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INDEPENDENT EXTERNAL EVALUATION OF UNESCO

PART I

REPORT BY THE EXECUTIVE BOARD'S AD HOC WORKING GROUP ON THE INDEPENDENT EXTERNAL EVALUATION REPORT

SUMMARY

By 185 EX/Decision 18, the Executive Board decided to establish an ad hoc working group whose mandate would be to examine the report of the IEE and to develop proposals concerning the recommendations thereof, taking into account the discussions held at the 185th session and to submit them to the Board at its 186th session.

Action expected of the Executive Board: approve recommendations of the Working Group (paragraph 16).

1. At its 185th session the Executive Board, having examined documents 185 EX/18 and Addendum, presenting the conclusions and recommendations of the Independent External Evaluation (IEE) of UNESCO, and underlining the common responsibility of the General Conference, the Executive Board and the Secretariat in its follow-up (according to the prerogatives of each body) decided to establish an ad hoc working group whose mandate would be to examine the report of the IEE and to develop proposals concerning the recommendations thereof, taking into account the discussions held at the 185th session and to submit them to the Board at its 186th session. The Board also decided that the ad hoc working group would be composed of 18 Member States of the Board (three from each electoral group) designated after consultation of the electoral groups, and that it would convene open-ended meetings, thus allowing enhanced participation of all Member States of UNESCO (185 EX/Decision 18).

2. The Members designated to sit on the ad hoc working group were the following:

Electoral Group I

Denmark
Italy
United States of America

Electoral Group IV

Pakistan
Republic of Korea
Sri Lanka

Electoral Group II

Belarus
Latvia
Russian Federation

Electoral Group V(a)

Congo
Madagascar
Zimbabwe

Electoral Group III

Chile
Cuba
Saint Lucia

Electoral Group V(b)

Egypt
Kuwait
Morocco

3. On Thursday, 2 December 2010, the Chairperson of the Executive Board convened the first meeting of the ad hoc working group and proceeded to the election of its Chairperson, Ms Vera Lacoëuilhe (Saint Lucia) and of its Vice-Chairperson, Mr Jens Dalsgaard (Denmark). The group then held a brief discussion on its forthcoming timetable, agenda and methods of work.

4. The group held six further meetings between 10 December 2010 and 21 March 2011. In addition to the Members of the Group a great number of observers attended the meetings (In all, 87 Member States and 2 observers out of which 45 Members of the Board). It is to be noted that, according to its mandate allowing enhanced participation of all Member States of UNESCO within open-ended meetings, observers participated on an equal status as members of the group in all meetings – with the exception of the final adoption of the recommendations of the group, at its seventh and last meeting. All Member States received notification to attend the meetings of the group, were invited to submit individual or collective written contributions or amendments to the draft recommendations (which were subsequently dispatched to all Member States) were given the floor whenever requested during meetings, were invited to participate in subsidiary drafting groups and, in general, to work alongside group members in order to enlarge and enhance the scope of the important task entrusted to the ad hoc working group and thus contribute to the largest possible consensus-building among all Member States. The meetings of the group were also attended by the relevant members of the Secretariat, who provided information as appropriate, contributed to clarify doubts and, when necessary, informed the group of the opinion of the Director-General on the issues at stake.

5. On Friday, 10 December 2010, the ad hoc working group held its second meeting, devoted to Strategic Direction One (*Increasing UNESCO's focus*) of the report on the IEE. Following the opening, the Deputy Director-General (designated by the Director-General, according to the terms of 185 EX/Decision 18, to ensure liaison between the Secretariat and the ad hoc working group) informed the participants that measures were being enacted by the Director-General – within her own responsibilities and prerogatives – for the follow-up to the recommendations of the report on the IEE.

6. During the open and rich debate that followed, it was pointed out that, among the five Strategic Directions of the report on the IEE, this was the one that most deserved to be qualified as “strategic”, the others being rather of a methodological nature. This wide-ranging and important part of the report on the IEE gave rise to a broad agreement that the selection of a limited number of strategic objectives would help increase UNESCO's focus and that, in order to reach this objective, specific criteria should be established for the overall preparation of the C/5 document,

including the assessment of capacity to deliver and impact, comparative advantage, as well as exit strategies, sunset provisions and a global, ongoing culture of evaluation.

7. All participants pronounced themselves in favour of the envisaged introduction of a quadrennial programme-cycle and concurred that it would greatly contribute to achieving the goals of focusing the Organization's work and enhancing its relevance and impact. The group analysed in detail the consequences that this measure would entail both for the different stages of the programme preparation and for its implementation, and formulated a number of recommendations relating to the consultation process, priority-setting, and reporting. An open-ended drafting group took place following the meeting in order to translate the summary made by the Chairperson at the end of the debates, into concrete draft recommendations.

8. The third meeting of the group took place on 20 January 2011, and was devoted to the joint examination of Strategic Directions Two (*Positioning UNESCO closer to the field*) and Three (*Strengthening participation in the United Nations*). A broad consensus arose on the need to reinforce the presence and action of UNESCO in the field based on the principles for a new field network architecture proposed by the Director-General. This architecture should, however, respond to the specific needs of each region and subregion, within the context of the programme concentration mentioned above. The coordination and synergy between Headquarters and field offices should be strengthened, and field offices should be provided with reinforced means – both in terms of budget and of human resources – to be able to carry out the programme at the regional/subregional level.

9. Strengthening the participation of UNESCO in the United Nations system is indeed very much related to UNESCO's field presence, particularly in the context of One United Nations. UNESCO's contribution to system-wide effectiveness would also position the Organization as a more significant actor within the system and help enhance its uniqueness and added value. The participants requested greater information on the activities of the liaison offices in New York and Geneva in order to contribute to a more coherent system-wide position by Member States in matters relating to the Organization's mandate. Following the end of the meeting, the Chairperson convened an open-ended drafting group, which took place on 31 January 2011, in order to put in writing the main results of the debates held during the meeting.

10. Strategic Direction Four (*Strengthening governance*) was undoubtedly the part of the IEE report that was most extensively discussed, being of particular interest to all participants. The fourth meeting of the group (Wednesday, 16 February 2011) was entirely devoted to a rich debate on governance that could not be drawn to completion. It was thus decided to pursue its examination at the following meeting, and the Chairperson invited those delegations which had concrete proposals to make in this area to submit them to her in writing. Six proposals (five individual and one collective) were subsequently received and dispatched to all Permanent Delegations, with a view to be examined during the debate to be held at the following meeting.

11. On Wednesday, 23 February 2011, the group held its fifth meeting. The morning session was devoted to the continuation of discussions on Strategic Direction Four, in the framework of previous debates and of the written contributions submitted by several Member States. During the lengthy discussion on this Strategic Direction, it was highlighted that the Constitution of UNESCO provided an appropriate framework for the governance of the Organization and the relationship between its three organs, which just needed to be updated and rendered more operational through concrete measures, particularly in the fields of information-provision and oversight. It was underlined that the constitutional role of the General Conference of determining the policies and main lines of work of the Organization should be strengthened, and that this would be easier within the context of a quadrennial programme. It was also highlighted that international cooperation within UNESCO not only implies the priority-setting role of the Conference, the monitoring role of the Board and the implementing one of the Secretariat, but an enhanced collaboration between Member States. Upon several proposals from the floor and the Chairperson, the group defined a series of improved information tools, accountability frameworks and a possible change in the

structure of the ad hoc groups assisting the Executive Board aimed at better preparing its sessions.

12. The afternoon session of the fifth meeting was devoted to the study of Strategic Direction Five (*Developing a partnership strategy*). The wide-ranging spectrum of UNESCO partners, the largest within the United Nations system, calls for a comprehensive policy and accountability framework, as stated in the IEE report, and the main conclusion of the debates on this item was to call upon the Director-General to develop such a framework, through the assessment of past experience, developing a series of key criteria for all partnerships while taking into account the diversity of the different partnership schemes set up by UNESCO over its history. It was also requested that the Director-General provide a complete overview of all existing UNESCO networks. The unique role of National Commissions was underlined in this context, as well as the need that relations between the Secretariat and National Commissions be conducted in accordance with the appropriate constitutional provisions.

13. On Thursday, 3 March 2011, the ad hoc working group held a sixth – initially unscheduled – meeting. The meeting took place upon the request of many participants, in order to afford the opportunity for direct interaction with Professor E. Stern, Leader of the Independent External Evaluation team. Previously, the Chairperson had requested interested delegations to address written questions that were subsequently transmitted beforehand to Mr Stern. The question and answer session with Professor Stern having been scheduled in the afternoon, the morning session was devoted to discussing and refining some of the proposals relating to Strategic Directions Four and One and to discuss and adopt the terms of reference for the proposed ad hoc group to be created to support the preparation of the two Plenary Commissions of the Executive Board session, as described in the Annex. The Director-General attended the morning meeting, praised the work already accomplished by the group and offered her support and willingness to follow-up the decisions taken by the Executive Board upon the report of the ad hoc working group. During the afternoon session, the participants had the opportunity to have a free exchange with Professor Stern, who clarified several aspects that, according to the participants, were not sufficiently explicit in the wording of the IEE report, addressed the questions previously submitted in writing by some delegations, and answered questions from the floor as appropriate.

14. Finally, on 21 March 2011, the ad hoc working group held its last meeting, devoted to the adoption of the recommendations to be addressed to the Executive Board. The Chairperson started the meeting by seeking the comments of the observers on the consolidated text before moving to the adoption by the members of the group. The group worked upon a consolidated text prepared – after broad consultations with interested Permanent Delegations, whether members of the group or not – by its Chairperson. This draft was examined paragraph by paragraph and amended as appropriate by the 18 members of the ad hoc working group, until its final adoption.

15. The recommendations that the ad hoc working group addresses to the Executive Board can be found below. The report of the Chairperson of the group, containing a detailed overview of the work of the group and a synthesis of the salient points of its debates, can be found in document 186 EX/INF.16.

