



H.E. Mrs Zohour Alaoui
President of the General
Conference of UNESCO

2 September 2019

Ref.: SHS/BIO/2019/045

Your Excellency,

Referring to your letter (ref. GBS/SCG/18/045-C) of 22 November 2018, I'm pleased to report that efforts have been made by the International Bioethics Committee (IBC), with the support of the Secretariat, to ensure effective follow-up of the recommendations of the open-ended Working Group on governance, procedures and working methods of the governing bodies of UNESCO, as relevant to the mandate, function and context of the IBC.

In this regard, a detailed analysis of the implementation status of the recommendations was prepared by the Secretariat and transmitted to IBC Members for further written feedback and suggestions in January 2019. The results of this written consultation provided a basis for further discussion during the 26th (Ordinary) Session of the IBC in July 2019. From that discussion, recommendations 56 to 58, 60 to 64, 66, 68, 69, 70, 72, 73, 75, 76, 78 to 81, and 86(a) were deemed to have been implemented. For recommendation 61, the IBC has also created a sub-working group to explore how to further enhance the visibility and dissemination of the IBC's work. In this regard, further discussion will also be held with COMEST for possible collaboration. Recommendations 71 and 74 were deemed as ongoing and are expected to be implemented by the end of 2020. Recommendations 65, 68 and 77 were also considered non applicable in the context of the IBC. Finally, the IBC felt that further reflection is needed on recommendations 59 and 86(b). In this regard, any consideration of "right-sizing" the Committee should take into account the workload of the IBC. Any reduction in the size of the Committee would adversely impact the quality and volume of its work. It would also reduce the pluridisciplinarity as well as geographical and cultural representation on the Committee. Furthermore, it could impact the ability of the Committee to respond quickly to emerging bioethical issues.

I'm attaching in Annex 1 the detailed analysis of the implementation status of each recommendations for the IBC, together with the outcome of the 26th (Ordinary) Session of the IBC whenever appropriate.

I look forward to presenting the status of the IBC's implementation of the governance recommendations during the meeting on 30 September 2019.

Please accept, Your Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.



Hervé Chneiweiss
Chairperson of the IBC

Encl. 1

ANNEX 1: RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE OPEN-ENDED WORKING GROUP ON GOVERNANCE, PROCEDURES AND WORKING METHODS OF THE GOVERNING BODIES OF UNESCO

PART 2. STRUCTURE, COMPOSITION AND METHODS OF WORK OF UNESCO'S INTERNATIONAL AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL BODIES (IIBS)

ANALYSIS OF IMPLEMENTATION STATUS FOR THE INTERNATIONAL BIOETHICS COMMITTEE (IBC)

| General Recommendations for all International and Intergovernmental Bodies | Implementation status | Responses from IBC Members |
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| Efficiency (mandate, composition, structure, rules of procedure, methods of work) | | |
| <p>56. IIBs are invited to update their mandates, as appropriate, including their objectives and programs to be more coherent with approved C/5 priorities and responsive to current global developments, such as the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.</p> | <p>IMPLEMENTED</p> <p>The mandate of the IBC as outlined in Article 2 of the Statutes of the IBC states that:</p> <p>Article 2 – Functions</p> <p>1. The Committee shall have the following functions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) it shall promote reflection on the ethical and legal issues raised by research in the life sciences and their applications, as well as encourage the exchange of ideas and information, particularly through education; (b) it shall encourage action to heighten awareness among the general public, specialized groups and public and private decision-makers involved in bioethics; (c) it shall co-operate with the international governmental and non-governmental organizations concerned by the issues raised in the field of bioethics as well as with the national and regional bioethics committees and similar bodies; (d) in accordance with Article 24 of the Universal Declaration on the Human Genome and Human Rights, hereafter referred to as 'the Declaration': <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) it shall contribute to the dissemination of the principles set out in the Declaration and to the further examination of issues raised by their | |

- applications and by the evolution of the technologies in question;
- (ii) it shall organize appropriate consultations with parties concerned, such as vulnerable groups;
 - (iii) it shall make recommendations, in accordance with UNESCO's statutory procedures, addressed to the General Conference and give advice concerning the follow-up of the Declaration, and it shall identify practices that could be contrary to human dignity.

2. The IBC shall determine its programme of work which shall be made public. The IBC shall include in that programme any item so requested by the Director-General or the Executive Board. It shall take into account the views of the Intergovernmental Committee, hereafter provided under Article 11, concerning its programme.

