



Organisation  
des Nations Unies  
pour l'éducation,  
la science et la culture

SHS-07/CONF.205/15  
Paris, 18 July 2007  
Original: English



**DRAFT REPORT BY THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL COUNCIL  
ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE MANAGEMENT OF SOCIAL  
TRANSFORMATIONS (MOST) PROGRAMME**

OUTLINE

**Source :** Article X of the Statutes of the Intergovernmental Council of the Management of Social Transformations (MOST) Programme

**Background :** In accordance with this Article, the Intergovernmental Council submits to the General Conference its report on the activities of the Programme in 2004-2005.

**Purpose :** The report provides a summary of the main themes discussed during the eighth Intergovernmental Council Session, which was held in Paris from 16 to 18 July 2007. It emphasized the Programme's development towards an international platform for horizontal cooperation, peer-learning and exchange between policy-makers in charge of social development, as well as regular exchange between decision-makers with social science researchers and practitioners. The report's main points deal with the outreach of MOST to high-level policy makers across the regions, especially through the MOST Fora for Ministers of Social Development; and the consolidation of MOST as a continuous, multiple flow interface between researchers and policy-makers. MOST's strategic alliances with partner institutions from the United Nations, Regional Intergovernmental bodies and International and National Social Science constituencies and networks also were applauded and encouraged. Appropriate methodologies for participatory action-research in the national context were discussed with a view to strengthening MOST's functional structures in multi-partite arrangements, including consultation with all communities. A specific focus of attention was cooperation of MOST with other UNESCO sectors, and especially with universities; as well as MOST's online policy-research tool and its last stage of development.

**Decision required :** No Decision is required on this Document.

1. The eighth session of the Intergovernmental Council (IGC) meeting in Paris, from 16 to 18 July 2007, opened by M. Koïchiro Matsuura, Director General of UNESCO, was dedicated to the second biennial review of work under MOST Phase 2 (2004-2013). The reoriented programme is to strengthen the research-policy link and to foster a culture of evidence-based policy making at national, regional and international levels.
2. The IGC noted significant progress towards fulfilling the programme's mandate through the launching and institutionalisation of the "MOST Fora of Ministers of Social Development". The high level of representation of member states with twenty Ministers and Secretaries of State at the eighth IGC session witnessed MOST's move towards successfully involving and committing national decision-makers to the social science – policy nexus.
3. Hon. Minister for Gender, Sports, Culture and Social Services of Kenya Maina Kamanda gave an account to the IGC on the inter-regional meeting of Ministers that MOST organized in collaboration with the Government of Kenya on the occasion of the World Social Forum in January 2007, at Nairobi. Main themes addressed by this meeting dealt with innovative social policy partnerships and the need to harmonize national policies aimed at strengthening social cohesion and democratic governance in his region. The Minister also reported on the East African Community's Council of Ministers Meeting in May 2007 during which the Ministers unanimously adopted the MOST proposal to establish a forum for Ministers of Social Development in the enlarged East African Community.
4. A first Ministerial roundtable was organized on 16 July during which the Chairperson of the IGC, Hon. Minister of Social Development from South Africa, Dr. Zola S. Skweyiya and the Social Development Ministers from Morocco, Pakistan, Argentina and Ecuador addressed their experiences with launching, institutionalizing and taking further the Fora of Ministers of Social Development in their respective region or sub-region. During the roundtable, the Social Development Ministers representing Uganda announced the intention to host the first edition of such Ministerial Fora in East Africa in the near future. In addition, the Minister from Malaysia highlighted her government's collaboration with an association representing social scientists and initiatives in compiling an inventory of social science research as well as capacity building programmes for young scholars. Meanwhile, Greece expressed interest in launching a first Forum for Social Ministers of Europe, with special focus on the MOST European priority theme "Ageing populations".
5. The second Ministerial roundtable organized on 17 July brought together Social Development Ministers and Secretaries of State from the Dominican Republic, Venezuela, Brazil, St. Lucia, Senegal, Egypt, the Syrian Arab Republic, the Islamic Republic of Iran and Sri Lanka. It took stock of the close links between social policies, growing participation and responsibility and strengthened democratization which are going hand in hand with decentralisation processes. Ministers expressed their interest in strengthening national policies through harmonization at regional level, strengthening civil society and creating regional synergies among all communities on issues related to social development.
6. Delegates applauded the presentation made by H. E. Mr Daniel Filmus, Minister of Education, Science and Technology on the successful organization of the "International Forum on the Social Science-Policy Nexus (IFSP)" in the three Argentinean cities of Buenos Aires, Córdoba and Rosario and in the capital of Uruguay, Montevideo. They welcomed the comments made by the Deputy-Director of the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD, Geneva) which had been a major partner in this undertaking, as well

as the account of collaboration and outlook towards future joint action presented by the Director of the Institute for Comparative Regional Integration Studies of the United Nations University (UNU-CRIS, Brugge, Belgium). The Director of the Social Policy Division of the United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA, New York) had also underlined the many possibilities of fruitful cooperation with MOST when addressing delegates at the opening.