16.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE AD HOC WORKING GROUP OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD ON THE REPORT ON THE INDEPENDENT EXTERNAL EVALUATION

Recalling 35 C/Resolution102 and 185 EX/Decision18,

Having examined the Report on the Independent External Evaluation as contained in documents 185 EX/18 and Add.,

The Ad Hoc Working Group recommends:

I. INCREASING UNESCO'S FOCUS

Acknowledging the need for a greater focus of UNESCO's programme, based upon its constitutional mandate, within the scope of its overarching/strategic programme objectives and bearing in mind its five recognized functions,

Recognizing the need to strengthen UNESCO's focus with a view to allocating a critical mass of its budgetary resources to activities permitting the attainment of relevant expected results and clear impact,

Underscoring the need to define ways and procedures to achieve greater focus in all UNESCO Programmes as well as in the field,

The Executive Board decides to:

1. Recommend to the General Conference that it adopt, at its 36th session, a limited number of strategic objectives, taking into account relevant IADGs including Millennium Development Goals, and other UN goals, with which programmes should be associated, in order to maximize impact;
2. Further recommend to the General Conference, at its 36th session, the adoption of a 4-year programming cycle and an appropriate revision mechanism, with a view to increasing stability and coherence and enhancing collaboration of UNESCO with its Member States in implementing the programme and mobilizing extrabudgetary resources, while maintaining a two-year budgetary programme;
3. Propose to the General Conference, at its 36th session, that the new C/5 be informed by a brief, succinct Medium-Term Strategy document (C/4) of a rolling nature over 8-years duration;
4. Develop, in the context of the proposed 4-year programming cycle, a programme and timetable of work for the C/5 and the C/4 preparation and monitoring to be submitted to the 37th session of the General Conference for adoption;
5. Adopt more detailed terms of reference and clear methods of work for its C/4 and C/5 Drafting Group at the time of its establishment;
6. Recommend that the three organs systematically apply clear, precise criteria for introducing new and maintaining existing programmes in the C/5, such as, inter alia:
 - (a) alignment with the overarching/strategic programme objectives;
 - (b) determination of the capacity to deliver and the probability of real impact through the assessment of budgetary and human resources available;
 - (c) delineation and comparative advantage as well as complementarity with the activities of other United Nations partners;
 - (d) formulation of exit strategies and sunset provisions; and
 - (e) periodic assessment of programmes, their implementation rates and exit strategies based on decision-oriented evaluations;

7. Invite the Director-General to ensure that the above-mentioned criteria are also applied to activities financed through extra-budgetary funds, and that such activities are subject to accountability measures;
8. Further invite the Director-General to promote intersectorality in programme development and implementation in order to reinforce synergies;
9. Request the Director-General to conduct a comprehensive review of the consultation process on the C/4 and C/5 with a view to enhancing priority-setting, allowing informed decision-making, and properly reflecting the opinion of Member States. The Director-General is therefore invited to propose a new consultation process to the Executive Board at its 187th session which includes a quantitative approach (i.e. through allocation of points) as well as a qualitative approach (i.e. based on an analysis of evaluation results);
10. Further request the Director-General to ensure that regional consultations on the C/5 are addressed to Member States, including their National Commissions, with no additional cost implications;
11. Call on the Director-General to further strengthen results-based management by:
 - (a) providing information in the C/5 that is in conformity with Recommendation 3 of 33 C/Resolution 92;
 - (b) ensuring that expected results are, where possible, expressed in terms for which the Organization can be held accountable; and
 - (c) reinforcing the current process towards better reports on the execution of the programme – EX/4 documents – in line with 34 C/Resolution 89 and 176 EX/Decision 29, including through the provision of an executive summary in the document.

II. POSITIONING UNESCO CLOSER TO THE FIELD

Acknowledging the need to position UNESCO closer to the field,

The Executive Board decides to:

12. Ensure that the field network architecture is based on the principles referred to in 185 EX/Decision 29 notably in paragraphs 4 and 5, and given the necessary flexibility in its implementation;
13. Request the Director-General to further ensure the effectiveness of the field network architecture by, inter alia, responding to the specific needs and context of each region and sub-region, while bearing in mind efforts to increase UNESCO's focus;
14. Request the Director-General to:
 - (a) ensure policy coherence between country level, sub-regional, regional and global priority-setting, planning, implementation, monitoring and reporting activities while maintaining a coherent results-based approach;
 - (b) define clearly the specific responsibilities, roles and expected outcomes of entities at all organizational levels – including category 1 institutes - as well as the expected synergies between each level;
 - (c) outline clearly the intended reporting line and chain of command in the proposed new field network architecture and update the tables of authority and accountability as required;

- (d) strengthen the coordination and synergy between Headquarters and field offices;
- (e) ensure an ongoing evaluation process of the reform of the field network to identify necessary adjustments if required, in addition to a comprehensive review and evaluation of the proposed new field structure and its impact (X) years after its implementation;
- (f) ensure the provision of the necessary professional skills and competencies (both managerial and programmatic) required to meet the high quality standards necessary for the successful implementation of the strengthened field presence;
- (g) include in the new Human Resources Strategy the necessary provisions and incentives to facilitate an effective and result-oriented implementation of the proposed new field structure;
- (h) provide a detailed estimate of the costs of the proposed new field structure;

III. STRENGTHENING UNESCO'S PARTICIPATION IN THE UN

Acknowledging the need for a stronger UNESCO engagement, better coordination and greater convergence with other UN agencies,

The Executive Board decides to:

15. Work with the Director-General and the General Conference to strengthen UNESCO's participation in the United Nations system and its contribution to system-wide coherence in order to improve UNESCO's effectiveness and positioning as a more significant actor within the UN;
16. Invite the Director-General to further strengthen the effectiveness of UNESCO's participation in joint UN planning and implementation processes at all organizational levels as well as in the harmonization of business practices;
17. Align, in accordance with UN General Assembly Resolution 63/232, UNESCO's programme cycle with the new quadrennial cycle of policy review of operational activities for development within the United Nations System, while bearing in mind efforts to increase UNESCO's focus;
18. Request the Director-General to periodically provide information to the Executive Board on UNESCO's participation in United Nations coordination mechanisms and on inter-agency collaboration;
19. Invite the Director-General to provide, when reporting on the Field Network, a clear definition of the role of the UNESCO liaison offices to the United Nations in New York and Geneva, as well as of the role of the newly established liaison offices with the African Union and the European Union;
20. Further request that the Director-General develop a communication mechanism to provide Member States with systematic updates on the work of the liaison offices in New York and Geneva on issues related to UNESCO's mandate, with a view to enhancing policy coherence;
21. Encourage the Director-General to continue implementing the policies of geographical mobility and of interagency mobility within the UN, as well as developing the lists of competencies required for the posts of UN Resident coordinators.

IV. STRENGTHENING GOVERNANCE

Recalling the distinctive roles and responsibilities of the three organs of the Organization as defined by UNESCO's Constitution, and the need to avoid duplication, disconnect and responsibility drift,

Recognizing the complexity of translating these roles into clear-cut procedures and practices in the daily running of the Organization,

Recalling its overall executive role and the need to avoid impinging on the managerial and implementing role of the Secretariat,

Underscoring article VI.5 of the Constitution which states that "Each State Member of the Organization undertakes to respect the international character of the responsibilities of the Director-General and the staff and not to seek to influence them in the discharge of their duties",

Acknowledging the need to further reform the Organization and strengthen and enhance the coherence of governance within UNESCO with the aim of achieving the following:

- strengthening the role of the General Conference in strategy policy formulation, priority setting and decision making;
- strengthening the participation of Member States in the work of UNESCO, inter alia, through programme delivery, strategic direction for the Secretariat, and enhancement of international cooperation;
- strengthening the monitoring role of the Executive Board in the execution of UNESCO's programmes, including follow-up to the recommendations of all evaluations;
- improving the quality and relevance of decisions by ensuring substantive, evidence-based information for the General Conference and Executive Board discussions;

The Executive Board decides to:

22. Invite the Director-General to develop, in consultation with the Executive Board and the General Conference, an accountability framework for the relations between the Governing Bodies and the Secretariat;
23. Invite the Director-General to submit to it at its 189th session a proposal for the establishment of a pilot monitoring mechanism involving representatives of Members States and the Secretariat to identify differences in expectations, duplications of functions and other "grey areas" in the interaction between the Governing Bodies and the Secretariat, in order to improve their working relationships and enhance the efficiency of the Organization;
24. Invite the Director-General to formally submit to the governing bodies relevant new initiatives within their prerogative prior to taking action;
25. Encourage the Director-General to make better use of the information meetings of the Secretariat by allowing, through consultations with regional groups, for Member States to identify periodically the subjects which they would like to discuss;
26. Request its Chairperson to convene a half-day special session of the Executive Board, when required, for the Director-General to consult the Board under the terms of Rule 59 of its Rules of Procedure;

27. Organize the sessions and set up the agendas for the General Conference with different tasks for each of its biennial sessions, calibrated to the requirements of managing a four-year programming cycle;
28. Propose that the General Conference consider some items, upon recommendation of the Executive Board, without a preliminary debate, proceeding directly to the examination of the Draft Resolution texts, unless a Member State requests that such a debate takes place;
29. Invite the Director-General to present all decisions of the governing bodies of international and intergovernmental programmes and UNESCO International Conventions having financial implications for the C/5 in a single well-structured report;
30. Recommend to the General Conference the merging of its Administrative (ADM) and General Questions, Programme Support and External Relations (PRX) commissions, on an experimental basis;
31. Formalize within the Rules of Procedure of the General Conference the current practice whereby Programme Commissions present to the Plenary Draft Resolutions to amend the C/4 and C/5;
32. Request the translation into an admissibility criterion of the recommendation requesting draft resolutions with financial implications to clearly identify the Main Line of Action (MLA) from which the resources should come;
33. Organize its sessions and set up its agendas with different tasks covering, inter alia, the Major Programmes for each of its sessions consistent with the requirements of managing a four-year programming cycle and develop a biennial programme for its thematic plenary debates;
34. Increase the number of items discussed in joint meetings of the Programme and External Relations (PX) and Finance and Administrative (FA) Commissions in order to avoid duplication and unnecessary repetition of debates;
35. Request the Director-General to propose at the 187th session a quality framework for Executive Board documents to ensure concise, analytical and action-oriented reports taking into account all previous decisions in particular 179 EX/Decision19;
36. Require, notwithstanding the right of Member States to present amendments, that all substantive amendments to draft decisions be provided in writing, and be projected on the screen during debates in the commissions, in order to improve the quality of Executive Board decisions;
37. Ensure that draft decisions relating to the C/4 and the C/5 are agreed in the respective commissions of the Executive Board prior to their consideration by the drafting group, thus ensuring that no new draft decisions are introduced in the meetings of the latter; .
38. Decides to adopt criteria for draft decisions aiming to amend the C/5 during the Executive Board, similar to those of the General Conference;
39. Suspend the work of the Group of Experts on Finance and Administrative Issues from the 188th Session, for an experimental period of 2 years;
40. Establish, at its 188th session, on an experimental basis, an Ad Hoc Group with enhanced participation by all UNESCO Member States to support the preparation of the two Plenary Commissions of the Executive Board session, as described in the Annex;

41. Request that the Director-General submit a comprehensive report on the UNESCO Secretariat accountability framework and its monitoring and evaluation mechanisms;
42. Invite the Director-General to put in place a Change Management Team to ensure coherent implementation of the overall reform of the Organisation.

V. DEVELOPING A PARTNERSHIP STRATEGY

Acknowledging the need for UNESCO to develop a comprehensive policy and accountability framework for strategic partnerships that looks outwards to civil society, expert communities and the private sector,

The Executive Board decides to:

43. Invite the Director-General to develop, in close cooperation with Member States, a draft comprehensive and outward looking UNESCO policy framework for strategic partnerships, to be presented to it at its 187th session for transmission to the General Conference at its 36th session;
44. Encourage the Director-General to take stock of and critically assess UNESCO's experience in working with different categories of partners, in order to base the comprehensive policy framework for strategic partnerships on lessons learnt and examples of good practices;
45. Suggest that the Director-General include in the comprehensive policy framework distinct strategies for each category of partners, within the whole range of UNESCO's programmes, as well as specific measures:
 - (a) to reach out to the range of partners of strategic interest for UNESCO, including IGOs, NGOs, civil society, expert communities, the private sector and other partners;
 - (b) to cover all forms of cooperation, including advisory functions to UNESCO, programme implementation and funding;
 - (c) to identify clear and objective criteria for the selection, approval and renewal of partnerships that, inter alia, permit the Director-General to respond quickly to partnership opportunities;
 - (d) to identify key elements to be included in all partnership agreements, including specific objectives, cooperation modalities, funding and accountability arrangements, duration and criteria for periodic evaluation of the cooperation and its impact;
 - (e) To reach a better balance in partnerships from different regions, in particular from the South;
46. Consider reviewing the mandate and the working methods of the NGO committee to make its work more focused;
47. Invite the Director-General, in the interest of full transparency, to make available on the internet updated information on all partnerships, and to report biennially to the Executive Board on activities under the comprehensive policy framework for strategic partnerships, including UNESCO funding to/from partners, an assessment of the outcome and impact of partnerships, the challenges identified, and the corrective measures taken.
48. Request the Director-General to provide, in the course of the next biennium, a full overview of all UNESCO networks and the initiatives undertaken to strengthen the overall management of UNESCO's networks, with a view to optimizing the impact and value of the latter.

