

**FINAL REPORT OF THE CONSULTATION OF THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL WITH
MEMBER STATES AND NATIONAL COMMISSIONS
FOR UNESCO IN Latin America and the Caribbean Region
Montevideo, Uruguay – 14 to 16 September 2012**

Introduction

1. Delegations of 28 Member States/Associate Members attended the Director-General's consultation with Member States and National Commissions for UNESCO of the Latin America and Caribbean region on the preparation of UNESCO's Medium-Term Strategy for 2014-2021 (37 C/4) and the Programme and Budget for 2014-2017 (37 C/5). The following includes a summary of the opening session and a synthesis of the views and proposals expressed by the delegates during the plenary sessions of the consultation. Delegations attended from: Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Aruba, Bahamas, Barbados, Brazil, British Virgin Islands, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Curaçao, Dominica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, Saint Kitts & Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saint Maarten, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay, Venezuela.
2. **His Excellency, Mr Oscar Gómez da Trinidad, President of the Uruguay National Commission for UNESCO**, welcomed the participating delegations and thanked them for attending this important meeting. He stressed the importance of the regional consultation to UNESCO, in view of the key role of National Commissions for the Member States of the region and for the Organization, in particular in the light of the difficult situation currently faced by UNESCO. He accordingly stressed that UNESCO must implement its mandate and concentrate on priority areas in which it had comparative advantages, namely the culture of peace and sustainable development. UNESCO must take the lead in the reflection and advancement of issues such as climate change, girls' and women's education, and culture and development, to respond to the major challenges ahead, such as poverty eradication, the reduction of inequalities, sustainable development, peace and security.
3. He added that the presence of the Director-General at the opening meeting demonstrated the importance of the consultation and incontrovertibly reaffirmed her commitment to the institution and to the interests of Member States. He also stressed that, in the current circumstances, the National Commissions played a crucial role as intermediaries between the governments and the Organization, as sounding boards for countries' interests, as instruments for disseminating UNESCO's programmes and activities within countries and as vital means of implementing and effectively delivering the various projects and initiatives involving the Organization and the countries of the region.
4. Lastly, he stressed the importance of the recent proposals by the Director-General concerning the draft Medium-Term Strategy and the draft Programme and Budget as contained in document 190 EX/19, which would be discussed by Member States and would undoubtedly enrich debates during the consultation. He called on the delegations to work to achieve a consensus on the C/4 and C/5 documents and thus produce a final report reflecting the region's interests for consideration at the forthcoming session of the Executive Board.

5. The **Director-General of UNESCO, Ms Irina Bokova**, thanked the Government of Uruguay for its generosity in hosting the regional consultation. She expressed her appreciation for the participation of representatives of Member States and National Commissions from Latin America and the Caribbean in this event, which was occurring at a crucial moment for the future of the Organization and which represented an opportunity for in-depth reflection on both the functions and the operation of the Organization. While praising the important progress made in many areas by LAC countries, she also highlighted some of the new challenges which the region is facing today, including: the increase of inequalities; social, economic and environmental stress; difficult democratic transitions; climate change, all affecting in particular Small Island Developing States (SIDS). She emphasized that in order to respond efficiently to these challenges and to remain faithful to its mandate to build peace in the minds of men and women, UNESCO has to reform itself and to redefine its priorities and their implementation mechanisms.
6. The Director-General stressed that, as part of her broader reform efforts, she had dedicated her efforts to raising the visibility of UNESCO in several key areas of comparative advantage, which are now receiving increased recognition at the highest level. She mentioned in particular the growing recognition of the links between culture and development, and the current preparation, with UNDP, of a report on the creative economy, and also the lead role given to UNESCO in the UN Secretary General's "Education First" Initiative, which will be chaired by the Director-General. She referred to the establishment of the Secretary-General's Scientific Advisory Board, for which UNESCO will serve as Secretariat, as well as the role of UNESCO in the development and implementation of the UN Ocean Compact.
7. Referring to her preliminary proposals for the Medium-Term Strategy 2014-2021 (37 C/4), and the Programme and Budget for 2014-2017 (37 C/5) she underlined that they were informed by a broad range of consultations including directions provided by the 36th General Conference, thematic debates with the Member States, the record number of replies to the questionnaires, regional consultations. She also underscored the "preliminary" nature of these proposals whose aim was to inform discussions and debates by the Member States during the 190th session of the Executive Board. She informed the meeting that the draft 37 C/4 and 37 C/5 will be submitted to the 191st session of the Executive Board. Having listened to the requests by the Member States for a more focused, more strategic, more coherent UNESCO, she proposed a sharp reduction in the number of overarching and strategic objectives and of main programmes. This focus should lead to new, integrated and transversal modalities of action naturally encouraging linkages and integrating for example, education and ICTs, natural and social and human sciences, and enabling a better interface among science, policy and society. She recalled the importance of youth, which represents a major potential in the LAC region and informed that she will propose at the 190th session of the Executive Board a Strategy to mainstream Youth throughout each programme of the Organization. Furthermore, she emphasized that human rights, equity, sustainability and social inclusion will remain guiding principles for the Organization. Finally, she expressed her warmest wishes for the success of the deliberations.

