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UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL
SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION
COUNCIL OF THE INTERNATIONAL BUREAU OF EDUCATION

Fifty-fifth session

Varembé Conference Centre
9-11, rue de Varembé, Geneva

24-26 January 2007

PROCEEDINGS AND DECISIONS

1. Opening of the session

The fifty-fifth session of the IBE Council was opened at 10:00 a.m. on 24 January 2007 by H.E. Mrs. Bhaswati MUKHERJEE (India), President of the Council, who extended a cordial welcome to all the members and expressed good wishes for the year 2007.

Twenty-three Member States were represented; the List of participants is attached as Annex XII.

2. Adoption of the agenda and annotated agenda

(Documents: UNESCO/IBE/C.55/1/Prov + Addendum)

DECISION

The Council adopted the agenda and the annotated agenda of the fifty-fifth session without amendment (Annex I).

3. Presentation of the new Director-designate and exchange of views with the members of the Council

The President conveyed a very cordial welcome to Mrs. Clementina Acedo (Venezuela) the new Director-designate of the IBE, who was appointed by the Director-General of UNESCO in November 2006 and who will assume official duty on 15 February 2007. The President expressed the happiness and satisfaction of the Council for this nomination, which, while taking long time, allowed the selection of the best candidate. Mrs. Acedo, currently a professor at University of Pittsburgh, holds a PhD in International Comparative Education from Stanford University and possesses an excellent professional experience both in the field and in several international organizations. The CV of Mrs. Acedo is attached to the Council's Proceedings and Decisions (Annex II).

The new Director-designate thanked the Council for its welcome, as well as the Director a.i. and his team for their excellent work, which she intends to continue in the same direction and spirit. She briefly recalled her professional carrier and expressed her happiness to be leading such an institution. She committed herself to make IBE even more a centre of excellence within the domain of curricula and reforms to respond to the needs of Member States, in particular in the South. She underlined the importance of the Council and expressed the desire to work in full synergy with it. She also intended to establish strong relations with the other components of the Education Sector, as well as other academic institutions and international organizations.

Nine delegations took the floor, conveyed their congratulations to Mrs. Acedo and expressed their satisfaction of her nomination, also conveying their wishes for best of success in addressing the numerous challenges that IBE will be confronted with in the coming years.

Mrs. Acedo thanked the members of the Council for the warm welcome and assured them that she will spare no efforts to carry out, to the best of her capacity, her new responsibilities.

4. Activities of the IBE during 2006

The IBE Director a.i. presented the main elements of the report on the IBE's activities for 2006, as they appear in the document *UNESCO/IBE/C.55/2* and *C.55/Inf.2*.

H. E. Mr. Olabiy YAI (Benin), President of the Administrative Group, presented points 1 to 8 of his report, as well as the Revised Appropriation Resolution for 2006 (*Document: UNESCO/IBE/C.55/Inf.3*).

Summary of the debate

The Director a.i., after having welcomed the Director-designate, as well as the representative of the Education sector and the future Secretary of the Council, made a comprehensive presentation of achievements of the programmes in 2006, which was greatly appreciated by the Council.

Before proceeding any further, the President and numerous members of the Council took the opportunity to thank and to express their gratitude to the Director a.i., who will retire at the end of April 2007. His excellent professional work, his dynamism and dedication to IBE over more than a quarter of a century was highly praised. The President requested that the sentiments of the Council members be reflected in a special motion to be included in the Council proceedings (see point 11 below).

Several Council members expressed their full appreciation for the good quality of work achieved by the IBE through its programmes. Several Members stressed the importance of capacity building efforts for curriculum experts and underlined the excellent achievements made possible by the Community of Practice (COP). At the same time they raised the following issues: the importance of curricula reflecting the theme "Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)", the strategic importance of strengthening IBE's cooperation with Field Offices, the degree of the IBE involvement in the Education Sector reform process and whether as a result of the reform, new assignments would be given to IBE. A request was also made to have a breakdown per geographical region of the implementation rate of programs, so that success could be measured more concretely. The issue of equity in the geographical distribution of the IBE activities was touched upon, for example, it was mentioned that the COP was not as present in certain regions; while, however, the outreach of the capacity building programme was appreciated. Some suggestions were made that the website could be used to better facilitate the dissemination of results of IBE work, so that others can learn from these experiences.

