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UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL  
SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION  
COUNCIL OF THE INTERNATIONAL BUREAU OF EDUCATION

Fifty-fifth session

Varembé Conference Centre  
9-11, rue de Varembé, Geneva

24-26 January 2007

**PROCEEDINGS AND DECISIONS**

### **1. Opening of the session**

The fifty-fifth session of the IBE Council was opened at 10:00 a.m. on 24 January 2007 by H.E. Mrs. Bhaswati MUKHERJEE (India), President of the Council, who extended a cordial welcome to all the members and expressed good wishes for the year 2007.

Twenty-three Member States were represented; the List of participants is attached as Annex XII.

### **2. Adoption of the agenda and annotated agenda**

*(Documents: UNESCO/IBE/C.55/1/Prov + Addendum)*

#### **DECISION**

**The Council adopted the agenda and the annotated agenda of the fifty-fifth session without amendment (Annex I).**

### **3. Presentation of the new Director-designate and exchange of views with the members of the Council**

The President conveyed a very cordial welcome to Mrs. Clementina Acedo (Venezuela) the new Director-designate of the IBE, who was appointed by the Director-General of UNESCO in November 2006 and who will assume official duty on 15 February 2007. The President expressed the happiness and satisfaction of the Council for this nomination, which, while taking long time, allowed the selection of the best candidate. Mrs. Acedo, currently a professor at University of Pittsburgh, holds a PhD in International Comparative Education from Stanford University and possesses an excellent professional experience both in the field and in several international organizations. The CV of Mrs. Acedo is attached to the Council's Proceedings and Decisions (Annex II).

The new Director-designate thanked the Council for its welcome, as well as the Director a.i. and his team for their excellent work, which she intends to continue in the same direction and spirit. She briefly recalled her professional carrier and expressed her happiness to be leading such an institution. She committed herself to make IBE even more a centre of excellence within the domain of curricula and reforms to respond to the needs of Member States, in particular in the South. She underlined the importance of the Council and expressed the desire to work in full synergy with it. She also intended to establish strong relations with the other components of the Education Sector, as well as other academic institutions and international organizations.

Nine delegations took the floor, conveyed their congratulations to Mrs. Acedo and expressed their satisfaction of her nomination, also conveying their wishes for best of success in addressing the numerous challenges that IBE will be confronted with in the coming years.

Mrs. Acedo thanked the members of the Council for the warm welcome and assured them that she will spare no efforts to carry out, to the best of her capacity, her new responsibilities.

#### **4. Activities of the IBE during 2006**

The IBE Director a.i. presented the main elements of the report on the IBE's activities for 2006, as they appear in the document *UNESCO/IBE/C.55/2* and *C.55/Inf.2*.

H. E. Mr. Olabiy YAI (Benin), President of the Administrative Group, presented points 1 to 8 of his report, as well as the Revised Appropriation Resolution for 2006 (*Document: UNESCO/IBE/C.55/Inf.3*).

#### **Summary of the debate**

The Director a.i., after having welcomed the Director-designate, as well as the representative of the Education sector and the future Secretary of the Council, made a comprehensive presentation of achievements of the programmes in 2006, which was greatly appreciated by the Council.

Before proceeding any further, the President and numerous members of the Council took the opportunity to thank and to express their gratitude to the Director a.i., who will retire at the end of April 2007. His excellent professional work, his dynamism and dedication to IBE over more than a quarter of a century was highly praised. The President requested that the sentiments of the Council members be reflected in a special motion to be included in the Council proceedings (see point 11 below).

Several Council members expressed their full appreciation for the good quality of work achieved by the IBE through its programmes. Several Members stressed the importance of capacity building efforts for curriculum experts and underlined the excellent achievements made possible by the Community of Practice (COP). At the same time they raised the following issues: the importance of curricula reflecting the theme "Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)", the strategic importance of strengthening IBE's cooperation with Field Offices, the degree of the IBE involvement in the Education Sector reform process and whether as a result of the reform, new assignments would be given to IBE. A request was also made to have a breakdown per geographical region of the implementation rate of programs, so that success could be measured more concretely. The issue of equity in the geographical distribution of the IBE activities was touched upon, for example, it was mentioned that the COP was not as present in certain regions; while, however, the outreach of the capacity building programme was appreciated. Some suggestions were made that the website could be used to better facilitate the dissemination of results of IBE work, so that others can learn from these experiences.

An enquiry was made with regards to the work on curricula development carried out in Afghanistan and whether this could be extended to other countries, like Liberia, Cote d'Ivoire, Congo and Sierra Leone. Furthermore, one member of the Council asked whether there were activities that were not implemented and in such cases, what were the reasons?

