

Director-General's Consultation and 15th Quadrennial and Statutory Conference of National Commissions for UNESCO in Europe and North America 2008

31 May – 4 June 2008, The Hague, Antwerp

Final Report

Participants

1. 42 National Commissions for UNESCO in the Europe and North American Region attended the consultation. Representatives of National Commissions from other regions took part as observers. Officials from UNESCO Secretariat also participated in the meeting (see list of participants in the Annex).

Welcome

2. On behalf of the Dutch Minister for Education, Culture and Science, Ms Judith van Kranendonk, Director-General for Culture, welcomed participants to The Hague. She highlighted the role of The Hague as an international city and a city of peace.
3. In his response, the representative of the Director-General of UNESCO, Mr Hans d'Orville, Assistant Director-General for Strategic Planning, thanked the organizers for the excellent preparation of the meeting. He pointed out that the consultation with National Commissions was an important first step in the 18 months consultation process leading to the establishment of the priorities for the biennial programme and budget 2010-2011. With the new Medium-term Strategy (34 C/4) and the current biennial programme for 2008-2009 (34 C/5) adopted by the General Conference in 2007, it would be crucial to translate the priorities of the C/4 in a seamless way into the new biennial programme for which consultations are currently undertaken and to maintain to the extent possible continuity. He also raised the important issue of giving more profile to the role of UNESCO in, for and with Europe.

Opening

4. The meeting was opened by Ms Ketty Tzitzikosta, President of the Hellenic National Commission for UNESCO. She proposed as chair of the meeting Ms Lieteke van Vucht Tijssen, President of the Netherlands Commission for UNESCO. This was adopted by acclamation.
5. Ms van Vucht Tijssen took over as chair and proposed that the three organizing Commissions for UNESCO – of the Netherlands, Flanders and Luxemburg – would rotate as chairs and vice chairs, which was accepted. The chairs where:
Saturday, May 31st 2008 and Sunday, June 1st 2008:
 - President: Ms Lieteke van Vucht Tijssen
 - Secretary General: Ms Els JacobsMonday, June 2 2008:
 - President: Mr Jean-Pierre Kraemer
 - Secretary General: Mr Paul KleinTuesday, June 3 2008 and Wednesday, June 4 2008:
 - President: Mr Walter Lerouge
 - Secretary General: Mr Jan de Bisschop
6. Ms van Vucht Tijssen explained that on the basis of consultations with National Commissions a new, more interactive format for the present meeting had been chosen, which

aimed at making the consultation more effective. She thanked the participants for their willingness to engage in the new format.

7. The Secretary-General of the German National Commission, Mr Roland Bernecker, was elected as chief rapporteur, the Secretary-General of the Luxemburg National Commission, Mr Paul Klein, and a Section Head of the German National Commission, Mr Alexander Leicht, as co-rapporteurs. A small commission to supervise the foreseen procedure of ranking of priorities was established, with the Secretaries-General of the Swiss and of the Armenian National Commissions, Ms. Madeleine Viviani-Schaerer and Mr Minasyan Hambardzum, as members.
8. The rules of procedure and the agenda of the meeting were adopted.

Plenary Debate on 35 C/5

9. In his introduction to the plenary debate on the 35 C/5, the representative of the Director-General, Mr d'Orville, highlighted a number of parameters for the present consultation. He pointed out that the seamless link intended between the C/4 and the C/5 documents entailed the relationship between the overarching objectives and the strategic programme objectives on the one hand and the biennial sectoral priorities on the other hand. It also extended to the important principle of intersectorality as well as the two global priorities of Africa and gender equality which would have to be an integral and visible part of each of the biennial programme and budget. He recalled that twelve intersectoral platforms, each led by an Assistant Director-General, had been included in the 34 C/5 as the new modality to implement programmes in an integrated and interdisciplinary manner. Mr d'Orville also pointed out that the 34 C/4 had been adopted as a rolling strategy but that the precise way in which adjustments would be introduced remained to be determined. He also noted that the results based management (RBM) approach had been strengthened, but that it also needed to be further refined. He pointed out that the statutory reports on programme implementation to the Executive Board would have to report against each expected result and hence care should be taken to avoid undue inflation of expected results.
10. Mr d'Orville also highlighted that in the implementation of its programmes UNESCO was active at the global, regional and country levels. A particular challenge for UNESCO lay in the integration of the Organization into country-level programming and implementation in the context of activities by UN country teams. The Director-General had taken a proactive role with respect inserting UNESCO into UN reform efforts at the country level thus enhancing its impact, role and visibility as part of the overall and coordinated UN effort. Mr d'Orville referred to the general agreement, in the wake of the 2005 World Summit Outcome, that the point of departure for action in the UN context were the national priorities of countries, which had to be seen in conjunction with the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDG). A focus on MDG's alone would be too limited and must be complemented by a broader range of internationally agreed development goals, such as the six Dakar EFA goals, the WSIS action plan and other sectorally relevant documents. Mr d'Orville added that in the context of the 'delivering as one' approach the Organization's core competencies needed to be clearly articulated in order to benefit from a UN system agreement that sectoral and technical competencies would determine lead roles to be entrusted to UN system organizations. The decisive question to be addressed is what UNESCO could do what others could or should not. Recent developments in the UN system had been favourable in that regard for UNESCO. UNDP agreed to accord precedence to specialized agencies in implementing development programmes in their areas of domain at the country level. For UNESCO this sometimes means a lead or coordinating role or nearly a supportive operational role.
11. A further parameter for the drafting of the new C/5, according to Mr d'Orville, was the role of National Commissions and civil society in general in UN country activities. Na-

tional Commissions had an important role in bringing their contributions and perspectives to bear in UNESCO's domains. Against this background, efforts need to be made to accomplish an integration of National Commissions in the framework of country level programming by UN country teams alongside or in support of UNESCO. With regard to the decentralization approach, Mr d'Orville finally pointed out that the results of the ongoing review by the Director General would be presented in 2009 and would need to fully taken into account when deciding upon UNESCO's role at the country level.

12. In a rich and concentrated plenary debate, in which 37 representatives of National Commissions took the floor in interventions limited to three minutes, a wide range of issues was addressed.

