DRAFT EVALUATION REPORT OF THE MOST NATIONAL LIAISON COMMITTEES (NLCs)

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EVALUATION REPORT OF THE MOST NATIONAL LIAISON COMMITTEES (NLCs)

I. FRAMEWORK OF THE EVALUATION

1. Mandate, purpose and scope of the evaluation

The evaluation was undertaken in keeping with the Recommendations of the Sixth Session of the Intergovernmental Council (IGC) of the MOST Programme (Paris, 19-21 February 2003) which stitpulated that "the MOST Secretariat in collaboration with National Commissions should undertake a review of the structure, operations and impact of the NLCs" and submit appropriate proposals and recommendations to the IGC Bureau.

This is the first comprehensive evaluation of the NLCs undertaken within the framework of MOST. Its purpose is prospective rather than retrospective, focusing on the transition process initiated in 2003 and currently underway, more specifically on "*How to adjust the structure and operations of the NLCs in order to implement the new mission of the Programme.*"

2. Evaluation methodology (Activities carried out)

In keeping with the Terms of Reference approved by the Social Science Sector and the IOS (Annex 1), an Evaluation Plan was submitted to the MOST Secretariat and the following activities were carried out:

- gathering, analyzing and systematizing information from the MOST documents available in the Secretariat files and on the MOST website;
- discussions and consultations with staff members of the SHS Sector and with various experts inside and outside the Secretariat –including representatives of social science NGOs - who had been involved in, and had intimate knowledge of MOST activities;
- contacts (via Internet and by phone) with members of the IGC Bureau and of the SAC, as well as with one former external evaluator of MOST;
- exchanges of views - by telephone, via Internet or face to face during the 7th Session of the MOST IGC - with representatives of the National Commissions, the NLCs and social science experts in several countries;
- visit to one NLCs (Romania) for which an extensive evaluation has been prepared and placed in the MOST files. (Two more visits to NLCs had been envisaged, but lack of time (and funds) did not allow for them to be made). The evaluator attended a meeting devoted to a MOST Project (CODENOBA) organized by the Social Sciences Sub Commission of the French National Commission for UNESCO;
- gathering up to date information on the situation of MOST NLCs through a **Questionnaire** (Annex 2) which was circulated in two rounds to Member States (May-June and August-September 2005). The Questionnaire turned into a very useful tool for the evaluation. There were 64 replies: 45 filled-in Questionnaires and 19 "other" replies indicating that there was no NLC in the respective country, but a new one is being envisaged for MOST Phase II (see Annex 3 for a presentation of replies by country). The information collected via the Questionnaire was used to assemble Tables 1, 2 and 3 (Annexes 6, 7 and 8 respectively). They have been placed on the MOST Website with a triple purpose: (a) to serve as a Data Base and a source of information and to facilitate contacts and exchanges of in formation and experience among NLCs, (b) to allow for their constant updating by the MOST Secretariat, with the support of the NLCs and the National Commissions for UNESCO and, (c) to encourage restructuring

NLCs - or setting up new ones where they do not exist – so as to better meet the requirements of MOST Phase II.

Several additional activities were of great help to the evaluator in order to complete his task:

- **Consultations with SHS staff.** The preliminary results of the evaluation were presented to a meeting of the SHS staff on 27 June 2005. Upon the initiative of the ADG/SHS, a second working meeting, attended by members of the MOST Secretariat, by Directors (or their representatives) and social science experts of the UNESCO field, cluster and regional offices, was organized on 30 June 2005. The meeting occasioned a frank and constructive exchange of views, which indicated that MOST Phase II needs rethinking seriously the structure, composition and functions of the national MOST arrangements/ mechanisms/ structures. As a result of the meeting, the UNESCO field, cluster and regional offices provided very useful assistance in obtaining information from Member States via the Questionnaire. They are at present more closely involved in assisting Member States to set up appropriate structures at the national and regional level that would better fit the needs of MOST Phase II.

- **Presentation of a Preliminary Evaluation Report to the 7th Session of the MOST IGC,** 25-27 July 2005 (Annex 4 Doc. SHS-05/CONF. 205/08d). The members of the IGC took note of the preliminary findings of the evaluation and of the comprehensive proposals and recommendations. They engaged in a thorough discussion of the action to be taken in view of a focused re-launch of MOST at the national level, emphasizing the need for a MOST national liaison officer, to be anchored in the structure of National Commissions, who could ensure stability and continuity of national MOST follow-up. They expressed agreement with the other proposals and recommendations submitted in the Preliminary Report, insisting on the need to set up and coordinate national and regional networks, as well as on MOST's increased cooperation with social science organizations, with the organizations in the UN System and with other IGOs that are active in the fields covered by MOST.

- **Informal Round Table of UNESCO Intergovernmental Science Committees and the National Commissions**. Organized during the 33rd General Conference (7 October 2005), the Round Table stressed on the one hand the need for increased cooperation between MOST NLCs and the national structures set up for the other scientific programmes of UNESCO and, on the other hand, on enlisting the support of the National Commissions in setting up MOST support-structures at the national and regional levels. It was also proposed to work together for the revision of the Guidelines of the NLCs of the Scientific Programmes, including the MOST NLCs.

3. Previous analyses of the MOST National Liaison Committees (NLCs).

The MOST Secretariat reviewed the situation of MOST NLCs in the year 2000. It found out that NLCs (or, rather incipient structures in support of MOST) had been established by that time in 61 countries, namely: *Algeria, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Barbados, Belarus, Benin, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde, Colombia, Congo D.R., Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Czech Republic, Egypt, Finland, France, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Israel, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Latvia, Lithuania, Malawi, Malta, Mauritania, Mongolia, Morocco, Netherlands, Norway, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovakia, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Switzerland, Tanzania, Thailand, Togo, Tunisia, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Vietnam.*

The Intergovernmental Council of MOST examined the work of the NLCs at its statutory meetings and adopted appropriate recommendations to improve their operation. The *MOST Evaluation Report (1994-2001),* took note of the fact that Member States have adopted widely varying solutions for the proper functioning of MOST at the national and local levels. It concluded that "the level of activity of MOST NLCs varies, depending on available funding and the enthusiasm of their members'. It further pointed out that NLCs encounter difficulties (i) to reach the scientific community, and especially the younger researchers, (ii) to secure supportive links with funding agencies and (iii) to reach out to the national policy-making bodies and to the society, a function, which, in the opinion of the evaluators, was "…only partially fulfilled."

In her *Proposals for MOST Phase II (2003),* Professor Elvi Whittaker former President of the MOST Scientific Advisory Committee, corroborated the conclusions of the Evaluation Report: the NLCs do not perform as originally envisaged and expected. She made several proposals to improve the work of the NLCs, namely: (i) to look at the liaison committees of the other UNESCO scientific Programmes (IOC, IGCP, IHP, MAB) in order to find more efficient structures and links; (b) to initiate a reporting system (biannual); and, (c) to consider setting up looser, thematic research networks, which are kept alive by shared academic interests. Her advice was "to use them for MOST, but not as appendages of MOST".

4. Evaluation premises

Setting up efficient structures and building up a complex system of networking and linking arrangements at the national, regional and international level is essential in the efforts to render MOST more *credible* and *visible* and to increase *its impact*. Twelve years after its inception and faced with new tasks posed by the reorientation of the Programme, MOST needs a new architecture of support structures to achieve the objectives set for its second phase.

This depends on a number of factors, of which the most important are the following:

a. the interest of the member states in the Programme and their readiness to allocate appropriate resources for its activities;
b. the interest of the community of social science researchers to engage in research and other activities that are in keeping with the objectives of the Programme.
c. The wider support of other stakeholders in society- including civil society actors and the public opinion at large.

