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Outcomes of the Fifth Intersessional Meeting (INX)

Tuesday 27 September 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.

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

In view of fact that the Fourth Intersessional Meeting was held only two weeks previously, on 9 September 2016, and with efficiency of time in mind, the Chairperson invited the Director-General to immediately address the questions that were submitted in advance by the respective electoral groups (see Annex).

The Director-General's remarks are available online at the following link:

<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0024/002460/246038m.pdf>

III. Presentation of the 2016 Global Education Monitoring (GEM) report

The representative of the Global Education Monitoring (GEM) Report presented an overview of the 2016 GEM Report, entitled *Education for people and planet: creating sustainable futures for all*. He opened by reiterating that the GEM Report had received a mandate from the international community to monitor global progress on education in the SDGs. The 2016 Report, the first in the new series, discusses the challenges of monitoring the new SDG 4 goal and targets, as well as examining the interlinkages between education and the other sustainable development goals.

The Report outlines current measurable progress against the indicators for which data is available, and discusses data challenges for the remaining goals. The Report also presents recommendations for national policy-makers to monitor progress towards meeting the education goals.

According to the 2016 Report, if current trends continue, the world is not on track to meet the new education goals by 2030. This would be a major loss given the critical role that education can play for the world to achieve the other SDGs. The Report organizes its analysis under six main chapters: people, planet, prosperity, peace, place and partnerships.

The GEM Report representative concluded by describing the communications and outreach activities that have accompanied the launch of the Report since 6 September. This includes traditional and social media outreach and dozens of launch events that have been held and are still planned to be held in the coming months. The Full Report and the Summary are being translated into the six United Nations languages as in previous years, and the Summary is being translated into an additional 15 national languages. On 3 October, the 2016 GEM Report Gender Review will be launched during an event to be held in UNESCO Headquarters.

In the discussion that followed, the members of the Executive Board praised the work of the GEM Report as an “essential reference document” in drawing attention to the urgent need for national action to accelerate progress towards the new global education goal and targets. The Members raised questions in relation to different aspects of the Report’s messages, reach, and follow-up by UNESCO. Members acknowledged that the Report was sober reading in relation to the progress still needed to be achieved to reach the global goal on education. Several members requested clarification on what actions had been planned by UNESCO to facilitate the dissemination and implementation of the Report’s recommendations at the national level. In relation to the Report, one member requested clarity on whether or not the past EFA Development Index would be continued in the new series. There was a request for clarification concerning the reach of the Report on social media and the choice of languages for translation of the Summary version of the GEM Report.

The Assistant Director-General for Education responded by first thanking those countries which had agreed to host launch activities for the 2016 GEM Report. He reiterated that the Report outlines the need for countries to change how they are working to accelerate progress towards the education 2030 goal, but that much can be done in the remaining time before the 2030 deadline. He then went on to describe current initiatives under way by UNESCO. The policy guidance at the country level is being explored through the development of the 39 C/5. There are currently 10 countries covered under a CAP education pilot project to align monitoring. The Education 2030 Steering Committee will be held in December and will review the 2016 GEM Report and make recommendations. UNESCO has every intention to promote the GEM Report as the monitoring report for SDG4.

The representative from the GEM Report further added that the new GEM Report series will need to respond to the needs of the international community. The Report will feed into the work of the SDG Education 2030 Steering Committee and the Technical Cooperation Group. In 2019, the High-Level Political Forum will focus on education and the GEM Report will also aim to inform this process. The global indicators for the follow up and review of the goals have been proposed, and the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators is currently addressing issues of methodology. The thematic indicators are being discussed by the Technical Cooperation Group, which is supported by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics. There is a consultative effort to monitor the new agenda.

While the challenges of meeting the new goals are overwhelming, the GEM Report has specific recommendations. For example, regional organizations with a stake in education can convene meetings and consultations to exchange experiences on systems and policies, for example on how to address disadvantage in education. A chapter in the 2016 Report addresses how regional organizations can help in that respect. The EFA Development Index has not been replaced because many of the new global indicators are not being globally monitored for the time being. In terms of outreach, there were 16 million impressions on Twitter on the day of the launch of the Report. Summaries are being translated both based on needs identified by a dissemination pilot project, as well as a result of national support and demand.