National Commissions had the opportunity to provide a written statement prior to the meeting. The statements that included the more specific priorities of National Commissions will be made available on the UNESCO website. Since the approach chosen for this regional consultation consisted in inventorising and prioritising items, proposals and suggestions for UNESCO's programme and budget in the biennium 2010/2011 (35 C/5) mainly through the format of the "World Café" (see below), this summary of the plenary debate is limited to focus on general issues of importance to many National Commissions. The following issues can be highlighted:

- **Concentration and prioritisation:** UNESCO should further sharpen its profile by clearly defining a reduced number of programme priorities in which its role as lead agency would be uncontested; coherence and less fragmentation, greater specificity in its action, a concentration in its country presence, a more effective division of labour with partners and the introduction of sunset clauses as a programming principle were proposed by many delegations;
- **Intersectorality and interdisciplinarity:** the creation of intersectoral platforms in the 34 C/5 was acknowledged by many as step in the right direction. However, more efforts to further develop an effective intersectoral and interdisciplinary approach throughout UNESCO's programme were considered as indispensable in order to take advantage of the Organizations broad mandate;
- **Linkage between C/4, C/5 and C/3:** with a view to enhancing monitoring, evaluation and accountability, several delegations asked for increased linkages between the Medium Term Strategy, the biennial programme and budget and the report of the Director General to member states on the activities of the Organization in the previous biennium (C/3).;
- **Education for All:** there was unanimous support for the strengthening of UNESCO's lead role in the coordination of Education for All. Achieving global momentum is imperative.
- **Policy advice and standard setting:** among the main functions of UNESCO, policy advice for capacity building and standard setting were highlighted by a number of delegations. In this regard, the implementation of UNESCO's conventions was considered a priority.
- **Reform:** many delegations expressed themselves in favour of continuing reform efforts; evaluation and monitoring should be further strengthened and along with the pursuit of quantifiable indicators, effective accountability and transparency of the budget
- **Delivering as one:** UNESCO should fully engage in the ongoing UN-reform which was considered an important effort to increase coherence in the international development cooperation. Delegates supported UNESCO's approach to reviewing its decentralization strategy in the context of the 'UN delivering as one' approach;

- **Visibility:** many delegations considered the issue of UNESCO's visibility as crucial; a more targeted communication strategy needs to be developed and implemented;
- **Role of National Commissions and civil society:** the network of National Commissions for UNESCO is decisive for country level programme implementation. National Commissions ensure UNESCO's visibility in Member States and make feedback from civil society in Member States available to UNESCO. They also facilitate the involvement of civil society actors in UNESCO's activities and help to increase the Organizations outreach and impact at country level. Therefore the role of National Commissions needs to be strengthened, in particular through closer cooperation with the secretariat as well as among National Commissions themselves, and effective training of officials of National Commissions.

Prioritisation of items proposed for UNESCO's programme and budget of 2010-2011 by the National Commissions of the Europe and North America Region

13. In order to make a more effective use of the expertise of National Commissions, a modern and interactive method was used for establishing the priorities of the Europe and North America Region for the 35 C/5. In several rounds of structured brainstorming, priorities were collected and formulated for the new C/5. In the participatory "World Café" format, each National Commission had the opportunity to introduce its priorities for each of the five major programmes of the Organization into five respective discussion rounds.
14. The following chairpersons and rapporteurs of the small-discussion groups were nominated: group 1: Natural sciences: Chairs: Ms Josee van Eijndhoven and Mr Luis Ramallo, Rapporteurs: Mr Dick Lageweg and Mr Jean-Pierre Boyer; group 2: Education: Chairs: Mr Fons van Wieringen and Ms Madeleine Viviani, Rapporteurs: Mr Harry Wichmann and Mr Paul Klein; group 3: Culture: Chairs: Ms Rachida Azough and Mr Marc Jacobs, Rapporteurs: Ms Zabrina Holmström and Ms Hilde Billiet; group 4: Communication and information, Chairs: Ms Verena Metze-Mangold and Mr Georges Dupont, Rapporteurs: Mr Vincent Wintermans and Mr Balazs Kalydy; group 5: Social sciences: Chairs: Mr Darko Strajn and Mr David Walden, Rapporteurs: Mr Arjan van Dal and Mr Nicolas Mathieu.
15. The resulting consolidated list of a total of 57 priorities was then ranked by National Commissions in two categories: one concerning priorities on a global level, a second concerning priorities of UNESCO's action for the Europe and North America Region. The ranking in the lists of the global priorities and of the priorities for the Europe and North America Region were closely similar; therefore, the list of priorities in the Europe North America Region will not be dealt with separately in this report. The ranking reflects the discussions as they took place and the results of the process that was used.
16. In all working groups of the "World Café", several overarching issues were repeatedly highlighted. National Commissions have to play a vital role in executing the UNESCO programme in their country or region. This role was highlighted by a great majority of participants as crucial for the relevance of UNESCO in Member States. The representatives of the National Commissions of the Member States of the Europe and North-America region stressed the utmost importance of the intersectoral approach during the planning and execution of UNESCO's programme. The setting up of intersectoral platforms was regarded as an important development. There is strong potential in increasing cooperation and coordination both at Major Programme level and between the respective Sectors.
17. The importance of taking the gender perspective into account was also highlighted. Special attention for developing countries was called for. The importance of gender, the role of civil society and the visibility of the Organisation were also mentioned as overarching

concerns. A strong call was made for UNESCO to show leadership, based on credibility. Good work is being done in that regard, but this does not result in great visibility to the public at large. A concern was being raised that UNESCO should not focus on minor activities. UNESCO has to be a proactive player, for example within international fora. Concrete results have to be presented to exemplify the work of the Organisation.

