



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Open-ended Working Group on governance, procedures and working methods of the governing bodies of UNESCO

Eighth meeting, Thursday 13 June 2019

SUMMARY

Chaired by the President of the General Conference, the purpose of the meeting was, in accordance with recommendation 134 endorsed by the General Conference in 39 C/Resolution 87, to examine recommendations 52 and 53, which had remained outstanding.

Before turning to the examination of the two recommendations, the Ambassador, Permanent Delegate of Japan recalled that, in his letters of 9 and 22 May and 7 June addressed to the President of the General Conference, his delegation had expressed the wish, on behalf of 28 Permanent Delegations, that the question of the draft amendment to Article V, paragraph 4 of the Constitution – proposed by 32 Member States, and the subject of item 7.3 of the provisional agenda of the 40th session of the General Conference – be examined by the Working Group at its meeting of 13 June 2019, or at another opportunity before the summer of 2019. A lengthy discussion ensued on whether the nature of such a meeting should be formal or informal, and who would be the appropriate person or body to convene it. Following the debate, it was decided, with the agreement of the parties concerned, that an informal meeting on the subject would be organized and co-chaired by the Permanent Delegations of Japan and the Philippines to UNESCO.

The Working Group then turned to the consideration of recommendation 52:

Following a thorough assessment of the candidates, it is recommended that the Executive Board propose a short list of a minimum of two and up to three nominees to the post of Director-General for appointment by the General Conference.

In her introduction, the President of the General Conference outlined, *inter alia*, the scope and procedural and substantive implications that the implementation of the recommendation would entail.

It was recalled that the content of that outstanding recommendation had been taken up almost word for word by the draft amendment to Article 6, paragraph 2 of the Constitution, proposed by the State of Qatar, which would be the subject of an additional item on the agenda of the 40th session of the General Conference. After a lengthy debate, the Working Group decided not to make a recommendation on the issue, in particular to allow for further reflection and avoid repetition, since it would be discussed by the General Conference under the additional item on the agenda requested by Qatar, which had received the support of El Salvador and Turkey.

It was subsequently recalled that, should the draft amendment be adopted by the General Conference at its 40th session, it would imply additional amendments to be made to other texts, in particular to Rules 104 and 106 of the Rules of Procedure of the General Conference and Rules 54 and 56 of the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board. The timetable applicable for the two organs to adapt their respective regulations to the new constitutional text adopted by the General Conference implied that it would be operational

only for the process of election to the post of Director-General, to be held at the 43rd session of the General Conference in 2025. The State of Qatar also informed the Working Group of its readiness to work with other delegations in the preparation of an explanatory note to be annexed to the draft amendment, which would specify its implications and the proposed timetable for its effective implementation.

Finally, the Working Group considered recommendation 53:

For the nomination of the Director-General, it is recommended to review Rule 56 of the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board, in order to avoid the possibility of the drawing of lots in the case that two or more candidates receive the same number of votes at the eliminating ballot or final ballot (5th round).

It was noted that recommendation 53 was related to recommendation 52. Consequently, it was decided to recommend to the General Conference that, should the draft amendment proposed by Qatar not be adopted, the General Conference recommend that the Executive Board review Rule 56 of its Rules of Procedure in order to avoid the possibility of the drawing of lots, and request it to amend its Rules of Procedure accordingly before the process of nominating a candidate for the post of Director-General in 2021, for the appointment of a Director-General by the General Conference at its 41st session.

Following the discussions, and before closing the meeting, the President of the General Conference announced that two Working Group meetings would be convened after the summer of 2019, respectively to:

- the presentation of the reports from the international and intergovernmental bodies (to which many of the recommendations were addressed) that were unable to attend the meeting on 27 March 2019 devoted to that exercise;
- the review the implementation of all 131 recommendations adopted by the General Conference, using the interim progress report to be submitted by the Secretariat to the Working Group, the Executive Board and the General Conference.

The President of the General Conference informed the Working Group that the two meetings could be held on 30 September and 1 October 2019 respectively, and that she would provide the group with specific information on the subject as soon as possible.