The PowerPoint presentations related to the Global Education Monitoring Report is available here: <http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/GBS/EXB/images/GEM.pdf>

IV. Report on the Implementation of the Strategy for the reinforcement of UNESCO’s Action for the protection of culture and the promotion of cultural pluralism in the event of armed conflict (200 EX/5. I. F)

Introduction by the Representative of the Director-General

The representative of the Director-General introduced the item by briefly referring to the two documents to be presented at the 200th session of the Executive Board: a progress report and the draft Action Plan for the Strategy’s implementation and practical ways for implementing a mechanism for the rapid intervention and mobilization of national experts. He recalled that the Action Plan was elaborated in response to the mandate given to the Secretariat by the General Conference when it adopted the Strategy and contained activities both in line with UNESCO’s mandate and representing the continuation of actions already regularly undertaken by the Organization in response to armed conflicts. He emphasized that the activities included in the Action Plan fitted into the core work of the

cultural conventions. He further recalled the financial constraints and challenges the Organization was facing and underlined that the presented activities required substantial additional funding.

Discussion/queries by the Board

Eleven delegates took the floor. While a majority welcomed the overall objectives pursued through the Action Plan, several Member States expressed concerns regarding the financial implications for the cultural conventions that would result from the allocation of Regular Programme budget to its implementation; the work stream with non-state armed groups; and the need for further clarifications concerning peacekeeping operations. Several delegates requested more detailed information on the Action Plan's contribution to creating synergies between the cultural conventions while avoiding overlaps, as well as on the legal and operational aspects of the proposed mechanism for the rapid mobilization and intervention of national experts, including the latter's selection criteria. One Member State requested more information on cooperation with the conventions' Governing Bodies when implementing the Action Plan. Finally, several delegates called for the organization of additional consultations prior to the 200th session of the Executive Board with a view to address those concerns.

Secretariat's reply to queries

In his reply, the Assistant Director-General for Culture reassured Member States that many of their concerns were already addressed in the wording of the proposed Action Plan and mechanism for the rapid mobilization and intervention of national experts. He stressed the Strategy's objective to reinforce the existing conventions and increase their effectiveness by bringing together their different mandates and areas of work in an integrated framework. He clarified that the modalities for the selection of experts to participate in the rapid mobilization mechanism would be made in accordance with the Organization's policies, including on gender balance. Regarding the financing of the adopted Strategy, he observed that the Heritage Emergency Fund had not yet generated the financial support that was expected and called on Member States to provide the means to the Organization to fulfil its mission. On the activity of the Action Plan concerning non-state armed groups, he reiterated that no direct cooperation was foreseen but rather their indirect sensitization on international humanitarian law through cooperation with specialized NGOs, as is common practice by the United Nations. He further clarified that participation of UNESCO in United Nations Peacekeeping Operations would only be envisaged with the authorization of the United Nations Security Council, as clearly written in the Action Plan. Finally, he indicated that the Secretariat would make every effort to hold additional consultations, underlining however the financial constraints and the fact that the Organization needed to act as soon as possible and could not afford further delaying the decision of the Board.

V. Preliminary proposals by the Director-General concerning the draft 39 C/5 (200 EX/13)

Introduction by the Secretariat

The ADGs of Major Programmes I, II, IV and V and the representatives of the ADG/SHS and ADG/IOC presented the Preliminary Proposals for each Major Programme and for IOC, highlighting the proposed MLAs and the related thematic areas, the linkages with the 2030 Agenda and other international development frameworks. They highlighted also the possible negative impact that budgetary reductions for the next biennium would have on programme delivery, indicating, in addition, the importance of maintaining all regular programme posts. They invited Member States to give due regard to such consequences at the time of their decision making on the budget ceiling.

Discussion/queries by the Board

In the ensuing debate, eleven Member States representatives took the floor.

Several delegates expressed appreciation for the Preliminary Proposals, the focus on the 2030 Agenda and on a limited number of Main Lines of Actions, and thanked the Secretariat for the presentations made.

Referring to the programmatic aspects of the Preliminary Proposals, Member States highlighted the importance of UNESCO's action in the field of natural sciences, and in the promotion of free media and access to information. In that regard, the work undertaken by the Communication and Information Sector was emphasized. Concerns were raised with regard to the prospects of reductions in posts in the Natural Sciences Sector. In relation to Major Programme IV, questions were raised with regard to the measures envisaged to broaden artistic freedom and to monitor and measure the role and impact of culture in relation to the 2030 Agenda. The need to ensure that UNESCO was giving due regard to the two Global Priorities and that a clear monitoring of related activities would be made was also underlined.