8. **His Excellency Mr Ricardo Ehrlich, Minister of Education and Culture of Uruguay**, welcomed the authorities and delegations participating in the meeting. He then conveyed greetings and best wishes from Mr Jose Mujica, President of Uruguay, who was pleased that such an important event was being held in Uruguay and convinced that it would contribute to the development of the region. The Minister highlighted the importance of the meeting held at a time when UNESCO and the international community faced great challenges. He was convinced that the countries of the region, despite their diversity, would draw on their common history in taking up the call to seek and find the best pathways and responses and to build common destinies based on equal rights and sustainable development in order to take up the challenges posed by civilizational changes presently affecting the world.
9. He said that transformations faced by civilization, including the strengthening of ethical principles, must be made. He considered that the main challenges were the building of social cohesion, the strengthening of coexistence and peace, work to achieve equal rights and the strengthening and development of human capacities. He stated that the pillars of economic, social, and environmental sustainability on which the United Nations had to date based its work no longer sufficed and that a fourth pillar — culture — must be strengthened in order to create areas for coexistence and ties of solidarity in societies. He accordingly stressed the importance of UNESCO in that new phase.
10. The Rules of Procedure were approved without modifications. The Provisional Agenda was approved with minor modifications.
11. The delegates of the following Member States were elected as members of the Bureau:
 - Chairperson:** Uruguay
 - Vice-Chairpersons:** Jamaica and Mexico
 - Rapporteur General:** Barbados
 - Co-Rapporteurs:** Argentina and Cuba
12. **Mr Jean-Yves Le Saux, Deputy Director of the Bureau of Strategic Planning and Director of the Division for Programme and Budget**, introduced the discussion on the 37 C/4 and C/5 outlining the new external environment of the current consultations, including pre- and post-2015; post-MDG period; post-Rio+20 outcome and follow-up; post-EFA context, post-WSIS; the UN Secretary-General's calls for an integrated approach to human development, sustainable development, economic development, peace and security, as well as his global Initiatives on education and science; the strengthened aid effectiveness agenda; the renewed approaches to UN coherence and effectiveness at country level. Among changes in UNESCO's internal environment, he mentioned the shift to a new planning cycle (8 years for the C/4 and 4 years for the programme part of the C/5); the recommendations of the Independent External Evaluation; and the decisions of the General Conference and the Executive Board on the preparations of documents 37 C/4 and 37 C/5; new format for the questionnaire with both qualitative and quantitative dimensions. Echoing Director-General's statements with regard to her Preliminary proposals, he underlined the focus in order to reduce fragmentation,

and emphasized the proposal for results based budgeting (RBB) and a Zero Nominal Growth Budget included in Part II of the document 190 EX/19.

13. Mr Le Saux suggested that deliberations during the cluster and plenary meetings could focus on the following key area/themes: Medium-Term Strategy for 2014-2021 (Mission statement, Overarching objectives, UNESCO's functions, Global priorities); Programme for 2014-2017 (priority programme areas, areas for UNESCO's leadership, within and outside the UN system, intersectorality, working closer to the field, operational effectiveness of the Organization, working with the UN, including at country level, partnerships); role of the National Commissions for UNESCO.
14. Sub-regional groups met on 14 September to discuss agenda items and reported to the plenary on the outcome of their discussions on 15 September.