The decision to shift the focus of MOST on the research-policy interlink has been taken by UNESCO and the IGC in response to the perceived need to bridge the gap between research in social sciences and policy formulation and implementation. This engaged MOST on a track that requires increased effort to gain broader interest among Member States, to have wider visibility and increased impact. While the need to base policy on solid research is unanimously recognized, achieving a close and harmonious link between them is still in the making. It requires building up a stable, long term relationship of confidence between policy and decision makers on the one hand and the community of social science researchers on the other hand. This can only be achieved through conducting theoretical and applied research at various levels (local, national, regional, and international) and by a long process of adjustments and changes of attitudes and practices. This is the major challenge for MOST and represents the specific *niche* that it is called to fill in.

The interest in and commitment to MOST of the community of social science researchers are unanimous and represent a major asset of the Programme. There are, however, limitations as to how long this commitment can be maintained. Research institutes and universities are increasingly being obliged to look

for funding to programmes, institutions and organizations that offer funds for contractual research. MOST is not and will never be in a position to be funded on a regular basis at the level that is required to attain its objectives. But, if it is intended to turn it into a "central programme of UNESCO" as recommended by the Intergovernmental Council at its last Session in July 2005, then it must be allocated minimum resources both from the UNESCO regular budget and from extra budgetary sources. As indicated in many replies to the Questionnaire, it cannot rely indefinitely on the voluntary commitment of scientists.

The other necessary link for the Programme to succeed is with the other stakeholders in society (civil society actors, trade unions, business and industrial entrepreneurs, the private sector and public opinion in general). MOST has still a long way to go in order to gain their full interest.

II. EVALUATION FINDINGS

5. The situation of NLCs in the countries represented in the MOST IGC

In light of the above considerations, the evaluation paid attention in the first place to **the situation of NLCs in the countries having served in the Intergovernmental Committee of MOST.** Seeking membership to the MOST IGC should indicate both interest and readiness to support the Programme.

A number of 88 member states have served as members of the MOST IGC since 1993, when it was set up (see Annex 4 for a detailed analysis). By the year 2000, only 46 of them (slightly above 52%) had taken steps to set in place a working arrangement to handle MOST at the national level. In some cases, a proper NLC had been set up, usually with the help of the Social Sciences sub Commissions of the National Commissions for UNESCO. In a few countries, NLCs were set with the help of research institutes which had proposed MOST research projects and had them approved by the MOST Scientific Committee. Not all existing committees had a sustained activity. There has even been a decline in the activity of some of them over the last few years. In two countries, the NLCs were discontinued three years ago and one of them does not intend to revive it.

On the other hand, 15 countries which have never been members of the IGC had set up an NLC by the year 2000. Moreover, other countries which have not been and are nor members of the IGC, especially from Africa, sent replies to the Questionnaire indicating willingness to join MOST during its second phase. *It seems necessary to consider ways by which membership to the MOST IGC reflects real interest in MOST of Member States and readiness to support the Programme.* The IGC members, especially the members of its Bureau, should also be more active not only in their countries, but also in the regions for which they have responsibilities.

6. Structure/affiliation, composition, roles and functions of NLCs

6.1. The legal and institutional status of the NLCs or of equivalent bodies/structures responsible for MOST at the national level

The overall situation of the national structures, mechanisms or other arrangements and of the way they handle MOST at the national level is presented in the annexed Tables to the Report. Table 1 (Annex 6) presents the current situation (*existence/ non existence/ envisaged action*) of the *institutional status, composition/ roles and functions* of MOST National Liaison Committees (NLCs) in 119 countries, namely 64 countries which sent a reply to the Questionnaire and 55 other countries (marked by a double asterisk) for which information is available in the MOST Secretariat files. Included in this second category are all the

countries which have been or are currently represented in the MOST IGC but did not send a reply. Whenever possible, the MOST coordinator, focal point/ or contact person in the respective country has been indicated. Additional information, arranged in similar Table form, presents the *activities* of NLCs (Table 2, Annex 7) and the *proposals made and the positions expressed* in the replies to the above mentioned Questionnaire (Table 3, Annex 8).

The information assembled in Table 1 allows establishing a typology of structures that handle MOST which is presented briefly below.

A. The National UNESCO Commissions follow up MOST as part of their overall functions

In **54** out of the **119** countries, MOST issues are handled **at a minimum level** by the National UNESCO Commissions as part of their overall functions and duties. This is limited to receiving information from the MOST Secretariat and disseminating it to national interested institutions and persons. The National Commission responds also to requests of the MOST Secretariat, but not on a regular basis. (The evaluation exercise, especially the request to fill in the Questionnaire, served to raise awareness of the National Commission to MOST responsibilities: in a number of cases it was for the first time that they responded to MOST-related requests). Some times an employee of the National Commission is assigned to handle MOST, together with the other UNESCO Science Programmes.

The fact that a large number of countries give limited attention to MOST indicates that the process of setting up support structures for MOST is still at an initial stage and needs persevering efforts on behalf of the member states and of UNESCO. It should be pointed out that 16 of the 54 Member States in this category, especially from Africa, indicated their interest and willingness to set up a proper NLC for MOST 2.

B. More advanced structures to handle MOST at the national level

More advanced structures to handle MOST at the national level (i.e. a proper NLC or equivalent) exist in **65** countries at present. They fall into several sub categories:

(i) When the National Commission has a *sub commission for Social Sciences*, the latter assumes responsibilities and serves therefore as the MOST NLC. This is the case of 6 countries in the Europe Region, 3 in Africa, 3 in Asia and the Pacific Region and 1 in Latin America and the Caribbean. It is significant to note the small number of countries in which the Social Science (sub) Commission plays a significant role for MOST.

(ii) In many countries, it is a *research institute* (usually an *institute of social sciences*) or a *university Dept.* that is assigned by the National Commmission to assist with MOST activities at the national level. The advantage of this arrangement: resides in the fact that an institutional responsibility for MOST assures continuity of action. But there are also disadvantages and limitations if one has in mind the complex activities required by MOST 2 which place emphasis on networking and on involving all stakeholders in the social science research/policy nexux. In a few countries it is institutes or newly created networks for the thematic projects of MOST Phase I, which have assumed and continue to discharge the MOST NLC function.

Some times it is a *national research council*, which handles MOST together with all other Science Programmes of UNESCO. The obvious advantage of this arrangement is the links that can thus be established with the other Programmes and the interdisciplinary approach that is thus promoted.

Arrangements of the type mentioned under (ii) exist in 34 countries: 9 in the Europe Region, 10 in Africa, 5 in the Arab States, 6 in Asia and the Pacific and 4 in Latin America and the Caribbean.

(iii) The third category includes Committees/groups set up by the NatCom to serve as MOST NLC proper. Membership tries to be representative of stakeholders. In a number of cases the NLCs act mainly as *ad-hoc* committees/groups. Such arrangements, which could be considered closer to the functions and roles of a proper NLC, exist in only **18** countries (7 countries in Europe, 2 in Africa, 2 in the Arab States, 3 in Asia and the Pacific and 4 in Latin America and the Caribbean).

For all categories under (i), (ii) and (iii) there is a focal point or contact person who coordinates MOST activities in the respective country and serves as the liaison officer for the relations with the MOST Secretariat and with the other NLCs. As a rule, the coordinator/liaison officer is the president of the NLC. When the respective country is represented in the IGC, it is the designated representative to the Council who performs that function.

Figure 1 below displays the distribution of various types of support structures for MOST by region.

