business of EFA, yet going beyond, with a universal and

holistic approach, the Assistant Director-General for Education also warned us that looking ahead, the real work is just about to start, as the implementation of Education 2030 will be a massive undertaking requiring all stakeholders' investment and engagement, with UNESCO playing a key role in the leadership and coordination.

15.8 The Assistant Director-General for Education recalled how document 38 C/54 outlines three key roles for UNESCO in the implementation of SDG 4: (1) to lead coordination and partnership building; (2) to review/monitor and report progress towards the achievement of the education targets; and (3) to support the Member States in the implementation.

15.9 With regards to the Preparation of the Draft Programme and Budget for 2018-2021 (39 C/5), the Assistant Director-General for Education laid forth how the Organization will further capitalize on its multidisciplinary expertise and enhance its intersectoral approach in the implementation of the SDGs.

15.10 Concerning the draft budget for 2016-2017 (38 C/5), the Assistant Director-General for Education reminded the Education Commission that, it was requested to adopt the budget allocation only for the next 2 years 2016-2017, with some minor programmatic changes taking into account recent developments in particular Education 2030 as the last General Conference has adopted the quadrennial programme for 2014-2017.

15.11 The Assistant Director-General for Education explained the few adjustments introduced to the Education programme with the view to ensure that the Sector is better "fit for purpose" to respond fully and effectively to Education 2030. He highlighted that these adjustments concern mainly Main Line of Action (MLA) 3, the title of which has been revised in the light of the 2030 agenda and now reads "Leading and coordinating the education 2030 agenda through partnerships, monitoring and research".

15.12 A total of 38 Member States and 10 Observers participated in the first debate on draft 39 C/5, Education 2030 and the Youth Forum, while 15 Member States took the floor to share their views during the fourth debate regarding draft budget of 38 C/5.

15.13 The Commission expressed its appreciation for the leadership of the Director-General in developing Education 2030 and its Framework for Action. Many delegates voiced their support to UNESCO's role as leader and coordinator of Education 2030. Delegates also supported the adoption of the draft budget and the review of the main line of action which they considered reflect well the high priority given to Education by the Organization and its role in leading and coordinating Education 2030. Furthermore, its role as standard-setter through its normative instruments in areas such as higher education and technical and vocational education and training was emphasized.

15.14 Many Member States also expressed their full commitment to the new education agenda. The fundamental responsibility of the Members States in the implementation of Education 2030 was reiterated by many Member States and Observers. They emphasized that UNESCO has a critical role in supporting the Member States in the implementation of the agenda.

15.15 The Education Commission urged the Director-General to clearly define how UNESCO will implement Education 2030, using the adopted Framework for Action as a reference for its programmes, and how it will contribute to the other Sustainable Development Goals. In this context, the Commission requested UNESCO to communicate to the Member States the new structure that would be put in place to implement Education 2030.

15.16 The Commission also encouraged the Organization to further pursue result-based management and highlighted the importance of monitoring and favouring the outputs of its programmes to assess their viability in the walk towards the achievement of the 2030 agenda.

15.17 In addition, the Education Commission strongly urged UNESCO to support the implementation of Education 2030 in close partnership with the existing UNESCO networks such as category 1 institutes, category 2 centres, UNESCO National Commissions, Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet), UNESCO International Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training and UNEVOC Network, University Twinning and Networking Programme (UNITWIN network), Global Network of Learning Cities, Goodwill Ambassadors and Special Envoys.

15.18 The comparative advantage of UNESCO in the field of monitoring and statistics related to education was also highlighted by many members of the Commission. The delegates urged UNESCO to collect relevant data with the view to inform decision making. In this regard, UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS) was considered as a key player. The work of the *Global Monitoring Report*, now to be called *Global Education Monitoring Report* (GEMR) was also appreciated. Many delegates stressed that sufficient funds and human resources should be allocated to both UIS and GEMR.

15.19 In this context, the role of UNESCO in supporting the Member States in developing the capacity for collecting data, managing statistics and monitoring in the field of education was considered by the delegates of utmost importance. The Commission encouraged UNESCO to support the development of national education statistics services.

15.20 The importance of promoting lifelong learning and quality education was reiterated by many delegates. Education as a fundamental human right and the importance of bridging formal, non-formal and informal education were stressed by a number of delegates. Qualified teachers were considered of critical importance in delivering quality education. The Commission urged UNESCO to pay particular attention to technical and vocational education and training and to reinforcing the relation between education and the world of work. Delegates called also to consider linkages between early childhood care and education including the implications on learners' performances. Information and communication technologies were mentioned by many delegates as drivers for promoting access and quality of education. The critical role of parents in participating in the education processes of children were highlighted by several observers.

