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PROPOSAL FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT IN SRI LANKA OF A SOUTH ASIAN CENTRE FOR TEACHER DEVELOPMENT AS A CATEGORY 2 CENTRE UNDER THE AUSPICES OF UNESCO

SUMMARY

Following a proposal by the Government of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka for the establishment of a South Asian Centre for Teacher Development as a category 2 centre under the auspices of UNESCO, and in line with 36 C/Resolution 15, a technical mission was undertaken in November 2011 to assess the feasibility of establishing the proposed centre. The evaluation was carried out in conformity with the criteria concerning the creation of institutes and centres under the auspices of UNESCO (35 C/Resolution 103).

This document has been prepared pursuant to the technical mission. It reviews the prerequisites for the establishment of the Centre, and provides the rationale behind Sri Lanka's proposal and the evaluation of the proposal. It is supplemented by an annex containing such provisions of the proposed draft agreement between UNESCO and the Government of Sri Lanka concerning the centre as deviate from the model agreement (see documents 35 C/22 and Corr.).

Financial and administrative implications are covered in paragraph 5.

Action expected of the Executive Board: proposed decision in paragraph 7.

INTRODUCTION

1. Sri Lanka has proposed the establishment of a South Asian Centre for Teacher Development in Meepe, Sri Lanka under the auspices of UNESCO (category 2) hereinafter referred to as the “Centre”. Pursuant to 36 C/Resolution 15, the feasibility study is submitted to the Executive Board so that it can analyse it and decide on behalf of the General Conference on the granting of the status of category 2 centre.

2. In conformity with the guidelines concerning the creation of category 2 institutes and centres under the auspices of UNESCO (35 C/Resolution 103), a UNESCO mission was undertaken to Sri Lanka in November 2011 to assess the feasibility and viability of establishing the proposed regional centre.

OVERVIEW OF THE PROPOSAL

3. The proposal submitted by the Government of Sri Lanka has endeavoured to address the requirements of the guidelines and criteria outlined in the integrated comprehensive strategy for category 2 institutes and centres (35 C/Resolution 103). Since the feasibility study mission, certain improvements were suggested and UNESCO has offered technical advice on the way forward.

- (a) **Objectives:** The overall objective of the Centre is to serve as a knowledge and training centre for teachers to improve the quality of education in the South Asian region through high quality teacher development and holistic education, “underlining the importance of continuous self-improvement and values of inclusiveness and diversity as a source of progress and unity, as well as the lifelong pursuit of knowledge and wisdom for the benefit of all”.¹ The Centre will provide leadership to support policy development, enhancing research and implementation of change in building a quality teacher force in the region.
- (b) **Functions:** The Centre’s functions are categorized as follows: (1) professional development of teacher educators/counsellors/advisers/mentors for school-based teacher development; (2) research and development in teacher education; (3) teacher curriculum development; (4) capacity development in the areas of teachers’ Information Communication and Technology (ICT) competency and e-pedagogy; (5) conception and piloting of inclusive education models within South Asia; (6) promotion of education for peace and sustainable development; and (7) provision of a continuing dialogue within UNESCO offices for collaboration on improving and raising the quality of education worldwide.
- (c) **Legal status and structure:** The Centre will have autonomous status and will be an independent legal entity, set up according to national legislation and enjoy legal capacity while working within the legal framework of the existing National Institute of Education (NIE), which has the mandate for the professional development of teachers. The Centre shall have a common seal in the name of the National Institute of Education, under which it shall carry out its functions. The Centre shall function under the auspices of UNESCO, but will be independent of UNESCO, who will not be legally responsible to the Centre, nor bear any responsibilities, nor liabilities of any kind, be they managerial, financial or otherwise.

Its structure will involve:

- (i) **Governing Board:** a body in charge of guiding, supervising and monitoring the Centre’s financial and thematic activities as well as matters of policy, direction and priorities. The activities of the Centre will be planned and supervised by the

¹ Proposal submitted by Sri Lanka to UNESCO.

Governing Board. The Board shall be appointed by the Minister of Education of Sri Lanka. It shall consist of: the current Secretary, Ministry of Education; a UNESCO representative, designated by the Director-General of UNESCO; the Secretary-General of the Sri Lanka National Commission for UNESCO; the Director-General of the National Institute of Education; and one representative from each of the Member States supporting the Centre, who have expressed interest in being represented on the Board and sent to the Centre a notification for membership.

Relevant observers from related government offices shall be invited to participate as advisors/observers, without the right to vote.