Figure 1: Typology of structures to handle MOST by Region

	NatCom follows MOST activities at minimum level (receives and disseminates information, responds to requests from the MOST secretariat	The (sub) Commission for Social Science assist NatCom to handle MOST issues. As a rule, the President/Vice-president of the sub commission is also the coordinator of MOST activities	A Research Institute (usually an institute of social sciences) or a university Dept. are assigned by the NatCom to assist with MOST activities at the national level. Some times it is a national research council, which handles MOST together with all other Science Programmes of UNESCO	Committees/groups set up by the NatCom to serve as MOST NLC. Membership tries to be representative of stakeholders. In other cases, the NLCs act mainly as *ad-hoc* committees/groups	Total
Europe	15	6	9	7	37
Africa	15	3	10	2	30
Arab States	7	-	5	2	14
Asia and the Pacific	9	3	6	3	21
Latin America/ Caribbean	8	1	4	4	17
Total	54	12	35	18	119

In the following paragraphs an assessment is made of where MOST stands with regard to support structures at the national level and what are the prospects for further development.

(a) In the **Europe Region**, there is a core of **22** countries in which more advanced support structures for MOST have been established. They have been highly supportive of the Programme and MOST can count on their further support in the future as well. They include in the first place the Nordic countries, (Finland, Sweden, Norway), the Netherlands, France, Switzerland, etc. Several countries in Eastern and Central Europe (Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia), are also active and have indicated readiness to take action to revive MOST-related activities in the future. The Romanian NLC, for which a more comprehensive analysis has been made, puts emphasis on developing cooperation at the sub regional and regional levels. Israel, Italy and Turkey were very active at the last IGC meeting and remain strong supporters of MOST. A case apart is Canada, which has shown keen interest in MOST in the past by supporting national and international projects. A sectoral Commission dealing with natural, social and human sciences has been set up by the Canadian Commission for UNESCO to coordinate action for all scientific programmes, including MOST.

During the evaluation, possibilities were examined for reviving MOST activities in the Mediterranean countries through the involvement of UNESCO Chairs and UNITWIN networks (Italy, Portugal, Spain and Greece) and proposals were made to that effect. The National Commissions for UNESCO of the United Kingdom and the United States indicated that they are following the reform process of MOST and will get in touch with the MOST Secretariat after they come to know the Programme better. Despite efforts made with the help of the Moscow UNESCO Office, no reply to the Questionnaire has been received from the Russian Federation, the Ukraine and other former soviet republics in the Europe Region. This is regrettable, particularly in light of the fact that interesting activities had been carried out in these countries during the first phase of MOST.

(b) Special attention has been paid to **Africa** during the evaluation exercise. The number of replies to the Questionnaire (14) shows that Africa needs MOST and expects the Programme to extend its action to the continent. The African countries need support to raise the level of training and research in the social sciences. At the present moment, MOST issues are handled at a minimum level by National UNESCO Commissions in 16 countries. In another 10 countries (Benin, Botswana, Burundi, Mali, Nigeria, Zambia, Zimbabwe, etc.) the Commissions have designated university departments to assist them in this task. More elaborate structures exist or are being envisaged in 3 countries (Cameroon, Tanzania and Uganda). The fact that in only 1 African country (Ghana) it is the Social Science sub Commission that extends support and has responsibilities for MOST is indicative of the weak position social sciences hold in the educational and research systems of the African countries. Capacity building is a priority for them and the support of UNESCO and of the developed countries is of paramount importance.

Several countries (Madagascar, Rwanda, Gambia, etc) requested the UNESCO Secretariat for assistance to set up MOST structures during the evaluation process. The UNESCO field offices in the Region are aware of these requests and are examining the possibilities for assistance in the very near future. This is very encouraging. There is thus the possibility to engage into a serious effort for the creation of national structures, while looking also at ways and means to set up regional ones. This all-out effort is expected to change the situation of MOST in Africa.

(c) Good working solutions have been found for MOST in several **Arab States** (Algeria, Tunis, Libya, Jordan) but activities are scarce and the level of interest in MOST is still low. There still are a number of countries in which MOST is little (if at all) known. The UNESCO Office in Beirut extended useful support throughout the evaluation and is pursuing further support to the Member States in the future. A proposal has been made for a MOST Project for Palestine. A similar one could be envisaged for Iraq.

(d) In **Asia and the Pacific**, several countries (Australia, Indonesia, New Zealand and Philippines) have been the active supporters of MOST during Phase I and continue to show interest. But the vast continent remains uncovered by MOST. An interesting MOST Policy Paper on rural migration in China has been published recently. However, there is room for more encompassing MOST initiatives to be taken in China and in the other large Asian countries such as India and Pakistan. It is important to note in this respect that Bangladesh sent a very comprehensive reply to the Questionnaire and its representative at the last Session of the IGC informed about steps to set up what looks a very promising NLC for MOST. The possibilities for future action in the Central Asian republics are also real and the UNESCO Office in Almaty is pursuing the matter with all due attention. So is the UNESCO Office for the Pacific, which, in a communication to the evaluator, mentioned a meeting, held with the National Commissions in August 2005, when steps were envisaged to set up MOST structures in at least five countries of the sub region.

(e) During the first phase of MOST, several countries of **Latin America and the Caribbean** were

particularly active: Chile, Cuba, Mexico, Uruguay, etc. The NLC set up in Uruguay in 1999 looked like an excellent model. It was envisaged to act as a network of institutions including three universities, four regional research and training centers (CEFIR, CLAEH, CALEN and Red MERCOSUR) working also in close cooperation with the UNESCO office in Montevideo. The intention to plan and carry out activities on a regional scale was evident. Although, like in other regions, there has been a decline in MOST action in Latin America during the last few years, the possibilities for a revival of interest are real, particularly in connection with the establishment of the Regional Forum of Ministers for Social Development and the forthcoming Global Forum on Social Science/Policy Nexus (February 2006).

The evaluation indicates that a lot remains yet to be done in order to arrive at a satisfactory number of countries in which support structures for MOST are in place to set MOST 2 into real motion. During the evaluation many National Commissions for UNESCO, especially from the developing countries, expressed interest to be associated to MOST and to set up an NLC for its support. On the basis of those expressions of interest and of the commitment of the cluster and regional UNESCO offices to provide requested assistance, it is realistic to expect that MOST could count, by the end of 2006, on having adequate support structures in at least **80-85** countries.

No uniform solution is proposed in the present evaluation. The Member States should retain their sovereign right to choose the solution they consider to better fit the conditions in their country. Nevertheless, from the typology presented above and from the subsequent sections dealing with the composition, roles and functions and activities of NLCs, lessons can be learned as basic requirements for them to work.

This fairly optimistic expectation of the evaluator is accompanied by clear warnings with regard to several possible dangers that need to be avoided. In the first place, setting support structures for MOST runs the risk to turn into a formal exercise by which persons or institutions are designated, without a clear view of what they are supposed to do and, more importantly, with what means. Secondly, as rightly pointed out in a communication from a UNESCO Office in Africa, it is imperative to avoid at all cost turning responsibilities for MOST into sinecures.

The other warning concerns the great variety of solutions adopted by Member States with regard to the structures, bodies or institutions that handle MOST at the national level. As indicated in one reply, "the institutional settings and assignments of NLCs in different countries are too varied and diverse, to make easy linkages and cooperation possible..." Certainly, flexibility is necessary, allowing for diversity of solutions as considered fit by Member Sates. But it is necessary to assure common features of NLCs that can facilitate links and cooperation.

6.2. Composition of NLCs

Information about the composition of NLCs is rather scarce and the evaluation should be regarded as tentative in this respect. The items in the Questionnaire referring to "composition" were fairly detailed, but few replies were comprehensive enough in order to allow for a valid picture as to the major stakeholders and potential partners that are represented in, or associated to NLCs.

Nevertheless, a few general remarks could be drawn. Of the main actors : (a) research institutes and universities, (b) ministries and other governmental bodies, and (c) institutions and associations, representing civil society, it is the research community (research institutes and universities) that are most active in all support structures for MOST at the national level. Ministries, other governmental bodies and decision and policy makers in general, are represented in few NLCs. Even when this is the case,

representation is in an indirect manner, i.e. via one or two representatives of such bodies in the NLC proper, in the Administration Council of Research Institutes or in the national Commission. Professional associations and other organizations of civil society are rarely represented in the NLCs. There are few representatives of civil society in the current composition of NLCs. The main concern is how to assure that representation goes beyond formal membership and is actually reflected in active participation and involvement of the respective bodies and institutions in concrete activities.