15.21 UNESCO's work on global citizenship education and education for sustainable development were also appreciated and the Commission urged UNESCO to continue its efforts and work to promote these areas. Promotion of

cultural diversity in view of fostering global citizenship was considered to be one of the fields where UNESCO should contribute towards through higher inter-sectoral cooperation.

15.22 Many members of the Education Commission stressed that the focus of Education 2030 should be on the vulnerable and the marginalized, girls and women, children and indigenous people. Several Member States commended the two global priorities of UNESCO: Priority Africa and Gender Equality. Delegates urged UNESCO to continue prioritizing countries in Africa and Small Island Developing States. The importance of South-South Cooperation and North-South Cooperation in this regard were emphasized.

15.23 The importance of involving youth in the decision-making processes of UNESCO was highlighted. The contribution of youth through the UNESCO Youth Forum is well appreciated and the recommendations by the Youth Forum in encouraging schools to be seen as learning communities were welcomed. The Commission suggested that platforms be provided for young people to participate in Education 2030.

15.24 Finally, the central role of education in contributing to the implementation of several Sustainable Development Goals was highlighted. UNESCO's unique mandate of working in the fields of education, culture, science and communications was considered to be an important comparative advantage. Many Member States urged UNESCO to improve its intersectoral cooperation with a view to foster its contribution across the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular in the areas of health, democracy, gender and climate change.

15.25 In his response, the Assistant Director-General for Education warmly thanked all the delegates for their comments and wide appreciation for UNESCO's work and support of its leadership and coordination role for the implementation of Education 2013. Taking careful note of their demands and visions during the debates, he referred to the summaries prepared by the Secretariats of each Commission to be submitted at the last joint meeting of Commissions on November 18, as the first phase of a series of consultations, which will lead to the formulation of the Director-General preliminary proposals concerning the 39 C/5 document.

15.26 He also responded to the concern expressed on how to start addressing the major challenges in implementing the new agenda by emphasizing how UNESCO, using its convening power, strategically positions itself as a platform, inviting Member States, United Nations agencies and other stakeholders to be part of the "steering committee for Education 2030", the new mechanism for coordination, and by reaffirming the Education Sector's commitment to strengthen an intersectoral approach, together with other sectors, also taking advantage of the Organization's comparative advantage.

15.27 The proposed resolution on UNESCO's role in the implementation of Education 2030 was adopted with amendments proposed by some Member States.

15.28 The Commission adopted the draft resolutions related to Major Programme I and its seven category 1 institutes, contained in volume I of document 38 C/5 as amended by 38 C/6, 38C/6 Addendum and 38 C/6 Addendum 2, as well as orally by the Commission. The five draft resolutions submitted by Member States, as contained in document 38 C/8 regarding Major Programme I were all adopted by the Commission, some taking into account the Director-General's observations.

15.29 Following this adoption, the Commission moved to the second debate which included two items, namely item **6.3** related to the Preliminary report concerning the preparation of a global convention on the recognition of higher education qualifications, and item **7.8** on the Consolidated Report on the Implementation of the 1993 Recommendation on the Recognition of Studies and Qualifications in Higher Education.

15.30 27 Member States and 1 observer took the floor to address these two items. Many Member States welcomed the preliminary report concerning the preparation of a global convention on the recognition of higher education qualifications and its finding. Strong support was expressed by almost all Member States taking the floor in favour of the development of such a global convention. In addition, a number of countries stated their readiness and desire to participate in the drafting committee to be convened.

15.31 The need for such a global standard-setting instrument was highlighted by some States in the absence of any legally binding framework at the international level regulating the recognition of higher education qualifications. Furthermore, the initiative was recognized by many as more relevant than ever, given the current context of the migrant crisis and rising number of refugees. The future instrument's potential to support and accompany academic and professional mobility was praised.

15.32 The envisaged process was commended for how it would contribute to increase transparency, quality, equity and reciprocity by many States. Quality assurance is one of the key principles which was underlined, so as to ensure that recognition mechanisms are reliable and trusted. In improving quality assurance systems, the instrument would also become a tool against fraud.

15.33 The diversity of national education systems as well as other local specificities, such as national government structures, led several Member States to call for a flexible approach, emphasizing common values but allowing to take regional and national differences into consideration.

