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FUTURE OF THE INTERNATIONAL BUREAU OF EDUCATION (IBE)

SUMMARY

Further to 40 C/Resolution 15 and 207 EX/Decision 13, the Director-General hereby presents the proposal of the Working Group on the Reorganization of the International Bureau of Education (IBE) in Geneva on the reorganization of the Institute, focusing on a renewed mandate and draft revised Statutes, and including the strengthening of UNESCO's curriculum activities.

The financial and administrative implications of this document are covered in paragraphs 11 to 15.

Action expected of the Executive Board: paragraph 18.



I. INTRODUCTION

1. During the 2018-2019 biennium, UNESCO's Executive Board deliberated on the future of the International Bureau of Education (IBE), a category 1 education institute based in Geneva, Switzerland. A roadmap for the reorganization of the IBE in Geneva was subsequently presented to the General Conference at its 40th session, proposing a way forward for renewing the Institute's mandate and governance. The General Conference took note of this roadmap and by 40 C/Resolution 15 invited the Director-General to establish a Working Group to elaborate a proposal for the IBE's reorganization in order to address the current issues of the Institute and to ensure that the renewed mandate will focus on the interlinkages between education and the other Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including curriculum. Partly echoing 207 EX/Decision 13, the General Conference also requested the Director-General to submit to the Executive Board a consolidated proposal for strengthening curriculum activities, including their relevant funding at UNESCO, taking into account the specific needs of developing countries.

2. During the discussions of the Working Group on the Reorganization of the IBE in Geneva, presented in the paragraphs below, there was consensus that IBE should continue to focus on curriculum, albeit under a renewed mandate. Given this decision, the Secretariat shared its vision and mapping of curriculum at UNESCO with the Working Group, which led to the proposals for the reorganization of IBE in Geneva and the strengthening of UNESCO's curriculum activities being elaborated as one. Through this document, the Director-General therefore presents the Working Group's proposal on the reorganization of the IBE in Geneva, including the strengthening of UNESCO's curriculum activities, for the Executive Board's consideration.

3. On 13 January 2020, China submitted a non-paper on the reorganization of the IBE, suggesting the model of "one institute with two locations", by "setting up parallel offices in Geneva and Shanghai, with the two offices mutually supportive and complementary to each other" and to "meet the needs of developing countries in curriculum, in particular African countries". The proposals on the mandate contained in this non-paper and subsequently presented by China to the Working Group, were taken into account in the discussions on IBE's renewed mandate. However, the Working Group did not discuss the proposal relating to the two locations as it considered this matter outside of its mandate, and not in line with the Terms of Reference that were adopted by unanimity.

II. WORKING GROUP ON THE REORGANIZATION OF THE IBE IN GENEVA – TERMS OF REFERENCE

4. The Working Group on the Reorganization of the IBE in Geneva was established in December 2019 and concluded its work in February 2020. The Working Group unanimously adopted its Terms of Reference, with a mandate focusing on the development of a renewed mandate for the Institute in Geneva and reviewing its Statutes to enhance governance, alleviate administrative procedures and ensure a stronger coherence with the Statutes of other education-related category 1 institutes. An informal meeting of the Working Group took place in December 2019, followed by six official meetings between January and February 2020. On the margins, the Chairperson also held meetings with Working Group members by regional group. In addition, a consultation and information meeting was organized for all Permanent Delegations to UNESCO on 3 February 2020 to present the preliminary outcomes of the Working Group.

5. The Working Group was composed of 22 members in total, distributed as follows: Group I (France, Norway, Portugal, Switzerland); Group II (Armenia, Slovenia); Group III (Ecuador, El Salvador, Saint Lucia); Group IV (China, Pakistan, Philippines); Group V(a) (Angola, Côte d'Ivoire, Kenya, South Africa); Group V(b) (Egypt, Kuwait, Mauritania, Oman, Palestine, United Arab Emirates). These were nominated by the Chairs of their respective electoral groups, following a call from the Assistant Director-General

for Education on 2 December 2019 to nominate three members per electoral group, as per 40 C/Resolution 15. As there was high interest across regions, when adopting its Terms of Reference, the Working Group decided to allow some flexibility for broader participation, thus eventually accepting all 22 members. Portugal was elected as the Chairperson of the Working Group and China as Vice-Chairperson.