49. Ensure that the future Human Resources Strategy takes into account, both in recruitment criteria and in training provisions for existing staff, the specific competencies required to interact professionally with the diversity of UNESCO partners and to successfully manage UNESCO networks.
50. Underline the important and unique role of National Commissions in liaising with national partners and civil society;
51. Call upon the Director-General to ensure that relations between the Secretariat and National Commissions are conducted in accordance with Article 7 of the Constitution.

ANNEX

PARAMETERS FOR AN AD HOC GROUP OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

I. MANDATE

1. The final mandate of the Ad Hoc Group, established under Article 17 of the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board, will be determined by the Executive Board at its 188th session. Ideally, the mandate would be to examine a limited number of items (determined well in advance through consultations between the Chairpersons of the Executive Board, the PX and the FA Commissions and the Ad hoc Group) so as to assist in the preparation of Executive Board discussions.
2. The items to be considered could include, inter alia, following examination where appropriate of information and documentation supplied by the Secretariat, the following:
 - examination of information provided by the Director General on the execution of the Programme and related budget issues (contained in documents EX/4), including intersectoral and extrabudgetary activities, as well as evaluations and their policy recommendations;
 - preparation for and follow-up, as required, of major conferences and world reports;
 - analysis of challenges and recommendations, as required, on how to address them through the ongoing programme implementation, and in the planning of the future programme cycle;
 - preparation of substantive input to the draft Executive Board Report to the General Conference on the implementation of the C/5 (Document C/9).

II. WORKING METHODS

3. The Ad Hoc Group comprises 18 Board Members (3 from each electoral group) with enhanced participation by all UNESCO Member States.
4. The dates of the meetings of the Ad Hoc Group are determined to ensure that the results of its work are transmitted to members of the Executive Board at least [10] working days before the opening of the session.
5. The duration of the Ad Hoc Group's meetings is determined by the Board, taking into account the general organization of its work and the related budgetary allocations.
6. The Ad Hoc Group works in English and French.
7. The Member States of the Executive Board designated as members of the Group, who do not have a permanent Delegation in France, may request financial assistance to facilitate their participation in the work of the group.
8. Concerning questions within its competence, the Ad Hoc Group can invite representatives of international organizations and relevant official partners, as well as qualified persons.



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INDEPENDENT EXTERNAL EVALUATION (IEE) OF UNESCO

PART II

**REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL ON THE FOLLOW-UP
WITH RESPECT TO OPERATIONAL ASPECTS OF THE IEE REPORT**

SUMMARY

Pursuant to 185 EX/Decisions 18 and 19 and 184 EX/Decision 5 (I), the Director-General presents herein a report on the proposed operational actions to be taken in response to the recommendations of the Independent External Evaluation of UNESCO.

For ease of reference, the proposed actions of the ad hoc working group and the proposed actions of the Director-General are provided in Annex II in a consolidated format.

Action expected of the Executive Board: draft decision paragraph 12.

INTRODUCTION

1. At its 182nd session, the Executive Board recommended (182 EX/Decision 24) to the General Conference that a forward-looking, independent evaluation be carried out, focused on the external challenges UNESCO faces in the twenty-first century. The General Conference adopted the recommendation (35 C/Resolution 102) at its 35th session thus initiating the Independent External Evaluation of UNESCO (IEE).

2. The final report of the IEE (185 EX/18) was presented to the 185th session of the Executive Board. The Executive Board decided to establish an ad hoc working group of Executive Board members, open to all Permanent Delegations, to examine the report of the IEE and to develop proposals concerning its recommendations for submission to the 186th session of the Executive Board. The ad hoc working group report is contained in document 186 EX/17 Part I. In the same decision, the Executive Board also invited the Director-General to report at the 186th session on the follow-up by the Secretariat with respect to the operational aspects of the report on the IEE.

3. The purpose of this report is twofold: (i) to take stock of ongoing efforts and actions already taken by the Director-General as part of the overall reform of UNESCO which are relevant to the IEE recommendations, and (ii) to present the Director-General's response to the IEE recommendations, notably her proposed plan of action to be implemented in sync with the recommendations of the ad hoc working group of the Executive Board.

KEY MESSAGES FROM THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL

- **Strongly supports reform**, especially for improving the strategic focus and relevance of the Organization and **commits the Secretariat** to engage in the implementation of the reform plan;
- Commits to enhance a **constructive collaboration with Governing Bodies** and regular consultations with Member States on the work of UNESCO;
- Realizes the current C/5 document and the forthcoming document 36 C/5 delineate a work programme for a transitional period and acknowledges the need for **further prioritization in consultation with Member States**;
- Encourages consultation with Member States to **implement the reform of the field network**, recognizing that **clear political will and allocation of adequate resources** are important for translating the field reform proposals into reality;
- Will do the utmost to ensure the **stronger positioning of UNESCO within the United Nations system**;
- Acknowledges the need for a **comprehensive partnership strategy** that factors in the strong potential of **leveraging different types of partnerships**;
- **Commits to full transparency and accountability** of the Secretariat to all its stakeholders and especially to the Governing Bodies;
- **Subscribes to the recommendations of the ad hoc working group** and undertakes to implement those falling under the purview of the Secretariat after endorsement by the Governing Bodies.

ONGOING EFFORTS AND ACTIONS ALREADY TAKEN TO REFORM UNESCO

4. On taking up her position, the Director-General was clear in her intention to reform the Organization in order to make it more relevant to the needs and priorities of Members States and to enhance impact. This vision entailed, *inter alia*, streamlining and making organizational structures more responsive and less costly and bureaucratic and doing more for less, ensuring full transparency, introducing new working methods, and bringing UNESCO closer to the field. To achieve these aims the Director-General's reform measures involved a substantial redesign of organizational structures, streamlined business processes and greater delegation of authority, so as to clarify accountabilities, raise efficiency in the use of staff resources, reduce overheads and facilitate interdisciplinary team work, while encouraging a culture of calculated risk-taking and learning.

5. Consequently, notwithstanding the findings of the IEE a number of initiatives and measures have already been taken by the Director-General to advance reform within UNESCO. These include:

- Changes in management practices and organizational design, in particular:
 - the merger of the Bureau of the Budget with the Bureau of the Comptroller, under a newly created Bureau of Financial Management (BFM) to be headed by a Chief Financial Officer, to streamline operations, to strengthen control, to better support field operations, and to substantially reduce senior posts for redeployment to programmes;
 - the strengthening of the Bureau of Strategic Planning by placing extrabudgetary resources mobilization and budget planning under its authority, thereby creating seamless planning of programmes and resources;
 - the restructuring of the Education Sector to strengthen management for results and improve programme delivery; the restructuring of the other sectors is near complete and will be announced following the Director-General's consultation with the Executive Board;
 - the merger of External Relations and Cooperation and the Bureau of Public Information to form a new External Relations and Public Information Sector to improve our communication and visibility, to strengthen the cooperation with Member States and National Commissions, to reinforce partnership with non-governmental actors, reduce top heavy management and cut costs;
 - the redeployment of efficiency gains stemming from reforming management practices and organizational design to reinforce priority programmes, and the commitment to engage in a continuous improvement programme so as to maximize the potential of scarce resources by reallocating funds to priority programmes under Major Programmes (MPs) in Part II of the budget, particularly through savings made in other parts of the budget and through increasing the proportion of operational programme funds compared with those for staff costs;
 - the placement of the Gender Equality division under the direct authority of the Director-General to reinforce Gender Equality as a global priority;
 - the institutionalization of regular thematic and sectoral information meetings with Permanent Delegates and Observers to increase transparency of operations and to ensure regular information exchange with Member States;
 - the re-establishment of the Forum of Administrative Officers (AOs) to enhance information sharing and to encourage a more regular dialogue among AOs, as well as between AOs and Corporate Services, in particular BFM.

- The establishment of a Senior Management Team (SMT) – supported by two Senior Management Committees: the Programme Management Committee (PMC) and the Corporate Services Committee (CSC) – to provide substantive coordination and to replace the College of Assistant Directors-General, the Directorate and numerous other coordination mechanisms.
- The Director-General's proposed reform of UNESCO's field office network, the principles of which were endorsed by the 185th session of the Executive Board and which will lead to the creation of adaptive, multisectoral regional offices over time.
- The development of a new human resources strategy, with emphasis on: talent management, developing staff capacity and creating an enabling work environment.
- The development and implementation of a new ethics policy, including a "whistle-blower" protection system and anti-retaliation measures, and a financial disclosure programme to be fully implemented by the end of 2011.
- The establishment of two new liaison offices in Addis Ababa and Brussels to reinforce cooperation with the African Union and the European Union, and the strengthening of the New York and Geneva Liaison offices to support a stronger positioning within the United Nations.
- The adoption of International Public Sector Accounting Standards, an initiative that was in the making for some time. The adoption of IPSAS is accompanied by strengthened internal control/risk management framework, written attestation by ADGs and Directors on the effectiveness of the control environment within their areas of responsibilities and the Director-General's statement on Internal Control as part of the audited financial statements.
- The consolidation of all Information Technology strategy decisions under a new function of Chief Information Officer to ensure a more business-oriented and user-friendly IT function and to develop and implement integrated knowledge management solutions.
- The Director-General's proposal to halve the current number of intersectoral platforms from 12 to 6, starting with document 36 C/5, and to allocate 10% of each MP activity budget to joint initiatives under the platforms, in order to enhance both programme focus and intersectoral work.

6. The actions taken so far are stimulating the Secretariat and increasingly positive feedback is being received from Member States, staff and stakeholders alike. The momentum of change is gathering pace and speed. While the net effect of these actions will take time to bear fruit, they are leading in the right direction. Structures are getting nimbler, bureaucratic behaviours are constantly being challenged, some of the changes are leading to efficiency gains and lateral thinking in dealing with global issues is taking root.

NEXT STEPS – ACTION PLAN TO IMPLEMENT THE IEE RECOMMENDATIONS

7. As indicated above, the recommendations of the IEE were not entirely surprising, as UNESCO was already trying to address some of the issues identified, but they were far-reaching in their implications. While a number of positive steps have already been taken, further reforms are needed to consolidate these gains and advance change within UNESCO. Reforming UNESCO is a shared responsibility between the Governing Bodies and the Secretariat and will be a long-term process requiring a sustained and coordinated set of actions, as illustrated in the timetable below:



8. The combined effects of the Director-General's action plan and the ad hoc working group's recommendations will deepen the change process within the Organization and lead to a new, re-invigorated UNESCO that will continue to play a leading role in the international cooperation agenda in its fields of competence.

9. Consistent with the recommendations of the ad-hoc working group of Member States, the Director-General will lead the change management process using the SMT as its main entry point. She has decided to operationalize the change management efforts through the two arms of SMT, the Programme Management Committee and the Corporate Services Committee to take care of day-to-day implementation and tasked the Deputy Director-General to oversee it. The Deputy Director-General, supported by ADGs as necessary, will continue to interface with Member States electoral groups on reform issues, as and when necessary.

10. The Action Plan presented in Annex I contains the Director-General's response to the recommendations of the IEE and includes in particular a set of planned actions in follow up to the operational aspects of the IEE report. These proposals are consonant with the conclusions and recommendations of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Executive Board and, more importantly, are in synergy with the Working Group's own proposed actions in response to the IEE. The timeframe for implementing each of the actions proposed by the Director-General is not yet reflected, as the Executive Board's debate and decision on the entirety of proposals submitted to its consideration under this agenda item should provide greater clarity on the most efficient and effective way to sequence the proposed actions.