Note: The mandate of the IBC covers the [Universal Declaration on the Human Genome and Human Rights](#) (1997), the [International Declaration on Human Genetic Data](#) (2003), and the [Universal Declaration on Bioethics and Human Rights](#) (2005) upon the adoption of the latter two Declarations (as stipulated in Article 25 of these two Declarations).

The mandate of the IBC is also aligned with:

- [UNESCO's Medium Term Strategy for 2014-2021](#) (37 C/4)
 - **Strategic Objective 6:** Supporting inclusive social development, fostering intercultural dialogue for the rapprochement of cultures and promoting ethical principles
- [UNESCO's Programme and Budget for 2018-2019](#) (39 C/5)
 - **Major Programme III, MLA 1:** Mobilizing knowledge and embedding rights and ethics to

foster and achieve social inclusion and equitable societies

- **ER 1:** Public policy-making in Member States strengthened, based on scientific evidence, humanities-based knowledge, ethics and human rights frameworks
- **ER 2:** National institutional and human capacities strengthened at all levels to generate, manage and apply knowledge for inclusive, equitable development that is based on ethical values and human rights
- **Major Programme III, MLA 2:** Fostering intercultural dialogue and engaging young women and men for peaceful and participatory societies
 - **ER 4:** Member States' commitments to the global agendas in favour of inclusive, sustainable and peaceful societies demonstrated through targeted advocacy campaigns and awareness-raising initiatives

Furthermore, as indicated in the 39 C/5, the work related to promoting ethical norms and standards has also been linked to the **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**, specifically SDGs 3, 5, 13, 16 and 17.

Observation: The mandate of the IBC provides the necessary flexibility for the Committee to examine and address emerging issues related to bioethics, taking into consideration developing situations and priorities at the international level.

57. To promote diversity and inclusivity, voluntary term-limits of two consecutive mandates are recommended for IIBs which

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Article 6.3 of the [Statutes of the IBC](#) states that:

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| <p>currently do not have term limitations for membership.</p> | <p>Article 6 – Terms of office 6.3 The Director-General shall not appoint the same person for more than two consecutive terms of office.</p> | |
| <p>58. As a general rule, term-limits of two consecutive mandates for membership in all Bureaus are recommended.</p> | <p>IMPLEMENTED</p> <p>Rule 11.2 of the Rules of Procedure of the IBC states that:</p> <p>Rule 11 – Elections 11.2 The Chairperson, Vice-Chairpersons and Rapporteur shall be immediately eligible for re-election only once.</p> | |
| <p>59. For cost-saving, coherence and harmonization, it is recommended that IIBs and the General Conference consider “right-sizing” the composition of the IIBs.</p> | <p>UNDER CONSIDERATION</p> <p>Article 3.1 of the Statutes of the IBC states that:</p> <p>Article 3 – Membership 3.1 The IBC shall be composed of 36 members appointed by the Director-General. The members shall be independent and shall act in their personal capacity. (...)</p> | <p><u>Outcome of the 26th Session of the IBC:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many members expressed satisfaction with the Committee’s current size. • The workload of the IBC should be taken into account when deciding on this recommendation. • Any reduction in the size of the Committee would adversely impact the quality and volume of its work. • It would also reduce the pluridisciplinarity as well as geographical and cultural representation on the Committee. • Furthermore, it could impact the ability of the Committee to respond quickly to emerging bioethical issues and it may appear in contradiction with recommendation 61 since enhancing visibility and the effectiveness of the work of the IBC will require more work and energy from its members. • The Committee and the Secretariat would require more time to reflect whether further action is needed on this recommendation. |

60. There is a need to reduce and manage politicization of nominations and decisions.

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- The IBC is an independent advisory body, composed of members acting in their personal capacity. In accordance with **Article 2** of the [Statutes of the IBC](#), the IBC produces advice and recommendations using a multicultural and multidisciplinary approach, building on the expertise and perspectives of its members.
- Furthermore, in accordance with **Article 7** of the [Statutes of the IBC](#), “the advice and recommendations of the IBC shall be taken by consensus, promptly made public and widely disseminated”.
- In practice, the Committee has always adopted its advice and recommendations by consensus based on technical and ethical considerations.

61. To enhance visibility and the effectiveness of the work of the IIBs, more effective information-dissemination is recommended through updating and enhancement of websites and outreach to all involved actors, including Member States and their National Commissions.