Many replies to the Questionnaire indicated a constant concern to assure representation (and participation) of women and young researchers in MOST NLCs and in MOST activities in general.

6.3. Roles and Functions of NLCs

There are considerable differences among NLCs with regard to the roles they assume and the functions they discharge. Information about this aspect is based mainly on the replies to the Questionnaire, which identified 11 primary roles and functions incumbent on NLCs: (a) promoter and facilitator of research; (b) mediator of the research policy inter-link;(c) policy design and implementation; (d) consultancies; (e) platform for intellectual debate; (f) communication and networking facilitator; (g) advocacy; (h) monitoring/evaluation and elaboration of indicators of social transformation and social developments (i) capacity building and training activities; (j) standard setting; (k) collection, processing and dissemination of information.

Most NLCs are engaged in (a) promoting research and in facilitating networking and in the collection and in (k) processing and dissemination of information. The other functions, especially (b) mediator of the research/policy interlink, (c) policy design and implementation and (g), advocacy for MOST, which are of particular importance for MOST Phase II are assumed by few NLCs only.

Many replies requested the MOST Secretariat to provide more information and guidance with regard to what roles and functions the NLCs are expected to perform. This should be provided by the MOST Secretariat and by the field offices of UNESCO. At the same time, the present Guidelines for the NLCs should be revised. In addition, as requested in many replies, the MOST Secretariat should facilitate increased exchanges of experience among NLCs through the MOST website and, whenever possible, through regional meetings of NLCs.

7. Activities

The analysis of activities of NLCs was covered by the evaluation mainly via the responses to the Questionnaire. The replies tend to indicate that, while MOST has carried out valuable work during its first phase to promote social science research and to enhance capacities for it in the developing countries, its relevance has not been fully perceived and recognized by decision makers and by public opinion at large. The new emphasis on the research/policy interlink envisaged for Phase II of MOST is still at an initial stage.

The Questionnaire asked for specific information as to how NLCs have, or envisage to:
- assist in the identification of priority areas in which research-based evidence is needed in order to formulate viable policies leading to sustainable social transformation;
- assist in the formulation and planning of research projects in such priority areas;
- assist in setting up research teams and networks for their execution;
- build up linkages and maintain continued dialogue between national researchers and policy makers;

- contribute to increased awareness of MOST among the research community, the decision and policy makers and the public opinion and civil society, through persevering, pertinent and credible advocacy action;
- promote and strengthen the role of the social sciences, in line with UNESCO's overall mission in the fields of science and education.

While there were examples of work undertaken within the framework of MOST in various countries that are in keeping with the new emphasis of MOST, the experience acquired thus far needs to be further enriched in order to be really convincing. What emerged from the evaluation that is relevant for NLCs, allows for tentative appraisals on the basis of which proposals for future action could be formulated.

7.1. Promoting policy-oriented research; Enhancing the research-policy link

The replies to the Questionnaire indicated that there is general agreement with regard to the emphasis placed on the research-policy interlink for MOST Phase II. This is very important, because, as mentioned earlier, there continues to persist reservations with regard to the possibility of bridging research and policy-making in the highly sensitive field covered by the concept of "social transformation". One reply from the Europe Region doubted whether politicians would accept and apply the results of research in policy making in that country.

The answer to these doubts seems to be - as emphasized in several responses received from NLCs - **research quality and relevance. "**Of the two poles of the relationship, it is the research one that has to be given priority" insisted another reply from the same region, it is only through its validity, quality, integrity and objectivity that it has chances to be applied into policy making. The relationship cannot be "one way" if it is to work, irrespective as to whether it is the research pole or the policy-making one that is the starting point. Policy-makers and other stake holders should be involved in defining research priorities, while researchers should be engaged in the use of the findings of their research in policy formulation. Equally important is to prove convincingly that *there is* an *added value* which MOST can bring and it can have an *impact* on policy formulation and implementation.

Many responses indicated that policy-oriented research in social sciences is carried out in many countries. Social scientists are often involved in the elaboration of studies that are meant to provide evidence for outlining policies in the social sphere. Leading researchers - including members of NLCs – serve as councillors to ministers, prime ministers and presidents on social issues, particularly in the Eastern and Central European countries. Several replies included concrete examples of major *themes and projects* (they are presented in Tables 1 and 2). However, the contribution of MOST is not direct and is not visible in many countries. In fact, according to the replies, interest in MOST, while fairly high among the research community, is rated low, among policy and decision making bodies as well as in the media and the general public in many countries.

The 7th Session of the IGC outlined the goals, priorities and activities aimed at improving the relation of policy-making and social science research. They should guide the future action of the National Commissions and of the NLCs. Thus, when setting up research networks at the national, regional and international levels, they should have in mind the priority themes identified for each region, while trying to further fine-tune key cross themes. The MOST Knowledge Platform - for Policy Platform developed by the Secretariat acquires particular importance in this respect. Many replies singled out the Forum on the Social Science Policy Nexus in February 2006 as a major event that could play an important role in enhancing the research-policy interlink and in the focused re-launch of MOST 2.

7.2. Capacity building and training

When setting the mission of MOST Phase II, the 6th Session of the IGC (June 2003) specified that capacity building should be pursued "whenever necessary". The 7th Session of the IGC reiterated this need by emphasizing that MOST should "assist developing countries to build a critical mass of high level social scientists" as a means to stem the tide or market driven "expert bureaus" which sometimes propose expertise of questionable quality. Capacity building and training activities acquire therefore particular importance for MOST in the developing countries and the IGC insisted that the Secretariat should use available funds, while also looking for additional resources for that purpose.

Information on capacity building and training activities collected during the evaluation is presented in Table 2 (Annex 8) to this report. In most countries training activities are organised with the support of universities and research institutes (Algeria, Australia, Barbados, Benin, Columbia, Latvia, Iran, Kuwait, etc.) within the framework of their usual graduate programs. In several countries, national training workshops are organised (New Zealand, Philippines, Uzbekistan). Summer schools, sometimes organised at the regional level (by the NLCs of Bulgaria, Uruguay, etc and by UNESCO Chairs and partner institutions e.g. ISSC, CODESRIA) have emerged as a successful form of training, and should be continued, if funds are secured.

It is particularly encouraging to see the efforts made by NLCs in several countries (Canada, France, Sweden, Switzerland) to provide assistance for capacity building and high level training in the social sciences to the developing countries. It is a line of action which should be further promoted during the second phase of MOST.

Support for capacity building and training is also needed for the staff of the NLCs in the developing countries. Many replies to the Questionnaire indicated this as an immediate necessity. They need training with regard to organizing and coordinating MOST-related activities and to securing funding for their execution. Some situations present are quite dramatic, such as the case of Cameroon, where the Social Science Research Institute, which had been designated to perform the NLC function for MOST was closed under financial constraints.

7.3. Collection, processing and dissemination of information

The information gathered for the evaluation indicates that, with very few exceptions, NLCs are engaged in the *collection, processing, use* and *dissemination of information* as a major need for MOST. There are *national data bases* on social science research in many countries, including *inventories* of *research institutes* and *research networks*, of on-going or past projects. This can be of real use in setting up networks for priority research and a rostrum of leading researchers for MOST Phase II.

In most cases the national data bases of social science research are linked to similar ones abroad - especially at the regional level. This is a major asset for envisaged research on the six regional priority themes identified for MOST Phase II. The use of the *MOST Clearing House facilities* is still restricted because they are little known. However, most replies indicated readiness to contribute to building up such facilities and to make use of them in the future.