7. Delegates were informed of an important spin-off event of the Buenos Aires IFSP convened by the South African government and attended by more than 200 participants. The “International Conference on Population and Development” organized at Mafikeng between 5 and 9 March 2007 successfully produced a set of recommendations for the better integration of research findings into African Union policies, Africa’s regional organizations’ policies and individual country policies. In this vein, it presented its recommendations to the SADC sub-commission on population.

8. Several presentations were dedicated to the strengthening of the national model of cooperation between researchers, policy-makers and representatives of civil society. Reflection was enriched by presentations from Israel and from Morocco. The construction of a national research-policy cooperation model with related governance arrangements and participatory research-action methodologies were laid out by the representative of the Ministry of Social Development, Family and Solidarity of Morocco. This promising model was discussed by delegates; and was also commended by the evaluator of the National Liaison Committees in 2005, Professor Dumitru Chitoran from Romania.

9. Appropriate methodologies for participatory action-research in the national context were discussed with a view to strengthening MOST’s functional structures in multi-partite arrangements, as well as alliances with major research councils such as the International Social Science Council. In addition, results of the research should be made available and accessible to all stakeholders.

10. The up-coming planning exercise of the MOST programme was discussed within the context of major developments in UNESCO’s actual planning and programming processes. The Deputy-Director-General addressed Delegates in his capacity as the Chairperson of the overall review of UNESCO’s major programmes in Natural and Social and Human Sciences, which was mandated by UNESCO’s last General Conference in 2005. A complementary presentation was made by a representative of UNESCO’s Bureau of Strategic Planning, focusing on UNESCO’s Medium-Term Strategy for 2008-2013 and its Programme and Budget for 2008-2009.

11. The Review Committees’ key recommendations entail, in particular, reinforcing MOST’s links with other UNESCO programmes in crucial areas such as the strengthening of national and regional research systems, the sustainable development in small islands development states and education for sustainable development. MOST stands ready to contribute to national research systems in the sense of its Phase 2 mandate, through appropriate action to strengthen the research-policy-action nexus. It already works on SIDS in the Pacific and the Caribbean; and has a network of UNESCO Chairs dealing with issues of sustainability. There will be cooperative ventures with the Science Sector, such as work on climate change and the policy-relevant treatment of data produced in biosphere reserves.

12. MOST reported to delegates upon its specific effort to support multi-partite networks at sub-regional and regional level with a view to producing policy-relevant knowledge under its current priority themes. IGC members addressed the need to strengthen both theoretical and socially relevant applied research and called upon MOST to assist developing countries with capacity-building especially with a view to safeguarding the integrity of social sciences and stemming the tide of market-driven “expert bureaux” which sometimes propose expertise of questionable quality. A plea was also made to focus on improved statistics and data collection methods.

13. With respect to the activities of the Programme in 2005 -2007, which the IGC highly appreciated, recurrent reference was made to the MOST Online Policy-Research Service, as well as the related MOST Conference Reporting System which for the first time had gone live at Buenos Aires, and meanwhile has been replicated by the Nantes World Forum on Human Rights. Related presentations were made to delegates by Professor Nazli Choucri, Chairperson of the MOST Scientific Advisory Committee, and MOST staff. Fruitful cooperation with the UNESCO Forum on Higher Education, Research and Knowledge was highlighted. The Forum adopted the MOST policy analysis grid to have MOST producing a series of Policy Briefs on their Global Conference held in December 2006. The Director of the Higher Education Division addressed delegates on the need and will to strengthened cooperation with MOST.

14. During the IGC discussions, delegates unanimously expressed great concern with respect to the low level of financial support for MOST on the basis of regular programme funding, as well as with the seriously understaffed situation of the Secretariat. The Intergovernmental Council decided to submit a draft resolution in this respect (see Annex II) to the General Conference. Delegates also asked for targeted advocacy action with respect to enhanced visibility and assistance with extra-budgetary fund-raising.

15. The MOST Intergovernmental Council addressed a number of recommendations (see Annex I) to the Director-General and the Member States on the main topics highlighted in the course of the debate.

## ANNEX I

### **Recommendations of the Eighth Session of the Intergovernmental Council of the MOST Programme**

**UNESCO Headquarters, 16 to 18 July 2007**

Considering that MOST is unique in that it is an intergovernmental programme that has global responsibility for developing and promoting social science research for the management of social transformations,

Underlining the responsibility of decision-makers to base policies on informed input from high quality social science research,

Taking into account the significant new development and activities that were undertaken by MOST during its phase 2 and especially during 33 C/5,

Recalling that UNESCO through MOST is active in creating new policy spaces for dialogue between producers and users of social science knowledge at all levels,

Giving due consideration to the convening of MOST Fora for Ministers of Social Development in regions and sub-regions, with a view to strengthening peer-learning, horizontal cooperation, participatory action-research and wide dissemination of results,