6. The Secretariat participated in all meetings and supported the Working Group in its deliberations and reporting. It also prepared thematic papers to support the Working Group's discussions, which can be accessed at this link: <https://on.unesco.org/2SWfJ60>.

III. WORKING GROUP ON THE REORGANIZATION OF THE IBE IN GENEVA – OUTCOMES

7. The Working Group agreed on its final report as presented by the Chairperson of the Group (see paragraph 9 below). Furthermore, it proposed a renewed mandate for IBE in Geneva, which is captured in Article II of the draft revised Statutes, and reviewed the remainder of the Statutes in order to enhance the Institute's governance, alleviate administrative procedures and ensure stronger coherence across the Statutes of the education-related category 1 institutes. The proposed draft revised Statutes are presented in paragraph 10 below.

8. At the end of the Working Group's final meeting on 5 February 2020, the representative from China requested that it be noted that her delegation did not agree with the outcome of the Working Group's proposed revisions of the Statutes. China therefore did not adhere to the Working Group's consensus on the Statutes.

9. The **final report** of the Working Group reads as follows:

The Working Group took into account the following considerations during its meetings:

- (i) *The resolution taken by the 40th session of the General Conference of UNESCO (40 C/Resolution 15), as well as the decisions taken by the Executive Board at its 207th and previous sessions (207 EX/Decision 13; 206 EX/Decision 17; and 205 EX/Decision 11), and the Terms of Reference adopted by the Working Group.*
- (ii) *The two IOS reports – Review of the International Bureau of Education (March 2013) and Audit of UNESCO's International Bureau of Education (March 2017) – as well as the IOS External review of UNESCO's work on curriculum development (September 2019).*
- (iii) *The document presented by the Secretariat with a mapping of curriculum activities at UNESCO, with the title "UNESCO's Work on Curriculum – The What & the How" (21 January 2020) as well as the Secretariat's document "UNESCO's vision on curriculum" (15 January 2020).*
- (iv) *The definition of curriculum provided by the IBE: "Curriculum is herein defined as a dynamic and transformative articulation of collective expectations of the purpose, quality, and relevance of education and learning to holistic, inclusive, just, peaceful, and sustainable development, and to the well-being and fulfilment of current and future generations."*
- (v) *The decision of the 69th session of the IBE Council (21 January 2020), that "underlines the need for the Executive Board of UNESCO to undertake urgent decisions on the future of IBE at its 209th session, according to the resolution of the 40th session of the General Conference, putting an end to the current uncertainties, bearing in mind the shared responsibility of all UNESCO Member States for IBE, its rejuvenation and sustainability."*

In its discussions, the Working Group also bore in mind that:

- (vi) *A comprehensive, holistic and integrated view of curriculum should be adopted by UNESCO, including in consultation with IBE, in order to build on IBE's cross-sectoral platform function, noting that aspects related to contents and decision-making processes should continue under the responsibility of UNESCO Headquarters and Member States in accordance with their competences on education policies.*
- (vii) *The IBE's work should create synergies amongst all UNESCO actors on curriculum (Headquarters, category 1 institutes, UNESCO Chairs, SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee, etc.), with a view to avoiding unnecessary duplication, and consolidating various work streams and initiatives to create a central focal point on curriculum.*
- (viii) *The IBE, to serve as an effective global platform on cross-sectoral dialogue with regard to the transformative role of education and curriculum, must cooperate with other partners outside UNESCO (teacher associations, universities, science centres, etc.) and take advantage of its strategic location in Geneva and links with other international organizations, NGOs and associations, not limited to those located in Geneva, in order to design and implement an interdisciplinary vision of curriculum, bringing inter-sectoral elements into a coherent framework.*
- (ix) *The IBE has to address the continuing needs of Member States for capacity development and technical assistance on curriculum development and reform.*
- (x) *The IBE, while considering present-day challenges and educational systems, must also have a forward-looking approach, exploring the uses of new technologies and taking account of emerging trends related to the future of education and curricula in the 21st century. In this regard, the IBE should continue to serve as a platform for researchers and policy makers to share innovative practices in curriculum reform and development.*
- (xi) *In order to address the current issues of IBE, a comprehensive and holistic view should be further discussed based on all proposals from Member States to support and reinforce the work of IBE.*