18. In this respect the contribution of the civil society to UNESCO's work has to be made known as well. Some National Commissions proposed a strong inclusion of civil society in UNESCO's activities in order to foster intellectual solidarity. This cannot be achieved without a transparent and open organisation. Observers should be allowed to attend all different kinds of expert meetings organised by UNESCO.
19. A repeated concern was the overlap of UNESCO with other international organisations, for example with respect to the Organisations' work on human rights. At the more strategic level, throughout the discussion UNESCO was called upon to enforce its role in areas of policy advice and capacity building, particularly with regard to the normative framework (regarding the existing instruments) and in assisting Member States with advice for the development of policies.
20. On the basis of the ranking procedure, the following priorities were considered particularly important for UNESCO's action at the global level; some priorities were aggregated and merged:

- (1) **Strengthen Education for Sustainable Development, inter alia, by developing guidelines and standards for ESD directed at teacher-training institutions, higher education programme developers and educational policy makers, and using UNESCO networks.** ESD needs to be further reinforced as it is central to the mandate of UNESCO, the lead agency for the UN DESD, and also in light of the importance of sustainable development in other UNESCO major programmes. Action to be taken includes: working out guidelines for ESD for teacher-training institutions; communicate good practices and disseminate professional and scientific information in ESD; foster a coherent multi-stakeholder approach; intersectoral cooperation. It has to be taken in to account that sustainable development is not only relevant for education but an overarching priority of the Organization. In that regard, the contribution of culture to sustainable development has to be considered as an important cross-cutting issue.
- (2) **Stimulate intercultural and interreligious dialogue.** The intersectoral platform is a means to promote the dialogue. UNESCO is encouraged to step up its work in the field of intercultural dialogue and work in close cooperation with the Alliance of Civilizations. It was recognized that UNESCO as an intergovernmental organization should proceed with caution in the field of interreligious dialogue. The basis for action in this area is provided in the Medium-Term Strategy stating that "Faith issues are addressed in a secular framework contributing to the objectives of dialogue." A proposal was presented that UNESCO could stimulate the dialogue through the organization of the Delphic Games. There is also a role for SHS to play in the intercultural dialogue. The dialogue has to get input of the multidisciplinary background the SHS provides, e.g. from philosophy, history and anthropology. UNESCO is supported to go beyond what it is doing now in relation to the dialogue among civilizations.
- (3) **Step up efforts to promote arts education for all, as a strategic means for achieving quality EFA.** The arts are a powerful means to develop cognitive capacity and creativity. Arts education has a positive influence on the success of students in other disciplines and therefore is of strategic importance for achieving quality education for all. Arts education can be an effective

tive tool for teaching reading, writing, and arithmetic. Furthermore, it fosters access to culture for all through the development of arts literacy. Special attention should be accorded to equal gender opportunities and the special needs of migrants and underprivileged groups. Intersectoral cooperation between the Education and Culture sectors is important in this area. Arts education needs to be fully integrated in the development of school curricula and further developed through the exchange of best practices. Decision makers need to be better informed of the positive effects of arts education.

- (4) **Promotion, effective implementation and monitoring of the existing normative instruments**, enhancing policy advice and capacity building (See conventions of e.g. 1954, 1970, 1972, 2001, 2003, 2005, and e.g. the Recommendation on the Status of the Artist). This implies analytical reporting, monitoring and evaluation. In this respect, the need for statistical data and statistics development was brought forward as a prerequisite for action. Therefore, the crucial role of the UNESCO Institute for Statistics UIS should be recognized in the 35 C/5, in which UIS must have a proper budget allocation. The importance of identifying mechanisms for the exchange of best practices between Member States was emphasized. It was highlighted that UNESCO should ensure a credible and geographically balanced world heritage list (revise the global strategy, change working methods). With regard to the 2003 convention, it was emphasized that commercialization should be avoided and local communities should be closely involved.
- (5) **Promote gender equality in an intersectoral way**. Gender equality as a global priority for UNESCO is a cross-cutting issue that has to be addressed by all sectors. UNESCO should continue to address gender equality in and through education, with regard to curriculum material (address the image of gender in textbooks) and by enhancing equal access to education at all levels. This should be reflected through concrete measures in the action plan under preparation. While a promotion of access for girls and women is urgent in many parts of the world, in other regions an increasing dropout rate of boys also has to be addressed. UNESCO must work towards gender equality in all science programmes by setting expected results, indicators and targets. This issue is not only about women's participation in science but also about the role of women in pursuing sustainable development (water, fuel wood). UNESCO should underline the importance of the gender aspect in media at large to assure the access of and participation of women and men. The image of women in the media and the internet is often dominated by sexist attitudes which in return can reinforce negative attitudes towards women. Gender parity in the higher management level of UNESCO should be pursued.
- (6) **Strengthen the linkages between natural and social and human sciences in order to have relevant scientific programmes and projects**. Many of the areas that UNESCO is dealing with require interlinkages between various scientific approaches, this holds e.g. for ethics, sustainable development, disaster preparedness and other major issues. This means that UNESCO should rethink its programme structures because it is necessary to think cross-sectorally on global issues. A merging of the social and the natural sciences was not proposed. For example: ethical issues can not be discussed without a discussion in the sciences involved. Intersectorality should be linked to all intergovernmental programmes (ISP's) in order to make UNESCO's activities more relevant. The development of indicators and measurable targets is needed. Special attention should be paid to the linkages between culture and sustainable development and to climate change including disaster preparedness. The results of the review of the two science programmes in UNESCO should be better used - including the expertise of the experts involved in this review. Some of the participants called for an ex-

ternal advisory group. On the other hand, existing expertise in ISP's, UNESCO Chairs and Category 2 institutes could be used in order to avoid the establishment of a new structure with budgetary implications. One aspect of the linkages between the two sectors is the promotion and monitoring of social transformations towards sustainable societies in close cooperation between the social and the natural sciences.

- (7) **Enhance access to information and promote information and media literacy in order to bridge the digital divide.** UNESCO should reinforce its facilitating role in constructing a favourable environment for accessing information. This comprises open access, copyright questions and the promotion of preservation of documentary heritage with special focus on digital heritage through the Memory of the World Programme, media literacy (ICT in education, capacity building) as a prerequisite for access, free and open software, the development of educational resources especially targeting vulnerable groups, policy advice, including IFAP, and standard setting, the creation of quality content in the public domain and the fostering of linguistic diversity. The digital divide as a central problem in all these issues comes up again in different forms with every new technology, and it affects all sectors. One aspect of enhancing access to information is the creation of an enabling environment for the effective use of this information. A lot of quality information is published but insufficiently used. Citizens often lacks tools to make optimal choices in assessing information; media literacy includes developing critical skills with regard to the proper use of ICT and new media and the faculty to assess the quality of the content carried by them. UNESCO is urged to take up a leading role in the transfer of knowledge at the global level and deliver open access to educational resources and research reports. Focus should be in first instance on the academic world. The promotion of independent and pluralistic public service radio/television broadcasting is a means to enhance access to information.
- (8) **Strengthen the focus on ethics, including bioethics, policy advice, ethics of science and technology, capacity building.** The Social and Human Sciences should provide the philosophical reflection that is much needed in a world in which technological developments raise questions with regard to, for example, bioethics and the ethics of science and technology. UNESCO should enhance its active role it plays in ethical debates at the international level and improve its capacity-building efforts in ethics by providing policy advice to member states and engaging in curriculum development. A helpful way to increase the visibility of the substantial work of UNESCO's ethics section would be to present concrete results whenever a natural science conference is taking place.
- (9) **Freedom of expression in the media and press freedom, inter alia journalist safety.** Freedom of expression is a basic value for UNESCO, and the Organisation should actively pursue its role as a custodian defending freedom of expression in the media and press freedom, inter alia by promoting journalist safety. Press freedom can also be endangered by too much concentration in the sector of the media. In some parts of the world, media is under pressure, numbers of journalists are killed in carrying out their profession every year, and most of the cases are never brought to justice. UNESCO should take much clearer stand as a custodian of press freedom with the further involvement of journalists, in cooperation with the civil society and National Commissions and by intensifying intrasectoral and intersectoral cooperation.
- (10) **Stimulate the protection of cultural heritage in post-conflict and post-disaster situations by providing expertise, support and pursue fundrais-**

