SEVENTY-FIRST SESSION OF THE COUNCIL OF THE INTERNATIONAL BUREAU OF EDUCATION

Geneva, 31 January – 1 February 2022

PROCEEDINGS AND DECISIONS
1. Opening of the session

The 71st session of the Council, held in a hybrid format, took place on the 31st of January and February 1st. All council members were present\(^1\). A welcome message from Mr. Arkadi Papoyan (Armenia), President of the IBE Council began the proceedings. The President acknowledged the IBE’s efforts in its transition to becoming a globally recognized Centre on curriculum related matters, as well as its renewed dynamism under the leadership of the IBE Director, Mr. Yao Ydo. Before giving the floor to the Director, the President recognized the value of a refreshed vision as illustrated in the IBE's new Medium-Term Strategy (2022-2025).

In his welcome remarks, the Director recalled the challenges and opportunities for the revitalization of the IBE through its Medium-Term Strategy and the 2022 Annual Workplan. The Director emphasized the value of IBE's internal and external expertise on curriculum related issues, as well as the importance of instilling a results-based management and advocacy approach in all IBE's interventions. Finally, the Director reiterated the critical importance of human and financial resources for the institution in the execution of its vision of supporting Member States' transformative curricular practices.

Next, the ADG/ED, Mrs. Stefania Giannini, in her opening speech, identified the 71st Session of Council as a pivotal moment for a new and more productive IBE. The ADG emphasized that, now more than ever, the world needs a refreshed IBE with a unique and strong expertise on curriculum related matters. In this regard, Mrs. Giannini highlighted IBE's window of opportunity for its revival through (i) its renewed mandate, (ii) new statutes and (iii) the full capacity of the new Council Members. Lastly, the ADG concluded her message with a reflection on the present and future challenges and opportunities for the IBE, taking into consideration its long-standing historical legacy.

The President of the IBE Council gave the floor to the new Council Members to introduce themselves. Mr. Majed Bin Ali Al Noaimi (Bahrain), emphasized the strong relationship between UNESCO, the IBE and Bahrain, as well as the importance of reinforcing and sustaining links with Arab Member States. Mr. Xin Tao (China) reiterated his commitment as a Member of the Council in contributing towards the development of the IBE. Mrs. Annette Scheunpflug (Germany) echoed the Council Members' sentiments and highlighted her commitment to providing her expertise in the field on education matters. Mr. Rafael Emilio Bello Díaz (Dominican Republic) pointed out the challenges encountered in the provision of distance learning during the pandemic, and the importance of curriculum in addressing these issues. The Vice-Minister of Education reaffirmed the strong commitment of Caribbean countries towards the realization of the Sustainable Developments Goals (SDGs). Mr. Aldo Sambo (Angola) emphasized his support for the "new face" of the IBE. Mrs. Alejandra Cardini (Argentina) pointed out the importance of linking together evidence and policymaking and stressed on the need to position education and curriculum as priority agendas within public policy. Mrs. Baela Reza Jamil (Pakistan) reflected on the fundamental role of citizen-led assessment on informing 'endogenous' learning practices, and the importance of connecting foundational and Socio-Emotional Learning (SEL) as a critical curricular component. Mr. Andreas Schleicher (representative of the OECD) recognized the need to position curriculum at the heart of the educational discourse and the fundamental role of IBE in

\(^1\) The list of participants is attached as Annex I.
addressing it from an international and comparative perspective. Furthermore, Mr. Schleicher voiced the OECD's commitment to mobilizing expertise in support of IBE's efforts. Mr. Svein Osttveit (Norway) echoed the critical role of the IBE in curriculum, as well as his willingness to establish ties between the IBE and Norway. Mrs. Fatimata Ba (representative for CONFEMEN) emphasized CONFEMEN's commitment to IBE in mobilizing expertise and liaising with African countries in the region to present the IBE's MTS. Finally, Mrs. Sabina Handschin (Switzerland) affirmed the importance of resilient systems and contextualized education, as well as the relevant role of the IBE within the broader international educational environment.