- (ii) **Secretariat:** a body in charge of running the operations of the Centre under the authority of its Director. It shall be comprised of five units: Administration and Finance Unit; Professional Development Unit; Research and Development Unit; Curriculum Development Unit; and an Information and Technology Unit. The Director of the Centre shall be appointed by the Governing Board.
- (iii) **Advisory Council:** an expert body of five intellectuals and academics to be set up by the Governing Board for the purpose of advising on research, curriculum and policy development, as well as planning, reviewing and monitoring the programmes of the Centre.
- (d) **Financial matters:** The Government of Sri Lanka will contribute the resources, financial or in kind, needed for the administration and proper functioning of the Centre, providing the Centre with an annual budget sufficient to cover expenses relating to its activities, including the secretariat, staff, infrastructure and maintenance, equipment and utilities. In addition, while obtaining continuing funding from the Government in accordance with national laws, the Centre will raise funds from international funding agencies, development agencies, regional intergovernmental organizations, the private sector as well as other funding institutions.
- (e) **Areas of cooperation with UNESCO:**
 - (i) The Centre hopes to contribute to strengthening UNESCO's teacher development programmes by implementing effective policies and systems for training, retaining and developing quality teachers to meet current and future demands. It will support UNESCO's priority of achieving quality education for all by assisting South Asian countries to make progress in the overall development of their quality teaching needs. It will provide them with new opportunities in research and teaching and will promote teacher development through formal, non-formal and informal learning, workshops and seminars, and research on curriculum development. It will promote networks for teacher development through North-South-South cooperation and sharing of best practices.
 - (ii) The Centre requests UNESCO to help in the provision of technical assistance for programme activities in accordance with the strategic goals and objectives of UNESCO; undertake evaluations and reviews of the Centre's performance; facilitate recruitment of international experts needed to work as consultants for the development of the Centre's programmes and activities; assist the Centre with establishing linkages with other institutions and agencies; and include the Centre in various programmes implemented by UNESCO which are beneficial to both.

REGIONAL OR INTERNATIONAL IMPACT OF THE CENTRE

4. At the time of the proposal submission, Sri Lanka had received official letters of support from seven South Asian countries, namely Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal and Pakistan. At the 36th session of the General Conference, the draft resolution was supported by 43 countries.

- (a) The Centre will strive for regional impact by assisting all countries of the subregion in their efforts to promote teacher development by making available its training programmes, research studies, advocacy plans and strategies to Member States of the region.
- (b) It will serve as a clearing house in the subregion for the transfer and exchange of experience, knowledge and best practices in the field of teacher development, curriculum development, use of ICTs in teaching, learning, and research.
- (c) It will supplement and complement the efforts of the two education-related category 2 UNESCO Centres – the Southeast Asian Centre for Lifelong Learning for Sustainable Development (Philippines) and the Asia-Pacific Centre of Education for International Understanding (Republic of Korea) – by mainstreaming the aspects of Education for Sustainable Development in Teacher Development.
- (d) The Centre's strategic plan emphasizes working alongside existing and planned UNESCO category 1 and 2 centres, especially those related to teacher policy and development, to maximize the Centre's effectiveness and to leverage its efforts. It also plans to work with UNESCO Chairs and networks.

FINANCIAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

5. In accordance with the guidelines and criteria for category 2 centres and institutes (35 C/Resolution 103), UNESCO shall not provide financial support for administrative or institutional purposes. Although the Centre has made no request for future financial support from UNESCO, it requests UNESCO's assistance in facilitating access to extrabudgetary funding and financial support from donors and international financing institutions. Future foreseen administrative costs for UNESCO linked to the operation of the Centre, if established as a category 2 centre, will be related to liaising with the Centre to provide technical assistance and enabling coordination between networks of related institutions and agencies.

SUMMARY EVALUATION OF THE PROPOSAL SUBMITTED

6. Addressing the need for holistic teacher development in the context of lifelong learning and sustainable development is critically important for enhanced delivery of quality education for all. The proposal for the establishment of a South Asian Centre for Teacher Development in Sri Lanka as a category 2 centre under the auspices of UNESCO satisfies all criteria as outlined in the guidelines and criteria for category 2 UNESCO institutes and centres (35 C/Resolution 103).

