

**Sub-Group 1: Structure, composition and methods of work of the Governing Bodies
(General Conference and Executive Board)**

Informal Summary

15 November 2016

The Co-Chairs presented draft recommendations for Sub-Group 1 ensuing from discussions held on 2 June and 23 September 2016. They noted that some recommendations have legal and financial implications. The Co-Chairs underscored that the recommendations were a preliminary draft that would allow identification of recommendations that met consensus and those that would need further refinement and consideration. It was decided to review the draft recommendations prepared by the Co-Chairs paragraph-by-paragraph.

The chapeau paragraph was approved.

I. General Conference

Mandate

Paragraphs 1 and 2 in the document were approved.

Structure

Paragraph 3 generated substantial discussion on the proposed options. A number of Member States requested details on their impact, feasibility and legal and financial implications. Some also stated that consideration had to be given to the linkages of each option with the Executive Board, to avoid duplication of its functions.

A slight majority of Member States supported option c. A Member State asked whether it was possible to invoke Article 43 of the Rules of Procedure to establish an ad hoc commission or subsidiary organ and requested more precise definition of “strategic issues.” One Member State expressed the preference that the proposed body should be open-ended in its membership.

Some Member States highlighted that option d. was a more flexible approach and also less costly. The Co-Chairs recalled that this option would give the President of the General Conference the prerogative to convene consultations “when necessary” on key issues, such as the draft C/5 and draft agenda of the General Conference, in order to provide feedback from the wider membership of UNESCO to the Executive Board. A Member State emphasized that the purpose of any option would be to strengthen coordination between the Governing Bodies and enhance the participation of all Member States.

Options a. and b. were not widely supported, due to concerns expressed regarding costs, departure from current institutional set-up, and difficulties of small delegations to cover multiple meetings. One Member State, however, maintained its support for option a. and called for

creative solutions for saving costs. One Member State proposed as an alternative option, extraordinary meetings of the Commissions of the General Conference. Another Member State expressed that it did not think any of the four options were feasible.

The Secretariat provided a rough estimate of resource implications: one General Conference costs US\$ 2.6 million, one additional week costs US\$ 900,000; a one day meeting with interpretation in the 2 working languages costs approximately US\$ 3,000 without temporary assistance and production of documents, while this figure goes up to US\$ 12,000 for a meeting in the 6 official languages.

Since it was not possible to arrive at a consensus, the Sub-Group agreed to keep this paragraph open with the four options for the time being. The Co-Chairs would revise the paragraph and the Secretariat would provide more information on costing in advance of the meeting of the Working Group on 15 December.

On paragraph 4, a Member State recalled the need to reinforce the role of the General Conference in preparing the C/5, while another noted the importance of avoiding duplication with the Executive Board. The Secretariat recalled the C/6 document which contains the recommendations of the Executive Board to the General Conference on the C/5. The Co-Chairs would revise this paragraph in conjunction with paragraph 3.

It was agreed that paragraph 5 would be moved to the recommendations that concern the Executive Board.

Paragraph 6 would also be reformulated together with paragraphs 3 and 4.

Rules of Procedure

Paragraph 7 was approved by the Sub-Group, after it was clarified by the Secretariat that the Legal Committee could easily absorb the work of the Credentials Committee and this would lead to efficiencies in terms of organization of the General Conference and cost reductions.

Paragraph 8 was adopted, after the Secretariat explained that in case of last minute withdrawals, there was still opportunity to submit candidatures if an Electoral Group needed to fill slots for elections to a subsidiary body.

Paragraph 9 was adopted.

Voting Rights

Paragraph 10 was approved.

Paragraph 11 was approved, after comments of a Member State to include "other UNESCO bodies."

Role of the Bureau

On paragraph 12, citing the need to reinforce transparency and accountability, several Member States expressed support for this recommendation. A number of delegations also supported the alternate suggestion, as the General Conference works in a very rapid manner. It was agreed that, at a minimum, a list of main Bureau decisions should be distributed to all delegations in a timely manner by the Secretariat.

One Member State expressed that it was not convinced of the merit of the proposal, since it would entail additional workload and the role of Vice-Presidents is to brief their respective Electoral Groups. In this connection, some Member States and the co-Chair mentioned the differences in working methods of Electoral Groups and the importance of uniform and timely interpretation of key decisions of the Bureau. The paragraph was approved.

Working Methods

Organization of the Session

Paragraph 13 was approved.

Paragraph 14 was approved.

Paragraph 15 was approved with an amendment proposed by a Member State.

On paragraph 16, as requested by the Sub-Group, the Secretariat prepared a cost estimate for an additional week of the General Conference together with a simulation of the timetable of work. The substantial cost increase (additional US\$ 900,000) and the difficulty for some delegations to participate in one additional week did not gather support for this recommendation.