An enquiry was made with regards to the work on curricula development carried out in Afghanistan and whether this could be extended to other countries, like Liberia, Cote d'Ivoire, Congo and Sierra Leone. Furthermore, one member of the Council asked whether there were activities that were not implemented and in such cases, what were the reasons?

The Director a.i. replied to the delegates' questions, emphasizing that the theme ESD could possibly be addressed within the context of the ICE, and that the IBE relations with Field Offices (FO) are very good, an example being the Bangkok Regional Education Office. As for the Education Sector reform, the IBE Director a.i. stated that he had participated in four initial planning meetings and that IBE functions have been clearly identified within the reform framework. He reminded the Council that the Institutes are viewed as important instruments in the decentralization process. As for the detailed breakdown of programs by region, the

Director a.i. considered that this could be achieved for the next Council and that the Director-designate will be in the position to fulfill the request. He also mentioned that curricula issues are politically sensitive and that IBE does not interfere in national curriculum processes unless explicitly requested to do so by Member States. Concerning the sharing of experiences made in Afghanistan with other countries in conflict/post-conflict situations, he reiterated the importance of the research/action/training carried out by the IBE in 2002-2003 with seven countries; he also mentioned a project that has just been discussed with the Regional Office for Education in Africa (BREDA) for new activities in Africa; finally mentioned that the experience and achievements of Afghanistan will be published. The Director a.i. also confirmed that a few planned activities did not take place due to lack of funding from the requesting party (Iraq, Lithuania). As for the Website, it was acknowledged that in 2007 the IBE will pursue all efforts to disseminate good practices, so that they are available to as many Member States as possible.

Some members of the Council wished IBE to be more present in the Arab States, which need substantive support in curricula development. Other members wondered whether it would be more feasible for IBE, because of the scarce financial resources, to have a regional approach, regardless of the different languages, and in close coordination with Regional Education Offices. One observer to the Council asked what role the National Commissions could possibly play. Some members of the Council further noticed that African Anglophone countries were not involved in some IBE activities and asked how the needs of Africa could be addressed in a more balanced manner. The importance of the IBE assisting countries in post-conflict situations was also stressed.

The Director a.i. addressed the issues raised, and presented the draft version of three exploratory studies, which were made available for distribution, specifying that they should be considered as a “work in progress”, namely: A) “*L’Education Biculturelle and Multilingue en Afrique*”; B) “*Education for Sustainable Development*” and C) “*Pour y voir plus clair dans le domaine de l’éducation en vue du développement durable.*”. He also reminded the Council that IBE external evaluation had mentioned IBE focus on the Gulf Arab countries, in detriment of poorer countries. Nevertheless, a COP focal point has already been established (Arab Bureau for Education in the Gulf States (ABEGS) and Gulf Arab States Educational Research Centre (GASERC) and a strengthening of activities in this region is planned accordingly. The Director a.i. confirmed that IBE keeps excellent relations with the National Commissions, which are not only fully informed about IBE activities, but are closely associated to them and in some cases they co-organize activities.

DECISION

At the close of the debate, during which fourteen delegates and one observer took the floor, and in accordance with the Statutes of the IBE stipulating that it “*supervise the execution of the programme activities of the Bureau*”, the Council:

- **took note of the comments and recommendations of the Administrative Group and approved paragraphs 1 to 8 of its Report (Annex IV);**
- **approved the Report of Activities of the IBE Director a.i. for 2006 (Annex III);**
- **approved the provisional accounts of the IBE as at 31 December 2006 (UNESCO/IBE/C.55/Inf.2), reviewed by the Financial Controller of UNESCO, as well as the Revised Appropriation Resolution for 2006 (Annex III). The state of the 2006 accounts, certified by the UNESCO Office of the Controller, will be formally approved by the Steering Committee of the Council in June or July 2007.**

5. Information and exchange of views

5.1. South-South Co-operation in education (*Document: UNESCO/IBE/C.55/Inf.4*)

The IBE Director a.i. briefly presented the information document and the President informed the Council of the deliberations of the 19 January 2007 Information Meeting of the Executive Board with the Director-General of UNESCO, regarding a Fund to be established through voluntary contributions by the Member States of UNESCO, to promote South-South cooperation in education.