11. For ease of reference, Annex II presents, in abbreviated format, both the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Executive Board and the operational follow-up actions proposed by the Director-General.

Proposed action by the Executive Board

12. The Executive Board may wish to adopt a decision along the following lines:

The Executive Board,

1. Recalling 184 EX/Decision 5 (I) and 185 EX/Decisions 18 and 19,
2. Having examined document 186 EX/17,
3. Endorses the Director-General's action plan with respect to the operational aspects of the independent external evaluation (IEE) report;
4. Requests the Director-General to submit a report to it at its 189th session on progress in the implementation of the planned actions contained in document 186 EX/17 Part II.

FOLLOW-UP TO THE INDEPENDENT EXTERNAL EVALUATION OF UNESCO

Strategic Direction One: Increasing UNESCO's focus

Recommendation 1: UNESCO needs to further focus its efforts to address challenges consistent with its mandate for international cooperation (“peace”) and development (“common welfare”). Focusing should ensure that all activities contribute to UNESCO’s priorities, differentiating between more and less strategically important programmes.

Greater focus will require:

- (a) the selection of a limited number of cross-cutting strategic objectives with which all programmes should be aligned;
- (b) regular assessment of existing and planned programmes in terms of their relevance, strengths and potential for cross-programme synergies;
- (c) advanced consultation with United Nations partners to minimize duplication;
- (d) using “programme models” and “theories of change” that demonstrate intended connections between activities and their contribution over time to programme and agency objectives;
- (e) administrative, budgetary, planning and human resources systems that support coherence, focus and synergy;
- (f) exit strategies for some programmes to support the continuation of activities where possible through their transfer to other parts of the UNESCO “community” or even other host bodies.

Recommendation 2: In the medium-term, progressive refocusing and routine programme review will also allow a needed reassessment of sector and division boundaries.

Director-General's comments:

Sharpening UNESCO's strategic focus is at the core of the Director-General's reform effort. It is a prerequisite to improving UNESCO's relevance to Member States and to enhancing the Organization's results, output and outcome leading to impact. Increasing UNESCO's focus is clearly a joint responsibility of the Governing Bodies and the Director-General. In this regard, the Director-General embraces the proposals made by the ad hoc working group and she is committed to engaging in a constructive collaboration with the Governing Bodies on this issue.

While the draft 36 C/5 is a step in the right direction, the Director-General recognizes the challenge of implementing sweeping programmatic and managerial changes in the short-term. It is therefore essential that the next Medium-Term Strategy concentrate on a limited number of strategic objectives and the Director-General is committed to working collaboratively with the Governing Bodies on their identification.

Operational Actions Planned	Timeframe
(a) <i>the selection of a limited number of cross-cutting strategic objectives with which all programmes should be aligned;</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the number of proposed intersectoral platforms in draft document 36 C/5 down to six, including three major thematic areas and refine substantively the intersectoral platform as part of crafting the next Medium-Term Strategy. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reinforce UNESCO's programmatic commitment to the two global priorities (Africa and Gender Equality) as cross-cutting concerns in the draft document 36 C/5 and further strengthened in subsequent C/5 documents. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design the next C/4 by setting out the broad parameters of UNESCO's work, including its key functions, modalities of work, and cross-cutting objectives. Most importantly, the next C/4 document will contain fewer strategic programme objectives and expected outcomes in comparison to the current document 34 C/4. 	
(b) <i>regular assessment of existing and planned programmes in terms of their relevance, strengths and potential for cross-programme synergies;</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Redesign the C/5 consultation process to facilitate prioritization based on a scoring system to be defined. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce systematic and periodic programme reviews building on evaluation findings to inform strategic direction. This includes the development of transparent and objective criteria to guide programme reviews. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce a system of project/programme appraisal before new projects are introduced. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and closely monitor underperforming programmes. Once a year, submit proposals to the Executive Board of programmes to be discontinued or re-oriented, as necessary with adequate level of analytical (both quantitative and qualitative) information. 	
(c) <i>advanced consultation with United Nations partners to minimize duplication;</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review all partnership agreements with United Nations organizations and develop new such agreements in order to strengthen mutual cooperation and agree to a better distribution of tasks in key areas. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in consultations with all United Nations partners at field level in the context of Common Country Assessments (CCA)/UNDAF processes. 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clarify a strategic division of labour among the five EFA convenors through the EFA coordination mechanism and the Inter-Agency Task Force which will guide the respective agencies' work at country level and within the CCA/UNDAF processes. 	
<p>(d) <i>using “programme models” and “theories of change” that demonstrate intended connections between activities and their contribution over time to programme and agency objectives;</i></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce the development of programme models in UNESCO's regular programme and extrabudgetary programming guidelines. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct systematic review and evaluation of programmes over the period of the Medium-Term Strategy making use of theory of change approaches, where appropriate, making the link between activities, outputs, results and impacts. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance the use of results-based management by demonstrating and reporting on outcomes by programmes. 	
<p>(e) <i>administrative, budgetary, planning and human resources systems that support coherence, focus and synergy;</i></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a new human resources strategy. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Move towards the use of results based budgeting (RBB) and required costing methodologies to strengthen RBM with effect from document 37 C/5 and over time prepare for accruals-based budgeting in concert with the United Nations system. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce an integrated knowledge management systems based on modern information technology (IT) systems led by a newly recruited Chief Information Officer. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to streamline financial management systems, policies and processes. 	
<p>(f) <i>exit strategies for some programmes to support the continuation of activities where possible through their transfer to other parts of the UNESCO “community” or even other host bodies.</i></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formulate criteria to be applied for introducing new programmes and maintaining existing programmes. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop exit strategies, including sunset clauses, with criteria for the termination of programmes/projects. 	

Strategic Direction Two: Positioning UNESCO closer to the field

Recommendation 3: UNESCO should position itself closer to country needs, resources and partners, in order to ensure its relevance, effectiveness and impact. To this end UNESCO should aim to become less Headquarters-oriented with a more mobile and deconcentrated workforce able to move flexibly between the field and Headquarters.

This can be achieved through:

- (a) a smaller but stronger network of multidisciplinary bureaux at subregional level with devolved powers;
- (b) taking advantage of NRA status while also deploying temporary in-country teams and working closely with United Nations partners;
- (c) priority-setting at regional, subregional and country levels involving Member States, United Nations and other partners;
- (d) delivering capacity-building and normative activities through modalities that strengthen international cooperation networks and solidarity;
- (e) encouraging programmes to relocate elements of their Headquarters-based work to the field, especially to regional centres in developing/emerging countries;
- (f) human resources policies that support career planning and mobility.

Director-General's comments:

UNESCO will need to continue to position itself closer to Member States to ensure the relevance of its work and better impact. The new UNESCO field network architecture was proposed and endorsed (in principle) at the last Executive Board, setting out the necessary requirements for its strengthening. The proposed structure provides for (i) a reinforced multisectoral presence aligned with the regional United Nations hubs and the geographical coverage of regional integration organizations and (ii) a flexible country presence adapted to the needs of Member States. The challenge ahead is to implement the reform of the field network while making sure the necessary policies and support mechanisms are in place. The development of a human resources management strategy that promotes geographic mobility and includes career planning services will be supportive for the proper functioning of our new field network.

Operational Actions Planned	Timeframe
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) <i>a smaller but stronger network of multidisciplinary bureaux at regional level with devolved responsibilities, authority and accountability;</i> (b) <i>taking advantage of NRA status while also deploying temporary in-country teams and working closely with United Nations partners;</i> 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a detailed phased implementation plan for the field reform to include: the identification of multi-sectoral regional offices, how they will be aligned with existing regional United Nations hubs and regional integration organizations. With respect to the country level, the implementation plan will include flexible models/approaches that will assist the Organization's participation in UNCT activities, also in countries where it has Non-Resident Agency (NRA) status. 	

<p>(c) <i>priority-setting at regional, subregional and country levels involving Member States, United Nations and other partners;</i></p> <p>(d) <i>delivering capacity-building and normative activities through modalities that strengthen international cooperation networks and solidarity;</i></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop results-based strategies for all offices to ensure field alignment with the strategic and programmatic directions in the C/4 and C/5. The multisectoral regional offices will identify the region-specific needs and priorities and be responsible for developing region-specific delivery strategies that will define both the programme direction and the delivery mode to be pursued in their respective regions. They will be given freedom to balance the normative and the operational work in consideration of their regions' specific needs and priorities. In the implementation of the reform, there will be a series of consultations to be conducted with both the Member States and the concerned field and the Headquarters staff to reflect their views and concerns. 	
<p>(e) <i>encouraging programmes to relocate elements of their Headquarters-based work to the field, especially to regional centres in developing/emerging countries;</i></p> <p>(f) <i>human resources policies that support career planning and mobility.</i></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that the phased implementation plan over the coming two biennia includes the decentralization of authority that needs to be enforced from the Headquarters to the field, including staff and post deployment as well as programme elements that would need to be devolved to the field. The plan will also include a detailed policy as to how to handle the staff movements that will be necessitated by the reform. 	
<p>Recommendation 4: UNESCO needs to better utilize skills and expertise that are nowadays available globally. This is especially important in emerging economies which can assist UNESCO in strengthening South-South, South-North and South-North-South cooperation. This would be facilitated both by improved partnership capabilities and by more flexible staff contracts and procurement procedures.</p>	
<p>Director-General's comments:</p> <p>The Director-General agrees that there are opportunities to better utilize skills and expertise available globally and that opportunities exist for global cooperation. By developing a new strategy for UNESCO's programme delivery in middle-income countries (MICs) the Organization will enhance its facilitating of South-South cooperation and triangular South-South-North cooperation.</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">Operational Actions Planned</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Timeframe</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance UNESCO's consultant roster to leverage the skills of geographically under-represented areas. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore how the expertise and capacity available in category 1 and 2 institutes and centres can be better used. 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build upon experiences gained under the South-South Coordination fund and consolidate the use of South-South and South-South-North modalities in both regular programme and extrabudgetary activities. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen cooperation with the UNDP South-South coordination fund. 	
<p>Recommendation 5: Continued investment in high-quality independent evaluation will be required to demonstrate impact. This could be further strengthened by devolving and supporting self-evaluation functions to field offices.</p>	
<p>Director-General's comments:</p> <p>The Director-General has relied heavily on a strong oversight mechanism which is in place today to support her in the ongoing reform and restructuring efforts. The Director-General considers evaluations as an essential component to building a learning organization and a strong sense of accountability for results. Evaluations conducted by the Internal Oversight Service consist of a mixture of evaluations conducted with in-house expertise and the use of external evaluators. The Director-General also recognizes the need to further enhance the evaluation competencies of field offices. This is addressed in the proposed reform of the field network which provides for the creation of a programme evaluation and knowledge management function in the multisectoral regional offices.</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">Operational Actions Planned</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Timeframe</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the new multisectoral regional field structure, a number of positions have been set aside to handle issues related to evaluation and monitoring as well as information and knowledge management issues. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include in the IOS medium-term work plan, the conduct of impact evaluations of programmes on a rotational cycle to ensure full coverage over the period of the new Medium-Term Strategy. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote the use of self-evaluation and make self-evaluation an integral component of programme management. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revise UNESCO's evaluation policy to make self-evaluation completion reports a requirement for all projects. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design a self-evaluation training programme along with the necessary tools and guidance materials. The training will be delivered in parallel with the existing results-based management training programme. 	

Strategic Direction Three: Strengthening participation in the United Nations

Recommendation 6: Intensifying engagement with United Nations Headquarters and with United Nations partners in New York and in the field is needed to ensure that UNESCO meets the highest international agency standards and continues to help shape its own formative context together with other specialized agencies.

