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3 INX/2
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Outcomes of the Third Intersessional Meeting (INX)

Friday 3 June 2016

I. Opening remarks by the Chairperson of the Executive Board:

The meeting was opened by the Chairperson of the Executive Board, Ambassador Michael Worbs. He welcomed the Members of the Executive Board, as well as Member States non-Member of the Executive Board as observers with enhanced participation status to the Third Intersessional Meeting, organized pursuant to 197 EX/Decision 28 and 44. The Chairperson informed the participants of the need to organize the meeting in Room XI as there has been some water damage in Room X following all the rain that Paris has received over the past week. While noting the inconvenience, he cited security and safety issues as the reason for the room change. Finally, the Chairperson reminded the participants of a decision taken during the sixth Plenary meeting of the 199th session that took place in April, during which a proposal by two Member States was forwarded to organize this intersessional meeting in the form of a retreat. Subsequently, a number of Member States and groups requested more information on the format, participation and potential costs of such a gathering. He concluded that, in order to allow more time to define and finalize a meeting of that nature, it was preferable to postpone such a retreat to a later date, and informed the participants that more information would be provided in due course.

II. Intervention by the Director-General, followed by a question & answer session:

Thereafter, the Chairperson invited the Director-General, Ms Irina Bokova, to make her introductory remarks relevant to the three topics to be discussed throughout the meeting. Her intervention is available online at the following link: (<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0024/002450/245002f.pdf>) (in French only)

Guided by the questions received from the regional groups (see annex) an interactive question & answer session ensued, during which participants were able to seek further clarifications from the Director-General and the members of her Senior Management Team.

Thereafter, the participants benefitted from presentations on three items that will be examined further during the 200th session of the Board, namely:

- Preparation process of the Draft Programme and Budget for 2018-2021 (39 C/5);
- Statistical data to monitor and implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development within UNESCO's fields of competence; and,
- Annual Report of the Internal Oversight Service (IOS) and Revision of the Terms of Reference of the Oversight Advisory Committee

III. Secretariat's presentation on the Preparation process of the Draft Programme and Budget for 2018-2021 (39 C/5):

1. Introduction by the Representative of the Director-General

In his presentation, the Deputy Director of the Bureau of Strategic Planning, Mr Jean-Yves Le Saux, provided an overview of the preparatory process for the elaboration of the draft Programme and Budget for 2018-2021 (39 C/5). Recalling the Roadmap approved by the General Conference at its 38th session, he stated that 117 Member States and 4 Associated Members had replied to the online questionnaire and that an analysis of the replies was available on the BSP website (<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/bureau-of-strategic-planning/resources/preparation-39c5/>). He underscored that despite some technical and logistical challenges, preparations were ongoing for the organization of the online regional consultations with Member States and Associated Members, and that the subregional consultations with the National Commissions for UNESCO will take place on 15 June next in Shanghai, China. He also referred to the initial mapping on UNESCO's contribution to supporting Member States in implementing the SDGs (document 38 C/7), and to the Strategic Results Report as important milestones of this process. He further presented the step-by-step approach envisaged for the Structured Financing Dialogue, noting that it involved a mutual learning process for both Member States and the Secretariat, and indicated a series of areas for which in-depth examination and adjustments were being undertaken. These include the type of resources to be integrated, budgeting techniques and accounting, programming, human resources and the transparency portal.

BSP's PowerPoint presentation is available here:

<http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/GBS/38GC/pdf/BSP.pdf>

2. Discussion/queries by the Board

In the ensuing debate, twenty-six participants took the floor, thanking the Secretariat for its work to prepare the Draft 39 C/5, acknowledging inherent challenges in setting up new modalities of consultations with Member States. They stressed the importance of substantive debates for the preparation of the Draft 39 C/5, including the definition of priorities and of a robust results framework aligned with the new development agenda, taking into account UNESCO's specific mandate.

While many recognized the pertinence of many parts of the questionnaire, such as the question regarding intersectorality, several reported difficulties in filling it out, due to various factors, including an ambiguity concerning the identification of national needs. A participant indicated that the question on sunset clause should also concern activities or specific programmes and not only thematic areas. The need for prior consultations with Member States on future versions of the questionnaire and for conducting a thorough beneficiary survey was also highlighted.

Several delegates emphasized that the consultation process should be designed to enable Member States to define priorities. Many asked for further clarifications concerning the online regional consultations of Member States and Associated Members, as well as on the subregional consultations of National Commissions in Shanghai. In particular, how the outcomes of these consultations would be reflected in the Draft 39 C/5. The key role of National Commissions for setting regional priorities was highlighted and the organization of the Shanghai meeting was valued as contributing to this goal.