Proposed decision

7. In light of the foregoing, the Executive Board may wish to consider the following decision:

The Executive Board,

1. Recalling the 36 C/Resolution 15,
2. Welcoming the proposal of Sri Lanka which is in accordance with the integrated comprehensive strategy and the guidelines for the establishment of institutes and

centres under the auspices of UNESCO (category 2) annexed to document 35 C/22 and Corr. and approved by the General Conference in 35 C/Resolution 103,

3. Recalling the importance of category 2 centres' positive contribution to UNESCO's priorities and potential international or regional impact,
4. Having examined document 189 EX/23 on the proposal for the establishment in Sri Lanka of a South Asian Centre for Teacher Development as a category 2 centre under the auspices of UNESCO and its annex,
5. Aware of the importance of international and regional cooperation and North-South-South cooperation in the field of teacher education and development,
6. Considering the positive observations and conclusions of the feasibility study,
7. Approves the establishment of the South Asian Centre for Teacher Development in Meepe, Sri Lanka, as a category 2 centre under the auspices of UNESCO;
8. Authorizes the Director-General to sign the corresponding Agreement between UNESCO and the Government of Sri Lanka.

ANNEX

PROVISIONS DEVIATING FROM THE MODEL AGREEMENT

Preambular paragraph

The Government of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka

and

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization,

Having regard to 36 C/Resolution 15 whereby the UNESCO General Conference seeks to favour international cooperation in respect of teacher development and quality education,

Considering that the Director-General has been authorized by the General Conference to conclude with the Government of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka an agreement in conformity with 36 C/Resolution 15,

Desirous of defining the terms and conditions governing the framework for cooperation with UNESCO that shall be granted to the said Centre in this Agreement,

HAVE AGREED AS FOLLOWS:

Article 1 – Definitions

1. In this Agreement, “UNESCO” refers to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.
2. “Government” means the Government of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka.
3. “Centre” means South Asian Centre for Teacher Development.
4. “South Asia Region” referred to in this Agreement includes the following countries: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka.

Article 2 – Establishment

The Government shall agree to take, in the course of the year 2012, any measures that may be required for the setting up in Meepe, the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, of the South Asian Centre for Teacher Development as a centre under the auspices of UNESCO, as provided for under this Agreement.

Article 6 – Functions/objectives

The functions of the Centre shall be:

- (a) professional development of teacher educators/counsellors/advisors/mentors for school-based teacher development;
- (b) research and development in teacher education;
- (c) teacher curriculum development;
- (d) capacity development in the areas of teachers’ ICT competency and e-pedagogy;

- (e) incubation and piloting of inclusive education models within South Asia;
- (f) promotion of education for peace and sustainable development;
- (g) provision of a continuing dialogue within UNESCO offices for purposes of collaboration on improving and raising quality of education worldwide.

The objectives of the Centre shall be:

To be a service provider, standard setter and a research management centre in the field of teacher development in the South Asian subregion.

Article 7 – Governing Board

1. The Centre shall be guided and overseen by a Governing Board composed of:
 - (a) The Secretary, Ministry of Education, the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka;
 - (b) The representative of the Director-General of UNESCO;
 - (c) Director General of the National Institute of Education, Sri Lanka;
 - (d) Secretary General of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lankan National Commission for UNESCO;
 - (e) representatives of Member States, which have sent to the Centre notification for membership, in accordance with the stipulations of Article 10, paragraph 2 below and have expressed interest in being represented on the Board.

3. The Governing Board shall meet in ordinary session at regular intervals, at least once every calendar year; it shall meet in extraordinary session if convened by its Chairperson, either on his or her own initiative or at the request of the Director-General of UNESCO or of two-thirds of its members.

Article 8 – UNESCO's contribution

1. [...]
 - (b) seconding members of its staff temporarily, as may be decided by the Director-General on an exceptional basis if justified by the implementation of a joint activity/project within a strategic programme priority area.

2. Article 9 – Contribution by the Government The Government undertakes to:
 - (a) make available to the Centre, the land, buildings, equipment, staff and utilities;
 - (b) entirely assume the maintenance of the premises of the centre;
 - (c) contribute to the Centre a total amount of US **\$442,478** per year for its operations and administrative expenses;
 - (d) make available to the Centre the administrative staff necessary for the performance of its functions, which shall comprise a Director and Heads of Departments for Professional Development of Teacher Educators, Research and Development in Teacher Education and Teacher Curriculum Development, as also, the support staff as required.

Article 14 – Entry into force

This Agreement shall enter into force, following its signature by the contracting parties.

Article 15 – Duration

This Agreement is concluded for a period of six (6) years as from its entry into force, and shall be deemed renewed unless otherwise expressly denounced by either party as provided for in Article 16.

Article 16 – Denunciation

2. The denunciation shall take effect within thirty (30) days following receipt of the notification sent by one of the contracting parties to the other.