ing. UNESCO should also explore possibilities to increase capacity-building for developing countries in post-conflict and post-disaster areas. UNESCO's role and the question whether UNESCO can take action also during conflicts e.g. using inventories for cultural heritage protection was debated and it was recommended to continue examining this question in the future.

- (11) **Strengthen UNESCO's leadership in policy advice.** The main additional value of UNESCO lies in its role in policy advice. This was stressed for all areas of UNESCO's work. EFA was held up as a model for UNESCO's global efforts across all its disciplines. This was elaborated for science as follows. The budgetary restrictions do not allow UNESCO to take a funding role in science development. However, it has a strong network in various scientific areas, and it could make this network effective in fostering more effective policy advice, for example in the area of sustainable development and capacity building. UNESCO should avoid minor endeavours ('do not think in intent, but in impact'). Its budget makes direct science development not possible – it is not a key player in the field of scientific research. Nevertheless, the contribution of UNESCO can be used as glue for coordinating existing international scientific networks and scientific bodies and making these networks more effective through policy advice and development in order to fulfil the needs of member states. A fine model for this is the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). UNESCO should marshal its efforts in order to assume a leading (intellectual) role in the scientific field. Through intellectual leadership of UNESCO international scientific networks could be coordinated in order to make a difference and add value to activities of these networks. UNESCO's science statistics should be further developed - to be used by Member States as a basis for global monitoring in science policy development.
- (12) **Develop tools for the recognition of formal, non-formal, informal education and their linkages in the framework of lifelong learning, with a special emphasis on literacy.** In the framework of lifelong learning UNESCO should promote the integration of formal, non-formal and informal education where a broader concept of EFA needs to be pursued to include all age groups. Lifelong Quality education must be fostered, from early childhood to old age, in the light of rapidly changing societies. To support efforts for quality education in lifelong learning, competencies acquired through life and in different areas of education need to be better understood. Particular attention must be paid to the important role of literacy in developing countries.
- (13) **Identify global cultural challenges and initiate and publish one or more global monitoring reports in the field of culture.** UNESCO was requested to show strong leadership in this domain, provide guidance to Member States and join together strategies towards a more coherent approach to culture. UNESCO should seek to increase the focus of its work in the Culture Sector and provide basic policy advice to Member States. The fact that culture is inherently dynamic was stressed. UNESCO should develop further its clearing house function. Reference was made e.g. to the Education for All (EFA) Global Monitoring Report (GMR) as an excellent model. There was agreement that there is a need in this area for a strengthening of the clearing house function of UNESCO and the need for reflection and identification of global cultural challenges.
- (14) **Effective implementation of the 2005 convention on the protection and promotion of diversity of cultural expressions.** With the convention in force, there is an urgent need to proceed to implementation. UNESCO's role in areas of policy development and capacity-building was particularly enhanced with regard to this convention. Here, UNESCO was also seen as a catalyst for exchange of information about good practices.

- (15) **Enhance standards and indicators for quality education and EFA, for a personal and professional development of each individual.** Standards should be set for all types of education and lifelong learning, including basic literacy; indicators should be developed and monitored both for input and for learning outcomes; regional differentiation (contextualisation) must be duly taken into account. This is important in order to prepare students for a new kind of active citizenship and to include everybody in Education For All. Implementation should be carried out in cooperation with other organisations (OECD) and not in competition with them, making full use of UNESCO's networks. Inclusive quality education contributes to intercultural dialogue. A big challenge is to counter the shortage of teachers in some regions of the world, e.g. by providing better working conditions.
- (16) **Improve quality of life by making full use of opportunities offered by the knowledge society in order to build participatory civil societies.** Building upon the principles of sustainability, diversity and inclusiveness, UNESCO should contribute to the creation of a "participatory society" in which citizens use information and knowledge in a responsible way. This can be achieved i.a. through improving information and media literacy, developing multimedia community centres (CMCs), distribution of affordable laptops, collecting and disseminating best practices with the help of National Commissions. UNESCO should pay attention to the inclusion of the civil society in to the creation and use of quality information.
- (17) **Use the ASP-network more effectively in order to promote UNESCO's objectives regarding the education of young people.** Disseminating UNESCO's principles among young people should be a priority of the Organization. The network of Associated Schools is an important tool to achieve this goal, as experience has shown in a large number of countries. However, global coordination and a strengthened secretarial support will be crucial. Furthermore, the emphasis on multicultural education should be strengthened and a reference curriculum for peace education considered.
- (18) **Promote more actively the cooperation in risk preparedness and mitigation.** No mitigation without preparedness. Natural disasters are particularly increasing their destructive effect upon human beings, territories and cultural heritage. UNESCO could be most effective in enhancing the cooperation within the science sector in a broad sense, and thereby underline the importance of risk preparedness and mitigation as a global priority. Technical guidelines on special fields (cultural heritage, buildings, water, etc) should be elaborated as well as activities concerning monitoring and mapping. Another suggestion was to create a database on natural disasters recorded in documents for instance in archives.
- (19) **Promote linguistic diversity and ensure that there is a coherent policy for languages in place.** This implies both preservation and promotion of languages with emphasis on languages less spoken and endangered languages and the languages of indigenous populations. Linguistic diversity needs to be taken into account in activities pertaining to the intercultural dialogue. Language is an inherent part of identity. A relaunch of the "Representative Works" was put forward for consideration (translations of literary work from smaller languages). It was questioned, however, at the expense of what the proposed relaunching could take place. The intersectoral platform on languages was seen as a potential asset.
- (20) **Support policy leadership and capacity building in education through effectively coordinated input from higher education and research.** Higher education expertise and research results should contribute to all fields of education, particularly the fields of policy and decision making. This im-

plies, among other things, putting together research results on literacy to reinforce policies in this field; coordination of UNESCO's activities in higher education efforts, including the UNESCO Institutes, so that they benefit all programmes of the Organization; foster the transfer of knowledge and train teachers in higher education with regard to knowledge-transfer activities.

