

REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE GENERAL CONFERENCE

Meeting on the follow-up to and implementation of the recommendations endorsed by the General Conference at its 39th session on the procedures and working methods of the governing bodies of UNESCO

Tuesday 1 October 2019

Your Excellencies,
Dear colleagues,
Ladies and gentlemen,

This morning, the Working Group on Governance, Procedures and Working Methods of the Governing Bodies of UNESCO considered the mid-term progress report on the follow-up to its recommendations, prepared by the Secretariat in accordance with Recommendation No. 131, which was endorsed by the General Conference in 39 C/Resolution 87. The progress report is contained in documents 40 C/29 and 40 C/INF.16.

I have noted that most speakers expressed their overall satisfaction with the report and that no comments were made on the implementation of the set of recommendations, with the exception of Recommendation No. 20.

At this morning's meeting, the main part of the debate therefore focused on Recommendation No. 20, which was endorsed by the General Conference by that same 39 C/Resolution 87.

The mid-term report reflects the implementation of Recommendation 20 as "*Ongoing: Action expected from Member States*", since it can only be implemented at the initiative of one or more Member States.

Its implementation is beyond the scope of this Working Group, as indicated by some delegations, and as you know, a number of Member States have already submitted an amendment to Article V, paragraph 4, of UNESCO's Constitution to this effect.

Some delegations considered that the question should be discussed within the framework of the General Conference, which follows naturally from Recommendation No. 20. They consider that the discussions can, however, continue in order to reach the desired consensus, but outside the Working Group on Governance.

Other Member States gave greater priority to continuing discussions on the issue in the light of the informal consultations held on 11 September last, which concluded that a broader dialogue was needed. The desire to reach a consensus position was mentioned by those countries. It was also mentioned that Recommendation No. 134 opens the possibility of continuing the dialogue until the 41st session of the General Conference.

Two Member States requested that the two letters addressed to the President of the General Conference by 31 Member States expressing serious reservations about the proposed constitutional amendment be mentioned in the report.

The Secretariat recalled that document 40 C/INF.16 simply reflected, as requested by the General Conference, the status of implementation of each of the recommendations. It would not be appropriate for the report to mention the different opinions or positions of Member States on the content of the recommendations adopted by the General Conference.

It was also recalled that the information meeting scheduled for 9 October next concerns the organization of the General Conference and cannot, by its nature, accommodate a discussion on items on the Conference's agenda. The President clarified that if a Member State wished to take the floor to report on the substance and outcome of the meeting held on 11 September 2019 on the

content of Recommendation No. 20, that could be considered, while noting that the information meeting would not be the subject of a report.

One delegation mentioned the possibility of pursuing other possible compromise paths, with alternative practical solutions, as envisaged by the text of Recommendation No. 20. That proposal seemed to have received some support.

In conclusion, the President of the General Conference appeals to all Member States to continue their efforts in favour of dialogue, consultation and consensus-building, if possible before the matter is considered by the General Conference.