15.34 One of the dominant and recurrent views expressed was that of the importance of the regional conventions. Their implementation needs to be further strengthened and their revision processes continued. Many agreed that the development of a global convention should take into consideration the already existing regional ones and build upon them, identifying common principles but also examining the specificities, given the importance of not having contradiction between the regional and global conventions.

15.35 Member States called upon UNESCO to strengthen the capacity-building offered to further develop the higher education system at national level but also for the functioning of the regional conventions. The consultative process

outlined in the report received broad support. Some Member States expressed concerns for the costs issues implied by both the development but all the more the implementation of such a global convention.

15.36 In his response, the representative of the Director-General thanked Member States for their broad support for the work on the global instrument and took due note of the reserves expressed by Member States, and in particular the need for general principles allowing the accommodation of local specificities, as well as the importance to continue supporting the ongoing process of revising the regional conventions. Responding to the concerns regarding the funding – a preoccupation for the Secretariat also – he recalled that the implementation of a global instrument would rely on the existing structures put in place for the regional instruments, but did also express his hope that Member States would be attentive to the additional funding needs.

15.37 The draft resolution concerning the preparation of a global convention was adopted with amendments by several Member States, and the draft resolution concerning the consolidated report on the Implementation of the 1993 Recommendation was adopted with the amendments made by the Legal Committee as well as by an additional amendment proposed by one Member State.

15.38 Ladies and gentlemen, let me now turn to the third debate which addressed the Implementation of 37 C/Resolution 67 concerning educational and cultural institutions in the occupied Arab territories. The proposed resolution on this item was adopted without debate. 6 Member States made statements on this item after the adoption of the resolution.

15.39 Fellow delegates, ladies and gentlemen, as I already summarized debate four at the outset of this report, we shall now turn to debate five which included the examination of two revised normative instruments: the Recommendation on Adult Learning and Education and the Recommendation concerning Technical and Vocational Education and Training.

15.40 The representative of the Director-General started to introduce the items by reminding the Commission of the consultation and drafting processes followed since the 37th General Conference where it was decided to undertake their revision. 22 Member States and 5 observers expressed their views on the items.

15.41 Broad support for the revision of both Recommendations was expressed, welcoming the suggested changes to their texts, which were deemed to accurately reflect the realities and challenges, as well as national priorities. Both were considered, as new international standards, crucial to accompany the implementation of Education 2030.

15.42 Member States expressed their satisfaction with the consultation processes and commended UNESCO and UIL for the synergies they enabled between the development of both texts and the comprehensiveness, depth and innovativeness of the consultations.

15.43 Several delegates called upon all Member States to ensure that the provisions of the Recommendations would be interpreted into national legislations, policies, and be financed so as to not remain merely aspirational. Specificities of Member States and their local conditions were recalled to emphasize the need for flexibility in the implementation of the Recommendations.

15.44 The importance of developing lifelong learning, including through the recognition, validation and accreditation of non-formal and informal learning, through the establishment of national qualifications framework and through the development of pathways and permeable systems was over and over again stressed by Member States, commending the Recommendations for their perspectives on this.

15.45 In light of how technical and vocational education and training (TVET) and adult learning and education both fall within the remit of various sectors and require the engagement of various stakeholders, Member States commended the Recommendations for underlining the importance of intersectoral policies, of inter-ministerial work and of stakeholders' involvement.

15.46 The recognition of the diversity of forms of learning encompassed in both texts, as well as the promotion of the use of ICTs and online forms of education and learning were warmly welcomed. Specific importance was given to the development of teaching and training staff, as well as to ensure TVET and Adult learning and education truly include all, including marginalized and vulnerable people, in particular girls and women. The establishment of an informal group called "Friends of TVET", with the purpose to share experience in the area, was mentioned and invitation was extended to all Member States to support the group. The work accomplished by the UNESCO International Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (UNESCO-UNEVOC) was also appreciated and deemed as essential for supporting the Member States in the implementation of the Recommendation.

15.47 In their responses, the representatives of the Director-General thanked Member States for their appreciation of both the consultations processes and outcomes. With regard to the Recommendation on Adult Learning and Education, the representative of the Director-General indicated how its monitoring and promotion will be a part of the monitoring of the Belem Framework for Action. The Recommendation concerning TVET will be given due attention in the development of a new TVET Strategy, which will identify new approaches and avenues to implement and monitor the Recommendation. The two draft resolutions were adopted, each as amended by one Member State.

