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REPORT ON CONSULTATIONS BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT OF THE KINGDOM OF THE NETHERLANDS AND UNESCO ON THE UNESCO-IHE INSTITUTE FOR WATER EDUCATION

SUMMARY

Background: The current Operational Agreement between UNESCO and the Government of the Netherlands and the Cooperation Agreement between UNESCO and the IHE Delft Foundation on UNESCO-IHE will expire on 31 December 2016.

This document informs the Executive Board on the outcome of the consultations between the Kingdom of the Netherlands and UNESCO.

1. UNESCO-IHE Institute for Water Education is a leading institute in the field of postgraduate water education, located in Delft, the Netherlands. Since its creation in 1957 as a center of excellence in water management, and as a UNESCO category 1 centre since 2003, the Institute has trained more than 15,000 water professionals from more than 160 countries, the vast majority from developing countries.

2. The General Conference, at its 31st session in November 2001, approved the creation of UNESCO-IHE as a category 1 institute (31 C/Resolution 16) and adopted its Statutes as set forth in document 31 C/47. The following agreements were signed in March 2003:

- An Operational Agreement between UNESCO and the Government of the Netherlands;
- A Cooperation Agreement between UNESCO and the IHE Delft Foundation;
- A Seat Agreement between UNESCO and the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

3. In 2015-2016, the Government of the Netherlands, the IHE Delft Foundation, and the UNESCO Secretariat have been engaged in joint consultations to assess the current Operational Agreement and Cooperation Agreement regarding UNESCO-IHE, both of which expire on 31 December 2016.

4. In compliance with Article 1.2 of the above-mentioned Operational Agreement, and 38 C/Resolution 20, a statutory evaluation of UNESCO-IHE was carried out from January to



June 2016. The report is available: [<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0024/002454/245409E.pdf>] and provides, *inter alia*, the following key observations [IOS/EVS/PI/151, 1 June 2016, p. 70].

- “UNESCO-IHE’s work is relevant to the UNESCO Natural Sciences Sector and to the UNESCO Water Family. UNESCO-IHE’s work was most relevant to the water community in developing countries and countries in transition. [...] UNESCO-IHE’s work is particularly relevant to the Dutch Government ...”.
- UNESCO-IHE also contributed to the formulation of the Sustainable Development Goals within the Agenda 2030.” [...] UNESCO-IHE’s work over the last five years has produced positive outcomes in the three areas of education, research and capacity development.

5. UNESCO Secretariat has engaged in consultations with the Dutch Government since July 2016 in order to address the future of the Institute following the expiration date of the Operational Agreement on 31 December 2016. Those consultations have led to the following:

- (i) The Institute, which is highly valued by the Member States of UNESCO, shall remain a strong pillar of the UNESCO Water Family, including the Organization’s International Hydrological Programme (IHP), the World Water Assessment Programme, as well as UNESCO centres and Chairs specialized in water around the globe.
- (ii) In order for the Institute to continue providing its highly appreciated activities in education, training and research, supporting and complementing UNESCO’s water programmes, a new cooperative framework should provide the necessary flexibility to allow the Institute to grow and develop for the benefit of UNESCO Member States through the continued funding by the Dutch Government beyond 2016.
- (iii) The Netherlands will therefore initiate within the third trimester of 2016 the application process for the Institute to become a category 2 centre under the auspices of UNESCO.
- (iv) Following the expiration of the current Operational Agreement, UNESCO and the Institute will pursue a smooth transition process through the signing of a Cooperation Agreement, in order to ensure the continuous operation of the Institute beyond 2016.

6. The transitional agreement, to be agreed upon between the Netherlands and UNESCO, will be of a fixed duration and should also establish, *inter alia*, the framework regarding the use of UNESCO’s name and logo in general and in particular on the diplomas during the next 2016-2017 academic year, on the premises and on all printed and online communication materials.

7. On 7 July 2016, the Director-General and the Minister of Education, Culture and Science of the Netherlands issued a joint communiqué on UNESCO-IHE (Annex I), in which they highlighted the aforementioned conclusions. Therein, UNESCO and the Netherlands also recognize and appreciate the role and good offices of the IHE Delft Foundation in facilitating past and leading future operations and for the functioning of UNESCO-IHE, notably through the dedication and commitment of the personnel at the Institute to provide educational programmes of excellence and an inspiring learning environment for students and professionals from across the world.

8. The Director-General and the Minister of Education, Culture and Science of the Netherlands appeal to all Member States, concerned entities in the United Nations system, as well as academic institutions and non-governmental organizations concerned with water management, to continue supporting the Institute and also further increase the number of students and professionals benefitting from its services.