Several participants referred to budgetary aspects of the Draft 39 C/5, including the need to receive a clear indication of costs increases required for a ZRG level, and to see an estimation of the extrabudgetary resources to be mobilized in the framework of the Structured Financing Dialogue.

3. Secretariat's reply to queries

In his reply, the D/DIR/BSP thanked the participants for their comments which allow the Secretariat to improve future questionnaires on the C/5 and to fine-tune the ongoing consultation process for the preparation of the Draft 39 C/5. He explained that the questionnaire integrated a "light" beneficiary survey after consultation with IOS. Acknowledging the crucial importance of the consultation process for the priorities setting exercise, he recalled that Member States' debates at the General Conference, the SRR exercise, and the replies to the questionnaire, in particular to question 7, included a series of substantive indications on priorities which would also be taken into account when preparing the Preliminary Proposals of the Director-General on the Draft 39 C/5.

He further informed that 100 Member States representatives had registered for the online regional consultations, of which two thirds hail from National Commissions. He indicated that a two-page document explaining the general framework of the online consultations, including the roles of the moderators and rapporteurs, was prepared by BSP and circulated to the Presidents of the Electoral Groups. Referring to the technical and organizational challenges of the new online consultations exercise, including the lack of experience of both the Secretariat and the Member States, he assured participants that the Secretariat would assist Member States in organizing face-to-face regional meetings at Headquarters, should they so wish, and further explained that the last day of the interregional meeting of National Commissions in Shanghai would be dedicated to subregional consultations of National Commissions facilitated by Field Office Directors and Headquarters staff.

An estimate of cost increases would be provided to the Executive Board, as in the past, at its 200th session. The ensuing Draft 39 C/5 would provide a realistic estimate of the extrabudgetary resources to be mobilized by Major Programme and by C/5 Expected Result. D/DIR/BSP thanked the participants for their leadership in promoting the Structured Financing Dialogue, (SFD), and again stressed that the realization of the SFD and the Integrated Budget Framework required a mutual learning process between the Secretariat and Member States. Informal meetings were envisaged to reach a common understanding and decision in a timely manner.

In her intervention, the Director-General thanked the participants for their recommendations. Recalling the significant political guidance resulting from the July 2013 prioritization exercise which had allowed UNESCO to overcome the financial crisis, she underlined the importance of the regional approach within the 2030 Agenda and the need for Member States to provide guidance on defining the Organization's priorities for the 39 C/5 to ensure an appropriate response to the 2030 Agenda implementation, and invited them to pursue internal consultations to this end.

IV. Secretariat's presentation on statistical data to monitor and implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development within UNESCO's fields of competence

1. Introduction by the representative of the Director-General

The Director of the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, Ms Silvia Montoya, presented an overview of the data needs in relation to sustainable development and the role of UNESCO in the 2030 agenda. The current development agenda explicitly recognizes poverty, inequality, food security, environmental sustainability and the realization of human rights as universal. This new agenda also implies new demands for information: the key is to transform data into knowledge.

UNESCO plays a crucial role in the monitoring of international commitments, as it has done with the monitoring of the Education for All (EFA) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The 2030 agenda presents important new challenges, since the Sustainable Developments Goals (SDGs) include more goals, targets and indicators as well as areas not included in the previous framework.

The United Nations Secretary General's Synthesis Report, from December 2014, proposed four levels of monitoring:

- **Global:** focused set of globally comparable indicators based on clear criteria;
- **Thematic:** broader set of indicators than globally covers the range of sectoral priorities;
- **Regional:** indicators to monitor frameworks validated by regional groupings;
- **National:** link to national plan; consult national stake-holders; recognize context and address inclusion and broader learning goals.

Global SDG indicators were proposed by an Inter-Agency and Expert Group on SDG indicators (IAEG-SDGs) established by UNSC in May 2015. The IAEG-SDGs is composed of 28 regionally-representative Member States' national statistical offices, and also includes observers international and regional organizations and agencies, civil society, NGOs, and academia. The global indicator framework will be adopted by ECOSOC and the General Assembly in 2016.