Having examined the report by the Director General on the conclusions and recommendations of the expert team of the overall review of Major Programmes II and III,

*We, the Intergovernmental Council of the MOST Programme,  
agree on the following:*

#### **Substance of the Programme**

1. The well-being and fulfilment of human rights of populations must be centre-stage in all considerations concerning public policy and programmes.
2. The attainment of the Millennium Development Goals should be pursued through intensified international, regional and national efforts, especially through greater cooperation and integration in social policies coordination, accompanying this effort with policy-oriented social science research, including action research. The integration of economic and social policies is especially important in this regard.
3. Social policies and actions aimed at promoting social justice and democratic governance in partner countries need to be encouraged. In this regard, the social consequences of the macro-economic policies should be taken into account.
4. Governments, policy makers and the international community are encouraged to support social science research through the adoption of appropriate enabling policies, capacity building and the allocation of adequate funding, and to engage social science and civil society communities in policy dialogues on research strategies, priorities, methodologies and results while respecting academic freedom.
5. In recognition of the increasing need to improve policy formulation, the MOST Programme should continue to concentrate on the improvement of the relation between policy-making and social science research, stimulate social science research that feeds into policy agendas and seek civil society and community groups' contributions to the nexus at national, regional and international level.

6. Equality of access to scientific knowledge and other forms of knowledge including local traditional knowledge needs to be strengthened, with due attention to the integration of knowledge produced by scientific and other actors.
7. The MOST Programme should continue and reinforce its cooperation with the United Nations system as well as intergovernmental bodies with a view to achieving the objectives of enhanced articulation between research and policy in the field of social development.
8. Spaces of dialogue, such as the Regional and Sub-Regional Fora of Ministers of Social Development need to be strengthened and expanded, to assist in the sharing of best practices and the design of projects which promote both innovation and horizontal cooperation between and amongst the partner states.
9. MOST is to work closely with the Division of Higher Education, the UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs Programme and the UNESCO Forum on Higher Education, Research and Knowledge.
10. The Secretariat will follow up on the research processes under the MOST Programme, drawing also upon research carried out under other UNESCO Programmes as well as other relevant parts of the UN system, such as research on poverty eradication, international migration, regional integration, multicultural societies and urban development, human rights, gender and youth issues, to be used as input for policy formulation.
11. The MOST Programme should explore the possibility of supporting new initiatives of research-policy linkages such as the social implications of global climate change.
12. The MOST Programme will assist in capacity-building initiatives in developing countries with the aim of strengthening the research-policy nexus of the national research systems.
13. The Secretariat is encouraged to pursue the MOST knowledge-for-policy platform strategy and to engage in dissemination to all stakeholders, using the Comparative Policy Research Tool and the Conference Reporting System.
14. The National Commissions for UNESCO and the national, cluster and regional offices of UNESCO should be proactive in promoting the MOST website and related services, publications, teleconferences and other multimedia tools.

### **Structure and Governance**

15. We urge the Director General to reinforce the MOST Programme and to provide it with all the necessary support, with the view to enhance its ability to promote the research-policy nexus in relation to social transformations.
16. We urge UNESCO to continue to strengthen the democratic governance of the MOST Programme and to further enhance the roles and responsibilities of the IGC Bureau and of the Scientific Advisory Committee in conformity of the basic texts of MOST.
17. We urge Member States to accelerate the implementation of the MOST National Liaison Committees as appropriate and to provide them with the necessary support.
18. We call upon the National Commissions for UNESCO to promote further the MOST Programme to the scientific communities and to encourage them to participate in the MOST Programme.

19. We call for the institutionalization of the Buenos Aires Process and for the convening on a regular basis, preferably every two years, of an international conference, organized by interested governments in co-operation with the MOST Programme, to review progress and the effectiveness of the linkages between social science research and social policies.

#### **Review of Major Programmes II and III**

20. We take note of the report and recommendations of the Expert Committee on the review of Major Programmes II and III and of the comments of the Director General, and we task the IGC Bureau and the Scientific Advisory Committee of MOST to prepare a detailed commentary on the recommendations and responses of the Director General, and to circulate these comments to the members of the IGC prior to the finalization of the response of MOST to the Director General.

## **ANNEX II**

### **Resolution Financing of the Management of Social Transformations (MOST) Programme**

The Intergovernmental Council of the Management of Social Transformations Programme,

21. Taking note of the importance of strengthening research-policy linkages worldwide;
22. Bearing in mind that the MOST Programme is adding value to the above endeavour;
23. Stating the concern expressed by the delegates present at the eighth session of the MOST IGC (16 - 18 July 2007) with respect to the low level of financial support for MOST on the basis of regular programme funding, as well as with the severely understaffed situation of the Secretariat;
24. Recommends to the General Conference of UNESCO that steps be taken to allocate appropriate regular budget and staffing resources to the MOST Programme in document 34 C/5, in order for MOST to function in an appropriate manner;
25. Appeals to Member States, IGOs, NGOs and the private sector to explore the possibility of extra-budgetary funding and other support to MOST activities.