2. Presentation and Adoption of the Agenda²

Before proceeding to its adoption, the Director presented the points of the agenda. No remarks or comments were made, and the proposed agenda was unanimously adopted by the Council members.

DECISION:

The Council adopts the agenda of the 71st session of the IBE Council.

3. Election of the executive committee

The Council members unanimously elected its Executive Committee, composed of the Chairperson, Mr. Svein Osttveit, and two Vice-Chairpersons: Mr. Majed Bin Ali Noami and Mr. Aldo Sambo. This was followed by a draw to determine which of the three members appointed by the Director General will be serving for two years.

The Director thanked Mr. Papoyan, the outgoing President, for his leadership and steady support to the IBE and welcomed Mr. Svein Osttveit, the new Chairperson who led the remaining of the session.

DECISION:

The Council based on the proposals of its Members, in conformity with its Revised Statutes as approved by the 41st session of the General Conference in November 2021 taking into consideration equitable geographical representation and rotation elected from among its members:
- Mr. Svein Osttveit as Chairperson;
- Mr. Majed Bin Ali Noami and Mr. Aldo Sambo as the two Vice-Chairpersons.
They shall serve a two-year term (Article III. 5).

The Council, in accordance with Article IX concerning the transitional provisions of the Revised Statutes of the IBE:

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² The Agenda is attached as Annex II
1. chose by drawing lots the following three members appointed by the Director-General of UNESCO to serve for a period of two years:
   - Mr. Svein Osttveit;
   - Mrs. Sabina Handschin;
   - Mr. Andreas Schleicher.

2. took note of the three elected Members of the IBE Council that have been drawn by lots by the General Conference to serve for two years:
   - Mr. Rafael Emilio Bello Diaz (Dominican Republic);
   - Mr. Xin Tao (China);
   - Mr. Majed Bin Ali Al Noaimi (Bahrain).

4. Presentation and Adoption of the Rules of Procedure of the IBE Council

During the presentation, Mrs. Sabina Handschin (Switzerland) proposed amendments to Rules 6 and 8. Mrs. Handschin requested that Rule 6 of the Rules of Procedure should reflect that the Ordinary session of the Council takes place in Geneva, while other sessions, even those requested by Member States, shall be understood as extraordinary. For Rule 8, Mrs. Handschin requested that a Draft Agenda for the Council shall be sent 30 days in advance. In addition, Mrs. Handschin petitioned that all relevant documents be sent two weeks prior to the Council to provide Members sufficient time to make informed decisions during the sessions.

Finally, the Chairperson suggested that, as part of Rule 11, the IBE shall attempt to present simultaneously on screen all the relevant documentation both in French and English.

Before the adoption of the Rules of Procedure, the Director responded to the inputs and questions provided and agreed with the amendments proposed. No further remarks or comments were made and the proposed amendments to the Rules of Procedure were unanimously adopted by the Council members.

DECISION:

The Council adopts the Rules of Procedure of the IBE Council

5. Report on activities 2021

In introducing this point of the agenda, the Chairperson called Mrs. Simona Popa to present the report on activities.

Mrs. Popa reminded that IBE’s activities were organized around five Strategic Axes as approved last year by the Council. The Axes correspond with UNESCO’s main lines of

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3 The document is attached as Annex III
4 The Report on Activities is attached as Annex IV
actions (MLA) as articulated in the 39 C/5, also mapped around IBE’s contribution to the core functions of UNESCO, SDG4 targets and overall UNESCO Education sector strategy 2014-2021. Mrs. Popa then proceeded by briefly reviewing the activities under each Axis.

Under Strategic Axis I, support to national and regional capacity development in curriculum and related issues, Mrs. Popa recalled that post-graduate and masters’ courses with partner universities had been established and the creation of two UNESCO chairs in the field of curriculum was supported. In addition, 11 countries have benefited from IBE’s support in areas such as ECCE, Global Citizenship Education and Competency-based curricula.