It was stressed that UNESCO should devote particular attention and support those Member States who have not even achieved the MDGs, in order to enable them to fully engage in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

The importance of establishing priorities was highlighted, particularly in the context of the financial situation of the Organization. All necessary measures should be taken to ensure that the programmatic priorities are fully funded, including through the structured financing dialogue, the application of full cost recovery, and other innovative funding measures.

One representative noted that the Preliminary Proposals represented a positive first step in the preparation of the draft 39 C/5, and expected that it would be complemented by a robust results framework with sustainability indicators. It was felt that the transformative dimension of priority gender equality was not well reflected for all Major Programmes, and that the response by the Major Programmes II and III to migration, climate change, the ocean and water issues needed to be explicitly reflected. Clarifications were sought about intersectoral cooperation foreseen between Major Programmes I and V in the area of media literacy, as well as about the progress made on the restructuring of the Transparency portal.

One delegate requested information on new activities/thematic areas proposed as a response to the SDGs, and inquired about sunset clauses applied to programmes. Also, noting that staff costs would decline by some \$16 million, he requested clarification concerning the cost increase under the "Other allowances" category of the staff costs. He further requested clarification as to whether a budget orientation debate would be held and noted that, in addition to the information provided on the impact of the \$507 million budget scenario on the Major Programmes, the same information concerning the corporate services, as well as the programmatic impact of the other budget scenarios, would be needed.

Secretariat's reply to queries

The Director-General thanked Member States for their constructive interventions and the comments on the programmatic aspects of the Preliminary Proposals concerning the Draft 39 C/5. In response to the question on sunset clauses, she recalled that there was no strict rule in this regard across all the United Nations system, and in UNESCO in particular, as each C/5 was a new programme and budget cycle. She added that indeed, as reported in previous sessions, UNESCO has halted, re-oriented and transferred some programmes, such as museums and books policy. She reiterated the need for Member States' guidance on programme prioritisation, in particular in light of discrepancies between the priorities set during the 2013 prioritisation exercise and the results of the Questionnaire on the draft 39 C/5.

In response to Member States questions concerning the staff costs, D/BSP clarified that the overall estimate of decrease in the staff costs in reality would only be \$6.6 million, when analysed globally. He further explained that, while the staff cost elements in general would decrease, the increase under "Other allowances" was mainly due to the fact that, in an effort to continuously improve its budgeting practices, the Secretariat now included under this category provisions for separation payments and maternity leave costs amounting to some \$7 million, which were funded previously through vacancy savings.

D/BSP further noted that despite the overall reduction in staff costs, additional amounts were needed to cover technical adjustment items for example, which included new/additional costs of some \$4.5 million in the case of the expenditure plans. He underscored that while it was fortunate that the zero real growth requirements for the 39 C/5 were historically low, a budget ceiling set at a \$507 million expenditure plan level would nonetheless require considerable absorption efforts by the entire Secretariat, including the Major Programmes. He further noted that if Major Programme Sectors used a part of the reinforcement obtained in the 38 C/5 \$518 million expenditure plan to fund posts, these posts would either have to be reconsidered or absorbed, if the Organization budget was forced to come down to \$507 million.

Finally, in response to requests from the floor, the Chair decided that a meeting would be convened before the 200th session of the Executive Board to enable further discussions on the financial and technical aspects of the 39 C/5.

PowerPoint presentation: MP/II – SC: Preliminary Proposal for 39 C/5

http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/GBS/EXB/images/ADG_SC.pdf

PowerPoint presentation: IOC:

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

THE NEXT INTERSESSIONAL MEETING WILL TAKE PLACE ON

TUESDAY 6 DECEMBER 2016

ANNEX

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY ELECTORAL GROUP

Group I

On 19-20 September, the United States, the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie, and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia supported a key UNESCO conference on the Prevention of Violent Extremism—or “PVE”— through Education in New Delhi, India. The objective was to translate PVE policy statements into action. Would you briefly summarize the event outcome, specifically, what UNESCO will do to assist Member States in implementing policy guidance in their education systems? What are the next steps that we should anticipate UNESCO taking in this area and what were the priority areas of action that were identified by Member State participants?

Group II

How would you further improve UNESCO’s capacity to be competitive in attracting extrabudgetary funds, including by sector and fund source (e.g., private sector, multilateral organizations), based on an analysis of a few last years? How will the further development of this capacity be articulated in relation to the foreseen process of the structured financing dialogue and integrated budget?”