UIS has been working actively, coordinating UNESCO's contributions to the elaboration of the global indicator framework and represents the Organization in the IAEG-SDGs and in the United Nations Statistical Commission (UNSC). Recently, UIS also submitted data and storylines for the United Nations Secretary-General's SDG Progress Report and the United Nations Statistics Division's SDG database and is producing global indicators for all countries for selected targets in SDGs 4, 9, 11, 12 and 13.

Regarding thematic monitoring, UIS is leading the development of thematic indicator sets for internationally-comparable sectoral reviews in education (43 indicators) and ICTs for development (35 indicators) while it is developing thematic indicator sets for science and innovation and heritage.

The proposal of a thematic set of indicators on education was developed between March 2014 and May 2015 and was incorporated in the Framework for Action at the World Education Forum in Incheon, Republic of Korea. The proposal was made by the Technical Advisory Group (TAG), originally composed of international organizations and agencies and expanded in 2015 to include a representative number of UNESCO Member States and civil society organizations to further refine the proposal. Thematic indicators were incorporated in Annex II of the E2030 FFA as a working draft. To finalize and implement this proposal, UIS is moving on several fronts to assume its mandate to produce the global and thematic monitoring indicators for SDG 4 and Education 2030, working in close collaboration with a wide range of stakeholders.

In May 2016, UIS and the Division for Education 2030 Support and Coordination (ED/ESC) convened a group of experts from governments, multilateral agencies and civil society groups to support the implementation of the new indicator framework that will be used to track progress towards SDG 4. The Technical Cooperation Group (TCG) will ensure coordination among all stakeholders to produce the data required to monitor SDG 4-Education 2030 and support the implementation of standards for international comparability. It will also ensure that the indicator framework is used as a benchmark to assess whether countries are equipped to face new statistical demands.

Also in May, UIS launched the Global Alliance to Monitor Learning (GAML). While five of the ten SDG targets focus on learning outcomes, a chronic lack of comparable data makes it impossible to measure even the most basic reading and numeracy skills across countries. The Alliance will tackle this problem by supporting efforts worldwide to effectively measure learning outcomes and use this information in the pursuit of SDG targets. GAML will forge stronger links between assessment experts, decision-makers, donors and civil society organizations representing many groups including teachers. These links are essential if we are to generate globally-valid and comparable data that contribute to improved learning environments.

Early in 2016, UIS jointly with UNICEF and the World Bank launched the Inter-Agency Group on Education Inequality Indicators (IAG-EII) in response to the call for a greater focus on equity in the SDGs. The main objective of the IAG-EII is to promote and coordinate the use of household survey data for monitoring of education targets at the global, regional and national levels, ensuring standardized analysis and reporting to complement evidence available in administrative data. The benefit will be increased efficiency and consistency in the processing of survey data by different agencies and strong legitimacy for equity-related survey-based indicators to serve the Education 2030 agenda, with a particular emphasis on increasing use of this data by countries.

On Science, Technology and Innovation, a task group was convened to develop the thematic list, led by UIS and including agencies and countries to present the developed list to the IAEG-SDG and the United Nations Statistical Commission. On Culture, the UIS will convene a meeting of the Expert Group on Heritage Statistics (September 2016) to discuss a work programme for heritage statistics including the monitoring of SDG indicator 11.4.1 and will develop and implement an annual data collection survey for heritage statistics (2017 and onward).

As it was remarked at the beginning of the presentation, it is key to transform data into knowledge. The UIS is not only working on the development of the indicator and the production of the data but also in some dissemination tools. In July, the UIS will be launching three major products: a new paper on out-of-school children and youth, which will include figures on secondary school-age youth for the first time; a new eAtlas presenting the latest available data to monitor SDG 4 – Education 2030, where users can consult a series of interactive maps to explore the data, which will be regularly updated as new information becomes available; and a new report which guides readers through the measurement issues involved in producing cross-nationally comparable indicators for monitoring SDG 4 – Education 2030 as well as present the results of a global quick survey on country readiness to monitor the education targets.

As a final remark, it is important to promote collaborative action to improve results in the implementation the monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals:

- Coordinating the work from a recognized institutional setting
 - UNESCO is the United Nations depository for comparable statistics in the field of education, science and technology, culture and communication
- With standards and protocols aligned with United Nations statistical principles and processes
 - Direct production of statistics in collaboration with countries and validated by countries
 - Recognized secondary sources of information
- Coordination mechanisms and partnerships
 - To privilege and serve countries' needs
 - To develop solid infrastructure to maximize synergies and reduce overlapping of efforts that includes non-state actors at the system level
 - Need to commit research and donors to support the SDG agenda

UIS's PowerPoint presentation is available here (English only):

<http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/GBS/EXB/images/UIS.pdf>

2. Discussion/queries by the Board

Participants expressed their appreciation for the extensive and detailed presentation by UIS on the process for defining and implementing the monitoring framework for the SDGs. Several underlined the importance of the participation of UNESCO, and particularly UIS in this process.