Summary of the debate

A frank and constructive debate ensued on this topic. Several members of the Council confirmed their strong support for “South-South cooperation” and recalled the UNESCO commitments to achieve this cooperation, especially in education. Urgent steps should be taken to initiate this type of cooperation and the Director-designate should take note of this as a priority. The President of the Council enquired about the status of a letter that Director-General promised to send to all Member States on this topic. The representative of the ADG/ED informed the Council that a Hqs-based focal point for South-South Cooperation had been appointed within the Education Sector and that the regional focal points were in the process of collecting documentation on good practices, to reflect activities already ongoing, but perhaps not widely known. She also confirmed that the letter on this matter had been drafted and that will be sent soon with suggestions about future steps. The President expressed her view that “UNESCO did not have appetite for South-South Cooperation” for long time, but recently thanks to the resolution, strong support had been developed for this topic, which deserves serious consideration. The letter from the Director-General would be an important step forward, and the education institutes should also identify their specific roles in this process. She also clarified that the South–South Cooperation should establish partnerships with the North, to take advantage of its expertise. It was recalled that the General Conference asked the Director-General to move this issue forward and to establish a Fund for South-South Cooperation in Education for pilot projects. China and India have committed US 1 million each for this purpose. The IBE should prepare the groundwork in order to play a specific role on this. It was also recognised that, in general terms, the IBE already applies South-South cooperation principles, since many of its experts come from Southern countries.

DECISION

The 55th Session of the Council of the IBE,

1. **Recalling General Conference Resolution 33C/7;**
2. **Having examined the document *UNESCO/IBE/C.55/Inf.4*;**
3. **Taking note of the decision 175 EX/Decision 4 (III) of the 175th session of the Executive Board to attach high priority to South-South cooperation;**
4. **Conscious of the Doha Declaration of the Second Summit of the G-77 and China held in Qatar from 12 to 16 June 2005 to establish a Fund for South-South Cooperation;**

5. Further encourages the triangular modalities of cooperation (South-South-North) in order to meet the objectives of EFA, and;

Urges the Director General to:

- 1. Take all appropriate steps to expedite the process of establishment of a South-South Cooperation Fund for Education;**
- 2. Ensure that IBE is appropriately involved in the areas of its mandate in the activities of the South-South Cooperation Programme for Education;**
- 3. Further ensure that the South-South Cooperation Programme for Education is reflected in the Mid-Term Strategy of the IBE.**

5.2. “Education and Care”

The representative of Venezuela informed the Council about the outcomes of the first regional seminar organized in Caracas in June 2006 on the theme of education and inclusion. The conclusions of the seminar are included in the Proceedings and Decisions of the 55th Session of the Council (Annex V).

She also communicated the desire of the Venezuelan Authorities to organize in autumn 2007 an international seminar on this theme, in connection with the preparations of the 48th session of the ICE (see the Council’s decision under point 7 below), and confirmed that the Government of Venezuela could cover part of the expenses.

6. Programme of activities of the IBE in 2007

The IBE Director a.i. presented the main lines of the draft programme of the IBE’s activities for 2007, along with the new presentation of the programme’s structure, as well as the budgetary situation (*Documents: UNESCO/IBE/C.55/3 + its Addendum*). The President of the Administrative Group presented points 9 to 11 of his report, as well as the Revised Appropriation Resolution for 2007 (*UNESCO/IBE/C.55/Inf.3*).

Mr. Mark Bray, Director of IIEP, presented the Institute and its activities as well as perspectives for closer collaboration with IBE within the framework of the important reform of the Education Sector. Mrs. Ana Luiza Machado, DADG/ED, informed the Council about the functions and role of the eight UNESCO institutes within a restructured Education Sector.