Group III

In regards to the Action Plan of the Strategy for the Strengthening of the Action of the UNESCO for the Protection of Culture and Promotion of Cultural Pluralism in cases of armed conflict, GRULAC considers that there are a number of elements that, for the moment, are not clear, including:

- According to the procedures of the United Nations, the mandate and budget of the peace missions are the object of deliberation in its intergovernmental organs (Security Council, Special Commission C-34 and Commission V). However, the Action Plan, as it has been redacted, only mentions the ad hoc dialogue between the UNESCO Secretariat and the DOMP;
- The financial implications of the Plan in respect to the 39 C/5 and its impact on other cultural conventions, considering that 20% of their cost will be covered by the regular budget of the Organization (Annex 2 of the Plan);
- UNESCO’s action against “non-state armed actors” and their regulation under international humanitarian law (Paragraph 28);
- The possibility and eventual problems of a country to recover their cultural property once it has been delivered to a sanctuary of cultural property in a foreign country, because of a state of internal crisis (Paragraphs 7 and 18 of the Plan);
- The strengthening methodology and the building of synergies between the Conventions, without taking into account the comments of the appropriate intergovernmental bodies (Paragraph 22);
- The definition of the representativeness in the intergovernmental committees for the cultural conventions in the areas of cooperation with other bodies of the United Nations (Paragraph 26).
- In this context, where there are still elements that are unclear in the Action Plan, and taking into account its importance, how could the Director General ensure, prior to its

adoption, a broad debate, inclusive and face-to-face debate of the Action Plan for the Protection of Culture and Cultural Pluralism between the Member States and the Organization?

Group IV

At the 200th session of the Executive Board in October 2016, the Director-General will present the preliminary proposals concerning the Draft Programme and Budget based on the General Conference resolution (38 C/Resolution 104), the deliberations held at the 199th session of the Executive Board, as well as the results of her consultations with Member States and all partners. One of the factors that have been taken into account in considering the budget ceiling is for UNESCO to focus on the programme needs in conformity with Results-Based Budgeting (RBB).

Therefore, ASPAC would like to inquire on the impact of the latest efforts which have been undertaken to improve intersectorality at UNESCO in mapping the different 2030 Sustainable Development Goals and targets across sectors such as in Literacy, Education for Sustainable Development and in Global Citizenship Education (GCED). And specifically in which areas UNESCO needs to reinforce intersectoral activities?

Group V(a)

1. With regard to Global Priority Africa and with particular reference to SDG 4 (quality education), 5 (gender equality) and 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions), how will UNESCO use its competencies to ensure that refugee and migrant children, particularly in Africa, and especially the girl child, are not left behind in the period leading up to 2030 and 2063 (African Union Agenda: “the Africa we want”) and stave off a potential threat to peace, security and sustainable development for all, amidst anticipated deep cuts in budget expenditure?
2. Due to the current financial situation of UNESCO, are the two budgetary options suggested compatible with the priority programmes for Africa included in the “Priority Africa” project? Is the Secretariat ready to offer assessment tools to study the quality, the quantity and the level of the effective cost of the programmes?
3. We congratulate the Director-General on the establishment of a UNESCO Task Force on the 2030 Agenda, whose mandate includes ensuring UNESCO’s appropriate support to Member States in the implementation, follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda. Can the Director-General provide us with an update on the work of this important Task Force? Secondly, the reinforcement of UNESCO’s presence in the field is essential for ensuring the successful implementation of the Agenda. Given the unique role of National Commissions for UNESCO, how can the Organization better integrate NATCOMs in the delivery of its programmes in the field and in the mobilization of the much-needed extrabudgetary resources in the Member States? Furthermore, as part of the lessons learnt in the current field network reforms, are there new or emerging roles that could be ascribed to NATCOMs to complement UNESCO’s action in the field towards the attainment of the 2030 Agenda?

Group V(b)

Regarding the needed additional \$14.4 million to reach the \$518 million expenditure, the Secretariat had mentioned during the last intersessional meeting that, aside from raising the contributions of Member States, the other possibility would be to have non-earmarked voluntary contributions that could fill his gap. Have you, Madam Director-General, and your team, started thinking of a strategy to raise non-earmarked funds, since with the global economic situation it is not very likely to approve the increase of Member States contributions? That way we can be well-prepared and have a plan-B.