- (21) **Develop reference curricula for peace education.** Peace curricula should be developed for all levels of education incorporating intercultural dialogue, human rights, arts, sustainable development, ethics, new media, citizenship, languages, etc. The emphasis on peace education directly follows from UNESCO's mission as a peace-building organization.
- (22) **Continue to develop materials and means for inclusive education for people with special needs.** Marginalized groups have specific educational needs that need to be addressed by UNESCO's activities in education. This includes migrants, children of illegal immigrants, linguistic minorities, the elder, and the disabled. The special needs of highly talented students must also be taken into account in this context.
- (23) **Actively promote the involvement of young people in the natural sciences.** This promotion can take shape by establishing science prizes for researchers younger than 35 years old and by establishing platforms of cooperation and exchange of good practices, for example on new methods of science teaching, world heritage and climate change. Public broadcasting programmes on scientific issues can raise the awareness of young people in order to provoke their interest in science.
- (24) **Explore cultural tourism for sustainable development.** Cultural tourism can have positive and negative effects on heritage and other forms of cultural expressions. The exchange of information on good and bad practices and the assessment and evaluation of specific cases were considered important. Digitisation of heritage is an area where UNESCO can be of assistance to Member States and this therefore is an issue to be looked into during the next programme period. A specific request was that UNESCO should try to create a database of public domain images (high quality pictures, moving images,).

21. The following priorities were also mentioned:

- (25) **Strengthen role of philosophy and future-oriented studies**
- (26) **Contribute to biodiversity by creating biosphere reserves for the proper management of natural resources, especially water and energy**
- (27) **Promote the visibility of UNESCO and its programmes and raise the awareness of researchers for the necessity of making the results of their research more known supplement the EFA-programme by strengthening its role in higher education and research**
- (28) **Play a standard setting role in creating norms for democratic, plural and sustainable knowledge societies ('infoethics').**
- (29) **Further explore the concept of regions on a cultural basis**
- (30) **Mainstream human rights within UNESCO**
- (31) **Continuing the fight against racism and discrimination by strengthening human rights research and education**
- (32) **Develop policy on museums and archives and (post) industrial heritage**

- (33) **Strengthen ethical, social and inclusive role of sport**
- (34) **Reinforce implementation of existing activities in social and human sciences in collaboration with all other sectors**

22. A plenary debate was dedicated to evaluate the outcome of this new approach of prioritising and to assess the implications of this methods and the results obtained. Participants unanimously thanked the three Commissions for UNESCO of Flanders/Belgium, Luxemburg and the Netherlands for having proposed this new approach for the Consultation of the Europe and North America Region. It was broadly welcomed as a much more interactive and productive method to exchange on important issues regarding UNESCO's programme and budget and to prioritize those items that received most support from National Commissions of the ENA region. Some concrete proposals were made to further refine this approach, e.g. the establishment of a drafting session after the "World Café" in order to aggregate, reorganize and reformulate the outcomes of the table sessions. Enough time should be foreseen for this exercise. The ranking procedure should then be based on such a more concise set of proposed priorities. The ranking procedure itself should also be further developed.
23. The participants unanimously expressed the wish that the methodology and the spirit of this meeting, based on much more intense participation and exchange, should become a model for future consultations of National Commissions of this region. Suggestions to further develop this methodology should be taken into account and implemented. The consultant that had assisted the three Commissions in preparing this consultation, Ms Eva van der Fluit, was thanked by the participants for her contribution to this successful meeting.
24. The Chairperson of the Coordinating Committee of National Commissions, Mr Luis Ramallo, President of the Spanish Commission for UNESCO, addressed the meeting to inform participants of the work of the Committee. He emphasized the important role of National Commissions and civil society actors in the work of UNESCO as laid down in a truly participatory spirit in the constitution of UNESCO and invited all participants to further engage in closer cooperation among National Commissions.

Adoption of the Report

25. The Report of the Meeting was adopted. The Chairperson warmly thanked the Chief Rapporteur and the Co-Rapporteurs for their work.

Conclusion of the Meeting

26. All participants expressed their deep appreciation and warm thanks to the three Commissions of Flanders, Luxemburg and the Netherlands for the outstanding level of dedication, creativity and professionalism with which they had organized this meeting; it was the unanimous feeling that this meeting had set new standards for future consultations of this kind.
27. The president of the Flemish Commission for UNESCO, Mr Walter Lerouge, closed the meeting.

Closing address by Minister Octavie Modert

28. The Minister for Culture of Luxemburg, Ms Octavie Modert, presented a closing address to the participants of the meeting. She underlined that National Commissions are an indispensable platform for reflection, anticipation and innovation for UNESCO. She congratulated the organizers to have chosen the approach of the "World Café" and the

“Market Place” which demands a rigorous preparation to lead to the expected results. She was happy to see that the objectives of the meeting had been fully achieved and translated into a rich and well structured report which clearly presents the priorities and preoccupations of National Commissions of the Europe and North America Region.

Report of the 15th Quadrennial and Statutory Conference of National Commissions for UNESCO in Europe and North America 2008

Opening

1. The chair of the 15th Quadrennial and Statutory Conference Mr Jean-Pierre Kraemer, President of the Luxemburg National Commission, opened the meeting and welcomed participants. The meeting consisted of a sharing of good practices from the work of National Commissions, a session on UNESCO’s decentralization process and the role of National Commissions, and the Secretaries-General meeting.