Specific ways of strengthening UNESCO's involvement in the United Nations would include:

- (a) improved dialogue with United Nations partners when formulating programmes and at all programming stages to lessen competition and increase the likelihood of synergies;
- (b) enhancing the role of the New York Office and encouraging greater programme staff involvement in United Nations relationships;
- (c) active support from Member States for strengthened United Nations partnerships by maximizing policy coherence between country representation in capitals, Paris and New York;
- (d) strategic dialogue with United Nations Headquarters to help identify scope for UNESCO to add value to the United Nations system consistent with its intellectual networking capacities and mandate.

Director-General's comments:

UNESCO is strongly committed to United Nations reform and to enhancing its participation, engagement and visibility within the United Nations at global, regional and country levels. This is very high on the Director-General's agenda, as evidenced in: UNESCO's engagement through the Chief Executives Board (CEB), the United Nations Development Group (UNDG), High-Level Committee on Programmes (HLCP) and the High-level Committee on Management (HLCM); UNESCO's role as chair of the United Nations Group on the Information Society (UNGIS); and participation in a number of post-conflict/post-disaster cases through United Nations Flash Appeals; the signature of recent Memoranda of Understanding with several United Nations organizations; recent efforts to enhance UNESCO's EFA convening role and the role of the EFA High-Level Group; preparation of the ECOSOC Annual Ministerial Review on education; and contributions to the culture of peace and non-violence and the dialogue among cultures.

The strengthening of the liaison offices is intended to reinforce our presence and participation with the United Nations, African Union and the European Union. UNESCO faces challenges due to its lack of presence in all Member States. Steps are being taken to address this challenge through the proposed field network structure which, *inter alia*, will bring the Organization closer to the regional integration organizations.

Operational Actions Planned	Timeframe
(a) <i>improved dialogue with United Nations partners when formulating programmes and at all programming stages to lessen competition and increase the likelihood of synergies;</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate actively in all UNDAF exercises. 	
(b) <i>enhancing the role of the New York Office and encouraging greater programme staff involvement in United Nations relationships;</i>	

(c) <i>active support from Member States for strengthened United Nations partnerships by maximizing policy coherence between country representation in capitals, Paris and New York;</i>	
(d) <i>strategic dialogue with United Nations Headquarters to help identify scope for UNESCO to add value to the United Nations system consistent with its intellectual networking capacities and mandate.</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop strategic mission documents for all liaison offices that explain their key priorities, objectives, role and function. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop fundraising opportunities for all liaison offices. 	
<p>Recommendation 7: There are other prerequisites for strengthening UNESCO's participation in the United Nations system that will follow from general moves to reposition UNESCO. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) enhanced partnering capacities; (b) a willingness to strengthen and devolve power to field and liaison offices accompanied by suitable accountability and oversight mechanisms; (c) improved coordination between administrative departments and sectors in Headquarters; (d) reformed human resources policies and management training. 	
<p>Director-General's comments:</p> <p>The comments of the Director-General under other recommendations point to the necessity for UNESCO to better reposition itself in the field, in particular vis-à-vis our partners in the United Nations system. The Director-General's proposal for strengthening the field network addresses many of the prerequisites set out in this recommendation, including giving more authority and decision-making power to the field while holding them accountable for results through the development of an accountability framework.</p>	
Operational Actions Planned	Timeframe
(a) <i>Enhanced partnering capacities;</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addressed through the development of the new human resources strategy. 	
(b) <i>willingness to strengthen and devolve power to field and liaison offices accompanied by suitable accountability and oversight mechanisms;</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement the Director-General's proposal for field network reform which will include the development of an accountability framework. 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to deliver field network office audits and evaluations aimed at assessing the effectiveness of existing control frameworks and holding offices accountable for expected results and report back regularly to the Governing Bodies on the key findings and progress made in addressing weaknesses. 	
<p>(c) <i>improved coordination between administrative departments and sectors in Headquarters;</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Already addressed through the creation of the Senior Management Committees – Senior Management Team, Programme Management Committee, Corporate Services Committee – as the central node to improve coordination on all issues at Headquarters. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creation of the “regional support platform” called for in the Director-General’s proposal to reform the field network will provide offices, added capacities and support in administration, finance, IT and human resources which will enhance the effectiveness of field – Headquarters coordination. 	
<p>(d) <i>reformed human resources policies and management training;</i></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a new human resources strategy. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offer training opportunities to assist UNESCO staff to join the corps of United Nations Resident Coordinators and Resident Representatives. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training of field and Headquarters staff in United Nations reform, UNDG and UNDAF issues and practices. 	

Strategic Direction Four: strengthening governance

Recommendation 8: There should be a clearer division of labour between UNESCO’s three organs, refocusing each on their distinctive roles. Addressing weaknesses in present governance arrangements will require separate and joint initiative by the Governing Bodies and the Secretariat.

Governing Bodies should consider:

- (a) improving General Conference and Executive Board access to independent expertise and scientific advice when formulating policies and main programmatic directions, for example through the use of independent panels of advisers;
- (b) developing an “accountability framework” that clarifies and delimits expectations of the Secretariat;
- (c) considering the advantage of specialized subcommittees (sectoral or priority-focused) to reduce Executive Board workload;
- (d) reviewing how Member State representation can be aligned with UNESCO’s specialized agency status.

Director-General's comments:

The Director-General is fully committed to providing all possible Secretariat support and advice in the Member States' quest for a meaningful response to the recommendations contained herein, realizing that any landmark process of change will involve dialogue, at times probably over a more extended period, among the three organs to achieve desired objectives. The process of interaction so far established among the three organs, both during the time of elaboration of the independent external evaluation and the discussion of its findings at the 185th session of the Executive Board, as well as more recently in the work of the Ad Hoc Working Group set up by the Board on the follow-up to the IEE, has demonstrated the value of such a clear, above board, transparent and comprehensive dialogue.

The Director-General strongly believes that reform and improvement of governance is part and parcel of the overall rationalization of the Organization's functions and that effective, lean, strong and rational governance which assigns roles and responsibilities in a clear and unambiguous manner is crucial for UNESCO's overall standing as an institution facing squarely the challenges of the twenty-first century. In this regard, she welcomes the open debates that took place during the sessions, the quest by Member States to search for transformational change in governance mechanisms and methods of work and the resultant proposals of the ad hoc working group.

Operational Actions Planned	Timeframe
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further deliberations of the recommendation of the ad hoc working group will take place during the 186th session of the Executive Board. 	

Recommendation 9: The Secretariat should consider:

- (a) putting in place a permanent programme review process linked with independent evaluation;
- (b) developing new ways of reporting results that demonstrate high-level outcomes and impacts linked with coherent programmes;
- (c) strengthening priority-setting and dialogue to be more inclusive of civil society and the private sector.

Director-General's comments:

The Director-General fully supports this recommendation and will put in place stronger programme monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. Furthermore, programme activities and results will need to be reported more transparently and, as discussed under recommendation 1, a redesigned consultation process on programme priorities will be put in place. In this regard, recommendations emerging from other Strategic Directions will serve a useful purpose, if carried through, notably the proposals relating to clearer and more specific priority-setting guidance from Member States for the preparation of future C/4 and C/5 documents, and others seeking a lightening of the workload of the Governing Bodies and a shortening of their duration through transparent prior information exchange on certain standing issues.

Operational Actions Planned	Timeframe
(a) <i>putting in place a permanent programme review process linked with independent evaluation;</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme ADGs will be responsible for systematic and periodic programme reviews, building on evaluation findings to inform strategic direction. • Design the evaluation cycle to cover programmes over the period of the Medium-Term Strategy. 	
(b) <i>developing new ways of reporting results that demonstrate high-level outcomes and impacts linked with coherent programmes;</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a fuller assessment for the C/3, using the results of evaluations and also consulting beneficiaries. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to assist Member States in their preparation of the Executive Board's report to the General Conference on implementation. 	
(c) <i>strengthening priority-setting and dialogue to be more inclusive of civil society and the private sector.</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation process to be "inclusive" (civil society and others) to help focus priorities (the modalities and mechanisms for inclusion of non-governmental actors at all levels of the elaboration and implementation of UNESCO's programme are developed in the Strategic Direction 5 under recommendations 11 to 13). 	
<p>Recommendation 10: Governing Bodies and the Secretariat should together consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) enactment of a four-year integrated planning and programming cycle, as presently advocated across the United Nations which would make preparing C/5 documents more efficient and less burdensome; (b) agreeing on information required for governance oversight; (c) continuing the integration of extrabudgetary resources into governance oversight; (d) developing strategies for network governance of the wider UNESCO community. 	
<p>Director-General's comments:</p> <p>The ad hoc working group of the Executive Board has reached consensus on a four-year planning cycle which is supported by the Secretariat who will take measures, once approved, to make it operational. This will need to go hand in hand with proper programme monitoring and evaluation mechanisms that are transparent to the Governing Bodies. The availability of programme information by online access of SISTER is an important step.</p> <p>The Director-General welcomes the findings of the IEE with respect to the strength of UNESCO's wider network. They clearly represent one of the strengths of the Organization.</p>	

Operational Actions Planned	Timeframe
(a) <i>enactment of a four-year integrated planning and programming cycle, as presently advocated across the United Nations which would make preparing C/5 documents more efficient and less burdensome;</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit a proposal for adopting a four-year cycle to the 36th session of the General Conference. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit a proposal for the planning of the content of the sessions of both Governing Bodies and their likely variations in length in function of the timing within the new cycle. 	
(b) <i>agreeing on information required for governance oversight;</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss and agree upon the information required to strengthen governance oversight within the context of the proposed establishment of a pilot monitoring mechanism involving representatives of Member States and the Secretariat. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Streamline and make transparent information on programmes, activities and performance available to Governing Bodies and the Secretariat, including through SISTER. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the preparation of documentation for Governing Bodies to make it more concise and strategic with analytical information of the right quality and quantity. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek a 50% reduction in documentation, with the attendant economies to be directed towards programme activities. To this end, design a new format for Governing Body documentation. 	
(c) <i>continuing the integration of extrabudgetary resources into governance oversight;</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that extrabudgetary resources fall under the same governance arrangements as regular programme resources and consistent with the Strategic Objectives of the Organization. 	
(d) <i>developing strategies for network governance of the wider UNESCO community.</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposed actions are provided under recommendations 11 and 12. 	

STRATEGIC DIRECTION FIVE: DEVELOPING A PARTNERSHIP STRATEGY

Recommendation 11: UNESCO needs to develop a comprehensive strategy for partnership that looks outwards to civil society, expert communities and the private sector to ensure its relevance, advance its values and implement its programmes. This becomes even more important if UNESCO is to realize its networking potential.

Such a strategy should aim to support:

- (a) civil society and other partners contributing to defining UNESCO's goals rather than being regarded solely as vehicles for programme delivery;
- (b) making UNESCO more accessible and less bureaucratic, especially important for NGOs;
- (c) renewing networks (e.g. between institutes, programmes, universities and centres of excellence) that can improve UNESCO's links with scientists, researchers and communities of practice;
- (d) a linked strategy for the "private sector" that recognizes and accommodates the diversity of companies, foundations, innovative financing vehicles and public-private partnerships.

Recommendation 12: Partnerships evolve over time and require appropriate structures and processes. Flexible procedures, creating opportunities for ongoing dialogue and partnership "styles of working" would also facilitate partnership formation and strengthening.

