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Educational, Scientific and
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Organisation
des Nations Unies
pour l'éducation,
la science et la culture

Organización
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para la Educación,
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Организация
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منظمة الأمم المتحدة
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联合国教育、
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Item 6.1 of the provisional agenda

40 C/29

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GOVERNANCE, PROCEDURES AND METHODS OF WORK OF THE GOVERNING BODIES OF UNESCO

OUTLINE

Source: 39 C/Resolution 87.

Background: At its 39th session, the General Conference examined the report of the open-ended working group on governance, procedures and working methods of the governing bodies of UNESCO. Through 39 C/Resolution 87, the Conference endorsed 131 of the 134 recommendations formulated by the working group. Recommendation 131 states that a mid-term progress report on the implementation of the recommendations should be submitted by the Secretariat in 2019 to the Working Group on Governance, to the Executive Board and to the 40th session of the General Conference.

Purpose: The present document contains the requested mid-term report.

Decision required: Paragraph 12.



Job: 201912447

INTRODUCTION

1. The *Working Group on governance, procedures, and working methods of the governing bodies of UNESCO* was established by the General Conference at its 38th session as an open-ended group with the mandate of reviewing the governance, procedures and working methods of the governing bodies of UNESCO (38 C/Resolution 101), building on the recommendations of the Executive Board (197 EX/Decision 28 and 44).¹
2. The Working Group met numerous times throughout the 2016-2017 biennium and presented its report (document 39 C/22) to the General Conference at its 39th session (2017). Through 39 C/Resolution 87, the General Conference endorsed 131 out of 134 recommendations made by the Group.²
3. Through their participation in these meetings, a number of Member States expressed their readiness to engage in a reform process that would result in a more relevant, efficient and inclusive Organization, in line with the Terms of Reference of the Group, which state: “In accordance with 38 C/Resolution 101, there is a need for a holistic and comprehensive reform of UNESCO, particularly its governing bodies, in order to ensure greater effectiveness and efficiency in governance and to improve strategic decision-making in the Organization. Reform shall be Member State-driven and reaffirm the intergovernmental nature of UNESCO, pursuant to the mandate contained in its Constitution. To this end, all Member States shall be requested to provide their views and proposals on governance, procedures and working methods”.
4. Recommendation 130 reads as follows: *Governing Bodies and IIBs can be requested to continue to take up the matter of governance reform in their respective agendas and to submit reports in this regard to the 40th session of the General Conference.* To enact this recommendation, the President of the General Conference, Chairperson of the Working Group, wrote in July 2018 to the Chairs of the different UNESCO International and Intergovernmental bodies (IIBs) requesting them to include an item related to the implementation of the recommendations on the agendas of upcoming meetings of their respective bodies and to report back to her in due time.
5. The President of the General Conference convened two meetings of the Working Group, the first on 27 March and the second (to be held) on 30 September 2019, where the Chairs of the different IIBs presented (or will present) their reports. These reports can be found on <https://en.unesco.org/generalconference/workinggroupongovernance>.
6. Recommendation 131 states that a mid-term progress report should be submitted by the Secretariat in 2019 to the Working Group on Governance, to the Executive Board and to the 40th session of the General Conference and a final report should be submitted in 2021 by the Secretariat to the Executive Board and the 41st session of the General Conference.
7. The Executive Board shall examine the present report at its 207th session and will therefore look at those recommendations addressed to it. Under a separate agenda item, and pursuant to recommendation 40, the Board will examine the terms of reference and methods of work of its Preparatory Group, based on lessons learned from its previous intersessional meetings.

¹ Through this decision the Executive Board, taking into account the recommendations and conclusions of the External Auditor's audit report on the governance of UNESCO, recommended to the General Conference the establishment of the Working Group.

² These recommendations are contained in Annex I of document 39 C/70.

8. Recommendation 134 (in the follow-up mechanisms section of the Working Group report) reads as follows:

Recommends to the General Conference to consider to reconvene the Working Group on Governance, Procedures and Working Methods of the Governing Bodies of UNESCO, before its 40th and 41st sessions with the aim to examine:

- a. *the implementation of the adopted recommendations on governance by the 39th session of the General Conference;*
- b. *outstanding recommendations issues in relation to 38 C/Resolution 101 including:*
 - *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;*
 - *For the nomination of the Director-General, it is recommended to review Rule 56 of the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board be reviewed 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 the final ballot (5th round).*

9. In order to provide follow-up to this recommendation, the President of the General Conference convened four meetings of the Working Group in 2019. Two of them were – and will be, on 30 September 2019 – devoted to the presentations by the Chairs of the different IIBs (see paragraph 5 above). Another meeting, held on 13 June 2019 was devoted to sub-paragraph (b) above. And a last meeting, to be held on 1 October 2019, will be devoted to the examination of the present report, thus following up sub-paragraph (a) above and recommendation 131.

10. On 13 June 2019, the Working Group examined the two outstanding recommendations mentioned in sub-paragraph (b) above, corresponding to its recommendations 52 and 53 respectively. It was recalled that the content of the first 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 Qatar³, 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 this 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 – additional item 6.3 of the Revised Provisional Agenda submitted to the Executive Board. Concerning the second outstanding recommendation, the Working Group noted that it is related to the first. Consequently, the Working Group also 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. The full informal summary of the meeting is available on https://en.unesco.org/sites/default/files/summary-meeting_13_june_2019_working_group.pdf.

11. Document 40 C/INF.16 contains a summary on the implementation of the different categories of recommendations addressed, respectively, to the General Conference, to the Executive Board and to the various IIBs (general and specific recommendations). It is to be noted that, in particular concerning the IIBs, their aims, objectives and functions are often very different and it is thus extremely difficult to provide coherent, standardized information on the way each one of them has

³ This constitutional amendment was proposed by Qatar on 9 May 2019 and communicated by the Director-General to Member States and Associate Members through her Circular Letter CL/4278 of 11 May 2019. Subsequently, on 8 August 2019, Qatar submitted a change to the proposed amendment, which was communicated by the Director-General to Member States and Associate Members through her Circular Letter CL/4290 of 8 August 2019.

tried to implement the recommendations of the Working Group, especially those that are general to all of some of them. As mentioned in paragraph 5 above, their comprehensive reports, available online, provide detailed information on what has been or is intended to be done. The templates contained in the Annex to the present document summarize main trends and are thus useful as an overview report on the situation of all IIBs but often need to be contrasted with the full reports in order to obtain a clear idea of the specific situation of each and every one of them.

12. The General Conference may wish to adopt a resolution along the following lines:

The General Conference,

Recalling 39 C/Resolution 87,

Having examined documents 40 C/29 and 40 C/INF.16,

1. *Acknowledges with thanks* the efforts of the President of the General Conference, Chairperson of the Executive Board and the chairs of the different international and the intergovernmental bodies concerned in the follow-up to and implementation of the recommendations endorsed by it in 39 C/Resolution 87;
2. *Thanks* the Director-General for the comprehensive information provided in her mid-term progress report (40 C/29);
3. *Encourages* Member States, the Executive Board, all international and intergovernmental bodies and the Director-General to pursue their efforts, as appropriate, to implement fully all recommendations;
4. *Decides* to examine the final report on the implementation of the recommendations at its 41st session.