Agenda

With respect to paragraph 17, a few Member States noted that organizing a meeting of the Bureau of the General Conference intersessionally would be complicated due to the size and composition of the Bureau and possible overlap with the Executive Board. One Member State recalled that the Bureau only has a coordination role. Other Member States supported the proposal, but said that opening Bureau meetings to all Member States was not feasible. It was suggested to review the formulation of the recommendation in conjunction with paragraph 3.

One Member State called for earlier distribution of the timetables of the Commissions of the General Conference. The Secretariat recalled that the General Conference provisional agenda and timetable are examined by Member States during two Board sessions and depend on the items added, including by the Executive Board preceding the General Conference. The statutory deadline for submission of items is set at 8 weeks before the General Conference, hence preliminary timetables could be envisioned after this deadline.

Relationship with Executive Board and Secretariat

Paragraph 18 was approved.

The Co-Chair proposed that paragraph 19 be considered by Sub-Group 2.

Paragraph 20 was adopted (with an amendment that would refer to harmonization of means between the two governing bodies).

II. Executive Board

Paragraph 21 was agreed.

Composition and membership

Paragraph 22 was approved.

Paragraph 23 would be amended to reflect comments from Member States.

Term limitations

On paragraph 24, a number of Member States supported option b. Some Member States supported options a. and c., noting that each Electoral Group had its own dynamics and specificities. Two delegations recalled the inherent right of each Member State to stand for election. One Member State reiterated its support for option c. It was agreed to keep this paragraph open for further discussion and possible revision.

Paragraph 25 would be amended following comments regarding differences in Electoral Groups.

Structure

It was agreed to examine cost implications before adopting paragraph 26.

Paragraph 27 would be amended taking into account a suggestion from a Member State to refer to the work of all Commissions, not only the Joint Commission.

Paragraph 28 was adopted.

On paragraph 29, several Member States requested that reference to “only once a year” be removed. Others preferred to maintain it. The Co-Chairs would reflect on the discussion and revise the paragraph.

On paragraph 30, the sovereignty of Member States and need for flexibility in the deadline was mentioned by a Member State and the Secretariat. Other Member States emphasized the need to “frame” national statements and focus them on the agenda of the Board. The paragraph was adopted with adjustments.

Paragraph 31 was adopted in the context of the discussion on the preceding paragraph.

Rules of Procedure

Paragraphs 32 and 33 were adopted.

With respect to paragraph 34, the Co-Chairs proposed to establish the deadline for submission of new items to one week before the start of the Board, which would entail appropriate amendment of the Rules of Procedure. There were no objections to the paragraph.

Regarding paragraph 35, it was recalled that during the 200th session of the Executive Board there was an extensive discussion during a private meeting on the Director-General's proposal to amend Rule 59. Following this debate, the Board decided to review the matter at a later stage and proposed to refer it to the Working Group on governance. It was therefore agreed to amend the paragraph to take into account the various views expressed, including confidentiality when dealing with certain issues. The co-Chair also recalled that the Rules of Procedure allowed for private meetings.

On paragraph 36, several Member States recalled their support to the recommendation. Questions were raised on the evaluation of the intersessional meetings of the Executive Board. The Secretariat informed that the President of the Executive Board decided to postpone the mid-term evaluation to the first intersessional meeting of 2017, since the last intersessional meetings for 2016 will be devoted to the 39 C/5 preparation. The evaluation would be included in the final report of the Working Group which will be submitted to the Executive Board and then to the General Conference next fall. Several Member States stressed that the Working Group had the mandate to provide recommendations on the intersessional meetings. The Co-Chair stated that, in his view, the paragraph already contained a preliminary evaluation of the intersessional meetings from the perspective of Sub-Group 1. There was a request to slightly amend the paragraph.

Role of the Bureau

Member States that took the floor to support paragraph 37 recalled the need for more transparency. One Member State reiterated the view that minutes would constitute additional work load. It was proposed that the same wording, pertaining to a summary of main decisions of the Bureau, be used as in paragraph 12 of the draft recommendations to promote consistency. The paragraph was approved accordingly.

Working Methods

Agenda

Paragraph 38 was approved.

Open-ended Informal Consultations

Paragraphs 39 and 40 were approved.

Paragraph 41 was approved with an amendment to remove “without charge.”

Paragraph 42 was approved.

For further elaboration

Paragraphs 43, 44, 45, and 46 were approved.

The Co-Chairs proposed that an additional paragraph 47 be added in the revised text concerning transparency of the procedures for elections of the Director-General. There were no opposing views expressed.

The Co-Chairs informed they would circulate revised draft recommendations as soon as possible before the 15 December Working Group meeting, in coordination with the Bureau of the Working Group and the Secretariat. They would present the revised draft at that meeting through an oral report.

Under Other Matters, the Co-Chairs discussed tentative plans for meetings of Sub-Group 2 in 2017.

Participants: 67 Member States