Director-General's comments:

One of UNESCO's key comparative advantages is its vast network of partners. This network enables the Organization to mobilize diverse actors in support of UNESCO's values and principles, to access specialized knowledge, to implement programmes, to share experience and good practices, and to further international cooperation in our mandated areas of work. However, UNESCO must do more to strengthen existing partnerships and build new ones so as to make the Organization more relevant and to further enhance our impact.

In this regard, the Director-General endorses the proposals of the ad hoc working group to take stock of our existing partnerships, to develop an overall policy framework for strategic partnerships, including distinct strategies for each category of partners. To this end, the Director-General has charged the Program Management Committee under the Chairmanship of the Deputy Director-General to start crafting appropriate and comprehensive partnership strategies consistent with the recommendation of the ad hoc working group.

Operational Actions Planned	Timeframe
(a) <i>civil society and other partners contributing to defining UNESCO's goals rather than being regarded solely as vehicles for programme delivery;</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elaborate a comprehensive policy framework for strategic partnerships with IGOs, civil society, NGOs, Goodwill Ambassadors, experts, local authorities, the private sector, etc. in order to ensure the relevance of its action, to reach its objectives and make them more visible. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consult widely on the draft C/5 documents through a specific questionnaire, specific meetings and other appropriate mechanisms, NGOs and non-governmental organization partners. 	

<p>(b) <i>making UNESCO more accessible and less bureaucratic, especially important for NGOs.</i></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elaborate a new statutory framework of cooperation, less bureaucratic, more open and better adapted to new trends, needs and effective sectoral cooperation including a reform of the liaison and representation mechanisms. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider opening up the Governing Bodies to NGOs and other non-governmental partners' inputs and representation. The Partners Forum might be instituted as an integral part of the General Conference and the Committee on NGOs of the Executive Board opened to other civil society actors. 	
<p>(c) <i>renewing networks (e.g. between institutes, programmes, universities and centres of excellence) that can improve UNESCO's links with scientists, researchers and communities of practice;</i></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop strategies with sunset clauses for phasing out from partnership with networks where results no longer meet priority expectations or where networks are not fulfilling their role per se. 	
<p>(d) <i>a linked strategy for the "private sector" that recognizes and accommodates the diversity of companies, foundations, innovative financing vehicles and public-private partnerships anchored in the values of UNESCO.</i></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addressed within the proposal to develop an overall policy framework in (a) above. 	
<p>Recommendation 13: Given the importance of National Commissions connecting UNESCO with civil society, their role needs to be reviewed and revitalized, ideally through capacity-building initiatives, South-South as well as North-South.</p>	
<p>Director-General's comments: The Director-General has remarked on numerous past occasions that National Commissions are an integral part of the Organization thereby offering enormous advantages to UNESCO in terms of enhancing the outreach to civil society, accessing expertise to assist in the delivery of work programme and increasing the Organization's visibility, interfacing with national authorities, just to name a few.</p> <p>However, not all National Commissions have the necessary capacities to assume effectively their core functions. Despite these circumstances, the Director-General is firmly committed to providing sustained support to National Commissions to assist in meeting these challenges. An evaluation of UNESCO's cooperation with National Commissions, whose purpose is to revitalize the relationship, to better define their role, to enhance their impact, and to strengthen methods of working together, will begin shortly. The findings of this evaluation will enable the Secretariat, Governing Bodies and Member States to agree upon a course of action for strengthening our National Commissions.</p>	

Operational Actions Planned	Timeframe
Conduct an evaluation of the cooperation of the UNESCO Secretariat with National Commissions and a comparative study of national supporting/liaison bodies of other United Nations agencies, the findings of which will be used to revitalize National Commissions.	
Study the actions to be taken to address issues of National Commissions' capacity and good governance given that they come under the host ministry.	
Encourage Member States governments to provide more solid and predictable funding for National Commissions and to ensure they are staffed to cover the different fields of competence of UNESCO.	
Enhance UNESCO's intellectual role, presence and visibility with National Commissions at regional and country levels and involve them in the celebration of international decades, years, days and special events.	
Enhance advocacy and capacity-building efforts with National Commissions through North-South-South partnership programmes, training, publications, and web/data development, and communication tools.	

ANNEX II

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED ACTIONS BY THE AD HOC WORKING GROUP
AND THE SECRETARIAT

Proposed actions	Ad hoc working group	Secretariat
Strategic Direction One – Increasing focus		
• Limited number of strategic objectives	X	
• Introduce four-year programming cycle	X	
• Introduce brief C/4 of a rolling nature over 8-years duration	X	X
• Develop programme and timetable of work for C/5 and C/4 preparation and monitoring	X	
• Adopt detailed terms of reference and clear methods of work for C/4 and C/5 drafting group	X	
• Recommend criteria for introducing new and maintaining existing programmes for regular programme and extrabudgetary funds	X	X
• Promote intersectorality/reduce number of intersectoral platforms	X	X
• Review and propose new consultation process for C/4 and C/5	X	X
• Take steps to further strengthen results-based management	X	X
• Reinforce commitment to two global priorities: Africa and Gender Equality		X
• Introduce systematic programme reviews		X
• Monitor low performing programmes separately		X
• Carry out review of all partnership agreements with United Nations partners	X	X
• Hold consultations with United Nations partners in CCA/UNDAF processes		X
• Clarify division of labour among EFA convenors		X
• Introduce programme models in UNESCO programming		X
• Conduct systematic review and evaluation of programmes		X
• Develop new human resources policy		X
• Introduce results-based budgeting (RBB)		X
• Improve IT systems and reporting		X
• Streamline financial management systems		X

Strategic Direction Two – Positioning closer to the field		
• Ensure policy coherence	X	
• Define responsibilities, roles and expected outcomes of all organizational entities, including category 1 institutes	X	
• Clarify reporting lines in new field network and update tables of authority and accountability	X	
• Strengthen coordination and synergy between Headquarters and field	X	
• Ensure an ongoing evaluation process of the reform of field network	X	
• Identify the necessary professional skills and competencies	X	
• Include necessary provisions in the new human resources strategy	X	
• Provide detailed costing of the proposed new field structure	X	
• Develop detailed implementation plan for field reform		X
• Develop results-based strategies for all offices		X
• Enhance consultant roster		X
• Better use of expertise and capacity in category 1 and 2 institutes and centres		X
• Build on experiences gained in South-South cooperation fund and strengthen cooperation with UNDP South-South coordination fund		X
• Establishment of monitoring and evaluation and knowledge management function as part of new field network		X
• Conduct evaluations of programmes on rotational cycle		X
• Promote self-evaluation and make it integral part of programme management		X
• Revise evaluation policy to make self-evaluation of projects required		X
Strategic Direction Three – Participation in the United Nations		
• Further strengthen participation in joint United Nations planning and implementation processes including harmonization of business practices	X	X
• Align programme cycle with new quadrennial cycle	X	
• Report on UNESCO participation in United Nations coordination mechanisms and inter-agency operations	X	
• Clearly define role of liaison offices	X	X
• Develop communication mechanism to provide Member States with information on work of liaison offices	X	

• Implement policies of geographic and interagency mobility/new human resources policy	X	X
• Develop list of competencies required for posts of United Nations Resident coordinators	X	X
• Develop accountability framework	X	X
• Conduct audits and evaluations of field offices	X	X
• Creation of Senior Management Committees		X
• Creation of regional support platforms		
Strategic Direction Four – Strengthening governance		
• Development of accountability framework for relations among three organs	X	
• Establish pilot monitoring mechanism to identify obstacles and improve interaction between three organs	X	
• Submit relevant new initiatives to governing bodies when required and within their prerogative	X	
• Better use of information meetings	X	
• Chairperson to convene half-day special session, when required, for the Director-General to consult Executive Board under Rule 59	X	
• General Conference to examine draft resolutions without general debate, unless requested		
• Director-General to present decisions of governing bodies of international and intergovernmental programmes and UNESCO conventions in single report	X	
• General Conference to merge Administration and Programme and External Relations Commissions of the General Conference on experimental basis	X	
• Formalize within the Rules of Procedure of the General Conference the current practice whereby Programme Commissions present to the Plenary Draft Resolutions to amend the C/4 and C/5 documents	X	
• Translate into an admissibility criterion the recommendation requesting draft resolutions with financial implications to clearly identify the Main Line of Action (MLA) from which the resources should come	X	
• Organize the sessions and set up agendas consistent with requirements of managing four-year programming cycle	X	
• Develop a biennial programme for the plenary debates of the Executive Board focusing on thematic issues	X	
• Increase the number of items discussed in joint meetings of the PX and FA Commissions	X	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Director-General to propose a quality framework for Executive Board documents to ensure concise, analytical and action oriented reports 	X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Require that all substantive amendments to draft decisions be provided in writing 	X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that draft decisions related to the C/4 and C/5 documents are agreed in respective commissions of the Executive Board prior to consideration by drafting group 	X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive Board adopts criteria similar to those of General Conference concerning draft decisions aiming to amend the C/5 document 	X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suspend the work of the Group of Experts on Finance and Administrative Issues from the 188th session, for an experimental period 	X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish, on an experimental basis, an ad hoc group with enhanced participation by all UNESCO Member States to support the preparation of the two Plenary Commissions of the Executive Board 	X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Director-General to submit a comprehensive report on the UNESCO Secretariat accountability framework and its monitoring and evaluation mechanisms 	X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Director-General to put in place a Change Management Team 	X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce systematic programme reviews 		X
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct regular evaluations to inform programme reviews 		X
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop fuller assessment for the C/3 		X
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist Member States in preparation of Executive Board report to General Conference on implementation 		X
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More inclusive consultation process 		X
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce four-year programme cycle 	X	X
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss and agree upon information required for governance oversight 		X
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Streamline and improve transparency of information for Member States 		X
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure extrabudgetary resources fall under same governance oversight as regular programme 		X
Strategic Direction Five – Developing Partnership Strategy		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop draft policy framework for strategic partnership 	X	X
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take stock of and assess UNESCO experience of working with different categories of partners 	X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include in the policy framework distinct strategies for each category of partners to include, <i>inter alia</i>, objective criteria for the selection, approval and renewal of partnerships; funding and accountability arrangements, and criteria for periodic evaluation 	X	X

• Review the mandate and working methods of NGO committee	X	
• Make information on partners available on Internet and report biennially to Executive Board on policy framework	X	
• Provide an overview of all networks and initiatives taken to strengthen management of networks	X	
• Include in the new Human Resources Strategy the competencies required to interact professionally with the diversity of UNESCO partners and to successfully manage UNESCO networks	X	
• Underline the important role of National Commissions in liaising with national partners and civil society and ensure adherence to Article 7 of Constitution	X	
• Consult with civil society through specific questionnaire		X
• Elaborate new statutory framework of cooperation		X
• Consider opening up the governing bodies to other partners		X
• Conduct evaluation of cooperation with National Commissions		X
• Encourage Member States to provide more support to National Commissions		X
• Strengthen interaction with National Commissions		X



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Executive Board

Hundred and eighty-sixth session

186 EX/17 Part III

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Item 17 of the provisional agenda

UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY PROPOSAL TO ALIGN PLANNING CYCLES WITH THE QUADRENNIAL COMPREHENSIVE POLICY REVIEW OF OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM (QCPR)

SUMMARY

This document examines possible scenarios for alignment of UNESCO's programme cycle with the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system (QCPR).

It responds to 185 EX/Decision 19 by which the Director-General has been requested *inter alia* to deliver a thorough analysis of the implications, programmatic, financial and administrative, of changing:

- (a) the C/4 cycle from six to eight years, with an appropriate mechanism for adjusting to the most recent QCPR;
- (b) the C/5 cycle from two to four years, with an appropriate mechanism for adjustments every two years.