Summary of the debate

All delegations expressed their appreciation for the presentation made by the Director a.i. of the IBE activities planned for 2007. The Council equally expressed appreciation for the new presentation of programmes and activities, which it deemed well structured, balanced and very clear, allowing for a good understanding and monitoring of what takes place at the IBE. They also conveyed the request that for the next meeting of the Council some elements be added to clarify the specific IBE role in the larger “constellation” of the Education Sector as well as relations with Field Offices and other education institutes. A member of the Council was of the opinion that IBE had not reached the point of being a prestigious institution, and needed a higher degree of concentration and focus. Some suggestions on future research

projects were discussed concerning curricula frameworks and low achievers (see decision below). Several suggestions for improvements were also made, like that the next presentation on future activities could emphasize what results are to be achieved, not only on how they will be achieved, so that at the same time the presentation could indicate and clarify areas where intersectoral work will be carried out. A two-year plan for research/studies could also be drawn up for the purpose of clarity. Some concrete proposals on future research projects as well as for larger IBE involvement with the Associated Schools Network were also mentioned and supported by the Council (see decision below). The Council also agreed that IBE should not enter into activities related to religious education.

Stress was also laid on the necessity to fundraise actively and the Council took note with satisfaction and gratitude of the announcement by Switzerland to continue its financial support to the IBE (2008-2011) and to provide an additional contribution of CHF 100'000 for the ICE. In 2007, fundraising will be a major challenge for the IBE. It will require innovative efforts to appeal to new potential donors, in order to ensure complementarity of resources, while at the same time avoiding dependence on certain conditionalities that could be imposed by donors. The suggestion was also made that a donors meeting should be organized taking advantage of the General Conference, as indicated in point 8, § 5 of the Report of the Working Group on the ICE.

The issue of how to sustain financially the journal "Prospects", was discussed at length, with the Council members agreeing on the importance for IBE to maintain this activity and on the priority for the Director-designate to actively explore ways of financially ensuring future issues, contemplating also innovative and cost-effective arrangements (see decision below).

Furthermore, the President emphasised that the IBE should develop areas of excellence to be used by Member States, and some members of the Council suggested the organization of longer term training courses for curriculum developers, similar to the ones organized by IIEP. The idea was discussed that IBE could engage more actively in cooperating closely with other institutes, in particular IIEP, and in fostering dialogue among civilizations (see the below decision). Some members also agreed that the draft exploratory study on "L'education biculturelle and multilingue en Afrique", which had been distributed, should be translated into English/Spanish to become more accessible to all African countries. The issue of how to develop an integrated approach to Africa while overcoming the linguistic barriers was also discussed (see decision below).

The Director a.i. thanked the Council members for their interventions, which were very focussed and of high value to stimulate a fruitful discussion. He certainly supported some of the suggestions (see decision below), he also replied to some of the interventions by reiterating that IBE aims at producing high quality results and at having a visible impact on the education systems of the Member States, and the results are clearly indicated in the "fact sheets" submitted to the Council. He also agreed that it would be appropriate to translate the draft exploratory study, after having finalised it. Concerning the organization of longer-term training sessions, the main obstacle is the IBE's limited capacity in human and financial resources. However, the prospect of on-line training is part of IBE's projects and will continue to be elaborated upon. As to further requests to intensify assistance in certain specific geographical areas, the Director a.i. replied by expressing concern about the gap between ever increasing demands and the limitations of the present IBE human and financial resources. Furthermore, he indicated that different programmes have different geographical focus, but that they are being expanded over time to encompass all regions. He also reminded the Council that, concerning technical cooperation/assistance, the IBE can intervene only at the request of Member States. He asked the Education Sector representative to explain the

IBE position within the Education Sector reform process and as compared with other education institutes.

DECISION

At the close of the debate, during which 20 delegations took the floor, and in accordance with the Statutes of the IBE stipulating that the Council is responsible for “*defining in detail, within the framework of the programme and budget approved by the General Conference and taking available extra-budgetary resources into account, as appropriate, the activities to be undertaken by the IBE*”, the Council:

- **took note of the comments and recommendations of the Administrative Group and approved paragraphs 9 to 11 of its Report (Annex IV);**
- **approved the new presentation of the programmes and activities and all the planned activities of the IBE for 2007 (Annex VI) presented by the Director a.i., including the following decisions:**

A) The Council urges the IBE:

- **to take into account, within the programme for 2007, the positions articulated by the delegations of Africa, Latin America and Caribbean, Asia-Pacific and Arab States in order to ensure, over the biennium 2006-2007, an equitable geographical distribution of the activities proportionate to the needs of each region;**
- **to take into consideration, provided that additional financial resources will be available, the proposals put forward by a member of the Council on future research projects concerning curricula frameworks: (i) Possible policies on a basic common curriculum (ii) a reference curriculum; (iii) “UNESCO curriculum” aimed at fostering peace education and dialogue among civilizations; (iv) a larger involvement in the network of UNESCO Associated Schools (ASPNET);**
- **to not implement the project for the organization of a Netforum within the COP on the theme of the role of religious education in the curriculum;**
- **to take into account the proposal by a Council member concerning the preparation of different curricula to meet the needs of low achievers;**
- **to take into account the proposal by some Council members concerning bilingual bicultural education in Africa, in particular to revise and finalize the exploratory study prepared in 2006 and to translate it into English, so that it could serve as a basis for discussions on this topic during the 56th session of the Council in 2008;**
- **to take into account, provided that additional financial resources will be available, the proposal by a Council member regarding the organization of brainstorming activities on curriculum development and implementation, for example, as seminars for reflection;**
- **to take into account, provided additional financial resources will be available, the proposal by a Council member concerning a research project to promote a programme of education and training in values;**
- **to present to the next session of the Council, within the report of activities, information concerning the follow-up on these decisions and the progress made.**

B) Concerning IBE publications as a whole, the Council requests the Director to carry out a strategic analysis of the situation and, more specifically, for the journal *Prospects* to conduct a complete evaluation of the problems and to look for solutions, which would allow for the continuation of the journal’s publication.

C) The Council took note with gratitude of the wish expressed by Kuwait to financially support the IBE, including to help it to continue producing its publications in different languages.

D) As for the sale of the Polish stamps, the Council:

- **having taken note of the information provided in the paragraphs 13 to 16 of the Report of the Administrative Group and of the recommendation made in paragraph 17,**
- **decided to authorize the IBE to proceed with the sale of the stamps.**
- **proposes to suggest to Member States, for instance at the time of the ICE, to issue “IBE stamps”, in the same way as Poland, so as to make it more widely known and also to mobilize extra budgetary resources for its activities.**

Finally, the Council approved the draft budget of the IBE for 2007, as well as the Revised Appropriation Resolution for 2007 (Annex VI).

7. Forty-eight session of the ICE

7.1. Report by the Working Group of the Council

(Document: UNESCO/IBE/C.55/Inf.5)

H. E. Mr. Michael OMOLEWA (Nigeria), President of the Working Group entrusted to assist the Director of IBE in preparing for the 48th session of the ICE, presented the results of their work, which took place on 22 and 23 January 2007 (Annex VII).

DECISION

At the close of the rich debate, during which 15 delegations and two observers took the floor, the themes of the last six sessions of the ICE (1990 to 2004) were revisited and the communiqué of the 16th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers (Cape Town, South Africa, 11 to 14 December 2006) was also taken into consideration in accordance with its Statutes stipulating that it is responsible “*to formulate proposals for the preparation and organization of the sessions of the International Conference for Education*”, the Council:

- **approved the whole Report of the Working Group and thanked and congratulated its members for the quality of their proposals, both in terms of substantive and organizational issues of the 48th ICE;**
- **decided to propose to the 34th General Conference that the 48th session of the ICE be organized in Geneva from 25 to 28 November 2008 on the theme: “Inclusive Education: The way of the future”;**
- **took note with gratitude of the offer by Venezuela to organize in Caracas in autumn 2007, with an appropriate financing, an international preparatory seminar dedicated to the theme of the ICE, which would be the regional consultation for the group of Latin America and Caribbean (GROLAC);**
- **recommended that similar initiatives be taken by Member States in order to organize preparatory meetings at the regional level in all regions;**
- **requested that the Director-designate, in collaboration with Working Group of**

the Council and of the Education Sector, initiate ICE's preparatory works and report to the Council at its 56th session.

