

22 March 2011

Future of the UK National Commission for UNESCO

The outcomes of the UK Department for International Development (DFID) Multilateral Aid Review (MAR) were published on 1 March 2011. In light of the MAR's findings, DFID reviewed the UK National Commission for UNESCO (UKNC) to determine how the organisation may best fulfil its mandate going forward with the resources available.

On Friday, 18 March 2011 DFID informed the UKNC of its proposal for the future of the organisation. The proposal stated that the UKNC would continue as an independent organisation for a further two-year period, in a revised and reduced format which engages more directly with the UK's Permanent Delegation to UNESCO and with UK government departments. The terms set out in the proposal include:

- The UK National Commission will remain an independent organization.
- A reduced grant is offered from DFID for an initial two years.
- Any funding from the Welsh Assembly Government and from the Scottish Government will be agreed with these funders separately in light of the DFID offer.
- The purpose of the UKNC will be to focus on:
 1. Independent policy advice to government in the fields of UNESCO competence
 2. Supporting the government's reform and effectiveness agenda at UNESCO
 3. Providing advice and support to UK individuals and institutions seeking UNESCO accreditation and nominations
- There will not be a UK-wide project portfolio.
- UNESCO - rather than the UKNC - will be responsible for implementing UNESCO activities in the UK.
- The system of standing committees and sub-committees will be replaced by the wider engagement of civil society on time-limited tasks.
- These tasks will allow for cross-discipline involvement around key themes.
- For the London-based UKNC Secretariat, there will be a maximum of three posts including a Head of Secretariat.
- The Board will be reduced in size to 7 members who will reflect the range of UNESCO fields of competence and the diversity of the UK.
- The UKNC will return to the original system of Board members being approved by government.
- The process for the appointment of Board members will be in accordance with that advised by the Commissioner for Public Appointments.

At a meeting of the UKNC Board of Directors on 18th March 2011, DFID's proposal was accepted unanimously by the Directors present. Consequently, a number of processes have been immediately put in place.

The UKNC networks will remain an important and active element of the Commission. While the standing committees will no longer exist, all existing members will have the opportunity to remain part of the UKNC network.

Further information on how and when these changes to the UKNC will be implemented and the implications for specific areas of the Commission's current work will be made publically available as quickly as possible.