10. The draft revised Statutes of the IBE as proposed by the Working Group read as follows:

Article I – Establishment of the Bureau

1. *The International Bureau of Education, hereinafter called 'the IBE', was established in 1925 in Geneva, Switzerland and formally integrated into the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in 1969. Within the framework of the Organization, and as an integral part thereof, the IBE is a category 1 institute on curriculum.*
2. *Within the above-mentioned framework, the IBE shall enjoy the functional autonomy necessary to achieve its objectives.*
3. *All activities carried out in exercise of the autonomy enjoyed by the IBE shall be in conformity with the Statutes as well as the relevant decisions of the General Conference and Executive Board.*
4. *The IBE is located in Geneva, Switzerland.*

Article II – Aims and Functions

1. *The IBE shall contribute to the design and implementation of the programme of the Organization in regard to education. To that end, the IBE is UNESCO's global focal point and platform for knowledge, dialogue and cooperation on curriculum, contributing to UNESCO's work in education through a holistic, inter-sectoral and forward-looking vision.*
2. *The IBE shall have the following functions:*
 - (a) *to consolidate and synergize the work of UNESCO in curriculum, fostering a forward-looking vision to contribute to equitable and inclusive education and sustainable development for all in the wake of global challenges and societal changes;*
 - (b) *to build a knowledge-base on curriculum, with the most advanced and cutting-edge research and comparative studies, making available methodological tools, curriculum prototypes and good practices;*
 - (c) *to develop standard-setting norms and instruments in curriculum that can guide and support Member States in the definition of their public policies and strategies;*
 - (d) *to respond to the needs of Member States, particularly developing countries, in developing and reforming curriculum through capacity development and technical assistance, and to foster policy dialogue and the sharing of experiences in curriculum development and good practices among Member States;*
 - (e) *to serve as a platform for networking and inter-sectoral dialogue on curriculum for the 21st century among relevant stakeholders, including relevant international organizations and academic institutions, with a particular focus on the transformative role of education for sustainable development, societal change and global challenges;*
 - (f) *to develop training programmes, in collaboration with universities and other relevant stakeholders from different regions of the world;*
 - (g) *to preserve the historical archives and documentation of the IBE, making them accessible to Member States and the public.*
3. *The general programme and budget of the IBE shall be part of the programme and budget of UNESCO. The resources of the IBE shall consist of the financial allocations assigned to it by the General Conference of UNESCO and of gifts, bequests, subventions and voluntary contributions received in accordance with the Financial Regulations applicable to the Special Account of the International Bureau of Education.*
4. *Within the framework of the general programme in course of execution, as approved by the General Conference, the IBE may maintain direct relations with the educational authorities of the Member States of UNESCO.*

Article III – Membership of the Council

1. *The IBE shall have a Council comprising twelve members, sitting in a personal capacity and chosen for their competence and high level of proficiency in the areas in which the IBE operates. These 12 members must be experts recognized for their high level work in areas relevant to the IBE, which must be attested namely through reputable publications, academic and scientific experience, or the exercise of high institutional responsibilities at*

the national, regional or international level. The Council must combine a diversity of profiles in order to enrich IBE's action.