Sharing good practices

2. In an interactive marketplace session National Commissions shared several examples of good practice projects. Subsequently, the following conclusions were drawn regarding lessons learnt:
3. Building upon their comparative advantages, National Commissions should continue to establish partnerships on all levels and with a broad range of partners, especially with civil-society organizations, youth representatives, the private sector, parliamentarians, the media, and with other Commissions. Civil-society cooperation may lead to innovative and interactive organizations structures. Relations with parliamentarians may stimulate and strengthen the implementation of normative instruments of UNESCO. Cooperating with professional experts when dealing with controversial issues was seen as essential as was the creation of joint projects with other Commissions (for example, on the model of the cooperation between the three Commissions organizing the 35 C/5 Consultation) in order to learn from their practices, exchange expertise and to strengthen the network.
4. In all their activities National Commissions should identify and focus on UNESCO’s comparative advantage and added value. Work done by other agencies and organizations should not be duplicated. It was stressed that all projects carried out should be of high quality, aim at long-term effects and use innovative methods. They should also react to current trends and take up topical issues. Communication of good activities to the media was seen as essential, bearing in mind that accessible terminology should be used. National Commissions should continuously evaluate their project implementation and make sound judgements on which projects to continue, which projects to expand and which projects to terminate. In taking a cross-sectoral approach, National Commissions can serve as a model for other UNESCO activities.

UNESCO’s decentralization process and the role of National Commissions

5. The representative of the Director-General, Mr Hans d’Orville, set out the key elements in the ongoing UN reform – the quest for coherence, efficiency and quality of delivery. He referred to the recent milestones of the reform, such as the 2005 Outcome document, the High-level panel’s report ‘Delivering as One’ (October 2006) and others such as the recent decision 179/42 of the Executive Board on UNESCO’s contribution to the UN reform. Mr d’Orville underscored that the quest for coherence must be pursued at all levels; inter-agency at the country level and within each organization, as well as verti-

cally among donors. Referring to the need for strategic inclusiveness within the UN system, he shared the 12 most important principles underlying the quest for coherence, which have emerged from the experience with the 8 'delivering as one' pilot countries. Among these were the critical need for Government ownership and leadership; a strong focus on the attainment and pursuit of the internationally agreed development goals, the dismissal of the 'one size fits all' approach, the need to ensure normative-operational linkages, and the One Plan/Programme as the pivot for coherence efforts and common country programming. The principles also include considerations with regard to the One Budgetary Framework, the quality, knowledge and skills of the resident Coordinator, institutional 'firewalling', harmonization of business practices, respect for core sectoral competences of the various specialized agencies ('redlining'), technical expertise as a paramount criterion for involvement in sectoral programming exercises, and the integration of relevant regional and global programmes into national programming documents.

6. Mr d'Orville further highlighted the importance of work in progress such as the issue of the financial support to field offices, the integration of UNESCO into regional directors' teams, the preparation of UNESCO Country Programming documents, the integration of civil society and in particular National Commissions and the conference foreseen for September 2008 to address this issue. Among the challenges for the future, Mr d'Orville mentioned the new space which has opened up to address cross-cutting themes through the joint action and programming of UN system organisations. He also referred, among other things, to the question of financial support from the C/5 for implementation, the question of ploughing efficiency/administrative savings back to programmes, and the issue of bringing the Bretton Woods organisations and the regional development banks into the fold.
7. In the ensuing discussion, one participant asked for additional information on UNESCO's field structure in relation to the UN reform. Mr d'Orville replied that this was part of the ongoing reflection within the decentralization Task Force. He acknowledged the need to be more flexible in the future that there was a growing recognition of the idea that decentralization by cluster office might not be a rational solution in the future.
8. In the following presentation on the Decentralization Review Task Force, Mr Etienne Clément, Deputy-Director of the Bureau for Field Coordination, presented the background for the Director-General's decision to set up this mechanism within the Secretariat in November 2006. Its aim was to make recommendations to the senior management and that representatives of National Commissions were invited to attend meetings on items relating to their role and functions. Regarding the progress made by the Task Force during its first phase between November 2006 and June 2007, he said that the overall objectives of this initiative were motivated by the need to periodically review the decentralization strategy and to ascertain its efficiency in responding to the challenges emerging from the UN reform. Among the achievements, Mr Clément highlighted the strengthening of Field Offices capacities and accountability, and UNESCO's participation in the 'delivering as One' approach through the definition of a set of comparative advantages, a plan of action and time-tables specifying support to Field Offices from Headquarters, and the identification of new skills and profiles required. With regard to the objectives of the second phase from December 2007 to March 2009, Mr Clément emphasized, among others, the revisiting of the structure of the decentralized system and the positioning of the National Commissions and national partners within the country-level approach, while remaining realistic with regard to UNESCO's budget ceiling in the medium-term. He finally referred to the need for defining the possible roles that National Commissions could assume in the future and mentioned, among others, the potential role of National Commissions within the framework of the negotiation of UN common country programming, their role as mobilizers of the 'broader UNESCO family' and the necessity of enhancing their visibility vis-à-vis governments and the UN country teams.
9. Mr James Kulikowski (ERC) expanded on the issues on the subject of decentralization and National Commissions. He reiterated that the National Commissions are important

elements of the current phase of the decentralization review and that National Commissions are represented in joint programming exercises in certain countries, such as Vietnam (pilot) and Swaziland (UNDAF). He proposed that National Commissions could, among others, act as sources of information, as advisers to Field Offices on country priorities, assist Field Offices in organizing consultations with Ministries, and as participants in joint national monitoring mechanisms as well as programme implementation within joint UN programmes. Mr Kulikowski also emphasized the role of National Commissions in countries not benefiting from joint UN country programmes and in mobilizing the broader UNESCO family and other partners at the national level. Referring to the working group conclusions of the Decentralization Review Task Force, Mr Kulikowski underscored the need to strengthen National Commission capacities in relation to UN country team issues, to develop a specific strategy and Terms of Reference for involving National Commissions in UN country team activities and to review cooperation between UNESCO and National Commissions in developed countries. This would involve enhanced interaction with National Commissions, including the definition of roles and approaches, the involvement of other partners, the development of a communication strategy and plan and the integration of these topics in the Regional Consultations. Mr Kulikowski finally referred to the next steps in this process which would comprise, among others, the implementation of a protocol for Field Offices to create a plan of action with National Commissions.