Plenary discussion

15. During their discussions, participants in the meeting agreed with the need to reform, modernize and de-bureaucratize the Organization, as well as to further increase the focus of its programmes. In this respect, and pending further examination, the participants expressed their appreciation for the general thrust of the document and acknowledged the commendable efforts which would have gone into its preparation.
16. In particular, they agreed to the need for UNESCO to work closer to the Field in order to better respond to the needs and priorities of countries, in particular by strengthening the decentralization of its human and financial resources and activities to the Field, by adopting a differentiated approach depending on specific needs of countries ("one size does not fit all"), and by ensuring greater operational flexibility and results-based accountability at country level. They welcomed the proposal of abolishing the intersectoral platforms, while emphasizing the need to further enhance intersectorality as a method of work. They further welcomed the commitment to reduce in UNESCO's budget the share of administrative expenditures in favour of programme implementation.
17. Participants urged that UNESCO should better reflect in its programmes the specific needs of the LAC region (see below). They emphasized that UNESCO should not overlook the fact that the greater part of the countries in the LAC region are categorized as Middle Income Countries (MICs) including large populations living in extreme poverty. The LAC region is the most unequal region in the world.
18. Participants reiterate and agreed to establish Spanish as a working language of UNESCO in all its publications and in the contents of the Organization's website. Spanish is the third most widely spoken language in the world and the second most studied language after English. Failure to generalize the use of this language at UNESCO restricts the Organization's impact on a potential population of 450 million to 500 million worldwide which has Spanish as its first or second language.
19. Also adopt Portuguese as a UNESCO working language, in accordance with the request of the Portuguese-speaking countries at the 35th session of the General Conference. Portuguese is one of the five most widely spoken languages in the

world, spoken by more than 250 million people in eight countries in Africa, South America, Asia and Europe. Establishing Portuguese as a working language would be consistent with the Organization's objective of strengthening multilingualism and cultural diversity.

A - Medium-Term Strategy for 2014-2021 (37 C/4)

20. As regards the general context in which the next strategy and programme of the Organization is prepared, several areas were discussed:

1. Mission statement

21. The participants agreed on the mission statement as proposed in document 190 EX/19 "As a specialized agency of the United Nations, UNESCO contributes to peace and sustainable development, building inclusive knowledge societies through education, the sciences and culture", with the understanding that it will not reduce the scope of UNESCO's mandate or activities, especially the eradication of poverty.

2. Overarching objectives for 2014-2021

22. The participants agreed to the two overarching objectives formulated in document 190 EX/19, however it is suggested to reformulate objective number 1: ".....and promoting interculturality".

3. UNESCO's functions

23. Participants acknowledged the importance of shifting the formulation of UNESCO's functions from 'being' to 'doing'. They agreed to the formulation of functions 4 and 5. However, they recommended the modification of the formulation of functions 1, 2 and 3, as follows:

- **Function 1:** several participants indicated their preference for retaining the term "laboratory of ideas", suggesting the following possible formulation: "Lead, as a laboratory of ideas, the global agenda in education, the sciences and culture through policy analysis and benchmarking". Others felt that this function should also highlight the importance of innovation and creativity. Several felt that the use of the terms "education, the sciences and culture" could be replaced with the expression "UNESCO's fields of competence".
- **Function 2:** participants recommended the incorporation of the exchange of best practices.
- **Function 3:** the meeting agreed to the following re-formulation: "Fostering international and regional cooperation including through the development of strategic alliances and partnerships".

24. It was also emphasized that given the importance and complexity of redefining the Organization's functions, more time for in-depth reflection was needed.

4. **Global priorities**

25. The meeting agreed to maintain Africa and Gender equality as global priorities.
26. While acknowledging the need for agreeing on a limited number of global priorities, and taking note of paragraphs 26 and 27 of document 190 EX/19, delegates nevertheless, considered that the multiple and complex challenges which SIDS are facing in the region justify recognizing SIDS as a global priority.
27. Furthermore, it was agreed that youth, which represents the largest part of the LAC region's population, should also be recognized as a global priority.
28. The following reformulation of the two global priorities was agreed on:
 - Global Priority 1: Africa and SIDS
 - Global Priority 2: Gender Equality and Youth

5. **Major Programmes**

29. The meeting discussed the proposal to reduce the number of UNESCO's Major Programmes from 5 to 3 and to change their formulation.
30. Concerning the number of Major Programmes, two opinions emerged from the discussions:
 - one group expressed a preference for maintaining the five Major Programmes;
 - another group expressed a preference for reducing the number to three, as proposed in document 190 EX/19, with the understanding however that this would not entail a reduction of the Organization's commitment to current programmes nor the elimination of Sectors.
31. Concerning the formulation of the title of Major Programme 3 two proposals were put forward:
 - "Culture, creativity and freedom of expression";
 - "Culture, creativity and means of access to knowledge" (~~means of access to knowledge~~).
32. In general, participants considered that further explanations should be provided concerning the rationale for reducing the number of Major Programmes to three and the resulting implications.
33. Participants agreed that given the time span of the future C4 documents (8 years) it should be a rolling strategy.