Regarding Strategic Axis II, support developing countries in developing and implementing hybrid, digitalized curriculum to promote distance education and digital literacy, Mrs. Popa recalled that global and regional dialogue as well as a series of webinars were organized on curriculum transformation and post-COVID-19. The IBE also provided evidence-based and innovative approaches on hybrid modes of education through a series of knowledge products (e.g. In-progress Reflections).

Under Strategic Axis III, support early childhood care and education (ECCE) curriculum improvement in developing countries, Mrs Popa recalled that despite the COVID-19 challenges and very limited financial and human resources, the IBE expanded relationships with national entities, Foundations and regional partners to support ECCE in several Member States. A collection of tools, policies and good practices in Early Childhood education was subsequently developed.

Regarding Strategic Axis IV, promote research and knowledge sharing on curriculum and related matters, the IBE continued to provide forward-looking leadership and promote innovative thinking through the development of quality publications. The IBE also consolidated its science of learning portal through its partnership with IBRO, and part of the IBE’s historical archives are now cataloged, preserved and freely accessible according to international standards.

Lastly, with regards to Strategic Axis V, IBE’s external image further improved through high quality publications, services and effective communication. There is a growing demand for IBE’s expertise and several invitations to partner with prestigious organizations such as the OECD and The World Council of Comparative Education Societies.

The Chairperson then handed the floor to the IBE Administrative Officer a.i., Mr. Valéry Kohemun, to present the 2021 activity budget report.

After highlighting the institution’s high implementation rates, Mr. Kohemun disclosed that among IBE’s Core Funders, only France has given the funds that had been pledged, while Switzerland and Germany have only fulfilled part of their commitment. As for the European Union, no amount has been given to date as the agreement is still being finalized. Mr. Kohemun informed that a final version of the report will be shared later this year.
DECISION:

In accordance with the Statutes of the IBE (Article Vb), stipulating that it “shall supervise the implementation of the programme of activities of the IBE”, the Council:

Approves the Report on activities 2021;

Commends the IBE for the implementation of the programme during 2021, stressing results achieved and in particular priorities and challenges faced.

6. Presentation of the Medium-Term Strategy 2022-2025

The Director presented the Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) 2022-2025 in four parts: (i) framework elements, (ii) programmatic aspects, (iii) operational aspects, and (iv) conclusion.

The MTS aims at framing the scope of intervention of the IBE, as well as opening dialogue with partners and strategically aligning both human and financial resources. The document has been developed through a participative approach, with active involvement from two Council members, the Africa Group and inputs received from Member States.

The MTS is guided by the key values, characteristics, challenges and priorities of the UNESCO and UN at large (SDG, GCED, ESD, ICT, Human Rights, etc.). Alongside with education stakeholders, the IBE will work on developing endogenous, systemic and holistic curricula.

The Director then explained the two approaches that will be adopted: technical assistance and capacity development. The IBE will also generate and mobilize relevant research in the field of curriculum, ensuring visibility of the work produced and therefore enhancing IBE’s advocacy programme.

The MTS will also be monitored and assessed with a set of defined indicators and periodical evaluations. Mr. Ydo emphasized the importance of this milestone not only for the next steps concerning the MTS, but also for providing donors with a clear idea of its programming capacity.

Regarding the operational aspects, the strategic location of the UNESCO-IBE, being at the heart of the Genève International is a key asset in accessing key stakeholders in education. The IBE plans to strengthen its collaborations with international, regional and local organisations (OECD, CONFEMEN, ADEA etc.) as well as other UNESCO offices and institutes.