Secretaries-General meeting

10. The meeting of Secretaries-General of National Commissions was chaired by Mr Paul Klein, Secretary-General of the Luxemburg Commission for UNESCO. The following points were discussed and agreed upon:
11. Experienced Secretaries-General will contribute to the training of new Secretaries-General and to their integration into the network by a peer-to-peer mentoring system and a pro-active participation in the preparation and implementation of the training week for new Secretaries-General in Paris. In addition to this agreement, the following activities and actions were also mentioned as important: organise meetings for new staff members like the one that took place in Slovakia; invite colleagues to a National Commission secretariat so that they can share their activities, as was done by France; establish partnerships between National Commissions, such as Germany did with its training programme for National Commissions from Africa; provide timely support with regard to concrete project activities; establish a training course for people who know UNESCO through a previous activity. It was stressed that the UNESCO Secretariat should provide assistance for these activities and facilitate personal contacts between National Commissions and staff members from Headquarters. Spain informed that it intended to organize a meeting for the Secretaries-General from Latin America.
12. More meetings along the 'Lugano model' will take place in order to strengthen the cooperation between National Commissions in the region and their position and recognition on the national level and within UNESCO. The idea is to organize enable an informal, concise, focused exchange of experience and the planning of joint activities. Around 20-30 representatives of National Commissions should take part, if possible composed of experienced colleagues and newcomers. All National Commissions were invited to come forward with the organization of such meetings. Information on the organization can be provided by Switzerland. Austria and Slovakia envisage organising one of the next meetings.
13. National Commissions will contribute pro-actively to the Civil Society Forum during the General Conference. A group of National Commission will work with the Secretariat to develop a concept that allows real discussion and exchange of ideas between the delegates of Member States and the invited representatives of the civil society.

14. The Europe and North America Region will be represented in the Coordinating Committee (formerly called Steering Group) through:
 - a. the Chairs or Secretaries-General of the National Commissions that organized the last two Consultations, plus one Chair or Secretary-General from the other electoral group if the two first are from the same group;
 - b. the Chair or Secretary-General of the National Commission organizing the next Consultation (as soon as formally confirmed).
15. A Virtual Forum will enhance the cooperation between the National Commissions of the Region. This instrument will be established in order to share information and good practices, discuss specific topics, prepare the agenda of regional meetings, support the representatives in the Coordinating Committee, integrate new Secretaries-General and staff members, promote partnerships, organise informal meetings, etc.
16. National Commissions should cooperate to foster a closer and more coherent cooperation with other international organisations, such as the European Union and the Council of Europe, to benefit from various overlapping activities and competences, particularly in culture and education.
17. The Secretary-General of the German National Commission informed of an ongoing initiative to create a network of National Commissions for UNESCO of member states of the European Union.
18. Furthermore, the results of the meeting organized by the French National Commission for UNESCO on the cooperation in the field of education in Europe and the role of National Commissions were recalled by the the Secretary-General of the French Commission.

Annex – Participants DG’s Consultation and Quadrennial Conference of National Commissions for UNESCO in Europe and North America 2008

1	Mr.	Andresen Guimarães	Fernando	Ambassadeur / President of National Commission	Portugal
2	Mr.	Armengol	Joan Miquel	Secrétaire général	Andorra
3	Mrs.	Anonuevo	Carolyn	Deputy Director	UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning
4	Mr.	Aydinuraz	Arsin Sener	President of National Commission	Turkey
5	Mrs.	Azough	Rachida	Member of National Commission	The Netherlands
6	Ms.	Baltina	Dagnija	Secretary General (taking up the duties on August 1, 2008)	Latvia
7	Mr.	Bar-Elli	Daniel	Secretary General	Israel
8	Mr.	Bernecker	Roland	Secretary General	Germany
9	Mrs.	Billiet	Hilde	Member of Flemish UNESCO Commission	Belgium
10	Mr.	Bisschop de	Jan	Secretary General Flemish UNESCO Commission	Belgium
11	Mr.	Boksenberg	Alexander	Chair	UK of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
12	Mr.	Boyer	Jean-Pierre	Secrétaire général	France
13	Ms.	Browne	Marva	Secretary General	Netherlands Antilles
14	Ms.	Bugailiskyte	Liliana	Programme Coordinator	Lithuania
15	Ms.	Carek	Rut	Secretary General	Croatia
16	Mr.	Cheng	Xiaolin	Chief of Section	UNESCO Paris
17	Mr.	Clement	Etienne	Deputy Director	UNESCO Paris
18	Mrs.	Connaughton	Susanna	Executive Director National Commission for UNESCO	United States of America
19	Mrs.	Corat	Sanye Gulset	Director	UNESCO Paris
20	Mr.	Crowley	John	Chief of Section, Ethics of Science and Technology	UNESCO Paris
21	Mr.	Dal van	Arjan	Programme Officer	The Netherlands
22	Ms.	Davies	Sue	Chair, Culture Committee	UK of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
23	Mr.	Dendev	Badarch	Director of the Office	UNESCO Moscow
24	Ms.	Dirmaite	Asta	Secretary General of the Lithuanian National Commission for UNESCO	Lithuania
25	Mr.	D' Orville	Hans	Assistant Director-General for Strategic Planning	UNESCO Paris
26	Mr.	Dupont	Georges	Expert / Member of National Commission	Luxembourg
27	Mrs.	Eijndhoven van	Josee	Member of National Commission	The Netherlands
28	Mr.	Favier	Jean	Président	France
29	Ms.	Fluit van der	Eva	Consultant	The Netherlands
30	Mr.	François	Michèle	Secretary Commission National Saint Marin	San Marino
31	Mr.	Galhardo	Manuela	Secrétaire exécutive	Portugal
32	Mrs.	Gobbi	Giovanna	Secretary General Commision National Saint-Marien	San Marino
33	Mr.	Gradis	Diego	Vice-président	Switzerland