B - Programmes for 2014-2017 (37C/5)

34. With the understanding that the merger of the current five Major Programmes into three and their respective names are decisions to be taken by the 190 Executive Board, the priorities identified by the region presented below are indicative and are not presented in an hierarchical order.

35. In reference to Major Program I: *Education for Peace and Sustainable Development*, key priorities included the following:

- Universal Early Childhood Care and Education
- International Conference of Education of Young and Adults (CONFINTEA)
- Quality education for all
- Continuous professional development of teachers
- Recognition of diplomas and mobility in higher education
- Development of centres that focus on special needs of children
- Support IT in the school curricula
- Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)
- Improving learning in mathematics, science and language in primary and secondary school
- HIV & AIDS education for prevention
- Education for sustainable development
- Reinforcement of UNESCO Chairs
- Reinforcement of UNESCO Associated schools (ASPnet)
- Strengthening of regional strategies in Education for All - EFA / PRELAC
- Human Rights Education for peace, non-discrimination, equality, justice and non-violence
- Including arts and culture in educational curricula
- Inclusive education
- Reinforcement of Education Institutes in LAC: IPE, IESALC

36. In reference to the Major Program II: *Mobilizing the sciences, technology and innovation for peace and sustainable development*, key priorities included the following:

- Supporting the development of science, technology and innovation policies
- Development of a Centers of Excellence for climate change and sciences
- Development of evaluation systems on the impact of climate change on SIDS
- Establish alliances for implementing activities and programmes for mitigating the impact of climate change
- Development of policies to protect against natural disasters
- Development of Early warning systems in the region
- International Oceanographic Commission (IOC)
- International Hydrological Programme (IHP)
- Man and the Biosphere Programme (MAB)
- Geoparks (regional and international networks)
- Water for All (fresh water systems)
- Natural disaster risk reduction and mitigation
- Further discuss the establishment of ethical principles on climate change
- Engineering initiatives

- Considering sports as means of societal change for youth
- Renewable energy
- Youth development
- Promoting anti-doping in sports
- Management of Social Transformations (MOST)
- World Commission on the Ethics of Scientific Knowledge and Technology (COMEST)
- International Bioethics Committee (IBC)
- Intergovernmental Committee for Physical Education and Sports (CIGEPS)
- Promotion of Human Rights, fight against any type of discrimination, social inclusion policies, youth
- Promote interculturality
- Promote the creation of Category 2 Centers in the region

37. In reference to the Major Program III: *Culture, Creativity and Freedom of Expression*, key priorities included the following:

- Strengthening cultural industries, creative industries and network of cities for peace
- Develop capacities and assist in the formulation of policies to ensure the effective implementation of Conventions
- Reinforce follow-up mechanisms of the Convention on the protection and promotion of the diversity of cultural expressions
- Capacity-building on the promotion and follow-up of the Conventions
- Strengthening the Slave route programme
- Capacity-building for design and implementation of cultural policies
- Coordinate and establish synergies among Conventions for increasing their efficiency
- Positioning Culture as the 4th pillar of sustainable development (social, economic and environmental)
- Promote the right to Culture
- Further discuss on a standard-setting instrument regarding museums and collections
- Memory of the World Programme
- Information for All Programme
- Universal access to knowledge
- Free, independent and pluralistic media
- Freedom of expression
- Close the digital divide and democratization of the use of ICT
- Open Educational Resources (OER)
- Recognize the role of arts and culture in the promotion of social inclusion, eradication of poverty, reducing youth violence, etc.

C – Role of the National Commissions for UNESCO

- The network of National Commissions is a unique model within the United Nations System, and its potential must be fully harnessed.
- National Commissions constitute a vital component in the UNESCO structure for the achievement of the Organization's mission and objectives.
- It is critical that their central interlinking role be strengthened among all stakeholders that have competence for the Organization's programmatic areas.