The plans of the MOST Secretariat to initiate - through consultations and with the active participation of NLCs, of research networks and institutions - link-ups and harmonization of available data bases on social policies, to create cross-reference systems on the web, to elaborate and agree upon a format of integrating data into the MOST-On-Line-Policy Research Tool are very much appreciated. The MOST Secretariat needs to continue efforts to make all communication and information facilities better known, so as to be

better used. One way to achieve this is to involve researchers in various countries more directly in planning and setting them up, especially the research tools.

7.4. Communication strategies and outreach capacities

Various *communication* strategies and appropriate activities are used in order to increase the outreach capacities of MOST and thus render the programme more visible. National seminars, round tables and conferences are organized jointly with governmental bodies or with NGOs. Public events on policy questions dealt with under MOST are also organized and reflected by the media. Diffusion of MOST information and publications to relevant governmental bodies/members of the National Parliament/social organisations/NGOs/ research institutes is assured by the National UNESCO Commissions.

However, according to the replies to the Questionnaire, public opinion interest in MOST was rated as "low" in many countries. Even if such ratings were not based on actual studies, of population samples, they call for appropriate steps to be taken in order to considerably improve the outreach capabilities of the NLCs, to enhance the visibility of their activities and to achieve accrued awareness and deeper understanding of MOST at the national level. The MOST Secretariat should also continue efforts to make MOST better known in the Member States and by the community of social scientists and by the international community in general. It is only in this manner that it can arouse interest and build up partnerships for the implementation of the Programme. ICTs are of great help in increasing the outreach capacities of MOST. This will be dealt with in the subsequent section.

8. The use of ICTs

At the present stage of its development, the MOST Programme needs heavily increased use of ICTs for the whole range of activities it encompasses. According to the information collected during the evaluation, countries differ considerably in their use of ICTs for the purposes of MOST. Many NLCs and institutions which have responsibilities for MOST are not equipped for their full use. It is not within the capacity of the evaluation to indicate how this situation could be remedied. The experience gained for other international projects indicates however that the worst possible choice would be to neglect using ICTs on the ground that facilities are not available for all participants, especially in the developing countries. This is the case of MOST as well. That is why the evaluator wishes to stress the appreciation which the IGC gave to the *MOST ICT-based Knowledge-for-Policy Platform,* newly established by the MOST Secretariat and the request it made that it should be broadly used for the enhanced dissemination of research results to a broad range of users. The other recommendation to star an *electronic newsletter* for the benefit of MOST National Liaison Committees is equally important.

All communication and exchange of information becomes interactive with the help of ICTS. Links could be established not only between the NLCs, the National Commissions and the Secretariat, but also with all potential partners, as indicated under 7.3. above. The MOST website and websites of other providers of social science data, including scientific research councils, UN agencies and the World Bank could be linked. This would provide access to genuinely global research data bases, with enormous benefit for researchers everywhere.

9. Cooperation strategies

9.1. Cooperation between NLCs and the MOST Secretariat

Most replies received from NLCs stress the importance of communication with UNESCO and with the

MOST Secretariat in particular. In a number of replies such communication was considered irregular, even insufficient. With very few exceptions, the replies were in favour of introducing a regular *periodic (biannual) reporting system* by the NLCs to the MOST Secretariat. This need not become an additional "burden" on people and institutions that are already heavily engaged in work often carried out on a voluntary basis. In fact, the setting up of a new, interactive section of the MOST Website so as to provide an interface between the MOST NLCs, the UNESCO Secretariat in Paris, the UNESCO field Offices, the National Commissions for UNESCO and the emerging regional research-policy networks would facilitate this task considerably. So would the electronic newsletter mentioned above.

At the same time, systematic use should be made of international meetings and other occasions where representatives of the Secretariat are present to maintain face to face contact, which remains a necessity. Also, the newly envisaged relationship between the UNESCO field Offices and the NLCs offers a possibility for increased such direct contact.

9.2. Cooperation and communication among NLCs; Regional cooperation

In keeping with the recommendations of the IGC, regional cooperation is to be considerably reinforced during MOST Phase II. Indeed *fostering a region-specific approach* to the science-policy link is at present a major task ahead for MOST. There are two dimensions of this issue as far as the present evaluation is concerned. The first refers to the need to build up closer links among NLCs at the regional level. One item in the Questionnaire asked the NLCs to what extent they considered it useful to set up a proper cooperation structure at the regional level. Most replies were in favour, but caution was expressed to avoid setting up heavy and costly structures. This caution has been retained in the final proposals presented by the evaluator.

The second aspect is more complex, referring as it does to how the whole range of MOST-related activities can be given a truly regional dimension. The most important development in this respect is the emergence of the *Regional Ministerial Forums for Social Development*, first in Latin America, then in Africa, with prospects of extension to other regions. It is probably the most promising development which was initiated parallel to MOST but with highly benefic consequences for its future. The second aspect refers to the identification of *priority research themes* for each region. The replies to the Questionnaire indicated general agreement with regard to the themes. However, few concrete projects have been launched or are envisaged to cover them. In fact, as stressed at the last session of the Intergovernmental Council, further refinement and tuning is necessary with regard to their formulation and, more importantly, with regard to ascertaining the ways and means to carry them out.

In pursuing increased regional cooperation, emphasis should be placed on networking and linking arrangements among partners, concomitantly with the establishment of viable *research networks*, with the avowed aim to arrive at a *critical mass of regional excellence* in the areas covered by MOST, to enhance a regional MOST platform, with closer networking of NLCs.

10. Alliances and partnerships with UN System organizations and other IGOs

Based on the recognition of the central role of social sciences for the development of society, MOST had, from the very beginning a broad international character, seeking to feed policy-relevant research results into various organizations and agencies in the UN system when setting their agendas and formulating, implementing and evaluating social policies. In fact, the very idea of MOST emerged in the context of the preparations of the World Summit for Social Development (WSSD) held in Copenhagen in 1995. The links with the UN organizations has been maintained, both at the level of the UNESCO Secretariat and at the

country level. Indeed, many replies to the Questionnaire give examples of cooperation and links between MOST activities and other UN ventures carried out in the respective countries with the support of UNDP, ECOSOC, UNICEF, WHO, etc.

Currently it is the follow up to the World Summit for Social Development (Copenhagen +10) the follow up to the Johannesburg summit and, more especially the MDGs that provide the framework for links between MOST and related UN action. The Decade for Sustainable Development Education (DESD), for which UNESCO is the lead organization reinforces possibilities of joint action.

However, the objectives of setting up stable coalitions with the UN system organizations that are active in social development have not been fully attained. It is necessary to pursue establishing partnerships in a more systematic manner with a view to share policy-relevant research. The international and interdisciplinary character of MOST based on comparative research is its main asset in this regard. It depends on its capability to generating new ideas and formulating new approaches in solving social challenges and issues to see itself established as a recognized international partner. There is room to work closer with UNDP in the first place. MOST can indeed bring a contribution to the elaboration of the Human Development Reports (refining concepts, developing ways to measure indexes, monitoring, evaluation of development trends, etc.). Links and partnerships with ECOSOC, UNICEF, WHO, UNHCR etc. could and should be established. The World Bank is increasingly involved in in-depth studies prior to the approval of loans for social development. It is an opening for MOST that should be used more intensively. Initial links have already been established with the United Nations University and its network of research institutions, they should be further developed and if possible lead to joint projects.

Links, coalitions and partnerships should be sought with other IGOs, with regional organizations and institutions that are active or make use of social science research (the European Union, OECD, the Commonwealth Secretariat etc.). As indicated by many replies from the Europe region it is not possible at present to conceive a valid action plan of MOST in Europe (particularly in Eastern and Central Europe) without building up links with related projects supported by the European Union. The same is true for other regions where other funding organizations are active.