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- In accordance with **Article 4** of the [Statutes of the IBC](#), Member States, Associate Members, non-Member States with a permanent observer mission, the United Nations, other organizations of the UN system, international governmental and non-governmental organizations are invited to attend the public meetings of the IBC.
- Furthermore, in accordance with **Rule 26** of the [Rules of Procedure of the IBC](#), the meetings of the IBC are open to the public unless the Committee decides otherwise. In practice, ordinary sessions of the IBC always include the convening of public meetings.
- Information regarding each IBC session (jointly with the IGBC and COMEST) and related working documents are made available on the website for the session (e.g. [website of the joint IBC-IGBC-COMEST public meetings](#)).
- All reports adopted by the IBC are also made available online on a dedicated website (e.g. [website for IBC reports](#)).

Outcome of the 26th Session of the IBC:

- To further strengthen the Committee’s response to this recommendation, a sub-working group has been created to explore how to enhance the visibility and dissemination of the IBC’s work.
- COMEST has also indicated that it would like to collaborate with the IBC sub-working group in this area, and further discussion will be held between the respective Chairs and Bureaus.

Additional suggestions from IBC Members:

- There should be venues for feedback and interactions from the public
- Utilize the existing networks of bioethics committees, bioethics societies, and organizations existing

- The outcomes of the work of the IBC, the IGBC and COMEST are also shared with UNESCO field offices, national and regional partners, UNESCO Chairs in Bioethics, and UN agencies and other intergovernmental organizations working in the area of bioethics and ethics of science (including but not only through the [UN Interagency Committee on Bioethics](#)).
- Press items are also prepared on the adopted reports of the IBC, as appropriate (e.g. [press item on gene editing](#)).
- In the recent joint public meeting of the IBC, the IGBC and COMEST in September 2018, the Chairperson of the IGBC also presented a number of [proposals to strengthen the cooperation between the three bodies](#). One of the objectives of these proposals is to promote the dissemination of the work of the three bodies.

within and across countries and regions, such as:

1. CANREC – the Caribbean Network of Research Ethics Committees (<http://carpha.org/What-We-Do/Research-Training-and-Policy-Development/Research-Ethics/CANREC>)
 2. BSEC – The Bioethics Society of the English-speaking Caribbean (<http://www.bioethicscaribe.org/index.html>)
 3. RedBioetica UNESCO – the Central and South America Network of Bioethics of UNESCO (www.unesco.org.uy)
 4. CARCEC – Capítulo Regional Centro Americano y del Caribe (gabsibaja@hotmail.com)
 5. IAB – International Association of Bioethics (<http://iab-website.iab-secretariat.org/>)
 6. Australasian Association of Bioethics and Health Law (<http://aabhl.org/>)
 7. ABA – Asian Bioethics Association
 8. Other bioethics societies and organizations – to be found in public listings worldwide
- Further, in keeping with the functions of the committees to encourage action to heighten awareness among the general public, specialized groups and public and private decision-makers involved in bioethics – as stated herein at Article 2:

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| | | <p>Functions, item b) on page 16, the dissemination of the work of the committees could also be sent (perhaps as news or press release) to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. National newspapers (e.g. editorial@jamaicaobserver.com) 2. News media in countries (e.g. https://www.bbc.com/news/world) 3. News media over the internet (e.g. http://www.messengernews.net/ ; https://www.nationsonline.org/oneworld/news.html) 4. Other media for the general public, to be found listed publicly worldwide |
| <p>62. Earlier preparation and dissemination of draft agendas and preliminary timetables, mainly by using the same template containing hyper-links to documents to be adopted/discussed in sessions.</p> | <p>IMPLEMENTED</p> <p>Rules 3.2 and 3.3 of the Rules of Procedure of the IBC state that:</p> <p>Rule 3 – Convening of sessions of the Committee (Article 5 of the Statutes of IBC)</p> <p>3.2 The Director-General shall inform the members of the Committee of the date, venue and provisional agenda of each regular session at least 60 days before the opening of the session; in the case of an extraordinary session, members shall be informed, if possible, at least 30 days before the opening of the session.</p> <p>3.3 The Director-General shall, at the same time, inform the states and organizations mentioned in Article 4 of the Statutes of the Committee, of the date, venue and agenda of each session.</p> | |