The MTS is expected to be funded by pluriannual funds that align with IBE’s work plan. In this regard, the Minister of Education of Angola has offered to organise a round table, to mobilise strong and sustainable funding. Mr. Ydo also thanks Mrs. Giannini for her

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5 The Medium Term Strategy is attached as Annex V
strong support and advocacy for the IBE. In conclusion, the Director called the Council members to support the implementation of the Strategy as well as advocate for the institution via their networks.

The Council members reacted to the presentation expressing their interest in the content of the MTS and complimented the team for the high quality of the document produced. However, they mentioned the need of a results-based framework and tangible indicators, that would provide a clearer picture of future activities, facilitating exchanges on the IBE’s ambitions. The Council members volunteered to support the IBE in the development of this framework and a Committee comprising Mrs. Annette Scheunpflug and Mrs. Handschin was set up to this effect. Council Members also suggested to add a glossary at the beginning of the document to better understand the acronyms included. Overall, the Council Members were confident about the impact this document will have to enhance the IBE.

**DECISION:**

*The Council approves the Medium-Term Strategy 2022-2025.*

*The Council expects finalization of a Results Framework by 30th March 2022.*

*The Council agrees to set up a Committee that will provide feedback to the IBE. The Committee will report back to the Executive Committee who will ensure circulation and approval by the Council.*

*The Committee’s Focal point will be Mrs. Annette Scheunpflug.*

### 7. Presentation of the 2022 Work Plan (activities and budget)

The Director started by mentioning that the work plan 2022 is the first leg of the IBE’s Medium-Term strategy 2022-2025. This workplan was elaborated while considering what could be done in the first year of implementation of the Medium-Term Strategy (MTS). The Director reminded everyone of IBE’s renewed, curriculum-focused mandate and recalled that IBE’s work plan contributes to the overall objectives of the UNESCO 41 C/4 (UNESCO’s Mid-Term Strategy), C/5 (UNESCO’s two years programming), as well as the SDG4.

The structure of the 2022 programme is based on the 4 Strategic Axes of the MTS 2022-2025 where IBE will support Member States in: (i) Curriculum Development (ii) Curriculum Implementation (iii) Curriculum Evaluation and (iv) Enabling curriculum processes. The following assumptions will be considered: (1) Standards & Procedures (2) Country Need and (3) Awareness.

Under the first Strategic Axis, *Capacity Development* there is Sub-Axis I.1, *Technical Assistance and Cooperation,* and Sub-Axis I.2, *Training.* A national-level strategy formulated through the creation of a critical mass of curriculum experts as well as a regional-level strategy achieved through the support of Regional Master’s programmes.

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6 The Work Plan is attached as Annex VI
in curriculum are both parts of the workplan. In this regard, partnerships with four Universities are already in place and the establishment of two Francophone Master’s in Curriculum has been supported. Other regions (e.g., Asia Pacific region and Portuguese speaking countries) are being explored. The development of a Quality Assurance (QA) tool for these Master/Diploma courses is being envisaged. Mr. Ydo Yao stated his wish to make IBE a reference centre in curriculum training through the establishment of a Certified Training course on Curriculum and the development of the institution’s first annual Summer School.

The second Strategic Axis, Knowledge Creation & Management, encompasses Sub-Axis II.1 research & foresight capacity, Sub-axis II.2 capacity development tools and Sub-Axis II.3 the documentation centre. The IBE will work on emerging trends and issues through the publication of Prospects. Science of Learning (SoL) and Hybrid Education, Learning and Assessment (HELA) are also areas of work under this Strategic Axis. The Director emphasized that tools and guidelines will be produced and published online. The Director also underlined the importance of working on ECE in view of the new challenges faced. He stressed on the importance of conducting a comparative analysis of ECE curriculum enablers and producing guidelines for improvements. For the research and publications to reach the relevant countries, publishers based in the regions will be selected. In addition, to preserve and promote IBE’s Historical Collections, digitization, completion of inventory and updating the website/TIND will be done. Moreover, short-term fellowships and exhibitions and special events in partnerships with international organizations, academic institutions, and libraries are expected. The IBE will continue to produce by-weekly Alerts and Digests on the latest news, trends, and publications, with a focus on curriculum and related matters.

