

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE SIXTH SESSION OF THE IGC MOST
(19- 21 February 2003, UNESCO Headquarters, Room IV)

Recalling that UNESCO through MOST is active in promoting research in social sciences for the management of social transformation as well as bridging the gap between research and policy at all levels;

Recognizing that MOST is not the only social science research programme under UNESCO but is nevertheless a significant social science programme under UNESCO;

Understanding that MOST is unique in that it is an intergovernmental body that has global responsibility for developing and promoting social science for the management of social transformation;

Cognizant of the increasing need to bridge the gap between research and policy development;

Taking into account the significant programmes and activities that were undertaken by MOST in the last 8 years and that many developed and developing countries have benefited from the research and other activities undertaken by MOST;

Aware that there are on-going projects that are being supported by MOST;

Realizing that there are both commonalities and regional differences in challenges concerning research priorities and thematic areas;

Giving due consideration to the findings of the MOST Evaluation Report (1994-2001) by Prof. O.V. Lindqvist, Prof R. Radhakrishna and Dr R. de Oliveira and the Proposals For Phase II (2002-2009) of the Management of Social Transformations (MOST) Programme by Prof Elvi Whittaker the IGC agreed as follows:

Mission

- a. That the MOST Programme should be continued.
- b. The mission of MOST for the next phase be as follows:
‘MOST will continue to promote the development and use of social science knowledge that contributes to better understanding and management of social transformations consistent with the universal values of justice, freedom, human dignity and sustainable development.
- c. Retain the name of the programme as Management of Social Transformations (MOST).

Goals and Priorities

- a. In recognition of the increasing need to improve policy formulation MOST programme should concentrate on the improvement of the relation between policy

making and social science research and where necessary enhance quality of social science research.

- b. Involve decision makers and other social actors in defining research problems and in the subsequent phases of the study to ensure acceptance and use of the findings in policy formulation while ensuring the integrity of the research.
- c. The research problems should build on the previous thematic areas of MOST and the expertise and network resulting from the past two periods with the prospect of including new themes deemed critical. These new priorities and themes should be defined through consultation process at regional and other levels taking into account the priorities of UNESCO.
- d. In undertaking MOST activities, local needs and indigenous knowledge be taken into account.
- e. Research projects should be issue- and solution-oriented as well as respect universal values and diversity.
- f. Noting the recommendations of the Five Chairpersons of the Five Intergovernmental scientific Programmes of UNESCO, Most should actively take part in joint interdisciplinary projects with the natural science programmes of UNESCO.

Activities

- a. The working group, consisting of the IGC Bureau and the Scientific Committee will develop a new result oriented work programme covering the conceptual development of the policy research interface, methodology and international comparative perspectives, taking into consideration the initiatives coming from different stakeholders. This programme will be submitted to the IGC within one year.
- b. Follow up on the research findings under the MOST programme to be used as input for policy formulation.
- c. Explore and analyse existing research findings before proposing new projects under the MOST programme.

Capacity Building

In keeping with its objectives of capacity building at national and regional levels MOST will focus on research and on developing linkages between policy and research through institutional reviews, cooperation between academic communities and stake-holders, new training ventures, Summer Schools, etc.

Structure and Governance

- a. Member states are encouraged to send specialists in the fields of social science and/or policy makers as governmental representatives to IGCs.
- b. IGC be given a greater role in governance, approval of strategies and programmes and the facilitation of relations with national research centers and policy makers.
- c. The role of the IGC Bureau should be considerably strengthened and it should meet twice a year.
- d. The SSC should consist of a group of 6 experts, one from each region, including the President of the IGC as ex-officio member and the SSC should act as standing

committee and be used on an ad hoc basis by the Bureau of the IGC and the Secretariat for the conceptualization of the Programme, development of strategies and for scientific advice at the project level.

Position of MOST

- a. MOST should be an autonomous unit within the SHS sector to increase its visibility and focus.
- b. The structure and location of the Secretariat should be finalized in the course of the 32C/5 after decisions concerning the reorientation of MOST at the General Conference
- c. The Secretariat must have the necessary human resources either on a permanent basis or on contract basis to perform its functions effectively.
- d. The members of the Secretariat should have scientific as well as managerial and institutional competencies.
- e. The Secretariat should be strengthened by bringing in outside competence on a rotating basis including through sabbaticals.

Enhancing Visibility

- a. The Secretariat should develop a new programme for the identification and dissemination of best practices, capacity building etc.
- b. The Clearing House, the publications and communication should be maintained at high, professional levels and should include not only academic and in-house publications but, as a crucial feature develop a programme for policy makers at the local, national and international level.
- c. Active attention must be given to improving outcomes through new forms of communication and collaboration between researchers, policy makers and the wider public.

Coordination and Evaluation

- a. Member states who do not already have the NLCs or persons are encouraged to arrange for them as soon as possible.
- b. The MOST Secretariat in collaboration with National Commissions should undertake a review of the structure, operations and impact of the NLCs during the 32 C/5 with recommendations and proposals to be submitted to the IGC Bureau.
- c. Evaluations should be carried out throughout the course of the programme.

Funding and Assessment

- a. UNESCO should allocate the necessary funds, as well as raise extra-budgetary funds, to implement the MOST programme and its projects.
- b. Secretariat should undertake impact assessment studies and evaluations.