- The current practice of the Secretariat is in line with the Rules indicated above.
- At this stage, hyperlinks have not been included in the provisional agendas and timetables of the sessions since documentation for the meetings are usually not fragmented, and the number of items are normally very manageable. Some examples are as follow: [agenda of the 25th IBC Session](#); [timetable of the joint IBC-IGBC-COMEST public meetings](#); [agenda of the 26th IBC Session](#); [programme of the 26th IBC Session](#) (in conjunction with the Conference on the Ethics of Science and Technology and Sustainable Development and the 11th COMEST Session).
- Documents are also made available on the sessions' website as soon as they are ready (e.g. [website of the joint IBC-IGBC-COMEST public meetings](#); [website of the joint IBC-COMEST public meetings](#)).
- The Secretariat could also include hyperlinks in the provisional agendas and timetables for future sessions if this is preferred by IBC Members. It should be noted that hyperlinks would be added only when documents are ready (due to the time needed to finalize translation of documents in English and French, this is usually 30 to 45 days and not 60 days prior to the meeting when the provisional agendas and timetables are first transmitted). This means that the provisional agendas and timetables would have to be updated on the website of the meeting accordingly, requiring the Secretariat to devote some additional time for this process.

Note from the Secretariat:

- Based on the outcome of the 11th Session of the IGBC, in order to harmonize the format of the documents for the IGBC, the IBC and COMEST, the Secretariat will introduce hyperlinks in the draft agendas and timetables as appropriate for all three bodies.

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| <p>63. The Secretariat is invited to promote a harmonized virtual working environment for all IIBs and to revisit UNESCO's "Strategy on Knowledge Management and Information & Communication Technology". Simple, more user-friendly documentation (i.e. less fragmented reporting and easier document tracking; annotated agenda with hyper-links to reports and draft decisions).</p> | <p>IMPLEMENTED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each joint IBC-COMEST session and each joint IGBC-IBC-COMEST session has a dedicated website, on which documents for the respective meetings are made available (e.g. website of the joint IBC-IGBC-COMEST public meetings; website of the joint IBC-COMEST public meetings) | |
| <p>64. Open-ended informal consultations on draft decisions to promote inclusive and effective decision-making.</p> | <p>IMPLEMENTED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The IBC is an independent advisory body, composed of members acting in their personal capacity. In accordance with Article 2 of the Statutes of the IBC, the IBC produces advice and recommendations on selected bioethical topics in the form of reports (reports of the IBC). • Furthermore, in accordance with Article 7 of the Statutes of the IBC, "the advice and recommendations of the IBC shall be taken by consensus, promptly made public and widely disseminated". • At the start of its work on new topics, the IBC, as per usual practice, will form Working Groups to prepare the draft text of the new reports. These Working Groups work through email exchanges and meetings (when funds or potential host(s) are available) between plenary sessions of the Committee. The drafts prepared by the Working Groups are also sent to the Committee as a whole for comments and feedback throughout the process. When appropriate, these drafts are also sent to partners on the UN Interagency Committee on Bioethics for comments. • These drafts are also discussed at the public meetings organized during the joint sessions of the IBC, the IGBC and COMEST (in accordance with Rule 26 of the Rules of Procedure of the IBC), as well as the ordinary sessions of the IGBC. | |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In accordance with Article 4 of the Statutes of the IBC, Member States, Associate Members, non-Member States with a permanent observer mission, the United Nations, other organizations of the UN system, international governmental and non-governmental organizations are invited to attend these public meetings. • During these public meetings, IBC and COMEST Members, IGBC and other Member States, observers from the United Nations, other organizations of the UN system, international governmental and non-governmental organizations, as well as the general public comment on the draft reports under preparation by the IBC. The IBC would then consider these comments as it further refines its draft reports before final adoption. | |
| <p>65. It is recommended that the Rules of Procedure of the IIBs be amended, when relevant, to advance the deadline for submission of candidatures to their subsidiary bodies from 48 hours to seven days before elections.</p> | <p>NON APPLICABLE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The IBC forms Working Groups to prepare the draft text of new reports. IBC Members join these Working Groups on a voluntary basis, depending on their expertise, interest and availability. Furthermore, members of the Working Groups also volunteer to be coordinators for the drafting process depending on their availability. | |
| <p>66. The role, composition and procedures of Bureaus and their members should be clarified and harmonized through codification in rules of procedure/ statutes or development of general guidelines for all IIBs, in close cooperation with the Secretariat.</p> | <p>IMPLEMENTED</p> <p>Rules 11.1, 12 and 13 of the Rules of Procedure of the IBC state that:</p> <p>Rule 11 – Elections</p> <p>11.1 The Committee shall elect a Chairperson, four Vice-Chairpersons and a Rapporteur who, assisted by the Secretary-General of the Committee, shall constitute the Bureau of the Committee and shall remain in office until the closing of the second regular session</p> | |