The third Strategic Axis, Outreach and Advocacy, will be mainly implemented through events and institutional communications such as policy forums, conference and other events. Under Sub-Axis III.1 the IBE will organize and co-organize inter-regional and regional thematic forums, conferences, policy dialogues and webinars on curricular priorities for education futures. The IBE will also launch and disseminate the 7 tools on curriculum and related matters developed under the project “Building resilient and Sustainable ECCE Systems”, financed by Dubai Cares. Special issues of Prospects and other publications in global events will also be developed. Under Sub-Axis III.2 Institutional Communications, the IBE, through its Communication Strategy, will establish its identity and brand strategy by producing promotional and institutional communication portals, materials and products. The IBE will (3) produce and distribute multimedia branded content (4) create 360° online and offline communication and awareness campaigns, and (5) design online and offline media advertising.

The Strategic Axis IV, Institutional Development, includes Sub-Axis IV.1 partnerships and funding sustainability as well as Sub-Axis IV.2 internal mechanisms to improve IBE’s sustainability. Under this Axis, the IBE will strengthen the cooperation with the International Geneva network by organizing open days and events at the Documentation Centre and by participating in major events organized by the Canton of Geneva. The IBE is also willing to develop and implement its Resource Mobilization Strategy by identifying new donors, developing partnerships, and increasing visibility of IBE’s projects. Under this Strategic Axis, the Director emphasized the staff development that will be achieved through the elaboration of a risk register and its implementation and other training opportunities. The Director stressed the importance of working as a team to reach the IBE’s objectives.
The Director concluded his presentation by reiterating the very ambitious vision of the IBE and highlighted that the IBE’s work plan can only be achieved if the necessary funds are available. To this end, the Director expressed his determination to work towards finding the needed resources for the realisation of the activities planned for 2022.

**DECISION:**

In accordance with the Statutes of the IBE (Article Vb), stipulating that the Council is responsible for defining “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”, and that it “shall mobilize human and financial resources for the implementation of the activities to be undertaken by the IBE”, the Council:

**Approves the Proposed programme of activities and adopts the proposed budget for 2022 (Appropriation Resolution).**

**The Council requests more information on secured and anticipated funding, including a timeline when possible.**

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8. **Operational Strategy for Priority Africa 2022-2029 ADG/PAX**

The Operational Strategy for Priority Africa was presented by Mr. Firmin Matoko (ADG/PAX). Aligned with UNESCO’s Medium-Term Strategy, it is the second operational strategy for Priority Africa developed by UNESCO, while the first covered the period 2014-2021. Based on the former strategy, it provides more in-depth responses and has been adopted by African Member States. This strategy is in line with the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals and the 2063 African Union’s (AU) Agenda. Priority Africa is one of UNESCO's global priorities as Africa's main challenge is its economic, social and cultural development.

The strategy is based on a “five flagships programme”. It encompasses UNESCO's main programmes and priorities in Africa.

**Flagship programme 1:** Campus Africa is focused on strengthening Higher Education in Africa. There are weaknesses in terms of infrastructure and quality in Africa. The aim is to strengthen higher education and build connections with higher education institutions around the world.

**Flagship programme 2:** The General History of Africa has been designed as a catalyst for achieving AU Agenda 2063 and the 2030 SDG Agenda. Content on Africa’s general history is still absent from education and textbooks in African schools. There is a need to revise the curricula of African member states to introduce the General History of Africa into the curriculum from childhood to higher education, and to introduce a general history encyclopaedia in textbooks. As of now, 10 volumes of the General History of Africa have been produced. The IBE has introduced the General History of Africa into the curriculum as: “Transforming Education Through Identity:. History, Language and Common Heritage.”
Flagship programme 3: Fostering cultural heritage and capacity development. The IBE is working on a holistic and comprehensive approach to curriculum development and supports an endogenous curriculum.