- The Participation Programme constitutes a fundamental tool for enhancing the Organization's visibility in Member States and for the development of the National Commissions, having regard not only to their own specific activities but also their connections with public entities and civil society.
- The region draws attention to the paucity of funds allocated to its Member States under the Participation Programme for 2012-2013. This reflects an inequitable distribution of funds compared to other regions, in the implementation of the Programme.
- UNESCO must continue systematically to inform National Commissions of available fellowships that it coordinates.
- The role of National Commissions within the Organization must be strengthened.
- Communication and the flow of information on UNESCO's programmes and activities between that Organization and the National Commissions must be improved. The Secretariat must respect established communication channels so that Member States can be aware of activities carried out in the field.
- It is recommended that training programmes for new Secretaries-General and staff of National Commissions be improved.
- UNESCO should contribute to communication and exchange of good practices among National Commissions.

D - UNESCO's cooperation with National Commissions

38. A special session on UNESCO's cooperation with National Commissions and civil society partners was organized during the Consultation. Mr Eric Falt, (ADG/ERI), made a presentation focusing on UNESCO's partnership strategy, enhanced communication between National Commissions and the UNESCO Secretariat, the follow-up to the review of the Secretariat's cooperation with National Commissions and the Participation Programme.
39. Regarding the partnership strategy, the delegates were informed that, as requested by the Executive Board, an overall strategy for partnerships with civil society, including NGOs, the private sector, the media, UNESCO clubs and parliamentarians has been produced by the Secretariat and will be submitted to the 191st session of the Executive Board (October 2012) for consideration. Given the important role of National Commissions in this regard at country level, ADG/ERI invited the participants to closely follow up and contribute to this debate.
40. Delegates were also informed that over the last two years, a number of new measures, such as the Monthly letter and the www.unesco.int website, were put in place to improve communication with Member States and National Commissions. The purpose is to provide information well in advance and to involve National Commissions in the celebration of special events and the launching of important reports. such as the EFA Global Monitoring Report (GMR).
41. ADG/ERI recalled that as follow-up to the Report of Review of the Secretariat's Cooperation with National Commissions (available online since January 2012), the Executive Board endorsed at its 190th session the setting up of the open-ended tripartite working group composed of representatives of National Commissions, Permanent Delegations and the Secretariat (HQ and field offices) and asked the regional consultations on 37 C/4 and 37 C/5 to produce proposals on the remit and terms of reference of this group for its consideration and adoption at 191st session. A preliminary proposal in this regard was circulated to the delegates for discussion.

42. Mr Falt finally stressed that the management of the Participation Programme has been improved by the Secretariat in spite of the current financial difficulties. He informed the participants that priority groups, including SIDS, are well taken into consideration. Mr Falt informed the participants that the Participation Programme was undergoing an external audit and that the first phase already took place at Headquarters. The second phase of the audit, mid-September to mid-October, will take place in some national Commissions identified by the external auditors. Finally, an appeal was made to National Commissions to send any outstanding financial reports.
43. During the ensuing debate, the participants expressed their satisfaction with regard to the qualitative improvement in the work of the External Relations and Information (ERI) Sector and the enhanced support it provided to the National Commissions thus increasing the visibility and the recognition of the crucial role National Commissions have in the implementation of UNESCO's activities at national level. It was emphasized that support to National Commissions should be provided not only by ERI, but by all Sectors at Headquarters. While acknowledging the financial constraints of the Organization, the delegates highlighted the importance of the Participation programme and called for more flexibility in the rendering of accounts, as well as for solidarity among countries and electoral groups with regard to the amounts allocated. In this regard, they also recognized the responsibility that the National Commissions have for an effective and efficient implementation of the activities funded under the Participation programme. Participants underscored the importance of the presence in the tripartite working group meeting of the National Commissions and called for solutions to be found by the Secretariat to enable it. An emphasis was put on the need to avoid overlapping at operational level with the work done by other agencies of the United Nations and to enhance joint delivery.
44. In his reply, Mr Falt emphasized that, in today's competitive world, multiple communication means put at the disposal of National Commission could contribute to enhance their visibility. He also underscored the need to have better representation of NGOs from LAC in the various specialized fora organized by UNESCO.
45. The meeting expressed its warm appreciation to the Government and National Commission of Uruguay for their generous hospitality including the generous contribution made for the travel and accommodation of participants, as well as for the excellent support provided to the consultation meeting, which contributed to its success. The meeting also expressed its deep thanks to the General Rapporteur, Mrs Celia Toppin, for the quality of the report.