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| | <p>thereafter, provided that they remain members of the Committee.</p> <p>Rule 12 – Functions of the Bureau The Bureau shall be responsible for co-ordinating the work of the Committee and setting the date, time and agenda of meetings. It shall perform any other function entrusted to it by the Committee.</p> <p>Rule 13 – Duties of the Chairperson 13.1 The Chairperson shall declare the opening and closure of sessions, direct the discussions, ensure observance of these Rules and accord the right to speak. He/she shall discharge any other duties entrusted to him/her by the Committee. 13.2 A Vice-Chairperson acting as Chairperson, in accordance with Rule 14 of the present Rules, shall have the same powers and duties as the Chairperson.</p> | |
| <p>67. It is suggested that Bureaus' composition be set, as much as compatible with individual IIBs' mandates, at a maximum of six members (Chair, Rapporteur, and four Vice-Presidents from the six Electoral Groups).</p> | <p>IMPLEMENTED</p> <p>Rule 11.1 of the Rules of Procedure of the IBC states that:</p> <p>Rule 11 – Elections 11.1 The Committee shall elect a Chairperson, four Vice-Chairpersons and a Rapporteur who, assisted by the Secretary-General of the Committee, shall constitute the Bureau of the Committee and shall remain in office until the closing of the second regular session thereafter, provided that they remain members of the Committee.</p> | |
| <p>68. The intergovernmental nature of Bureaus should be reaffirmed while maintaining expert engagement. In this regard, the attached guidelines on responsibilities of Bureau members are recommended for dissemination to all Governing Bodies and IIBs (appendix 2).</p> | <p>NON APPLICABLE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The IBC is an independent advisory body, composed of members acting in their personal capacity. Therefore, the IBC and its Bureau are not intergovernmental in nature | |

69. Documents related to Bureau meetings should appear online before meetings take place; outcomes, including reports of Bureau meetings, should be communicated to all members, and as appropriate, all Permanent Delegations, in a timely manner.

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- The IBC Bureau conducts email consultations as needed, between ordinary sessions. The outcomes of email consultations of the Bureau are shared with all IBC Members.
- The IBC Bureau also meets during its ordinary sessions as needed, especially to finalize the text concerning its work programme for the following biennium. In practice, this text is drafted by the Secretariat during the session based on the discussion and agreement of the IBC. This draft is then presented to the Bureau for review and adoption. The adopted language of the work programme is then published on the [website](#), and transmitted to the IBC in a document of the Bureau. At this stage, IBC Members can also suggest changes to the language of the work programme, which will then be further considered by the Bureau.

70. Elections of Bureaus should be held, as much as possible, soon after elections for seats on the IIBs conducted at the General Conference, to avoid having Bureau members from Member States, which are no longer members of the IIBs concerned.

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- In accordance with **Article 3.1** of the [Statutes of the IBC](#), IBC Members are appointed by the Director-General as independent experts in their personal capacity, and not elected.
- Furthermore, in accordance with **Rule 11.1** of the [Rules of Procedure of the IBC](#), the Bureau “shall remain in office until the closing of the second regular session thereafter, provided that they remain members of the Committee”.
- In practice, the Bureau is elected during the ordinary session held in the second year of a programme biennium, while IBC Members are appointed at the beginning of the first year of the following programme biennium.
- In the case that a Bureau member has come to the end of his/her first term at the end a programme biennium