2. *In the process of electing and appointing the members of the Council, geographic representation and gender balance should be taken into account.*
3. *The members shall be elected and appointed as follows:*
 - (a) *six members shall be elected by the General Conference based on submissions of several candidatures from each one of the six electoral groups of UNESCO;*
 - (b) *six members shall be appointed by the Director-General of UNESCO:*
 - *three members shall be chosen, after consultations by the Director-General of UNESCO with appropriate partners;*
 - *two members shall be proposed by international organizations, that will be invited by the Director-General of UNESCO according to the strategic interest of partnerships with IBE;*
 - *one member shall be proposed by the host country.*
4. *The members shall be elected or appointed for a period of four years. Members elected by the General Conference are eligible for immediate re-election once. Members appointed by the Director-General are eligible for immediate re-appointment once.*
5. *The Council shall elect from among its members a Chairperson and two Vice-Chairpersons, taking into consideration equitable geographical representation and rotation. They shall serve a two-year term.*
6. *If any member resigns or is prevented from carrying out his/her duties, leading to an absence from two consecutive ordinary sessions, without leave of absence, a new member shall be designated as follows:*
 - (a) *In the case of an elected member, the General Conference shall elect a new member from the same electoral group according to the same principles or procedures;*
 - (b) *In the case of a member appointed by the Director-General, he/she shall appoint a new member for the remainder of the term of the person being replaced, according to the same principles and procedures.*
7. *The members shall not receive salaries for their services. The IBE shall cover the costs of their travel and subsistence allowance, when they are on official travel on the IBE's business.*

Article IV – Working Methods of the Council

1. *The Council shall meet in ordinary session at least once every year. It may meet in extraordinary session, if convened by the Director-General of UNESCO or at the request of seven of its members.*
2. *The working languages of the Council shall be English and French.*
3. *Each member on the Council shall have one vote.*

4. *The Director-General or, in his/her absence, his/her appointed representative, shall take part in the Council's sessions without the right of vote.*
5. *The Council shall adopt its Rules of Procedure.*
6. *The Council shall set up an Executive Committee consisting of its Chairperson and two Vice-Chairpersons. Between the sessions of the Council, the Executive Committee shall perform the functions assigned to it by the Council.*
7. *The Council may set up subsidiary bodies to assist in the execution of its specific tasks,*

Article V – Functions of the Council

The tasks of the Council shall be:

- (a) *to draw up, on the proposals of the Director of the IBE, taking into account the lines of emphasis of the medium-term planning, the draft general programme and budget of the IBE, for submission to the General Conference with the observations or recommendations of the Director-General and the Executive Board, and to take steps to ensure the consistency and complementarity of the activities foreseen in the draft general programme and budget of IBE with the other activities foreseen in the draft programme and budget of UNESCO;*
- (b) *to define, within the framework of the programme and budget of UNESCO approved by the General Conference and taking available extra-budgetary resources into account, as appropriate, the activities to be undertaken by the IBE. The Council may consult, if deemed appropriate, donor and beneficiary countries and partners. The Council shall supervise the implementation of the programme of activities of the IBE and shall mobilize human and financial resources, in line with the resource mobilization strategy of UNESCO;*
- (c) *to approve the draft annual budget of the IBE which is submitted to it by the Director of the IBE;*
- (d) *to verify budget execution and the audited accounts of the IBE and the report of the External Auditor of UNESCO relating to the IBE;*
- (e) *to submit to the General Conference at each of its ordinary sessions a report on the activities of the IBE.*

Article VI – The Director

1. *The Director of the IBE shall be appointed by the Director-General, in consultation with the Council, for a term of office of maximum six (6) years.*
2. *The Director shall prepare and submit to the Council his/her proposals for the draft general programme and budget of the IBE.*
3. *The Director shall be responsible for the administration of the IBE, in accordance with the Financial Regulations applicable to the Special Account for the International Bureau of Education, the Financial Rules applicable to the Special Account for the International Bureau of Education and the Human Resources Manual.*

Article VII – Staff

The Director and personnel of the IBE shall be members of the UNESCO staff and be subject to the provisions of the UNESCO Staff Regulations approved by the General Conference, with the exception of staff employed on an occasional basis as provided for in the UNESCO Human Resources Manual.

Article VIII – Amendments

These Statutes may be amended by the General Conference of UNESCO.