11. Links with social science associations and NGOs

MOST is UNESCO's major programme aimed at promoting the social sciences and their use in society. It is only natural therefore to expect a privileged relationship between MOST on the one hand and the social science educational and research institutions and associations on the other hand. UNESCO helped establish the International Association of Universities as a privileged partner for its Higher Education programme and ICSU for its Science one. It did the same for its social science programmes by helping establish the International Social Science Council. At the same time, MOST has established links with a broad range or social science associations and NGOs on which it relies as research partners and as advocacy actors for the programme.

However, it is the feeling of the evaluator that the links of MOST to the social science associations and NGOs, beginning with ISSC, is not visible enough and does not work at the required level. The fact that aside of the Secretary General of ISSC, no NGO and no science association attended the last IGC meeting, is a matter of concern. There could be objective explanations. Indeed, many research institutes which have responsibilities for MOST indicated in their responses to the Questionnaire that since they are all faced with serious funding problems and since MOST has seen its budget reduced from year to year, they lose interest and look for funding sources elsewhere. The NGOs and the social science associations may have similar arguments. But this is not the only reason, or it cannot explain entirely the current level of

their cooperation with MOST. This cooperation needs to and can be improved and the members of the Scientific Advisory Committee could play an important role in this respect. So can those members of the IGC and presidents of NLCs who hold leading positions in the research institutions in their countries and have close links with international and regional science associations. The framework agreement between UNESCO and ISSC should be rendered more specific with regard to MOST.

12. Collaboration and coordination of action among the Scientific Programmes of UNESCO.

The Seventh Session of the MOST IGC stressed the need for closer links between MOST and the other Science Programmes of UNESCO. The World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) and the related Millennium Development Goals continue to provide a strategic vision for the scientific programmes of UNESCO, which are united by the common theme of sustainability. Their objective is to provide basic scientific underpinning for understanding on-going global changes, while feeding into policy decision-making. MOST is particularly fit to provide support (knowledge and advice for policy outlines) concerning the social aspects of the issues covered by the other scientific programmes of UNESCO.

The solutions adopted by several countries with regard to MOST facilitate interaction among programmes. Thus, Canada has set up a Sectoral Commission for the natural, human and social sciences, which deals with all the scientific programmes. It is within its framework that a special Sub Committee deals with MOST. Similarly, Sweden has entrusted the task to secure and coordinate support at the national level to all scientific programmes to the Swedish Research Council. In many other countries – especially in Eastern and Central Europe - responsibilities for MOST (and for the other UNESCO Science Programmes) have been entrusted to specialized research institutes of the national academies of sciences. Yet other interesting solutions have been found in other countries (Indonesia, Uruguay, Tunisia, etc.). However, promoting inter programme cooperation as outlined at the last meeting of the Chairs of the six Scientific Programmes of UNESCO (Paris 5-6 October 2005) should be pursued more systematically.

13. Links with UNESCO Chairs

It is the opinion of the evaluator that the potential of the UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs Programme has not been fully used for the benefit of MOST. They provide an excellent means to reinforce activities. The UNESCO chairs on Sustainable Development, already working as a Network could provide the core. Networking chairs and using them to reinforce MOST is a line of action to be pursued systematically in the future. They can assist NLCs in reinforcing action at the national level and more importantly they can facilitate networking and joint research on a regional scale.

Several UNESCO chairs are linked to the NLCs and carry out activities in support of MOST (Bulgaria, Chile, Romania, Uruguay, etc.). In one country (Republic of Moldova), the MOST focal point is also the national coordinator of the UNESCO Chairs. It is both possible and necessary to make fuller use of the UNESCO Chairs and UNITWIN networks in order to reinforce MOST in all regions. Several initiatives taken along these lines during the evaluation indicate the large possibilities that exist in this sense.

- The Romanian NLC has solicited the support of UNESCO's European Centre for Higher Education (CEPES) to enhance regional cooperation for the benefit of MOST through the UNESCO Chairs for which it has responsibilities, especially in the countries of Eastern and Central Europe;
- Setting up a UNESCO Chair at the University of Pavia, where the Centre for International Development and Cooperation is involved in activities that are very much in consonance with the concerns of MOST. The Director of the Centre met ADG/SHS and discussed this possibility. The University of Pavia and the UNESCO Chair, if set up, could play a useful role in supporting MOST in Italy.

-      Associating the UNESCO Chair on Human Rights, Democracy and Peace Education at the University of Thessaloniki, in order to reinforce MOST action in Greece. The Chair holder will discuss this issue with the National Commission of Greece to agree on modalities.

-      A proposal to launch a MOST Project for Palestine has been outlined, based on the expected support of the UNITWIN PEACE Network of European universities.

Based on the conclusions and recommendations, of the external evaluation of the UNESCO Chairs in the social sciences which is currently underway, steps should be taken to increase their contribution to reinforcing MOST.

14. Funding

The evaluation took note of the almost unanimous complaint of NLCs and National Commissions about the sever lack of means and funds placed at the disposal of MOST both by UNESCO and by Member Sates. The 7th Session of the IGC expressed concern with the worsening financial situation of social sciences worldwide, in both developing and developed countries. They voiced a plea to both governments and UNESCO to pay due attention to the need for strengthening social science research and training and to provide adequate funding for that purpose.

The following observations can be made with regard to funding, based on the evaluation:

-      many countries gave examples of MOST projects carried out with financial support form internal and external sources, which indicates that there are solutions when due attention is paid to secure funds;
-      the expectations for funding by UNESCO are high. This is in many ways a carry over of the practice used during MOST Phase I, when National Commissions and NLCs proposed research projects for full funding – on a competitive basis – form the MOST Budget. That practice cannot continue, for obvious reasons and alternative solutions should be sought;
-      very little use is made of the Participation Programme funds for MOST activities.

The evaluation cannot and was not meant to find solutions to the funding financial situation of MOST. It can only point out priority needs and experiences that could be extended and possible tracks that could be followed.

- Appropriate funding by the Member States and by UNESCO is essential at present in order to re-launch MOST and set into motion the range of activities- including the setting up of support structures and networks foreseen for its reoriented Phase II.
- The recommendation of the 7th Session of the MOST IGC to set up an international fund for MOST, similar to the one set up for IPDC should be pursued with the full implication of UNESCO, the National Commissions and the members of the IGC.
- The track to follow in order to implement the objectives of MOST is to seek partnerships and alliances (cf. Section 10 above) with related programmes and activities carried out by UN system organizations, IGOs and other organizations, foundations and agencies.
- UNESCO funds, however scarce, need to be used more judiciously by balancing out expenses for publications, for meetings for the MOST website and the Research Tool etc., with necessary allocations for assisting Member States to set up support structures for MOST and to carry out activities.
- MOST is essentially an international cooperation undertaking in which the spirit of solidarity and

sharing should prevail, particularly in relation to capacity building for the benefit of the developing countries.

III. CONCLUSIONS

The main conclusions of the evaluation which were presented to the 7th Session of the IGC retain their validity:

- The number of Member States having set up proper NLCs (or adequate arrangements, mechanisms and structures to handle MOST at the national level) is still reduced,

- Even when NLCs do exist, their structure, institutional status and the range of roles and functions they assume are (i) highly diverse, which renders regional and international cooperation difficult, and (ii) they are not well tuned to the requirements of the reorientation of MOST Phase II on the research/policy/practice interlink;

- There is a clearly felt need – in addition to improving capacities for action at the national level - to also develop such capacities at the *regional level*, for which corresponding structures have to be built up, especially in connection with the Regional Forums of Ministers of Social Development.

- There is a general complaint about lack of resources and a funding base for MOST.

- The MOST Secretariat is understaffed and cannot possibly cope with the amount of work required – among other responsibilities - to assure regular contact with MOST structures and networks at the national, regional and international level.