The Director a.i. replied to the delegates' questions, emphasizing that the theme ESD could possibly be addressed within the context of the ICE, and that the IBE relations with Field Offices (FO) are very good, an example being the Bangkok Regional Education Office. As for the Education Sector reform, the IBE Director a.i. stated that he had participated in four initial planning meetings and that IBE functions have been clearly identified within the reform framework. He reminded the Council that the Institutes are viewed as important instruments in the decentralization process. As for the detailed breakdown of programs by region, the

Director a.i. considered that this could be achieved for the next Council and that the Director-designate will be in the position to fulfill the request. He also mentioned that curricula issues are politically sensitive and that IBE does not interfere in national curriculum processes unless explicitly requested to do so by Member States. Concerning the sharing of experiences made in Afghanistan with other countries in conflict/post-conflict situations, he reiterated the importance of the research/action/training carried out by the IBE in 2002-2003 with seven countries; he also mentioned a project that has just been discussed with the Regional Office for Education in Africa (BREDA) for new activities in Africa; finally mentioned that the experience and achievements of Afghanistan will be published. The Director a.i. also confirmed that a few planned activities did not take place due to lack of funding from the requesting party (Iraq, Lithuania). As for the Website, it was acknowledged that in 2007 the IBE will pursue all efforts to disseminate good practices, so that they are available to as many Member States as possible.

Some members of the Council wished IBE to be more present in the Arab States, which need substantive support in curricula development. Other members wondered whether it would be more feasible for IBE, because of the scarce financial resources, to have a regional approach, regardless of the different languages, and in close coordination with Regional Education Offices. One observer to the Council asked what role the National Commissions could possibly play. Some members of the Council further noticed that African Anglophone countries were not involved in some IBE activities and asked how the needs of Africa could be addressed in a more balanced manner. The importance of the IBE assisting countries in post-conflict situations was also stressed.

The Director a.i. addressed the issues raised, and presented the draft version of three exploratory studies, which were made available for distribution, specifying that they should be considered as a “work in progress”, namely: A) “*L’Education Biculturelle and Multilingue en Afrique*”; B) “*Education for Sustainable Development*” and C) “*Pour y voir plus clair dans le domaine de l’éducation en vue du développement durable.*”. He also reminded the Council that IBE external evaluation had mentioned IBE focus on the Gulf Arab countries, in detriment of poorer countries. Nevertheless, a COP focal point has already been established (Arab Bureau for Education in the Gulf States (ABEGS) and Gulf Arab States Educational Research Centre (GASERC) and a strengthening of activities in this region is planned accordingly. The Director a.i. confirmed that IBE keeps excellent relations with the National Commissions, which are not only fully informed about IBE activities, but are closely associated to them and in some cases they co-organize activities.

## **DECISION**

**At the close of the debate, during which fourteen delegates and one observer took the floor, and in accordance with the Statutes of the IBE stipulating that it “*supervise the execution of the programme activities of the Bureau*”, the Council:**

- **took note of the comments and recommendations of the Administrative Group and approved paragraphs 1 to 8 of its Report (Annex IV );**
- **approved the Report of Activities of the IBE Director a.i. for 2006 (Annex III);**
- **approved the provisional accounts of the IBE as at 31 December 2006 (UNESCO/IBE/C.55/Inf.2), reviewed by the Financial Controller of UNESCO, as well as the Revised Appropriation Resolution for 2006 (Annex III ). The state of the 2006 accounts, certified by the UNESCO Office of the Controller, will be formally approved by the Steering Committee of the Council in June or July 2007.**

## 5. Information and exchange of views

### 5.1. South-South Co-operation in education (*Document: UNESCO/IBE/C.55/Inf.4*)

The IBE Director a.i. briefly presented the information document and the President informed the Council of the deliberations of the 19 January 2007 Information Meeting of the Executive Board with the Director-General of UNESCO, regarding a Fund to be established through voluntary contributions by the Member States of UNESCO, to promote South-South cooperation in education.

#### Summary of the debate

A frank and constructive debate ensued on this topic. Several members of the Council confirmed their strong support for “South-South cooperation” and recalled the UNESCO commitments to achieve this cooperation, especially in education. Urgent steps should be taken to initiate this type of cooperation and the Director-designate should take note of this as a priority. The President of the Council enquired about the status of a letter that Director-General promised to send to all Member States on this topic. The representative of the ADG/ED informed the Council that a Hqs-based focal point for South-South Cooperation had been appointed within the Education Sector and that the regional focal points were in the process of collecting documentation on good practices, to reflect activities already ongoing, but perhaps not widely known. She also confirmed that the letter on this matter had been drafted and that will be sent soon with suggestions about future steps. The President expressed her view that “UNESCO did not have appetite for South-South Cooperation” for long time, but recently thanks to the resolution, strong support had been developed for this topic, which deserves serious consideration. The letter from the Director-General would be an important step forward, and the education institutes should also identify their specific roles in this process. She also clarified that the South–South Cooperation should establish partnerships with the North, to take advantage of its expertise. It was recalled that the General Conference asked the Director-General to move this issue forward and to establish a Fund for South-South Cooperation in Education for pilot projects. China and India have committed US 1 million each for this purpose. The IBE should prepare the groundwork in order to play a specific role on this. It was also recognised that, in general terms, the IBE already applies South-South cooperation principles, since many of its experts come from Southern countries.

#### DECISION

The 55<sup>th</sup> Session of the Council of the IBE,

1. **Recalling General Conference Resolution 33C/7;**
2. **Having examined the document *UNESCO/IBE/C.55/Inf.4*;**
3. **Taking note of the decision 175 EX/Decision 4 (III) of the 175th session of the Executive Board to attach high priority to South-South cooperation;**
4. **Conscious of the Doha Declaration of the Second Summit of the G-77 and China held in Qatar from 12 to 16 June 2005 to establish a Fund for South-South Cooperation;**