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| | <p>is not re-appointed for a second term the following programme biennium, the seat on the Bureau will become vacant.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In this case, Rules 14 and 15 of the Rules of Procedure of the IBC provide for the mechanism to hold an election during the ordinary session held in the first year of a programme biennium to fill the vacant seat. | |
| <p>71. As much as feasible, Bureau meetings should be open to observers and working methods made more transparent.</p> | <p>ONGOING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See recommendation 69 above. • In practice, the IBC Bureau meetings during the ordinary sessions are currently convened with the participation of Bureau members and the Secretariat only. This practice is to facilitate an easier drafting process of the language of the work programme to reflect the discussion and agreement of the IBC. • Rules of Procedure of the IBC does not prevent these Bureau meetings from being open to observers from amongst IBC Members. | <p><u>Outcome of the 26th Session of the IBC:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The IBC has decided that Bureau meetings held during the Committee's plenary sessions will be open to observers from amongst IBC members. • An amendment of its Rules of Procedure to this effect will be proposed for adoption at its next plenary session in 2020. |
| <p>72. Strengthen information-sharing, communication and collaboration between Bureaus, Intergovernmental Councils and Committees and Member States.</p> | <p>IMPLEMENTED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Chairpersons of the IGBC, the IBC and COMEST meets virtually at least once a year to coordinate and share information on the progress of the work of the three bodies, as well as to explore opportunities for collaboration and synergies. Joint meetings are held in accordance with the respective work calendars of the three bodies to improve synergies among them, and other meetings are now planned to avoid overlap. • Since 2014, the three bodies have been served by a single consolidated Secretariat. This has also facilitated better information sharing, coordination and collaboration among the three bodies. | |
| <p>73. Gender-neutral language be adopted throughout all UNESCO documents.</p> | <p>IMPLEMENTED</p> | |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Secretariat provides editorial assistance to ensure that gender-neutral language is used in all IBC documents. | |
| <p>74. All IIBs should have the opportunity to submit formal inputs to the mid-term strategy C/4 and the draft Programme and Budget C/5 documents of UNESCO.</p> | <p>ONGOING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Bureau of Strategic Planning has published “Working with UNESCO: Guidebook for Members of UNESCO’s International and Intergovernmental Bodies”. The Secretariat will support the Committee to implement this recommendation based on this guidebook, as appropriate and in accordance with its mandate. | |
| <p>75. A feedback mechanism can be envisaged for substantive dialogue between Member States and IIBs, beyond the limited reporting to the General Conference. This could be through information meetings or briefings. Reporting to the General Conference should be enhanced through a new more strategic and results-oriented reporting format to be followed by debate and General Conference resolutions to provide feedback to IIBs.</p> | <p>IMPLEMENTED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The draft reports of the IBC are discussed at the public meetings organized during the joint sessions of the IBC, the IGBC and COMEST (in accordance with Rule 26 of the Rules of Procedure of the IBC), as well as the ordinary sessions of the IGBC. In accordance with Article 4 of the Statutes of the IBC, Member States, Associate Members, non-Member States with a permanent observer mission, the United Nations, other organizations of the UN system, international governmental and non-governmental organizations are invited to attend these public meetings. During these public meetings, IBC and COMEST Members, IGBC and other Member States, observers from the United Nations, other organizations of the UN system, international governmental and non-governmental organizations, as well as the general public comment on the draft reports under preparation by the IBC. The IBC would then consider these comments as it further refines its draft reports before final adoption. | |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Secretariat will also take on board the suggestion of Member States to hold information meetings on the Bioethics and Ethics of Science and Technology Programme as a whole. • The outcomes of the work of the IBC and the IGBC are included into the results-oriented reporting of the C/5, in addition to a separate report by the Director-General to the General Conference on the work of the IBC and the IGBC (e.g. 39 C/REP/15). The manner in which such reports are to be examined by the General Conference is under the prerogative of the General Conference itself. | |
| <p>76. Orientation sessions for new members of all IIBs, especially for Chairpersons and Bureau members, should be institutionalized and include introduction to the C/4 and C/5 frameworks. To that end, a short user-friendly guidebook including good practices and acronyms could be produced to familiarize members with working methods and C/4 and C/5 mechanisms.</p> | <p>IMPLEMENTED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A training and orientation session for new and returning IBC Members is held at every ordinary session during the first year of a programme biennium. • The Bureau of Strategic Planning (BSP) is currently working on a guidebook for all IIBs introducing the C/4 and C/5 frameworks, including good practices and acronyms. The Secretariat would be ready to share this guidebook once it is available. | |
| <p>77. Balanced resource allocation is necessary to ensure the effectiveness of all IIBs.</p> | <p>NON APPLICABLE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Since resource allocation for the IBC is decided by the General Conference through the C/5, the implementation of this recommendation lies with Member States. | |
| <p>78. Use of languages for inclusivity and effectiveness remains an important objective.</p> | <p>IMPLEMENTED</p> <p>Rule 27 of the Rules of Procedure of the IBC states that:</p> <p>Rule 27 – Working languages</p> <p>27.1 The working languages of the Committee shall be English and French. Statements made during meetings of the Committee in one of these two languages shall be interpreted into the other language.</p> | |