On the other hand, despite a discernible slowing down of MOST activities during the transition period, the evaluation has shown continued interest in MOST not only by the research community, but also by a large majority of Member States. The evaluation itself has been received with interest and regarded as an opportunity to renew and reactivate MOST. It is significant that practically all the replies to the Questionnaire stressed that the evaluation is expected to lead to strengthening MOST activities or to set up appropriate structures to handle MOST Phase II. There are good chances for the process of redefining the architecture of MOST National Committees to succeed.

Its aim should be to adjust affiliation, structure, and operations of the NLCs with a view to implement the new mission of the Programme by:

- bridging the gap between the formulation of social policies and social science research at the national level;
- supporting and promoting social sciences at the national level;
- articulation of concrete action at the national level and the regional research and political networks defined through consultations;
- setting up "research communities" around specific themes;
- organization of exchanges at the regional and international levels."

The next Section of the Evaluation outlines proposals and recommendations submitted to the IGC and SAC for that purpose.

IV. PROPOSALS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Proposals for the reorganization of MOST implementation structures at the national, regional and international levels

On the basis of the evaluation and having in mind the recommendation of the 7th Session of the IGC, a thorough reorganization of the support structures and of the networking and linking arrangements for MOST at the national, regional and international levels is submitted for discussion and decision by the IGC and SAC. The proposals are aimed at having, at each level, (a) clear responsibilities of persons/institutions/structures dealing with MOST, (b) representative bodies where MOST-related issues are discussed, activities are planned and their implementation is evaluated regularly, (c) a system of research networks engaged in major research projects and in various other activities, and (d) links with a broad range of partners, including links with governmental and decision making bodies.

Particular care has been given to avoid proposing heavy and over ambitious structures for a Programme which is facing serious financial constraints. They are in fact extensions of what could be called "best practices" already in place in some countries. In principle, they should not involve additional costs over and above what many Member States do assure for MOST activities at present. However, attention is drawn to the fact that minimum funds are necessary to assist setting up structures in the developing countries.

1.1. Implementation arrangements/mechanisms/structures at the national level

-        *designation* of a liaison officer/focal point/ contact person, who has the time, capacity and resources to carry out a wide range of tasks and responsibilities – spelled out in his/her job description - to promote MOST at the national level. He/she could be placed in the National Commission for UNESCO. Alternatively, he/she could be placed in a Ministry that has responsibilities for the areas covered by MOST (i.e. the Ministry of Social Development), or in a research institution, provided the latter has a well defined status and close links with the national authorities.

-        **MOST National Forum (MNF) or MOST National Liaison Committee (MNC)** – consisting of a *group* of well informed, committed and resourceful people and representing the national authorities, the research community and civil society actors - who can effectively promote MOST by planning, coordinating and securing implementation of a broad range of activities at the national level. It is through MNFs that research networks are set up and the link between research, policy and practice could be secured. They assure links with the other UNESCO Science Programmes and with relevant programmes/ projects undertaken with the support of UN agencies and organization and of IGOs. Its secretary could be the MOST focal point/contact person. MNFs should submit a Report to the MOST Secretariat every other year.

-        **MOST research network(s) (MRN),** set up by the Most National Forum (MNF) to undertake policy-oriented research on priority themes identified at the national level and to provide advice to policy makers. MRNs should also be in a position to fulfill the think tank, platform for dialogue and advocacy functions foreseen for MOST. MNFs will cooperate closely with the *sub commissions for social sciences* of the National UNESCO Commissions, with *research institutes and university departments* with *professional organizations* and *civil society actors*. The *UNITWIN networks and the UNESCO Chairs* will be associated to their activities.
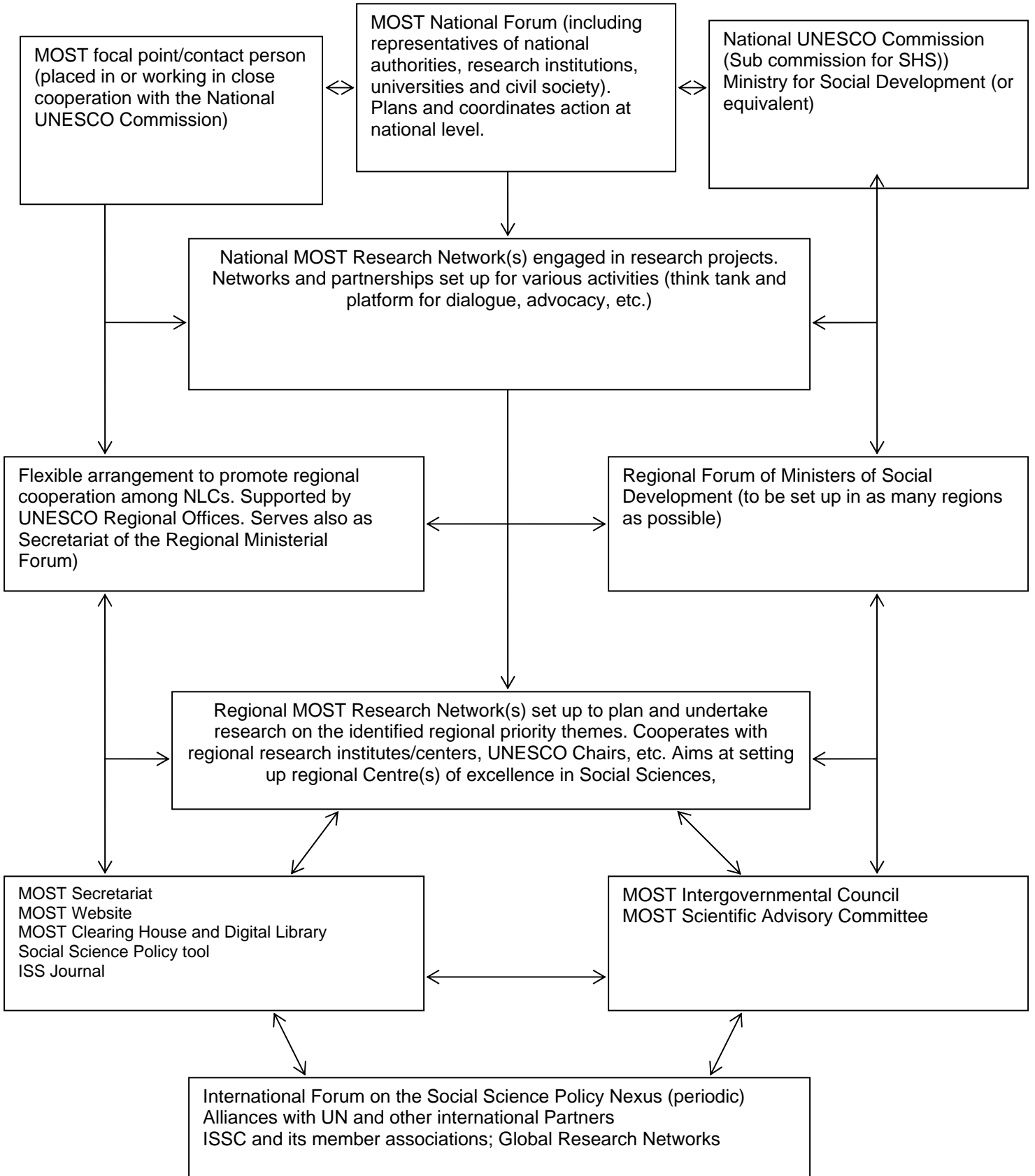
1.2. MOST implementation arrangements/mechanisms/structures at the regional level

- **The Regional Forums of Ministers for Social Development** are emerging as a most important initiative to promote MOST activities at the regional level. They should be extended so as to cover other regions than they do at present.

- **Regional Ad-Hoc MOST Committees,** set up to facilitate cooperation among MNFs**.** They should help implement decisions adopted by the Regional Ministerial Forums. They are not envisaged as rigid, costly structures, consisting of flexible arrangements (periodic meetings when necessary and constant contact by telephone and the Internet) by which the national focal points and the MNFs agree to carry out regional activities. The MNF and focal point of the country which is hosting the Regional Ministerial Forum will take the initiative and serve as coordinator.

