Item **4.13** of the provisional agenda

OUTCOME DOCUMENT OF THE "CONNECTING THE DOTS: OPTIONS FOR FUTURE ACTION" CONFERENCE

OUTLINE

Source: 196 EX/Decision 5 (I, F).

Background: By 196 EX/Decision 5.I.F the Executive Board recommended the Outcome Document of the "CONNECTing The Dots: Options for Future Action" Conference that sets forth the options for consideration by the General Conference at its 38th session.

Purpose: To inform the General Conference on options for UNESCO's future action on Internet-related issues within the C/4 and C/5 documents, and to offer the opportunity to Member States for deliberations thereon.

Decision required: Paragraph 11.

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1.   By Resolution 52 adopted at its 37th session, the General Conference requested the preparation of a comprehensive study on Internet-related issues, within the mandate of UNESCO, including access to information and knowledge, freedom of expression, privacy, and ethical dimensions of the information society, containing possible options for future actions, produced through an inclusive multi-stakeholder consultation process.

2.   In June 2015, this study entitled "*Keystones to foster inclusive Knowledge Societies – Access to information and knowledge, Freedom of Expression, Privacy and Ethics on a Global Internet*" was published in French and English.

3.   The study was prepared through a comprehensive, inclusive, multi-stakeholder consultation process in 2014-15. This involved holding meetings on the initial framework with all Member State groups, discussions at seven international conferences, and 20 written submissions, which resulted in a 30 point questionnaire as the basis for research.

4.   UNESCO received close to 200 responses worldwide to the questionnaire, including from United Nations bodies, governments, academia, civil society and private sector. Based upon these responses as well as discussions at 10 international conferences, the first draft of the study and its related options was developed and published in mid-February 2015.

5.   On 3 and 4 March 2015, UNESCO convened the "CONNECTing the Dots: Options for Future Action" Conference in order to present the draft study for review. This multi-stakeholder event involved 400 participants, including 116 speakers from governments, civil society, private sector, academia and the technical community and intergovernmental organizations. The study's proposed options for future action formed the basis of the conference Outcome Document, which was put up for discussion before and during the conference, and which was then updated before being overwhelmingly adopted by the participants.

6.   The conference deliberations constituted the final consultative stage of the research process, and they enabled the draft study and the Outcome Document with the possible options for future action to be finalised for deliberation by Member States. The adopted Outcome Document with possible options for action is reflected verbatim in the final study "*Keystones to foster inclusive Knowledge Societies – Access to information and knowledge, Freedom of Expression, Privacy and Ethics on a Global Internet*".

7.   At its 196th session, the Executive Board debated the progress made on the study (196 EX/5 Part I), recognized the insights of the "CONNECTing the Dots: Options for Future Action" conference, and expressed appreciation of "the open, inclusive and transparent process that UNESCO has engaged in for the study" (196 EX/Decision 5 (I, F). It further recommended the Outcome Document with its possible options for action for consideration by the General Conference at its 38th session for Member States deliberations on them. The Director-General also forwarded the Outcome Document as a non-binding input to the post-2015 development agenda and the United Nations General Assembly's review process for the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS).

8.   Running through all the consultative stages of developing the study, and receiving widespread support, have been four cross-cutting principles for UNESCO's Internet-related work to advance the continued development of inclusive Knowledge Societies. These four principles have been summarized in the draft concept of "Internet Universality", which brings together UNESCO's pre-existing positions and statements as regards the Internet. Summarized as the R.O.A.M principles, and reviewed through the study consultations, these stand for an Internet that is:

►►   Rights-based, rooted in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and its associated Covenants;

►►   Open, in the way that Internet protocols are developed, applications are designed, and services are made available to their users;

►►   Accessible to all, in both infrastructure and content; and

►►   Multi-stakeholder in its governance, building on the successful partnerships that have evolved since WSIS between governments, the private sector, the technical and professional community, and civil society to foster the Internet's growth and use for peace, prosperity, social equity and sustainable development.

9.   The Internet Universality concept and the R.O.A.M principles are referenced in the possible options for future actions in the CONNECTing-the-dots Outcome Statement and the final report, "*Keystones to foster inclusive Knowledge Societies – Access to information and knowledge, Freedom of Expression, Privacy and Ethics on a Global Internet*."

10.   All of UNESCO's Internet-related work will continue to be implemented within the framework of UNESCO's Medium Term Strategy (C/4) and its Programme and Budget (C/5).