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| | <p>27.2 The documents of the Committee shall be issued in English and in French.</p> <p>Observation: Due to the budgetary situation of UNESCO over the past few years, this rule is applied for ordinary sessions of the IBC only. It is currently financially impossible to apply this rule for the meetings of the Working Groups held in between ordinary sessions, and meetings of the Bureau.</p> | |
| 79. IIBs and their Secretariats are requested to enhance coordination in scheduling of meetings to avoid overlap. | <p>IMPLEMENTED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See recommendation 72 above. | |
| Best practices | | |
| 80. Best practices should be shared and replicated or, if necessary, adjusted to reflect specificities with the aim to promote governance mechanisms that facilitate strategies and action plans anchored on the C/4 and C/5. Attached, in this regard, is a non-exhaustive list of best practices identified by the Working Group (Appendix 3). | <p>IMPLEMENTED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Bureau of Strategic Planning has published “Working with UNESCO: Guidebook for Members of UNESCO’s International and Intergovernmental Bodies”. • The Secretariat has shared information with the Committee about this publication. | |

| Specific recommendations for the intergovernmental councils and committees | Implementation status | Responses from IBC Members |
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| Intergovernmental Bioethics Committee (IGBC), International Bioethics Committee (IBC), World Commission on the Ethics of Scientific Knowledge and Technology (COMEST) | | |
| 86.a. In reviewing the three IIBs as a related cluster, IGBC, IBC and COMEST are invited to continue adjusting and/or updating their mandates, roles and working relations in a holistic manner, looking at other models of | <p>IMPLEMENTED</p> <p>The mandate of the IGBC as outlined in Article 11.2 of the Statutes of the IBC states that:</p> <p>Article 11 – Intergovernmental Committee</p> | |

UNESCO expert bodies reporting to intergovernmental bodies.

11.2 The Intergovernmental Committee shall examine the advice and recommendations of the IBC, including those concerned with the follow-up of the Universal Declaration. The Intergovernmental Committee shall inform the IBC of its opinions. It shall submit its opinions to the Director-General for transmission, together with the advice and recommendations of the IBC, to the Member States, the Executive Board and the General Conference. It may transmit any proposals for the follow-up of the advice and recommendations of the IBC.

The mandate of the IBC as outlined in **Article 2** of the [Statutes of the IBC](#) states that:

Article 2 – Functions

1. The Committee shall have the following functions:
 - (a) it shall promote reflection on the ethical and legal issues raised by research in the life sciences and their applications, as well as encourage the exchange of ideas and information, particularly through education;
 - (b) it shall encourage action to heighten awareness among the general public, specialized groups and public and private decision-makers involved in bioethics;
 - (c) it shall co-operate with the international governmental and non-governmental organizations concerned by the issues raised in the field of bioethics as well as with the national and regional bioethics committees and similar bodies;
 - (d) in accordance with Article 24 of the Universal Declaration on the Human Genome and Human Rights, hereafter referred to as ‘the Declaration’:
 - (i) it shall contribute to the dissemination of the principles set out in the Declaration and to the further examination of issues raised by their applications and by the evolution of the technologies in question;
 - (ii) it shall organize appropriate consultations with parties concerned, such as vulnerable groups;

(iii) it shall make recommendations, in accordance with UNESCO's statutory procedures, addressed to the General Conference and give advice concerning the follow-up of the Declaration, and it shall identify practices that could be contrary to human dignity.

2. The IBC shall determine its programme of work which shall be made public. The IBC shall include in that programme any item so requested by the Director-General or the Executive Board. It shall take into account the views of the Intergovernmental Committee, hereafter provided under Article 11, concerning its programme.

Note: In summary, the IGBC and the IBC pursue the following objectives in their respective functions:

- to keep abreast of progress in genetics, whilst at the same time taking care to ensure respect for the values of human dignity and freedom in view of the potential risks of irresponsible attitudes in biomedical research;
- to promote reflection on the ethical and legal issues raised by research in the life sciences and their applications;
- to encourage action to heighten awareness among the general public, specialized groups and public and private decision-makers involved in bioethics.

