

United Kingdom National Commission for UNESCO

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QUESTIONNAIRE ON 33 C/5

GENERAL REMARKS

Our Return

We begin by expressing our delight that the UK National Commission was returned to existence on 31 March 2004 by Her Majesty's Government in positive spirit, and can report that we are already in operation and well in process of constructing the full working body of the National Commission. In partnership with Government, we look forward to enhancing the participation of UK civil society in UNESCO, and give you our full support in advancing your programme and planning.

Some of us participated in the Conference of National Commissions for UNESCO of the Europe and North America Region held in Zurich, June 2004 and found it most gratifying to experience the warm welcome from the Secretariat and from our cousin National Commissions that we received.

A Different C/5 – The New Model

The UK National Commission very much endorses the proposal by Sweden for The New Model and recommends the Director General to take note of the model for the upcoming C/5, as presented at the recent Conference of National Commissions for UNESCO of the Europe and North America Region. Specifically, we support the underlying aims of its introduction:

- to facilitate a genuine policy discussion at the General Conference by underlining the up-stream functions and by avoiding micro-management discussions;
- to increase the political impact of UNESCO and thus give more visibility to the organisation;
- to make it readable and to the point for actors in the member states, in order to involve and engage them in the work of UNESCO;
- to present a clear connection to the C/4 and, in consequence, to an altered C/3, facilitating an overview of how the Organization has obtained the key objectives in the proposed result-based programming, budgeting and monitoring of the Organisation;
- to facilitate the Results-Based Management.

RESPONSE TO THE QUESTIONNAIRE

General

We believe it is very important for UNESCO to clarify its strategic role then to communicate this role and its activities in a concise and focussed way, thus publicising more effectively what UNESCO does. Making the website more intuitive to navigate also would ease the access to information about the Organization and its activities.

We feel that for efficiency, effectiveness and relevance in carrying out its programme UNESCO needs to do far more to break down intersectoral barriers within the Organization.

Answers

Broadly, we support the UK Government's response to the Questionnaire (appended) and think that the UK should be engaging constructively with the Secretariat to achieve the highlighted general aims.

Further to that response we would like to make the following *additional* points in reference to the numbered paragraphs:

8. Benchmarking should be part of the process of setting measurable targets and outcomes.

13. Provision of quality education at all levels should be emphasised more strongly in UNESCO's role.

16. While the role and activities of other international players need to be taken into account, we support all the indicated proposals (ICT-enhanced education, ICT literacy, creation of multimedia learning centres, ICT-based teacher training) and in addition press for a greater emphasis on the classroom: for example, sharing of lesson plans and model lessons.

18. We strongly support the creation of the International Basic Sciences Programme . This is an important and timely introduction that seeks to promote substantial innovations and enhancements in the existing programme. In this context we urge for increased emphasis on capacity building in high-level science and technology. Crucially this will encourage the necessary intellectual involvement and retention of people with the capability to promote scientific and technical advancement, in turn leading to peaceful international cooperation and to setting the evolutionary path to self-sufficiency for countries in development or in post-conflict transition.

25. We believe that (i) fundamentally should be maintained, although possibly it should be made more strategic and focussed. This is an area where all UN programmes need to work closely together.

29. Yes, there is a need for complementary research-based activities: concrete supporting evidence is always necessary to initiate change.

33. We do not believe that the principal priority should be strengthened with more resource.

34. *We add:* To achieve *impact oriented action*, we believe that UNESCO needs more clarity on the distinction between programmes, for example IFAP and IPDC.

35. The use of ICTs in education, both as an intrinsic tool and as a means of access, is a crucial area for development but the issue of the digital divide must be a central consideration for resolution.

38. Regarding *future orientations and action*, we point to the need for coordination with other UN agencies (as is true in most of UNESCO's areas): for example the work of UNDAW: 'promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women are effective ways to combat poverty, hunger and disease and to stimulate development that is truly sustainable'. Regarding *conflict/post-conflict areas*, we draw attention to UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (see below). Awareness of it should inform UNESCO thinking and policy in its Dialogue among Civilizations.

Women, Peace and Security – UN Resolution 1325:

Adopted three years ago, this deals with the protection of women in conflict zones and calls for women to be involved at all levels of peace processes; paragraph 3 urges the UN Secretary-General to appoint more women as special representatives and envoys and calls on Member States to provide candidates for inclusion in a regularly updated, centralised roster.

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