By 185 EX/Decision 19 the Director-General has furthermore been requested to submit a report on the analysis to it at its 186th session.

Potential budget implications are discussed in the document (see Annex III).

Action expected of the Executive Board: draft decision in paragraph 14.

I. BACKGROUND

1. At its 63rd session in 2008, the United Nations General Assembly had by resolution 63/232 on “Operational activities for development” decided to change the comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system from a triennial to a quadrennial cycle “in order to better provide policy guidance to the United Nations funds and programmes and the specialized agencies”. It had furthermore decided to commence its next comprehensive policy review in 2012. By the same resolution, the United Nations General Assembly “urges the funds and programmes and encourages the specialized agencies to carry out any changes required to align their planning cycles with the quadrennial comprehensive policy review (QCPR), including the implementation of mid-term reviews as necessary” (para. 20).

2. In line with General Assembly resolution 63/232, UNESCO’s General Conference had at its 35th session by resolution 82 (ii) (“Report by the Director-General on the implementation of the reform process – Decentralization strategy”) requested the Executive Board “to submit to it proposals to accommodate the United Nations General Assembly’s request to specialized agencies to align their programme cycle with the new quadrennial cycle of policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system, starting in 2012”. Documents 184 EX/5 and 185 EX/19 provided an initial assessment and a progress report on the matter, as part of reporting on the “Follow-up on the implementation of United Nations General Assembly resolution 62/208 concerning the triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system”.

3. Subsequently, and building on the information presented in document 185 EX/19, the Executive Board requested the Director-General by 185 EX/Decision 19 to deliver a thorough analysis of the implications, *inter alia* programmatic, financial and administrative, of changing:

- (a) the C/4 cycle from six to eight years, with an appropriate mechanism for adjusting to the most recent QCPR;
- (b) the C/5 cycle from two to four years, with an appropriate mechanism for adjustments every two years;

and to submit a report on the analysis to the Executive Board at its 186th session taking into consideration the debate at the 185th session and in the context of the follow-up to the independent external evaluation. The present document aims to respond to this request.

II. RATIONALE FOR A POSSIBLE ALIGNMENT WITH THE NEW CYCLE

4. The comprehensive policy review constitutes a key reference text to orient the development cooperation activities of the United Nations system, including through United Nations coordination and inter-agency collaboration at the country level. The last comprehensive policy review, the *2007 Triennial comprehensive policy review (TCPR) of operational activities for development of the United Nations system* (United Nations General Assembly resolution 62/208) offered detailed policy guidance in the areas of funding, national capacity development and development effectiveness, and improved functioning on the United Nations development system. As such, it had been submitted to, and discussed by UNESCO’s Executive Board in a series of documents (179 EX/INF.11, 180 EX/52, 181 EX/49, 184 EX/5 and 185 EX/19). The provisions of the comprehensive policy review are in particular relevant as a matter of system-wide coherence and consistency at the country level.

5. The United Nations General Assembly had emphasized repeatedly the importance of the comprehensive policy review, through which it establishes key system-wide policy orientations for the development cooperation and country-level modalities of the United Nations system. The strategic plans of the funds and programmes, and the medium-term strategies of the specialized

agencies constitute major instruments by which the organizations implement their mandate and policy guidance given by various bodies.

6. By resolution 62/208, the United Nations General Assembly had underscored the importance of ensuring that the strategic plans of funds and programmes were consistent with, and guided by, the comprehensive policy review (para. 97). Originally, the programming cycles of the funds and programmes were not synchronized with the cycle of the review. It was found that in the past “the interface between the current planning processes of the four funds and programmes and the triennial comprehensive policy review did not allow the plans to benefit from the guidance of the latest review in a timely manner. The plans were either prepared much ahead of the triennial comprehensive policy review, or were already being implemented when the latest review was being conducted. The timing gaps were rather significant” (63/207, para. 29). The objective was that **“better alignment of the strategic planning processes of the funds and programmes with the cycle of the comprehensive policy review, thereby ensuring that the strategic plans were finalized upon the conclusion of the comprehensive policy review, would improve the conditions for the strategic plans to reflect the guidance of the review”** (63/207, para. 3). This is also taken up by the United Nations General Assembly resolution on “System-wide Coherence”, adopted on 2 July 2010, in which the General Assembly *inter alia* “encourages governing bodies of the funds, programmes and specialized agencies of the United Nations development system to include in their strategic plans, as appropriate, specific provisions for the full implementation of policy guidance provided in the Comprehensive Policy Review of the General Assembly [...]” (para. 9).

7. The question of aligning the strategic plans with the comprehensive policy review applies to all organizations of the United Nations system, funds and programmes as well as specialized agencies. It is part of an overall effort to improve coherence in the actions and functioning of the United Nations development system, based on guidance given by Member States. Taking into account the general themes and approaches outlined in the comprehensive policy review, it seeks to bolster consistency among different United Nations organizations’ strategies and strategic plans.

8. In addition to this system-wide concern, UNESCO’s Executive Board has also focused on the institutional implications – opportunities and challenges alike – which would be associated with a change of cycle. These implications are wide-ranging and will be considered in their own right in Annex III below.

9. While the General Assembly’s request – and the response of the United Nations funds and programmes hereto – had focused on aligning the strategic plans/medium-term strategy documents to the QCPR (corresponding to UNESCO’s C/4 document), UNESCO’s Executive Board had subsequently requested the Director-General by 185 EX/Decision 19 to present also the implications of a possible change in the cycle of the C/5, in addition to that of the C/4 cycle.

10. As discussed in greater detail in document 185 EX/19, the following arguments had been advanced in the context of the United Nations General Assembly discussion to support the change of the comprehensive policy review from a **triennial to a quadrennial cycle** (see United Nations General Assembly document A/63/207 on the “Implications of aligning the strategic planning cycles of the United Nations funds and programmes with the comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development”):

- a quadrennial cycle would allow more time for implementing the guidance provided by the comprehensive policy review;
- a four-year cycle could improve the possibilities for analysis, monitoring, reporting, and review of the implementation of the comprehensive policy review, thereby providing a more comprehensive, evidence-based assessment of the results of the implementation of actions;

- for the United Nations funds and programmes, whose strategic plans run over a period of four years, a quadrennial cycle would open possibilities for synchronization with the comprehensive policy review;
- reducing the frequency of comprehensive policy reviews could generate savings and efficiency gains for the United Nations secretariat and for that matter UNESCO, involving both regular and extrabudgetary resources;
- a four-year cycle would be in line with the recommendations of the Report of the Independent External Evaluation of UNESCO (185 EX/18, paragraph 55).

11. The Executive Boards of United Nations funds and programmes (UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, WFP), have, in line with the above request, decided to extend their current four-year medium-term strategic plans until the end of 2013, with a new plan to cover the period 2014-2017. The rationale behind this timing is that the QCPR, finalized at the end of 2012 and starting as of 2013, could be discussed at Board sessions and reflected in the relevant draft strategic plans during 2013, before the new strategic plans would take effect as of 2014. The alignment to the QCPR by United Nations funds and programmes has been undertaken with the understanding that there is a need to provide adequate time between the adoption of the most recent resolution on the comprehensive policy review and the finalization of the strategic plans of United Nations funds and programmes. As outlined in document A/63/207 of the United Nations General Assembly, a lapse of one year was deemed appropriate for drafting and refining a strategic plan for United Nations funds and programmes in which the comprehensive policy review could be adequately considered.

III. POSSIBLE IMPLICATIONS OF AN ALIGNMENT OF UNESCO¹ WITH THE NEW CYCLE

(see Annex III)

IV. TIMING OF THE NEW CYCLE

12. Assuming that the first eight year C/4 document would be implemented beginning with the 37 C/4 (and consequently the 37 C/5), this medium-term strategy would cover the 2014-2021 period. Thus it would be aligned with the QCPR which is being finalized in 2012 and starts as of 2013. As in the case of medium-term plans of United Nations funds and programmes, the additional year in between would allow for sufficient time to discuss the substantive provisions of the QCPR document at Board sessions and to reflect them, if relevant, in the programming phase of the C/4.

13. Annex I provides a timeline for the change. Annex II provides costs for the 35th session of the General Conference, as a reference.

Action expected of the Executive Board

14. In view of the above, the Executive Board may wish to adopt a decision along the following lines:

The Executive Board,

1. Recalling 184 EX/Decision 5 (Part I), by which it requested the Director-General to present a thorough report on possible scenarios for alignment of UNESCO's programme cycle with the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR) of

¹ Document 185 EX/19 outlines the position taken by other specialized agencies on the issue of alignment with the QCPR.

operational activities for development of the United Nations system, including the programmatic and managerial implications for UNESCO,

2. Recognizing the importance of the comprehensive policy review, through which the United Nations General Assembly establishes key system-wide policy orientations for the development cooperation and country-level modalities of the United Nations system, as well as the desirability for UNESCO's Medium-Term Strategy to reflect those orientations, as appropriate,
3. Having examined the report contained in document 185 EX/19 and the scenarios discussed therein, as well as their respective implications,
4. Expresses its preference to:
 - (a) extend the C/4 cycle from six to eight years, with an appropriate mechanism for adjusting to the most recent quadrennial comprehensive policy review (QCPR);
 - (b) prolong the C/5 programme cycle from two to four years, with an appropriate mechanism for adjustments every two years;
 - (c) maintain the biennial cycle for the budget of the C/5 document; (alternately: Extend the budgeting cycle to four years, with possible budget modifications every two years, and a carry-over of budgetary savings made during the first two years of the cycle to the second two-year period);
5. Decides to maintain the rolling character of UNESCO's Medium-Term Strategy so as to ensure that the substance and directives of two consecutive quadrennial comprehensive policy review documents be reflected in the Organization's strategic documents, as appropriate;
6. Requests the Director-General to submit to it at its 187th session a report on the modalities for introducing the changes outlined in paragraphs 4 and 5 of the present decision.

ANNEX I

TIMELINES

	Funds and programmes (Medium-term plan)				Funds and programmes (Medium-term plan)				F&P...		
	37 C/5				38 C/5				39 C/5...		
	37 C/4								39 C/4...		
QCPR				QCPR				QCPR...			
2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022		

ANNEX II

COSTS RELATED TO THE 35TH SESSION OF THE GENERAL CONFERENCE

Operating budget (general operating expenses, temporary assistance, overtime, supplies, materials, equipment and staff travel of the Secretariat of the General Conference)	166,131
Allocation President of the General Conference (general operating expenses, travel, hospitality, supplies and materials of the office of the President of the General Conference)	56,839
Documentation and interpretation services (Interpretation: \$985,219; Translation: \$943,851; Documents production: \$1,015,136)	2,944,206
Conference services (temporary assistance overtime and equipment for security, protocol, public information, medical service, information systems and telecommunications and conference services)	924,413
Travel (assistance to LDCs)	91,533
External Auditor fees	434,000
Total	4,617,122

NB: *It may be concluded from these figures that the estimated daily cost of a session, excluding documentation, is \$159,400 (\$63,563 for interpretation, including the Youth Forum, and \$95,837 for temporary assistance, overtime and rental of equipment). This calculation, based on 15 working days at the rates applicable at the 35th session, provides an assessment of the savings that might be achieved by reducing the duration of the session. It does not take into account documentation expenses, which would remain stable if there was no variation in the number of items on the agenda.*

This table is extracted from document 184 EX/17, which contains more detailed information.

