

**Message from the co-Chairs of the open-ended Tripartite Working Group for the follow-up
to the review of the cooperation of UNESCO Secretariat
with National Commissions for UNESCO**

Dear Colleagues,

You have by now received notification from the Secretariat of the venue and dates for the second meeting of the Tripartite Working Group on cooperation between the Secretariat and National Commissions for UNESCO.

As you will recall, our objective is to prepare a draft plan of action, including proposed timelines and responsibilities for implementing the recommendations, for submission to the 191st meeting of the Executive Board in April 2013. The Executive Board will then submit its recommendations to the 37th session of the General Conference later this year.

The second meeting of the Working Group will have a significant amount of material to work with: the IOS report; discussions which took place at the various regional consultations of National Commissions in 2012; views expressed at the first meeting of the Working Group; and a range of suggestions put forward through the Secretariat's e-forum network.

To bring all this material together in the form of an agreed draft action plan will not be easy. There is however widespread agreement that we must take full advantage of the opportunity which the Secretariat's initiative in setting up this exercise has created to improve UNESCO's overall effectiveness and strengthen the role and effectiveness of National Commissions.

Draft Discussion Paper

It seems to the co-Chairs that it is now time to move on from the IOS report and base our discussions at the next meeting on the Working Group's own material. We are accordingly working with the Secretariat to produce a draft discussion paper for the meeting which distills key findings and recommendations from earlier discussions and the e-forum exchanges. (The e-forum will remain open for another two to three weeks, both to receive your further suggestions and for any comments you may wish to make on the draft discussion paper.) This draft discussion paper will be circulated to all Permanent Delegates and National Commissions in the next few days.

Your comments on the draft paper will be welcome, both before and during the meeting. We will need to ascertain whether the suggested recommendations cover the ground as comprehensively as they should, whether they go too far (or not far enough) and whether there are better or different ideas that should be incorporated in the action plan.

Second Meeting of the Working Group

We have also given some thought to how the structure and agenda for the second meeting of the Working group might look. It seems to us that the findings and recommendations of the Working Group will fall into four broad categories and that it would make sense to structure the meeting around these categories as follows:

Session 1: Legal framework and structural issues

Session 2: Actions to be taken by individual Member States and National Commissions

Session 3: Strengthening interactions and partnerships among National Commissions

Session 4: Improving cooperation between National Commissions and the Secretariat – both at Headquarters and at Field Office level

Session 5: General discussion on the action plan.

Next Steps

It will be for the Working Group to determine the next steps in this process. Our tentative thinking is that immediately following the meeting the co-Chairs and the Secretariat should prepare a report or an action plan incorporating the meeting's findings and recommendations. This report will be forwarded to the Executive Board as requested by the Board at its last session.

We look forward to receiving your views on the above proposals and the draft discussion paper (to be sent in the coming days). We consider that - thanks to your many thoughtful contributions - good progress is being made in this exercise and we can look forward to a constructive and successful meeting next month.

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