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RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE PREPARATORY GROUP TO THE EXECUTIVE BOARD AT ITS 197th SESSION

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Item 4 Execution of the programme adopted by the General Conference

Part I *Programme execution*

The Preparatory Group wishes to draw the attention of the Executive Board to the following points, regarding this online report on Programme Execution:

- Improvements were noted in the content and presentation of the 197 EX/4 Part I thus responding to the recommendations of Member States in this regard.
- The length of the document and level of detail are of concern and raise the question about the necessity of such an extensive biannual reporting.
- The overall “fully on track” status of implementation appears inconsistent with realities of programme implementation and constraints resulting from the current financial situation and it was indicated that the Secretariat should not refrain from reporting on difficulties, challenges, delays and obstacles in programme implementation.
- There is need for harmonization between reporting on programme implementation and on the related expenditure; Member States underlined that there remains a gap between reporting on Part I and Part II.
- A List of available and pending policy briefs emanating from the work of the Scientific Advisory Board was requested.

Item 4 Part II *Budgetary situation of the Organization for 2014-2015 (37 C/5) as at 30 June 2015 (Unaudited), Budget adjustments arising from donations and special contributions received and Management Chart for Programme Execution in 2014-2015 (37 C/5 Approved) Status as at 30 June 2015 (Unaudited)*

The Preparatory Group wishes to draw the attention of the Executive Board to the following points:

- Member States took note that the previous deficit was considered eliminated and that the current biennium is expected to be completed without any deficit.
- Member States request a clear differentiation between the lapse factor and the vacancy rate. It is to be noted that the relevant information on this is available in the document from the Budget Orientation Debate Report (196 EX/15.INF.3) and the External Auditor’s Report on Budgetary Techniques (196 EX/15.INF Rev.) from the 196th Executive Board session.
- Member States sought indication of the anticipated level of the lapse factor for the 39 C/5. The vacancy rate was anticipated to be 9% by the end of 2017.
- The funding of the Voluntary Mutual Separation Programme is not consistent with previous decisions of the Special Session of the Executive Board, the subsequent Executive Board and the resolution of the General Conference and thereby with the principle that all savings generated shall be directed to the five Major Programmes. Legal grounds for the allocation of savings towards the Voluntary Mutual Separation Programme remain to be clarified.
- Member States requested that a list of the 39 posts, which have been rendered vacant by the Voluntary Mutual Separation Programme be provided to the Executive Board, including status of these posts such as grade, downgrading, abolition, information or savings resulting from this exercise.

- Member States noted that one of the aims of the Voluntary Mutual Separation Programme is to better position the Secretariat for the post-2015 agenda and hence questioned how making General Service staff redundant relates to this objective.
- It was noted that some of the reported line transfers could have been covered from Part V of the budget.
- A *post facto* amendment to the Appropriation Resolution is not considered good practice by Member States, therefore underlined that the Appropriation Resolution could only be amended by the General Conference.
- As far as the cost recovery plan is concerned discrepancies were noted between the amount appearing in document EX/5 Part IV and that mentioned in document EX/4 Part II.
- The implementation rate of extrabudgetary resources is far from being satisfactory, in spite of efforts made to give staff appropriate training.
- Member States are awaiting the forecast of transfers to be provided by the Secretariat.
- Member States required further explanation on the increasing level of expenditure on contracted services, raising concern about existing in-house expertise.

Item 5 Follow-up to decisions and resolutions adopted by the Executive Board and the General Conference at their previous sessions

Part I *Programme issues*

Activities benefitting SIDS within the Organization's programme (2014-2017) and budget (38 C/5), including an analysis of additional resource requirements

The Preparatory Group wishes to draw the attention of the Executive Board to the following points:

- Member States appreciated the elaboration of the first overall SIDS programme assessment.
- Member States highlighted the lack of coherence between sectors in the development of activities, budget allocations and volume of mobilized funds benefitting SIDS.
- The document should include the issue of climate change and its impact in SIDS as well as take into account the SDGs and UNFCCC COP 21.
- It was suggested that consideration be given to the possibility of creating in SISTER and RBB a mechanism that would facilitate the identification of specific activities benefitting SIDS similar to the ones used for Priority Africa and Gender Equality.
- A table with a clear breakdown between Regular Budget and extrabudgetary funds is needed, so as to facilitate dialogue with possible donors.
- A strategy for raising extrabudgetary funds is also needed, informed by the above table.

Item 5 Part IV *Management issues*

Implementation of the action plan for improved management of extrabudgetary funds

The Preparatory Group wishes to draw the attention of the Executive Board to the following points:

- Member States have insisted on the follow up of the review process on cost recovery mechanism and requested a clear time frame related to this. They expressed concerns with regard to the achievement of the 2% target for cost recovery at the 199th session of the Executive Board, as decided by the 196th session of the Executive Board.
- It was noted that a precondition for a resource mobilization strategy was the elaboration of quality projects.
- Member States requested more information on the FITOCA and its modalities of management.
- Member States requested further clarification on the relationship and balance between the Regular Budget and extrabudgetary funds. It is not clear whether Regular Budget subsidizes extrabudgetary or the contrary. The cost recovery policy needs further explanation and clarification, and its implementation needs further strengthening.
- Member States emphasized the need for structured financing dialogue as a permanent mechanism and the need for all Member States (not just donors) to take part in such dialogues. It was also requested that the broad spectrum of Member States should be involved in elaborating the modalities of the dialogues.
- Concern was raised as to the capacity of staff to mobilize private sector extrabudgetary funding, especially in the field offices.
- It was signalled that if one of the aims of the field office network is to mobilize extrabudgetary funds, then Directors/Heads of Field Offices should have clear fundraising targets as part of their performance evaluations.
- Concern was raised as to the overall implementation capacity of the resource mobilization strategy.
- Given the information on recent training delivered, it was questioned whether there is an overall strategy for staff training?
- Concern was raised as to the full participation in the United Nations system in terms of development and implementation of the common definition of operating costs.
- It was queried whether there were adequate operational structures in place to implement mega-intersectorial projects and intersectorial priorities.
- While appreciating the new evaluation policy, it was underlined that its continued implementation, including decentralized evaluations, is necessary.
- In the proposed draft decision, it is important to explicitly stress the role of field offices notably as pertains to paragraph 7.
- It was queried whether Priority Africa benefited from mobilization of extrabudgetary resources and innovative financing, as has been stated by the Secretariat in previous discussions.

Invest for Efficient Delivery

The Preparatory Group wishes to draw the attention of the Executive Board to the following points:

- It is to be recalled that the Invest for Efficient Delivery idea is a key core part of the delicate consensus reached on the ZNG Plus budget.
- The investment fund will need to produce a return of at least US \$11 million in the 39 C/5 in line with the budget consensus.
- It is understood that Invest for Efficient Delivery will be implemented within the existing programmes and services.
- Member States flagged the following issues to be further developed or clarified: return on investment, calendar of implementation, payback period and lack of other investment options in the document.
- Clarity is required regarding the definition of investment in this context; a tighter definition of investment shall be proposed.
- Further clarification is required on the expected savings announced under the KM and ICT Strategy and under the proposed KM and ICT investments.
- The Secretariat recognized that this “strategic” Special Account will have its investments/allocations approved by Member States.

Criteria for introducing new and maintaining existing programmes for regular and extrabudgetary programmes

The Preparatory Group wishes to draw the attention of the Executive Board to the following points:

- There is a need for a draft decision on this item; in this regard, it has been further recalled that a draft decision should accompany every item presented to the Executive Board.
- Member States need to be aware of the criteria used for introducing, maintaining or terminating programmes. It is to be clarified as to what level this will apply.
- There is a need to take into account the core mandate of UNESCO when considering the continuation of existing programmes.
- There is also a need to develop methods to synthesize the criteria in a comprehensive and analytical way.

Proposal for presenting the performance indicators (PI) and targets related to the global priorities Africa and Gender Equality

The Preparatory Group wishes to draw the attention of the Executive Board to the following point:

- Member States requested the mainstreaming of the Performance Indicators for global priorities throughout all programme sectors, instead of limiting them to a few expected results.
- There is a need for a draft decision on this item.

Item 6 Outcomes of the World Education Forum 2015

The Preparatory Group wishes to draw the attention of the Executive Board to the following points:

- Long term operational plan translating the report into concrete and sustainable actions, in particular for the 39 C/5, is required. A strategic results report will be presented to the Executive Board at its 199th session.
- A Strategy is required for achieving tangible results at country level and there is need to develop ambitious and innovative mechanisms.
- Member States raised the complexities of the monitoring agenda.
- Logistics for timing and space for the launch of the Framework for Action on 4 November 2015 were raised.

Item 7 UNESCO's participation in the preparations for a post-2015 development agenda

The Preparatory Group wishes to draw the attention of the Executive Board to the following points:

- There is a need for a debate on UNESCO's comparative advantage in the participation in the preparation for the post-2015 agenda. What will UNESCO's role be? How does UNESCO intend to deliver and which resources will it identify to do so?
- Member States invited the Secretariat to broaden the discussion paper so that it can serve as basis for discussion for the future 39 C/5 at the General Conference.
- The need for guidelines to structure this discussion at the General Conference was highlighted.
- Overall, item 7 will need to be linked to item 22 on "Preparation of the 38th session of the General Conference".

Item 9 Report on the implementation of the International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures (2013-2022)

The Preparatory Group wishes to draw the attention of the Executive Board to the following point:

- Member States recommend that this item be examined without debate at the Executive Board.

Item 12 Enhancing UNESCO's Contributions to Promote Culture of Respect

The Preparatory Group wishes to draw the attention of the Executive Board to the following points:

- It was noted that there was no presentation of the item by the Member States who proposed the item on the agenda.
- Member States noted that the scope and boundaries were not clear in the document presented. Neither the Secretariat nor the Member States were therefore in a position to define the nature and extent of UNESCO's action under this item.
- It is recommended that the United Nations Human Rights Council resolution 16/18 of 12 April 2011 be provided to the Executive Board along with document 197 EX/12.

Item 18 Report by the Executive Board on its activities and programme implementation

Part II *Implementation of the current Programme and Budget (37 C/5)*

The Preparatory Group wishes to draw the attention of the Executive Board to the following points:

- Member States expressed concern on the change in format of this document and recommended that the document be presented to the General Conference in the previously agreed format.
- The General Conference may wish to review the desired future format of this report.

Adopted with amendments in Room IV on 23 September 2015 at 18:02.