11.   The General Conference may wish to adopt the following resolution:

The General Conference,

Having examined document 38 C/INF.4 and 38 C/53,

Recalling 37 C/Resolution 52 and 196 EX/5 (I, F),

Acknowledging the growing importance and impact of information and communication technologies for sustainable development in all of UNESCO's fields of competence,

Noting that the finalized study has fulfilled its mandate of informing the report to the General Conference on the implementation of the World Summit on the Information Society outcomes,

Appreciating the open, inclusive and transparent process that UNESCO has engaged in for the study, including at the above-referenced multi-stakeholder conference,

Recognizing the insights of the "CONNECTing the Dots: Options for Future Action" Conference, organized by UNESCO in March 2015, as the culminating phase of the consultative process,

Noting that the options of the above-mentioned consultative conference have been included in the finalized Internet study,

Also noting that the options proposed in the Outcome Document (Annex to 38 C/53) provide an opportunity for UNESCO to contribute to an Internet that respects the principles of human rights, openness, accessibility and multi-stakeholder participation and which plays an optimum role in the Sustainable Development Agenda,

1.   Endorses the overall options that have emerged from the Study processes, and which are also attached as Annex hereto, as offering a comprehensive agenda for UNESCO's approach to Internet issues within its mandate, programme and budget ;

2.   Endorses the Internet Universality concept, with an Internet based on human rights, and the principles of openness, accessibility and multi-stakeholder participation;

3.   Requests the Director-General to:

(a)   Reinforce UNESCO's leading role in the implementation of WSIS outcomes beyond 2015,

(b)   Extend UNESCO's further work on the options that have emerged from the Internet study process,

(c)   Forward this resolution as a non-binding input to the UNGA overall World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) review process; and to the high-level meeting of the General Assembly established by UNGA resolution 68/302,

       (d)   Submit a report to 39th session of the General Conference on WSIS beyond 2015, including on Internet-related issues, for a debate and possible resolution on the Organization's role beyond 2017;

4.   *Invites* Member States to strengthen UNESCO's role on Internet-related issues through extra-budgetary contributions and a strong support for its positioning in the international post-2015 landscape.

ANNEX

Outcome document

The "CONNECTing the Dots: Options for Future Action" Conference held at UNESCO Headquarters 3-4 March 2015,

Noted the potential of the Internet to advance human progress towards inclusive Knowledge Societies, and the important role of UNESCO in fostering this development within the wider ecosystem of actors,

Affirmed the human rights principles that underpin UNESCO's approach to Internet-related issues, specifically that the same rights that people have offline must be protected online as per Human Rights Council resolution A/HRC/RES/26/13;

Recalled Resolution 52 of the 37th session of the General Conference, which mandated a consultative multi-stakeholder study with options for consideration of Member States, to be reported to the 38th General Conference within the framework of UNESCO's work on the World Summit on the Information Society,

Further recalled the establishment of principles in guiding documents that include the article 12 and 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and article 17 and 19 in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights;

And, having *reviewed* the draft of the UNESCO consultative study,

Commend continued work on the related options below, and look forward to UNESCO Member States deliberations on them:

1.   Overarching options for UNESCO

1.1   Considering the Final Statement of the first WSIS+10 conference, endorsed by the 37th General Conference, affirm the on-going value of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) outcomes, including the Internet Governance Forum (IGF), for the post-2015 development agenda, Internet governance issues, and the role and work of UNESCO;

1.2   Affirm that the fundamental human rights to freedom of opinion and expression, and its corollary of press freedom and the right of access to information, and the right to peaceful assembly, and the right to privacy, are enablers of the post-2015 development agenda;

1.3   Also affirm that increasing access to information and knowledge across society, assisted by the availability of information and communication technologies (ICTs), supports sustainable development and improves people's lives;

1.4   Promote the alignment of Internet-related laws, policies and protocols with international human rights law;

1.5   Support the Internet Universality principles (R.O.A.M) that promote a Human Rights-based, Open Internet is Accessible to all and characterized by Multistakeholder participation;

1.6   Strengthen the cross-cutting role of the Internet in all of UNESCO programmatic activities, including Priority Africa, Priority Gender Equality, support to Small Islands Developing States and Least Developed Countries, as well as in UNESCO's leadership of the International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures.

2.   Options for UNESCO related to the field of Access to Information and Knowledge:

2.1   Foster universal, open, affordable and unfettered access to information and knowledge, and narrowing the digital divide, including the gender gap, and encourage open standards, raise awareness and monitor progress;

2.2   Advocate for ICT policies that enhance access guided by governance principles that ensure openness, transparency, accountability, multilingualism, inclusiveness, gender equality, and civil participation including for youth, persons with disabilities, marginalized and vulnerable groups;

2.3   Support innovative approaches to facilitate citizen involvement in the development, implementation and monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals, as agreed at the UN General Assembly;

2.4   Promote universal access to information and knowledge and ICTs by encouraging the creation of public access facilities, and by supporting users of all types to develop their capabilities to use the Internet as creators and users of information and knowledge;