ANNEX III

POSSIBLE IMPLICATIONS OF AN EXTENSION OF THE C/5 PROGRAMMING CYCLE FROM 2 TO 4 YEARS, AND OF THE C/4 FROM 6 TO 8 YEARS

	Possible advantages	Possible disadvantages	Comments
<p>Programmatic implications</p> <p>The time horizon available for planning and implementing</p>	<p>The time horizon available for planning, implementing and monitoring would double from two to four years. The scope and ambition of the expected programme results UNESCO is aiming to achieve within a C/5 period would be increased. Arguably, the longer-term planning horizon, and the increased stability and predictability associated with it might be more appropriate to tackle and deliver results on more complex issues within UNESCO's areas of expertise and to assess the impact of activities and interventions. A quadrennial cycle would allow more time for implementing the guidance provided by the comprehensive policy review.</p>	<p>A four-year horizon might be excessively broad in areas which call for rapid response to rapidly changing circumstances. It might "freeze" UNESCO in growingly irrelevant activities. It might also lead to the definition of very "vague" results.</p>	<p>As suggested in the IEE report, advantages appear to outweigh disadvantages if adequate mechanisms are in place to allow the Organization to respond to emerging priorities and to ensure effective programme delivery and effectiveness. This includes in particular robust monitoring by the Secretariat and the governing bodies, as well as adequate sunset-clauses and/or strict focusing and prioritization. Adequate planning should supply for the "vagueness" of results, including through the definition of "implementation phases" for certain programmes.</p>
<p>Opportunities for monitoring</p>	<p>A larger time span for implementation and delivery might allow better opportunities for monitoring implementation of the C/5 programme, including course adjustments of ongoing activities in light of the monitoring information gathered. This might also lend itself to a more comprehensive, evidence-based assessment of the results, a better feedback on evaluations, and to a better sharing of experience, identification and exchanges of good practises as well as lessons learned.</p>	<p>Terminating unsuccessful programmed activities might be more difficult, unless clear sunset clauses exist. Initiating new (or substitute) activities might also be a challenge and thus the Organization may not be able to respond to new developments with the desired dispatch.</p>	<p>Advantages appear to outweigh disadvantages if clear exit, sunset and rolling clauses are stipulated and monitoring mechanisms are in place, allowing for the definition and implementation of new activities.</p>

	Possible advantages	Possible disadvantages	Comments
Programmatic implications			
	Overall, it may allow impact assessments of activities to be undertaken.		
Opportunities for coordination	A four-year programming and planning process might afford more opportunities for coordinating efficiently substantive matters and programme results, including between Headquarters and field offices, and among field offices, e.g. on a regional basis as well as with other external stakeholders. Intensified exchange and coordination during planning processes could bring about not only greater programme clarity and coherence, but also a better division of work between Headquarters, regional and country levels.	Rapid reaction to changing circumstances may not be easy to accommodate under a four-year coordination. Mistakes made initially may have consequences which might be difficult to correct.	Advantages appear to outweigh disadvantages, if the coordination mechanisms are not set in stone from the beginning, and if they allow for substantial course correction, including in budget terms.
Relevance for UNDAF common country programming exercises	While alignment to national and specific UNDAF cycles may remain difficult to accomplish, as they are set on a country-by-country basis, longer term C/5 results over four years might facilitate the planning and programming of UNESCO's contribution to UNDAF deliverables, as they typically run over a duration of more than four and typically five years.	The comparability to other agencies' work plan formats, which are often on an annual basis due to the requirements of their executive boards, is being further decreased with a switch from two to four years of UNESCO C/5 results information.	Advantages appear to prevail, if there is sufficient flexibility in the planning of country level activities, especially allowing for year-to-year changes and if the internal work plan process would envisage annual reviews and updates.
Alignment to the QCPR	If the first four-year C/5 (programme) were be implemented as of the 37 C/5, it would run from 2014-2017. Hence, it would be fully aligned with the first QCPR which is to be finalized at the end of 2012 and will start as of 2013, in the same manner of alignment chosen by the United	The QCPR is arguably not the only policy document produced by the United Nations General Assembly, which also delivers system-wide recommendations in thematic areas of importance to UNESCO, quite apart from policy guidance provided by the UNESCO General Conference	Advantages would appear to prevail, if the programming is flexible enough to allow UNESCO to respond to other emerging policy recommendations/issues, in particular by the UNESCO General Conference.

	Possible advantages	Possible disadvantages	Comments
Programmatic implications			
	Nations funds and programmes. Alignment would be realized as the QCPR could be discussed at Board sessions and reflected in the relevant draft strategic plans during 2013, before the new strategic plans would take effect as of 2014.	pertaining to the Organization's global priorities, five domains and intersectoral platforms.	
Relationship between Programme and Budget:			
a) 4-year Programme with a 4-year Budget	The current C/5 format is an integrated biennial "Programme and Budget" document, which defines UNESCO's expected results and budgets them at Main Line of Action (MLA) level. A four-year programming cycle with a four-year budgeting cycle would maintain this strong linkage of the programme and the budget components, and ensure predictability of resources. In this scenario, financial commitments would have to be made by Member States for a four-year period, which conceivably – in the light of national appropriation policies – might have to be indicative commitments only.	Four-year budget commitments are conceivably difficult to make. In addition, commitments for a four-year period made in "low-budget" years might have a negative ripple effect and impact over several years, even if certain austerity policies by Member States determining their preference for certain budget envelopes may have been terminated.	Advantages would prevail, allowing for UNESCO to respond to emerging needs and priorities in a more systematic and prolonged manner.
b) 4-year Programme with a 2-year Budget	The current biennial time-frame for financial commitments by Member States would be maintained.	Programme and Budget would be somewhat de-linked, and predictability would be reduced. This would limit the possibilities of results-based programming, and result in a four-year programme in which years 1 and 2, but not years 3 and 4 would be explicitly budgeted.	The advantages of this solution are not clear, as it could lead to substantial mid-course budget corrections after 2 years, necessitating also corresponding programmatic adjustments. Thus, the long-term predictability of funding prospects might be reduced. The resulting Programme might be "top-heavy". Advantages might prevail if Member States were to adopt some kind of "a priori" commitment to sustain the budget levels, such as

	Possible advantages	Possible disadvantages	Comments
Programmatic implications			agreeing on a certain floor. In terms of flexibility of operations and administration, this option should also ideally provide for the automatic carry-over of budgetary savings made during the first two years of the cycle to the second two-year period.
Mechanism for adjustment of the C/5 every two years	Mid-term adjustments in light of monitoring information gathered, as well as in light of emerging trends and challenges, could be done on a biennial basis during intermediate General Conference sessions (see below).	The agenda of governing bodies would need to be adjusted to allow for a proper consideration of mid-term adjustments.	Advantages appear to outweigh disadvantages, provided that mechanisms are in place to ensure mid-term adjustments.
Managerial and administrative implications			
Agenda of the General Conference	One of the principal functions of UNESCO's General Conference session is the debate on, and adoption of, the C/5 document of the Organization. The change in duration of the C/5 programme or programme and budget from two to four years might have an impact on the agenda of the General Conference sessions, as established now. As the cost of a regular General Conference session is estimated at around US \$ 4,000,000 per session (see Annex II on cost of the 35th session of the General Conference, including related costs before, during, and after the session), ² a change in the cycle of the General Conference from two to four years might have a significant cost-saving potential. It might also entail savings in terms of	The agenda would need to be prepared to allow the General Conference to decide on appropriate course corrections, as well as to prepare for a 4-year programme and budget. The nature of General Conference sessions might be different, depending on whether there would be the adoption of a new C/5 programme of four years, or whether the session would be held in the middle of an ongoing C/5 programme. In this latter case, this "intermediate" General Conference session could be dedicated to the monitoring of the ongoing C/5 implementation, and to a discussion of emerging trends and strategic challenges (trends analysis) as well as potential changes this might necessitate for the ongoing C/5,	Advantages appear to outweigh disadvantages, with some possible savings, as long as the agenda of the General Conference is clearly established and streamlined accordingly, with slightly different agendas in the first and "intermediate" meetings.

² Table taken from Document 184 EX/17.

	Possible advantages	Possible disadvantages	Comments
Programmatic implications	staff time which could be devoted instead much more to programmatic activities – however the financial impact of this effect is hard to quantify.	conceived in the spirit of a rolling document. This also would apply for the budgetary aspects of the C/5, if they were to remain biennial in nature. However, the “intermediate” session would also need to prepare the future Programme. The first session in a 4-year Programme could conceivably be shorter in duration. With an estimated daily cost of some US \$150,000, a shortened duration would bring about substantial cost savings potential.	
Frequency and nature of C/5 consultations	A 4-year cycle might greatly reduce the burden of consultations. An intermediate General Conference session might also be devoted to consultations among Member States for the subsequent C/5 document. Currently, biennial regional consultations are being held every two years with National Commissions for the preparation of every C/5 document and every six years for the preparation of the C/4 document, which are combined with the C/5 consultations. The cost of such consultations are estimated at up to US \$850,000 (including staff missions) per biennium. Member States, NGOs and intergovernmental organizations (including of the United Nations system) have in the past been consulted through a questionnaire in writing, the gist of which is summarized by the Secretariat for consideration by the Executive Board.	The change in cycle of consultations does not need to have a negative impact on UNESCO’s ability to identify emerging needs and priorities in its fields of competence, responding to Member States and National Commissions views and priorities.	Advantages appear to outweigh disadvantages, as long as the intermediate General Conference is in a position to agree on mid-term corrections in light of emerging trends and challenges as well as new demands.



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Item 17 of the provisional agenda

**UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY PROPOSAL TO
ALIGN PLANNING CYCLES WITH THE QUADRENNIAL
COMPREHENSIVE POLICY REVIEW OF OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES
FOR DEVELOPMENT OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM (QCPR)**

CORRIGENDUM

Please insert the following two pages as pages 6 and 7 of Annex III to document 186 EX/17 Part III.

	Possible advantages	Possible disadvantages	Comments
<p>Programmatic implications</p> <p>Relevance of longer-term objectives at C/4 level</p>	<p>A C/4 would cover two four-year C/5s, and would be a “rolling strategy”, allowing for possible amendments after the initial four years. The guiding function of the C/4 strategy would be maintained in the proposed scenario, with the difference that the scope would be increased from six to eight years. As a consequence, the document would be expected to be more strategic and succinct, outlining core functions and objectives. It would arguably contribute to greater predictability.</p>	<p>Rapidly changing circumstances may make it challenging to define stable objectives over an 8-year period, and to introduce new ones. The relation of the C/4 with the “second” C/5 might become too distant.</p>	<p>Advantages appear to outweigh disadvantages, provided that the C/4 is a succinct document, highlighting UNESCO’s core competencies and functions in the multilateral system, and providing the principles guiding the formulation of the C/5 documents, without attempting to define in detail the activities of the Organization – Also provided that the document is effectively “rolled” after four years (see below). In general, the C/4 document and debates are a useful opportunity to provide strategic guidance.</p>
<p>The rolling character and the strategic nature of the C/4</p>	<p>The implementation of the medium-term strategy and objectives is designed to be an evolving process, including continuous monitoring and review. UNESCO’s General Conference had decided that the current medium-term strategy should be a rolling strategy, allowing for a revision every two years by the General Conference – although this rolling provision was never applied. In the proposed duration of eight years, the opportunity for revision would allow to take into account the guidance and provisions of the</p>	<p>The “rolling” nature of the C/4 would require specific provisions by the governing bodies.</p>	<p>Advantages appear to outweigh disadvantages, provided that the lessons of monitoring and evaluations are taken into consideration, and that specific mechanisms are established.</p>

	Possible advantages	Possible disadvantages	Comments
Programmatic implications			
	next QCPR, where relevant, which is scheduled to run from 2017-2020, but it would also require specific action and decisions by the General Conference to that end.		