15.48 Fellow delegates, I would now like to turn to debate 6, which covered items related to the management of the education-related category 1 institutes, and to the establishment of 2 new category 2 institutes and centres. Presentations of reports on the 2014-2015 activities were given by the chairpersons or the representatives of the governing boards of six UNESCO category 1 institutes in education, namely: UNESCO International Bureau of Education (IBE); the UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP), the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL), the UNESCO Institute for Information Technologies in Education (IITE), the UNESCO Institute for Capacity-Building in Africa (IICBA); and Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Education for Peace and Sustainable Development (MGIEP).

15.49 The report of the UNESCO International Institute for Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (IESALC) was presented by the Director of the Institute. The institutes' presentations were followed by a presentation by the Director of the UNESCO Santiago Office on the Regional Education Project for Latin America and the Caribbean (PRELAC). When introducing the items under debate, the Assistant Director-General for Education recalled some background elements, namely the comprehensive review of the then six education-related category 1 institutes jointly undertaken by the Education Sector and UNESCO's Internal Oversight Service (IOS) with a view to identify ways to improve their management, as well as the report by the External Auditor on the governance and financial reporting of the institutes. He then explained how the Education Sector has duly taken into consideration the recommendations of IOS and the External Auditor, by accomplishing steady progress in improving the management of the education-related category 1 institutes in 3 key areas namely (1) programme management and coordination; (2) the financial and budget management; and (3) the human resources management.

15.50 Twenty Member States took the floor for the debate and the discussions that ensued showed the overall appreciation of Member States for the Institutes work. Tribute was paid to the work done to make management more transparent and UNECO was encouraged to continue implementing the Recommendations of IOS and the External Auditor. A call was made to clarify the mandates so as to avoid duplications and foster each Institute's specific role in contributing to Education 2030 in complementary ways.

15.51 The importance of IESALC as the only category 1 institute in higher education was recalled by many Member States, especially those from the Latin America and the Caribbean region.

15.52 The Representative of the Director-General for Education took due note of the importance to make sure there would be no duplication in the implementation of Education 2030, in which the Institutes have an important role to play. He mentioned the six year strategic plan developed for IESALC with the view to ensure sustainable core funding. He also welcomed, for IITE, the willingness by the host country to provide further core funding. The draft resolution on the management of the education-related category 1 institutes, including the revisions to the statutes of the IBE and of the IITE were approved with an amendment of one Member State.

15.53 The second agenda item under this debate dealt with the proposals for the establishment of two category 2 centres, one in Bangladesh – namely the International Mother Language Institute – and the other in China – namely the International Centre for Higher Education Innovation. The proposals to establish the centres were supported by several Member States and the item was adopted without debate.

15.54 Ladies and Gentlemen, Let me now turn to our seventh and last debate, which covered item **4.18** concerned with proclamation of 5 November as "World Day of Romani Language". One Member State and one observer expressed support for the draft resolution, which was adopted without amendments.

15.55 Distinguished delegates, I have now completed my presentation on the work of the Education Commission. Allow me to conclude my presentation by congratulating the members of the Commission for a very participatory meeting with intense and constructive debates, which, I believe, will now allow the Education Sector to move forward as it embarks on the demanding journey towards 2030. I would also like to thank the representative of the Director-General, the Assistant Director-General for Education, Mr Qian Tang, for the useful clarifications he provided to the Commission, which allowed it to carry out its work. Let me also thank the secretariat of the ED commission for their dedication and professionalism. I thank you for your attention.

16. **The President:**

Thank you very much Your Excellency for the presentation. Are there any comments or suggestions on this report? May I then consider that the General Conference takes note of the Report of the Education Commission. Dominican Republic, you have the floor Madam.

17. **República Dominicana:**

Gracias Señor Presidente, yo quería bueno felicitar la Comisión de Educación por el trabajo desarrollado y dirigirme personalmente a su Presidenta Kris Rampersad que ejerció esas funciones en representación del GRULAC y impuso y su dinámica en los trabajos de esa Comisión cuyos resultados fueron muy exitosos con opiniones muy favorables de parte de los Estados Miembros. Yo le pediría especialmente que esta observación de la República Dominicana contara en el informe verbal. Muchísimas gracias.

18. **The President:**

Thank you very much. Indeed, we have taken note of that comment. Any further interventions? I see none. Belize.