7.2. Forum on the theme and sub-themes of the ICE

Summary of the debate

Some Council members confirmed their endorsement on the proposed theme as well as the suggested date, and stressed on the importance for the ICE to attract the interest of high-level dignitaries and ministers of education. Discussions took place on how best to formulate the title, and whether it would be appropriate to include a question mark, or the word 'curricula' or 'human rights'. At the same time, the need was mentioned to develop a detailed concept paper and budget for the ICE. There was also consensus that it would be very useful to have preparatory regional consultations, to ensure a more participatory and comprehensive approach to the initiative. There was agreement on the fact that some issues mentioned will be accommodated within the four sub-themes, which will be further discussed in the coming months. Stress was placed on the importance of ensuring that the technical inputs towards the work of the Conference be evidence based, so that a proper policy dialogue could be developed. It was equally emphasized that the fundamental role and commitment of teachers should be more explicit in the formulation of the fourth sub-theme. The Director a.i. congratulated the Working Group for the excellent work carried out, he also indicated that the budget depended on the ICE structure and once this has been determined, the financial implications will be easier to identify. He also agreed on the importance of policy dialogue and of not mixing themes of too different nature.

DECISION

The Council requested that the Secretariat include in the Proceedings of the 55th session of the IBE Council the proposals put forward during the discussions of the Forum on the theme and four sub-themes of the ICE.

8. UNESCO's Strategy and the IBE's Strategy 2008-2013

(Doc. UNESCO/IBE/C.55/Inf.6)

Mrs. Ana Luiza Machado, new DADG/ED, presented the elements of the draft Strategy of the Education Sector for 2008-2013 (34 C/4), which will be submitted to the Executive Board at its 176th session. Her presentation is annexed to the Proceedings and Decisions of the 55th session of the Council (Annex VIII).

The Director a.i. presented the draft IBE Strategy 2008-2013 (Annex IX), the elaboration of which will continue during the year 2007.

Summary of the debate

Members who took the floor expressed their appreciation for the foreseen structure of the IBE Strategy 2008-2013, which illustrates well the relationship between the UNESCO Strategy and the IBE specificity. It was hoped that the document should also identify, schematically, IBE's place and role within the "constellation" of UNESCO's overall activities on education.

DECISION

At the close of the debate, during which two delegations took the floor, the Council:

- **took note of the status of preparation of the UNESCO Strategy and of the IBE Strategy for 2008-2013;**
- **requested the IBE Director-designate:**
 - **to continue the preparation of this document in light of the decisions, which will be taken at the 176th session of the Executive Board and at the 34th session of the General Conference; and**
 - **to submit a comprehensive document to the 56th session of the Council in January 2008.**

9. Draft programme and budget for the 2008-2009 biennium (34 C/5)

(Document: UNESCO/IBE/C.55/Inf.7)

The IBE Director a.i. presented the proposed activities of the IBE for the biennium 2008-2009 (34 C/5) as well as the draft resolution to be submitted to the 34th session of the General Conference of UNESCO next October (Annex X). He also informed the Council about the financial projections related to the current various budget scenarios and their impact on the IBE budget (Annex XI).

The President of the Administrative Group presented the paragraphs 18 and 19 of his Report (Annex IV)

Summary of the debate

The Council unanimously expressed astonishment and concern with regards to the serious consequences of the current different scenarios, for the survival of the IBE and other institutes. If the budget is, by definition, a policy reflection, one wonders what are, in this respect, the real intentions of the Education Sector and that of UNESCO Headquarters. The search for funding, certainly indispensable, cannot be achieved without a minimum of human resources and it cannot be envisaged that non-compressible institutional expenses (general functioning, staff salaries for established posts, sessions of the Council) be financed through extra budgetary resources or voluntary contributions. Furthermore, a decrease in UNESCO's contribution may send the wrong message which could lead donors to question their institutional support to the IBE. For the Council, it is thus the duty of UNESCO to ensure to the IBE, through its regular budget, the basic funding it requires to meet its vital needs. The Council equally deplored the fact that, within the different scenarios, the principle of proportionality may not be respected, which unjustly penalizes the institutes vis-à-vis the Education Sector. It was noted that it was an established principle of multilateralism that payment for established posts and maintenance costs had to be met from UNESCO's Education Sector's core budget. Moreover, since IBE's programmes were all funded through extra budgetary resources, these proposed cuts would only affect maintenance costs and payment for established posts. Council members further noted that since the Executive Board had not yet decided on the level of funding for UNESCO in the next biennium, the above scenarios were not realistic and could only demoralize the staff and the Director designate of IBE on the eve of the organization of an ICE.