Article IX – Transitional provisions

In the first cycle of elections and appointments of the IBE Council, three members elected by the General Conference and three members appointed by the Director-General of UNESCO, chosen by drawing lots, will serve for two years, although their term of office may be renewed for a period of four years.

IV. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

11. The IBE currently receives a financial allocation of \$4.04 million from UNESCO Headquarters every biennium. Furthermore, it has a total of five fixed-term regular programme posts and two project appointments, in addition to personnel on other types of contracts.

12. Switzerland has committed, through its offer of 11 October 2019, to providing voluntary contributions of CHF 4.4 million over four years for IBE in Geneva.

13. During the deliberations of the Working Group on the Reorganization of the IBE in Geneva, France announced its intention to provide \$1 million per year for an initial period of three years for a renewed mandate of IBE in Geneva, and refocused on curriculum.

14. In its above-mentioned non-paper of 13 January 2020, China expressed that it would be prepared to provide up to \$14 million per biennium to the IBE (Shanghai).

15. Furthermore, by 207 EX/Decision 13, the Executive Board also requested the Director-General to present financial information at its 209th session on the possible impact of transferring curriculum to Headquarters. If this were to be the case, a transversal team could be established at Headquarters with at least five staff members (P-2, P-3, P-4, P-5, G-6), which is the standard size of a team for a thematic area within the Education Sector. The costs for UNESCO could amount to around \$6.5 million per biennium, including \$5 million for programme activities and \$1.5 million to cover the above-mentioned staffing. This amount would need to be mobilized. The \$5 million for programme activities per biennium is an estimate of the basic level of funds that would allow the transversal team on curriculum to start delivering on the renewed mandate and mobilize extrabudgetary funds to strengthen its work. This is equivalent to only half of the amount indicated in the call for interest that the Secretariat had sent out in December 2018, when the option of finding a new host country for IBE was under consideration.

V. TRANSITIONAL MEASURES

16. By 40 C/Resolution 15, the General Conference has delegated authority to the Executive Board to decide provisionally and on non-budgetary aspects on the reorganization of IBE, including by reviewing its Statutes as well as any other necessary transitional measure, to be submitted to the 41st session of the General Conference for final endorsement. In this context, the Executive Board is

invited to approve the renewed mandate of the IBE as presented in Article II of the draft revised Statutes as well as to decide to approve provisionally the revised Statutes as a whole (paragraph 10 above).

17. In order to implement the draft revised Statutes proposed by the Working Group, and in particular the transitional provisions foreseen in Article IX, the Executive Board is invited to recommend to the 41st session of the General Conference to decide that the term of office of all current members of the IBE Council shall end at the 41st session of the General Conference.

Proposed draft decision

18. In light of the above, the Executive Board may wish to adopt a decision along the following lines:

The Executive Board,

1. Recalling 207 EX/Decision 13 and 40 C/Resolution 15,
2. Having examined document 209 EX/12,
3. Welcomes the efforts of the Director-General in establishing and supporting the Working Group on the Reorganization of the International Bureau of Education (IBE) in Geneva;
4. Takes note with appreciation of the proposal of the Working Group on the Reorganization of the International Bureau of Education (IBE) in Geneva, focusing on a renewed mandate which includes the strengthening of UNESCO's curriculum activities, as well as the draft revised Statutes;
5. Reaffirms that the International Bureau of Education (IBE) shall remain a category 1 institute on curriculum, and approves the Institute's renewed mandate as presented in Article II of the draft revised Statutes of the IBE;
6. Approves provisionally the revised Statutes of the International Bureau of Education (IBE) as set out in paragraph 10 of document 209 EX/12, including the renewed mandate, and requests the Director-General to transmit these for final endorsement to the General Conference at its 41st session;
7. Invites the Director-General to take any necessary transitional measures to start implementing the renewed mandate;
8. Recommends that the General Conference at its 41st session decide that the term of office of all current members of the Council of the International Bureau of Education (IBE) shall end at the 41st session of the General Conference in order to implement the transitional provisions as foreseen in Article IX of the revised Statutes of the IBE.