- **Regional MOST Research Networks**, established with a view to promote policy-oriented social science research particularly on the six identified regional priorities themes. They will be set up through links established with MOST potential partners in the region (regional social science associations and institutions such as CODESRIA, FLACSO, etc) the networks of UNESCO Chairs, etc. The ultimate objective is to set up Regional Centers of Excellence in Social Sciences.

1.3. MOST implementation arrangements/mechanisms/structures at the international level

- The **Intergovernmental Council and the Scientific Advisory Committee** will provide guidance and supervision for overall MOST activities;

- The **MOST Secretariat** will assist and be responsible for the execution of the Programme.

- The **International Forum on the Social Science Policy Nexus** could emerge as the proper structure at the international level where all major actors of MOST – from social scientists to policy makers and civil society actors meet and exchange views on the research/ policy/practice link for positive social transformation. It can contribute significantly to the visibility and credibility of MOST. If the Buenos Aires Forum so decides, all support should be extended to it in order to become a regular, periodic MOST event.

- **Partnerships** and **alliances** with projects and programmes undertaken by UN agencies and organizations, by IGOs and donor agencies that cover areas related to the concerns of MOST. Cooperation with a broad range of NGOs is also part of the working arrangements at the international level. In particular, cooperation with ISSC should be strengthened on a mutual benefit basis.

Figure 2: MOST Organizational Chart

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┌─────────────────────────┐     ┌─────────────────────────┐     ┌─────────────────────────┐
│ MOST focal point/contact│     │ MOST National Forum     │     │ National UNESCO         │
│ person (placed in or    │     │ (including              │     │ Commission              │
│ working in close        │     │ representatives of      │     │ (Sub commission for     │
│ cooperation with the    │ <─> │ national authorities,   │ <─> │ SHS))                   │
│ National UNESCO         │     │ research institutions,  │     │ Ministry for Social     │
│ Commission)             │     │ universities and civil  │     │ Development (or         │
│                         │     │ society). Plans and     │     │ equivalent)             │
│                         │     │ coordinates action at   │     │                         │
│                         │     │ national level.         │     │                         │
└─────────────────────────┘     └─────────────────────────┘     └─────────────────────────┘
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National MOST Research Network(s) engaged in research projects. Networks and partnerships set up for various activities (think tank and platform for dialogue, advocacy, etc.)

Flexible arrangement to promote regional cooperation among NLCs. Supported by UNESCO Regional Offices. Serves also as Secretariat of the Regional Ministerial Forum)

Regional Forum of Ministers of Social Development (to be set up in as many regions as possible)

Regional MOST Research Network(s) set up to plan and undertake research on the identified regional priority themes. Cooperates with regional research institutes/centers, UNESCO Chairs, etc. Aims at setting up regional Centre(s) of excellence in Social Sciences,

MOST Secretariat
MOST Website
MOST Clearing House and Digital Library
Social Science Policy tool
ISS Journal

MOST Intergovernmental Council
MOST Scientific Advisory Committee

International Forum on the Social Science Policy Nexus (periodic)
Alliances with UN and other international Partners
ISSC and its member associations; Global Research Networks

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B. Recommendations

i) *Reorganization of MOST NLCs and other support structures*

1) The *MOST Secretariat* and the *UNESCO field, cluster and regional offices* should assist Member States to *reorganize NLCs* and to put into place the *support structures for MOST* as discussed by the MOST IGC at its 7th Session and presented under A (above).

2) The *National Commissions for UNESCO* should extend support, in close cooperation with appropriate bodies, organizations and institutions in their countries to the reorganization process of the NLCs and of other support structures for MOST at the national level.

3) The *MOST Secretariat* and the *UNESCO field, cluster and regional offices* should take action, in close cooperation with the National Commissions and with other MOST partners to begin setting in place the *networks and linking arrangements* proposed for MOST at the regional and international levels.

4) The *members of the IGC* - especially of its *Bureau* – and of the *Scientific Advisory Committee* should be more actively involved in setting up the proposed structures. In particular, the *IGC Regional Vice Presidents* should take initiative and assist in setting up appropriate cooperation structures in the sub regions for which they have responsibilities.

5) A *debate* on the organizational aspects of the national and regional MOST structures that are best suited to serve the research/policy interlink should be organized on the occasion of the International Forum on the Social Science Policy Nexus in Buenos Aires (February 2006), with broad participation of representatives of the main MOST constituencies - policy makers, researchers and civil society actors.

6) The *Guidelines for the MOST NLCs* should be revised in keeping with the new requirements of the Programme. The revision will be carried out in close consultation and cooperation with the *Secretariats* of the other *Science Programmes* of UNESCO.

7) A *biannual reporting system* of NLCs to the MOST Secretariat and the IGC should be introduced, while also developing regular interactive communication between them , based on ICts.

ii) *Coalitions, partnerships, networking and linking arrangements to reinforce programme activities*

8) Close *links, coalitions, networks and alliances* will be established and synergies will be built with projects and programmes undertaken by *UN agencies and organizations* under the federating umbrellas of WSSD, DESD and MDGs. Similar action will be taken to strengthen cooperation with a broad range of like-minded partners, including IGOs, agencies and institutions that cover areas related to the concerns of MOST.

9) Close links with the other *Science Programmes of UNESCO*, as recommended by the meeting of the Presidents of their IGCs, will be further developed with a view to arrive at coordination and joint planning and execution of activities that are of mutual interest.

10) Links will be established with other major programmes of UNESCO, such as *Education for All* and action taken by UNESCO within the framework of the *World Decade of Education for Sustainable*

Development.

11) The UNESCO field offices will also be more closely involved in promoting and coordinating activities of MOST Phase II at the *regional level*, particularly, in activities related to the regional priority research themes.

12) Based on the results of the on-going evaluation of the *UNESCO Chairs in social sciences,* the MOST Secretariat, should take steps - with the support of the National Commission and of the UNESCO field offices - to associate a larger number of UNESCO Chairs and UNITWIN networks to MOST,

13) Action should be taken by the MOST Secretariat, the IGC and SAC to establish closer *working ties with national, regional and international social science associations and NGOS. Cooperation with ISSC* within the existing framework agreement with UNESCO, should be further strengthened and should be rendered more specific with regard to MOST.

ii) *Communication strategies and outreach capabilities*

14) The MOST Secretariat should continue efforts to enhance communication capabilities and strategies with NLCs, Member States and various partners. All the facilities at its disposal – especially the *MOST Website* – should be used to assure these links. The Website should increasingly serve as an *interactive communication tool*, allowing MOST focal points and MOST National Committees to be in constant touch with the MOST Secretariat, to have access to the MOST Data Bases and Clearing House facilities, while also contributing to their up-dating.

15) Plans to establish an *Electronic Newsletter* and of *MOST Electronic Forum*s should be pursued, so as to enhance the communication and outreach capabilities of MOST and to organize debates and consultations whenever large scale research projects are launched or major international MOST events/debates are organized.

16) The work started by the MOST Secretariat to launch a *MOST ICT-based Knowledge-for –Policy Platform* should be continued with pursued in close consultation with experts and researchers to make sure that it meets identified needs.

iv *Funding and resources*

17) *UNESCO* should give due attention to the recommendation of the 7th Session of the MOST IGC to turn MOST into a *central programme* of the Organization and to allocate adequate resources for its implementation. At the same time, the Social Science Sector should take steps to reinforce the programme by linking its ongoing relevant activities of the Sector under the umbrella of MOST.

18) *Member States* should extend increased material and financial support to MOST, particularly at the present stage, when MOST Phase II needs resources to take off successfully.

19) Action should be taken jointly by UNESCO and the Member States to set up an International Fund for MOST, as proposed by the IGC at its 7th Session (July 2005).