Flagship programme 4: Harnessing new and emerging technologies for sustainable development in Africa, through the implementation as well as recommendation on the ethics of artificial intelligence.

Flagship programme 5: Enhance Open Science is a programme for reinforcing capacity building in Basic and Applied Sciences. It involves scientific research for encouraging innovation and technology development for use in ocean science, climate change resilience, and water resources management. Though challenges were encountered due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the IBE managed to support the UNESCO Science Sector in the development of an Ocean Literacy toolkit.

9. Determination of the dates of the 72nd session of the Council

The Director expressed his wish to have the next Council meeting in December so that the Report 2022 as well as the Workplan for the following year may be presented and validated for implementation starting from January 2023.

The Director suggested to have the IBE’s 72nd session of the Council on Thursday 15 (full day) and Friday 16 December (half day) or Monday 19 (full day) and Tuesday 20 (half day).

DECISION:

The Council decides to propose to the Director-General of UNESCO that:

The 72nd session of the IBE Council will be held either on Thursday 15 and Friday 16 December 2022 or Monday 19 and Tuesday 20 of December 2022.

10. Adoption of the Decisions of the 71st session

DECISION

In conformity with the Rules of Procedure of the IBE Council (Section IV, Rule 17), which foresees that “the Council shall approve at each session the text of the decisions” and that “the Proceedings shall be published in French and English during the month following the session”, the Council is invited to:

- review the texts of the draft Decisions of the 71st session;
- adopt them;
- request the IBE to publish the text by the end of February 2022.
11. Any other business

Mr. Renato Opertti (Senior Expert for the IBE) presented two of IBE’s recent publications: "Learning to Build Back Better Futures for Education: Lessons from Educational Innovation during the covid-19 pandemic" in partnership with Harvard Graduate School of Education, and "Reaching Out All Learners: A Resource Pack for supporting inclusive education" in collaboration with UNESCO HQ. For the former, Mr. Opertti emphasized the lessons learnt regarding educational innovation during the pandemic, as well as their curricular implications. Mr. Opertti highlighted the value of this book in rethinking the roles of actors in education, and in the emergence of innovative practices not only in suitable, but also under challenging circumstances. Concerning the latter, Mr. Opertti highlighted a new paradigm in inclusive education, as well as its practical focus in supporting teachers towards enhancing their inclusive practices. As the Senior Expert reiterated, the book offers practical tools for addressing critical questions in inclusive education at the levels of the classroom, the school and the wider community.

No other businesses were addressed.

12. Closing remarks

At the end of the session, the Chairperson gave the floor to the Director for his final words. The Director warmly thanked the Chairperson, Mr. Svein Osttveit, on behalf of all IBE colleagues for his availability and moderation through the session. Mr. Ydo further thanked the ADG and the members of the Council for their participation and their valuable comments. He then assured that the IBE team will work on revising the documents so that they can be shared for resource mobilization purposes under the ADG’s guidance. The Director then kindly invited the Council members to share resource mobilization proposals if the opportunity arises. The Director also guaranteed that the Council members will be informed of all the meetings that the IBE will organize.

The representative of the ADG, Mrs. Astrid Gillet, as well as the former President of the IBE Council, Mr. Papoyan, praised the success and richness of the Council meeting and thanked the members for their contributions. Mrs. Gillet showed enthusiasm for the progress of the IBE and reiterated the willingness of HQ in supporting the Institute. Mr. Papoyan concluded by expressing his best wishes to the new Council members as well as to the new Chairperson.

The Chairperson concluded the 71st session of the IBE Council by recalling the fruitful discussions of the past two days. He thanked the Director as well as the entire IBE team for their work and concluded by expressing his wish for the IBE to achieve its ambitious results.

The Chairperson closed the 71st session of the Council on Tuesday 1 February at 1:30 pm.