2.5   Reaffirm the important contribution provided by open access to scholarly, scientific and journalistic information, open government data, and free and open source software, towards the building of open knowledge resources;

2.6   Explore the potential of the Internet for cultural diversity.

3.   Options for UNESCO related to the field of Freedom of Expression

3.1   Urge Member States and other actors to protect, promote and implement international human rights law on free expression and the free flow of information and ideas on the Internet;

3.2   Reaffirm that freedom of expression applies, and should be respected, online and offline in accordance with Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) that any limitation on freedom of information must comply with international human rights law as outlined by Article 19(3) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights;

3.3   Support safety for journalists, media workers, and social media producers who generate a significant amount of journalism, and reaffirm the importance of the rule of law to combat impunity in cases of attacks on freedom of expression and journalism on or off the Internet;

3.4   Noting the relevance to the Internet and digital communications of the international Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), and the work of the Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights, concerning the prohibition of advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence (Rabat Plan of Action 2012), promote educational and social mechanisms for combating online hate speech, without using this to restrict freedom of expression;

3.5 Continue dialogue on the important role that Internet intermediaries have in promoting and protecting freedom of expression;

4. Options for UNESCO related to Privacy

4.1 Support research to assess the impacts on privacy of digital interception, collection, storage and use of data, as well as other emerging trends;

4.2 Reaffirm that the right to privacy applies and should be respected online and offline in accordance with Article 12 of the UDHR and Article 17 of the ICCPR and support as relevant within UNESCO's mandate, the efforts related to UN General Assembly Resolution A/RES/69/166 on the Right to Privacy in the Digital Age;

4.3 Support best practices and efforts made by Member States and other stakeholders to address security and privacy concerns on the Internet in accordance with their international human rights obligations and consider in this respect the key role played by actors in the private sector;

4.4 Recognise the role that anonymity and encryption can play as enablers of privacy protection and freedom of expression, and facilitate dialogue on these issues.

4.5 Share best practices in approaches to collecting personal information that is legitimate, necessary and proportionate, and that minimizes personal identifiers in data;

4.6 Support initiatives that promote peoples' awareness of the right to privacy online and the understanding of the evolving ways in which governments and commercial enterprises collect, use, store and share information, as well as the ways in which digital security tools can be used to protect users' privacy rights;

4.7 Support efforts to protect personal data which provide users with security, respect for their rights, and redress mechanisms, and which strengthen trust in new digital services.

5. Options for UNESCO related to Ethical dimension of the Information Society

5.1 Promote human rights-based ethical reflection, research and public dialogue on the implications of new and emerging technologies and their potential societal impacts;

5.2 Incorporate, as a core component in educational content and resources, including life-long learning programmes, that support the understanding and practice of human rights-based ethical reflection and its role in both online and offline life;

5.3 Enable girls and women take full advantage of the potential of the Internet for gender equality through taking proactive measures to remove barriers, both online and offline, and promoting their equal participation;

5.4 Support policy makers in enhancing their capacity to address the human right-based ethical aspects of inclusive knowledge societies by providing relevant training and resources;

5.5 In recognition of the trans-boundary nature of the Internet, promote global citizenship education, regional and international cooperation, capacity-building, research, the exchange of best practices and development of a broad understanding and capabilities to respond to its ethical challenges.

6. Options for UNESCO related to cross-cutting issues:

6.1 Promote the integration of UNESCO's expertise on Media and Information Literacy (MIL) into formal and informal education systems, in recognition of the important roles that digital literacy and facilitating universal access to information on the Internet, play in the promotion of the right to education, as enumerated in Human Rights Council, Resolution 26/13;

6.2   Recognize the need for enhanced protection of the confidentiality of sources of journalism in the digital age;

6.3   Support Member States as requested in the harmonization of relevant domestic laws, policies and practices with international human rights law;

6.4   Support transparency and public participation in the development and implementation of policies and practices amongst all actors in the information society.

6.5   Promote research into law, policy, regulatory frameworks and the use of the Internet, including relevant indicators in the key areas of the study.

6.6   Promote UNESCO's participation in discussions on Network Neutrality as relevant to the fields of access to information and knowledge and freedom of expression.

7.   Options related to UNESCO role

7.1   Reinforce UNESCO's contributions and leadership within the UN system, including continued implementation of the WSIS outcomes, the WSIS+10 review, the IGF and the post-2015 development agenda;

7.2   Engage as relevant with partners outside of the UN system, such as individual governments, civil society, news media, academia, private sector, technical community and individual users; including by providing expert advice, sharing of experience, creating fora for dialogue, and fostering development and empowerment of users to develop their capacities;

7.3   Support Member States in ensuring that Internet policy and regulation involves the participation of all stakeholders, and integrates international human rights and gender equality.