34	Mr.	Gresiczki	Peter	Secretary General	Hungary
35	Ms.	Gutman	Kerli	Coordinator of Education and Science Programmes	Estonia
36	Mr.	Haar ter	Bas	Ambassador / Permanent Delegate to UNESCO	The Netherlands
37	Mrs.	Hafner	Marjutka	Secretary General	Slovenia
38	Mr.	Hannam	Everton	Secretary General	Jamaica
39	Mr.	Hasanov	Emil	Acting Secretary General	Azerbaijan
40	Mrs.	Helgadóttir	Gudny	Chairperson	Iceland
41	Mrs.	Holmström	Zabrina	Counsellor / Secretary General	Finland
42	Mrs.	Holse	Irene	Head of Section Ministry of Education	Denmark
43	Mr.	Hreinsson	Einar	Secretary General	Iceland
44	Mrs.	Jacobs	Els M.	Secretary General	The Netherlands
45	Mr.	Jacobs	Marc	Member Flemish UNESCO Commission	Belgium
46	Mrs.	Jean	Michele	President Canadian Commission	Canada
47	Mrs.	Kabitoglou	Ekaterini	Member of the Executive Board of the Hellenic Nat.Com.For UNESCO	Greece
48	Mr.	Kalydy	Balázs	Counsellor	Hungary
49	Mrs.	Kampen van	Anke	Member of National Commission	The Netherlands
50	Mr.	Klein	Paul	Secrétaire général	Luxembourg
51	Mr.	Komorowski	Tomasz	Project Coordinator	Poland
52	Mrs.	Körnell	Ulrika	Desk Officer	Sweden
53	Mr.	Kouchnirenko	Vladmir	Chief UNESCO Clubs and New Partnerships	UNESCO Paris
54	Mr.	Kraemer	Jean-Pierre	Président	Luxembourg
55	Mrs.	Krasovskaya	Elena	Secretary General	Belarus
56	Mr.	Kuna	Milan	Deputy Secretary General	Czech Republic
57	Mr.	Kulikowski	James	Director	UNESCO Paris
58	Mr.	Lageweg	Dick	Senior Programme Officer Education	The Netherlands
59	Mrs.	Lange	Ellen	Secretary General	Norway
60	Mr.	Leicht	Alexander	Head of Division UN Decade ESD	Germany
61	Mr.	Lerouge	Walter	President Flemish UNESCO Commission	Belgium
62	Mrs.	Lian	Vigdis	Member of the Norwegian NatCom for UNESCO	Norway
63	Mr.	Lindell	Johan	Secretary General	Sweden
64	Mr.	Listov	Andrey	First Secretary MFA Russian National Commission	Russia
65	Mrs.	Malina	Barbara	Head of the Division for Education and Communication / Information	Germany
66	Mr.	Markkanen	Tapio	Professor / President of the Finnish National Commission	Finland
67	Mr.	Mathieu	Nicolas	Officer	Switzerland

68	Mrs.	Mebes	Julie	Deputy Permanent Delegate to UNESCO	The Netherlands
69	Mrs.	Meganck	Janet		The Netherlands
70	Mr.	Meganck	Richard	Rector	UNESCO-IHE Delft
71	Ms.	Merotto	Wally	Operations Coordination Officer	UNESCO-BRESCE Venice
72	Mr.	Mesa	Jose Antonio	Secretary General Spanish Commission	Spain
73	Mrs.	Metze-Mangold	Verena	Vice President	Germany
74	Mr.	Minasyan	Hambardzum	Secretary General	Armenia
75	Mrs.	Mitreva	Roumiana	Expert	Bulgaria
76	Mrs.	Moala-Mafi	Lucy	Secretary General	Tonga
77	Mr.	Molnar	Ludovit	Professor / Chairman of Slovak Commission for UNESCO	Slovakia
78	Mr.	Morgan	W. John	Chair, Education Committee; UNESCO Chair Political Economy of Education	UK of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
79	Ms.	Mouyi	Loukia	Officer	Cyprus
80	Mrs.	Nielsen	Linda	President of the Danish National Commission	Denmark
81	Mrs.	Nikita	Eleni	Secretary General	Cyprus
82	Mr.	Nistor	Sergiu	Secretary General	Romania
83	Mr.	Oduber	James A.	Secretary General	Aruba
84	Mrs.	Okilj	Milijana	Architect / Member of National Commission	Bosnia and Herzegovina
85	Mr.	Opschoor	Hans	Member of National Commission	The Netherlands
86	Mr.	Ozols	Rolands	Secretary General	Latvia
87	Mrs.	Papachristopoulou Tzitzikosta	Maria Ekaterini	President of the Hellenic National Commission for UNESCO	Greece
88	Mrs.	Pelzer	Myriam	Vice-president Commission francophone et germanophone pour l'UNESCO	Belgium
89	Ms.	Petoshati	Elida	General Secretary of the National Commission	Albania
90	Mr.	Plathe	Axel	Chief / Executive Office, Communication and Information Sector	UNESCO Paris
91	Mrs.	Polakovicova	Viera	Secretary General	Slovakia
92	Mrs.	Preis	Ann-Belinda	Senior Programme Planning Officer	UNESCO Paris
93	Mr.	Ramallo	Luis I.	President	Spain
94	Mr.	Rao	Jacques	Chief Executive Office External Relations and Cooperation UNESCO	UNESCO Paris
95	Mr.	Ratajski	Slawomir	Secretary General	Poland
96	Mr.	Ruoss	Engelbert	Director	UNESCO-BRESCE Venice
97	Mr.	Rusnac	Constantin	Secretary General	Republic of Moldova
98	Mr.	Sadlak	Jan	Dr./ DIRECTOR	UNESCO-CEPES Bucharest
99	Mrs.	Siim	Margit	Deputy Secretary General	Estonia
100	Mr.	Skoda	Pavel	Secretary General	Czech Republic
101	Mrs.	Soliven	Preciosa	Secretary General - UNESCO National Commission of the Philippines	Philippines

102	Mr.	Strajn	Darko	Researcher (PhD)	Slovenia
103	Mrs.	Thurdin	Görel	President	Sweden
104	Mrs.	Viviani-Schaerer	Madeleine	Secrétaire générale	Switzerland
105	Mrs.	Vucht Tijssen van	Lieteke	President	The Netherlands
106	Mrs.	Walcher	Maria	Acting Secretary General	Austria
107	Mr.	Walden	David	Secretary General	Canada
108	Ms.	Westrik	Carol	Programme Officer	The Netherlands
109	Mr.	Wichmann	Harry	Programme Officer	The Netherlands
110	Mr.	Wieringen van	Fons	Member of National Commission	The Netherlands
111	Mr.	Wintermans	Vincent	Programme Officer	The Netherlands
112	Mr.	Yatsenkivskyi	Oleh	Secretary general, National Commission of Ukraine for UNESCO	Ukraine
113	Mr.	Zal	Nihat	Secretary General	Turkey
114	Mr.	Zemek	Alexander	U.S. National Commission for UNESCO	United States of America