Furthermore, in addition to its role set out in Article 11.2 of the [Statutes of the IBC](#), the IGBC can take the initiative to open a dialogue with the latter on matters of common interest, including adopting new or amending existing international instruments of UNESCO in the field of bioethics (Article 11.7). The IGBC Chair is also an ex-officio member of the World Commission on the Ethics of Scientific Knowledge and Technology (COMEST). In general, the IGBC contributes, together with the IBC and COMEST, to improving UNESCO's governance role and functioning in the field of bioethics and ethics of science and technology.

The mandate of COMEST as outlined in **Article 2** of the [Statutes of COMEST](#) states that:

Article 2

The Commission shall be responsible for advising the Organization on its programme concerning the ethics of scientific knowledge and technology. It shall also be mandated:

- to be an intellectual forum for the exchange of ideas and experience;
- to detect on that basis the early signs of risk situations;
- to perform the role of adviser to decision-makers in this respect; and, lastly,
- to promote dialogue between scientific communities, decision-makers and the public at large.

Observation: Based on the mandates stated above, the IBC (providing independent expert advice and recommendations) and the IGBC (providing governmental opinions on the IBC's advice and recommendations) focus their work on ethical reflection related to the life sciences ([reports of the IBC](#)), while COMEST focuses its work on ethical reflection on areas of scientific knowledge and technology outside of the life sciences ([reports of COMEST](#)). Therefore, the three bodies have distinct mandates and roles. Since 2014, measures have been implemented to improve the working methods of the three bodies that have enhanced synergy, collaboration, and substantive consultation among them, as well as the overall cost-effectiveness of their collective operation. These measures include the creation of a consolidated Secretariat for the three bodies, convening of information sharing and coordination meetings of the three Chairpersons, convening of joint meetings of the bodies whenever feasible, etc. The mandates of the IBC, the IGBC and COMEST also provide the necessary flexibility for the three bodies to examine and address emerging issues related to bioethics, taking into consideration developing situations and priorities at the international level.

86.b. Consider adjusting, as appropriate, the number of members in each IIB in view of avoiding duplication of efforts and achieving cost efficiencies.

UNDER CONSIDERATION

The composition of the IGBC is defined in **Article 11.3** of the [Statutes of the IBC](#) which states that:

Article 11 – Intergovernmental Committee

11.3 The Intergovernmental Committee shall be composed of 36 representatives of the Member States elected by the General Conference. (...)

The composition of the IBC is defined in **Article 3.1** of the [Statutes of the IBC](#) which states that:

Article 3 – Membership

3.1 The IBC shall be composed of 36 members appointed by the Director-General. The members shall be independent and shall act in their personal capacity. (...)

The composition of COMEST is defined in **Article 3.1** of the [Statutes of COMEST](#) which states that:

Article 3

3.1 The Commission shall be composed of 18 members, appointed by the Director-General following consultation with the National Commissions and Academies of Science of the Member States, and serving in a personal capacity. It shall have an open-ended structure and may bring in specialists on specific subjects.

Furthermore **Article 3.5** of the [Statutes of COMEST](#) also states that:

Article 3

3.5 The Presidents of UNESCO's five intergovernmental scientific programmes (IOC, MAB, MOST, IGCP and IHP), of the International Bioethics Committee (IBC) and the Intergovernmental Committee, and those of the International Council of Philosophy and Human Sciences (ICPHS), the International Council of Social

Outcome of the 26th Session of the IBC:

- Many members expressed satisfaction with the Committee's current size.
- The workload of the IBC should be taken into account when deciding on this recommendation.
- Any reduction in the size of the Committee would adversely impact the quality and volume of its work.
- It would also reduce the pluridisciplinarity as well as geographical and cultural representation on the Committee.
- Furthermore, it could impact the ability of the Committee to respond quickly to emerging bioethical issues.
- The Committee and the Secretariat would require more time to reflect whether further action is needed on this recommendation.

Sciences (ICSS), the International Council of Scientific Unions (ICSU) and the Pugwash Conference on Science and World Affairs shall be invited to participate in the work of the Commission.

Observation: As indicated in recommendation 86.a above, the three bodies have distinct mandates and roles. Measures have also been taken to improve their overall synergy, collaboration and cost effectiveness. The current compositions have also ensured multicultural and multidisciplinary representation in the work of the three bodies.