One participant asked about the current status of the indicators and if they can still be changed in the upcoming phases of adoption. The participant also expressed the need for Member States to take ownership over the Organization's work at national, regional and international levels.

Participants were also interested in quality, given the emphasis that SDG 4 gives to this dimension, specifically in the definition of quality and the indicators to be used to monitor the related targets as well as the mechanism to communicate progress.

Related to the availability of data, some participants remarked the potential gaps in monitoring given the current questionnaire on education statistics. They also asked about the UIS strategy for data collection, particularly if it will be based on official data.

Finally, several questions were raised about UIS initiatives on capacity-building in order to collaborate with countries in the implementation of the monitoring framework. This includes data development, processing and the definition of the national monitoring framework.

3. Secretariat's reply to queries

The DIR/UIS reviewed the process for defining both global and thematic indicators and explained that they can still be modified. However, in the case of global indicators, the process is in the final stages so it is not anticipated that further changes will occur, particularly those indicators related to UNESCO's fields of competence. As concerns SDG 4, she said that UNESCO will continue as lead agency for the implementation process.

Regarding the focus on quality, the indicators proposed at the global and thematic levels have been defined through a broad consultation process where UNESCO and Member States have actively participated. UIS has started working on their implementation. For learning outcome indicators, this process will be conducted with the support of the recently-launched Global Alliance to Monitor Learning (GAML), which includes initiatives to help countries to implement them.

As it was highlighted during the presentation, the SDGs present several challenges in term of information, and this will have an impact on the UIS strategy for collecting data. The current questionnaires need to be reviewed in order to focus them on the new demands of data. It is also necessary to explore alternatives sources, particularly for dimensions as learning outcome, equity and education financing. GAML's work and the Inter-Agency Group on Education Inequality Indicators (IAG-EII) will be crucial for this.

Capacity-building initiatives to support countries is a key component of the implementation strategy of the monitoring framework. UIS is working on that as well as other UNESCO sections. UIS has a well-established field network with teams located in LAC, APA, Sub-Saharan Africa and is currently in the process of covering a vacant post in ARB.

V. Secretariat's presentation on the Annual Report of the Internal Oversight Service (IOS) and Revision of the Terms of Reference of the Oversight Advisory Committee

1. Introduction by the representative of the Director-General

The item was introduced by the Director of the Internal Oversight Service (IOS), Ms Susanne Frueh. The presentation focused on relevant oversight issues, namely: (a) the Terms of Reference of the Oversight Advisory Committee; (b) the IOS Evaluation Strategy; and, (c) a number of emerging messages from ongoing IOS work.

DIR/IOS recalled resolution 38 C/Resolution 102, adopted during the last session of the General Conference, on the proposed revision of the terms of reference of the OAC, requesting that they be further modified to reflect the findings of an ongoing JIU review as well as to align them with the terms of reference of the United Nations Independent Audit Advisory Committee (IAAC). In order to further the discussion, Ms Frueh provided additional information on audit committees in the United Nations system, including a comparative analysis of their respective mandates, reporting lines, etc. as well as a comparison between UNESCO's OAC and the IAAC.

DIR/IOS briefed the participants on the status of the Evaluation Strategy that was developed to implement UNESCO's Evaluation Policy. The complementarities between corporate and decentralized evaluation systems were highlighted. With regard to the decentralized system, efforts are focused on the commitment to sustain funding by setting aside 3% for evaluations and to developing an evaluation focal point network and related management training programme. The principal risks to delivering the strategy and the measures aimed at mitigating them were presented.

DIR/IOS provided a quick status update on a number of key evaluation reports that Member States may wish to discuss in more depth at the 200th session. These include: ongoing evaluations on UNESCO's role in Education in Emergencies and Protracted Crises; UNESCO's standard-setting work related to the Regional Higher Education Recognition Conventions; Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet); Education for All (EFA) Global and Regional Coordination Mechanisms and Review of Evaluative Evidence on Teacher Policy – all reports relevant to the 2030 Agenda. In addition, she flagged two ongoing audits, one on emergency business processes accompanying the evaluation and one on category 2 institutes. She highlighted that time limitations during Board sessions make it difficult to examine any report in-depth and expressed her interest to discuss how to better facilitate such discussions.

