



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Executive Board

Hundred and ninetieth session

190 EX/37

PARIS, 13 August 2012
Original: English

Item 37 of the provisional agenda

REMIT AND TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE OPEN-ENDED TRIPARTITE WORKING GROUP FOR THE REVIEW OF THE COOPERATION OF UNESCO'S SECRETARIAT WITH NATIONAL COMMISSIONS FOR UNESCO

SUMMARY

Pursuant to 189 EX/Decision 16, the Secretariat submits this document on the remit and terms of reference of the open-ended tripartite working group for the review of the cooperation of UNESCO's Secretariat with National Commissions for UNESCO. This document was prepared on the basis of discussions held during the regional consultations on the draft document 37 C/4 and the draft documents 37 C/5 in Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire) and Thanh Hoa (Viet Nam). Further discussions will take place at the three forthcoming consultations in Bratislava (Slovakia), Montevideo (Uruguay) and Muscat (Oman) and may result in an addendum to this document.

Action expected of the Executive Board: proposed decision in paragraph 9.

I. Background

1. The Executive Board at its 189th session (March 2012) took note, by its 189 EX/Decision 16, of the review of the cooperation of UNESCO's Secretariat with the National Commissions for UNESCO. It also "endorsed the setting-up of an open-ended tripartite working group composed of representatives of Permanent Delegations, National Commissions and the Secretariat" to follow up on the IOS review of the cooperation of UNESCO's Secretariat with National Commissions. The Executive Board requested that "the forthcoming regional consultations of Member States and National Commissions produce proposals concerning the remit and terms of reference" of this working group.

II. Summary of the discussions during the regional consultations

2. During the regional consultations held in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire and Thanh Hoa, Viet Nam, special sessions were organized, focusing on UNESCO's cooperation with National Commissions. In this connection, discussions were held regarding the review of the cooperation between UNESCO's Secretariat and National Commissions. The participants welcomed the setting-up of the open-ended tripartite working group and made concrete proposals.

3. In order to be cost effective, it was proposed that meetings of the open-ended working group should be held in connection with the Executive Board sessions in Paris, taking advantage of the presence of representatives of governments and National Commissions. Further discussions can also be held through e-mails with a view to reducing unnecessary costs and expenses. A subsequent meeting of the open-ended working group would be necessary before final recommendations are made.

III. Proposed remit and terms of reference

4. The open-ended tripartite working group is established to follow up on the IOS report of the review with the following specific assignments:

- Examine the key conclusions and recommendations of the report;
- Recommend key priorities to improve UNESCO's cooperation with National Commissions;
- Develop (for the 191st session of the Executive Board) an action plan including detailed time-lines and responsibilities for the implementation of the recommendations;
- Ensure that the planned actions are in line with and complement UNESCO's overall reform effort (Independent External Evaluation (IEE), follow-up, roadmap including field presence reform, partnership strategy, etc.) and identify possible synergies;
- Propose recommendations that could be carried out by a resolution of the 37th session of the General Conference.

IV. Composition

5. The tripartite working group is open-ended. However, it should comprise at least:

- Two representatives of National Commissions per region;
- Two representatives of Permanent Delegations per region (from different countries than the above-mentioned National Commissions);
- A total of four representatives of the UNESCO Secretariat (Headquarters and field offices).

6. Representatives of National Commissions to the open-ended tripartite working group may be proposed during the regional consultation meetings while representatives of Permanent Delegations may be proposed later by their regional groups. National Commissions of the Africa and Asia and the Pacific regions have already designated at the regional consultations in Abidjan and Thanh Hoa their representatives to this tripartite working group.

V. Working modalities

7. The open-ended tripartite working group is expected to meet twice between the 190th and the 191st sessions of the Executive Board. The first meeting of the tripartite working group is proposed to be held immediately following the Executive Board's 190th session and the adoption of its proposed terms of reference. The Sector for External Relations and Public Information (ERI) will serve as the Secretariat for the open-ended tripartite working group.

8. The open-ended tripartite working group may hold a subsequent meeting before the 37th session of the General Conference by when it should have completed its work.

Proposed action by the Executive Board

9. The Executive Board may wish to adopt a decision along the following lines:

The Executive Board,

1. Recalling 189 EX/Decision 16,
2. Recalling that the National Commissions for UNESCO are established by Member States' governments under Article VII of UNESCO's Constitution,
3. Having examined document 190 EX/37,
4. Takes note of the results of the regional consultations on documents 37 C/4 and 37 C/5 on the follow-up to the review of cooperation between the UNESCO Secretariat and its National Commissions;
5. Approves the remit and the terms of reference of the open-ended tripartite working group composed of representatives of the Permanent Delegations to UNESCO, the National Commissions for UNESCO, and the Secretariat;
6. Invites the open-ended tripartite working group to organize its work according to the time-frame proposed under section V "Working modalities" of document 190 EX/37;
7. Requests the open-ended tripartite working group to develop an action plan, including detailed timelines and responsibilities for the implementation of the recommendations, for consideration by the Executive Board at its 191st session, and to report thereon to the General Conference at its 37th session.



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Executive Board

Hundred and ninetieth session

190 EX/37 Add.

PARIS, 8 October 2012
Original: English

Item 37 of the provisional agenda

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ADDENDUM

SUMMARY

This addendum complements the document 190 EX/37 on the remit and terms of reference of the open-ended tripartite working group for the follow-up of the review of the cooperation of UNESCO's Secretariat with National Commissions by reporting on related discussions during the recent regional consultations with Member States and National Commissions on draft document 37 C/4 and draft document 37 C/5, which took place in September 2012 in Bratislava (Slovakia), Montevideo (Uruguay) and Muscat (Oman).

1. As was done in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire and in Thanh Hoa, Viet Nam, special sessions on UNESCO's cooperation with National Commissions were organized in the three recent consultations that took place in Bratislava, Slovakia (10-12 September), Montevideo, Uruguay (14-16 September) and Muscat, Oman (29 September-1 October).
2. During these sessions, ADG/ERI as the representative of the Director-General recalled the main findings and conclusions of the IOS review on UNESCO's cooperation with National Commissions contained in the Final Report of this review. He recalled also that the Executive Board had requested that proposals concerning the remit and terms of reference of the open-ended tripartite working group be proposed for the consideration at its 190th session. Document 190 EX/37, prepared by the Secretariat on the basis of discussions held during the regional consultations in Africa and in Asia and Pacific, included the proposed terms of reference, composition and working modalities of this group.
3. In the ensuing discussions, participants were generally in favour of the proposals to assign this tripartite working group with specific tasks, as mentioned in document 190 EX/37.
4. Several representatives of National Commissions expressed their strong interest in joining this tripartite working group and in contributing to its work.

5. It was suggested that if the proposed remit and terms of reference of the open-ended tripartite working group are approved by the Executive Board at this current session, the first meeting of this group could take place immediately after the closing of the Executive Board session, thus taking advantage of the presence of many representatives of governments and National Commissions.

6. In this regard, the Secretariat is arranging, in cooperation with the French National Commission for UNESCO, the organization of a one-day meeting of the tripartite working group on 19 October in Paris.