19. **Belize:**

Thank you Mr President. I want to just thank the presenters of the APX Commission and Education Commission reports, particularly the Chairpersons and Deputy Chairs of these commissions. They have done an extremely wonderful job. Mr President, I want to especially mention Ambassador Sudders. He is a brilliant young man and he is one that I have grown to admire and I hope he will vie for other leadership roles in UNESCO. I want to give particular and special mention to my distinguished colleague from Trinidad and Tobago, Dr Chris Ramprasad. Dr Ramprasad has done such a stellar job. She was resolute, composed, humorous, distinguished, competent, excellent, articulate, abled and qualified. I saw her in person myself. She performed exemplarily, with fidelity and zeal, and this is the same way I have seen her perform on the Executive Board, especially when she took the chair of the PX Commission as Deputy Chair. Dr Ramprasad has given of her time and talent selflessly and I hold her in high esteem. I want to congratulate her on her team for her extraordinary service, and it is service not just for Trinidad and Tobago but also, as the Dominican Republic said, for the Latin American and Caribbean Group (GRULAC), and not just GRULAC, she was also doing service for the world, since we are the world. Thank you very much, Mr President.

20.1 **The President:**

Thank you very much. Indeed, we are the world. May I then consider that the General Conference takes note of the report of the Education Commission and hereby adopts the draft resolutions proposed in document 38 C/91, subject to the decision that the Conference may take when adopting the Appropriation Resolution for 2016-2017? Thank you very much. *It is so **decided***. I wish to once again congratulate all members of the Education Commission under the able leadership of the Chairperson for their good work and the efficiency with which they were able to dispense their agenda.

20.2 Dear colleagues, we have thus finished our work for today. As mentioned at the beginning of this meeting, there will be no plenary session tomorrow. The plenary will reconvene on Monday, 16 November 2015 at 10 a.m. for the Leaders' Forum. We will have the great honour to receive several heads of State and government on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of UNESCO. I would strongly recommend that you be in Room I at 9.45 a.m. sharp so as to welcome our distinguished visitors. I will now give the floor to the Secretary who will provide some information on this particular event.

21.1 **Le Secrétaire:**

Merci, Monsieur le Président. À l'occasion du Forum des dirigeants de la 38<sup>e</sup> Conférence générale de l'UNESCO les 16 et 17 novembre, la Conférence générale recevra, le lundi 16 novembre, les Présidents de la République islamique d'Iran, de la Bulgarie, du Cameroun, de l'ex-République yougoslave de Macédoine, du Gabon, de la Lybie, de la Lituanie et de la Mongolie. Le mardi 17 novembre, la Conférence générale recevra le Premier Ministre du Bangladesh, puis les Présidents de Malte, de l'Azerbaïdjan, du Mali et de la France. Le programme détaillé du Forum des dirigeants et des interventions des hautes personnalités gouvernementales qui s'y exprimeront sera affiché sur les écrans et dans le Bulletin d'information des délégués en ligne.

21.2 S'agissant de la soirée célébrant le 70<sup>e</sup> anniversaire de notre Organisation, le 16 novembre, la cérémonie commencera par un concert de l'Orchestre mondial pour la paix (World Peace Orchestra), « Artistes de l'UNESCO pour la paix », à 19 heures en salle I. Ensuite, Mme la Directrice générale ainsi que les anciens directeurs généraux de l'organisation, MM. M'Bow, Mayor et Matsuura, feront une allocution célébrant cet anniversaire.

21.3 La cérémonie sera suivie, à 20 h 45, du lancement d'une projection multimédia unique sur les façades du bâtiment du Siège de l'UNESCO, visible de la piazza Suffren, du hall Ségur, du restaurant au 7<sup>e</sup> étage ainsi que de l'avenue Lowendal. La projection architecturale d'un cycle de 15 minutes sera rediffusée en continu jusqu'à minuit. Les délégués pourront venir voir la projection le 17 novembre aussi, à partir de 18 heures jusqu'à minuit. Enfin, la projection sera montrée une dernière fois le 18 novembre, à partir de 18 heures jusqu'à minuit également.

21.4 Enfin, la cérémonie du prix international UNESCO-Guinée équatoriale pour la recherche en sciences de la vie aura lieu demain, samedi 14 novembre, à 15 heures, en présence de S. E. M. Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, Président de la Guinée équatoriale. La salle I devant être réaménagée pour préparer cette cérémonie, tous les délégués sont invités à retirer tous leurs effets personnels et documents et à ne rien laisser en salle tout de suite après la clôture de cette séance plénière. Je vous remercie, Monsieur le Président.

22. **The President:**

Thank you very much, Mr Secretary. Before I adjourn the meeting, let me remind you dear delegates, Your Excellencies, that the voting is still open in Room IV. Please, those of you who have not yet voted, before you leave, we kindly request you to go and submit your vote. On that note, *this meeting is now **adjourned***. Thank you very much and have a lovely weekend.

*The meeting rose at 4.55 p.m.*