IOS's PowerPoint presentation is available here:

http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/GBS/38GC/pdf/IOS_Eng.pdf

2. Discussion/queries by the Board

Two participants raised the following points:

- The importance given by the Board to receiving independent advice on the functioning of UNESCO oversight responsibilities;
- Agreement on the need for more in-depth discussion of reports, proposing a separate Item on the Board's agenda for individual evaluations;
- Interest in the recent audit of the Social and Human Sciences Sector, noting that the summary of the report did not reflect the serious concerns raised in the main text, and that the findings were of great interest to the Board and should be subject to discussion; and
- Clarifications on (a) who was involved in the recent revisions to the OAC TOR and (b) on the selection process for members of the OAC.

3. Secretariat's reply to queries

In response to the points raised, DIR/IOS:

- Welcomed the suggestion that IOS reports be given more time; and indicated other options such as information meetings or meetings with groups of Member States interested in an evaluation (e.g. as was done for the TVET evaluation).

- Acknowledged that regarding audits, it would be more important to read the entire text and not just the abstract and invited Member States interested in the findings of audits to read the full summary,
- Clarified (a) that the proposals for last revisions to the TOR have been made by OAC members, and (b) noted that the OAC selection process is conducted in line with standard in-house practices including the advertisement of the opening to Member States and in relevant journals, followed by shortlisting of candidates and interviews by a selection committee of senior managers. A shortlist of suitable candidates is developed on the basis of the interview as well as set criteria (relevant experience, skills, gender, and geographic representation) and presented to the Director-General for final decision/nomination.

THE NEXT INTERSESSIONAL MEETING WILL TAKE PLACE ON

FRIDAY 9 SEPTEMBER 2016

ANNEX

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY ELECTORAL GROUP

Group I

Taking note of the fact that the “Consultation of the Director-General on UNESCO Programme and Budget 2018-2021 (39 C/5) closed on 11 May, can the Director-General set out a timeline for all the stages of the consultation process for the preparation of the C5”. UK Delegation would like to understand particularly the role of that online consultation process and any other steps. (UK and France)

Group II

Even though one of the major problems plaguing the Organization is acknowledged to be the lack of resources and the heavy dependency (as high as 75%) of UNESCO’s programme activities on the extrabudgetary funds, the lack of smooth, flexible and transparent way of absorption of the extrabudgetary funding, according to some recent feedback from the donors, seems to be persisting.

What is, in your opinion, a major reason for these obstacles to arise and what further urgent steps need to be taken to help facilitate the extrabudgetary funding procedures?

Group III

In the light of your experience in the United Nations system, in particular as Director-General of UNESCO, what is the main challenge that you have faced until today and how would you recommend that it be addressed? What means would you use to strengthen cooperation and synergies between UNESCO and the United Nations, particularly in view of the repositioning of the Organization in the system, in the context of implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?

Group IV

It is noted that Major Programme V Communication and Information (MPV) has the advantage of being a transversal programme with significant links to other major programmes. In this connection, and within the framework of the Intergovernmental Information for All Programme (IFAP), we have expressed full satisfaction on the successful organization of the conference on “Youth and Internet; Fighting Radicalization and Extremism” in June 2015. As a follow up to this conference, we should appreciate knowing from the Director-General about the progress made on the development of policy interventions that would help contain youth extremism and radicalization for the benefit of Member States.

Group V(a)

The Africa Group commends the Director-General on UNESCO’s role in the preparation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. UNESCO has also decided to provide assistance and technical support to Member States in its fields of competence in the context of Global Priority Africa, particularly in terms of statistics and data collection.

Given the paramount importance of qualified teachers to attaining the Sustainable Development Goal for education (SDG 4), how does UNESCO intend to assist Member States, particularly least developed countries, including their National Commissions, to build adequate means to measure the successes and weak points, and to meet the growing demand for qualified teachers, in particular by making the profession attractive to young people. The importance of scientific research in the development of countries is undeniable. What is UNESCO doing for the development of scientific research in Africa?

The importance of scientific research is undeniable for developing countries. What does UNESCO do for the development of Scientific Research in Africa?

Group V(b)

In document 39 C/5, what will UNESCO's strategy be with regard to strengthening the role of culture in the light of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and what measures will be included for the protection and safeguarding of cultural heritage, particularly in the event of armed conflict and trafficking of cultural property?