A question was raised as of whether the planned budgetary cuts would affect all institutes equally. The representative of the Education Sector clarified that the sector is preparing only working scenarios, since decisions can only be validated by the Executive Board and the General Conference. One important point was made in relation to the proportion of regular budget funds and extra budgetary resources for IBE. It was stressed that the latter should not constitute the majority of the financial resources, in order to confirm a sound multilateralism, where IBE would not be losing control over its mandate and programmatic priorities.

DECISION

At the close of the debate, during which nine delegations took the floor, the Council:

- **Having taken note of the recommendations of the Administrative Group and having approved the paragraphs 18 and 19 of its Report (*Document: UNESCO/IBE/C.55/Inf.3*);**
- **Recalling the General Conference Resolution 33C/90 reaffirming the need for UNESCO to consolidate its support to the UNESCO Institutes;**
- **Further recalling the commitments and principles of multilateralism enshrined in the UNESCO Constitution;**
- **Noting the objectives of regular budgetary contributions to maintain the core activities of IBE in the spirit of multilateralism;**
- **Further noting that IBE's programmes, in their entirety, are presently funded by extra-budgetary and voluntary contributions;**
- **Conscious of the need for maintaining the autonomy and excellence of the UNESCO Institutes including IBE;**
- **Further conscious of the need for the IBE Director-designate to perform core functions of the Institute in accordance with the mandate and the needs and priorities established by the Member States;**
- **Reiterating the need to respect the principles of equality and proportionality in any future allocation of funds to UNESCO Institutes;**

Calls upon the Director General to:

1. **Strengthen the administrative and substantive capacity and role of the IBE in areas of its excellence;**
 2. **Maintain, in the next biennium, at least the present level of contribution i.e. USD 4,591,000, which would enable the IBE to meet its basic recurring infrastructural expenses;**
- **Further calls upon members of the IBE Council, who are also members of the Executive Board to take up this matter at the Executive Board at its 176th session.**

10. Dates of the fifty-sixth session of the Council

DECISION

The Council decided to propose to the Director-General of UNESCO that the fifty-sixth session be held from 23 to 25 January 2008. This should be preceded, on 21 and 22 January, by the meeting of the Administrative Group and of the Working Group responsible for assisting the IBE Director in preparing the 48th session of the ICE. As usual, a meeting of the Steering Committee of the Council will be held in June or July 2007 in Geneva.

11. Any other business

Upon the proposal of H. E. Mr. Michael OMOLEWA, Ambassador of Nigeria, the Council paid tribute to Mr. Pierre Luisoni, Director a.i. and Secretary of the Council, who will retire on 30 April 2007 and adopted the following mention in order to thank him:

“The Council expresses its profound appreciation to the Acting Director of the IBE, Mr. Pierre Luisoni, for his efficient, dedicated, committed and sustained contribution to the IBE over more than a quarter of a century, and wishes him every success for the future.”

12. Adoption of decisions of the fifty-fifth session

The President of the Council mentioned that 14 seats of the IBE Council will open up for election at the next session of the General Conference. She also mentioned that India will seek re-election from the Asian Group, while according to the rotation principle, the presidency should go next to the Latin America and the Caribbean region.

According to its Rules of Procedure, the Council approved the text of its decisions (Document: UNESCO/IBE/C.55/Decisions Prov) and asked the Secretary of the Council to include possible amendments.

The Council entrusted the Secretary of the Council with the task of publishing the Proceedings and Decisions of the fifty-fifth session by the beginning of March 2007.

13. Closure of the session

The representative of Switzerland, as the hosting country, on behalf of the entire Council, congratulated the President on her recent promotion and conveyed his expression of high appreciation and personal thanks to her, for the excellent work she performed in her capacity. The collegial way in which she conducted her responsibilities greatly facilitated the smooth running of the Council business. He also re-assured that the President will always be welcome in Switzerland.

The President closed the fifty-fifth session of the Council on Friday 26 January 2007 at 13:40 p.m.